



Jagan asks YSRCP cadre to guard votes during SIR
He said the deletion of a genuine voter during the SIR process could be difficult to reverse and stressed the need for continuous vigilance at the grassroots level.

P4

Even hardened criminals are sure to get caught!

It always seems that police failures make the headlines — their successful work rarely does. In times like these, elders say, righteousness — whether small or great — inevitably endures.

P6

Solar energy key to protect Earth: Solanki

Former IIT Bombay professor and renowned "Solar Man of India" Dr Chetan Singh Solanki has called upon citizens to move beyond being mere consumers of energy and become energy producers to address the growing challenges of climate change.

P2

Building healthy habits early

Eating a variety of vegetables every day can help improve immunity and protect children from common illnesses. Leafy greens, carrots, tomatoes, and other colorful vegetables contain nutrients that support healthy eyesight, brain development and energy levels.

P8

Simultaneously published from Hyderabad | Warangal | Tirupati | Vijayawada | Visakhapatnam | Khammam | Kurnool | Delhi

For Advertisement Pl Call: 8096967713

Follow @ / thehansindia / thehansindiaweb / thehansindia / TheHansIndiaWeb / thehansindia

Book your Copy: 97055 55551

WINDOWS



Mamata moves Kolkata HC against poll defeat in Bhabanipur

KOLKATA: Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday filed an election petition before the Calcutta High Court challenging the poll result in the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency, where she lost to Bharatiya Janata Party leader Suwendu Adhikari. Adhikari, West Bengal's first BJP Chief Minister, had defeated Banerjee by a margin of more than 15,100 votes. The BJP leader had also defeated another TMC candidate in the Nandigram constituency, which he vacated on May 15. In 2021 as well, Banerjee had filed a similar petition after she lost to Adhikari in Nandigram by a margin of 1,956 votes.

LS Speaker to hear TMC factions before taking call

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will hear the defeated TMC MPs as also the faction led by Mamata Banerjee before deciding on giving recognition to the breakaway faction even as the NCPI, the party which the rebel faction will join, has named Jyoti-prakash Chatterji as its new president. One of the leading faces of the TMC rebel faction, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, on Tuesday claimed that the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI) has agreed to accept the joining of all the dissident Lok Sabha members of her party, whose numbers are likely to go up to 22 from the present 20. The Lok Sabha Speaker will hear the defeated TMC MPs as well as the faction led by Mamata Banerjee before deciding on giving recognition to the breakaway faction, sources privy to the development said.



Naidu pitches AP as semiconductor hub

- CM invites global chipmakers to invest in state
- Says semiconductor facility planned in Rayalaseema
- Focuses on high-tech manufacturing ecosystem in state
- GlobalFoundries, NXP, ASMPT take part in roundtable

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday invited global semiconductor companies to visit Andhra Pradesh within the next 30 days to explore investment opportunities, positioning the state as an emerging destination for semiconductor manufacturing and advanced technology industries.

Addressing the Semicon Ecosystem Roundtable Conference in Singapore, Naidu said Andhra Pradesh is adopting a "Speed of Doing Business" approach focused on faster approvals, efficient governance and investor-friendly policies.

He stated that India has emerged as one of the world's most attractive investment destinations and that Andhra Pradesh offers



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the Semicon Ecosystem Roundtable Conference in Singapore on Tuesday

a conducive ecosystem for global manufacturers.

The Chief Minister revealed that a semiconductor manufacturing facility is planned in the Rayalaseema region, strengthening the state's ambitions to build a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem. He said Rayalaseema also offers significant opportunities in defence

manufacturing, aerospace, electronics, fighter aircraft components and automobile production.

Naidu said the state is committed to partnering with global companies to promote innovation, manufacturing excellence and sustainable industrial growth across the semiconductor value chain.

Continued on Page 7

WORLD CITIES SUMMIT

CM hardsells Amaravati to global investors

► Says the Greenfield capital offers global-scale investment opportunities

► Showcases Amaravati as global knowledge city, people-centric, net-zero capital

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday invited global investors to explore opportunities in Amaravati, presenting the capital city as a future-ready knowledge and innovation hub at the World Cities Summit in Singapore. Continued on Page 7

Modi-Trump meet set to spotlight G7 Summit

GLOBAL LEADERS GATHER IN FRANCE

NEW DELHI

A scheduled meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and United States President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in France is set to be one of the most closely watched diplomatic engagements of the week, as world leaders converge in the lakeside resort town of Evian amid growing geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and mounting security challenges.

Modi arrived in France to participate in the 52nd G7 Summit, where discussions are expected to range from the war in Ukraine and the evolving situation in West Asia to global trade, energy security, and the future of international governance. His anticipated talks with Trump are likely to focus on bilateral trade, tariff issues, the global oil market, regional conflicts, and broader geopolitical developments that are reshaping international relations.

Continued on Page 7



PM Narendra Modi shakes hands with US President Donald Trump before the plenary session of the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, on Tuesday

FIRST IN 16 MONTHS... THE GREAT HANDSHAKE!
Modi, Trump exchange pleasantries amid strained ties

Evian-les-Bains: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump exchanged pleasantries and held a brief conversation on Tuesday at a gathering of G7 leaders, marking their first in-person encounter in 16 months amid continuing strain in bilateral ties. Continued on Page 7

G7 allies scramble to put Ukraine back atop Trump's agenda P7



SHOULD AADHAAR USE BE RESTRICTED TO ID PROOF: SC

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Centre and state governments on a petition alleging that Aadhaar cards are being wrongly used as proof of citizenship, domicile and address.

The petition has asked the court to direct authorities to restrict the use of Aadhaar only to identity verification.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice V Mohan issued notices to the Centre, all states and Union Territories on the petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

The petition seeks directions to the Centre, state governments and the Election Commission of India to

ensure that Aadhaar is used only as proof of identity and not as proof of citizenship, domicile, address or date of birth. Section 9 of the Aadhaar Act clearly states that Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship or domicile. UIDAI's notification dated August 22, 2023, also clarified that Aadhaar is only proof of identity, not of citizenship, address, or date of birth. Aadhaar is being used as proof of age, citizenship, and residence in processes such as school admissions, property purchases, obtaining birth certificates, ration cards, and driving licenses. The petition claims that due to this, infiltrators and illegal immigrants are also obtaining other documents based on Aadhaar. Continued on Page 7



IAF to develop indigenous kamikaze one-way attack drones

NEW DELHI: IAF has initiated a project to jointly develop indigenous long-range kamikaze drones with domestic industry partners, aiming to enhance self-reliance and gain greater control over future upgrades and modifications.

Continued on Page 7

Gulf nations seek protection of maritime routes

DUBAI

THE Gulf countries, while welcoming the peace deal between the US and Iran, have called for protection of maritime routes and freedom of international navigation, including the uninterrupted flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

The UAE Foreign ministry said it affirms the importance of "prioritising dialogue and diplomacy, and adhering to international law, in a manner that reinforces regional security



and stability". It called for "full compliance" with the provisions of the agreement, ensuring an "immediate and comprehensive cessation" of hostilities, protection

of maritime routes and freedom of international navigation, including the uninterrupted flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. Continued on Page 7

1st Indian LNG tanker Disha safely crosses Hormuz

NEW DELHI: A Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) carrier, Disha, safely transited through the Strait of Hormuz. It is the first Indian LNG tanker to cross the war-hit narrow shipping lane since the war in the Middle East broke out.

Continued on Page 7

ALMOST NO RAIN CLOUDS 3 satellites paint worrying monsoon picture for India

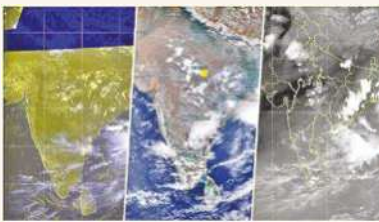
NEW DELHI

FRESH satellite imagery from European and American weather agencies has revealed an alarming picture of India's southwest monsoon, with cloud cover across large parts of the country appearing unusually sparse for mid-June, raising concerns about a prolonged rainfall deficit during a critical phase of the season.

Images captured on Tuesday by the European weather satellite Meteosat Indian Ocean Data Coverage (IODC), operated by EUMETSAT, NOAA's weather satellite, and Isro's Insat-3DS show vast stretches of central, western and peninsular India largely devoid of the dense cloud bands typically associated with an active monsoon.

The images present a striking contrast to what meteorologists would normally expect nearly two weeks after the monsoon's onset

over Kerala. Instead of widespread moisture-laden clouds advancing across the subcontinent, much of India appears dry, with only scattered patches of convection visible over parts of the Bay of Bengal and eastern regions. Weather experts say the situation reflects a significant weakening of the monsoon circulation. Heat continues to dominate large parts of



the country, while key atmospheric drivers that normally fuel the monsoon remain unusually weak. Among the biggest concerns is the absence of a strong Somali Jet, a powerful low-level wind current that transports enormous amounts of moisture from the equatorial Indian Ocean toward India during the monsoon season.

Continued on Page 7

Telegram banned till June 22 post-NEET paper leak

NEW DELHI

THE Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has blocked messaging app Telegram in India till June 22, and a direction has been issued to the platform to disable the message editing feature in India till June 30. The move is on account of the NEET-UG 2026 retest that will be held on June 21. Welcoming the action against Telegram, the NTA said the move will go a long way in helping the Agency to conduct a safe and secure exam on June 21. "Throughout the period leading up to the present action, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination

SOME FEATURES OF THE APP BLOCKED TILL JUNE 30



Centre (I4C), under the Ministry of Home Affairs, has served as the principal nodal agency coordinating the operational response to the Telegram-based fraud

and misinformation targeting NEET (UG) 2026 candidates.

Acting on inputs received continuously from NTA, from state law-enforcement agencies, including the police



forces of Bihar, Gujarat and Rajasthan, and from its own continuous monitoring of public channels and platforms, I4C has secured the prompt take-down of a substantial

number of Telegram channels, groups and bots whose names and content openly advertised their fraudulent and misleading purpose," the NTA added.

Continued on Page 7

Google removes Telegram from Play Store, Apple may follow suit

NEW DELHI: Google has removed messaging app Telegram from its Play Store, and Apple is likely to follow suit in compliance with a government order, sources aware of the development said on Tuesday. The government has ordered Google and Apple to delist the Telegram app from their app stores till June 22 to check paper leaks during the upcoming re-examination of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) on June 21.

Continued on Page 7

Motorists with loud silencers need to exercise caution from now

• The city police launches a major crackdown on those violating traffic and vehicle safety regulations

• Women, senior citizens and those suffering from cardiac issues expressed concern over the noise pollution caused by modified vehicles

• During the drive, officials seized 142 modified silencers that were found to be causing noise pollution

VASU POTNURU
VISAKHAPATNAM

FOR some motorists, drawing attention through noise is considered a trend. However, their reckless attitude not only causes inconvenience to others but also poses a risk to fellow commuters.

Following a surge of complaints from residents over noise pollution and reckless road behaviour by a section of motorists, the city police launched a major crackdown on those violating traffic and vehicle safety regulations.



Police crushing seized noisy silencers in Visakhapatnam

The special enforcement drive, carried out under the directions of City Police Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi, targets unauthorised vehicle modifications that have become increasingly common among youngsters in the city. According to police officials, several youths have been removing the company-facilitated silencers from their expensive motorcycles and replacing them with modified products that produce excessive noise and emit smoke, causing inconvenience to the public and adding to environmental pollution. Women, senior citizens and those suffering

from cardiac issues have expressed concern over the noise pollution caused by such modified vehicles and have urged the police to take strict action against it.

Responding to the complaints, traffic police teams have intensified inspections across the city. During the drive, officials seized 142 modified silencers that were found to be causing noise pollution. The altered silencers are being destroyed periodically to prevent their reuse. Police also removed 89 unauthorised high-beam lights fitted on cars and auto-rickshaws. Officials said these lights create visibility problems for oncoming mo-

torists at night, increasing the risk of road accidents.

Also, the enforcement drive has focused on the growing use of mobile phone stands on two-wheelers. Traffic authorities observed that many riders tend to divert their attention to their mobile phones while riding, resulting in risky situation not only for themselves but also to the other road users. Keeping this in view, 270 mobile stands have been removed from vehicles during recent inspections.

In another significant action, police seized 73 two-wheelers involved in illegal bike racing on Beach Road

and other parts of the city. Cases have been registered against the riders, and the Deputy Transport Commissioner (DTC), Visakhapatnam, has been requested to initiate the process for suspension of their driving licenses.

Speaking on the issue, City Police Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi said that unauthorised vehicle modifications and traffic violations pose a serious threat to public safety. He noted that children, women, elderly citizens and people suffering from heart-related ailments are particularly affected by loud vehicle noise. The Commissioner also cautioned that the use of unauthorised high-beam lights and mobile phone stands while driving could result in accidents, causing risk to both riders and road users.

The Visakhapatnam City Police appealed to motorists to comply with road safety regulations, avoid unauthorised vehicle modifications and drive responsibly in the interest of public safety and environmental protection. Further, he stressed that keeping the Visakhapatnam roads safe and secure is a shared responsibility between the people as well as the department officials

Powder, politics and ‘makeup’...



As part of the protest, TDP supporters throwing eggs at the image of former IT Minister Gudivada Amarnath in Visakhapatnam

• Political controversy over makeup intensifies in Andhra Pradesh

• Makeup has become a new standard defining women political leaders' demeanour

• Comments against Home Minister draw criticism from various quarters

RANI DEVALLA
VISAKHAPATNAM

AT a time when ‘makeup’ is no longer considered a ‘decoration’ but a daily regimen as every other person wants to look good, dress up well and make heads turn, the debate is now centred on whether it is ‘politically’ correct or incorrect? Even HR professionals in major companies are keen on recruiting presentable and good-looking candidates for a number of posts they need to fill.

At workplaces, every employee wants to look presentable. From a maid who visits homes to clean up the mess and tasked with household chores to a BPO executive who sets aside a portion of her monthly-income to buy a new set of clothes she has been eyeing for quite a while, a teacher who experiments with a new neckline for a blouse she is planning to pair

up with an old sari to an marketing executive who looks forward to visiting a saloon to groom himself well before hitting the market floor and a corporate employee who invests in branded clothes, professionals across domains are determined to turn up well at workplaces.

But is there any exception to look presentable in the political arena? Makeup, especially for women in public life, has never been a luxury. However, what astounds people now is how even a simple regimen could turn into a debatable topic among political circles. Even in the previous YSRCP government, an army of ministers presented themselves well whenever there was an occasion to celebrate, inaugurate or participate. Draping handloom saris, former minister Vidadala Rajini carries herself well during public appearances and official events.

Former Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharitha is known for her graceful sari styling. Likewise, YSRCP leader RK Roja is a well-dressed actor-politician. And so is Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi, fielded as the YSRCP MP candidate for the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha constituency in the 2024 polls. The list seems to be endless. Makeup has become an integral part of women's public life. How-

ever, in Andhra Pradesh, makeup has become a new standard defining women political leaders' demeanour.

Referring to Home Minister Vangapaludi Anitha, former IT Minister Gudivada Amarnath made remarks on her makeup. “There is a ‘makeup’ minister for us. If she roams under the sun, a kilo of makeup melts away,” he was seen commenting. Apparently, his snide remarks drew controversy and criticism from various quarters.

Condemning his comments, representatives from women associations staged various forms of protests. Terming Amarnath's derogatory remarks as highly ‘objectionable’, TDP women's wing staged a dharna at the party office, throwing eggs at the image of the former IT Minister and performed a mock funeral for his effigy.

TDP state president Palla Srinivasa Rao demanded Amarnath to withdraw his comments and tender an unconditional apology to the Home Minister. There are unpteen serious issues to address. However, instead of focusing on them and working to resolve public concerns, ‘makeup’ row followed by resulting protests, makes one wonder how even a lipstick, powder and foundation could become politically disrespectful and murky.

APEPDCL CMD carries out surprise inspection at call centre

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

AS part of providing quality services to electricity consumers, Andhra Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited (APEPDCL) Chairman and Managing Director Prudhvi Tej Immadi carried out a surprise inspection at the company's call centre. The performance of the call centre, complaints received, and the steps being taken to resolve them were reviewed on the occasion. The manner AEs dealt with complaints at the field level was examined.

For some complaints pending resolution, the concerned officials were called from the call centre and asked for an explanation. The APEPDCL CMD warned that strict action would be taken against those negligent in resolving consumer problems.

Speaking on this occasion, the CMD ordered that call centre executives must be available 24x7 and respond to every call received at the call centre number 1912. He made it clear that action would be taken



APEPDCL Chairman and Managing Director Prudhvi Tej Immadi examining call records at the company's call centre in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

against those responsible if they showed negligence in responding to calls or failed to treat consumers politely.

The CMD underlined that AEs should resolve field-level complaints in a timely manner and delay or negligence will not be tolerated. He advised that every complaint should be treated with utmost priority and resolved as quickly as possible.

Later, the CMD, accompanied by operations director TV Surya Prakash, CGM P Solman Raju, among others, observed how call centre executives

spoke to customers.

After listening to the call records of several customers, he advised them to speak more politely and patiently. He instructed them to be empathetic towards customer problems and provide accurate information. Given the current possibility of further power supply disruptions due to rains and strong winds, the CMD instructed officers and staff to be more vigilant.

He advised them to respond immediately to any complaint and expedite power supply restoration.

Summer kits distributed to traffic personnel



Visakhapatnam City Police Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi handing over summer kit to traffic police in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

IN an initiative aimed at safeguarding traffic personnel from the scorching weather, Visakhapatnam City Police Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi distributed summer protection kits to traffic police personnel in the city on Tuesday. With temperatures remaining high across the region, the Andhra Pradesh police department has taken proactive measures to ensure traffic personnel can perform their duties efficiently and safely under extreme heat conditions. The initiative was undertaken with funds sanctioned by the Director General of Police (DGP) for the welfare of traffic police personnel.

A total of 450 summer kits were distributed to traffic police staff, ranging from home guards to Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs). The kits in-

clude UV-protected goggles, a steel water bottle, sun caps, ORS packets and a face mask, all intended to help traffic personnel cope with prolonged sun exposure while on duty.

Addressing the gathering, Police Commissioner Shankhabrata Bagchi stated that each summer kit costs approximately Rs.1,500 and that a total budget of Rs.6.75 lakh had been allocated for Visakhapatnam city. He expressed confidence that the kits would not only protect personnel from heat-related health issues but also enhance their ability to provide uninterrupted and effective traffic management services to the public.

The initiative reflects the department's commitment to the welfare of its frontline personnel, who continue to discharge their duty diligently despite challenging weather conditions, the CP mentioned.

Yoga asanas demonstrated for holistic wellness

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

AS part of the state government's ongoing celebrations leading up to International Yoga Day on June 21, a large-scale yoga programme was organised at the East Point Golf Club in Mudassarlova on Tuesday. The event drew enthusiastic participation from people across various sections of society. The district administration has been conducting a series of yoga events at prominent tourist destinations in Visakhapatnam, including Rushikonda Beach and the Naval Dockyard, with the dual objective of promoting the significance of yoga and showcasing the city's tourism potential. The event held at East Point Golf Club received an overwhelming response, with participants performing various yoga asanas in a serene and scenic environment.



Spreading mats and following instructions, participants doing yoga asanas at East Point Golf Club in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

Visakhapatnam Member of Parliament M Sriharat, district collector M Abhishikh Kishore, Joint collector Gobilla Vidyadhari, Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation Commissioner Ketan Garg, Andhra Pradesh Oil and Seed Growers Corporation Chairman Gandhi Babji, senior district officials, representatives of the Hotels Association, members of East Point Golf Club, tourism officials and students participated in the programme. Addressing the

gathering, district collector M Abhishikh Kishore stated that East Point Golf Course is recognised as one of the premier golf courses in the country and noted that the Yoga Andhra programme organised at the venue aims to further promote its prominence. He said it was a matter of pride for Andhra Pradesh that lakhs of people participated in last year's International Yoga Day celebrations held under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, resulting in securing a place in the Guinness World Record. He expressed confidence that this year's yoga celebrations would also be a grand success.

The collector further announced that a massive yoga demonstration involving thousands of participants would be organised at the Beach Road on June 21 as part of International Yoga Day celebrations.

People told not to get carried away by misinformation on data centres

• Visakhapatnam MP M Sriharat clears the air on excessive water consumption for the proposed data centres

• Under the guise of environmental activism, false campaign is being carried out

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

VISAKHAPATNAM Member of Parliament M Sriharat exhorted people not to get carried away by the false campaign being circulated on various social media platforms against the establishment of the proposed data centres in Visakhapatnam.

In an interaction with the media organised at

GVMC here on Tuesday along with GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg, the MP urged people not to believe the misinformation campaigned against data centres.

Emphasising that data centres are critical to future growth in emerging cities like Visakhapatnam, the MP stated that the false campaign circulated on social media is baseless and intended to create fear among the public.

The MP said that allegations claiming data centres would further intensify water shortage and environmental degradation in the city are nothing but irresponsible and misleading. Considering the existing water resources, Sriharat explained that with the additional water expected through the



Visakhapatnam MP M Sriharat speaking at a media conference in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

Polavaram project and the proposed desalination plants, Visakhapatnam will have abundant water stretching beyond its future requirements.

Visakhapatnam region currently receives approximately 410 MLD (million litres per day) of water supply. Even after accounting for future population

growth, industrial expansion, data centres and other infrastructure requirements, the maximum projected demand is estimated at around 1,500 MLD, the MP reasoned, adding that the existing infrastructure already provides a capacity of 1,243 MLD, while the Polavaram project is expected to contribute an

additional 2,110 MLD, ensuring a comfortable surplus.

Responding to concerns regarding power consumption, Sriharat stated that such criticisms are not based on facts. “Data centres represent high-technology investments that will generate substantial employment opportunities, attract significant capital investment and strengthen the state's digital economy. With Andhra Pradesh expected to add large-scale renewable energy capacity in the coming years, there is no reason for concern regarding future power availability,” he assured.

Denying claims that data centre projects are proceeding without environmental clearances, the MP clarified that all necessary statutory approvals have

been granted following comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and added that stringent environmental safeguards will be implemented wherever required.

Addressing misconceptions surrounding the involvement of Google, Adani, and Airtel in the projects, the MP explained that Google's advanced technologies, computing capabilities and artificial intelligence services form a key part of the data centre ecosystem, while infrastructure development and operational responsibilities are being undertaken by partner organisations as part of the overall project framework.

He expressed concern that certain groups, under the guise of environmental activism, are spreading

false propaganda misleading people and attempting to obstruct investments, industrial growth and employment generation in the state.

Sriharat further said both the Central and state governments are committed to transforming Visakhapatnam into one of India's leading digital and technology hubs and projects such

as data centres will serve as significant milestones in realising that vision. He called for the public's support for the city's growth and development and urged people to rely on facts rather than misinformation and contribute to transforming Visakhapatnam as a major technology and innovation destination.

Hans India Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME
(Old Name) Robbi Vijayalakshmi
W/o Robbi Surya Prakasa Rao,
Resident of D.No 17-81-1-9/13,
Brindavan Garden Colony, Wellfare
delights Building, pendurthi,
pendurthi Mandal, Visakhapatnam
District, Andhra Pradesh,
pin-531173. have changed my
name and shall henceforth be
known as **Mavuru Vijayalakshmi**
(New Name) for all purposes.
(Th_KVM)

NOTICE:
Readers are advised to make appropriate
enquiries while responding to
advertisements in these columns.
THE HANS INDIA
(Hyderabad Media House PVT Ltd)
does not vouch for any claims made
by the advertisers. Hyderabad
Media House PVT Ltd. shall not be
held responsible/ liable for any
consequences in case such claims
are found to be false.

Crime down 14% in two years of NDA rule: Anitha

- ▶ Home minister says Rs 247 cr saved from cyber fraud
 - ▶ 8,396 missing persons traced; 56,674 ganja cases registered under anti-drug drive
 - ▶ Emergency response time cut to under 10 minutes; over 6,000 police personnel recruited
- HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

HOME minister Vangalapudi Anitha on Tuesday said the NDA coalition government has achieved significant improvements in law and order, women's safety, cybercrime prevention and anti-drug enforcement during its first two years in office, with the state's overall crime rate declining by 14.1 per cent.

Addressing a press conference at the Secretariat, Anitha said the government has strengthened policing through the use of CCTV surveillance, drones, artificial intelligence-based analytics and digital monitoring systems, enabling faster crime detection and investigation.



Home minister Vangalapudi Anitha addresses a press conference along with officials at the Secretariat on Tuesday

Highlighting women's safety initiatives, the minister said over 11.15 lakh SOS alerts have been received through the Shakti app, with authorities responding promptly to emergency calls. She said dedicated women's protection mechanisms and technology-based safety systems have been established across the state.

Under Operation Muskaan, police traced and reunited 8,396 missing persons, including children, women and elderly citizens, with their families. The government has also intensified action against crimes involving children, with 2,293 victims receiving

counselling and rehabilitation support.

Anitha said the state has launched an aggressive crackdown on narcotics and ganja cultivation through the EAGLE enforcement unit. According to the minister, authorities registered 56,674 ganja-related cases, initiated legal action against 2,366 individuals and seized assets worth more than Rs 4 crore.

In the cybercrime sector, she said coordinated efforts involving cyber war rooms, banks, telecom operators and the 1930 cyber helpline helped prevent losses of nearly Re 247 crore

to online fraudsters.

The minister said emergency response services have been significantly strengthened, reducing average response time from 30 minutes in 2024 to less than 10 minutes, while achieving a response efficiency rate of 97.47 per cent.

On police welfare, Anitha said the government recruited more than 6,000 police personnel, promoted 505 gazetted officers and increased the stipend for constable trainees from Rs 4,000 to Rs 7,500 per month.

She also said the government is modernising forensic infrastructure, with forensic examinations completed in 7,793 cases between January and May this year and strengthening prosecution systems to improve conviction rates.

According to the minister, courts delivered judgments in 279 major criminal cases, resulting in eight death sentences, three life imprisonment terms, 42 convictions carrying sentences of more than 20 years and 14 convictions carrying 14 year prison terms.

Anitha said the government's focus remains on technology-driven policing, public safety, police welfare and ensuring effective delivery of justice across the state.



MSME, SERP and NRI empowerment minister Kondapalli Srinivas, along with senior officials of the departments, speaks to the media at the Secretariat on Tuesday

MSME sector got ₹1.9 L-cr in two years: Srinivas

- ▶ MSME, SERP and NRI affairs minister says MSME parks, private industrial parks and revival policy have driven investment and job creation
 - ▶ Women SHGs provided Rs 63,000 cr bank linkage; 5 lakh new women entrepreneurs is target
 - ▶ Informs that APNRTS resolved 1,376 NRI grievances
 - ▶ Social security pensions cross Rs 33,000 cr annually
- HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government extended more than Rs 1.9 lakh crore in bank credit to the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector over the past two years while implementing a range of industrial reforms and entrepreneurship programmes aimed at boosting economic growth and employment, MSME, SERP and NRI empowerment minister Kondapalli Srinivas said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press confer-

ence on achievements of NDA coalition government in the past two years at the Secretariat, Srinivas said the government has identified MSMEs as a key driver of industrial expansion, investment attraction and job creation. Andhra Pradesh currently has around 55,000 micro enterprises, 8,000 small enterprises and over 1,000 medium enterprises. The sector comprises 49 per cent services, 28 per cent trade and 23 per cent manufacturing.

To strengthen industrial growth, the government has introduced more than 20 sector-specific policies covering textiles, food processing, electric mobility, clean energy, electronics, defence and aerospace, logistics, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. MSME parks are being developed across the state, and land has already been allotted to 792 industries, which are expected to generate more than 1.03 lakh jobs.

Srinivas said the Private Industrial Park Policy is expected to attract investments of over Rs 1,900 crore and create 16,500 jobs. A dedicated MSME revival policy has also been launched to support stressed units through restructuring and investment mobi-

lisation. In the past two years, MSMEs received more than Rs 22,448 crore in collateral-free loans under the CGTMSE scheme and over Rs 40,000 crore under the PM MUDRA programme.

The government has also established a Rs 100-crore Collateral-Free Loan Guarantee Fund and launched the Rs 300-crore Chief Minister Entrepreneurship Advancement Programme (CMAP), which is expected to generate more than 17,600 jobs.

The minister spoke of the government's focus on women's empowerment, noting that self-help groups received bank linkage support exceeding Rs 63,000 crore and over Rs 9,300 crore through the Sreenidhi credit system. The government created one lakh women entrepreneurs last year and aims to create another five lakh this year. The newly launched 'Swayam AP' brand will market products manufactured by women's self-help groups across the state.

Srinivas also said the state government continues to provide extensive welfare support through social security pensions and NRI assistance programmes, while advancing the NRT Icon Towers project in Amaravati.

SIR: ECI enables online submission of forms

- ▶ The Election Commission has enabled online filling and submission of enumeration forms under the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.
 - ▶ Voters can complete the process online without waiting for a Booth Level Officer visit, provided their mobile number is linked to their voter ID and details match Aadhaar records
- HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CHIEF electoral officer (CEO) Vivek Yadav on Tuesday said that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has enabled the facility to fill and submit enumeration forms online as part of the SIR. The ECI kicked off the enumeration period of the Special Intensive Revision of the electoral roll in the southern state on June 15, which will continue for a month until July 14. "ECI has enabled the facility for filling and submission of enumeration form online. Filling this form online allows to match elector record with the historical base roll without



Picture for representational purpose only

waiting for a Booth Level Officer (BLO) home visit," Yadav said in a press release. Before availing online submission of EF via eSign, Yadav said an elector must meet the prerequisites of mobile linkage and name matching. Under mobile linkage, he said an elector's mobile number must be linked to his Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC or voter ID card). Likewise, he said the spelling of the elector's name on EPIC must match exactly with his Aadhaar card. If there is a mismatch, the digital eSign will fail, and the elector will need to submit a physical form through his/her BLO, Yadav added.

Merely two years after the general elections in the state, which witnessed the simultaneous Parliamentary and Assembly polls, the ECI is undertaking the SIR with July 1, 2026 as the qualifying date. The exercise will cover nearly 4.16 crore electors across 28 districts and 175 Assembly Constituencies in Andhra Pradesh.

Gandikota project gains pace, phase-II tenders invited

- ▶ Rs 5,250-cr drinking water project being implemented in two phases
- PRADEEP VENNELAKANTI
TIRUPATI

ONE of the largest rural drinking water projects in Rayalaseema is gathering momentum. The state government is pushing ahead with a Rs 5,250-crore scheme to transport and treat water from the Gandikota reservoir for supply to drought-prone areas of Annamayya and Chittoor districts.

The 'Drinking Water Supply Scheme for Western Chittoor Region' aims to provide a permanent solution to the chronic drinking water shortage faced by the western parts of the erstwhile Chittoor district. The project will draw water from the Gandikota reservoir in YSR Kadapa district and supply it to seven Assembly constituencies spread across Annamayya and Chittoor districts.

The scheme is being implemented in two phases at a total estimated cost of over Rs 5,250 crore. While works under Phase-I are already in progress, the government has invited tenders for Phase-II, marking a significant step in the execution of the long-pending project.

Under Phase-I, the government sanctioned Rs 2,370 crore and commenced works in April 2025. The project is scheduled for completion by October 2027. Officials said works worth nearly Rs 90 crore have already been completed and construction activity is expected to pick up pace in the coming months. The first phase will provide drinking water to Rayachoti, Pileru and Thamballapalle Assembly constituencies.

For Phase-II, tenders worth Rs 2,886 crore have been invited. Online bids are being accepted from June 12 to June 27. Rural Water Supply Chief Engineer Hareram Naik issued



Gandikota reservoir in YSR Kadapa district

orders related to the tender process on June 5. After completion, the second phase will extend drinking water supply to Madanapalle, Punganur, Palamaner and Kuppam constituencies.

As part of the project, a balancing reservoir will be constructed at Gandikota. Water will then be conveyed through transmission pipelines to treatment facilities proposed in Gurramkonda mandal of Annamayya district. Separate water treatment plants are being established for the two phases.

The Phase-I water treatment plant, estimated to cost around Rs 300 crore, is already under construction. A second treatment facility will be taken up after the Phase-II contract is finalised. Each plant will have a treatment capacity of 75 million litres per day (MLD), taking the total capacity to 150 MLD. Officials said the project is expected to meet the drinking water needs of several lakh people across the beneficiary constituencies. The scheme is considered crucial for the western Chittoor region, which has long struggled with low rainfall, recurring droughts and excessive dependence on ground-water sources.

Jagan asks YSRCP cadre to guard votes during SIR

- ▶ Directs party constituency-coordinators to closely monitor and immediately report irregularities to election authorities
- HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed party constituency coordinators and regional in-charges to remain on high alert during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, describing the next four weeks as crucial for protecting genuine voters from deletion.

At a review meeting with senior party leaders at the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli, Jagan instructed coordinators to closely monitor the electoral roll revision process on a daily basis, immediately report irregularities to election authorities, and escalate unresolved issues to the party headquarters.

He said the deletion of a genuine voter during the SIR process could be difficult to reverse and stressed the need for continuous vigilance at the grassroots level.

Jagan alleged that the ruling government



was attempting to remove YSRCP supporters from electoral rolls through administrative means and claimed that efforts were being made to alter voter lists ahead of future elections. He urged constituency coordinators, Booth Level Agents and party workers to ensure that no genuine voter is removed from the rolls.

Calling voter protection the party's top organisational priority, Jagan directed the cadre to treat the electoral revision exercise as a mission to safeguard democratic rights and maintain constant field-level monitoring until the process is completed.

Naidu releases book on his visionary decisions

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu released a book CBN@361 Degrees-Polymath at a special event organised by the Kakatiya Cultural Association in Singapore on Tuesday. The Chief Minister presented the first copies of the book to Shilpak Ambule, High Commissioner of India to Singapore. The book was written by Shakamuri Srinivasa Prasad, chief editor of Repatikosam daily and translated into English by retired IAS officer K V Satyanarayana. The publication offers an in-depth analysis of the decisions taken by Chandrababu Naidu as a visionary leader across different phases of his public life and governance.

Speaking on the occasion, author Shakamuri Srinivasa Prasad said that Naidu's leadership style and decision-making reflect the vision-driven approach demonstrated by globally acclaimed leaders such as former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and former



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu along with others releases 'CBN@361 Degrees-Polymath' in Singapore on Tuesday

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

He noted that Naidu's commitment to long-term planning, economic development and construction of Amaravati as a world-class capital city exemplifies this approach. Former AP RERA chairman Ramanath stated that the book brings to light several lesser-known aspects of Chandrababu Naidu's leadership and governance philosophy, drawing from observations and insights that are not widely known to the public.

During the event, the Kakatiya Cultural Association honoured Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu with the Global Polymath Award. The

Association also presented him with a commemorative silver coin released to mark the birth centenary of Singapore's founding leader, Lee Kuan Yew.

Representatives of the association announced that the book will soon be published in Telugu, Hindi and several other Indian languages. They also noted that the digital version of the earlier publication, Chandrababu X.0, had recorded over 8 million downloads.

Former AP RERA chairman Ramanath, K V Satyanarayana, Shankara Prasad and prominent members of Telugu community in Singapore participated.

APTRANSCO TO COMMISSION 24 PROJECTS WORTH Rs 3,507 Cr BY DEC

- ▶ Projects to add major capacity and strengthen state's power infrastructure
 - ▶ Vijayanand directs officials to expedite ongoing and upcoming transmission works
- HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

SPECIAL chief secretary to the Chief Minister K Vijayanand on Tuesday directed officials to ensure the timely completion and commissioning of 24 transmission projects being executed by APTRANSCO at an estimated cost of Rs 3,507 crore between June and December.

Reviewing the progress of various transmission projects at a meeting held at Vidut Soudha in Vijayawada, Vijayanand said the government and APTRANSCO are committed to providing quality, reliable and uninterrupted power supply to agriculture, industries, com-



Special chief secretary to the Chief Minister K Vijayanand reviews the progress of APTRANSCO transmission projects during a meeting at Vidut Soudha in Vijayawada on Tuesday

mercial establishments and domestic consumers.

He stressed the need to expedite the implementation of 400 kV, 220 kV and 132 kV transmission projects to meet the State's growing power demand and strengthen its transmission infrastructure.

During the meeting, officials informed him that APTRANSCO has already commissioned three 400 kV substations, eight 220 kV

substations and 21 substations of 132 kV capacity. Additionally, 1,465 MVA of transformation capacity and 571 circuit kilometres of transmission lines added to the State grid, they said.

Also, they said a total of 68 transmission projects, involving an investment of Rs.5,279 crore, are currently under various stages of execution. Once completed, these projects would add 15,224.50 MVA of trans-

formation capacity and 1,828 circuit kilometres of transmission lines, they explained.

Vijayanand directed officials to closely monitor the works and complete them within the stipulated timelines while maintaining high-quality standards. He also noted that tenders have been floated for 29 new transmission projects, which are expected to create an additional transformation

capacity of 4,520 MVA and establish 700 circuit kilometres of transmission lines. Besides, 72 more projects are in the planning stage and tenders for these works are expected to be floated within the next three months.

Reviewing the action plan for the inauguration of the 24 completed transmission projects, Vijayanand said these projects would significantly improve grid stability, reduce transmission losses and support the industrial, agricultural and socio-economic development of the state. Reiterating APTRANSCO's commitment to meeting the state's future energy requirements, he said the utility is focused on building a robust, modern and future-ready transmission network capable of supporting Andhra Pradesh's long-term growth and development.

The meeting was attended by directors A K V Bhaskar, J V Rao, and Venkata Ramamurthy, along with chief engineers and superintending engineers.

Notorious criminal injured in encounter

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

A notorious criminal and prime accused in a recent armed robbery case sustained bullet injuries during an encounter with the police under Sadar police station area of Keonjhar district on Tuesday morning, officials said. The criminal was identified as Pravat Mallick, the main accused in the case related to the looting of more than Rs 8 lakh from two panchayat-level government officials at Mukuna village under Sadar police limits on May 18.

The police, during the course of an investigation into the armed robbery case, ascertained Mallick's involvement. Apart from this, the accused is also involved in more than 40 criminal cases relating to robbery, theft and other serious offences. According to the official statement of Keonjhar police, in a major breakthrough, a team of Sadar police station apprehended the dreaded criminal during a raid in the wee hours on Tuesday.

"During interrogation, the accused confessed his



involvement in the armed robbery of Rs 8,18,100 and disclosed concealment of robbery proceeds and other stolen property. During the recovery of the stolen property near Mahuldiha Water Tank, Belda, Keonjhar district, the accused suddenly retrieved a concealed country-made firearm and fired one round at the police party with the intention to kill the police person-

nel," informed the Keonjhar police.

Subsequently, the police resorted to a controlled retaliatory fire in self-defence, resulting in injury to the accused on his right leg. The cops later overpowered the accused and disarmed him. He was immediately rushed to the Keonjhar District Headquarters Hospital for treatment. Doctors later shifted him to SCB Medical

College and Hospital, Cuttack, for advanced care. A country-made firearm and robbery-related cash were seized from the spot.

A fresh case has been registered under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Arms Act. The police said that further investigation is underway to apprehend other associates and recover the remaining stolen property.

Out-of-control car kills 3 bystanders

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

AT least three persons were killed and three others seriously injured when a speeding car ran over several people having tea on a roadside stall after hitting multiple vehicles here, police said on Tuesday. The mishap took place in Gajapati Nagar area under Maitree Vihar police station limits, on the road connecting Acharya Vihar to Nalco Square in Bhubaneswar, on Monday night.

The speeding EV crashed into several two-wheelers and an auto-rickshaw on the road before ramming into a group of people having tea near the roadside stall. While two persons, identified as Jeyrom Ekka, husband of an IAS officer, and Santosh Behera (from Dhenkanal) were declared dead at the hospital on



Monday night, another person, Laxmidhar Toppo, died during treatment at a hospital here on Tuesday morning, said Bhubaneswar ACP (zone-5) Biswaranjan Senapati.

Three other persons, including auto driver Shankarlal Sharma, Sulagna Deo, an HR in an IT firm, and Subrat Mishra, an employee of Nalco, are under treatment and ad-

mitted to different hospitals, he said. Sharma's health condition is stated to be serious, while the other two injured persons are stable, Senapati said.

He further said that three cases were registered at Maitree Vihar police station related to the accident. "We have arrested the car driver Anil Kumar Gouda (30), a resident of Gangapur area in

Ganjam district, under Section 105 of BNS (culpable homicide that does not amount to murder)," the ACP said.

When asked about the reason behind the accident, he said, "The car driver was experiencing severe cough just before the accident, and he did not exactly know how he lost control of the vehicle and crashed into people and other vehicles." "A breath analyser test conducted on the driver showed zero alcohol reading, indicating that he was not under the influence of alcohol at the time of testing," the ACP stated.

The police have seized the prescription and cough syrup bottle he was using. The police, however, said the exact cause and circumstances of the accident will be determined after completion of the investigation and examination of all available evidence.

Bamboo handicraft demand drops

VENKAT RAMAN PRADHAN
BARGARH

BAMBOO handicrafts, once a major source of livelihood for people living near the forest areas of Bargarh district, are witnessing a steady decline in demand. Local artisans traditionally produce a variety of bamboo products such as winnowing baskets, carrying baskets, trays, and other household items, which have long supported their families financially.

However, artisans say that the lack of adequate government support, promotional initiatives, and access to dedicated markets have significantly affected the industry. As a result, sales have dropped over the years, threatening the survival of this traditional craft.



Bamboo craftsmen have urged the government to take immediate steps to revive the sector by providing better marketing opportunities, financial assistance, and policy support to sustain their livelihoods and preserve the region's rich handicraft heritage.

Rising costs of quality bamboo poles also eat heav-

ily into the artisans' narrow profit margins.

Many rural artisans struggle to secure upfront cash to buy automated machinery or bulk materials independently. Plummeting profits have pushed the younger generation to abandon the trade, and migrating to other States for better paying jobs.

Two workers rescued from Tirupati

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Police rescued two labourers belonging to Gajapati district who were allegedly subjected to bonded labour and illegal confinement in Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, an official said on Tuesday. The rescued labourers were identified as Santiel Karado (54) and Gamliel Karado (29), residents of R Udayagiri block in Gajapati district. According to police, both had been working as labourers under a businessman in Tirupati for the last five years. However, according to information received from their family members, they had been illegally confined by their employer for the past eight days, the police officer

said. The families also alleged that during this period, the duo was deprived of adequate food, prevented from contacting their families, denied their rightful wages, and threatened to continue working without payment for the coming months. Acting upon the complaints, R Udayagiri Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Rakesh K Sahoo established contact with Tirupati Police and shared all relevant details regarding the victims and the circumstances of their confinement. Through coordinated efforts, timely intervention, and effective cooperation between Gajapati Police and Tirupati Police, both labourers were successfully rescued and brought to safety, the officer said.

Schools to reopen tomorrow

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond on Monday said that all schools, both government and private, in the State will reopen on June 18 after summer vacation. The schools were closed on April 27 for summer vacation following a rise in temperature in various districts of the State.

"The government is concerned about the education of the students.

The temperatures have also dipped as monsoon has arrived in Odisha. So, all schools will reopen on June 18," Gond told reporters. If an unbearable heat wave prevails on June 18, further decision will be taken keeping the health of the



students in mind, he said.

The government is taking necessary steps to distribute textbooks to the school-going students as soon as possible, he said.

Usually, the summer vaca-

tion in schools starts on May 6 and continues till June 17. However, considering the existing heat wave conditions, the government had announced summer vacation on an earlier date.

Minor sexually abused in Mayurbhanj

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

A 13-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted in Mayurbhanj district, police said on Monday. The family members of the victim alleged that the minor was gang-raped on Sunday, but Mayurbhanj Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Deepak Kumar Gochayat said it was a case of sexual assault and not a case of gang-rape.

The ASP said the police acted promptly and detained three persons for their alleged involvement in the incident after registering a case at Rairangpur Town police station under the provisions of POCSO and BNS. Based on the preliminary investigation, the ASP said the minor girl had gone to a secluded place with a male friend on a motorcycle on Sunday, where she was sexually assaulted by him.



The minor's elder sister was also there at a distance, talking to one of the accused persons while her sister was being abused in nearby forests. The two girls had gone to the forest area with the four accused persons. The ASP said that the three accused persons, identified as Sk Makbul, Sk Tipu, and Sk Omaan, were detained while Sk Zabeed was absconding.

Another case of a woman

allegedly gang-raped was reported from Patnagarh police station area in Bolangir district, the police said. While the alleged crime took place on June 8, the victim reported the matter to the police on June 14, following which the four accused were arrested.

Another such incident was reported from a village under Kodinga police station area in Nabarangpur district,

where a 21-year-old woman was found dead in mysterious circumstances. Her body was recovered from the backyard of her house, police said.

The family members in their complaint said that the victim had gone out on Sunday night to celebrate the Raja festival, and she joined swing play with a friend till 9 pm. Later, she was not seen by friends, the family members said, adding that her body was discovered early Monday morning. There were injury marks on her body, the family alleged.

Nabarangpur SP Kashyap Parth Jagdish, who visited the spot, said, "The death is mysterious. But we cannot say now whether it was a case of rape and murder. The exact cause of death will be determined after the post-mortem report. Strict action will be taken after investigation." No one was either detained or arrested in the Nabarangpur case.

Bhanja legacy takes centre stage in Delhi

SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BERHAMPUR

THE literary brilliance and cultural grandeur of Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja, one of Odisha's greatest poets, will be celebrated on a national platform as a 20-member cultural troupe from Berhampur and the Ganjam region prepares to present "Swapnila Odisha: A Cultural & Literature Tribute to Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja" at the prestigious Stein Auditorium of India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on June 19.

Organised by Anwesha Kala Kendra, the programme seeks to showcase the immortal literary legacy of Upendra Bhanja through an artistic fusion of music, dance, storytelling and cultural performances.

Revered as the architect of Odia poetic excellence, Upendra Bhanja's works



continue to inspire generations and remain a cornerstone of Odisha's literary heritage. Union Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra

Singh Shekhawat will grace the occasion as the chief guest. The event will feature a vibrant presentation of Odisha's classical and folk

traditions by artistes from Berhampur and Ganjam, reflecting the region's deep cultural connection with the celebrated poet.

Anwesha Kala Kendra secretary Anwesha Brahma said the programme is aimed at taking Odisha's rich literary and artistic traditions to a wider audience and creating greater awareness about the enduring contributions of Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja to Indian literature.

The cultural evening will also offer guests a taste of traditional Odia cuisine, adding a culinary dimension to the celebration. Expected to draw literary scholars, artistes, members of the Odia diaspora and culture enthusiasts, the event promises to be a fitting tribute to the legendary poet and a proud moment for Ganjam's cultural fraternity.

Lord Jagannath rules Odisha as King, says Majhi

HANS NEWS SERVICE
PURI

CHIEF Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday said that Lord Jagannath was the "real King" of Odisha and he is doing public service by occupying the CM's chair. "In Odisha, the Chief Minister is not the ruler, but the Lord Himself is the real King and the CM's seat is not a symbol of power but a means of public service," Majhi said after being felicitated at a special function here for succeeding in deleting the word 'Dham' tag from the Jagannath temple at Digha in neighbouring West Bengal.

A special programme was organised by 'Shri Jagannath Bhakta Seva Sansthan' at the Town Hall here to felicitate Majhi for taking strong steps to protect the Jagannath culture and establish Odia identity in the world. The meeting was attended by Puri MP Sambit Patra, servitors, Jagannath culture scholars, pandits and devotees.

The speakers at the meeting praised the Chief Minister for the successful and historic intervention taken by him to remove the word 'Dham' from the name of the Jagannath Temple at Digha in West Bengal. Majhi stated that according to the eternal

culture and classical rules, Puri is the only Shri Jagannath Dham in the whole world.

"Shri Jagannath culture and tradition have its own uniqueness. I assure you here that the State government will remain vigilant like a guard for the protection, promotion of Shri Jagannath culture and preservation of the classical tradition of the temple," the Chief Minister said.

Many Jagannath devotees were hurt after the then West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee named Digha Temple as 'Jagannath Dham', and she refused to withdraw

the word 'Dham' despite being requested by many organisations.

However, with the change of political landscape in West Bengal, Majhi urged his counterpart, Suwendu Adhikari, who, after receiving the letter, promptly agreed to drop the word 'Dham' from the Digha Jagannath Temple. Majhi said that those who have done politics of arrogance about Lord Jagannath have suffered the consequences in the elections, because there is no place for arrogance with 'Kalia Saanta' (Lord Jagannath).

Calling his government as a representative of 'Odia

Asmita', Majhi reiterated his commitment to protect the classical tradition of the temple. He said that his government opened all four doors of the temple for devotees on the first day of its formation on June 12, 2024 and opened the Lord's Ratna Bhandar (treasury) for repair and inventory after a gap of 46 years. Majhi also said that many poor devotees, who could not visit Puri temple due to different issues, have benefited through the State government's "Shri Jagannath Darshan Yojana" scheme that provides free 'darshan' of the Lord and can partake of 'Mahaprasad'.



India must diversify fuel supply chains despite US-Iran MoU

THE memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the United States and Iran to mark the end of the war in West Asia has been greeted with more than a sigh of relief, all over. Stock markets have welcomed it including, in India whose half of crude imports pass through Strait of Hormuz. The Strait will be “completely open” from Friday, US President Donald Trump declared. It is “partially opened, already. However, there was “hunting” in the area to ensure it was de-mined, he said. This is good news but demining the Strait is easier said than done. The US knows it. On June 2, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee that

Iran had “mined large segments of Hormuz—international waters.” Shipping and maritime security experts told a prominent Israeli newspaper that ensuring the Strait of Hormuz is safe from mines could delay a return to normal shipping traffic by weeks. Conventional minesweepers could be deployed along with state-of-the-art underwater drones, but it may take 40 to 50 days before many insurance, shipping, or oil companies are confident enough to sail through, according to experts. Further, there is still a great deal of uncertainty with the MoU, which is just the beginning of real negotiations. Given the recalcitrant attitude of the clerical regime and

hardliner jihadists in Iran, the talks getting derailed at any moment is a distinct possibility. For these people are fired by revolutionary fervour; in their scheme of things, getting nuclear weapons is not a strategic requirement but a doctrinaire imperative. It is to be seen if these people could be reined in by saner elements in Tehran. Then there is Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is sulking because of Trump’s insistence to have a deal as quickly as possible. While he has not criticised the MoU, he is certainly not happy; he and his nation will like a regime change in Iran—or, at least, substantive degradation of its military might. To be sure, the degradation

of Iran’s armed forces is quite substantive, but Tel Aviv wants more. In other words, peace will prevail for some time in the Middle East, but it will be fragile. The success of the proposed negotiations will depend on whether Iran’s leadership is willing to make meaningful concessions on its nuclear programme and regional activities. Hardliners within the Iranian establishment may view any compromise as a sign of weakness and seek to obstruct the process. At the same time, domestic political pressures in both the United States and Israel could limit the room for diplomatic manoeuvre. Any perceived violation of commitments, however minor, may

trigger renewed tensions. Israel, as we mentioned, remains unconvinced that diplomacy alone can neutralise what it sees as the Iranian threat. Worse, the problem is not just the divergence in objectives between Washington and Tel Aviv; it is also Trump’s temperament and temper, which he loses very often. He even uses four-letter words in public—something no head of state or government has done in recent memory. Therefore, countries like India should not celebrate the MoU too much. It is a good start, but a start, nonetheless. To reduce our dependence on the Strait, we must earnestly start diversifying our fuel supply chains.

LETTERS

RTI: System must deliver

PROPOS “21 years of RTI: Miles to go” (June 16). The Right to Information Act (RTI) completed 21 years as a pillar of Indian democracy. It has exposed corruption, tracked funds, and forced answers from public bodies. RTI helped citizens challenge opaque political funding and projects like electoral bonds. Yet the law is strained. Over 4.1 lakh appeals choke Information Commissions, and 2.4 lakh new cases came in a single year. States like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh face the most delays. When authorities deny data, trust erodes. The Supreme Court recently called some RTI activism a business, dismissing an activist’s bail plea in a road work case. Abuse must be curbed, but courts questioning motives risk chilling genuine queries. We need faster disposal, penalties for needless denial, and training for officials. Protecting whistleblowers and streamlining commissions will keep RTI strong. Transparency is not optional for governance. After two decades, the promise remains, but the system must deliver.

K Chidanand Kumar, Kollam

RTI and judicial interference

PROPOS of “21 years of RTI: Miles to go” (THI June 16). It’s been 21 years since the promulgation of the Right to Information Act (RTI). It was a milestone ordinance meant to instil accountability and transparency in functioning of governments, service sectors, and availability of fundamental rights to citizens. However, judicial interference and governmental foot-dragging have undermined RTI. This is exemplified by 4.1 lakh appeals pending and 2.4 lakh cases registered for review before Information Commissions. The incident of the Supreme Court denying anticipatory bail to a ‘RTI activist’, for monitoring road construction in Punjab, exemplifies the beating RTI has received. If that person who was denied bail had paid the gargantuan road tax and vehicle registration fees, it is his prerogative to ascertain the progress of the road meant for his use.

Dr George Jacob, Kochi

Hail Indian army’s move to end colonial-era customs

THE Indian army’s recent introduction of new uniform regulations is commendable. These changes successfully shed vestigial colonial-era customs and embrace indigenous cultural aesthetics, while enhancing overall practicality and operational comfort for personnel across the board. Through these combined measures, the Indian army cultivates a distinct institutional identity rooted in India’s own cultural fabric. Such measures reflect the army’s continued commitment to ensuring that the institutions, traditions and spaces where soldiers live, train and serve increasingly embody India’s own heroes, values and national legacy while preserving the professionalism and heritage of the force. These changes align the military’s visual and ceremonial identity with contemporary sovereign Indian values, without compromising the dignity and discipline of the force. It is a proud moment for India that the visual landscape of the world’s second-largest standing army is being fundamentally rewritten to project a modern and self-reliant nation.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai-210

Not a typical peace framework

This refers to “Peace on paper, war on the ground — The fatal flaw in the Iran deal” (THI, June 16). The article identifies the central weakness of the US-Iran agreement with precision. A MoU that defers every substantive issue — nuclear sequencing, sanctions relief, regional security — to a sixty-day negotiation window is not a peace framework. It is a postponement dressed as diplomacy. The Israeli variable alone makes durability doubtful. Israel was not a party to the negotiations, does not consider itself bound by the terms, and has demonstrated repeatedly that it will act independently when it perceives existential threats. For countries like India that have genuine economic stakes in West Asia’s stability, this uncertainty will prove a costly affair. Cautious optimism is warranted but structural confidence is not.

K Sakunthala, Coimbatore-641671

A fine line between true morality and hypocrisy

IN an act of moral prudery, the NCERT ‘appareled’ the ‘Dancing Girl’ of Mohenjo-daro (and disfigured her in the process) to spare Class 9 students the ‘embarrassment’ of having to look at her bare torso. NCERT officials have restored the palm-sized figurine to her original looks in the face of the flak from historians and educationalists. The modification misrepresenting the original artefact, if not reversed, would have denied the students the benefit of looking at the metallurgical marvel as it was conjured up about 4500 years ago. It is a must-see for students of the Indus Valley Civilization. Deriving aesthetic pleasure from human anatomy is not immoral or sinful to be so puritanical about it or take offence at it. For instance, Michelangelo’s statue of David and sculptural works at the Khajuraho temple appeal to us as sentient beings. Desmond Morris’ book The Naked Woman is a study of the female body worth reading by everyone. It will disabuse us of outdated attitudes to nudity and sex. After all, there is a fine line between true morality and hypocrisy.

G David Milton, Maruthancode (TN)

thehansreader@gmail.com

BENGALURU ONLINE

MLA adopts three girls after Bidar family tragedy

BIDAR: In a heartwarming gesture following a tragic incident that claimed the lives of two sisters, Aurd MLA Prabhu Chavan has announced that he will take responsibility for the future of the three surviving daughters of the affected family in Shembelli village of Bidar district. The decision came after the legislator visited the family, which has been struggling emotionally and financially since the tragedy. The incident occurred on June 7 when six members of the family allegedly fell seriously ill after consuming mangoes. The victims, including mother Indumati and her five daughters, suffered severe vomiting and diarrhoea and were rushed for treatment.

Read more at <https://epaper.thehansindia.com>



RAVULAPATI SEETARA-MARAO

OUR ancestors used to talk about the ages. They said that in the Treta Yuga dharma stood on four legs, in Dwapara Yuga the number of legs decreased, and in Kali Yuga dharma almost lost its footing — elders would say this and people used to laugh. But looking at the crime-filled times that are spreading now, it feels as if our ancestors, with uncanny insight, were foretelling the future: “dharma will wither in the Kali Yuga.” How true is that?

A reader going through newspapers would be left with no doubt that dharma has largely gone astray — it is a sickening, nauseating feeling. In one village, people who had regarded a poor man as a benevolent trustee were stunned when a police investigation revealed that he was a criminal who had been stealing the trust’s assets; they were speechless and later felt they had no option but to cut him off completely. But an old man in that village, who was in the twilight of his life, did not show surprise—he muttered to himself, “It is the age of Kali,” and accepted it.

In a small village of Uttar Pradesh, one Vikas Singh Thagor, known to be a modern Robin Hood, spent many years helping the poor as if it were a gift from God. He lovingly gave schoolbags to children who couldn’t afford them. He helped the most disadvantaged in the village with money when they were in trouble. He even paid for luxury trips for his friends. Wherever he traveled, he flew and stayed in big hotels. For a man like that, how devastating it must have been to be caught in Manikanta Nagar colony in Vikarabad, and then after a police investigation that exposed him as Raju-Peda Double Roll—be forced to account for every penny? The poor villagers in UP and his friends must have been crushed by disappointment, while the police were elated at having caught a major thief.

Fate plays strange games. When a person’s life is portrayed on film in a sensational way that makes theatre audiences gasp, and then people in real life encounter such a figure, the police warning that “this could be a fraud” becomes terrifying. When someone with a criminal past is finally caught, the old guard comforts that justice still moves forward. In Telangana he posed as a labourer. Going from colony to colony pretending to be a worker, he noted which houses were locked. At night he looted many of those locked homes, and with the money he stole he



It always seems that police failures make the headlines — their successful work rarely does. In times like these, elders say, righteousness — whether small or great — inevitably endures. Scientific investigation is making tremendous inroads into the methods of hardened criminals.

returned to his village in UP and, without asking anyone, provided financial help to his friends, the poor and to children, living a life of luxury. That was Vikas Singh Thakur —who lost his freedom after he was trapped by the police. He confessed that he had stolen about 1.57 kg of gold, 2.56 kg of silver and cash totaling Rs 8.22 lakh. He began stealing at the age of 16 and built a notorious record: 34 cases in police books, which makes for a remarkable criminal history. Now, after Vikarabad police investigations, his number of thefts has risen to 61. In Sultanpur district,

four gold traders aided him, taking the stolen jewellery, giving him a share and even lending money when he needed it. He gave the gold to them through his mother. If a mother does not stop her son from stealing vegetables, she must bear some responsibility for the history that follows. This episode almost feels like a moral drama playing out in real life. The Vikarabad police and higher authorities must be commended for bringing Vikas Thakur’s career to account.

In another incident, white-collared criminals who had expanded the marijuana trade all the way to Thailand

were arrested by the newly formed “Eagle Force” (a police unit), writing new pages in history! They used 300 vehicles, made 405 flight bookings, and spent lakhs on flights alone. They landed in Thailand with wine and water facilities, spent nearly Rs three crore, and were trying to set up a “Pattaya-style” nightclub in Kokapet area of Hyderabad when the police caught them during a sting! Forty people operate in this network. Many have been arrested. Hemang Pramod Kelsukar and Sudhansh Pramod Kelsukar (both from Mumbai) were running the gang. Operating since around 2023, they had established links across Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, among other states, running this drug operation in a highly organized manner — until police surveillance exposed it. People are very pleased that Eagle Force and senior officers, through hard, painstaking work, successfully caught such big time criminals.

On the same page is the news that Dilshuknagar police caught international cannabis smugglers from Odisha while they were selling the drug. Ramesh Bandam and Nirmal Chhatriya were arrested. These are brazen, clever thefts — frauds carried out to deceive officials and cover their tracks — and this criminal experiment to trick authorities also makes the headlines in newspapers!

Cyberabad police warned people to be careful of such

criminals and revealed their tactics. Posing as employees of the Metropolitan Water Works, they were sending WhatsApp messages to residents in some areas saying that their water bill was unpaid and the connection would be disconnected — a ploy to extort money. Although the identities of those involved haven’t been reported in the news, this warning makes it clear that Hyderabad residents must stay on guard. Any reader who goes through this page of varied crime reports can’t help but exclaim, “Good heavens!” But learning that the police are making proper efforts to catch and control crime makes it worth sharing these details. It always seems that police failures make the headlines — their successful work rarely does. In times like these, elders say, righteousness — whether small or great — inevitably endures.

Scientific investigation is making tremendous inroads into the methods of hardened criminals. CC cameras, WhatsApp messages, telephonic conversations, and a watch on hardened criminals outside and inside jail see them as sitting ducks. Let people encourage not only Telangana police but the firmament in our country to continue similar efforts to ensure people lead happy lives, safe, and secure.

(The writer is a retired IPS officer, who has served as an Additional DGP of Andhra Pradesh)

Man made tragedies-Lifetime trauma for victims’ kin; protection for perpetrators

DR HYMA MOORTY

MAJOR man-made fire disasters—ranging from industrial accidents and city-wide bombings to catastrophic infrastructure failures have claimed several precious lives.

The Uphaar cinema tragedy was one of the worst fire disasters in recent Indian history. The fire started in the parking lot during the matinee screening of the movie ‘Border’ on June 13, 1977. Approximately, 59 people died of asphyxiation and 103 were seriously injured in the subsequent stampede. There is no record of how many succumbed eventually. The result was that one of the Ansal brothers (The hall’s promoters) was sentenced to two years in jail. Justice delivered for so many deaths? This is the result of a 24-year legal battle fought by two grieving parents.

Seven newborns died and 12 were rescued following a fire at the baby care wing in New Born Hospital in East Delhi’s Vivek Vihar. A massive fire broke out at the TRP Game Zone in Rajkot, claiming 33 lives, including nine under-16 children. Foreign nationals were among the 21 people who died in a blaze that ripped through a hotel in South Delhi’s Malviya Nagar on June 3. At least 47 people were pulled out of the inferno and taken to nearby hospitals but how many of them will walk out of the hospitals remains uncertain.

Tragically, most fire tragedies in the country happen either when greed takes over safety or the build-

By the time the CBI or ED book a case, he emerges as a popular real estate developer in Hyderabad. These guys roam in circles where ‘getting away with it is a flex’. Shame does not work and conscience is something they don’t have. You must hit at the things that they value most-money, freedom + status and the ability to do business, all over again. Seize assets before trial. Not after 10 years. Freeze bank accounts; attach properties, auction them to pay victims within 90 days can be good deterrents.

ers save money by going in for cheap wiring, blocked exits and illegal extra floors. A fire NOC costs less than a life, but compliance eats into profit.

All tragedies are pinned down to unethical behaviour and collusion of interested parties. It is rarely just the owner. Someone signs the fake fire safety certificate. Someone in the municipal fire department looks the other way in lieu of a bribe. Someone approves of an illegal commercial space in a residential area. The paper trail is clean; the building is not. Zero concern for lives is the greatest tragedy of our lives.

Emergency exits locked to ‘pre-



vent theft’. Overcrowding beyond permitted capacity. Flammable material stored because “What are the odds”? The calculation is always: “Will I get caught?” and not “Will someone die”?

A person who has done something illegal is a criminal. One who is morally and ethically wrong is also a criminal. Thieves outwit systems. What is the punishment ‘if’ caught? A fine that is one per cent of a day’s profit and the case drags for any number of years. The risk reward is broken again. Unethical behaviour pays. Safety doesn’t. Officers personally should be made liable if structures cleared by them burn. Make owners criminally liable for deaths, not just fines. Charge them with culpable homicide not amounting to murder and straight away jail them for 10 years, if not

more. Property should be seized. These are hardened criminals; public shaming does not embarrass them at all. Jail is a ‘business risk’. A twitter trend is just blabber. They are budgeted for it. Shut down in Rajkot and move to Surat is the modus operandi-a new name, new company but the same old illegal activities.

While anguished families of victims are in courts awaiting justice, the owner-perpetrator is inaugurating a new gaming zone, around the same time. No dearth of money results in getting a new identity, shifting base to a new city and enjoying new political protection. If there is a fire safety case against a person in Gujarat or Delhi, the ‘viable’ option for street-smart individuals is to set up a new establishment in the neighbouring state

Pawan seeks Centre's aid for AP's Great Green Wall

- ▶ Deputy CM urges Central support for Great Green Wall, coastal protection and pollution-free Godavari
- ▶ Proposes expansion of tiger conservation camps, welfare measures for Forest Watchers, and Kumki elephants to tackle human-animal conflict.
- ▶ Bhupender Yadav assures priority clearances, cooperation, and visit to Andhra Pradesh on International Elephant Day

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

DEPUTY Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday sought Central assistance for Andhra Pradesh's Great Green Wall initiative and coastal conservation efforts along the state's 1,050 km coastline.

Meeting Union environment, forest and climate change minister Bhupender Yadav in Delhi, he also sought enhanced support under the Green India Mission and expeditious wildlife clearances for the Sontyam Road project in Visakhapatnam.

Pawan Kalyan said they discussed several key environmental and wildlife con-

servation initiatives concerning Andhra Pradesh.

The Deputy CM said he thanked the Central minister for the approval of the Aranyaram Common Facility Centre (training and research), which covers the units of HANUMAN - Animal Conflict Mitigation Centre, Great Green Wall Monitoring Centre, Forest Fire Command and Control Centre, and State Tiger Monitoring Centre.

He sought suggestions from the Central minister to keep the sacred Godavari free from municipal and industrial pollution.

Pawan Kalyan requested support for increasing the number of base camps in the NSTR region from the pre-



Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan with Union environment, forest and climate change minister Bhupender Yadav in Delhi on Tuesday

sent 90 to 150. This initiative will significantly strengthen wildlife protection, particularly tiger conservation, while also generating nearly 300 employment opportunities for local Chenchu youth as Forest Watchers, thereby combining conservation with sustainable livelihoods for indigenous communities.

He also requested support for the provision of motorcy-

cles and free ration facilities for these Forest Watchers to enhance their mobility, efficiency, and welfare while serving in remote forest areas. The Central minister responded positively.

Pawan Kalyan also discussed the need for trained Kumki elephants from Odisha to mitigate human-animal conflict in Parvatipuram district and requested to put

a word in for the induction of tigers from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh states to strengthen genetic diversity in Andhra Pradesh's tiger population.

During the discussions, Bhupender Yadav also spoke to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and extended his support for facilitating these conservation efforts. Pawan Kalyan said that the Central minister assured full cooperation from the government and expressed his willingness to personally visit Andhra Pradesh on August 12, the International Elephant Day. He also assured that the necessary approvals and sanctions pertaining to these proposals would be taken forward on priority before his visit.

The Deputy CM said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, they remain committed to protecting forests, conserving wildlife, strengthening ecological security, and building a greener, more sustainable Andhra Pradesh for future generations.

SHOULD AADHAAR USE BE RESTRICTED TO ID PROOF: SC

Continued from page 1

The petitioner has also raised questions about the voter registration verification process. According to the petition, the document verification under Form-6 is not sufficient and can lead to the inclusion of names of people in the voter list who do not possess the necessary valid documents. The petition demands comprehensive reforms in the verification framework used in the electoral process. Along with this, it suggests the formation of a high-level monitoring committee, which should include retired Supreme Court judges, cybersecurity experts, and forensic experts. The Supreme Court delivered a historic verdict on September 26, 2018. The court, by a 4:1 majority, deemed the Aadhaar Act constitutional, but struck down some provisions. The court stated that linking Aadhaar to bank accounts and mobile SIMs is not mandatory. Aadhaar is not mandatory for school admissions. However, the use of Aadhaar in government subsidies and welfare schemes is valid. The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016, is the law under which the legal framework for the issuance of Aadhaar numbers, their use, data security, and the functioning of UIDAI was determined.

This law came into effect on March 26, 2016. The Act clarifies that Aadhaar is not proof of citizenship. Aadhaar only indicates that the person is a resident of India.

1st Indian LNG tanker Disha safely crosses Hormuz

Continued from page 1

The LNG carrier carrying 62,370 metric tons of LNG and managed by a Shipping Corporation of India-led consortium and chartered by Petronet LNG Ltd, is also one of the first commercial vessels to transit the Strait since the announcement of a preliminary ceasefire deal between the United States and Iran. Director in the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Upesh Kumar Sharma, said the vessel is expected to arrive at Dahanu in Gujarat on Thursday.

IAF to develop indigenous kamikaze one-way attack drones

Continued from page 1

The IAF has issued a limited tender enquiry to select Indian companies for the development of fixed-wing, one-way attack unmanned aerial systems (OWA-UAS), commonly known as kamikaze drones. The project will be coordinated by the Air Force's 5 Base Repair Depot (BRD) at Suler, Coimbatore, which will act as the nodal agency.

Unlike conventional acquisition programmes where the armed forces define requirements and industry develops the product, the IAF will play a direct role in the de-

sign and development process. The move is expected to give the service greater flexibility in tailoring the platform to evolving operational requirements.

According to the technical requirements, the drone should be capable of operating at altitudes up to 16,000 feet, function in both day and night conditions, and carry a modular payload of at least 30 kg. The platform is expected to support multiple mission configurations, including precision-strike roles, airborne data relay functions and sensor-based missions.

3 satellites paint worrying monsoon picture for India

Continued from page 1

The accompanying cross-equatorial flow, another crucial component of the monsoon engine, has also remained weak. Satellite imagery highlights extensive dry air over the western Indian Ocean, visible as large brownish regions on moisture maps.

Meteorologists attribute this to widespread sinking air over the region, a phenomenon that suppresses cloud formation and limits the northward transport of moisture into the Arabian Sea. The weakness of the Arabian Sea branch of

the monsoon has become particularly evident. Normally, this branch delivers heavy rainfall to the west coast, central India and large agricultural regions across Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. However, rainfall activity has remained patchy and below normal in many of these areas.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has already warned of prolonged below-normal rainfall across the country's crucial "monsoon core zone," which includes central, western and peninsular India, regions that account

for a substantial share of the nation's agricultural output. There are, however, some encouraging signs on the horizon. Forecast models indicate that cross-equatorial winds may strengthen during the next two weeks. Meteorologists also expect the Somali Jet to intensify, potentially drawing larger amounts of moisture into the Arabian Sea and reviving monsoon activity over India. Forecast guidance suggests humidity levels could begin increasing within the coming week, with a more significant monsoon revival possible toward the end of June.

CM hardsells Amaravati to global investors

Continued from page 1

Addressing the Leadership Plenary-2 session on the theme "Can Smart Cities Love Humans?", Naidu said Amaravati is being developed as a people-centric capital that combines technology, sustainability and high quality of life. He described the city as a "Knowledge City" where national and international educational institutions, digital infrastructure and a quantum computing ecosystem are being established.

The Chief Minister said Amaravati is being planned as a world-class capital with dedicated zones for knowledge, finance, sports, justice, tourism, healthcare and media. Built along a 21-km stretch of the Krishna River,

the city will feature inner and outer ring roads, iconic bridges, cycling and walking tracks, underground utilities, green energy systems and a Greenfield airport.

Naidu said the capital is being developed with a net-zero vision while ensuring equity, environmental sustainability and economic opportunities. He highlighted the land pooling model under which farmers voluntarily contributed 35,000 acres for the capital project and received developed plots in return.

Pitching Amaravati as an investment destination, the Chief Minister urged investors to bring innovative ideas and participate in the city's development. He said advanced digital infrastructure

and emerging technologies would give Amaravati a distinct identity among global cities.

Drawing parallels with the development of Cyberabad, Naidu said technology-driven urban development creates long-term wealth and economic growth. He noted that Cyberabad, built during his earlier tenure, has evolved into a major economic hub and a key revenue generator.

Following the summit session, Naidu visited technology and innovation exhibits, including the Singapore Pavilion, Innovators Alley and Google showcases, where he reviewed urban development models, startup innovations and technology-enabled governance solutions.

Google removes Telegram from Play Store, Apple may follow suit

Continued from page 1

The nationwide examination is conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to undergraduate medical institutes. The agency cancelled the previous exam held on May 3 amid allegations of paper leak.

G7 allies scramble to put Ukraine back atop Trump's agenda

EVIAN-LES-BAINS: US allies at the Group of Seven summit of major industrialised democracies worked Tuesday to push the war in Ukraine back up the agenda of President Donald Trump after more than four years of fighting sparked by Russia's full-scale invasion.

The Iran conflict has in recent weeks overshadowed Ukraine but following his announcement of an agreement to end the 3 1/2-month-old conflict in the Gulf, Trump said he now wants to focus on Ukraine. Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy joined G7 leaders for a morning working session.

Talks wrapped quickly, as leaders gathered for just 75 minutes. According to a French diplomat familiar with the talks, G7 leaders, including Trump, agreed to increase pressure on Russia, notably through sanctions targeting its oil and natural gas sectors. The diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity on ongoing talks in Evian, said G7 leaders held a "very fruitful" conversation on Ukraine.

Leaders also agreed on a common position to support Ukraine

by providing additional air defence capabilities and other means of protection, the diplomat said. As the US under Trump has cut back aid to Ukraine, France and its European allies are now the biggest providers of military and financial support to Kyiv.

In the French spa town close to the Swiss border, Trump downplayed the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the US but lamented the death toll.

"The whole thing is ridiculous," Trump said. "So, yeah, I'm going to do whatever I can."

Doctor's prescription now mandatory for cough syrups

Continued from page 1

All cough syrups — including the addictive ones containing opioids such as codeine — will now require a doctor's prescription.

The move comes after a spate of cases of contaminated cough syrups — in India and other countries — leading to deaths of children, including the case in Madhya Pradesh.

The matter was discussed in a meeting of the apex drug regulator's Drug Consultative Committee in November last year, right after the case in Madhya Pradesh. The committee of experts said: "DCC was appraised about the recent incidence due to contaminated cough syrup, and it was proposed that the exemption

provided under ...Schedule K ... in respect of syrups for cough may be deleted. DCC deliberated the matter and approved the proposal."

The committee also looked at whether excipients other than propylene glycol — which is understood to be the source of the contaminants ethylene glycol and diethylene glycol — can be used for the manufacturing of syrups. Importantly, mandating prescriptions for cough syrups would ensure children do not end up taking formulations such as dextromethorphan — which is not meant for those under the age of four or six years — that can cause severe respiratory depression and death in them.

Modi-Trump meet set to spotlight G7 Summit

Continued from page 1

The meeting comes at a particularly significant moment following Trump's announcement of an agreement with Iran aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz and easing tensions that had unsettled global energy markets. While details of the arrangement remain limited, the development is expected to feature prominently in summit discussions, with leaders seeking clarity on its implications for regional stability and global energy supplies. There is also considerable interest in whether Modi will raise concerns over the reported deaths of three Indian seafarers, allegedly killed during a United States naval attack on commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. The incident has generated political debate in India and added another dimension to the forthcoming engagement between the two leaders. The

two-day summit, hosted under France's rotating presidency of the G7, brings together leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States, alongside representatives of the European Union. French President Emmanuel Macron has also invited several key partner nations, including India, Brazil, South Korea, Kenya, and Egypt, reflecting the growing importance of emerging economies in addressing global challenges. For India, Modi's participation underscores New Delhi's expanding role in international diplomacy. As one of the world's fastest-growing major economies and an increasingly influential voice of the Global South, India has become a key stakeholder in discussions on economic resilience, energy security, technological cooperation, and reform of multilateral institutions.

The great shake hand!

Continued from page 1

In Evian-les-Bains, the site of this year's G7 summit of the powerful grouping, Modi and Trump shared a warm handshake followed by a short conversation. A full bilateral sit-down is slated for Wednesday on the sidelines of the gathering. While details of their brief exchange were not known, the encounter sets the stage for their high stakes' talks. Following US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to India last month, the two sides are now looking at rebuilding the bilateral ties. The relations witnessed a major downturn after Washington imposed punitive tariffs on India and President Trump made controversial assertions regarding his role in de-escalating the India-Pakistan military clashes last May.

and officials have sometimes offered contradictory interpretations of what is in it. While Israel is not a party to the agreement, it is part of the war: It joined the US in launching strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, and has since fought the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon and seized large swaths of that country.

Gulf nations seek protection of maritime routes

Continued from page 1

During the conflict, Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway used to ferry one-fifth of the global oil supplies, which is the only maritime route for several Gulf countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE. Iran also carried out strikes against Gulf countries as they host US military bases, which were used to target the Islamic Republic. In its statement, the UAE Foreign ministry urged respect for the sovereignty of states and the principles of good neighbourliness, and strict adherence to international

law. All this, it said, could advance security, stability, and economic prosperity at both the regional and global levels. It also stressed the importance of "continuing negotiations in order to build on this progress and achieve sustainable outcomes".

Saudi Arabia also welcomed the US-Iran agreement and hoped "for achieving peace in a manner that enhances the security of the region and the world through a lasting agreement that takes into account the security interests of regional countries and upholds the principle of respect for the

internal affairs of states." The Foreign ministry reaffirmed Qatar's "full support" for all efforts and initiatives aimed at enhancing regional security and stability and reaching sustainable solutions to outstanding issues through dialogue and peaceful means.

These, it said, should be done in accordance with the principles of international law and good neighbourliness, in a manner that contributes to opening "new horizons for cooperation, development, and prosperity, and serves the common interests of the peoples of the region and the world".

Naidu pitches AP as semiconductor hub

Continued from page 1

The roundtable was attended by representatives of major semiconductor and technology companies, including GlobalFoundries, NXP Semiconductors, ASMP, One System Technologies, Techsend Photomask and Aquatech.

The Chief Minister urged industry leaders to assess the state's infrastructure, policy support and manufacturing ecosystem, saying Andhra Pradesh is prepared to support large-scale investments in the semiconductor sector.

Telegram banned till June 22 post-NEET paper leak

Continued from page 1

The NTA referred to the directions issued as "a measure of last resort, taken only after intermediate remedies, including the take-down action coordinated by IAC, had been pursued and had not produced, at the platform level, the response required to protect candidates in the run-up to the examination."

Channels on Telegram have been operating under names like- "PAPER LEAKED NEET", "Re-NEET 2026", "Private Mafia", "REE NEET MAFIAA" — and have "demanded sums ranging from a few thousand to several lakhs of rupees from candidates and their families, in exchange for purported access to the re-examination paper", the NTA statement said, adding that these sort of promises are "in every instance, a fraud". Channels operating under self-descriptive names openly solicited desperate students and their families, demanding sums ranging from a few thousand to several lakh rupees in exchange for purported access to the re-examination question paper.

NTA has categorically stated that no such paper exists outside the secured examination chain, and that every such promise is, without

exception, a fraud designed to extort money from anxious aspirants.

The modus operandi, as documented by NTA, works as follows: a channel administrator posts an innocuous message before the exam. After the exam is conducted and the actual question paper becomes publicly available, the administrator edits that old message to insert the real question paper — crucially, while retaining the original timestamp. The fabricated chat is then circulated virally as "proof" that the paper was leaked before the exam, causing public panic and undermining the credibility of the examination process.

The MeitY direction to disable the editing feature is designed to close this post-examination window of fabrication. NTA acknowledged in statement that the access restriction will affect lakhs of ordinary citizens who use Telegram for legitimate personal, educational, and professional purposes. The agency clarified that the block is strictly temporary, ending the day after the exam on June 22. The feature-level direction on message editing, which extends to June 30, does not affect the ability to send or receive new messages on the platform.





NARAYANA, A PLACE WHERE ASPIRATIONS TURN INTO AIRs

From Olympiad gold to JEE Advanced AIR 5: The remarkable rise of Kuchi

HARI NARAYANAN
HYDERABAD

At 18, Kuchi Sandeep from Visakhapatnam has emerged as one of India's most promising young minds.

Kuchi secured an outstanding AIR 5 in JEE Advanced 2026 after earlier achieving AIR 37 in JEE Main 2026. A student of Narayana, Hyderabad, his achievement places him among the country's top engineering aspirants.

But Kuchi's success story extends far beyond competitive examinations. He had already earned international recognition by winning a gold medal at the International Chemistry Olympiad held in the UAE. He is now preparing to represent India once again at the upcoming International Chemistry Olympiad in Uzbekistan.

Aspiring to study Computer Science at IIT Bombay and build a career in technology, Kuchi believes the future belongs to innovation, while retaining a healthy perspective on the opportunities and challenges posed by artificial intelligence.

Q. Congratulations on securing AIR 5 in JEE Advanced. Before we talk about preparation and strategy, take us back to those crucial moments—the day before the results were announced, the day the results were declared, and the day after.

Kuchi: Those 3 days were a rollercoaster of emotions. My exam had gone well, I was expecting a decent result but every second was filled with mixed emotions—fear, excitement and anticipation. The moment results were announced I was overjoyed. It was a proud moment for my family and to be honest, I was very very proud of myself.

Q. The moment students open their JEE Advanced results is something they remember forever. What happened when you finally saw AIR 5 on the screen? What was your immediate reaction, and how did your family respond?

Kuchi: The moment I opened the results I was on cloud 9. It was a dream come true. A single digit all India rank was in itself a very proud moment for me, but top 5 was a cherry on the cake.

Q. When did you first begin to believe that securing a top rank in one of the toughest exams in the country was possible? Was there a particular moment when you felt, “Yes, I can do this”?

Kuchi: In the days before JEE Advanced I did really well on my mock tests. Combined with my previous Chemistry Olympiad selection it gave me the confidence that I could secure a top rank

Q. Narayana is often described as a place where aspirations turn into AIRs. How did you choose Narayana?

Kuchi: I visited the campus and I really liked the teachers there. I also felt the regular Narayana testing did help my JEE preparations.

Q. Many people assume that top rankers have their careers planned from childhood. Tell us about your journey. When did your serious JEE preparation actually begin, and how different was your experience from what people generally imagine?

Kuchi: I studied in a CBSE school before

Narayana. In Class 9th, I joined Narayana for the Junior Science Olympiad and I have been with them since. I began my journey by Olympiad preparation and started serious JEE prep in 11th grade. My journey was quite similar to what people imagine but a less intense version of it.

Q. JEE preparation is often described as a two-year marathon rather than a sprint. What did your daily routine look like during the most intense phase of preparation, and how did you maintain consistency over such a long period?

Kuchi: I made sure that I spent a considerable chunk of my day trying to solve

different kinds of problems from different sources. I also made sure I revised previous topics while reading new ones. I maintained consistency over a long period by treating each mock test I gave as the final exam which always made me give my best.

Q. There is a popular belief that students who secure top ranks study 14 to 16 hours a day. Was that your reality, or do you believe success is more about the quality of study rather than the quantity of hours?

Kuchi: I believe both are important. Quantity is important until one can ensure at least 8-10 hours of study but after that further increase in quantity will just worsen the quality. After reaching a minimum it is much more important to focus on quality of study.

Q. A journey as demanding as JEE preparation inevitably comes with moments of pressure, self-doubt, and frustration. Were there times when you felt overwhelmed, and how did you navigate those difficult phases?

Kuchi: Bad tests always made me feel down. I overcame it by looking back at my good test results and talking to my parents and teachers.

Q. Apart from the guidance of Narayana's teachers and mentors, family support often plays a crucial role behind the scenes. How important were your parents, family members, and friends during these two years of preparation?

Kuchi: My parents stayed with me throughout my JEE prep so I was able to come back home instead of a hostel which was helpful. Also, my parents gave me motivation whenever I did badly in tests.

Q. Many IIT graduates eventually choose careers in technology, entrepreneurship, research, or even the Civil Services. Have you thought about the path you would like to pursue in the long run, and what attracts you to that field?

Kuchi: I would like to pursue a career in technology. Modern technology is fascinating to me, I would like to be a part in discovering it.

Q. If engineering had not been your chosen path, what other career options would have interested you? Were there any subjects or professions outside engineering that genuinely appealed to you?

Kuchi: If I hadn't chosen engineering, I would have chosen research in chemistry.

Q. Now that you have secured a rank that gives you access to the country's finest institutes, which IIT and branch are you aiming for, and what makes that choice special for you?

Kuchi: IIT Bombay Computer Science. The field is rapidly growing and changing and therefore seems exciting.

Q. As someone preparing to enter the technology world at a time when Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming industries, what are your thoughts on AI? Do you see it primarily as an opportunity, or are there concerns that students should be mindful of?

Kuchi: It is both an opportunity and a concern. It will take over a lot of jobs which can easily be automated and don't require deep thinking but it will also make jobs easier.

Q. India will celebrate 100 years of Independence in 2047. Looking ahead to that milestone, what kind of technological future do you envision for the country? Do you think innovations such as flying cars and advanced urban mobility could become a reality in everyday life?

Kuchi: I think flying cars and all are still science fiction in the near future but I envision a future where most repetitive and boring tasks are automated.

Q. Finally, lakhs of students across India are currently preparing for JEE while dealing with pressure, uncertainty, and fear of failure. Having successfully completed this journey, what message would you like to share with them?

Kuchi: Work hard and stay focused so that you can achieve your dreams.



Kuchi Sandeep



IIT Madras celebrates international graduates

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) celebrated the achievements of its international students during a special Degree Distribution Programme, where graduating scholars from across the world received degrees across postgraduate and doctoral programmes.

The event marked the successful completion of studies for international students enrolled in programmes including MTech, MS, PhD, joint degrees and other international academic collaborations. Graduates representing several countries participated in the ceremony, highlighting the institute's growing global academic presence.

Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Vikram Misri, Foreign Secretary of India, congratulated the graduating students and encouraged them to apply the knowledge, skills and research experience gained at IIT Madras to address global challenges, particularly those affecting developing nations.

He urged students to use innovation and technology to contribute to sustainable development and problem-solving in an era of rapid technological transformation. Emphasising the importance of global cooperation, he noted that highly skilled graduates have an important role to play in addressing issues related to economic development, infrastructure, healthcare, education and climate resilience.

The ceremony also reflected India's growing role as an international higher education destination. Over the years, IIT Madras has expanded opportunities for students from different countries through scholarships, academic partnerships and dedicated international outreach initiatives.

The institute offers several support mechanisms for overseas students, including scholarships under the IIT Madras Global Engagement initiatives, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) programme, the Study in

India initiative and other international collaborations. These efforts have helped attract talented students from Asia, Africa and other regions.

Officials noted that international enrolment at IIT Madras has steadily increased in recent years, with strong participation from countries across the Global South. The institute has also strengthened global academic engagement through research collaborations, exchange programmes and international partnerships.

For many graduating students, the ceremony marked not only the completion of their academic journey but also the beginning of careers in research, industry, entrepreneurship and public service. The event underscored the growing importance of international education and the role of institutions such as IIT Madras in preparing graduates to contribute to global development through science, technology and innovation.

TODAY IS NATIONAL EAT YOUR VEGETABLES DAY

Honing healthy habits early

Vegetables are an important part of a balanced diet and play a key role in helping children grow strong and stay healthy. Packed with essential vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants, vegetables provide the nutrients needed for healthy bones, muscles and overall development.

Eating a variety of vegetables every day can help improve immunity and protect children from common illnesses. Leafy greens, carrots, tomatoes, beans, peas and other colorful vegetables contain nutrients that support healthy eyesight, brain development and energy levels. They also aid digestion and help maintain

a healthy weight.

Health experts recommend including vegetables in every meal to ensure children receive a wide range of nutrients. Different colors of vegetables provide different benefits. For example, orange vegetables such as carrots and pumpkins are rich in vitamin A, while green vegetables like spinach and broccoli contain iron and calcium that are important for growth and strong bones.

Developing healthy eating habits at an early age can have long-term benefits. Parents and teachers can encourage children to eat vegetables by offering colorful salads, soups and healthy snacks. Involving children

in gardening or helping with simple meal preparation can also make them more interested in trying different vegetables.

Eating vegetables regularly not only helps children stay active and energetic but also supports concentration and learning. A nutritious diet, combined with regular physical activity and adequate sleep, contributes to overall health and well-being. By making vegetables a regular part of their meals, children can build healthy habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. Small changes in daily eating patterns can make a big difference in helping children grow into healthy and happy adults.





A separate and practical contingency plan should be developed for each vulnerable district ahead of for Kharif season with special attention to water conservation, moisture management, intercropping, and alternative crop patterns

Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Agriculture Minister

BIZ BRIEFS

Beautyverse by Amazon

Amazon India has announced the third edition of Beautyverse, its flagship beauty discovery event, scheduled for June 20 in Mumbai. Siddharth Bhagat, Director, Amazon India, said: "Last year, Beautyverse brought together over 1,400 attendees and brands who witnessed 1.6X growth in their business post the event. This year, we're bringing together over 2,000 attendees, 70 brands, India's biggest celebrities, more than 600 creators and Prime members."

GHR Infra's project in Hyd

GHR Infra has commenced Phase 1 handovers at GHR Callisto, its premium residential community in Kollur, marking a key milestone for the 1,190-apartment project in West Hyderabad. Spread across 8.3 acres, the IGBC pre-certified Gold-rated development comprises four towers and offers 2, 2.5, 3 and 4 BHK homes. The project features a 50,000 sq ft clubhouse, nearly 70 per cent open space, smart-home automation and sustainability-focused amenities, including EV charging stations and rainwater harvesting systems.

Isuzu unveils service camp

Isuzu Motors India has announced a nationwide 'ISUZU I-Care Pre-Monsoon Service Camp' for its D-MAX pick-up and SUV range from June 18-24. The initiative will offer customers a free 37-point vehicle check-up along with discounts on labour, parts, lubricants, roadside assistance, extended warranty and select service packages. The camp will be conducted across all authorised ISUZU service outlets nationwide, aiming to ensure preventive maintenance and a hassle-free driving experience during the monsoon season.

Hero, Salesforce collaborates

Salesforce, an agentic SCRM, announced its collaboration with Hero FinCorp, an NBFC, to revolutionise loan processing with Agentforce. Abhimanyu Munjal, MD, Hero FinCorp, said: "At Hero FinCorp, we are leveraging AI, data and digital innovation to transform the way customers access credit. As we continue to scale our business and expand financial inclusion across India, enhancing speed, efficiency and customer experience through technology remains a strategic priority."

JCB logs milestone

JCB India has produced and sold its 600,000th machine in the country, marking a significant milestone in its over four decades of operations in India. The milestone machine is a Backhoe Loader, one of the country's most widely used construction equipment models. Deepak Shetty, CEO, JCB India, said: "This milestone is much more than a number. It reflects the trust that customers have placed in JCB over several decades."

Telangana, AP among revenue deficit states: CAG

NEW DELHI

UTTAR Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Manipur, and 9 other states recorded surplus revenues in 2024-25, while the remaining 15 states had a deficit.

Eighteen states targeted revenue surplus, 3 states targeted revenue deficit, and 7 targeted zero revenue deficit in FY 2024-25, according to a report on 'State Finances 2024-25' released by Comptroller and Auditor General of India K Sanjay Murthy on Tuesday.

"In FY 2024-25, 15 states were revenue-deficient while the rest 13 states were revenue surplus," the report said.

Of the 18 states that targeted revenue surplus, 9 achieved the target, while Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh,

UP, Gujarat, Jharkhand, 10 other states recorded revenue surplus in FY25

Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Mizoram, and Telangana ended up being revenue deficit in 2024-25.

Seven states -- Goa, Jharkhand, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh -- targeted a zero-revenue deficit.

Among them, 4 states -- Goa, Jharkhand, Tripura, and Uttar Pradesh -- achieved a revenue surplus, whereas Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu ended the year with a revenue deficit.

Of the 15 states that were revenue-deficient in 2024-25, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Punjab and West Bengal received Finance Commission revenue deficit grants.

The report further said that if the indicative fiscal deficit target of 3 per cent of the GSDP, fixed by the Fifteenth Finance Commission for 2024-25, for states' fiscal consolidation path is considered, then 18 states were above the target.

The aggregate revenue deficit of 15 revenue-deficit states, without netting revenue surplus of 13 states, stood at Rs3,46,385 crore, which was 1.5 per cent of their combined GSDP. The net revenue deficit, after adjusting the revenue surplus in 13 states, stood at Rs2,19,041 crore, 0.68 per cent of the combined GSDP of all 28 states.

"I hope that the publica-

tion on State Finances 2024-25 will serve as a useful evidence-based resource for governments, researchers, policymakers and citizens, enabling a deeper understanding of state finances and supporting informed fiscal decision-making," CAG Murthy said.

The publication highlights the growing importance of states' own tax revenues, which accounted for 50 per cent of the combined total revenue receipts of Rs40.52 lakh crore across the 28 states in 2024-25.

State GST constituted more than 43 per cent of the combined states' own tax revenues. The combined budgetary expenditure of all

states stood at Rs 51.20 lakh crore in 2024-25, equivalent to 15.78 per cent of their combined GSDP.

The decadal trend shows that salaries, pensions and interest payments continue to constitute a major share of revenue expenditure.

In 2024-25, such committed expenditure exceeded 43 per cent of the combined revenue expenditure of the 28 states, with significant inter-state variation -- from 74 per cent in Nagaland to 29 per cent in Maharashtra.

As of March 31, 2025, the total liabilities of the states stood at Rs 90.51 lakh crore. All 28 states recorded a fiscal deficit.

A decadal analysis of defi-



cit parameters shows that states as a whole, during the period 2015-16 to 2024-25, remained in revenue and fiscal deficit. A substantial increase in revenue deficit took place in 2020-21, a year impacted by the Covid pandemic.

There has been a substantial increase in the fiscal defi-

cit in 2020-21 and 2024-25.

The states which witnessed a substantial increase in fiscal deficit in 2024-25 as compared to 2023-24 were Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tripura and Uttarakhand.

OIL PRICES SET TO EASE AFTER US-IRAN DEAL

However, prices unlikely return to previous levels immediately: Analysts

NEW DELHI

CRUDE oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices are expected to moderate following signs of a potential US-Iran peace agreement and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, although analysts cautioned that supply disruptions, damaged infrastructure and tight inventories could keep energy markets volatile for months.

The prospect of normalised shipping through the strategically important Strait of Hormuz has already triggered a sharp decline in geopolitical risk premiums, helping Brent crude retreat about 20 per cent from recent highs, while LNG benchmark prices have also softened.

"The potential reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, amid signs of de-escalation



in the West Asia conflict, has triggered a sharp decline in geopolitical risk premiums in energy markets," said Sehul Bhatt, Director, Crisil Intelligence. Bhatt said the decline in crude prices, coupled with recent increases in domestic fuel prices and reductions in excise duties, had largely offset under-recoveries on automobile fuels, easing pressure on petrol and diesel market-

ing margins.

"The cumulative under-recovery on petrol, diesel and liquefied petroleum gas during March-May 2026 is estimated at approximately Rs1 lakh crore. If the Indian crude basket remains below \$90 per barrel, under-recoveries are unlikely to increase materially from current levels," he said.

Lower crude prices would

also help reduce inflationary pressures, and India's energy import bill, Bhatt added, though he cautioned that it could take weeks or months for global oil and gas markets to fully normalise.

"While the risk of prolonged supply disruption has eased, it may take several weeks or months for crude oil and LNG markets to fully normalise," Bhatt said. "In the near term, uncertainties around the implementation of the peace deal could continue to drive volatility in energy markets."

Prashant Vasisht, Senior Vice President and Co-Group Head, Corporate Ratings at ICRA Ltd, said a successful US-Iran agreement would ease crude and gas prices, but a return to pre-conflict levels could take significantly longer.

PSU banks see sharp jump in green deposits FY26

Deploy funds for clean transport, renewable energy

MUMBAI

STATE-owned lenders witnessed a sharp surge in green deposit mobilisation in FY26 amid increased depositors awareness and the maturation of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Green Deposit Framework, introduced in 2023. According to PTI's analysis of banks' Annual reports for 2025-26, eight state-owned lenders raised Rs 3,733.11 crore in FY26 through green deposits, compared to Rs 1,831.79 crore in the year-ago period.

The rise in green deposits reflects a growing focus among banks and depositors towards sustainable finance, with lenders increasingly linking their fundraising efforts with environmentally responsible lending, analysts said.

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lend-



er, raised Rs 317.39 crore through its green deposit products till March 2026, with outstanding green deposits recorded at Rs 218 crore as on March 31, 2026.

SBI garnered Rs 189.08 crore through green deposits in FY26, with the entire amount being deployed in clean transportation, particularly in green cars or electric vehicles, as per the Bank's Annual Report for 2025-26.

"The amount of green deposit raised has been utilised for financing the Green Car (EV) Loan portfolio," SBI said in its annual report.

The bank said its green car loan portfolio stood at Rs 3,587 crore as of March 31, 2026. Green deposit proceeds have been channelled into this portfolio to align the bank's liability mobilisation and asset deployment strategies.

Primary markets lose steam in 2026

NEW DELHI: After a strong run in 2025, India's primary market witnessed a slowdown with 23 companies tapping the Initial Public Offering (IPO) route to mobilise over Rs 27,000 crore in 2026 so far, amid heightened volatility and macro uncertainty, according to a report released by Equirus Capital on Tuesday.

This came following a launch of 103 maiden public issues in 2025, together raising Rs 1.76 lakh crore. This fundraising figure far exceeded the Rs 1.6 lakh crore raised by 90 firms in



2024 and the Rs 49,436 crore garnered by 57 companies in 2023.

However, the IPO activity is showing signs of a major pickup as geopolitical tension eased with insurtech firm Turtlemint Fintech Solutions and Advit Jewels are scheduled to open on June 19 and June 23, respectively.

Additionally, the country's largest stock exchange NSE is expected to file its preliminary papers with Sebi this week. Further, quick commerce unicorn Zepto and the largest fund house SBI Mutual Funds plan to launch their public issues next month, people aware of the matter

Ltd, the operator of Cordelia Cruises, is also expected to come out with its maiden public offering this month. The public issues of insurtech firm Turtlemint Fintech Solutions and Advit Jewels are scheduled to open on June 19 and June 23, respectively.

Additionally, the country's largest stock exchange NSE is expected to file its preliminary papers with Sebi this week. Further, quick commerce unicorn Zepto and the largest fund house SBI Mutual Funds plan to launch their public issues next month, people aware of the matter

SpaceX nears Microsoft's valuation

NEW DELHI: Shares of Elon Musk-backed space and satellite company SpaceX continued their remarkable post-listing rally, with the stock trading above \$220 in overnight trading and pushing the company's market capitalisation close to tech giant Microsoft, a market commentary platform said on Tuesday.

In a post on X, The Kobeissi Letter said SpaceX is now valued at less than \$100 billion below Microsoft, while the stock has gained about 63 per cent from its IPO price of \$135 per share since its market debut on June 12.

The rally has propelled the combined market capitalisation of SpaceX and Tesla to a record \$4.4 trillion, exceeding Apple's market value and approaching that of Google, according to the platform. It described the surge as un-

precedented, saying no initial public offering in history had witnessed a rally of such magnitude in such a short period. SpaceX raised a record \$85.7 billion after underwriters exercised the greenshoe overallotment option, making it one of the largest IPO fundraising exercises ever. In addition, the rally has significantly boosted Elon Musk's personal fortune, with Musk's net worth surpassing \$1.3 trillion, a level never before reached by an individual.

At that valuation, Musk's wealth exceeds the market capitalisation of all but 12 publicly listed companies worldwide, the platform noted. It further said that the combined value of SpaceX and Tesla now surpasses that of Apple, underscoring the scale of investor enthusiasm surrounding Musk's business empire.

Mkts rally for 3rd day on positive trends

The rally was broad-based, with notable gains in IT, realty, FMCG, and oil & gas sectors

MUMBAI: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rose for the third consecutive day on Tuesday, propelled by a positive trend in global markets and softening crude oil prices following a peace deal between the US and Iran.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 544.15 points, or 0.71 per cent, to settle at 76,808.48 following gains in IT, select energy and banking stocks. Intraday, it surged 582.41 points, or 0.76 per cent, to 76,846.74. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 135.25 points, or 0.57 per cent, to end at 23,989.15.

During the day, it jumped 148.7 points, or 0.62 per cent, to 24,002.60. In three straight sessions, Sensex jumped 2,975.93 points, or 4 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 827.55 points, or 3.57 per cent. Foreign investors turning net buyers in Indian equities also



boosted the sentiment, according to experts.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, HCL Tech rose the most by 3.59 per cent a day after the IT major announced a Rs 1,427 crore investment in government-backed sovereign AI model developer Sarvam AI for a 10.46 per cent stake. Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Consultancy Services

and Bajaj Finance were also among the winners. InterGlobe Aviation, UltraTech Cement, Maruti and Tata Steel were among the laggards.

"Domestic equity markets continued their recovery momentum, buoyed by growing optimism around a de-escalation in US-Iran tensions and softening crude oil prices. The rally was broad-

based, with notable gains in IT, realty, FMCG, and oil & gas sectors," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Broader markets also ended higher. The BSE MidCap Select index climbed 0.64 per cent and SmallCap Select index went up by 0.59 per cent. Sectorally, Realty jumped 2.27 per cent, Focused IT (1.72 per cent), IT (1.66 per cent), FMCG (1.12 per cent), Energy (1 per cent) and Oil & Gas (0.85 per cent). Metal, Commodities and Auto were among the laggards. A total of 2,368 stocks advanced, while 1,886 declined and 153 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Monday, purchasing equities worth Rs 200.05 crore on net basis, according to exchange data.

After the game (against New Zealand) they said to us, 'you have to leave immediately. We've been asked to get on a plane and return to our camp in Tijuana, and we are really troubled by that. They are forcing us to go back early. They are making the situation more and more difficult, more hurdles, but we're not going to let that stop us from doing our best' - Amir Ghalenoel, Iran football team head coach



Cape Verde's veteran wall stands tall on WC debut

Vozinha, 40, makes seven saves to hold Spain's star-studded lineup to shocking 0-0 draw

R J RICO ATLANTA

IT took Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha all of his 40 years on Earth to make his World Cup debut. The long, long wait was worth every fleeting second. Vozinha recorded seven saves on Monday, holding Spain's star-studded lineup to a shocking 0-0 draw.

The veteran keeper was everywhere as the Spanish team and its fans became increasingly frustrated, despite dominating possession and unleashing 27 shots. Not even the second-half entrance of young superstar Lamine Yamal could crack the code to get past Vozinha and the Cape Verde defense.

As the final whistle blew, Vozinha hunched over near his net and cried before being embraced by his teammates. Cape Verde, in its first-ever World Cup match, had gotten a point against Spain, the 2010 champion and one of the tournament favorites this year.

Vozinha said he was overcome by emotions thinking about his loved ones who were unable to see his finest performance: his grandparents who had raised him, and his mother. His grandparents died a few years ago.

And his mother had been unable to gather the money in time to secure a visa to enter the US, Vozinha said. Cape Verde is among 50 countries



Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha makes a save during the World Cup match against Spain

whose citizens face bonds of up to \$15,000 to secure a US visa, part of President Donald Trump's broader crackdown on travelers from countries that officials said had high rates of visa overstays.

The Trump administration last month suspended the requirement for ticket-holders from Cape Verde and four other World Cup nations, but critics said it was too late for many fans. Vozinha's performance was a culmination of a career that didn't even start at the professional level until Vozinha made his debut at the age of 25 for Angolan club Progresso. Since then, he's had stops in Moldova, Cyprus, Slovakia and Portugal, where he currently plays for Chaves in the Portuguese second division. He joined the national team in 2012 and at times, Vozinha said, he thought about retiring from the national team, but he "continued

because of this dream."

"I work all my life for this, for this moment, for this dream," Vozinha said. "A lot of generations in the past (dreamed of) this day but they did not achieve. And now the dream comes true." The word "vozinha" is Portuguese for "little grandmother," and the goalkeeper said he was given the nickname by older kids who would beat him on the soccer field and then laugh, saying he was going home to complain to his grandparents.

Years later, he took on the nickname after someone else on his club also had the same first name, Josimar. These days, Cape Verde defender Steven Moreira said he and his teammates like to tease Vozinha about his age. He said he was proud of the keeper, calling him a "big legend" who had a "crazy game" and showed that age doesn't matter.



Belgium's Romelu Lukaku celebrates with teammates after a self goal from Egypt earn a draw for the latter

Belgium settles for 1-1 draw with Egypt

SEATTLE: Romelu Lukaku's mere presence sparked an attack that led to Belgium's lone goal only seconds after he entered as a second-half substitute, helping his team earn a 1-1 draw with Egypt on Monday at the World Cup.

Lukaku came on in the 66th minute with Belgium trailing 1-0. He ran down the middle of the field and lurched to tap a cross from the right into the net, but Egypt defender Mohamed Hany did that instead, scoring an own-goal. The equalising goal came only 23 seconds after Lukaku came on the field. Emam Ashour had put the Egyptians ahead in the 19th minute with his first international goal. Ashour, a midfielder who was playing in his 30th game for his country, took advantage of a defensive breakdown to give Egypt only its second lead in World Cup match. The Egyptians, who are playing in their fourth World Cup, still have never won a game at the tournament. Belgium failed to advance past the group stage at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and has not won any of its last three matches in the tournament. Egypt had numerous chances to increase its lead but could not put the Red Devils away. Lukaku and teammate Kevin De Bruyne also had an abundance of opportunities to take the lead. (AP)

RESULTS

- Spain 0 Cape Verde 0
- Belgium 1 Egypt 1
- Saudi Arabia 1 Uruguay 1
- Iran 2 New Zealand 2

Fixtures (in IST)

ON WEDNESDAY

- France vs Senegal 12:30 am at MetLife Stadium, East Rutherford, New Jersey
- Iraq vs Norway 3:30 am at Gillette Stadium, Foxborough, Massachusetts
- Argentina vs Algeria 6:30 am at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium, Kansas City, Missouri
- Austria vs Jordan 9:30 am at Levi's Stadium, Santa Clara, California
- Portugal vs Congo DR 10:30 pm at NRG Stadium, Houston, Texas

ON THURSDAY

- England vs Croatia 1:30 am at AT&T Stadium, Arlington, Texas
- Ghana vs Panama 4:30 am at BMO Field, Toronto, Canada
- Uzbekistan vs Colombia 7:30 am at Estadio Banorte, Mexico City, Mexico
- Czechia vs South Africa 9:30 pm at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta, Georgia

Gurucharan bags Brilliant Trophy Jrs online chess title

HYDERABAD: Gurucharan Bhole of Raviteja High School, Narayanpet, emerged champion of the Brilliant Trophy Juniors Online Chess Tournament, scoring an impressive 11 points from 12 rounds. The tournament, conducted online, witnessed participation from young chess talents across the country.

Ayaan Arora of New Delhi and Saw Jinson Samuel of Andaman & Nicobar Islands secured second and third places respectively, both finishing with 10.5 points from 12 rounds.

Leeladitya Vardhan, Shanmukha Vasudeva, Anjan Goud Panasa, P Jillin Jeffin, Lopamudra Srivalli Aadya, Advitiya A G., and Laxmi Rishaank completed the top ten standings. The event also featured age-category prizes for boys and girls in Under-15, Under-13, Under-11, Under-9 and Under-7 sections. Several promising young players showcased their skills, making the tournament a highly competitive and successful event.

The age category prize



winners are:Boys: Under-15: 1. Mohammed Shabbir Ahmed, 2. Preran. Under-13: 1. M Adithya, 2. VSai Anirudh. Under-11: 1. Sacit Bara, 2. Arhant Reddy Swarna. Under-9: 1. Mohammed Sahir Ahmed, 2. T Easanth Under-7: 1. Vaidik Tanwar, 2. B Nithwik.

Girls: Under-15: 1. Sri Lasya Tummapudi, 2. Kandepu Manasa. Under-13: 1. Saanvika Akarapu, 2. Parnita Under-11: 1.S K Sony, 2. Kandepu Karthika. Under-9: 1. Anshitha, 2. B Aira. Under-7: 1. B Nithwika, 2.Ishika Garlapati.

TCA THREATENS LEGAL ACTION OVER PROPOSED TG-20 LEAGUE



HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE Telangana Cricket Association (TCA) has announced that it will issue legal notices to several film personalities, cricketers and Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) officials over their alleged association with the proposed

TG-20 League, which it claims lacks mandatory approval from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). TCA General Secretary Dharam Gurruva Reddy said notices would be sent to actors Venkatesh Daggubati and Vijay Deverakonda, former India cricketer Ambati Rayudu, and international players Tilak Varma

Gymkhana FC enter semis, beat Bolarum Sporting 2-0

HYDERABAD: Gymkhana FC secured a place in the semi-finals of the Bolarum Challenge Cup 2026 with a convincing 2-0 victory over hosts Bolarum Sporting in the tournament's second quarter-final match.

Bolarum Sporting made an energetic start and nearly opened the scoring in the 10th minute. Piyush delivered a precise cross to Sai Satya, but a timely intervention by a Gymkhana defender prevented the hosts from taking the lead.

Gymkhana FC gradually settled into the contest and broke the deadlock in the 20th minute of the first half. Jobin finished off a well-constructed attacking move to put his side ahead 1-0.

The visitors maintained control after the break and doubled their advantage in the 75th minute. Majid reacted quickest to a rebound after goalkeeper Likith made an initial save, calmly slotting the ball home to make it 2-0.

Bolarum Sporting continued to battle hard and created a late chance through Abhishek, but he was unable to find the target.

and Mohammed Siraj, among others. The association alleged that their endorsements could create a misleading impression that the tournament is officially recognized. The TCA also raised concerns over the role of the Court-appointed Single Member Committee headed by retired Justice P. Naveen Rao and questioned the legality of the league's governing structure and financial transactions.

Further, the association alleged political interference in cricket administration, irregularities in franchise ownership and marginalization of district-level players. It claimed that cricket was being used to advance commercial and political interests.

'People from RSS' behind attack on me: Dipke

JAIPUR

COCKROACH Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke on Tuesday alleged that "some people from RSS" were behind the attack on him a day earlier, claiming it was an attempt to shift focus away from the real issue and stifle the voice of students.

Dipke landed at the Nagpur airport on Tuesday morning, ahead of the CJP's protest scheduled at Samvidhan Square here later in the day to demand the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over last month's NEET (UG) paper leak issue.

The CJP founder was allegedly slapped multiple times by two men while supporters carried him on their shoulders during a protest in Jaipur on Monday. Two youths have been detained in connection with the incident.



Asked who he thinks was behind the attack on him, Dipke alleged, "There were some people belonging to RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), and there is nothing new in it."

Whenever someone speaks against the government or their ideology, they do like this; there is nothing new in it, he claimed.

On claims that he has ties

with RSS and had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dipke said, "Is that why they attacked me yesterday?"

He claimed the attack on him was an attempt to divert attention from the real issue and to suppress the students' voices.

"We will not deviate from our issues; you attack us as much as you want. We will do our protest peacefully

and democratically and not deviate from our main issue, which is about more than one crore students suffering injustice, and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has to take responsibility for it," he said.

"These kind of attacks will keep happening, but I am not afraid. We walk on the path of (Mahatma) Gandhi ji and Ambedkar, and it is our satyagraha, we will keep going on peacefully," he asserted.

Dipke has appealed to Nagpur residents, including students and the youth, to gather at Samvidhan Square at 4 pm on Tuesday for a peaceful demonstration.

The CJP has been demanding Pradhan's resignation over the NEET (UG) paper leak scandal.

Elaborate security arrangements have been made ahead of the protest in Nagpur, officials said. PTI

'BJP 'failed' accountability test by not seeking Pradhan's exit'

NEW DELHI

CONGRESS president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday accused the BJP government of having completely failed the test of accountability by not asking Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign following several exam irregularities.

He also criticised the government for putting curbs on the Telegram messaging app ahead of the NEET-UG 2026 re-exam on June 21, "The Modi government has temporarily blocked Telegram for the NEET exam re-test.

Modi ji should first demand the resignation of his Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who has blocked the futures of millions of youth," Kharge said in a post on X.

"Whether it's deploying the Indian Air Force, blocking Telegram, or catching small fish to protect the paper leak mafia - this is all something the Modi government has to do because in the last



10 years, 90 paper leaks have occurred, and 9 crore youth are suffering due to this fraud and corruption. How long will this government keep covering up its failures?" the Congress chief asked.

The Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha claimed that nearly half a dozen young people have been forced to take their own lives due to the exam irregularities.

"Modi ji doesn't utter a single word. There are countless candidates whose parents took loans to prepare them for recruitment exams over

years. And then, one after another, NEET, SSC, UGC-NET, CUET, and other exam papers get leaked," he said.

The situation, Kharge said, has reached such a point that so much fraud was carried out in the CBSE results that talented students had to expose this government.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will also be addressing a few student conventions across the country starting June 17 in Kota while seeking to unite the student community against the Modi government over the paper leaks.

NCPI names new chief; party gen secy 'has no idea'

KOLKATA: The Nationalist Citizens Party of India, which has been thrust into the spotlight after the Trinamool Congress rebel Lok Sabha faction's merger with it, has named Jyotiprakash Chatterji as its new president, according to Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, a key face of the dissident camp.

Ghosh Dastidar's statement came a day after NCPI founder Shewli Kundu told reporters that she had stepped down as the NCPI chief, triggering speculation that Ghosh Dastidar herself had taken charge of the party.

Amid TMC split, LS speaker gave Abhishek 2-hr notice

NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will hear the defected TMC MPs as well as the faction led by Mamata Banerjee before deciding on giving recognition to the breakaway faction, sources said. Meanwhile, sources from the Mamata-led TMC said that on Monday, its leader Abhishek Banerjee was called for a meeting with Birla at a two-hour notice when he was still being questioned by the ED. TMC sources said Banerjee got an email from the speaker's office at around

2 pm on Monday, asking him to meet Birla at 4 pm. Soon after, the speaker's office called party MP Kirti Azad and told him about the email. Azad, in response, informed the speaker's office that Banerjee was "committed to cooperating with all investigative agencies" and was cooperating with the investigation at the ED office in CGO complex in Kolkata, sources said. Later in the day, Azad also met the speaker to inform him about the email.

The sources added that Banerjee returned after questioning only around mid-



night. The communication came as around 20 TMC MPs announced they were merging with the little-known Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI) and said they would later stake claim to be recognised as the "real TMC".

Earlier, sources from Parliament said Birla is likely to seek legal opinion on the defected leaders' demand to be recognised as a separate group after a proposed merger with the little-known Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI).

Two held for throwing eggs at TMC MLA Kunal

KOLKATA: Two persons were arrested on Tuesday morning, allegedly for throwing eggs at Trinamool Congress MLA Kunal Ghosh outside party supreme Mamata Banerjee's residence here, a senior police officer said. Chandan Singh and Ravi Koyal were arrested following a complaint lodged by Ghosh late on Monday evening. "An FIR was registered immediately. One accused was detained in the night, and based on information gathered during his interrogation, the second accused was arrested on Tuesday morning," a senior police officer said.

Raut rejects Sena (UBT) MP defection buzz

MUMBAI

A day after Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Deshmukh met Shiv Sena minister Prataprao Jadhav, sparking speculation of a possible switch, Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said a "wrong picture was being painted" and asserted all parliamentarians remain firmly with the party.

Talking to reporters in New Delhi, Raut targeted the ruling BJP, accusing it of splitting parties and saying this was bad for the country's political health. "All Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs are together and will remain together," the



Rajya Sabha member said.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) has downplayed the speculation of an 'Operation Tiger' being afoot (by ruling Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde) to poach party MPs.

Notably, the mascot of the undivided Shiv Sena was a tiger drawn by party founder Bal Thackeray. Thackeray on Sunday called a meeting of

party MPs. Of the nine Lok Sabha members, only four --- Arvind Sawant, Anil Desai, Rajabhau Waze and Sanjay Patil --- attended the meeting in person, while Omprakash Rajee Nimalkar, Bhausaheb Wakchaure, Nagesh Bapurao Patil Ashtikar and Sanjay Deshmukh attended online.

Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Jadhav spoke to Thackeray over the phone, Raut said on Monday. The five MPs had cited different reasons to attend the meeting virtually.

Deshmukh, MP from Yavatmal-Washim, had said he skipped the meeting for family reasons.



How excessive heat damages hair and why henna creams can be a gentler alternative

Healthy hair doesn't lose its shine and strength overnight. Repeated exposure to excessive heat and harsh chemical treatments can gradually weaken hair fibers, leading to dryness, breakage, and fading colour over time



CLELIA CECILIA ANGELON

Hair damage rarely happens overnight. Dullness, dryness, loss of shine, breakage, and premature color fading are often the result of cumulative stress that builds up over time. One of the main contributors is frequent exposure to excessive heat, whether from intense sun exposure, blow dryers, flat irons, curling tools, or other heat sources.

When hair is repeatedly subjected to high temperatures, its natural moisture content decreases, making the fiber more vulnerable to dryness, porosity, and reduced strength. In many cases, these effects are ampli-

fied when combined with repeated chemical treatments.

What Excessive Heat Does to Hair

The cuticle, the outer protective layer of the hair, helps retain moisture and preserve the integrity of the hair fiber. Frequent exposure to excessive heat can gradually compromise this protective barrier, leading to frizz, loss of shine, and increased fragility.

Heat styling tools used at very high temperatures can accelerate the evaporation of water from within the hair shaft, contributing to structural changes that weaken the fiber over time. For this reason, regular exposure to intense heat requires additional care to help maintain healthy-looking hair.

The Role of Chemical Coloring Processes

While heat contributes to hair wear and tear, one of the most significant factors associated with cumulative



damage in color-treated hair is the repeated use of alkaline agents commonly found in conventional hair color products.

Ingredients such as ammonia, ethanalamine, diethanolamine, and triethanolamine are used to open the cuticle and allow pigments to enter

or be lifted from the hair. While this process is effective for coloring, repeated exposure can increase porosity, contribute to dryness, and reduce the overall resilience of the hair fiber. Many consumers notice these effects through rougher texture, faster color fading, scalp sen-

sitivity, and a growing need for intensive conditioning and repair treatments.

How Henna Creams Work Differently

Henna creams offer a different approach to hair coloring. Rather than relying on aggressive alkaline



systems to alter the hair structure, henna deposits color in a gentler way that better respects the hair's natural integrity.

This characteristic can be especially beneficial for hair that is already exposed to frequent heat styling or has undergone multiple chemical treatments over time.

In addition, cream-based henna formulations have made the coloring pro-

cess more convenient by eliminating many of the preparation and application challenges traditionally associated with powdered henna, while preserving its plant-based origin.

A New Approach to Caring for Color-Treated Hair

Maintaining healthy hair involves multiple factors, but reducing excessive heat exposure and choosing gentler

coloring systems can make a meaningful difference in the appearance and condition of the hair over time.

As a result, more consumers are seeking alternatives that provide beautiful color without adding unnecessary chemical stress to the hair fiber. Henna creams represent one practical option for achieving that balance.

(The writer is a Founder & CEO of Surya Brasil)

Nia Sharma shares unique take on how fame works today



Television actress Nia Sharma has shared a unique perspective on fame. She offered her thoughts on how stardom is perceived in today's fast-moving entertainment industry.

In her recent post, she compared the nature of modern fame to something instantly accessible and widely enjoyed. Taking to Instagram, the 'Naagin' actress posted her sultry video and wrote, "Fame today is like instant noodles. everyone enjoys!" In the clip, Nia is seen dressed in a shimmering, stylish saree and striking different sultry poses for the camera. Notably, her 'Ek Hazaron Main Meri Behna Hai' co-star and dear friend Krystle Dsouza commented, "For 2 mins max."

In April, Nia Sharma and Krystle D'Souza, who are known for their

on-screen sisterly bond in 'Ek Hazaron Mein Meri Behna Hai,' were spotted enjoying a fun-filled long drive in Nia's luxury car. Krystle also took to her social media account and shared a light-hearted video of the duo having a great time during the ride. She captioned it as, "High on coffee and some careless whispers."

Nia often shares her videos and photos on social media.

On the work front, Nia is widely known for her performances in television shows such as "Behenein," "Ek Hazaron Mein Meri Behna Hai," "Meri Durga," and "Kaal - Ek Agnipariksha." In 2020, she participated in "Khatron Ke Khiladi: Made in India" and emerged as the winner. She has also appeared in popular web series including "Twisted" and "Jamai 2.0."

Soha Ali Khan talks about passing down her favourite childhood toy to daughter Inaaya

Soha Ali Khan has spoken about how her favourite toy, whom she lovingly named Elliott, shaped her childhood and also revealed that she passed it down to her daughter, Inaaya Naumi Kemmu, as the actress wanted her little one to experience the same joy of creating her own little world.

In a nostalgic video, Soha reflected on her favourite childhood companion, a stuffed toy dog named Elliott, and the countless adventures she created alongside her siblings, Saif Ali Khan and Saba Ali Khan.

Soha shared in the video: "One of my most favourite summer vacation memories is just sitting with Bhai, with my sister Apa and making up stories around Elliott. One of us would start the story, another would continue it, and third would add a twist; and by the end of the afternoon, Elliott had travelled the world, solved mysteries, and made the most unlikely friends."

The actress recalled how



her brother Saif Ali Khan would "hide clues around the house" and her sister Saba Ali Khan Pataudi "would draw up a treasure map."

She added: "And I would lead the investigation through Elliott. I remember entire afternoons just disappearing as we solved mysteries that basically existed only in our imaginations."

"It was never really about the toy itself. It was about

everything our imagination allowed it to become," she said. Soha sees those same qualities come alive in her daughter, Inaaya.

"When Inaaya was born, I really wanted her to experience that same joy of creating her own little world, so starting with Elliott; I gave Elliott to her and now her favourite toy is stuffed animals. One day she is reading to them, she's cooking for them, she's teaching them

lessons," she shared. Soha said that watching her imagination take over is "honestly one of my favourite things."

The actress took to the caption section, where she mentioned that "a toy is never just a toy."

"It's an adventure waiting to happen - a window to imagination, create, and the beginning of some of our most cherished childhood memories. I watched my first #ToyStory movie with my family and the legacy has been such a big part of my childhood and growing up years!" She added: "As Disney and Pixar's Toy Story 5 releases in cinemas, what I love most is that this new chapter not only reunites us with Woody, Buzz Lightyear, Jessie and the gang, but also asks a very important question for today's children and parents: how do we continue to nurture imagination in a world increasingly shaped by screens?"

Disney and Pixar's Toy Story 5 releases in India on June 19.

CROSSWORD

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

DOWN

2 A soft felt hat (6)

3 Abrasion (6)

4 Light source (3)

5 Cooked in an oven (5)

6 Sightseer (7)

7 Vessels for ashes (4)

8 Spell (6)

12 Full of pathogens (5)

13 Prolong vowels (5)

14 Openly manifest (5)

15 Hindu goddess of war (5)

16 Trunk (5)

18 Plume or pride oneself (5)

19 Small onion (7)

21 Bottom of the crankcase (3,3)

22 Reach or gain (6)

23 Distinctive periods (6)

25 You receive them on your birthday? (5)

26 Prod (4)

28 Jamaican popular music (3)

ACROSS

1 Kick up ____ (1,4)

6 Paint solvent (5)

9 Gallery custodian (7)

10 Embellish (5)

11 Deprive of weapons (5)

12 Toothed wheels (5)

13 Let or allowed to fall (7)

15 Small spot (3)

17 Wild party (4)

18 False or insincere, as a prefix (6)

19 Intelligent (5)

20 Deserving (6)

22 Grows old (4)

24 Illuminated (3)

25 Nazi secret police (7)

26 Clear (5)

27 Reel (5)

28 Cheekiness (5)

29 Thor Heyerdahl's raft (3-4)

30 Beginning (5)

31 Worry (5)

Solution to June 16

SUDOKU

7

9

8

6

3

2

1

6

9

5

1

8

9

6

3

1

2

3

2

7

4

6

2

1

4

9

2

6

2

9

1

4

7

8

3

5

1

8

3

6

9

5

4

7

2

7

4

5

8

2

3

6

7

8

4

2

5

1

2

1

8

3

5

9

7

6

4

5

7

4

2

6

1

3

9

8

3

6

2

9

1

8

5

4

7

4

9

7

5

3

2

1

8

6

8

5

1

4

7

6

9

2

3

Solution to June 16

'Western wear kinda gal' Zeenat Aman reveals Manish Malhotra's trick to make her comfortable in sarees

Veteran actress Zeenat Aman, who is often dubbed the queen of Instagram, has shared how celebrity fashion designer and producer Manish Malhotra ensured comfort for her on the sets of her film 'Bun Tikki'.

On Monday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a few pictures of herself wearing sarees on the sets of the film. The actress shared while she has a natural affinity for western styling, Manish ensured she feels comfortable wearing sarees. The trick was that Manish turned all sarees by making them ready to wear. She penned a long note in the caption as she wrote, "Shooting 'Bun Tikki' was such a sweet, endearing experience. Working on it showed me how much I have grown to appreciate gentle stories that unravel human intricacies without the "pow boom bang" aggression of masala formula flicks. My wardrobe for the



film was exquisite, and I felt reinvented in the saris @manishmalhotra05 designed for me. Now it's evident that I'm more of a western wear kinda gal, so Manish eased me back into traditional clothes by making each of these saris "ready to wear". Sheer genius."

She further mentioned, "That made 12 hour shoot days and long hours of styling oh so comfortable. There is no doubt great beauty and legacy to draping a sari, but for those of us who don't

have the patience or skill, this is the ultimate hack. Ladies, have you tried wearing a sari in this style? Your thoughts?"

Earlier, the actress took a trip down memory lane and reflected on how her return to the screen after the birth of her first son, Azaan, was possible only because of the support of her mother.

She revealed she was going through a rough patch in her married life at the time and just wanted to escape her personal life.



OTT deals crisis puts big-budget films under financial pressure

SUHAS SISTU

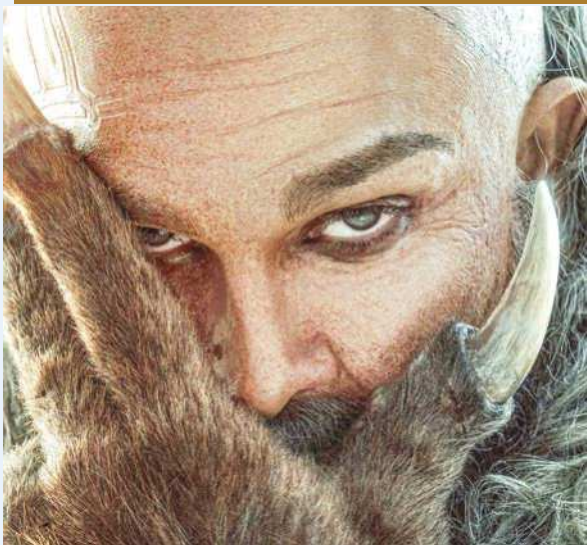
The Indian film industry is facing a new financial challenge as OTT deals, once considered a major source of revenue recovery, have witnessed a significant decline. Streaming platforms are reportedly reducing acquisition budgets, leaving producers of several big-budget films under mounting pressure.

Industry sources indicate that major upcoming projects, including Varanasi, Raaka, and Toxic, are finding it difficult to secure digital deals at their expected valuations. While producers have quoted premium prices for streaming rights, OTT platforms are reportedly offering less than one-third of those amounts, creating a substantial gap between expectations and market realities.

The slowdown has become a major concern because digital rights have played a crucial role in helping producers recover a significant portion of production investments in recent years. With production costs and star remunerations continuing to rise, filmmakers are now relying more heavily on theatrical collections to achieve profitability.

Several Telugu and Hindi films are reportedly yet to finalize their digital agreements due to pricing dis-

The sharp decline in OTT acquisition prices has created fresh challenges for film producers across India. With digital platforms significantly reducing their spending, several high-profile projects are struggling to close streaming deals, increasing dependence on theatrical performance for financial recovery.



agreements. Even some of the country's most anticipated projects are facing uncertainty in this area. Reports suggest that Shah Rukh Khan's King is yet to conclude its OTT deal, while films such as Vishwambara starring Chiranjeevi and Prabhas' Fauzi are also awaiting digital partners before key release-related decisions can be finalized. Industry insiders claim that many

streaming platforms have informed producers that their annual content acquisition budgets have already been allocated, making fresh negotiations increasingly difficult. This has led to growing anxiety among producers who have invested heavily in large-scale productions.

As the OTT market undergoes a correction phase, filmmakers are being forced to rethink recovery strate-



gies. For now, the success of many big-ticket films may depend largely on their theatrical performance, mark-

ing a significant shift from the OTT-driven business model that dominated the industry in recent years.

'Nagabandham' promises a grand visual spectacle: DOP Soundararajan

With its worldwide release scheduled for July 3, Nagabandham - The Secret Treasure is shaping up to be one of the most ambitious Telugu films of the year. Starring Virat Karna in the lead role and directed by Abhishek Nama, the epic adventure thriller has already created significant buzz through its promotional content. Now, cinematographer S. Soundararajan has shared fascinating insights into the making of the film, revealing the scale, research, and technical efforts that went into bringing the story to life.

According to Soundararajan, the film's biggest highlights are the visually stunning Anantha Padmanabha Swamy temple sequences and a grand climax designed to leave audiences mesmerized. He explained that extensive research was carried out before production began, with the director, art director, and cinematography team visiting several temples, including the famous Anantha Padmanabha Swamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, to study intricate architectural and cultural details.

The production team then recreated a fictional temple setting called "Srirangapuram," blending influences from iconic South Indian temples. Massive sets were constructed on a scale rarely seen in Telugu cinema, presenting one of the biggest challenges for the cinematography department. Soundararajan revealed that advanced drone technology and specialized camera equipment were used to capture the enormous sets in immersive single-shot sequences.

The cinematographer also praised director Abhishek Nama's vision, describing him as a filmmaker with exceptional clarity and storytelling ambition. He noted that the makers never compromised on quality, with certain sequences reportedly mounted on a massive budget to achieve the desired grandeur and realism.



Produced by Kishore Annapureddy and Nishita Nagireddy under the Nick Studios banner, Nagabandham also stars Nabha Natesh, Aishwarya Menon, Jagapathi Babu, Mahesh Manjrekar, and Rishabh Sawhney in pivotal roles.

Soundararajan further lauded lead actor Virat Karna's dedication, revealing that he performed demanding scenes in extreme weather conditions and remained committed despite health challenges during filming.

Blending mythology, fiction, adventure, and drama, Nagabandham aims to offer audiences a visually rich and spiritually immersive cinematic experience. With grand visuals, extensive VFX work, and a divine musical backdrop, the film is expected to deliver a unique theatrical spectacle when it arrives in cinemas on July 3.

'Odiyan' marks Dharma Productions' Malayalam debut; Prithviraj in lead

Dharma Productions is expanding its footprint into Malayalam cinema with the announcement of Odiyan - The Age of Illusion, an ambitious folklore horror thriller starring Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead role. The project marks the first Malayalam production venture for the renowned Bollywood banner and brings together Dharma Productions and Prithviraj Productions for a prestigious collaboration. The film will be directed by acclaimed filmmaker Rahul Sadasivan, who earned widespread praise for his atmospheric horror dramas Bhoothakaalam and Bramayugam. Joining Prith-

viraj in a pivotal role is actress Manju Warrier, further elevating expectations surrounding the project.

The makers unveiled a striking announcement poster that immediately captured attention. Featuring a skeletal figure curled inside an ornate antique mirror, the artwork hints at a dark and mysterious narrative rooted in supernatural themes. The imagery reflects elements of black magic, ancient rituals, and shapeshifting folklore that form the foundation of the story.

Set in the 19th century, Odiyan - The Age of Illusion draws inspiration from Kerala's legendary Odiyan folklore. According to popular myths, Odiyans were feared shapeshifters believed to possess mysti-



cal powers, allowing them to transform into animals and move unseen under the cover of darkness. Known for his unique storytelling style, Rahul Sadasivan is expected to present the folklore through a gripping and immersive horror lens. The film is being produced by Karan Johar, Adar Poonawalla, Apoorva Mehta, and Supriya Menon. Mounted on a grand scale, the project

is planned as a multilingual release in Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi, enabling it to reach audiences across India. With a celebrated director, a strong cast, and a fascinating mythological backdrop, Odiyan - The Age of Illusion has already emerged as one of the most anticipated horror films in development.

Production is expected to begin shortly, with the makers targeting a theatrical release next year.

'GUNDE PELIPOTHONDHE' FROM 'SRINIVASA MANGAPURAM' HIGHLIGHTS FRESH ROMANCE

The makers of Srinivasa Mangapuram have unveiled the film's third single, Gunde Pelipothondhe, offering audiences a delightful glimpse into the romantic world crafted by director Ajay Bhupathi. The song, which celebrates the innocence and excitement of first love, has quickly caught the attention of music lovers with its melodious composition and vibrant visuals. Featuring debutant Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni and actress Rasha Thadani, who is making her Telugu cinema debut, the track showcases the blossoming emotions of a young man enchanted by a girl who changes his world. Set against a picturesque temple backdrop, the song captures youthful affection, admiration, and the magical feeling of falling in love for the first time. Music composer GV Prakash Kumar delivers a soothing and enchanting melody that blends classical



influences with contemporary sounds. Complemented by Oscar-winning lyricist Chandrabose's heartfelt lyrics and Anurag Kulkarni's soulful vocals, the song creates an emotional and memorable listening experience. The elegant

flute passages, rich orchestration, and violin arrangements further elevate its appeal.

Visually, Gunde Pelipothondhe stands out with colorful frames and graceful choreography by Bhanu Master. Jaya Krishna Ghat-

tamaneni impresses with his natural screen presence, while Rasha Thadani brings charm and elegance to the screen. Their refreshing chemistry has emerged as one of the song's major highlights.

Directed by Ajay Bhupathi, who earned acclaim with Mangalavaaram, Srinivasa Mangapuram also features veteran actor Mohan Babu in a powerful antagonist role. Produced by P. Kiran and presented by Ashwini Dutt, the film is generating strong curiosity with each promotional release.

Backed by a talented technical team including cinematographer Jayakrishna ISC, editor Madhav Kumar Gulapati, production designer Sahi Suresh, and action choreographer Real Sathish, the film promises a blend of romance, emotion, and engaging storytelling. The makers are expected to announce the release date soon.



Pooja Hegde showcases fashion-forward style

Actress Pooja Hegde is enjoying a successful phase in her career as her latest Bollywood entertainer Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai continues to attract audiences in theatres. The romantic comedy, directed by David Dhawan, features Varun Dhawan, Mrunal Thakur, and Pooja Hegde in lead roles and has been generating positive buzz since its release on June 5. Amid the film's encouraging response, Pooja has also caught the attention of fans with her latest stunning photoshoot. The actress showcased her fashion-forward style in a graceful sage-green corset dress that perfectly blended elegance and contemporary glamour. The outfit featured delicate lace-trimmed layered hems, adding a soft and sophisticated touch to her overall appearance.

The photographs, captured during a night-time shoot, highlight Pooja's effortless charm and confidence. Her flowing jet-black hair, caught dramatically in the breeze, added a striking visual appeal to the images. Sparkling drop earrings and stylish stacked rings completed the look, enhancing the actress's refined fashion statement. Known for her versatility both on-screen and off-screen, Pooja continues to maintain a strong presence in the entertainment industry. Her latest appearance has received appreciation from fans on social media, with many praising her elegant styling and radiant look. With a successful film currently running in theatres and several anticipated ventures in the pipeline, Pooja Hegde appears to be enjoying one of the most promising phases of her career. Her combination of screen presence, fashion appeal, and consistent performances continues to make her one of the most sought-after actresses in Indian cinema.

'Save The Tigers Season 3' premiere creates buzz

The much-anticipated Save The Tigers Season 3 is all set to stream on JioHotstar from June 19, and the excitement surrounding the popular Telugu web series reached new heights with a grand premiere event held at AMB Cinemas in Hyderabad on Monday evening. The star-studded screening witnessed an overwhelming response from celebrities, media representatives, and special guests, turning the evening into a celebration of one of the most successful regional OTT franchises. The red-carpet event featured glamorous appearances, exclusive interactions, and a special screening that left attendees entertained and laughing throughout.

Several prominent personalities from the entertainment industry attended the premiere, including Sundeep Kishan, Kamakshi Bhaskarla, Rag Mayur, VJ Sunny, Kalyan Padala, Chaitanya Rao, Ven-



katesh Kakumanu, Karthik Ratnam, Aditya Mandala, Srinath Maganti, Mukku Avinash, Nirupam, and Kireeti Damaraju. The screening received an enthusiastic response, particularly for the performances of Priyadarshi, Vennela Kishore, Jordara Sujatha, Krishna Chaitanya, Deviyani Sharma, Abhinav Gomati, and Pavanigangireddy. The new season revolves around the lives of three couples while introducing a fantasy element through a divine character portrayed by Vennela Kishore, adding a

fresh dimension to the narrative. Having emerged as one of the most-watched Telugu web series on OTT platforms, Save The Tigers earned widespread popularity through its relatable humor, quirky characters, and family-friendly entertainment. With Season 3 introducing a unique fantasy twist, expectations are soaring among fans eager to witness the next chapter of the beloved franchise.

The countdown has officially begun for what promises to be another entertaining and laughter-filled season.

Is Dhanush quietly preparing son Yatra for a grand debut?

The buzz around star kids entering the film industry never seems to fade, and the latest name creating excitement is Yatra, the son of Tamil superstar Dhanush. While the actor has repeatedly maintained that his son is still young and that there is no immediate plan to launch him, fresh industry gossip suggests that things might be moving faster than expected behind the scenes. According to reports doing the rounds in film circles, Yatra could be gearing up for his acting debut sooner than anyone imagined. Interestingly, the project is said to be backed by Dhanush himself, making it a special launch vehicle for his son. Though there has been no official confirmation, the speculation has gained momentum after reports claimed that pre-production work is already underway.

Adding more fuel to the rumours, sources suggest that filmmaker Rajkumar Periasamy is likely to direct the project, while popular composer GV Prakash could be on board to score the music. There is



also chatter that Yatra has already undergone a look test and that the makers are considering a formal launch event in the near future. What makes the gossip even more believable is Dhanush's recent decision to introduce his nephew Pavish to cinema through Nilavukku Enmel Ennadi Kobam. With the actor already encouraging young talent within his family, many believe Yatra's debut may only be a matter of time.

For now, fans are eagerly waiting for an official announcement. Until then, the question remains—will Yatra be the next star from the Dhanush family to step into the spotlight?