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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in New Delhi on Saturday

PM gets WH invite as he talks trade & security with Rubio

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday held crucial talks on security and trade with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who in turn extended him an invitation to the White House on behalf of Donald Trump. The three-day visit to India by Rubio comes at a time when ties between India and the US under Trump 2.0 have continued to fluctuate amid trade and energy tensions, which have only deepened amid the Iran conflict. US envoy Sergio Gor, who joined Rubio for the meeting with PM Modi, said the talks

also spanned the Indo-Pacific, where China has sought to assert its strength. India has always been viewed by the US as a counterbalance to China in the crucial region. "We had a productive discussion on ways to deepen US-India cooperation across security, trade, and critical technologies... India is a vital partner to the United States!" Gor tweeted. He also said that PM Modi was invited to the White House in the "near future". In the meeting, Rubio also pitched for US energy products, saying it had the potential to diversify India's energy supply.

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Sanjeevani rollout across state by Aug 15: CM Naidu

Says it's predictive, preventive, and curative healthcare prog

- ▶ Launches the expanded programme in Chittoor district
- ▶ AI-based medical advice, virtual consultations, and doctor follow-up services will be introduced
- ▶ Govt plans to introduce a "family doctor" system for every household in future



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu addressing a public meeting in Yadamarri village in Chittoor district after the launch of Sanjeevani project on Saturday

PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI CHITTOOR
CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched the expanded Sanjeevani healthcare programme in Kandriga village of Yadamarri mandal in Chittoor district on Saturday, saying the initiative aims to eventually provide comprehensive healthcare services to people across the state. Describing public health as one of the government's

top priorities, Naidu said the programme is being implemented with focus on predictive, preventive, and curative healthcare under the concept of 'Health is Wealth'. Naidu recounted that Sanjeevani was launched as a pilot project in Kuppam last year and has now been extended to the entire Chittoor district. The government plans to implement it across the state before August 15. Under the programme,

every individual will be provided with digital health record. The Chief Minister said the government is making arrangements to conduct 42 types of medical tests at the village level. AI-based medical advice, virtual consultations, and doctor follow-up services will also be introduced as part of the initiative. The government plans to introduce a "family doctor" system for every household in the future.

Naidu said health insurance coverage up to Rs 2.5 lakh is being provided to every citizen. In addition, medical assistance up to Rs 25 lakh would be extended through NTR Vaidya Seva and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for those requiring advanced treatment. The Chief Minister urged people to maintain good health through proper food habits, exercise, yoga, meditation and pranayama.

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Lokesh calls for statewide push for Mahanadu success



- ▶ TDP to hold hybrid Mahanadu across 1,875 clusters during May 27-28
- ▶ Cadre asked to mobilise women, grassroots level leaders and booth teams
- ▶ Attendance would be monitored through the "My TDP" app

charges during an online review, Lokesh described Mahanadu as a reflection of the TDP's "strength, discipline and organisational spirit" and said the event should be conducted in a festive atmosphere across the state. He said this year's conclave would be organised under the theme "Stree Shakti Mahanadu," with focus on women's participation and empowerment. Lokesh said the party had originally planned to organise Mahanadu physically in Nellore, but switched to a hybrid format in view of energy conservation measures and broader national circumstances following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for austerity and fuel conservation. Lokesh said politiburo members and state-level leaders would participate physically from the party headquarters in Mangalagiri, while cadre and local leaders would join virtually from cluster-level venues across the state.

MINISTER for IT and HRD Nara Lokesh on Friday called upon Telugu Desam Party cadre to work collectively with zest to ensure the success of the party's Mahanadu, which will be conducted in a hybrid format across 1,875 clusters in Andhra Pradesh during May 27 and 28. Addressing cluster in-

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US tightens green card rules



WASHINGTON: IN a major shift in US immigration policy, the administration of President Donald Trump has announced that many foreign nationals seeking permanent residency, or green cards, may now have to leave the United States and apply from their home countries. The new policy, issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services

(USCIS) under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), marks one of the biggest changes to the green card process in more than six decades. The move has drawn criticism from immigration lawyers, aid organisations and policy analysts, who warn that it could disrupt the lives of millions of immigrants and their families.

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US & IRAN CLOSE TO EXTENDING CEASEFIRE BY 60 DAYS

TEHRAN: The ceasefire between US and Iran is likely to be extended by two more months, according to reports, citing mediators. The ceasefire has been in place since April 8 and reports of extending the truce comes amid fresh diplomatic push after mediator Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir met top Iranian leadership in Tehran over the weekend.

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Naidu targets YSRCP

Says no place for 'axe party' in democracy

- ▶ Accuses the previous govt of encouraging divisive politics
- ▶ Assures to transform Rayalaseema into a horticulture hub



LAUNCHING a blistering attack on the YSRCP, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu accused the Opposition of promoting violence, spreading misinformation and creating social divisions during its tenure in power. Addressing a public meeting at Yadamarri village in

Puthalapattu Constituency in Chittoor district, Naidu alleged that the previous regime had subjected people to fear and insecurity over the last five years. Without directly naming the YSRCP, he repeatedly referred to it as the 'axe party', saying that it has no place in democracy. The Chief Minister said the Opposition was unable to tolerate the

welfare and development programmes being implemented by the NDA coalition government. He claimed frustration within the party had increased as the government's 'Super Six' welfare promises were receiving a positive response from the public. Naidu accused the previous government of encouraging aggressive political conduct and false propaganda. "They speak lies whenever they open their mouths and pretend to be innocent before the media," he remarked, alleging that divisive campaigns were being carried out in the name of caste and religion for political gains.

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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PUSH PM DISTRIBUTES OVER 51K APPOINTMENT LETTERS

NEW DELHI
PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday distributed more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly inducted recruits at the 19th Rozgar Mela via video conferencing, as part of the government's broader push to boost employment generation. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said that since the Rozgar Mela series was initiated by PM Modi on October 22, 2023, the number of



appointments in government jobs has increased, transparency has been brought into the recruitment system, and candidates' confidence has grown. He added that the discipline of timelines and dead-

lines has also increased in the recruitment process, and the merit of candidates appointed through the Rozgar Mela has been superior. Inspired by Modi's initiative, several state governments have also started organising similar job fairs. More than 5.5 to 6 lakh jobs have been created through job fairs in states including Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura.

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Cockroach party website taken down



NEW DELHI: The official website of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has been taken down in the recent crackdown against the youth and Gen Z-led online movement after the party's official X handle was withheld.

Petro prices hiked again

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel prices were increased again on Saturday, marking the third hike in less than 10 days as global crude oil prices continue to surge amid the ongoing West Asia conflict and disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz. Petrol prices were raised by up to 87 paise per litre, while diesel prices increased by as much as 91 paise per litre across major cities. In Delhi, petrol now costs Rs 99.51 per litre, up from Rs 98.64, while diesel prices rose from Rs 91.58 to Rs 92.49 per litre. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) prices were also increased by Re 1 per kg, marking the third hike in less than 10 days. With the latest revision coming into effect immediately, CNG in Delhi will now cost Rs 81.09 per kg. Prices in Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad have risen to Rs 89.70 per kg, while Gurugram will see CNG priced at Rs 86.12 per kg.

Tulsi Gabbard quits as director of US nat'l intelligence

WASHINGTON: Tulsi Gabbard resigned as President Donald Trump's director of national intelligence on Friday, saying she needed to step away as her husband battles cancer. She is the fourth Cabinet official to depart during Trump's second term. In her resignation letter, which she posted on social media, Gabbard said she told Trump she would leave office on June 30.

CBSE's diktat on 3-language study sparks debate

- ▶ CBSE Class XII results (2026) reveal fewer than 500 students across south India opted for their state languages
- ▶ Kerala leads with 367 Malayalam candidates, while Tamil Nadu, despite its linguistic pride, saw only 52 Tamil examinees
- ▶ Students lament language switching pressures, shifting between Hindi, Tamil, and Sanskrit due to policy reversals
- ▶ Experts warn of a looming threat to south Indian languages, as globalisation and AI and pan-English language skills overshadow mother tongue learning

SRITA VEMURI HYDERABAD
IN the context of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) mandating the three-language formula from this academic year, the latest Class XII results reveal a troubling picture of language learning in south India. While the policy aims to balance national integration with regional identity, the numbers of those making choices among the languages suggest that learning of south Indian languages is being given the go-by not by others but by students themselves. The CBSE Class XII results



show that only three students wrote the Telugu exam, five the Kannada exam, and 52 the Tamil exam. Kerala stands out with 367 students opting for

Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry, and Kerala chose to take their state language in the final board exam. For context, the CBSE has made the study of three languages compulsory for students from Class ninth beginning from the first of July this year. In a statement, CBSE said that at least two of the three languages must be native Indian languages, in line with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023. It was clarified that there will be no board examination for the third

language (R3) in Class tenth and that all assessments for R3 will be entirely school-based and internal. Further, the board said, the performance of students in R3 will be duly reflected in the CBSE certificate. No student will be barred from appearing in the Class tenth Board Examinations due to R3, it added. Students themselves admit that language choice is often strategic. "I am a child of a Telugu-speaking couple who grew up in Hyderabad; so, Hindi was chosen as my second language, and Tamil became my inevitable third," shared one student.

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Focus on preventive healthcare drives Sanjeevani expansion

- Govt sanctioned Rs 162 cr for deployment of 904 mobile medical units in remote and rural areas

- Target set to conduct health screenings for 56.40 lakh people within a year

- Digital Health Profiles to store prescriptions, diagnostic reports, medical history and follow-up details



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu looking at the Sanjeevani project details in Yadamari of Chittoor district on Saturday

After recording encouraging results during the pilot phase in Kuppam, the government has started expanding the programme in a phased manner to cover rural and urban populations.

The large-scale rollout of the project across the Chittoor district formally began at Yadamari of Puthalapatu constituency in Chittoor district on Saturday. As part of the programme, the state government has sanctioned Rs 162 crore for the deployment of 904 Mobile Medical

Units in remote and rural areas. Authorities have also set a target of conducting health screenings for nearly 56.40 lakh people within the next year. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to ensure that medical test reports are delivered to beneficiaries through WhatsApp within 48 hours to improve accessibility and speed of service.

Unlike regular health screening drives, Sanjeevani has been designed as a long-term healthcare man-

agement system. The programme combines doorstep screenings, digital health records, specialist consultations and artificial intelligence-based health advisories to provide continuous healthcare monitoring, particularly for people suffering from chronic and lifestyle-related diseases.

During the pilot phase in Kuppam, more than 80,000 residents were enrolled under the programme and over 70,000 medical tests were conducted. Following the response received during the trial phase, the government decided to extend the initiative across the state.

A major feature of the programme is the creation of Digital Health Profiles for every registered person. These profiles will contain prescriptions, diagnostic reports, medical history and follow-up details in digital format. Doctors will be able to access patient records from anywhere in the state, helping reduce repeated tests and improving treatment accuracy.

The project has been developed with support from

the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Tata Consultancy Services. A centralised Digital Nerve Centre has also been established to integrate health data collected from Primary Health Centres, village clinics and hospitals.

Under the programme, 42 different medical tests will be conducted covering major health concerns including diabetes, hypertension, cardiac ailments, kidney disorders, respiratory diseases, cancers and maternal and child health issues. Health experts believe the initiative can strengthen preventive healthcare services and reduce pressure on tertiary hospitals through early detection and continuous monitoring.

Officials said screenings would be conducted through village and ward secretariats to improve access to healthcare services in both rural and urban areas. Artificial intelligence tools integrated into the system will generate health scores, issue reminders for follow-up consultations and support preventive care measures.

Op 'Clean Sweep' launched in municipalities across AP



Municipal administration and urban development minister P Narayana, Vijayawada Central MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao and others join sanitation workers in sweeping roads during the launch of 'Operation Clean Sweep' in Vijayawada on Saturday

- Four-week sanitation drive aims to make urban local bodies clean and dump yard-free

- Minister Narayana joins sanitation workers, launches awareness campaign in Vijayawada

- Govt targets waste processing, waste-to-energy expansion and cleaner urban infrastructure

B Anil Kumar Reddy, municipal commissioner H M Dhyanchandra and campaign brand ambassador Dr G Samaram.

As part of the programme, the minister joined sanitation workers in sweeping roads, painted road dividers, planted saplings and later shared breakfast with the public at an Anna canteen.

Addressing the gathering, Narayana said the state government was implementing the special Swachh Andhra campaign to make state clean and free from dump yards. He said the first week of the campaign would focus on cleaning roads and public places, while the second week would involve drain-cleaning activities with public participation. The third week would create awareness on waste segregation at households and commercial establishments, and the final week would focus on maintaining cleanliness in public toilets.

The minister said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had launched the Swachh Andhra initiative in Machilipatnam on October 2, 2024, with the objective of encouraging public participation in sanitation activities. He added that the Chief Minister has been personally reviewing the programme by visiting one district every third Saturday.

Narayana said out of nearly 153 lakh tonnes of legacy waste left unattended earlier, around 85 lakh tonnes of above-ground garbage had already been cleared in record time under the directions of the

Chief Minister. He said the remaining underground waste would also be removed by the end of June.

The minister further said the government was giving priority to waste-to-energy projects. While plants in Visakhapatnam and Guntur are already operational, six more projects are under various stages of construction and are expected to become operational within the next two years.

Swachh Andhra Corporation chairman K Pattabhiram said the government was striving to make the state a national model in sanitation through people's participation. He said steps were being taken to establish eight waste-to-energy plants and 107 waste processing centres across the State. He also noted that 2,000 electric vehicles had been deployed for door-to-door garbage collection.

Municipal administration principal secretary S Suresh Kumar said Swachh Andhra would play a key role in achieving the vision of Swarna Andhra. He appealed to citizens to treat urban cleanliness as a collective responsibility and avoid dumping waste on roads and in drains.

MLA Umamaheswara Rao called upon traders, educational institutions, self-help groups, NGOs and youth to actively participate in sanitation activities and contribute towards building a clean Andhra Pradesh.

Several NGOs, terrace garden groups, resident welfare associations, sanitation workers and citizens participated in the programme.

TDP, BJP hit back at Jagan over 'politics of violence'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA



Finance minister Payyavula Keshav and BJP MP C M Ramesh speaking to the media in Vijayawada on Saturday

FINANCE minister Payyavula Keshav and BJP MP C M Ramesh launched a sharp counterattack against YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Saturday, accusing the YS family of institutionalising faction and violence-based politics in Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing reporters along with Ramesh in Vijayawada, Keshav alleged that factional politics and the criminalisation of political culture in the state originated under the YS family. He asserted that the YS family were "the accused, not the victims," and accused Jagan of attempting to rewrite political history through emotional narratives.

The minister alleged that political intimidation, violent factionalism and misuse of influence had become entrenched in parts of Rayalaseema during the era of Y S Raja Reddy. He claimed the TDP was considering compiling and publishing incidents linked to faction violence in Pulivendula politics.

Keshav accused the YS-

- Payyavula says faction politics began under YS family

- CM Ramesh challenges Jagan on Viveka murder case narrative

RCP of weakening institutions, damaging industrial growth and disrupting projects during its tenure. He said the "axe image" associated with the YSRCP gained public traction because of the party's political conduct over the years.

BJP MP Ramesh alleged that Jagan was attempting to project himself as a victim in order to divert attention from the murder case of former minister Y S Vivekananda Reddy.

KAKINADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
"e" PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION
Proc No. 2424/2026/E2, Dated: 23.05.2026
Tenders invited through e-procurement platform for 68 works with an estimated cost value of Rs.9,63,43,608/- from the eligible contractors.
Last date and time for downloading for 08 Works: Dt. 05-06-2026 upto 10-00 AM
Last date and time for downloading for 60 Works: Dt.16-06-2026 upto 10-00 AM
Tender Inviting Authority: Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Kakinada
Mail: kkd_mplcorp@yahoo.com, Call Centre Phone: 0884-2357722
Further details can be seen at "e" procurement market place @ www.aeprocurement.gov.in
Sd/- N.V.V.Satyanarayana, Commissioner (F.A.C),
Municipal Corporation, Kakinada

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE FINANCIAL CORPORATION
(Incorporated under the State Financial Corporation Act, LXIII of 1951)
19-5-3, 2nd Floor, Beside Swalanthra Petrol Bunk, Near Kembla Cheruvu, Rajamahendravaram, RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM - 533105.
Phone : 0883-2442766, Mobile No.89493 58513, E-Mail : rajahmundry@apsfc.com

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
NOTICE FOR SALE U/s. 29 OF SFC'S ACT 1951
In exercise of powers conferred under Sec.29 of State Financial Corporations Act, 1951 and pursuant to the possession of the secured assets of the borrower(s)/ mortgagors mentioned hereunder, the public and all concerned including the concerned borrowers/mortgagors, their legal heirs/representatives, as the case may be, are hereby informed that offers are invited by the Senior Branch Manager, Rajamahendravaram Branch of, APSFC for purchase of the properties listed below on "As is where is", "As is what is", "Whatever there is" and "without recourse" basis on E-auction Dated 27.07.2026, for recovery of amount mentioned hereunder due to the aforesaid Secured Creditor from below mentioned Borrower/s in the account/s. The details of Reserve Price, EMD for the secured assets will be as follows:

| Sl. No. | Name of the Industrial concern & Location | *Amount Out Standing (as on 30.04.2026) (Rs. In Lakhs) | Description of Property | Reserve Price | | EMD | |
|---------|---|--|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| | | | | a) Total Assets (Rs. In lakhs) | b) Machinery only (Rs. In lakhs) | a) Total Assets (Rs. In lakhs) | b) Machinery only (Rs. In lakhs) |
| 1. | M/s. Livax Plastics, Rep.by Partners: 1) Smt. K. Subhasri 2) Sri K. Jagadees 3) Sri K.Radha Madhava Reddy (Late) 4) Smt. K.Seshayi Sy.Nos.64/1D, G.Mamidada (V), Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District-533344. | 1519.01 | Land:Ac.0.83 cents or 4017.20 Sq.yds in Sy.Nos.64/1D, G.Mamidada (V), Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District Building: PEB Factory Shed: 1839.48 Sq.m Machinery: Tape extrusion line, Filament/Tape winder, Air cooled compact air chiller, Dosing unit with mixer body, High Tensile black bobbins, Air Compressor, etc., Line of Activity: Manufacture of HDPE/PP Tape Rolls for Woven Sacks. | a) 324.29 b) 156.22 | a) 20.00 b) 12.02 | Bid Multiple Amount Rs 1.00 lakh | Date of Demand Notice: 05.08.2021 Date of Possession Notice: 19.07.2022 |
| 2. | M/s. Villmar Agro Polymers Pvt. Ltd Rep.by Directors : 1) Smt. K. Subhasri 2) Sri K. Jagadees 3) Sri K.Radha Madhava Reddy (Late) 4) Smt. K.Seshayi Sy.Nos.64/1C, G.Mamidada (V), Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District-533344 | 2026.85 | Land:Ac.0.47 cents or 2274.80 Sq.yds in Sy.Nos.64/1C, G.Mamidada, Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District Building: PEB Factory Shed: 1021.93 Sq.m Machinery: Circular Looms, Panel Board etc., available in the same premises. Lamination machine, Bag stitching machines etc., available at M/s Livax Plastics unit premises. Line of Activity: Manufacture of HDPE/PP Woven Sacks Bags. | a) 295.32 b) 185.02 | a) 20.00 b) 14.24 | Bid Multiple Amount Rs 1.00 lakh | Date of Demand Notice: 05.08.2021 Date of Possession Notice: 19.07.2022 |
| 3. | M/s. Silaris Rotomacs Rep.by Partners: 1) Smt. K. Subhasri 2) Sri K. Jagadees 3) Sri K.Radha Madhava Reddy (Late) 4) Smt. K.Seshayi Sy.Nos.64/1B, G.Mamidada (V), Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District-533344 | 877.92 | Land:Ac.0.42 cents or 2032.80 Sq.yds in Sy.Nos.64/1B, G.Mamidada, Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District Building: PEB Factory Shed : 715.35 Sq.m Machinery: Circular Looms, Panel Board etc., available in the same premises. Rotogravure printing machine, Drum type slitter rewinder machine, Coating & Lamination machine, Pouch making machine etc., are available at M/s Livax Plastics unit premises Line of Activity: Rotogravure Printing, Lamination and Pouch making. | a) 140.39 b) 87.79 | a) 10.80 b) 6.76 | Bid Multiple Amount Rs 1.00 lakh | Date of Demand Notice: 05.08.2021 Date of Possession Notice: 17.05.2022 |
| 4. | M/s Lenira Polymers Rep.by Partners: 1) Smt. K. Subhasri 2) Sri K. Jagadees 3) Sri K.Radha Madhava Reddy (Late) 4) Smt. K.Seshayi Sy.Nos.64/1A, G.Mamidada (V), Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District-533344 | 395.03 | Land:Ac.0.28 cents or 1355.20 Sq.yds in Sy.Nos.64/1A, G.Mamidada, Pedapudi Mandal, Kakinada District Building:PEBFactory Shed: 427.35 Sq.m Machinery: Plastic processing extrusion machine along with standard accessories etc., Line of Activity: Mfg. of Multi (Three) Layer Blow Film. | a) 73.98 b) 39.43 | a) 5.70 b) 5.00 | Bid Multiple Amount Rs 1.00 lakh | Date of Demand Notice: 05.08.2021 Date of Possession Notice: 17.05.2022 |

*With further interest and other expenses if any from 01.05.2026.
DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION: The e-auction will take place through portal <https://www.bankauctions.in> on 27.07.2026 from 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM onwards with unlimited auto extension of 5 minutes time.
Tenders will not be accepted for the sale of the machinery of any single unit individually and the tenders shall be invited and accepted only for the combined sale of machinery of all four units.
The interested bidders are advised to go through the detailed Terms & Conditions of e-auction available on the Web Portals: <https://www.esfc.ap.gov.in> and <https://www.bankauctions.in> before submitting their bids and taking part in the E-auction. Every Tenderer is deemed to have gone through and accepted the Terms and Conditions for sale.
The EMD shall be payable through NEFT/RTGS in the following Account: - 002311011000751, Union Bank of India, Veerabhadrapuram Branch, (IFSC Code: UBIN0806269).
LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF TENDER FORM ALONG WITH EMD ON 24.07.2026 ON OR BEFORE 5.00 PM.
E-auction bid document containing e-auction Tender Form, Declaration, General Terms & Conditions of online auction sale are available in APSFC's website <https://www.esfc.ap.gov.in> and <https://www.bankauctions.in>. For any further details/clarifications, prospective bidders may contact Branch Manager on Mobile No.9866310581.
Station : Rajamahendravaram Sd/- Senior Branch Manager, APSFC, Rajamahendravaram Branch.
Date: 24.05.2026

Govt aiming for clean Godavari Pushkaralu, says Durgesh

- Tourism minister says the govt is committed to conducting the upcoming Godavari Pushkaralu in a completely pollution-free environment

- Dy CM Pawan Kalyan will inspect ghats from Pushkar Ghat to Kotilingala revu and review pollution-clearance measures in the Nalla channel during his Rajamahendravaram visit on May 25

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM

TOURISM, culture and cinematography minister Kandula Durgesh said the state government aims to conduct the upcoming Godavari Pushkaralu in a completely pollution-free environment.

On Saturday, the minister, along with district collector Kirti Chekuri, joint collector Y Megha Swaroop, district SP D Narasimha Kishore and municipal commissioner Rahul Meena, inspected Pushkar Ghat to review arrangements ahead of Deputy Chief Minister Konidela Pawan Kalyan's visit.



Tourism minister Kandula Durgesh reviewing arrangements for the Deputy CM's visit in Rajamahendravaram on Saturday

Speaking to the media, Durgesh said senior officials reviewed preparations for the Deputy Chief Minister's visit to Rajamahendravaram on May 25. He said Pawan Kalyan is laying special focus to pollution control in the Godavari basin and measures needed for the smooth conduct of the Pushkaralu.

The Deputy Chief Minister is scheduled to arrive in Rajamahendravaram on Sunday night. On Monday morning, he will travel by boat from Pushkar Ghat to Kotilingala revu to inspect various ghats. He will also review measures to clear pollution and clean the Nalla channel.

A review meeting on Godavari Pushkaralu arrangements will later be held at the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation office under the chairmanship of the district collector.

Durgesh said that although the Godavari is a sacred river, it is facing a serious pollution problem. He said timely action and proper planning could help ensure clean and hygienic Pushkaralu for pilgrims.

The minister directed all departments to make effective use of the coming year, work in coordination and prepare a comprehensive action plan for pollution-free Pushkaralu. Senior officials from various departments participated in the inspection.

AP fast-tracks electric bus push across 11 cities

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

ANDHRA Pradesh is stepping up efforts to strengthen electric mobility infrastructure under the Centre's PM e-Bus Sewa Scheme, with the state aiming to emerge as a model for green public transportation, according to special chief secretary to the Chief Minister K Vijayanand.

Chairing a virtual review meeting at Viduyt Soudha here on Saturday, along with APSRTC In-charge vice-chairman and managing director M T Krishna Babu, Vijayanand reviewed progress in electricity infrastructure and charging facilities being developed for electric buses under the scheme.

He said the initiative would significantly improve sustainable urban transport systems while supporting environmental protection and modernising public transport in the state. The government led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is according priority to green mobility and clean energy initiatives, he added.

Under Tender-II of the PM e-Bus Sewa Scheme, the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs has sanctioned 750 electric buses for Andhra Pradesh, covering 11 cities and 12 depots. Tirupati has also received a special al-

location of 300 electric buses under CESL Tender-III.

Of the 750 buses, 621 are 12-metre buses and 129 are 9-metre buses. They will operate in Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Kakinada, Rajamahendravaram, Kadapa, Amravati, Tirupati and Anantapur.

Vijayanand said the government is simultaneously creating Behind-the-Meter (BTM) charging infrastructure through charging depots to ensure uninterrupted bus operations. The Central Sanctioning and Steering Committee approved financial assistance of Rs 79.98 crore against a total project cost of Rs 89.99 crore for high-tension power connectivity, charging stations and electrical infrastructure works.

He said substantial progress had been made in co-ordination with APTransco and discoms, while the Centre released Rs 17.86 crore for BTM infrastructure development in Simhapuri, Gajuwaka, Kakinada, Kurnool and Anantapur regions. The tender process for low-tension infrastructure at all 12 depots has been completed and Letters of Acceptance were issued on May 5. Krishna Babu directed officials to speed up pending electrical works to ensure timely completion of the project.

Showcasing its might, SKAT to celebrate its 30th anniversary

- SKAT has carried out hundreds of aerial displays across India and abroad
- The squadron is presently commanded by Group Captain Ajay Dasarathi, an experienced Su-30 pilot
- SKAT initially flew the iconic Kiran Mk II aircraft, from which the team derived its name 'Surya Kiran'



Suryakiran Aerobatic Team carrying out spectacular aerial displays with precision and operational excellence

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

THE Suryakiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT), the premier aerobatic display team of the Indian Air Force, continues to showcase its might and operational excellence ever since its formation in 1996. Based at Air Force Station Bidar, the team was raised with an aim of showcasing the professionalism, precision and operational excellence of the Indian Air Force through synchronised aerobatic displays. The squadron is presently

commanded by Group Captain Ajay Dasarathi, an experienced Su-30 pilot with a vast operational flying experience and a Qualified Flying Instructor.

Over the years, SKAT has carried out hundreds of aerial displays across India and abroad, representing the Indian Air Force at prestigious air shows, national celebrations and international aviation events. The team has performed in countries including Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, China and the

UAE, earning admiration for its precision flying and vibrant formations. Initially, SKAT flew the iconic Kiran Mk II aircraft, from which the team derived its name 'Surya Kiran' (sun's rays). The team performed numerous breathtaking displays across the country and became one of the most recognised symbols of the Indian Air Force.

In May 2006, the team was formally designated as 52 Squadron, 'Sharks', carrying forward the distinguished legacy of

the erstwhile MiG-21 FL squadron. In 2015, the team transitioned to the more advanced Hawk Mk-132 aircraft produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited significantly enhancing its display capabilities with modern avionics, improved performance and smoke-generation systems. The induction of the Hawk aircraft marked a new era in the team's operational and display profile.

Participation in major editions of Aero India, displays abroad in the UAE,

Thailand, Laos, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and China, the spectacular aerial display over Chennai that drew an estimated audience of nearly 1.7 million spectators along the coastline, and the first-ever aerial display over the Himalayas in 2026 form remarkable milestones in SKAT's history.

The Suryakiran Aerobatic Team is commemorating its 30th anniversary, marking three decades of its spectacular aerial displays performed across India and abroad.

Dedicated wards arranged to treat summer-related illness

- Keeping the hot days in view, special wards have been arranged in government hospitals
- These wards with air-conditioners aim to treat patients suffering from heatstroke and related illnesses



An air-conditioned ward facilitated at Pendurthi government hospital in Visakhapatnam

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

AMID rising temperatures, government hospitals across Visakhapatnam district have intensified measures to provide improved medical care to patients suffering from heatstroke. According to District Hospital Coordination Officer Narendra Singh, government hospitals have arranged dedicated air-conditioned wards for patients admitted with heatstroke symptoms and other related issues. He stated that adequate stocks of essential medicines, IV fluids and oxygen support systems have been made available to ensure timely treatment for the patients.

As part of the special measures taken, a four-bedded air-conditioned ward has been established at the Aganampudi hospital, while

two-bedded AC rooms have been set up at the government hospitals in Bheemuniapatnam, Pendurthi and Gopalapatnam. The new wards have been set up to provide treatment to patients in a comfortable environment and help them recover quickly from heat-related illnesses.

The District Hospital Coordination Officer stated that medical staff were directed to provide immediate attention and emergency treatment to heatstroke victims. Also, ORS corners and drinking water facilities have been arranged in hospital premises for the benefit of both patients and attendants. He appealed to the public not to ignore signs of heatstroke and advised to seek medical

intervention if signs such as dizziness, dehydration or high body temperature are spotted.

The District Coordinator of Hospital Services (DCHS) also appealed to charitable organisations and service-minded individuals to extend support to the hospitals by contributing to buttermilk distribution programmes and donating air conditioners, coolers and mini hot-and-cold water dispensers for improved patient care during the summer season. As part of the summer action plan, a control room was set up at the Collectorate. People can seek help from the control room by dialling the numbers 0891-2590100, 0891-2590102.

190 candidates receive appointment letters at Rozgar Mela

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

AS many as 190 candidates received appointment letters as they got selected for various government departments and ministries at the 19th edition of the Rozgar Mela held in Visakhapatnam on Saturday.

Chaired by Lalit Bohra, Divisional Railway Manager, Waltair Division, the Rozgar Mela was organised by the Railways at the Indian Institute of Management Visakhapatnam in the presence of M. Chandra Shekhar, Director, IIM-V, among others.

Congratulating the newly-recruited candidates, Lalit Bohra encouraged them to uphold the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and public service. He advised them to earn respect through dedication and ethical conduct and to always treat citizens with dignity and empathy while discharging their duties.

The 190 appointees will



Divisional Railway Manager of Waltair Division Lalit Bohra addressing the gathering at the 19th edition of the Rozgar Mela in Visakhapatnam on Saturday

join various Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Financial Services, and the Department of Higher Education, among others. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

distributed over 51,000 appointment letters at the 19th National Rozgar Mela via video conferencing. The mela was conducted in 47 locations across the country. The Rozgar Mela is a flagship initiative of the Government of India aimed at accelerating employment generation and

providing meaningful career opportunities to the nation's youth. Since its launch, nearly 12 lakh appointment letters have been distributed across its 19 editions, demonstrating the Government's sustained efforts to create a skilled, empowered, and future-ready workforce.

Clean sweep!



District collector M Abhishikth Kishore and GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg wielding brooms after the 'Operation Clean Sweep' programme gets flagged off in Visakhapatnam on Saturday

APEPDCL bags 'Global Best L & D Strategy of the Year-2026 Award'

- APEPDCL secures the prestigious award for its exemplary efforts in employee training and skill development initiatives
- CMD Prudhvi Tej Immadi emphasised that employee skill development remains a key priority for the organisation
- Calls upon officials and staff to actively contribute toward the growth and progress of the company

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

ANDHRA Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (APEPDCL) bagged a prestigious national-level recognition for its exemplary efforts in employee training and skill development initiatives in the power distribution sector.

The company secured the 'Global Best Learning and Development Strategy of the Year-2026 Award' at the renowned 'The G-geef Global HR Excellence Awards-2026' ceremony organised in New Delhi.



APEPDCL official receiving the 'Global Best Learning and Development Strategy of the Year-2026 Award' in New Delhi

Director (Projects, IT & HRD) T Vanaja and CGM (HRD) D. Suman Kalyani received the award on behalf of the organisation presented by Vijay Kumar Saraswat, Permanent Member of NITI Aayog at the award presentation ceremony. APEPDCL Chairman and Managing Director Prudhvi Tej Immadi informed that the APEPDCL has been providing structured

training programmes to its employees. The CMD stated that the company has been implementing a structured training policy aimed at ensuring that each employee undergoes at least three days of professional training annually.

He noted that continuous training programmes are being conducted to enhance employee efficiency, strengthen technical exper-

tise and further improve the quality of services delivered to consumers.

The APEPDCL CMD further emphasised that employee skill development remains a key priority for the organisation and called upon officials and staff to actively contribute toward the company's growth and progress through continuous learning and showcasing professional excellence.

Three die in as unseasonal rains wreak havoc

HANS NEWS SERVICE
ANAKAPALLI

TWO labourers died after a coconut tree, uprooted by the rain, fell on them. The incident happened due to unseasonal rain at Satyavaram, Payakaraopeta mandal. Another person died at Nakkapalli mandal in Anakapalli district following rains.

Expressing concern over the incidents, Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha mentioned that the government will stand by the bereaved family members.

The Home Minister emphasised the need to consider all precautionary measures and advised people not to stand near trees and electric poles during the downpour.

Step towards school is the path to progress: Collector

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

NTR district collector Dr G Lakshminsha has said that the "Badi Pilusthondi" enrolment drive is receiving an enthusiastic response across the district, with officials and field-level staff actively creating awareness among parents to admit their children in government schools.

On Saturday, the Collector, along with District Educational Officer (DEO) L Chandrakala and officials from various departments, visited Bhimavaram and Makkapeta villages in Vatsavai mandal and participated in the "Badi Pilusthondi" programme being organised by the Education Department and Samagra Shiksha.

During the visit to Bhimavaram, the collector took part in a door-to-door awareness campaign and interacted with parents, explaining the facilities and welfare schemes available in government schools. He congratulated 26 students who shifted from private schools to government schools. Later, he visited the Zilla Parishad High School at Makkapeta and reviewed



NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshminsha interacts with parents and students during the "Badi Pilusthondi" enrolment drive in Vatsavai mandal on Saturday

the student admission process. The officials also identified out-of-school children and facilitated their enrolment.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Lakshminsha directed officials and teachers to work in coordination to ensure that every child joins school and receives quality education.

He also instructed officials to complete all pending works being taken up under the "Mana Badi Mana Bhavishyathu" programme before the reopening of schools. Special Officer DMF Vijayakumari, teachers, village elders and officials participated in the programme.

Meanwhile, NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshminsha,

along with former MLC TD Janardhan, KDCC Bank Chairman Nettem Raghuram, Jaggayyapeta MLA Sriram Rajagopal (Tataiah) and other local leaders, inaugurated a WBM metal road constructed at a cost of Rs 1.19 crore at Lingala village in Vatsavai mandal.

Speaking on the occasion, the collector said the upgraded rural road would improve connectivity between Lingala and Vatsavai and greatly benefit farmers. He stated that better rural roads help farmers transport agricultural produce to markets more quickly and at lower cost, while also contributing to village development, improved livelihoods and social transformation.

AP to launch 38 MSME parks, Rs 200 cr cluster programme

- CM Naidu to inaugurate MSME Summit 2026 in Vijayawada tomorrow
- Govt to unveil digital, export and startup initiatives targeting 1 lakh MSMEs
- Summit to bring together 1,000 entrepreneurs, industrial bodies and PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

MINISTER for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Kondapalli Srinivas on Saturday said the state government is aligning the MSME sector with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's vision of creating "an entrepreneur in every household," ahead of the MSME

Growth Summit 2026 scheduled to be held in Vijayawada on May 25.

Reviewing arrangements at Dr B R Ambedkar Kalavadi, where the summit will be inaugurated, the Minister directed officials to ensure seamless coordination for what the government considers a flagship MSME event.

The summit is expected to bring together nearly 1,000



Kondapalli Srinivas

participants, including new allottees from 175 MSME parks, entrepreneurs, PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries and industrial associations from across Andhra Pradesh.

A major announcement at the summit will be the launch of 38 MSME parks under the state's larger MSME industrial infrastructure programme.

The event will also feature the rollout of several technol-

ogy, financing and startup initiatives, including a Rs 20-crore SIDBI-backed seed fund for deep-tech startups, digital transformation assessments for one lakh MSMEs, energy and water audits for industrial clusters, and a Rs 200-crore AP Cluster Development Programme aimed at supporting around 750 MSMEs and generating more than 3,000 jobs.

Strategic partnerships are expected to be formalised with the India SME Forum, Vodafone Idea, Zoho, Amazon, Meta and the Quality Council of India to strengthen MSME digitalisation, exports, logistics support and quality certification across Andhra Pradesh.

Officials said the summit will focus heavily on export readiness, digital commerce, technology transfer and industrial sustainability, with dedicated sessions planned on global e-commerce access, digital invoice financing and MSME banking solutions.

The Chief Minister is also scheduled to inaugurate the newly developed Dr Ambedkar Kala Vedika convention centre before participating in the MSME summit proceedings. Dr Yuvaraj, secretary for industries department, Dinesh Kumar, vice-chairman and managing director of APIIC, and Viswa, CEO of AP MSME Development Corporation, attended the review meeting.

Jana Sena MLA Sridhar resigns as Assembly whip

- Railway Kodur MLA cites 'personal reasons' for stepping down
- Pawan reviews allegations involving two party MLAs

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA



File photo

JANA Sena Railway Kodur MLA Arava Sridhar on Saturday resigned from the post of Legislative Assembly whip and submitted his resignation letter to Pawan Kalyan.

According to party sources, Sridhar informed the Jana Sena chief that he was stepping down due to personal reasons.

During the meeting, the MLA also reportedly explained his position regarding recent allegations and

controversies linked to him. Sridhar has recently faced allegations from a woman, which have generated political attention.

Pawan Kalyan held a meeting with Jana Sena MLAs at the Secretariat. Chirri Balaraju also met the Deputy Chief Minister on Saturday. During the meeting, Pawan Kalyan reportedly reviewed the MLAs' per-

formance in the Polavaram constituency and sought clarification over certain issues and complaints that had reached the party leadership. Sources said Balaraju requested time to resolve some personal matters with his family members, following which Pawan Kalyan reportedly advised him to settle the issues within four weeks.

3 Army officers survive Leh chopper crash; post-accident selfie goes viral

NEW DELHI: Three Indian Army officers, including a Major General, survived after a Cheetah light helicopter crashed in the Ladakh sector near Leh on May 20, officials said.

The helicopter, a newer variant of the Cheetah equipped with a TM333B engine, met with an accident during an afternoon sortie. Army officials said the aircraft was carrying two pilots and Division Commander Major General Sachin Mehta at the time of the crash.

All three sustained injuries but are safe and stable, officials added. The two pilots were admitted to hospital with minor injuries.

Meanwhile, a selfie of Major General Mehta taken after the crash surfaced on social media and quickly went viral. The Army has ordered a Court of Inquiry to ascertain the cause of the helicopter crash. The helicopter involved in the accident was a Cheetah, a version of the ageing

Cheetah fleet that has served the Indian armed forces for decades. Derived from the French-origin Aerospatiale Alouette III design, the Cheetah helicopters became a backbone of military operations in high-altitude regions such as Ladakh, Siachen and Arunachal Pradesh because of their ability to operate in thin air and extreme weather conditions.

For years, the light helicopters have been used for reconnaissance missions, casualty evacuation, troop movement and ferrying supplies to remote forward posts inaccessible by road. However, much of the Cheetah and Chetak fleet is now decades old and has increasingly come under scrutiny over maintenance challenges and safety concerns. The armed forces have been gradually moving towards replacing them with newer indigenous platforms.

Lokesh calls for statewide push for Mahanadu success

Continued from P1

The national working president of TDP instructed cluster in-charges to ensure participation of booth in-charges, village presidents, committee members, affiliate wings, and "Kutumba Sadhikara Sarathis" in the programme.

Lokesh said attendance would be monitored through the "My TDP" app and directed organisers to ensure technical arrangements, including LED screens, audio systems, and connectivity at every cluster venue.

He urged party leaders to utilise Mahanadu as a platform to strengthen grassroots networks ahead of the upcoming elections to local bodies.

Stressing internal organisational discipline, Lokesh said the party was giving priority to active workers while allocating nominated posts and identifying committed cadre through digital monitoring systems.

MPs, MLAs, MLCs, constituency in-charges, zonal coordinators, and district-level party leaders participated in the review.

'America First' visa tool for India announced

NEW DELHI: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has introduced an 'America First' visa scheduling tool as a broader push to upgrade how American consulates operate. While on his high-profile four-day diplomatic tour to India, Rubio spoke about the visa tool that gives priority to business professionals and people whose travel directly strengthens economic and strategic links with the United States. Rubio pointed to the foundation of the US-India relationship and how it has been growing in ways that don't always make headlines. He said that the US and India have expanded commercial ties now with more than 20 billion in invest-

ments. "20 billion in investments from Indian companies in the United States," he said and also highlighted a security partnership through military exercises in the Indo-Pacific.

A slow or unpredictable consular process can get in the way of the very exchanges, such as business visits, investment trips, and partnership meetings, that are building those ties. To remove the friction, a smarter scheduling system is needed. "An orderly and a secure consular system is vital to solidifying this important relationship," Rubio said. The tool is built around a single prioritisation principle: applicants who strengthen ties with the United States get

earlier access to scheduling. In practice, that means business professionals, the people flying into close deals, sign agreements, expand operations, or represent Indian companies investing in American markets. However, Rubio also mentioned that the new facility isn't only about visa applicants.

He addressed the American men and women working at the mission directly, the consular officers, the support staff and everyone on what he called "the front lines" of advancing US national interests every day. "This facility saved Americans money because it's going to make us more efficient."

PM gets WH invite as he talks trade & security with Rubio

Continued from P1

It comes amid mounting concerns for India, which imports 80% of its crude oil needs, as the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz continues to affect energy flows.

"The US will not let Iran hold the global energy market hostage," Rubio told PM Modi. The energy pitch comes as the US, which took control of Venezuela's oil industry following the capture of former President Nicolas Maduro, appears eager to push Venezuelan crude back onto the global market. PM Modi, in his post on X, added that issues related to regional and global peace and security were also discussed, indicating that the Iran conflict was among the topics that came up.

The timing is crucial amid reports that Trump was considering relaunching strikes on Iran after talks for a peace deal, which is being mediated by Pakistan, failed to bear any fruit. "We discussed sustained progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and issues related to regional and global peace and security," PM Modi tweeted. "India and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good," he further said.

CBSE's diktat on 3-language study sparks debate

Continued from P1

Others conceded opting for Sanskrit because it is perceived as easier. At the same time, Hindi's compulsory status in later years created what one described as a *voilà* moment — suddenly finding the course effortless due to prior exposure.

This shifting landscape reflects deeper anxieties. In Tamil Nadu, the state government made Tamil compulsory in all schools in 2015-16, but CBSE institutions still offered limited options. By 2017-18, Hindi was made compulsory across all classes, forcing students to abandon their third-language choices. Such reversals leave students questioning the value of learning any particular language and highlight the ongoing power struggle over linguistic education.

The practical argument for Hindi is clear: it eases mobility across states and is widely spoken. Yet, the cultural cost is steep. One student who moved from Chennai to Hyderabad admitted that while Hindi literacy helps in daily life, "the inability to read Telugu" — his mother tongue — "creates painful gaps in my cultural identity".

With globalisation, urban migration, and the domi-

nance of programming languages and AI skills and pan-English language learning dominating the education landscape across the southern state, S Prabhakar, a Kannada teacher from Devanahalli in Bengaluru, said, "This is not an isolated case. Students increasingly view mother tongues as irrelevant to their career prospects. The danger is stark: earlier, there was a common thread that connected people across the southern states, though each has its own language, rich in heritage and literature; now, there is the risk of being "pushed into the back seat by the policymakers in education who fail to see the eventual disaster within a few generations if current trends continue."

C Vatsala, a Telugu pundit from Hyderabad, pointed out that the CBSE's three-language formula was designed to preserve diversity while promoting national unity. However, unless schools, parents, and policymakers actively incentivise learning state languages, south India's vibrant linguistic spectrum could fade into a monochrome dominated by Hindi and English. The challenge is not just educational — it is civilizational, she adds.

Naidu targets YSRCP

Continued from P1

The TDP supremo also criticised incidents involving public celebrations with animal blood and warned against attempts to create disturbances. Strict action would be taken against anyone trying to threaten public peace or provoke unrest. He further

launched a personal attack on leaders of the previous dispensation, alleging that they had failed even in maintaining family relationships and had harassed their own relatives over property disputes.

Claiming that people were now living without fear after the NDA alliance came to

power in the State, Naidu said his government had restored security for people's lives and properties. Describing himself as a servant of the people rather than a ruler, Naidu promised to continue working for the welfare of the poor.

He also touched upon economic and climatic challenges facing the State. He said changing weather pat-

terns and the impact of El Nino were expected to reduce rainfall this year. Despite the challenges, he said the government was determined to transform Rayalaseema into a horticulture hub with investments worth Rs 1 lakh crore, including Rs 40,000 crore from the government and Rs 60,000 crore in private investments.

90 killed in China coal mine blast

BEIJING: Ninety miners were killed in a gas explosion in a coal mine in north China, official media in Beijing reported on Saturday, adding that 201 miners have so far been rescued. The gas explosion occurred at the Liushenyu coal mine on Friday May 22, 2026.

US & Iran close to extending ceasefire by 60 days

Continued from P1

Earlier Asim Munir in Iran met with the top leadership, including President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and top Iranian negotiator and parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Pakistan army in a statement on Saturday said that Field Marshal Asim Munir concluded a short but highly productive tour of Iran, Reuters reported. Meanwhile, US secretary of State Marco Rubio on Saturday hinted that Iran could agree to a peace deal as soon as today. His remarks indicating progress in diplomatic efforts to end the war come at a time when Pakistan army chief Asim Munir met top Iranian leadership in Tehran as Pakistan has positioned itself as a mediator in the peace talks between Iran and US.

Cockroach party website taken down

Continued from P1

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said on Saturday that both his personal Instagram account and the party's Instagram account had also been "hacked".

The platform surfaced last week after a row over remarks linked to Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant during a court hearing on granting "senior" status to lawyers, referring to "youngsters" as "cockroaches" and "parasites". Later, the CJI said his remarks had been misquoted and that they were aimed at people entering the legal field with "fake and bogus degrees".

What started as an online satire campaign later became a broader discussion of digital dissent and growing frustration among young people. Through memes and political commentary, the platform

has raised issues such as unemployment, examination paper leaks and education.

On Saturday, Dipke said the party's "iconic website", cockroachjantaparty.org, had been taken down as part of the latest action against the movement. The founder said 10 lakh cockroaches had registered as members through the website, while 6 lakh cockroaches had signed a petition seeking the resignation of Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged failures in the education system, particularly due to the NEET-UG 2026 'paper leak' controversy.

"Why is the government so scared of cockroaches? But this dictatorial behaviour is opening the eyes of India's youth."

Our only crime is we were demanding a better future for ourselves. But you can't

get rid of us that easily. We're working on a new home right now. Cockroaches never die," he wrote in a post on X.

As of Saturday afternoon, CJP crossed 22 million followers on Instagram. This put it well ahead of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has around 9.2 million followers on the Meta-owned platform, and the main opposition Congress party, which has around 13.4 million followers.

The party appeared after controversy broke out over CJI Surya Kant using the terms "parasites" and "cockroaches" while reprimanding a lawyer over his plea seeking senior designation.

"There are youngsters like cockroaches, who don't get any employment or have any place in profession. Some of them become media, some of them become social media,

RTI activists and other activists and they start attacking everyone," the CJI said.

The CJI later said he had been misquoted and clarified that the remarks were aimed only at people entering the legal profession using "fake and bogus degrees". The Cockroach Janta Party was formed a day after the CJI's remarks on May 15. It rapidly went viral and drew support from politicians, activists, artists and a large number of social media users across age groups.

Political leaders such as Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders Mahua Moitra and Kirti Azad, along with Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, have either interacted with or shown interest in the movement. Activists, including Prashant Bhusan and Anjali Bharadwaj, have also engaged with it.

Petro prices hiked again

Continued from P1

The latest hike follows a Rs 2 per kg increase announced on May 15 and another Re 1 per kg hike on May 17. With the latest revision, CNG prices in Delhi climbed to Rs 80.09 per kg, breaching the Rs 80-mark for the first time.

The latest hikes come as India faces mounting pressure from soaring global crude oil prices triggered by the West Asia conflict and disruptions to shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical oil transit chokepoints.

Expressing concerns over the issue, citizens, as well as the taxi drivers, raised concerns over the hike. The taxi drivers said that the increase in prices does not mean an increase in fares for them.

Delhi residents raised con-

cerns over the increase in fuel prices, with no effective increase in income. Some held the government responsible for the hike and for dismissing the public concerns.

A local said, "It's affecting the middle class. Petrol prices are increasing. It's a loss. But what can we do? People who have work will have to use a car. People are carpooling as asked. But petrol is expensive. There is no alternative. Electric cars are so expensive. People are not able to buy them."

"Our government is useless. What will you do? I drive a car. How will it affect the common man? The common man has become a beggar. The common man does not have money. Expenses are increasing. The government is responsible for this," another resident said.

US TIGHTENS GREEN CARD RULES

Continued from P1

Until now, many immigrants legally staying in the US could apply for a green card without leaving the country through a process known as "adjustment of status". Under the revised policy, USCIS officers have been instructed to decide on applications on a case-by-case basis and grant exceptions only in extraordinary circumstances.

DHS said the new approach was intended to prevent misuse of immigration loopholes. "An alien who is in the US temporarily and wants a Green Card must return to their home country to apply," the department said in a statement. The administration argues that the immigration system should function "as the law intended" rather than encouraging temporary visa holders to remain in the coun-

try while pursuing permanent residency.

According to analysts at the Cato Institute, more than one million immigrants in the US are currently waiting for green cards.

The new rules could force many applicants to leave behind jobs, homes and families while their applications are processed overseas. Immigration experts say the change could particularly hurt mixed-status families, where some members are US citizens or permanent residents while others are on temporary visas. There is also uncertainty over how pending green card applications already filed inside the US will be treated.

Immigrant aid organisations strongly criticised the move. HIAS said the policy could endanger vulnerable people, including survivors

of trafficking and abused children, by compelling them to return to countries they had fled.

Critics also warned that the policy could worsen delays, as the US immigration system is already struggling with a large backlog of visa and residency applications.

The latest measure is part of a wider tightening of immigration rules under the Trump administration. Over the past year, the administration has shortened visa durations for foreign students, media personnel and cultural exchange visitors. In January, the US State Department said it had revoked more than 1,00,000 visas during Trump's second term. The administration has also taken steps affecting refugees and immigrants with protected legal status in the United States.

PM distributes over 51K appointment letters

Continued from P1

Since its inception, around 12 lakh recruitment letters have been issued through 18 Rozgar Melas across the country. The 19th Rozgar Mela was held at 47 locations, with recruits joining various ministries including Railways, Home Affairs, Health, Financial Services and Higher Education. Addressing the gathering, PM Modi said, "I just returned from a trip to five countries two days ago. It was only a five-nation trip, but during this time, I spoke, had detailed discussions, and met with leaders of major companies from dozens of countries, and I felt one thing in common everywhere: The world is very excited about India's youth and India's technological progress."

Sanjeevani rollout across state by Aug 15: CM Naidu

Continued from P1

Promoting healthy living, he referred to the concept of 'Food as medicine, Kitchen as Pharmacy'. Naidu also spoke about developmental initiatives in Rayalaseema. He said the government is prioritising water resource projects such as Handri-Neeva, Galeru-Nagari and the Somasila-Swarnamukhi link canal to improve irrigation facilities in the region. The Chief Minister said the state government is also focusing on industries, data centres, drone cities, aerospace hubs, and food processing sectors in Rayalaseema. The region, he added, would be developed into a global horticulture hub. District Collector Sumit Kumar said the Sanjee-

vani Digital Nerve Centre call centre has so far conducted health follow-up services for around 73,000 people. The programme would be implemented more effectively with coordination among various departments to ensure continuous medical monitoring for every family.

Puthalapattu MLA K Murali Mohan and MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao said the programme would improve access to modern healthcare services in rural areas and help identify health problems at an early stage through digital records and AI-based systems. Tata Group CEO Girish Krishnamurthy said the Tata Digital Nerve Centre would help extend healthcare services even to remote areas.

CM reviews law and order situation

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday said a stable law and order environment was essential for the State's economic growth. Majhi made the remarks during a high-level review meeting on the prevailing law-and-order situation and the pace of industrialisation in the State. The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hemant Sharma, DGP Y B Khurania and the Chief Minister's advisor Prakash Mishra.

The meeting happened amid the row over the alleged assault on BJD MLA Ranendra Pratap Swain in the Athargarh area of Cuttack on Friday. Earlier in the day, Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik wrote to the Chief Minister, alleging that "BJP-backed goons" had blocked and physically prevented Swain from carrying out his public duties. Describing the episode as evidence of a "rapidly deteriorating law-and-order situation"



in the State, Patnaik said the incident represented a direct attack on democratic institutions.

At the meeting, Majhi reviewed the implementation of directives issued on May 14, when he had instructed the DGP to instil fear among criminals, restore public confidence and intensify action against organised crime, officials said.

The Chief Minister

was informed that police action against criminals had intensified, citing two recent police encounters in Sambalpur and Berhampur in which accused persons were injured.

According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), Majhi directed the police to function with greater efficiency, alertness and professionalism to ensure public safety and maintain people's confidence in the

system.

The meeting, held ahead of the BJP government's second anniversary on June 12, also reviewed progress on election promises, implementation of welfare schemes, industrial growth, employment generation and future development plans for the State.

The Chief Minister also discussed the pace of industrialisation with Sharma, who additionally oversees the Industries

department.

The high-level meeting targeted a dual approach of maintaining public safety while solidifying investor confidence as his administration nears its two-year milestone. The DGP reported a measurable increase in the State's conviction rates, attributing the rise to improved evidence collection frameworks updated under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Heatwave to continue till May 28

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE IMD on Saturday forecast continuation of heatwave conditions across Odisha till May 28, with five places in the western region of the State recording temperatures of 45 degrees Celsius or above. The industrial town of Jharsuguda recorded a maximum temperature of 45.2 degrees Celsius, followed by Sambalpur, Hirakud, Titlagarh and Boudh, all logging 45 degrees Celsius.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its evening bulletin, said heatwave conditions are very likely to prevail at places over Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Bolangir districts, while warm night conditions are also very likely at places over Bolangir district. The weather office issued an orange warning (be prepared) for heatwave conditions on Sunday for these districts.

It also cautioned about heatwave conditions at places over Boudh district and hot and humid conditions over Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Puri, Khurda and Nayagarh



on Sunday. These districts were issued a yellow warning (be aware). According to the IMD, there will be no large change in maximum temperatures or daytime temperatures across the State over the next five days.

Thereafter, maximum temperatures are likely to fall by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius, the bulletin said. Meanwhile, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari advised citizens to stay indoors and avoid stepping out unless necessary. He also urged people to avoid outdoor activity during peak afternoon hours and to drink water frequently. "If you are venturing outdoors, then wear light cotton clothing and carry a water bottle and an umbrella," the minister

said. The Special Relief Commissioner's office has also put all the districts on alert and asked collectors to keep a watch on the IMD forecast and act accordingly. So far, three persons have died due to heat-related incidents in the State, the SRC office said.

Meanwhile, the Met office also said the southwest monsoon is likely to advance to some more areas in the next few days. "Conditions are favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon into some more parts of southwest and southeast Arabian Sea, Comorin Area, southwest, southeast and east-central Bay of Bengal and remaining parts of Andaman Sea during next 3-4 days," it said.

Coop official held in Rs 75 lakh fraud case

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAYAGADA

ODISHA Vigilance arrested a cooperative official for his alleged involvement in a Rs 75 lakh fraud case. The Vigilance on Thursday arrested Tarini Prasad Tripathy, Managing Director of K Singhpur Large Area Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society (LAMPCS) in Rayagada district. Tripathy is accused of embezzling LAMPCS funds amounting to Rs 75 lakh, said a Vigilance officer.

During the investigation, the department found that



the fraudulent activity took place between 2024 and 2026.

Tripathy allegedly executed the fraud by systematically manipulating official records and

defrauded the money of the LAMPCS.

The investigation also found that the misappropriated amount included savings and deposits of primary members of the co-operative society, affecting local depositors who depended on the institution for financial security.

In this connection, a case has been registered at Koraput Vigilance police station under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against the Managing Director of K Singhpur LAMPCS, the officer said.

Fake NIA officer caught for fabricating case

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE Commissionerate Police on Friday arrested a man for allegedly impersonating an officer of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and influencing a woman to lodge a fabricated complaint. The accused, identified as Ashish Reddy (45) of Lajpat Nagar in New Delhi, was found to be posing as an NIA officer and interfering in the investigation of a case registered at Kharavel Nagar police station earlier on the basis of a woman's complaint.

According to police, the woman had recently lodged a complaint alleging that she



had been sexually assaulted by unknown persons inside a vehicle near Puri-Konark Road in April. However, during the course of the investigation, police found that the accused, Reddy, who was known to the com-

plaintain, had introduced himself as a senior NIA officer and was actively influencing the investigation process.

He allegedly pressured investigating officials and played a key role in drafting

the complaint. Subsequent verification with the National Investigation Agency confirmed that Reddy was not associated with the organisation and had been impersonating an officer using fake credentials.

During further inquiry, the complainant also admitted that the earlier allegations of abduction and sexual assault by unknown persons were fabricated. She told police that the complaint had been drafted under Reddy's influence following a personal dispute with her friend.

Police also found that Reddy had established contact with the woman on the pretext of helping her and

later sexually exploited her. He allegedly drafted a false FIR, which was initially submitted at Infocity police station and later transferred to Kharavel Nagar police station.

During the investigation, police seized a fake NIA identity card, a T-shirt bearing the NIA logo, a vehicle, mobile phones and other items, including weapons, from the accused.

Reddy has been booked under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Arms Act. Police said further investigation was underway to verify his antecedents and possible involvement in other cases.

Odisha bans strike in power sector

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE Odisha government on Friday invoked provisions of the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, prohibiting strikes in the power sector to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply amid rising complaints of outages, officials said. The order, aimed at maintaining seamless generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, will cover utilities such as GRIDCO, OPTCL, OHPC, OPGC and DISCOMs, and remain in force for six months from June 21, according to an official notification.

Officials said the ESMA, 1988, was imposed to prevent strikes and related protests in power generation, transmission and distribution establishments across the State. The notification stated that the government was "satisfied that in the interest of the public, it is necessary to prohibit strikes" to maintain industrial peace and optimise power generation, transmission and distribution. Sources in the power sector said the move came amid reports of protests by a section of temporary and casual workers over issues related to layoffs, wages, out-

sourcing and service conditions.

There have also been reports of power outages from Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bolangir and other parts of the State. By bringing electricity services under the ambit of essential services, the government has legally barred employees from resorting to strikes or protests that could disrupt operations, officials said. Odisha's peak-hour power demand this summer has risen to around 6,600 MW, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo said in a post on X: "Electricity is the backbone of Odisha's progress - fueling industries, empowering agriculture, and illuminating every household.

"Recognising its critical importance, the government of Odisha has invoked the Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1988, to prohibit strikes in the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity across GRIDCO, OPTCL, OHPC, OPGC, and all DISCOMs." This directive ensures uninterrupted functioning of essential power infrastructure during the severe heat wave conditions gripping the State, he said.

Two more arrested in Rs 9.6 cr bank fraud case

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Odisha Police have arrested two more persons for their alleged involvement in a Rs 9.6 crore bank fraud case, officials said on Friday. With the fresh apprehensions, a total of six persons have been arrested by the police so far.

The fresh arrests were made in Chhatisgarh capital Raipur on Thursday, and the accused, identified as Surjit Roy and Sameer Srivastav, were brought to Odisha on transit remand on Friday, an officer of the EOW said.

The arrests were made on the basis of a police case registered by the Chief Manager of the Baripada branch of a PSU bank.

According to the police, the fraudsters withdrew the amount from the bank account of the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) trust, Mayurbhanj, by producing forged



cheques, the official said. Of the illegally transferred amount, Rs 5.04 crore was blocked and Rs 13.56 lakh lying in 33 accounts have been frozen, he said.

Roy and Srivastav were found to be the proprietors/signatory authorities of Roy Associates and SS Traders, respectively. A total of Rs 45.19 lakh was transferred to the bank account of Roy's firm, while Rs 39.19 lakh was transferred to the account of Srivastav's company.

During the investigation, the EOW found that the two arrested persons are



members of a larger gang with a complex network spread across Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha, officials said. After their arrest, EOW got some important clues about the entire gang.

They have been indulging in such scams for the last four years, they said.

Earlier, four accused persons, identified as Pomesh Tembhere, Ghanshyam Ahuja, Ajmir Mondal and Brajesh Mishra, were arrested in connection with the fraud case.

University of Craiova confers honorary doctorate on Samanta

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR



THE University of Craiova, one of Romania's oldest public universities, has conferred an honorary doctorate upon Achyuta Samanta, the eminent educationist, social reformer and Founder of KIIT and KISS.

The honorary doctorate was awarded to Samanta on Saturday at a special ceremony organised by the university on its premises. This is the 73rd honorary doctorate received by him. Samanta was honoured in recognition of his remarkable contribution towards

the development of society through education. The honorary degree was presented in the presence of the President of the Senate of Craiova, Leonardo Geo Menescu, along with several academicians, students and distinguished guests.

Established in 1947, the University of Craiova is among the oldest public universities in Romania. The university senate had recommended the name of Samanta in accordance with its constitutional responsibilities under the applicable laws. During the full senate meeting held last month, the university resolved to confer

the honorary doctorate upon him. Expressing his gratitude to the authorities of the University of Craiova for the honour, Samanta said that he has been continuously working in the fields of education and social service for more than three decades. He stated that the recognition would further inspire him to continue his efforts in the areas of education and social welfare. Stating that the honour is the result of the dedication and hard work of the staff members of KIIT and KISS, Samanta dedicated the recognition to all employees of the two institutions.

Minister reviews Rath Yatra preparations

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Law Minister Pritihiviraj Harichandan on Friday stressed the need for proper coordination between officials and servitors, particularly the Daitapati priests, to ensure the smooth conduct of the upcoming annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath in Puri. The Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri is governed by the State Law department under the provisions of the Shree Jagannath Temple Act, 1955.

Harichandan chaired a high-level review meeting at the State guest house, attended by senior government officials, servitors and other stakeholders. "A discussion was held to ensure that all activities of the Rath Yatra are conducted in a coordinated, systematic, and safe manner by maintaining coordination between services and administration," the minister told reporters. He highlighted the crucial role of Daitapati servitors during the annual nine-day sojourn of the holy trinity -- Lord Balabhadra,

Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath --beginning July 16.

The minister said Daitapati servitors act as custodians of the deities when they come out of the 12th-century shrine in Puri for the annual Rath Yatra. "They take care of everything for the deities, and therefore, their punctuality in performing rituals smoothens the festival," he said.

Responding to a question, Harichandan said there was no difference among the Daitapati servitors and that they remain united in their

devotion and service to Lord Jagannath. Stating that every journey and festival of Lord Jagannath is deeply connected with the emotions of devotees, the minister said all government departments, servitors and security agencies must work in coordination to ensure smooth conduct of the festival.

During the meeting, key aspects such as timely Pahanis (processions), chariot pulling, Adapa Mandap Bije (taking idols to their aunt's house at Sri Gundicha Temple), regulated public dar-

shan, crowd management, barricading arrangements, security measures and facilities for devotees were discussed. The importance of advance dissemination of ritual schedules was also emphasised.

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee informed the meeting about the preparedness of materials required for the Rath Yatra and chariot pulling.

He said chariot wood, ropes, cloth coverings, fra-



grant resins (jhuna), sandalwood and other essential items have already been stocked in advance.

The meeting is part of broader preparations by the State government and police to ensure an incident-free

Rath Yatra, especially in the wake of last year's stampede near Gundicha Temple that claimed three lives.

Wealth without well-being: the paradox of India's elderly

TEJ SINGH KARDAM

IN India, senior citizens often find themselves in a paradoxical situation. Indians born in the pre-liberalisation era grew up in a time of scarcity and limited economic opportunities. In this situation their upbringing instilled a deep-seated habit of saving and an aversion to spending. For them, wealth accumulation was not just about financial security but also a means of pacifying their fears about their unknown future needs.

Despite possessing significant assets and savings, many lead frugal lives, unwilling to enjoy the wealth they have painstakingly accumulated. This has resulted in them 'dying rich but not living rich'. This is particularly prevalent among older generations, who, despite being financially sound, feel insecure and choose to live with a cautious, conservative approach. While the younger generation is moving away from traditional investments like real estate and gold, the elderly remain emotionally attached to these assets.

Possible reasons as to why senior citizens tend to die rich rather than living rich:

Living modestly despite wealth:

Many senior citizens in India continue to live modestly despite being financially sound. They often prioritise frugality and self-denial, driven by concerns about potential medical expenses, longevity, and the need to support their children or grandchildren. This conservative approach can lead to an unnecessarily restricted lifestyle, where seniors deny themselves the comforts and experiences they could easily afford. The fear of outliving their

The biggest gift seniors can give their children is not a house or a gold chain but life well-lived. The irony is that many senior citizens live frugally, sacrificing pleasures, only to die wealthy. They were in a way, poor in life but rich in death. There is a need for senior citizens to focus on personal well-being and happiness.

savings, or the possibility of an unexpected medical emergency wiping out their wealth, often looms large in their minds.

Emotional factors:

Senior citizens have retained their emotional attachment to traditional investments. They often see real estate and gold as tangible assets that provide a sense of security, stability and returns in the form of rent. These assets hold sentimental value and are associated with memories and legacy. The older generation grew up in an era when these investments were the primary wealth-building tools, making it harder for them to break away from this mindset. In addition to emotional attachment, they tend to invest heavily in traditional assets - real estate and gold, viewing them as symbols of security and legacy. However, this emotional attachment makes these assets illiquid, leaving them unable to generate regular income for day-to-day comfort.

Invisible burdens-Inflation, healthcare and over-giving:

Beyond emotional letdowns, there is the real challenge of rising costs. Medical inflation in India is growing faster than general inflation. A single health emergency can wipe out years

of savings. Many senior citizens also deplete their retirement funds supporting their children's education, business or weddings. While done with love, it can leave them financially vulnerable later in life.

Generational shift:

Younger generations today value mobility over inheritance, convenience over nostalgia. They are choosing apartments near work, rental flexibility and minimalist living over ancestral homes. The generational shift in financial thinking leaves many senior citizens feeling disconnected and even disappointed.

Changing trends and priorities:

The younger generation, in contrast to their elders, prefer simplicity and minimalism. The next generation are witnessing a significant shift in their investment preferences as well. They are moving away from traditional investments, which were once considered safe and reliable. Instead, they are exploring new avenues such as stock, mutual funds, income plans and even cryptocurrency. This shift can be attributed to various factors, including the desire for higher returns, ease of diversification and the influence of global investment trends.

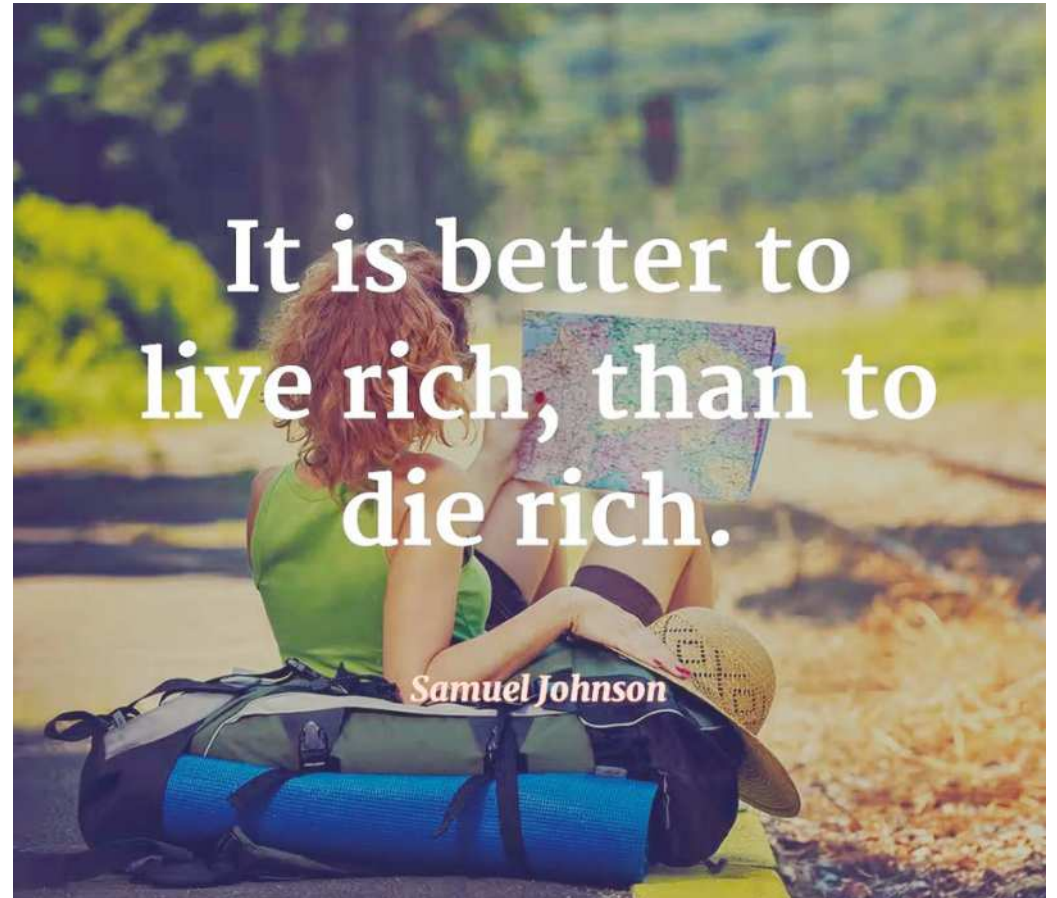
One such example of the

younger generation not being interested in traditional assets is of one senior citizen, who died aged 85. His wife had predeceased him. One son lives in London and the other in New Zealand. They have the nationality of those countries. Neither was interested in the house their father had built in his prime age.

The father had written a will before his death to give all the property equally to both his children. The sons did not have time to get all the property in their names and then sell it. Both made a power of attorney to sell the property in someone's name. Thereafter the proceeds from the sale of the property were sent to their home country.

Benefits of financial planning:

It is important that senior citizens live life to the fullest and explore the reasons behind their emotional investments. It is high time they understand the changing taste and priorities of the younger generation and the rising costs faced by senior citizens. There is a need for the senior citizens to utilise a portion of their wealth for their own comfort and happiness. Going for financial planning like having a well-structured retirement plan can ensure that they have enough funds set-aside for emergencies and long-term



care, while allocating money for travel, leisure and other personal interests. The seniors should explore annuity plans; systematic withdrawal plans from mutual funds with a steady income stream without depleting their core assets. Ultimately, Indian senior citizens need to prioritise their own well-being and happiness, breaking free from the cycle of living economically to make the next generation rich.

Self-care and setting an example:

Retirement should be about fulfilment. Senior citizens should travel, pursue hobbies, attend cultural events, or just

enjoy quiet time with friends. These are not luxuries but are essential to a rich life. They should not forget the power of community like joining clubs, senior networks for emotional support, to combat loneliness and foster a sense of belonging. By prioritising their own well-being, embracing change, and spending meaningfully, they can rewrite what ageing looks like. They can prove that it's possible to live rich - not just financially but emotionally and spiritually. The biggest gift seniors can give their children is not a house or a gold chain but life well-lived.

The irony is that many senior

citizens live frugally, sacrificing pleasures, only to die wealthy. They were in a way, poor in life but rich in death.

There is a need for senior citizens to focus on personal well-being and happiness, diversification into annuities, mutual funds, and income plans to balance financial security with comfort and enjoyment, in addition to balancing the children's education etc.

Further they should break free from the habit of extreme thrift, enjoy the fruits of their hard work, and "live rich" rather than merely "die rich".

(The writer is a retired IFS officer)

Homage to K S Gopal, the architect of sustainable development and agricultural innovation

His pioneering SWAR irrigation framework earned UNESCO laurels

VANAM JWALA
NARASIMHA RAO

DURING the 1990s, while serving as a faculty member at the Dr MCR HRD Institute, I was tasked with planning a training program on the 'Role of NGOs in Rural Development'. The singular, exceptional expert who immediately came to my mind, and whom numerous professional colleagues strongly recommended was KS Gopal. By then, he was steering the Hyderabad-based Centre for Environment Concerns (CEC).

Established in 1984 by a visionary group of activists, the CEC was dedicated to pioneering innovations, fresh ideas, and 'next practices' in the development sector. The broad areas of their operations encompassed poverty alleviation, rural development, environmental sustainability, and inclusive markets to enhance livelihoods.

Through these pillars, they aimed to regenerate natural resources in rain-fed, agriculturally backward dry land areas. The process they envisaged was driven by multi-disciplinary action research, field-level pilots, and a strategic mix of policy and practice advocacy. Against this dynamic backdrop, Gopal joined CEC as its director in 1993. Since joining, he spearheaded initiatives in participatory forest development, foreign funding research in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, later in Telangana, and local cereal-based community grain banks. His expertise included environmental hotspots, civil society advocacy, soil en-

richment, organic agriculture, chemical-free forestry pest management etc. He also worked extensively on optimal utilisation of River Godavari waters.

Though he passed away at the age of 72 years, his vibrant energy remained undiminished until about six months prior to the tragic day. Since our first meeting, we have enjoyed a lifelong friendship. He was always the life of small gatherings with like-minded friends. He thoroughly enjoyed a social drink and a smoke, generously sharing joyful, unreserved moments with his closest companions.

Gopal left an indelible mark on everyone he touched, and his profound influence will stay with his friends, including me, forever.

Upon hearing the news of his passing on May 16, I visited his residence, offered condolences to his wife, before paying my last respects at the crematorium. Our bond was deeply academic. We shared ideas. Whenever we met, whether at Dr Utlal Balaji's house, my flat, Dr AP Ranga Rao's residence (later Dr Bharat's), or Sashi's home, our discussions were invariably intense yet stimulating. They ranged broadly from politics to development, driven by Gopal's passion.

We shared an intellectual 'common ground', where Gopal was the undisputed leader. However, the 'actual physical ground' he chose once, for his groundbreaking 'System of Water for Agriculture Rejuvenation (SWAR)' irrigation experiment was a 1000-square-yard mini-farm near the Chilkoor Balaji temple. His pri-



He foresaw generic commodities transforming into branded 'Farm-to-Fork' (Farm-to-Table) products, moving directly, or with minimal steps, from a local farm to the consumer's plate. However, he warned that this transformation would be aggressively driven by big players with deep pockets, smart information and communications technology systems, and remote management tools. He remarked that whoever commands the marketplace will ultimately dictate the future of our rural economy. Gopal cautioned that a handful of mega-corporations often end up controlling the entire value chain, squeezing farmers, intermediaries, and consumers alike

mary focus was always irrigation water efficiency, which he firmly believed was structurally linked to soil and plant root health.

The core concept was

delivering water directly to the root zone with minimal waste.

As a first-of-its-kind system, SWAR provided measured moisture to the

roots, cutting water use by 50 per cent compared to standard drip irrigation for horticulture and agroforestry crops. He advocated precise moisture delivery tailored to different soils and crop cycles. When he casually mentioned this seven years ago, I offered our mini farm. Gopal self-funded the entire project, covering all installation and fertilizer expenses.

While I was working with Telangana's first Chief Minister, K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR's), as his CPRO, Gopal in July 2019 discussed with me a CEC study on the effective use of water for Telangana's prosperous agriculture. This coincided with KCR's massive re-engineering of irrigation projects to ensure state-wide water supply. Gopal's insights directly complemented KCR government's plans to establish specialized crop colonies for efficient, high-quality agricultural service delivery.

In that context, Gopal presented a distinctive proposal: the Kharif season should focus on pulses, coarse cereals, millets, and fodder, boosting productivity through quality seeds, protective irrigation, and sustainable farming practices. Conversely, during Rabi, canal-fed flood irrigation could support crops like paddy, wheat, and cotton. Additionally, he favoured agro forestry to simultaneously enhance farmer incomes and restore local ecology.

Again, in June 2020, aligning with KCR's initiatives, Gopal proposed the framework of 'Right Interventions for Regulatory Farming.'

This concept emerged against the backdrop of 24/7 quality power supply, unprecedented paddy harvests, and landmark agricultural welfare schemes like Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima. During this period, KCR suggested strategically converging MGNREGS with core farming operations to directly support landowners while simultaneously securing employment for agricultural labour.

Gopal, who contributed significantly to the evolution of MGNREGS, analysed that the Indian agricultural ecosystem was undergoing deep, structural shifts. These changes spanned procurement models, crop diversification, urban dietary demands, mechanization, and modern supply chains. In this rapidly evolving landscape, he focused on how to social-engineer and unleash human creativity toward building a more equitable rural economy. For him, the pathways and opportunities were always plenty.

He shared an insightful perspective regarding the Research and Innovation Circle Hyderabad (RICH). He envisioned RICH, designed to take lab research from Telangana's top scientific institutions to the market, as a potent force multiplier. For him, this ecosystem could empower a vast number of young people to secure meaningful livelihoods while remaining deeply connected, with their feet and hearts, to the soil.

The strategic suggestions made by Gopal, which we so deeply debated, did not remain confined to our private conversations. Beyond

bringing his visionary ideas directly to the notice of the Chief Minister, who responded with a highly positive, considerate, and accommodating approach, I also documented them from time to time, extensively in detailed articles published across mainstream platforms to ensure they reached a wider audience.

When major agricultural reforms, including the 'One Nation, One Market' framework, amendments to the Essential Commodities Act, contract farming, and public-private partnerships for storage infrastructure were proposed in July 2020 under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, Gopal observed that the sector was on the cusp of a structural shift. He noted that traditional peasantry farming was rapidly giving way to corporate agri-business.

He opined that farmers could no longer rely on Minimum Support Price (MSP) or assured government procurement. Instead, the sector would transition into an era of customized production, dynamic price discovery, and nationally integrated markets dominated by large corporations, food chains, and exporters. He foresaw generic commodities transforming into branded 'Farm-to-Fork' (Farm-to-Table) products, moving directly, or with minimal steps, from a local farm to the consumer's plate.

However, he warned that this transformation would be aggressively driven by big players with deep pockets, smart information and communications technology systems, and remote management

tools. He remarked that whoever commands the marketplace will ultimately dictate the future of our rural economy. Gopal cautioned that a handful of mega-corporations often end up controlling the entire value chain, squeezing farmers, intermediaries, and consumers alike.

He often said, 'Markets are brutal, fierce battlegrounds. Their architecture decides who thrives, who benefits, and who is ultimately subjugated or decimated.'

To illustrate this grim reality, he shared a striking real-life story he personally encountered. In the academic and corporate realms, Gopal was a highly qualified management specialist, with MBA and a Diploma in International Trade. He shared his vast practical knowledge as a faculty member at ASCI and a 'Scholar-in-Residence' at TISS, eventually delivering guest lectures at world-renowned institutions like Oxford and York.

Gopal served on the EPTRI Governing Council and NIRD Research Council. He founded the IDL Rural Development Trust, co-founded the Deccan Development Society (DDS), and promoted communal harmony in Hyderabad. His pioneering SWAR irrigation framework won international accolades, including from UNESCO, leading to his frequent participation in high-level forums convened by the World Bank, UN, UNEP and FAO.

Gopal's loss leaves a deep void. His revolutionary practical ideas nurture our soil.

It is the essence of genius to
make use of the simplest ideas
— Charles Péguy

Different Strokes

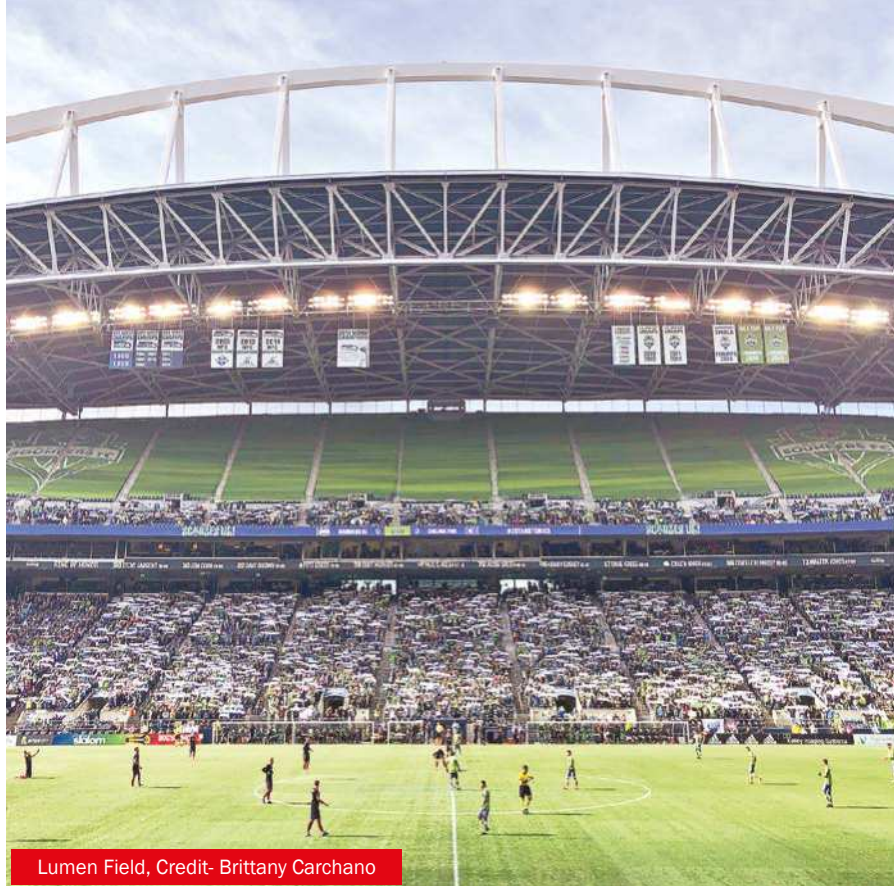
A guide to exploring Seattle during FIFA 2026: Sports, culture and sightseeing



City, Credit- David Newman



Waterfront Park Seattle-Photo by Hannah Te courtesy Friends of Waterfront Park



Lumen Field, Credit- Brittany Carchano

Seattle is set to experience a landmark year in 2026 as it becomes one of the host cities for FIFA World Cup 26™, transforming the city into a global hub of football, culture, and celebration. Known for its vibrant sports culture and walkable urban core, Seattle offers visitors a unique blend of high-energy matches, iconic landmarks, and immersive local experiences.

At the heart of the action is Lumen Field, known during events as Seattle Stadium. The venue will host six World Cup matches between June and July, including four group-stage fixtures featuring top international

teams such as the USA vs Australia on June 19 and Iran vs Egypt on June 26. The stadium sits in the city center, making it easily accessible for fans and turning the surrounding district into a festival-like atmosphere throughout the tournament.

Beyond the matches, Seattle will come alive with official fan celebration zones across locations like Seattle Center, Pacific Place, Waterfront Park, and SoDo's Victory Hall. These free public spaces will feature live match screenings, food stalls, entertainment, and community events starting June 11, creating a citywide festival of football.

Seattle's sports identity

extends well beyond the World Cup. The city is home to teams like the Seahawks (NFL), Sounders FC, and Reign FC, with Seattle Mariners representing Major League Baseball at nearby T-Mobile Park. Game days across the city are marked by lively sports bars such as Flatstick Pub, Atlantic Crossing, and The George & Dragon Pub, where fans gather to watch global and local matches in a spirited atmosphere. Between matches, visitors can explore the city's most iconic attractions. A must-visit is Pike Place Market, where fresh produce, artisan stalls, and historic charm define Seattle's food culture. Nearby, the

revitalized waterfront offers scenic views, public art, and attractions like the Seattle Great Wheel and immersive experiences along Overlook Walk.

At the cultural core of downtown lies Seattle Center, home to major landmarks including the Space Needle, the futuristic Chihuly Garden and Glass, and the interactive Museum of Pop Culture (MOPOP). Together, these sites showcase Seattle's mix of innovation, creativity, and entertainment.

For dining and nightlife, Pioneer Square offers refined options such as modern Indian cuisine and contemporary Pacific Northwest dining, along with theaters, concerts, and

performances at venues like Climate Pledge Arena and McCaw Hall.

Additional experiences include panoramic city views from Smith Tower, historical insights at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, and cultural exploration at the Wing Luke Museum in Chinatown-International District. For a quieter escape, Capitol Hill offers Volunteer Park, the historic Water Tower observation deck, and the Seattle Asian Art Museum.

With its combination of world-class football, cultural depth, and scenic urban exploration, Seattle in 2026 promises an unforgettable experience for sports fans and travellers alike.

'B Nagi Reddi: A Son's Memoir' – A heartfelt tribute to a visionary legend

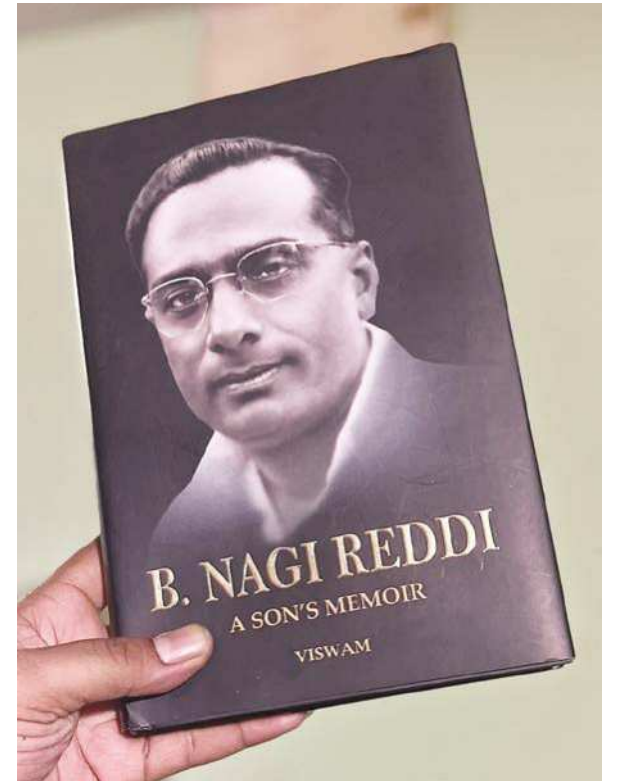
SUHAS SISTU

B Nagi Reddi: A Son's Memoir is far more than a conventional biography. Written by B. Viswanatha Reddi, popularly known as Viswam, the book offers an emotionally rich and deeply researched account of the life of legendary filmmaker, publisher, and philanthropist B. Nagi Reddi. Instead of glorifying the icon with exaggerated mythology, the memoir focuses on presenting a grounded and authentic portrait of a man who played a monumental role in shaping Indian cinema, publishing, and healthcare.

Structured across 37 chapters, the book traces Nagi Reddi's inspiring journey from a small village in Andhra Pradesh to becoming one of the most respected names in South Indian cinema. His story unfolds like one of the magical tales from Chandamama, the beloved children's magazine he co-founded alongside Chakrapani. The memoir beautifully captures how traditional values, discipline, and compassion became the foundation of his remarkable life.

One of the strongest aspects of the book is the way it expands beyond cinema. While readers get fascinating insights into the making of iconic films and the establishment of Vijaya Studios, the narrative also highlights Nagi Reddi's achievements as the founder of Vijaya Hospital and a pioneering force in Indian publishing. The book reveals how he successfully balanced creativity, entrepreneurship, and philanthropy without ever losing his humility.

The memoir also serves as an important historical document, chronicling the growth of Chennai and the South Indian film industry



during the second half of the 20th century. Through anecdotes shared by colleagues, employees, and close associates, readers gain a rare behind-the-scenes look at the evolution of filmmaking, magazine publishing, and business culture during that era.

Viswam's writing style remains crisp, factual, and emotionally sincere throughout the book. Rather than relying on dramatic embellishments, he allows real incidents and personal memories to speak for themselves. This restrained storytelling approach adds credibility and emotional depth to the narrative. The book consistently portrays Nagi Reddi as a "karma yogi" — a man who never claimed personal credit for his achievements and always acknowledged the contribution of his team members.

Another compelling

element is the insight into Viswam's own legacy. As the longtime publisher of Chandamama, he expanded the magazine into multiple languages, including Braille editions, helping generations of children connect with storytelling and culture. His contributions to publishing, social welfare, and public service further strengthen the memoir's emotional authenticity.

What makes B. Nagi Reddi: A Son's Memoir truly engaging is its ability to combine personal emotion with historical importance. It is not merely a tribute from a son to his father, but a valuable record of an extraordinary personality who left an unforgettable mark on Indian society. For readers interested in Indian cinema history, publishing, philanthropy, and inspiring real-life journeys, this memoir stands out as a must-read and deeply rewarding experience.

Magical fingers on the harmonium



Pandit Ratan Sharma with son Govind, granddaughters Jyothi and Devika

JAYWANT NAIDU

Pandit Ratan Sharma, lovingly known in music circles as the "Harmonium Master," carries a legacy that blends tradition, devotion, and generations of musical excellence. A proud mentor to his granddaughters Jyothi Sharma and Devika Sharma—both rising stars in the world of Indian music—he finds his greatest joy not in accolades, but in their achievements.

Recalling his formative years, Ratan Sharma speaks with reverence about his gurus. "My teacher in Ujjain, Guru Kaluram, was a Sarangi player who always said, 'Khane ke saath daal hona aur saangeet ke saath taal hona'—there should be daal in food and rhythm in music," he reflects. Later, his journey took him to Mumbai, where he trained under Guru Mohan Singh, a respected name in the Hindi film recording circuit. "If my fingers move on the harmonium at this breathtaking speed, it is all due to his blessings," he



Pandit Ratan Sharma on his 70 year old Harmonium

says humbly. His vintage harmonium, first played in 1955, remains his most cherished companion. With visible wear on its wooden keys, it stands as a silent witness to decades of dedication. "Yeh mera saathi hai," he says fondly—this is my partner.

For Ratan Sharma, his greatest pride is his family's musical ascent. Jyothi Sharma has already made a mark as a finalist on Suron Ka Eklavya 22 (DD National), winner of the 6th edition Khazana Ghazal Festival,

recipient of the Yuva Pratibha Singing Talent Hunt 2023 by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and finalist of the Asha Ki Asha International Talent Hunt. Her sister Devika Sharma is also emerging as a promising young artist with a bright future ahead.

The family's musical thread is further strengthened by his son Govind Sharma, a tabla player who also manages the performances and schedules of the young artistes, ensuring their talents reach wider audiences. Ratan Sharma's journey has also placed him alongside legends, having shared musical spaces with ghazal maestro Ghulam Ali and Vithal Rao. Today, he continues to dedicate his time to teaching students at his home near Kabutar Khana in Hyderabad. "It is my duty to teach the younger generation as a tribute to my gurus who gave me everything about music and life," he says, embodying the spirit of a true custodian of tradition—where every note played is a continuation of a timeless legacy.

Jasmine and Jetstreams: The calm of Chennai, the energy of Hyderabad

JYOTSNA HARISH

Here's a unique tale of two South Indian cities—Chennai and Hyderabad. Both attract talent and investments. Comparing them helps you see which city aligns with your academic, career, and lifestyle goals.

The educational landscape of Chennai is built on tradition. It features prominent institutions such as IIT Madras, Anna University, Madras Christian College, and Ethiraj College for Women. These provide a strong base in engineering, arts, and research. Over 30 deemed universities add to this strength. The city has led in medical education through CMC Vellore, AIIMS, and private universities like SRM and VIT. Most schools follow the CBSE or a state board. There is a strong focus on coaching for JEE and NEET exams.

Meanwhile, Hyderabad has quickly closed the gap with Chennai. Institutions like IIT Hyderabad, BITS Pilani Hyderabad, IIIT Hyderabad, and ISB support research and startups. Mahindra, Woxsen, and NMIMS universities add to the city's educational landscape. IB, IGCSE, and CBSE International and national board schools are common in busy areas like HiTech City, Gachibowli, and Miyapur. These schools serve many IT families.

While Chennai still leads in research output,



Chennai, Marina Beach

Hyderabad has made inroads, particularly with industry-linked programs. Turning to healthcare and culture, Chennai stands out for hospitals such as Apollo, Fortis, GH, and Stanley, making it the city with the most hospitals in India. It attracts almost 45 per cent of India's medical tourists. Low-cost health care in facilities for heart, cancer, and transplant care is boosting the healthcare sector's popularity.

The city is also known for its beaches like Marina, Akkarai, and Besant Nagar. Chennai's classical arts scene is strong, thanks to sabhas that promote Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam dance. However, the city is less welcoming to speakers of other languages than Hyderabad, and languages such as Telugu, Malayalam, Hindi, Gujarati, and Bengali are mostly found in small areas. However, Chennai faces persistent urban challenges. These include flooding during the monsoon, water shortages in summer, and ageing drainage systems. Poor garbage segregation worsens these issues. The city's waste

management is inconsistent. This is seen in dump yards at Perungudi in the south and Kodungaiyur in the north.

Compared to Chennai, the city of pearls stands out for its efficient roads and cost-effectiveness. Commuting is easier thanks to the Outer Ring Road and wide main roads. Its water supply, sourced from the Godavari-Krishna projects, is more reliable than Chennai's, although certain areas in the Old City and northern suburbs still face pressure issues. Healthcare infrastructure is expanding, with major hospitals such as AIG, Yashoda, and KIMS.

Compared to residents of many other Indian cities, Hyderabadis are generally more welcoming to speakers of other languages. One can hear Hindi, Telugu, Urdu, and English widely spoken. However, lake encroachment and traffic jams in HiTech City are becoming increasingly serious.

Looking more closely at transport, the Chennai Metro covers 54.1 km. It has two main lines, Blue and Green, and 41 stations. These connect the city to its suburbs, including



Hyderabad, Tank Bund

the airport, train stations, and business areas such as Aalandur and Koyambedu. Phase II, a 118.9-km expansion, is underway but slow, causing traffic and road issues. Metro ridership is currently about 2.6 lakh daily, which is low for a big city.

Compared to Chennai and other major Indian cities, Hyderabad Metro Phase 1 runs on a 69.2 km network. It links key residential, business, and IT areas through three elevated lines: Red, Blue, and Green. It is India's largest public-private partnership metro. The metro serves about 4.7 lakh riders daily, making it a strong public transport option. Its main drawback is that it does not connect to the airport or the Old City.

Beyond infrastructure, the good mornings of Chennai are threaded with small rituals. Office-goers pause at roadside temples to touch brass bells and offer a quick prayer; flower vendors cluster near bus stops and railway stations, exchanging jasmine garlands for a few rupees; women tuck blooms into their hair, and men buy garlands for home altars. These gestures slow the city's

pace and bind people to place.

In contrast, Hyderabad's mornings emphasise efficiency, unlike more leisurely cities. People grab quick coffees, go for runs along the Outer Ring Road, and take the fast metro or shuttle to workplaces. While temples and flower sellers are present, most commuters focus on their schedules and reaching their destinations quickly. Unlike in some other cities, ritual stops are less common.

Bringing these aspects together, Chennai offers long-standing educational institutions, a strong healthcare system, and rich cultural traditions, but faces ongoing infrastructure and environmental challenges. In comparison, Hyderabad offers a dynamic, fast-growing environment in these areas, but each city has its trade-offs.

Each city will influence your daily routines, from how you start your morning to the small, meaningful habits you keep—like putting jasmine in your hair at sunrise or giving a quick nod to a colleague on the metro as the city moves around you.

It is an encouraging performance by our Greco-Roman wrestlers to finish the opening day with five medals. The wrestlers showed great determination and discipline on the mat, and this performance reflects the steady progress Indian Greco-Roman wrestling has been making at the continental level

- Sanjay Singh, President of WFI



U23 ASIAN WRESTLING C'SHIP
Suraj, Sagar win silver as India bag 5 Greco-Roman medals

NEW DELHI: Suraj Singh and Sagar Singh led the charge with silver medals as India made an impressive start to its campaign in the U23 Asian Wrestling Championships by securing five medals in the Greco-Roman category on the opening day of the competition at the Tien Son Sport Center in Da Nang, Vietnam, on Saturday.

While Suraj Singh and Sagar Singh claimed silver medals in their respective weight categories, Kumar Sachin, Rohit, and Hardeep added to the tally with bronze medals in their respective weight categories.

Suraj Singh impressed in the 60kg category with a solid run to the final before going down 0-4 against Kazakhstan's Aibek Aitbekov in the gold medal bout to finish with silver.

In the 67kg category,



Sagar Singh also produced a commendable performance throughout the tournament. However, he suffered a 0-9 defeat by technical superiority against Uzbekistan's Aytjan Khamkhanov in the final and settled for the silver medal.

Kumar Sachin added a bronze medal in the 77kg category despite going down 3-10 against Kazakhstan's Alikhan Dursunov, while Rohit narrowly missed out after suffering a hard-fought 3-5 defeat against Uzbekistan's Bekhruz Barnoev in the 97kg division. Hardeep also fell short in the 130kg bout, going down 0-4 against Kazakhstan's Jokhar Uzarov.

4 Indians enter Asian Jr Individual Squash finals

PANZHUIHUA (CHINA)

ARYAVEER Dewan (boys' U-19), Shiven Agarwal (boys' U-17), Anika Dubey (girls' U-17), and Amarya Bajaj (boys' U-13) advanced to the finals in their respective categories at the 33rd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships in Panzhihua, China, on Saturday. Aryaveer, seeded 3/4, defeated Malaysian top seed Nickhileswar Moganandharam in four games in the semifinals and will meet either Md Alnasafan (KSA) or Jonghyeok Lee (Kor) for the crown. Aryaveer had beaten the Malaysian for the U-17 title last year.

Meanwhile, Shiven, seeded 5/8, beat fellow Indian Squash Academy trainee Lokesh Subramani in a close four-game semifinal and will take on Pakistan's 9/16 seed Nauman Khan for the U-17 title. Anika, seeded 3/4 and



bronze medallist in this age group last year, will battle with Malaysian top seed Harleem Tan for the U-17 crown after her semifinal opponent retired midway through their match.

Amarya, seeded 3/4 and bronze medallist in the boys' U-13 category last year, beat Malaysian second seed Muhammad Sharhan Mohd Saiful in four close games in the semifinals. He will take on top seed Leung Ngo San of Hong Kong in the U-13 final.

Results involving Indians (semifinals):
U-19 Boys: 3/4-Aryaveer Dewan bt 1-Nickhileswar Moganandharam (Mas) 11-

6, 11-4, 3-11, 11-6.

U-17 — Boys: 5/8-Shiven Agarwal bt 5/8-Lokesh Subramani 4-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-9. Girls: 3/4-Anika Dubey bt 2-Jinoreeka Ning Manivannan (Mas) 9-11, 3-2 ret.

U-13 —Boys: 1-Leung Ngo San (HK) bt 3/4-Abhyuday Arora 11-8, 8-11, 11-8, 8-11, 11-4; 3/4-Amarya Bajaj bt 2-Muhammad Sharhan Mohd Saiful (Mas) 11-9, 11-8, 6-11, 11-8. Girls: 1-Kareena Sashikumar (Sgp) bt 3/4-Shanaya Parasrampuria 11-5, 11-6, 13-11; 3/4-Rio Yoshino (Jpn) bt 2-Divyanshi Jain 11-8, 7-11, 11-6, 4-11, 12-10.

Super Chess Classic: Pragg draws with Vachier-Lagrave

BUCHAREST (ROMANIA): Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa missed a few winning attempts and was held to a draw by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France even as the race for the title tightened at the end of the penultimate round of the Super Chess Classic here.

On what turned out to be another excitement-filled day, the clash between overnight leaders Fabiano Caruana of United States and Vincent Keymer of Germany ended in a draw while world championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan scored his second victory on the trot over Dutchman Jorden Van Foreest Friday night.

It was not a day the two Dutch GMs would like to remember as Anish Giri went down to lowest ranked Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania.

76th Jr National Basketball C'ship
TN off to flying start; Kerala, K'taka continue winning run

PUDUCHERRY

REIGNING champions Tamil Nadu launched their campaigns on a triumphant note, securing dominant victories in both the men's and women's categories on the opening night of the 76th Junior National Basketball Championship at the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium in Puducherry.

In a late-night fixture on Friday, the Tamil Nadu men's team outlasted Delhi 54-37, powered by a stellar 16-point performance from Yadesh Kumar, well-supported by 10-point contributions each from Sumanesh V, Manish R M, and Vishal V. Delhi's resistance was led by Mohamed SainGauri and Gagin Atri, who scored 10 points apiece.

In the women's division, Tamil Nadu registered an equally emphatic 74-36 victory over Punjab. M Kaviya spearheaded the attack with 16 points, while Sumitha Devi (12), Shanjana P K (10), and Dheivithya S (10) ensured a balanced team effort to overshadow Punjab's Tishmeet Kaur, who fought hard for her 17 points.

The prestigious eight-day mega sporting event is being organised by the Pondicherry Basketball Association under the aegis of the Basketball Federation of India (BFI).

The second day of the championship witnessed high-voltage drama as powerhouse teams consolidated their positions. In Group A of the men's section, Kerala survived a nerve-wracking encounter to scrape past Uttar Pradesh 57-55 in a see-saw battle that saw multiple lead changes.

Milen Jose Mathew led the charge for Kerala with 16 points, aided by Abhishek R Pradeep (14) and Adwaid A S

(11), narrowly neutralizing a fierce 16-point performance by UP's Raj Sibgh. The quarter-wise scoreline of 17-12, 10-13, 17-12, and 13-18 reflected the razor-thin margins of the contest.

Meanwhile, in Men's Group B, Karnataka cruised to their second consecutive victory with a commanding 87-46 demolition of Rajasthan, courtesy of a scoring blitz from Samath Manur (26 points), Vijayendra Vedanthi (20 points), and Harshan Yatish (11 points). Rajasthan's offense was limited to scattered efforts by Muhammad Raza Khan (12) and Manish Kumar Maal (10).

The women's fixtures on day two delivered equally thrilling action, highlighted by a down-to-the-wire Group A clash where Haryana edged past Punjab 68-63. Kanika and Jahnavi Sheoran notched 15 points each, while Myrah Sabbar chipped in with 10 to help Haryana withstand a potent Punjab attack led by Vanshika Kaur (19), Priya (17), Tishmeet Kaur (11), and Pawanpreet Kaur (10).

In Group B matches, Uttar Pradesh displayed strong offensive depth to defeat Gujarat 85-69, riding on Neha's brilliant 22-point game, with Anshika Sharma (15) and Pragna Singh (11) playing crucial supporting roles against Gujarat's Dinal Viththani (13) and Nithya Agraal (10). In the same group, Kerala maintained their perfect start by convincingly beat Maharashtra 81-59. Kerala's multi-pronged attack featured Aritha K (17), Vaigha T (16), and Liya Maria (15), which ultimately overwhelmed Maharashtra despite a spectacular, game-high 29-point lone crusade by Aarya Phatangare.

RR play for playoff spot, MI for pride

MUMBAI: Before the start of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, neither the Mumbai Indians nor the Rajasthan Royals would have imagined that their last match of the preliminary round at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday would turn out to be so crucial not only for them but for the entire league.

Both teams have everything to play for -- RR for the playoff spot, MI for their pride, and to avoid finishing at the bottom of the pile.

The outcome of the match will decide the fourth spot in the playoffs -- if Rajasthan Royals, who are on 14 points, win the match, they will move to 16 and beyond the reach of Punjab Kings, who are on 13 and at



maximum move to 15 points at most by winning their last league match against Lucknow Super Giants.

Winning the match will also help five-time champions Mumbai Indians avoid the wooden spoon as they are currently tied with Lucknow Super Giants on eight points and have a better Net Run Rate.

So, the last day of league action in the IPL 2026 will start with a make-or-break afternoon for Rajasthan Royals, who will be getting into it with their fortunes in their hands, with the two teams engaging in the final

day game of the season.

The winner of the inaugural edition of IPL has had an up-and-down season so far and are coming into Sunday's encounter after ending a three-match losing streak with a win over bottom-placed LSG. They had started their campaign with four wins, but then lost their way, posting indifferent results due to inconsistent performances.

In contrast, the Mumbai Indians, meanwhile, have endured a season to forget. They made history by winning their season opener for the first time in 14 years, but things went downhill soon after as they lost matches in clusters.

IN ACTION TODAY
MI vs RR at 3.30 pm in Mumbai
KKR vs DC at 7.30 pm in Kolkata

TG20 unveils franchise owners for Telangana Cricket League

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

IN a major boost to cricket in Telangana, the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) on Saturday announced the founding franchise owners for the inaugural edition of TG20, the State's first franchise-based T20 cricket league. The announcement was made during the "TG20 Origins - Shape the Future" event held at ITC Kakatiya in Hyderabad.

The league will feature eight teams representing different regions of Telangana. M/S Ushodaya Enterprises Pvt Ltd secured the Hyderabad franchise with the highest bid of ₹7.5 crore, while Boorugu Infra/Pranava won the Ranga Reddy franchise for



₹7.2 crore. Other franchises include Warangal, Medak, Nalgonda, Karimnagar, Mahabubnagar and Khammam. TG20 aims to provide a structured platform for emerging cricketers from Telangana and strengthen grassroots cricket in the State. The league will feature local talent alongside established domestic players and experienced coaching staff.

The organisers said discussions are underway

with JioStar for live telecast on Star Sports Telugu and streaming on JioHotstar. Marriott Hotels will host teams and officials during the tournament. HCA Secretary M. Jeevan Reddy described TG20 as a "defining moment" for Telangana cricket, while TG20 Governing Council Chairman V. Agam Rao said the league would combine sporting excellence, entertainment and commercial growth.

132 NCC cadets stranded in Manipur airlifted to Assam

IMPHAL

IN view of the prevailing situation in Manipur, 132 NCC cadets were evacuated to Guwahati and Jorhat in Assam by the Indian Air Force (IAF) on Saturday, officials said.

A senior official said that in the true spirit of jointmanship and commitment towards the safety and welfare of youths, 132 NCC cadets who attended the NCC North Eastern Region (NER) Flying Camp in Imphal from May 11 to May 20, 2026, are undergoing emergency evacuation to Guwahati and Jorhat by the IAF amid the prevailing security situation and restrictions on road movement in Manipur.

"The evacuation has been planned by the NCC NER Directorate in consultation with the Headquarters Director General NCC and in coordination with the Headquarters Eastern Air Command," the official said.

He said that the swift and timely action ensured that the cadets safely reached their destinations in time for their examinations, bringing immense relief and happiness to their parents and family members. "The NCC cadets have also conveyed their heartfelt gratitude for the care, support and timely assistance extended to them. Special thanks have been extended to the Defence Minister, the Ministry of Defence and the Indian Air Force for their unwavering support," the official added.

Chinese-made weapons seized in Mumbai

MUMBAI

IN a major crackdown, the Anti-Extortion Cell of the Mumbai Crime Branch has arrested three alleged criminals who had reportedly arrived in the city to sell illegal foreign-made weapons, officials said on Saturday.

They added that the accused, all from outside Maharashtra, were apprehended during a late-night operation carried out on the basis of specific Intelligence inputs.

According to police officials, credible information was received indicating that certain individuals carrying weapons were on their way to Mumbai.

THREE ARMS SUPPLIERS ARRESTED



Acting swiftly on the tip-off, the Crime Branch laid a trap near a public toilet located on P D Mello Road close to St. George Hospital.

Around 10:45 P.M. on Friday, the three accused were caught red-handed

during the operation.

Police recovered three firearms, magazines and 45 live cartridges from the possession of the accused. Officials said the ammunition and weapons bore the inscription

'Made in China'. However, investigators are now trying to determine the actual source and route through which the weapons entered the country, making the origin of the Chinese-marked arms a key aspect of the ongoing probe.

The arrested accused have been identified as 24-year-old Jashanpreet Mangal Singh and 24-year-old Sukhwinder Singh, both residents of Patiala in Punjab, and Arbaz, a resident of Jhalawar in Rajasthan, officials mentioned.

They said all three have serious criminal backgrounds and multiple cases registered against them.

Investigators further

revealed that two of the accused had allegedly been absconding since 2022 in connection with a murder case and had been on the radar of law enforcement agencies for a long time. Arbaz alone is stated to have as many as 19 criminal cases registered against him.

According to preliminary investigations, the accused were allegedly planning to supply and sell the weapons to local criminals operating in Mumbai and nearby areas.

Following the arrests, a case under relevant sections of the Arms Act has been registered against them at Mumbai's M R A Marg Police Station.

Further investigation into the case is currently underway.

Miscreants vandalise Kolkata school, probe on

KOLKATA: A group of miscreants allegedly went on a rampage inside a girls' school in south Kolkata in the early hours of Saturday, prompting a police probe.

The incident took place around 4.30 a.m. at Kamala Chatterjee Girls' High School under the jurisdiction of Gariahat Police Station. Acting on a complaint, the police have initiated an investigation.

The school authorities said that one of their buildings is not their own; rather, it is a rented premise where classes for the primary and secondary sections are held.



They claimed that the act of vandalism was specifically carried out within this particular building.

The school is equipped with surveillance cameras, which captured a group of youths scaling the main gate in the early hours of Saturday morning to gain entry into the school premises. Subsequently, they proceeded to vandalise the building. School

Headmistress Debjani Das said, "When I arrived at the school in the morning today, I saw that everything had been damaged. Everything was recorded on the CCTV camera. A complaint has been filed with the police as well as the district school inspector."

According to sources in the District School Education Department, the next step will be taken after speaking to the headmistress next Monday. The vandalism inside a school in Kolkata has raised questions about the safety and security in educational institutions.

Encounter breaks out in Rajouri during search ops

JAMMU: An encounter started on Saturday between terrorists and the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

Officials said on Saturday that an encounter had started between terrorists and security forces in Dorimal forests of Rajouri in Jammu and Kashmir.

"At least 2-3 Pakistani terrorists are believed to be trapped, operation is underway", officials said. Following specific Intelligence inputs about the presence of terrorists in Dorimal forest area of Rajouri, security forces

started a cordon and search operation.

"As the security forces closed in on the hiding terrorists, they opened fire, after which an encounter started which is now going on.

"Reinforcements have been rushed in to plug all exit points of the hiding terrorists", an official said.

The two border districts of Rajouri and Poonch have witnessed a significant surge in counter-terror operations and encounters since the area has served as the primary infiltration and revival corridor for terrorists in the past.



COIMBATORE GIRL'S MURDER SHOCKS TN

CM Vijay promises justice; two accused arrested

COIMBATORE

A wave of grief and outrage swept across Tamil Nadu after the brutal abduction and murder of a 10-year-old girl in Coimbatore, triggering renewed concerns over the safety of women and children.

As the incident sent shockwaves across the state, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay expressed deep anguish over the tragedy and assured strict action against those responsible.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the Chief Minister described the incident as an "inhuman and unforgivable criminal act" that has caused immense pain and shock. He said such barbaric acts can never be tolerated in a civilised society and extended his deepest condolences to the grieving family of the child.

"I offer my heartfelt condolences to the family that is suffering the unbearable loss of their beloved daughter. The government stands with them in this difficult time," CM Vijay said.

The case took a major turn after police arrested two persons identified as Karthik (33), a native of Nagapattinam who had been residing at Pallapalayam near Coimbatore, and his associate Mohanraj in connection with the crime.

Police sources said the accused were known to the victim's family and are suspected to have abducted the child before allegedly murdering her.

Investigators revealed that Karthik sustained injuries while attempting to escape from police custody. According to officials, he suffered fractures to his leg and hand during the escape attempt.

The injured accused was later secured and brought under police custody for further investigation.

Meanwhile, Mohanraj was produced before Judicial Magistrate Arun Kumar at the Suler Judicial Magistrate Court on Saturday. The court ordered that he be remanded to judicial custody until May 27. Chief Minister Vijay stated that he had directed police authorities to carry out a thorough and time-bound investigation and take all necessary steps to ensure the immediate filing of the chargesheet. "The Tamil Nadu government will act firmly to ensure severe punishment under the law for those who commit heinous crimes against women and children. All immediate and necessary actions will be taken," CM Vijay said. Police officials said the investigation is continuing and more details are expected to emerge in the coming days.