

AI drive takes Centre stage at iGOT workshop

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VIJAYAWADA

THE first regional workshop of iGOT–Mission Karmayogi for the southern states concluded in Vijayawada on Wednesday after two days of discussions on strengthening the capabilities and skills of government employees and improving the quality of public services.

The workshop, organised by the Capacity Building Commission at Dr B R Ambedkar Kala Vedika, focused on capacity building, modern skills, digital learning, technology adoption and sharing of best practices among the participating States.

On the second day, Andhra Pradesh made a presentation on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public administration and citizen services.

Finance special chief secretary Peeyush Kumar explained to representatives of various states the measures taken by the state to use AI for delivering faster and more transparent services. Peeyush Kumar said that while the use of AI was increasing in governance,

• **AP showcases its use of AI in public administration, including analysis of nearly 5,000 commercial tax assessment cases involving transactions worth about Rs 1,600 cr**

• **Officials from six southern states discuss capacity building, digital learning, modern skills and best practices to improve govt services**

human judgement would remain crucial in decision-making. He called upon government officials to move beyond merely implementing rules and focus on finding solutions to public problems.

He said an experiment involving a multi-agent AI network in the commercial taxes department had proved successful. Nearly 5,000 assessment cases involving transactions valued at around Rs.1,600 crore



Finance special chief secretary Peeyush Kumar speaking at the iGOT–Mission Karmayogi for the southern states in Vijayawada on Wednesday

were analysed using AI, he said.

The finance special chief secretary stressed the need to prepare government employees as well as the younger generation for emerging technological challenges. He said officials needed to continuously upgrade their skills in line with changing requirements.

Representatives from six southern states discussed best practices in training and capacity building and exchanged experiences on strengthening training institutions and improving

learning systems for government employees.

The two-day workshop also deliberated on measures to improve the quality of citizen services, enhance employee skills and competencies, expand digital learning and promote the use of modern technologies in government departments.

The regional workshop also prepared a draft incorporating key areas for strengthening employee capabilities. Discussions covered an integrated approach to capacity building,

from training and skill development to improvement in service delivery. The iGOT–Mission Karmayogi platform is being used to promote continuous learning and professional development among government employees.

Andhra Pradesh has completed more than two crore iGOT online courses, placing the State among the leading States in employee capacity building, according to officials.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has appreciated the state's progress in employee skill development and particularly commended the AP HRD department, planning department and AP State Development Planning Society.

The workshop also focused on strengthening co-ordination between training institutions and government departments and expanding digital learning to enhance employee capabilities.

The participating States agreed on the importance of continued exchange of experiences and best practices for building a more capable and responsive public administration.

Hero Indian captain prevents flydubai hijack

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Together, they regained control of the cockpit and diverted the aircraft to Saudi Arabia, where it landed safely.

Israeli outlets YNet News and Channel 12 confirmed the Captain's nationality as Indian, hailing him as a hero whose actions prevented a mass tragedy. Preliminary reports in Israeli media suggested that the Omani pilot allegedly attempted to crash the aircraft by forcing it into a steep descent from around 30,000 feet. The Indian pilot reportedly lost more than 17,000 feet in under 30 seconds during the incident.

Fluctuating between about -30,000 and +10,000 feet per minute. The aircraft briefly climbed to around 21,650 feet before descending below 14,000 feet and later stabilising at around 15,000 feet for an extended period.

Videos shared on social media purportedly show passengers screaming as the aircraft undergoes a sudden descent. In another clip, passengers appear to cheer after the situation aboard the aircraft seemingly comes under control. The footage has emerged amid reports of a violent confrontation between the pilots. However, the precise sequence of events captured in the videos could not be independently established.

Cabinet hikes MSP for all rabi crops

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The rabi MSP increases range from Rs 25 per quintal for wheat to Rs 675 for safflower, while the Green Energy Corridor-III scheme will strengthen intra-state transmission networks and add 50 GWh of battery storage capacity. The new Intelligent Traffic Management System in Delhi will cover 42 traffic corridors and use adaptive signals, automated enforcement and real-time traffic data.

Safflower has received the highest absolute increase of Rs 675 per quintal, followed by rapeseed and mustard at Rs 413 per quintal. The MSP for lentil (masur) has been increased by Rs 390 per quintal, barley by Rs 136, gram by Rs 83 and wheat by Rs 25 per quintal. The MSP for wheat has been fixed at Rs 2,610 per quintal for the 2027-28 marketing season, compared with Rs 2,585 per quintal in 2026-27.

The Green Energy Corridor scheme, with a total outlay of Rs 1,86,405 crore, will strengthen intra-state transmission systems and facilitate the evacuation of up to 135 GW of renewable energy across states and Union territories. The scheme, targeted for completion by FY2032-33, includes Rs 1,36,378 crore for intra-state transmission systems and Rs 50,000 crore for deploying 50 GWh of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

CM Naidu calls for continuous skill training of govt staff

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He asked employees to make use of virtual courses to continuously upgrade their skills. Skill development should not be viewed as a one-time exercise, he said, pointing out that IAS officers regularly undergo orientation and training to update their knowledge and capabilities.

Naidu directed officials to develop similar opportunities for other government employees and explore partnerships with IITs and IIMs for specialised training programmes.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the drinking water

situation in urban areas and directed officials to ensure that shortages did not occur in either urban or rural areas.

Officials informed him that the drinking water situation in towns and cities had improved considerably following the recent rains. However, minor shortages were still being reported in two municipalities in the Rayalaseema region, where remedial measures were underway. The officials also reported that groundwater levels in Visakhapatnam city had improved following recharge and that the drinking water situation was being addressed.

Modi calls up Trump, discusses trade & energy

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"We also exchanged views on regional and international issues, including ongoing efforts to advance global peace and security," he added. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch as both sides continue to deepen the strategic partnership.

This comes days after Trump signed into law a sweeping sanctions package targeting Russia and Iran and giving his administration expanded powers to penalise countries that continue buying Russian oil and gas, including India.

Zero vision, 100% frustration in Oppn, poohpoohs BJP

NEW DELHI: The BJP said the outcomes of the INDIA bloc meeting on Wednesday were "zero vision, 100 per cent frustration, and an advance excuse for poll defeats", with the leaders of the Opposition grouping rejecting Rahul Gandhi's leadership.

"The INDI Alliance fell apart even before the meeting took place. The DMK did not attend the meeting. Akhilesh was busy elsewhere. The AAP had already declined,"

Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said at a press conference at the BJP headquarters. The senior BJP leader further pointed out that Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said he will join the meeting virtually. "Why is this happening? It is because the INDI Alliance is simply not willing to accept Rahul Gandhi as its leader. His leadership is not being accepted; that is why they are not even showing up," Chouhan said.

India bloc declares all-out war on SIR

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At a meeting attended by leaders of as many as 19 political parties that lasted over three-and-a-half hours, it was decided that all Opposition MPs will march to the Election Commission on October 6 and the leaders would meet the President to highlight the issues related to alleged irregularities in voter list revision.

The Opposition grouping discussed the demand for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation and said they will not relent till he is ousted.

The meeting held at the Constitution Club here was attended by top party leaders - Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, besides TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar

Abdullah, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, besides left leaders.

Some Opposition leaders, including Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM chief Hemant Soren, participated in the meeting online, as they could not be physically present.

"With unanimity, everyone vowed to fight together," Kharge said while addressing a joint briefing by the bloc leaders after their meeting. The Congress chief said they have decided on the joint action plan, whereby "save democracy" marches will be taken out in all districts from October 2-8 and demonstrations will be held before the district magistrate's office, where the youth and NGOs would also be invited.

"We will hold five big rallies during October/November and date and place would be decided soon. We will tell people how the government is

snatching the rights of the people to elect their government for running the country," he said. Rahul Gandhi said INDIA bloc leaders are the "collective defenders" of the Indian Constitution and asserted that it is their "personal commitment" to ensure that those who have "destroyed" Indian democracy are punished.

TMC chief Mamata Banerjee asserted that the INDIA bloc is "very much united" and demanded immediate removal of CEC Kumar, alleging serious electoral wrongdoing and manipulation of the electoral process. "But now it has been exposed that Gyanesh Kumar is a 'daaku'. He stole people's votes... therefore, Gyanesh Kumar must resign immediately," she said. "If Gyanesh Kumar does not resign, we people will launch a massive movement from 'mitti to aasmaan' (from the ground to the sky). We will fight, we will win... we will protect democracy and the Constitution," she said.

Kharge said that on November 1 a mega rally would be organised in the national capital to highlight the issue of 'vote chori'. "Now everyone is realising that what Rahul ji was saying is correct and it is attracting attention. First Prime Minister Narendra Modi did 'notebandi' and is now doing 'votebandi', taking away the people's rights," he said.

Asked about reverting to ballots instead of EVMs, Kharge said everyone 100 per cent agreed that all elections henceforth should be held on ballot paper and that the laws framed by this "vote chori government" should be annulled.

According to sources, the rallies will be held in Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and one more city.

The Congress chief said Modi-Shah are making the Election Commission work like a "puppet", alleging that "These people are only winning elections by stealing votes.

TG's Chikitha strikes double gold on debut in Asian Games

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The 21-year-old Chikitha hails from Telangana's Sultantpur village in Peddapalli district. She was initially interested in karate but was persuaded by her father Srinivasa Rao to become an archer. Her first love with archery was when she was a child and a bow presented by her uncle on the occasion of Dasara, which made her aspire for a career in archery. She fondly recollects, "It was a Dasara holiday. My uncle who lives in Hyderabad, bought a recurve Decathlon bow. I tried it just for fun. We used to shoot just for fun at that time," she recalled.

Chikitha said that her father was the driving force behind her archery career, making significant financial sacrifices, including taking loans and selling a rice harvester, to fund her training. She said she was inspired by Saina Nehwal's Olympic success stating, "After Saina Nehwal won an Olympic medal, he decided that I should play another sport (archery, instead of karate)."

Legendary Archer Abhishek Verma trained Chikitha at the SAI Centre in Sonepat, shooting 300 arrows daily. Chikitha said: "I didn't get into archery on my own. It was my father's choice. He wanted me to play sports because he couldn't play any sport. When I was small, he used to take us to playgrounds. Every day we

used to play some games," she recalled, after what can be described as a smashing debut. In school, from 6th grade till 8th grade, I was doing karate. I got my first black belt also," said Chikitha.

Once he realised that Chikitha has potential, her father Srinivasa Rao took a loan to buy her upgraded equipment that could shape her better. She started pursuing archery more seriously in 2018 and was picked in the junior camp in 2021. Rao eventually also sold the family's rice harvester to fund her archery training. He took her to a nearby town to train with a local archer and built makeshift targets at home.

After losing Rs 1.5 lakh in a fraud while trying to buy her first compound bow, he took another Rs 3.5 lakh loan for new equipment. Her performances later earned her a government-funded bow from the district Collector.

On the question of handling pressure, Chikitha said, the golds this morning had also eased the pressure that she had built on herself in the past few months.

"Personally, I have been struggling this past year, facing some difficulties. After becoming World champion last year, it became very difficult for me to perform at the same level. I was struggling with my shooting aim. I worked really hard and I got back to the first team," she said.

Will complete 36 irrigation projects in 3 years: Naidu

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He said the government planned to complete the Polavaram project by next year and make water available through gravity flow. Water conserved in the Krishna Delta would subsequently be diverted towards Rayalaseema, he said.

Naidu said the previous government had obstructed the Pattiseema project, while his government had completed it and so far transported 490 tmc of water through the project. He said inadequate

inflows into the Krishna, Srisailem reservoir, and Prakasam Barrage, which he attributed to the impact of El Nino, had made the project particularly important this year. He said water brought through Pattiseema was supplied to the delta region, helping prevent a drinking water shortage in Vijayawada.

Naidu said the NDA coalition government had already conferred land rights on 28,000 families in Visakhapatnam and 5,800 families in Mangalagiri. He said the decision to grant ownership rights was

taken after considering the difficulties faced by poor families who had been living on the lands for decades. He congratulated public representatives and officials involved in the distribution of pattas to beneficiaries in NTR and Krishna districts.

The land covered by the pattas in Vijayawada alone extends over 707 acres and is valued at Rs 28,112 crore, with the value of individual plots ranging from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 2 crore, according to the government.

The government had

completed 5.5 lakh houses and was preparing to provide another 5.5 lakh houses during the coming year, he said.

Naidu criticised the previous government over its land policies between 2019 and 2024, alleging that they resulted in property disputes within families. He objected to the printing of political leaders' images on pattadar passbooks and alleged that the Land Titling Act had created difficulties for landowners.

The Chief Minister said about Rs 800 crore

was spent on printing images even on survey stones and argued that the money could instead have been used for welfare programmes.

The coalition government's priorities, he said, were welfare, development, and wealth creation, Naidu said, and claimed that Rs 1.50 lakh crore had already been spent on developmental works.

Naidu also criticised the previous government over its opposition to the Amaravati capital project, alleging that letters had

been written to the World Bank to prevent funding for the project and that various protests had been organised against Amaravati.

He said the previous administration had advocated a three-capital model and described Amaravati in negative terms. He said Amaravati would nevertheless be developed as a major capital city, with 50 per cent green cover, green energy meeting its electricity requirements, and a net-zero city objective.

Job creation coalition govt's only agenda: Lokesh

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He said the sports certificates being questioned were issued during the previous YSRCP government and added that the government was prepared to abide by any court directions on the issue.

On educational reforms, Lokesh said the system needed to be redesigned for the requirements of the future, rather than those of the past. He said 16,000 teachers had been recruited and trained and that student-level data was being used to prevent dropouts.

Referring to emerging

technologies, Lokesh said quantum computing was not a hypothetical concept but a next-generation technology.

Andhra Pradesh, he said, was planning to establish a 156-qubit quantum computer in Amaravati and build an ecosystem around research, material science, and cryogenic technology.

On attracting investments, Lokesh outlined the government's "3S" approach — speed, service and stability. He said the government was seeking faster project clearances, keeping investors informed about project progress, and providing a

stable policy framework.

Lokesh also said Gen Z was demanding systemic changes irrespective of caste, religion, or region. He said governments needed to listen to young people and work with them to find solutions.

During his Kerala visit, Lokesh also met Kite Garments chairman and managing director Sabu M. Jacob in Kochi and discussed opportunities in textiles, apparel manufacturing, and industrial development. At Jacob's invitation, he visited the Kite factory and reviewed its integrated manufacturing operations.

SIR update: No more parent, grandparent details, says EC

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The EC, however, has maintained that its decisions on SIR and Form 6 were unanimously approved by all three commissioners. In a clarification issued on September 26, the poll panel said the SIR declaration attached to Form 6 had been upheld by the Supreme Court and that the forms prescribed under the 1960 Rules would be used during periods when SIR is not underway. Earlier, a new voter applying for inclusion in the electoral roll was not required to provide details of their parents or grandparents from previous

SIR rolls. That additional requirement was introduced for Form 6 applications during the SIR exercise. Applicants were required to provide information to establish their linkage with earlier electoral rolls, including details concerning their parents or grandparents. With SIR completed in a state, the additional declaration will no longer be required for new voter applications there.

The EC has said SIR has already been completed in 20 states and Union Territories, including Bihar and West Bengal. Young and first-time voters, as well as people whose names were

left out during SIR or subsequently, can apply for inclusion through continuous updation. The requirement will continue in states and Union Territories where the SIR exercise is still underway. New voters applying for enrolment in these areas will have to submit Form 6 along with the SIR-related declaration, including the details required to establish their linkage with the previous electoral roll.

This creates a distinction between voter enrolment during an ongoing SIR exercise and enrolment during the period of continuous updation after SIR has been completed.