



THE Hans India



Emotional availability is the new attraction: The rise of affectional dating

Cool indifference, mystery, and emotional distance were once rewarded in the dating culture. The less invested you were, the more desirable you seemed.

Fasting across religious faiths

While a vrata covers a wide range of ritual vows in Hinduism, the Christian approach is centered on voluntarily humbling oneself before God through fasting, prayer, and sacrifice to focus on spiritual growth.

Odisha gears up for Prez, PM visit

As Odisha gears up for the visit of President Droupadi Murmu and PM Modi on June 20, the government on Tuesday said the State will get developmental projects worth several thousand crores of rupees on the occasion.

Amarnath hits back at TDP over 'fabricated' row

Pointing out to rising number of murders, attacks on women, political violence, missing children cases, lock-up deaths and the escape of a ganja smuggler from police custody, Amarnath questioned the HM's silence over such burning issues.

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KEEP HORMUZ OPEN: MODI

Raises safety of seafarers with Trump at G7 Summit

EVIAN-LES-BAINS

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged US President Donald Trump to ensure the safety of seafarers and maintain freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, highlighting India's dependence on the strategically vital maritime route amid efforts to secure a peace agreement with Iran.

During a bilateral meeting with Trump on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in France, Modi said the reopening and protection of the Strait of Hormuz was crucial not only for regional stability but also for the global economy. "You and I agree that keeping the Strait of Hormuz open is vital for the global economy," Modi said, stressing that India has consistently advocated unrestricted maritime movement.

Modi and Trump held wide-ranging talks focusing on the proposed bilateral trade deal, bilateral defence and security ties and the West Asia crisis.

"Lakhs of Indian seafarers operate in maritime sector; I believe that their security is equally important," PM Modi told President Trump. India lost 3 Indian seafarers in an



US President Donald Trump with PM Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France, on Wednesday

attack by US Navy last well at MT Settebello. Two more vessels with Indian crew on board were also attacked in the same week.

Modi thanked President Trump for his efforts to restore peace in West Asia and expressed hope for a lasting resolution to the conflict. "We have always said that

there should be freedom of navigation...Lakhs of Indian seafarers operate in the maritime trade sector. I believe that their security is equally important. I am confident that the deal (with Iran) will have provisions for the security of the seafarers," Modi said in his media comments.

Continued on Page 7

DON'S BIG PROMISE 'IF INDIA IS ATTACKED, WE WILL BE THERE FOR MODI'

Says Trump on defence ties with India

EVIAN-LES-BAINS: While commenting on the defence relationship between the US and India, US President Donald Trump said even though the countries do not have a formal defence agreement, Washington would be there for New Delhi. Answering a question about defence ties, Trump said, "I think it's a great relationship. Cont'd on P7

'A TOTAL KILLER, A TOUGH TRADER'

Trump all praise for PM at G7 bilateral

EVIAN-LES-BAINS: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday showered praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in France's Evian on the sidelines of the G7 Summit 2026. Assigning adjectives like "a killer and a tough trader" to PM Modi, Trump said he has immense respect for the leader. "He's a very tough



negotiator... You look at this man. I'll give you a lesson. He's the most beautiful-

looking man. He looks so nice, like an angel. But actually, he's as tough as a killer... But he looks so good. So he gets you by surprise. There are a few people like this," Trump said as the two leaders held a bilateral meeting in France. Continued on Page 7



'We're the most famous couple'

MELONI TELLS PM MODI AT G7 SUMMIT

EVIAN-LES-BAINS

LEADERS of the Group of Seven (G7) gathered in France's Evian-les-Bains on Tuesday to discuss key global challenges, reaffirm their support for Ukraine, and welcome

the breakthrough deal between the US and Iran. Amid this serious event, a brief interaction between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni has caught all the attention on social media,

with the 'Melodi' buzz making a return. A viral video shows PM Modi and Meloni greeting each other and shaking hands moments before lining up for a group photo with other leaders, including US President Donald Trump. Cont'd on P7



Modi flags concerns over impact of West Asia crisis

REPORT: P7



Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reviews agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture sectors at the Secretariat in Amaravati on Wednesday

EL NINO CONCERNS

CM calls for crop diversification

- ▶ Directs officials to focus on market-driven cultivation, natural farming
- ▶ Seeks solutions for problems of chilli, tobacco, totapuri mango growers

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed officials to formulate crop cultivation strategies suited to the changing weather conditions associated with the El Nino phenomenon, with a special focus on crop diversification and market-linked farming.

Reviewing the agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture sectors at the Secretariat, the Chief Minister instructed officials to guide farmers on the cultivation of agricultural, commercial and

horticultural crops based on last year's experiences and prevailing market trends.

Naidu emphasized the need to accelerate the adoption of natural farming across the state and stressed the importance of certification and traceability to improve market access. He said he would personally participate in awareness programmes to encourage farmers to adopt scientific and sustainable cultivation practices.

The Chief Minister directed officials to address issues affecting chilli, tobacco and totapuri mango farmers.

Continued on Page 7

WINDOWS

India, EU agree to sign FTA by year-end

EVIAN-LES-BAINS: India and the European Union will sign the ambitious free trade agreement

by the end of this year, top EU leader Ursula von der Leyen said on Wednesday after holding talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi that largely focused on boosting two-way economic engagement against the backdrop of a fragile geopolitical environment. In the meeting, held on the sidelines of the G7 summit in this French commune, the two sides also resolved to step up security and defence cooperation. Besides Von der Leyen, the President of the EU Commission, the meeting was joined by European Council President Antonio Costa.

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Competitive exams may soon come with a nationwide lockdown

GOING THE GOA WAY!

AP introduces beach shack bar policy



HANS NEWS SERVICE VIJAYAWADA

THE Andhra Pradesh government has announced a new Excise Policy under which bar licences will be granted to beach shacks along the State's coastline, aiming to promote coastal tourism, generate employment, and create a transparent regulatory framework for tourism-linked enterprises.

The policy, which will be effective from September 1, 2026, to August 31, 2029, follows recommendations made by the Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted to review and reform the State's excise policies. The

government has approved detailed guidelines for the establishment and operation of bars in beach shacks and notified the same through an Extraordinary Gazette issued on Wednesday.

Andhra Pradesh has a coastline stretching over 975 kilometres across 12 coastal districts, offering significant potential for tourism development. Although a regulatory framework for beach shacks was introduced in 2016, no licences were issued and the policy lapsed in 2022. The new policy seeks to revive the concept with stronger safeguards and clear operational guidelines.

Continued on Page 7



Telegram moves Delhi HC against govt curbs

Centre claims 'shocking' activities on platform

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Centre to file its reply on Telegram's plea against its order temporarily restricting access to the messaging app ahead of the June 21 NEET-UG 2026 re-examination. As the matter came up before a vacation bench of Justice Tejas Karia, Telegram's counsel claimed the curbs were illegal, but Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta defended the government action, saying the platform was being misused and he would reveal "something shocking" on Thursday. The court adjourned the hearing to Thursday and issued notice to the Centre. During the hearing, Telegram's counsel questioned the legality of the government order blocking the platform. Cont'd on Page 7

Uddhav Sena stares at split

6 MPs set to join Shinde camp ■ NDA to get boost in Lok Sabha

MUMBAI

SIX Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs reportedly formed a separate group in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday and submitted a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The six MPs are expected to join the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Friday, the party's foundation day. Sena functionaries said the process of forming the separate group was completed smoothly.

The Shiv Sena (UBT) has nine MPs in the Lok Sabha.



Barring Arvind Sawant, Anil Desai and Rajabhai Waze, all the remaining MPs are understood to have joined the new group.

Sena (UBT) MPs Sanjay Raut, Sawant and Desai also met Birla and urged him not

to recognise any separate group formed by defecting Sena (UBT) MPs. However, Sena functionaries claimed that Birla had recognised the group of six MPs as a separate bloc.

Continued on Page 7

SAMAJWADI SPLIT NEXT?

- ▶ Claims UP minister
- ▶ Akhilesh responds

NEW DELHI: Amid turmoil in TMC and buzz of a brewing split in Shiv Sena (UBT), speculation of a possible split in former Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (SP) surfaced after state minister OP Rajbhar claimed that the Opposition party could face a major exodus. Continued on Page 7

DEAL NOT FINAL: TRUMP

Changes tune on Tehran ■ Threatens to drop bombs

EVIAN-LES-BAINS

JUST as things were looking up for the peace efforts in the Middle East, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday crushed hopes again, with fresh warnings to Iran.

During his remarks at the G7 Summit in France, Trump said that no deal had been finalised with Iran and warned he would



resume "dropping bombs" and go back to shooting if Tehran did not abide by its obligations.

Trump clarified that only

a memorandum of understanding was in the works, and that no deal had been finalised. "If I don't like it, we will go back to shooting at them," Trump said, adding: "If they don't behave, we'll go right back to dropping bombs right smack in the middle of their head." He made the remarks sitting alongside Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Continued on Page 7



Take yoga to every household: CM to officials

Baba Ramdev to join CM at Undavalli for Yoga Day fete

HANS NEWS SERVICE

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday directed officials to take yoga to every household in Andhra Pradesh by integrating the practice with the state's flagship Sanjeevani health programme, while calling for the successful implementation of the Yogandhra initiative.

Reviewing preparations for International Yoga Day celebrations at the Secretariat, the Chief Minister stressed the need to encourage people to adopt yoga as part of their daily lives and focus on preventive healthcare. He instructed officials to prepare a year-long action plan under the theme "Yoga for Every Household" and suggested instituting special awards next year for yoga master trainers who deliver exceptional performance.

Continued on Page 7

Meta starts charging for Insta, FB & WhatsApp

NEW DELHI

Launches a new 'Meta One' subscription brand



algorithm-driven social feed of the last 15 years is winding down.

Analysts believe that it's an urgent attempt to offset soaring AI costs as Mark Zuckerberg tries to play catch up in the AI space where it is lagging behind. Meta increased its 2026 capital expenditure forecast to an unprecedented \$125 billion - \$145 billion, primarily to fund AI compute infrastructure, data centres, and higher component costs.

Instagram Plus costs \$3.99 a month. Subscribers get story insights showing how many

people rewatched a story, unlimited custom audience lists beyond Close Friends, the ability to spotlight a story for a week, the option to extend a story past 24 hours, a preview mode that lets one to watch

other people's stories without showing up as a viewer, and Super Heart animated reactions. One can also post straight to the profile without it appearing in followers' feeds. While Facebook Plus

is also \$3.99 a month and gives you a similar bundle, focused on profile customisation, reactions and analytics, WhatsApp Plus is cheaper at \$2.99. "It is not about social expression. It is about personalising the messaging app: custom themes, ring-tones, more pinned chats, list customisation and premium stickers," say the experts.

Then there is the AI tier. Meta is testing Meta One Plus at \$7.99 and Meta One Premium at \$19.99 for heavier Meta AI users. The Premium plan unlocks deeper reasoning

on complex tasks and more image and video generation across Meta's apps. Free Meta AI access remains but with usage limits. These plans start testing next month in Singapore, Guatemala and Bolivia.

For creators and businesses, Meta One Essential at \$14.99 bundles the Verified badge, impersonation protection and an enhanced linksheet. The top tier, Meta One Advanced at \$49.99, promises higher placement in Facebook and Instagram search, a bolder Follow button on Reels, automatic follow invitations, deeper competitive analytics and team access controls. Continued on Page 7

Idle-lying Rushikonda palatial structure to become a luxury resort

- The lavish Rushikonda structure to be developed into a luxury resort of international standards
 - Leading hospitality groups like Taj, The Leela, Atmosphere Core have expressed interest in revamping the facility
- The subcommittee suggested preserving one of the blocks of the complex as a cultural or heritage centre

RANI DEVALLA
VISAKHAPATNAM

AFTER two years of devising serious plans to convert the opulent sea-facing 'Rushikonda palace', built during the previous government's tenure, into a viable venture, the state cabinet subcommittee has finally proposed transforming the lavish structure into a luxury resort of international standards.

The luxury resort, to be developed under the public-private-partnership (PPP) model, aims at



A view of the Rushikonda palace in Visakhapatnam

ensuring productive utilisation of the asset built splurging public funds to the tune of Rs.500 crore and generating revenue.

With maintenance costs amounting to crores, the palatial structure became a white elephant for the Chandrababu Naidu-led government even if it remained idle and it took quite a while to figure out workable income-generating alternative.

After visiting the building multiple times, the state cabinet subcommittee, comprising Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh and Visakhapatnam district in-charge Minister Dola Sree Bala Veeranjanya Swamy, opined that allowing the palatial complex to

remain idle would increase maintenance costs.

Hence it recommended allocating the property to the hospitality sector so it could contribute to economic growth and the tourism sector.

Keeping Visakhapatnam people's sentiments in view, the committee suggested preserving one of the blocks of the complex as a cultural or heritage centre and it would be kept open for public visits.

The proposal will soon be placed before the state cabinet headed by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for the final nod.

After carrying out an extensive inspection of the building, the state cabinet subcommittee reviewed the architectural design and present condition of



Subcommittee members visiting Rushikonda palace in Visakhapatnam

the structures along with tourism and revenue officials.

This was followed by another review meeting with Tourism Department Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain, District Collector M Abhisikhth Kishore, GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg and senior officials from the revenue and tourism departments wherein the discussions centred on the future course of action.

Given the growing maintenance costs and feedback received from stakeholders and public, the subcommittee felt that operating the Rushikonda complex as a premium hospitality venture would be the most profit-generating alternative.

The ministers informed that several leading hospitality groups, including Taj, The Leela, Atmosphere Core and other reputed brands, have already expressed interest in revamping the idle-lying asset into an international luxury resort.

They informed that interested groups would soon be invited through an official notification, following a transparent process involving Request for Qualification (RFQ), eligibility assessment and prescribed timelines.

Following the committee's recommendations, the two-year-long wait to convert the lavish Rushikonda palace into a productive project has finally ended.



Anakapalli SP Tuhin Sinha and district police officials with the accused in Anakapalli on Wednesday

Anakapalli police bust global drug network; seize 213 kg ganja

HANS NEWS SERVICE
ANAKAPALLI

IN a major breakthrough against interstate and international drug trafficking, the Anakapalli police cracked a ganja smuggling network with links extending beyond national borders and seized 213.360 kilograms of ganja worth Rs.1.06 crore.

The operation was carried out on the directions of Anakapalli District Superintendent of Police Tuhin Sinha and under the supervision of Parawada Sub-Division Deputy Superintendent of Police B Mohan Rao and Parawada Circle Inspector R Mallikarjuna Rao.

Briefing details of the case at a media conference held at the District Police Office on Wednesday, SP Tuhin Sinha mentioned that main accused of the network Shaikh Ajmal Khan, hails from Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, while his family is currently residing in Narsipatnam of Anakapalli district.

Investigations revealed that Ajmal Khan has a significant international criminal background and maintained links with international drug syndicates.

According to the SP, Ajmal Khan was previously apprehended by Sri Lankan authorities in connection with narcotics trafficking.

During his arrest, Sri Lankan investigators reportedly recovered 495 grams of Methamphetamine and 8.583 kilograms of Hashish from his possession.

He was sent to the Boossa High Security Prison in Sri Lanka from 2022 to 2025 while the case remained under investigation.

Though granted bail by a Sri Lankan court, his passport remained in the custody of Sri Lankan authorities.

Anakapalli police

- Main accused Shaikh Ajmal Khan, previously jailed in Sri Lanka's high-security Boossa Prison for trafficking meth and hashish, illegally sneaked back into India via sea routes after submitting his passport to a Sri Lankan court
- Acting on a tip-off, a special team led by Parawada WSI GSV Mahalakshmi ambushed a car and its pilot bike escort at Lankalapalem junction, seizing 213.36 kg of agency-sourced ganja
- Anakapalli SP Tuhin Sinha revealed that the syndicate was moving Odisha-border contraband to Chennai and Vijayawada. Special teams are tracking hawala transactions and six absconding operatives
- Sinha felicitated the Parawada division police and the specialized 'Eagle Team' with cash rewards and commendation certificates for smashing the cross-border ring

identified that the main accused illegally re-entered India by seaway.

He allegedly established contact with a Tamil Nadu-based drug dealer identified as Raja and devised plans to transport ganja sourced from the Andhra Pradesh Agency areas to Vijayawada, Chennai and other destinations. During investigation, the SP informed that Ajmal Khan initially attempted to procure ganja by paying an advance of Rs.6 lakh to a group led by Shetty Ravikumar of Gomangi village in Pedabayalu mandal.

As the consignment was delayed, the accused sourced the ganja through Shyam from the Janaba area of Odisha.

The transportation arrangements were coordinated by Ajmal Khan's younger brother Shaikh Abdul Rehman and another person T Durga Prasad.

After receiving credible information, a special police team led by Parawada police station Woman Sub-Inspector (WSI) GSV Mahalakshmi conducted surveillance and vehicle checks at Lankalapalem junction on June 16.

While the accused were communicating through mobile phones and moving with a pilot motorcycle escorting a car carrying the contraband, the police team strategically intercepted and surrounded both the vehicles. A thorough search led to the seizure of a large quantity of ganja concealed in the car, resulting in the arrest of five accused persons.

Commending the officers and staff involved in the successful operation, SP Tuhin Sinha felicitated DSP B Mohan Rao, CI R Mallikarjuna Rao, WSI GSV Mahalakshmi, members of the Eagle Team and other police personnel with commendation certificates and cash rewards for their exemplary work in bursting the international drug network.

The five arrested accused were produced before the court and remanded. Special police teams have been deployed to trace rest of the accused Raja, Shyam, Mahadev, Askar, Abid and Bhadri who are involved in the case. The SP stated that a comprehensive investigation is underway to uncover the interstate drug trafficking channels and hawala money transactions allegedly linked to the syndicate.

AP witnessing Rs 23 lakh crore worth devtpt works: NDA Ministers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
ANAKAPALLI

THE coalition government is steering Andhra Pradesh towards rapid development after overcoming the financial constraints and setbacks faced during the previous five years, asserted Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha and Anakapalli in-charge and Minister for Mines and Geology Kollu Ravindra.

Addressing the 'Two years of NDA Government in AP' programme organised at NTR stadium here on Wednesday, the ministers said the NDA government in AP led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan is giving equal priority to both welfare and development, ensuring balanced growth across the state.

They stated that Andhra Pradesh is witnessing unprecedented development works valued at nearly Rs.23 lakh crore with projects worth Rs.4 lakh crore to Rs.5 lakh crore alone being undertaken in Anakapalli district.

They noted that a large-scale infrastructure, industrial and welfare initiatives are transforming the district into a major growth hub of the state.

Railway Standing Committee Chairman and Anakapalli Member of Parliament CM Ramesh said the NDA government at the Centre and the coalition government in the state

- Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha and District In-charge Minister Kollu Ravindra reveal that the state is witnessing unprecedented development works worth nearly Rs 23 lakh crore, with Anakapalli district alone securing projects worth Rs 4 lakh crore to Rs 5 lakh crore
- Addressing the 'Two Years of NDA Government' event, the ministers asserted that the Chandrababu Naidu-Pawan Kalyan administration has successfully overcome past financial setbacks to balance welfare with rapid infrastructure growth
- Railway Standing Committee Chairman and Anakapalli MP CM Ramesh highlighted how coordinated governance under the NDA's "double-engine" model has fast-tracked state growth, pointing to a massive jump in the national railway budget to Rs 2.65 lakh crore

have delivered remarkable progress through coordinated governance. He said the concept of a double-engine government has accelerated development works across the state with strong support from the Centre.

Highlighting the achievements of the Union government, CM Ramesh said the railway budget has increased significantly from Rs.25,000 crore to Rs.2.65 lakh crore under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, enabling rapid expansion and modernisation of railway infrastructure across the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Pendurthi MLA Panchakarla Ramesh Babu stated the alliance government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and

Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan is fulfilling the promises made to the people during the elections. He said development works worth at least Rs.1,000 crore are being taken up in every constituency while simultaneously addressing public welfare commitments and financial obligations.

A rally was carried out from the Jana Sena Party office in Anakapalli to the venue. The stadium reverberated with slogans supporting the coalition government and its development agenda.

MLAs Konathala Ramakrishna, Kalidindi Surya Naga Sanyasi Raju, Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy, Sundarapu Vijay Kumar and MLC Vepada Chiranjeevi Rao, along with several public representatives and party leaders, attended the programme.



National convenor of Jal Biradari and environmentalist Bolisetty Satyanarayana briefing the media in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday

Bolisetty slams govt for violating green norms for data centres

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

THE government deliberately downgraded mega data centres, which should be strictly classified under 'category A' due to stringent environmental laws, to 'category B2' to grant environmental clearances, national convenor of Jal Biradari and environmentalist Bolisetty Satyanarayana raised strong objections over government regulatory violations.

Referring to recent statements made by Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat assuring that the proposed data centres and major industrial projects pose no threat to water resources and the environment, Bolisetty Satyanarayana disagreed with the MP's explanation.

"Classifying a mega data centre as 'category B2' in the Google project bypasses the mandatory public hearing and comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes required for Category A," Satyanarayana objected, pointing out that issuing environmental clearances swiftly and laying the foundation stone immediately is entirely wrong.

This is an 'illegal' move designed to suppress citizens' voices and conceal the environmental damage caused by such projects. In the name of 'ease of doing business', Satyanarayana alleged, the city witnesses 'ease of doing destruction', which is a severe ecological onslaught and a major blow to the peaceful life of the people. He demanded classification of the proposed data centres under category

A and a halt to progress made without central-level screening and public consultation.

Responding to the MP's assurance of water supply through Polavaram, Satyanarayana asked, "What if Polavaram water becomes unavailable due to drought or some other reasons? Data centres will deplete Visakhapatnam's groundwater.

The proposed alternative desalination plants will discharge chemical brine into the ocean, destroying marine wealth and wiping out fishermen's livelihoods."

Satyanarayana further warned that these projects, with a peak load capacity of 700-900 MVA, lack adequate renewable energy sources at the ground level and cautioned that it will strain regular power grid, leading to frequent power cuts and tariff hikes for citizens.

Talking about growing city temperatures, the national convenor said cutting down trees along the coast and massive heat emitted by the data centres will further alter Vizag's climate, turning it into a concrete furnace.

Jal Biradari demanded an immediate halt to the data centre works until an independent environmental audit is conducted democratically in the presence of the public. "Data centres are essential for Andhra Pradesh's economic growth and employment in the digital age. However, if we fail to plan ahead and enforce strict regulations, keeping Virginia's experiences in view, the environment will be destroyed before Vizag could even become an IT hub," he added.



Home Minister V Anitha and Anakapalli MP CM Ramesh, among others, with fishermen accessories at the 'Two Years of NDA Government in AP' event celebrated in Anakapalli on Wednesday



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1.	Loan Exposure Under Customer ID: 39081 LAN : HFS / LAN - 4375024101011661 & 4375024101024100 1. Jagadeesh Centring Work (Borrower) Add. Door No 1-147/ A, Anandapuram Village, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, 530052 2. Chandaka Jagadeesh (Co-borrower) Add. D No 1- 147/ A, SC BC Colony, Anandapuram, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, 530052 3. Chandaka Mani (Co-borrower) Add. D No 1- 147/ A, SC BC Colony, Anandapuram, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, 530052 4. Sandaka Mohan (Co-borrower) Add. Door No 2- 7/ 1, Cheemalapalle, Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, 530047	All that piece and parcel of land with extent of 82.84 sq yards or along with RCC slab residential building having built up area of 553.6 sq ft, situated at Village Asst No.246, Current No.116410A002001477, of covered by Gramakartam Sy No.161 of Anandapuram Village, Anandapuram Mandal, Visakhapatnam Dist., within the limits of SFO, Anandapuram being bounded by:- East: House of Daria Badrayya, South: House of Adada Satyarao, West: House of Kuppa Prasad, North: Road. Measurements: East wing : 46.6 feet or 14.21 mts, South wing: 16 feet or 4.88 mts, West wing: 46.6 feet or 14.21 mts, North wing: 16 feet or 4.88 mts. Together with anything attached to the earth or permanently fastened to anything attached to the earth with all present and future structures thereon.	13/04/2026 Rs. 20,96,279/- (Rupees) Twenty Lakh Ninety-Six Thousand Two Hundred & Seventy-Nine Only	15.06.2026

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Odisha gears up for Prez, PM visit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

AS Odisha gears up for the visit of President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 20, the government on Tuesday said the State will get developmental projects worth several thousand crores of rupees on the occasion. The country's two highest constitutional functionaries are scheduled to attend a function marking the second anniversary of Odisha's BJP government. "June 20 is also the birth anniversary of our President who is coming to her 'karma bhoomi' Rairangpur in Mayurbhanj district. On this day, both the President and the Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay foundation stones for a number of development projects collectively valued at several thousand crore rupees," an official statement said. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi reviewed the security and other preparations for the ceremony. The projects waiting to be



launched by Murmu and Modi included the much-awaited railway projects and a mega coal gasification project, officials said. Murmu, who was born on June 20, 1958, at Padiebeda village in Mayurbhanj district, started her political career as a councillor of Rairangpur Municipality in 1997. Later, she became an MLA, a minister, the governor of Jharkhand and finally the President of India. "Since she started her po-

litical innings from Rairangpur town, her birthday visit is seen significant and a day of joy for the people," an official at the CMO said. As per the schedule, while Murmu will reach Rairangpur on June 19, Modi will arrive at the tribal hinterland town the next day. To ensure the smooth conduct of this high-profile visit and to tighten the security arrangements, the Chief Minister directed all the departments to work

in coordination with each other so that there is no deviation especially during the mega public meeting and the movement of VVIPs. The officials informed the Chief Minister that special arrangements have been made by the State government and local administration to welcome the President in her birthplace. The review meeting was attended by senior officers including Chief Secretary Anu Garg.

CM orders high-level probe into textbook errors

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

TAKING serious note of the errors detected in school textbooks published by the Odisha government, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday directed the officials to take immediate corrective measures and ordered a high-level inquiry into the matter.

According to an official statement issued by the Chief Minister's Office, Majhi chaired an important meeting at Lok Seva Bhavan to review the issue. School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond, Chief Secretary Anu Garg, and senior officials from various departments participated in the meeting through virtual mode. During the meeting, the



Chief Minister decided to take immediate steps to rectify the errors found in the textbooks. He also ordered the constitution of a three-member high-level committee under the chairmanship of the Development Commissioner to

investigate the lapses and identify the officials or agencies responsible for the mistakes. The committee has been directed to submit its report within seven days. Based on the findings of the committee, stringent action

will be taken against the officials or institutions found responsible for the errors. Expressing concern over the issue, Majhi emphasised the need for maintaining the highest standards of accuracy in educational materials and instructed officials to ensure that all identified mistakes are corrected without delay. As per reports, the new textbooks prepared by SCERT, Odisha, under Odisha Curriculum 2025 for Classes I to VIII contain nearly 1,678 identified errors. The highest number of mistakes — 705 — has been found in the Class VIII textbooks alone, including 294 errors in Jijnasa, 114 in Sanskrit, 25 in Social Science, and 31 in Literature, as well as several significant errors in English and Mathematics.

Mushroom cultivation flourishes in Ganjam village



SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BERHAMPUR

ONCE known primarily for migration of workers in search of livelihoods, Ganjam district is now home to Odisha's mushroom capital. Radhamohanpur village in Chikiti block has carved a unique identity through large-scale mushroom cultivation, with more than 60 families producing and supplying over four tonnes of mushrooms daily to markets across southern Odisha, generating employment and prosperity within the village. Radhamohanpur village in Ganjam district's Chikiti block has emerged as a model of rural self-reliance, earning

recognition as "India's Mushroom Village" for producing and supplying more than four tonnes of mushrooms to markets every day. While thousands of workers migrate from the district in search of jobs, the village has created sustainable livelihoods through mushroom cultivation and spawn production. Nearly 60 families in the village are engaged in mushroom farming, while 10 to 12 families produce mushroom spawn. Around 70 families depend directly or indirectly on the sector, which began gaining momentum in 2012 after farmers received training from agricultural institutions. The village has over 60 mushroom farms, with oyster mushrooms being the

primary crop due to strong market demand. Mushrooms harvested here are supplied to Berhampur, Paralakhemundi, Jeypore, Koraput, Nabarangpur and other markets across southern Odisha. Farmers said women play a leading role in cultivation and processing activities, with each farm employing five to seven women workers. Villagers credit late Shantimohan Pattnaik, a former cooperative secretary, for introducing and promoting mushroom cultivation in the area. Despite its success, farmers have sought government support for easier access to loans and financial assistance to expand production and maintain spawn-production equipment.

Two detained in gang-rape case

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KENDRAPARA

THE Odisha Police on Tuesday detained two persons in Chhattisgarh in connection with the gang-rape of a 17-year-old girl at a place hardly 200 metres away from the office of the Superintendent of Police in Kendrapara district, an officer said on Tuesday. The incident took place at Jajanga on Monday night and came to light on Tuesday after the victim's mother lodged a complaint at the Kendrapara Sadar police station, alleging that two persons in an inebriated state forcefully took her daughter to a secluded place while the victim had gone to attend to nature's call. It was alleged that the two raped the minor girl at knifepoint. The accused also assaulted her when she tried to resist them. The miscreants also threatened to kill her if she told anyone about the incident, the police officer said. After the complaint was filed, the police launched an investigation and detained two accused persons, aged 30 and 34 years. A case was registered against the accused under various sections of the BNS and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, Kendrapara SP Siddharth Kataria said. The girl and her parents, who hail from a village in Chhattisgarh, have been selling brooms and residing in a roadside tent for the last three months, police said.

Oppn slams State govt over 'errors'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

THE Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Congress on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the State government over serious errors found in the newly published Odia textbooks for Classes I to VIII, alleging that the glaring mistakes expose the deterioration of Odisha's education system under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty described the textbooks as a "national embarrassment" and alleged that they constitute a direct assault on the Odia language, culture and the future of lakhs of students. He said the BJP government, which frequently raises the slogan of "Odia Asmita," has exposed its complete failure through the textbooks.

According to Mohanty, the new textbooks prepared by SCERT Odisha under Odisha Curriculum 2025 for Classes I to VIII contain nearly 1,678



identified errors. He alleged that the mistakes go beyond typographical errors and include serious spelling mistakes, factual inaccuracies, geographical distortions, incorrect names of historical and literary personalities, and wrong photographs and captions. Citing examples, Mohanty said a photograph of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly has been presented as that of the Odisha Legislative Assembly, the Niyamgiri Hills have been shown as being located in Jharkhand,

Ganjam district has been referred to as Brahmapur district, and the names of noted Odia personalities such as Sunanda Patnaik and Pandit Nilakantha Das have been misspelled. He said the errors would mislead students about their history, geography, culture and identity. He further alleged that the School and Mass Education department attempted to cover up the lapses by hurriedly issuing a correction list, exposing negligence and a lack of accountability. The BJD has therefore

demanding the immediate withdrawal of all defective textbooks, a high-level inquiry into the negligence involved in their preparation and proofreading, an investigation into the officials and ministers responsible, and the publication of error-free textbooks before the next academic year. Similarly, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das also targeted the State government, saying the administrative failure is "a mockery of the State's education system" and "a direct insult to Odisha's rich history, geography and culture." The party has demanded the immediate withdrawal of all textbooks from Class I to Class VIII containing inaccuracies, a transparent and time-bound investigation into the SCERT review board to punish the officials who approved these textbooks, and the resignation of the State School and Mass Education Minister or issuance of a public apology for the glaring errors.

Engineer held for forging Dy Speaker's letter

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

AN Odisha government engineer was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly forging a letter in the name of Odisha Assembly Deputy Speaker Bhabani Shankar Bhoi to secure an official transfer, police said. The accused, identified as Laxman Hembram (31), is an assistant executive engineer posted at Harichandanpur block in Keonjhar district. A case was registered at the Capital police station in Bhubaneswar on June 13 based on a complaint filed by the Deputy Speaker's private secretary. The FIR was lodged under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Information Technology Act against two assistant

executive engineers, including a woman. Bhubaneswar Zone-I ACP Ramesh Chandra Bisoi said Hembram and the woman engineer allegedly prepared a forged recommendation letter purportedly issued by the Deputy Speaker and used it to obtain transfers to Sundargarh district. The forgery came to light after authorities verified the document and found that the signature and letterhead had been fabricated, police said. Following the investigation, Hembram was arrested on Wednesday and brought to the Capital police station for questioning. "Further investigation is underway to ascertain the role of the woman engineer and any other persons involved in the case," Bisoi told reporters.

Officials asked to ensure no eligible voter is left out

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

DEPUTY Election Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti directed Odisha district collectors-cum-electoral registration officers (DEOs) to ensure that no eligible voter is left out during the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls in the state.

Bharti issued the direction on Tuesday while reviewing the progress of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and holding discussions with collectors and DEOs of nine districts on the status of implementation, an official statement said. He reviewed the distribution of

enumeration forms, the extent of digitisation completed so far, and issues causing delays in the process, it said. During the meeting, the officials informed that out of around 3.33 crore registered voters in the State, 3.16 crore (94.6 per cent) had been successfully mapped before the start of the SIR exercise, leaving 5.34 per cent unmapped. "As of today (June 16), 99.20 per cent of enumeration forms have been distributed to voters, and 46.44 per cent of these forms have already been digitised," officials said, adding that Sundargarh district was the top performer in both form distribution and digitisation.



Expressing satisfaction with the pace of work, Bharti directed officials to complete the entire process before the June 28 deadline. Meanwhile, Odisha's Chief Electoral Of-

ficer R S Gopalan said the official deadline for form distribution and submission is June 28, but officials have been asked to complete the process by June 23-24.

ECoR boosts slope safety ahead of monsoon

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

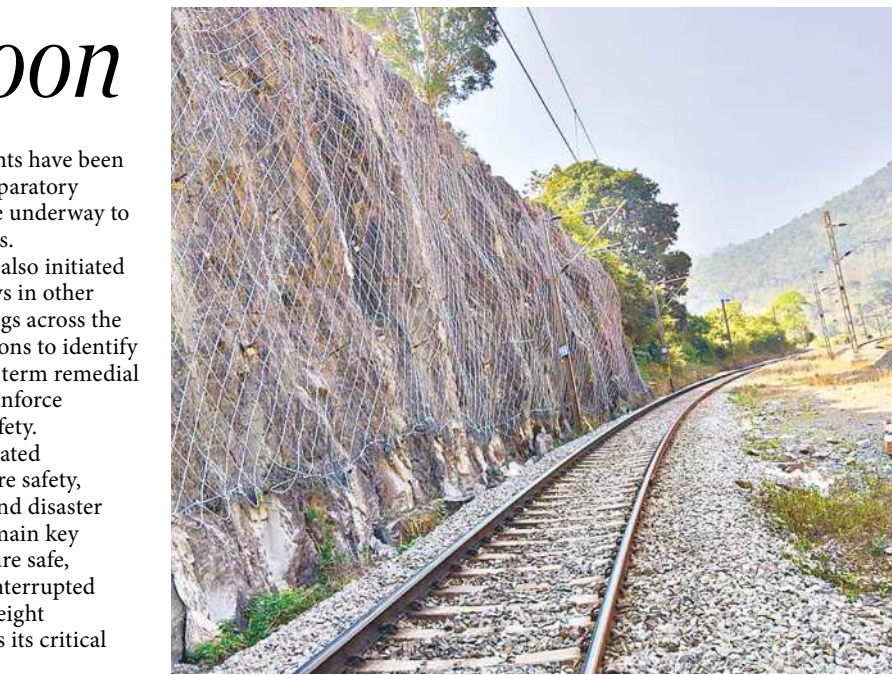
TO ensure safe and reliable train operations during the monsoon, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) has expedited protection and strengthening works across the Kottavalasa-Kirandul (KK), Koraput-Rayagada (KR) and Rayagada-Vizianagaram (RV) sections. The works are being undertaken in vulnerable ghat stretches that are susceptible to rockfall, soil erosion and weather-related disruptions. As part of the safety drive, ECoR is deploying advanced slope stabilisation measures,

including Rock Fall Barriers, Rock Bolting, Wire Mesh Netting, Geomat Laying and tunnel strengthening to improve infrastructure resilience and operational reliability. In the KK-I section, substantial progress has been recorded with completion of 910 metres of Rock Fall Barrier installation, 29,776 square metres of Wire Mesh Netting and 22,197 metres of Rock Bolting. Field operations have also intensified, with 346 drilling points completed and 40 holes grouted for stabilisation. Additionally, 300 square metres of Rhomboidal Mesh and 730 square metres of Mono-

oriented Mesh have been laid at vulnerable locations to provide enhanced slope protection. In the KK-II section, the targeted 120 metres of Rock Fall Barrier work has been completed. Additionally, 4,200 square metres of Wire Mesh Netting has been executed to strengthen vulnerable hill cuttings. Protection measures in the Koraput-Rayagada (KR) section are also progressing steadily. The Railway has completed the entire targeted 300 metres of Rock Fall Barrier work and 1,600 metres of Rock Bolting, achieving full completion in both categories. In addition, 10,000 square metres

of Wire Mesh Netting has been completed. According to ECoR, these preventive interventions are intended to reduce the risk of loose rock movement, improve slope stability and maintain uninterrupted train movement through difficult ghat terrain. In the Rayagada-Vizianagaram (RV) section, protection works in vulnerable cuttings between Lanjigarh Road and Rayagada are being taken up on priority and are scheduled for completion by June 30. To further strengthen tunnel safety under the KR section, tenders for strengthening three tunnels have already been awarded. Traffic and power

block requirements have been finalised and preparatory arrangements are underway to execute the works. The ECoR has also initiated geological surveys in other vulnerable cuttings across the KK and KR sections to identify sustainable long-term remedial measures and reinforce infrastructure safety. The Railway stated that infrastructure safety, modernisation and disaster preparedness remain key priorities to ensure safe, smooth and uninterrupted passenger and freight operations across its critical ghat corridors.



Govt’s U-turn on Harappan ‘Dancing Girl’ is quite baffling

MORAL policing begins quite early these days. Now, sanskari commissars ensured that Class 9 students didn’t see the iconic ‘Dancing Girl’ of Mohenjo-daro in its present form—with the torso uncovered. For decades, school students have seen the artefacts of the Indus Valley Civilisation, including the Dancing Girl, in the textbooks published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), an autonomous organisation established by the government in 1961. Its primary objective, its website says, was to assist and advice the Central and state governments on policies and programmes for qualitative educational development. Accordingly, its duties include preparation and publication of

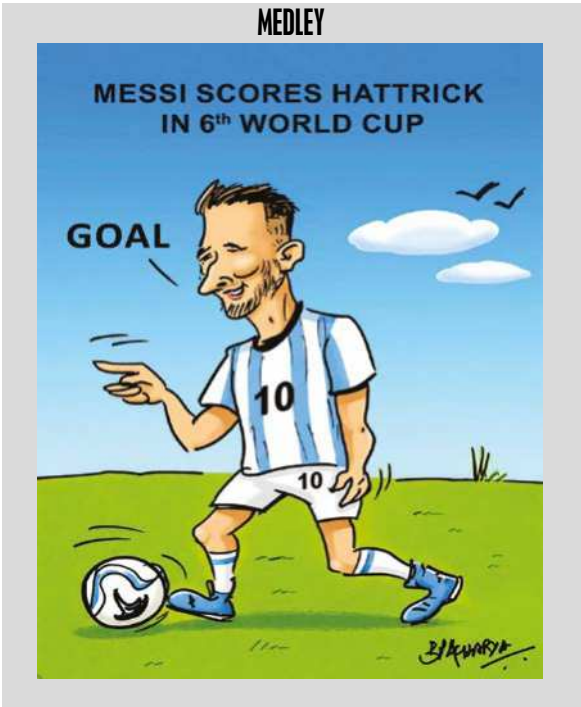
“model textbooks, supplementary materials, newsletters, journals, and educational kits, multimedia digital content, and other educational materials.” What kind of “model textbook” can preach moral policing over accurate presentation of facts and visuals? This was not the first time that sanskaris have objected to the famed bronze figurine, but their objections were reportedly brushed aside by “some government expert.” Still, the retouched photograph is featured in the opening chapter, ‘History of Arts,’ of Madhurima, the new arts education textbook for Class 9. In the doctored image, the figurine’s torso was shaded from the shoulders down. Historian Michel Danino, who headed the textbook development committee

for NCERT’s new Class 6 social science books, had told a newspaper last month that the NCERT was against placing the Dancing Girl on the opening page of a chapter on Indus Valley Civilisation. Danino, who is no longer a member of the committee, said “shading of her [Dancing Girl’s] trunk is an act of censorship; unless we wish to return to Victorian morality, such prudishness is misplaced—should students, then, be barred from entering the National Museum, where the original figurine is housed, not to speak of many semi-nude or nude statues of goddesses, apsaras, etc.?” He expressed indignation at the creation of “a fake artefact which exists nowhere. That is just not done.” He is wrong: it is done in India—not

merely done, but disturbingly normalised. Shading of the Dancing Girl’s torso is not an isolated lapse in judgement; it belongs to a long and growing tradition of sanitising history to suit contemporary notions of propriety. Instead of allowing students to encounter the past on its own terms, institutions entrusted with education are recasting it through the lens of present-day moral anxieties. The result is neither history nor pedagogy, but a carefully curated fiction.

The irony is difficult to miss. The same civilisation whose achievements are celebrated in textbooks is deemed unsuitable for students when represented through one of its most famous artefacts. A bronze figurine created nearly

4,000 years back is altered because modern gatekeepers fear that young readers may see what generations of scholars, museum visitors and school-children have seen without scandal. The artefact survives; only its representation is censored. Such interventions reveal a troubling lack of confidence in both students and teachers. If adolescents can study wars, famines, social hierarchies and political violence, surely, they can also view an ancient sculpture in its original form. To suggest otherwise is to confuse education with protectionism and learning with moral supervision. Thankfully, the government has decided to restore the original Harappan Dancing Girl in textbooks. At least, for now.



FASTING ACROSS RELIGIOUS FAITHS



TALKING OF MANY THINGS

IN the Vedas ‘vrata’s or ‘nomu’s are religious rituals, vows, or observances aimed at fulfilling a desire, seeking blessings, ensuring family welfare, to attain specific goals such as health, wealth, prosperity or overcoming adversity. They involve specific, ritualized restrictions, such as avoiding certain foods on specific days, strict adherence to certain customs and vows, or a ‘sankalpam’, to gain spiritual merit. They primarily serve to align the individual with cosmic order, purify the mind and body, and foster discipline through voluntary sacrifice. They also represent a divine ordinance acting as a binding commitment to ethical conduct and spiritual focus, often involving fasting or specific ascetic practices to propitiate deities.

Such rituals call for spiritual discipline and lead to purification, adherence to divine laws and atonement, or ‘prayaschitta’, to neutralize past sins, negative karma, or to overcome defects in one’s life. By sacrificing comforts such as food, the devotee creates a closer connection with the Almighty, thus fostering gratitude and devotion. In Vedic literature, Agni is often termed vratapā protector of the vrata, indicating that these observances ensure orderly behav-

iour and divine protection.

A ‘mauna vrata’ is one form of such rituals. It is a spiritual and intentional vow of silence rooted in Indian traditions, where an individual abstains from speaking for a set period to cultivate inner peace, self-discipline, and introspection. It aims to reduce external stimuli, conserve mental energy, and achieve clarity of thought by turning one’s focus inward.

Such a vow, however, is generally not permissible in Islam, and is considered an innovation or ‘bid’ah’. The Holy Quran, no doubt, mentions a fast of silence observed by Maryam, an ardent devotee of Allah and the only woman mentioned by name in that scripture, who is recognized as a paragon of purity, piety, and submission to Allah. That practice, however, was for previous generations and was cancelled by Prophet Muhammad, who emphasized that abstaining from permissible speech is not an act of obedience.

The religious scriptures of major faiths contain many references to such practices. For instance, Parvati, the principal Hindu Goddess of love, beauty, marriage, children, and devotion, who is the consort of Lord Shiva, represents the divine feminine energy, or ‘Shakti’ that balances Shiva’s asceticism. She began to be known as ‘Aparna’, or without leaves, because of the extreme penance she undertook to marry Lord Shiva, during which she gave up all food, including leaves. The name signifies her intense dedication and sacrifice, establishing her as a model of devotion.

Likewise, ‘Varalakshmi’ vrata is a significant Hindu puja, observed on the second Friday of the ‘Shravana’ month. It is

While a vrata covers a wide range of ritual vows in Hinduism, the Christian approach is centered on voluntarily humbling oneself before God through fasting, prayer, and sacrifice to focus on spiritual growth. The Islamic equivalents of vrata are generally called ‘Sawm’ or fasting or ‘Siyam’.

dedicated to Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity, to whose boon granting form, married women fast and pray, for the well-being, health, and longevity of their husbands and children.

In ‘Maha Bhagavata’, Satyabhama, one of Lord Krishna’s consorts, is famously known for her beauty and immense wealth. She believes that she holds the absolute highest place in Krishna’s heart and wants to ensure that she would have Lord Krishna as her husband in every birth. The celestial musician and an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu, Sage Narada, informs her that in her current birth, she has Lord Krishna as her husband on account of her good fortune. To continue to have that fortune in all her future lives, she performs a special vow, which involves gifting Krishna to Narada and then trying to buy him back. Satyabhama tries to weigh Krishna against all her wealth, jewels, and gold, but the scales continue to remain lower on Krishna’s side. It is only when she stops being proud and asks for help, and when a single Tulasi leaf is placed, with pure devotion, on the scale by Rukmini, consort of Krishna, and the first Queen of ‘Dwaraka’, the Kingdom of Krishna, and the embodiment of Goddess Lakshmi, that the scales balance. The message conveyed is that Krishna can be pleased only with sincere devotion, or ‘bhakti’, but not with wealth.

Also in the Hindu mythology is described the tale of how

the severe and intense penance of the venerated Sage Vishwamitra, characterised by decades-long austerity and aimed at surpassing Sage Vashistha, transforms him from the powerful warrior King Kaushika to a revered ‘Brahmarshi’, the penance involves overcoming massive temptations, including Apsaras, or celestial nymphs, Menaka and Rambha, before finally mastering his anger and ego to attain supreme spiritual status. Yet another example can be found in Ramayana. Ravana, the ten-headed demon king of Lanka and an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva, performs an intense penance to Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva to gain immense power, knowledge, and invincibility. He sacrifices his ten heads, which grow back each time, symbolizing his dedication. This devotion grants him boons, making him a dominant ruler, a master of scriptures, and the possessor of the Celestial Weapon, ‘Chandrarhas’.

Turning to Christian equivalents of such rituals, we find that the equivalent of a vrata is found in the spiritual disciplines of fasting and abstinence.

For example, ‘Lent’, the 40-day period before Easter, beginning on ‘Ash Wednesday’, is somewhat like a long-term vrata, involving abstinence, fasting, increased prayer, and acts of charity. The fasting is designed to foster self-denial, focus on prayer, and draw closer to God. Denying oneself food entirely for a period to focus on spiritual matters, is on the lines of Jesus’

40 days in the wilderness. Likewise, a ‘vow’ is a personal, voluntary promise made to God, such as committing to a season of fasting, a specific prayer routine, or abstaining from a habit.

Some examples are, the ‘Daniel Fast’, which is a common practice based on the Bible where individuals abstain from rich foods, such as meat, dairy or wine, for 21 days, consuming only vegetables and water and the ‘Ember Days’, which are traditional days of prayer and fasting which occur quarterly.

In summary, while a vrata covers a wide range of ritual vows in Hinduism, the Christian approach is centered on voluntarily humbling oneself before God through fasting, prayer, and sacrifice to focus on spiritual growth.

The Islamic equivalents of vrata are generally called ‘Sawm’ or fasting or ‘Siyam’. Like the Hindu custom, Islamic fasting involves abstaining from food, drink, and sexual activity, from dawn until sunset to cultivate self-control, piety, and devotion to God. Examples include, ‘Ramadan’, also known as ‘Ramzan’, or obligatory fasting. The month-long fast during Ramadan is the most significant form of worship, to a mandatory, universal vow observed by all able Muslims. Several other fasts are also undertaken, such as ‘Sunnah’ fasts, or recommended vows, which are voluntary fasts, like the Hindu ‘Kamya Vratas’ or vows for desire. ‘Shawwal’, or fasting six days after Ramadan, observing the ‘Ashura’, or fasting on the 10th of Muharram. In addition, ‘Kaffarah’ or expiation fasts undertaken to make up for breaking a previous fast or as a penalty for certain transgressions and ‘Nazar’ vows, or specific voluntary fasts a person

promises to keep if a particular wish is fulfilled are also known. Fasting on Mondays and Thursdays is highly recommended by Prophet Muhammad.

A lighthearted tale now, to lighten the mood. The story goes that a representation was made by Chitragupta, record keeper of Yama, the Hindu God of Death, Justice and Afterlife, to Lord Brahma, the God of Creation, and the first deity of the Holy Trinity or ‘Trimurti’s, along with Vishnu and Shiva, about the embarrassing consequences of the Varalakshmi vrata. The gist of the grievance was that on account of the observance of the ritual, women were succeeding in getting the same husband for seven successive births. The women were happy. Not so, however, their husbands because men, by nature, would like a different wife in each birth. Lord Brahma was in a dilemma, as the vrata was an ancient tradition, regarded holy and desirable. Chanakya, the legendary Indian philosopher, teacher, economist, and royal strategist, known for masterminding the establishment and celebrated famously for his sharp political wisdom, was summoned to assist in the resolution of the crisis. The brilliant Chanakya, as always, came up with a novel and unique solution and suggested that Lord Brahma insist that the boon would be granted to women only on the condition that the mothers-in-law also would be the same in all the births! The ladies observing the tradition, understandably, refused to accept the condition. Both parties, men, and women were happy, not to mention Lord Brahma!

(The writer was formerly Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

LETTERS

The Rs 1,600 crore SCCL black hole

Accountability can no longer wait as a staggering, cavernous discrepancy given that nearly 40 lakh tonnes of coal, valued at an estimated ₹1,600 crore, have vanished into thin air from the stockyards of the state-run Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL). It came to light after physical inspections of several mining sites reportedly revealed empty, dusty stockyards, directly contradicting official records that boasted of substantial reserves. The opposition was quick to accuse the Congress-led state government of presiding over, or turning a blind eye to, large-scale irregularities and the potential illegal diversion and black-marketing of a vital national resource. In governance, silence is rarely interpreted as neutrality; more often, it is read as complicity or paralysis. As the controversy snowballs, the Telangana government’s lack of a detailed, transparent response is only fuelling the narrative of a systemic cover-up. SCCL is a critical pillar of Telangana’s industrial and energy backbone. When a resource as heavily regulated and physically massive as coal disappears on this scale, it points to either a catastrophic failure of internal audit mechanisms or a deeply entrenched, highly coordinated network of illicit siphoning. The state leadership must act swiftly to clear the air, because in a democracy, the smoke from such a political storm will not dissipate until the truth is unearthed.

Calicut Krishnan Ramanathan, Ghaziabad-201001

Need to diversify fuel sources

THIS is further your editorial ‘India must diversify fuel supply chains despite US-Iran MoU’ (THI June 17). It rightly calls for diversifying fuel supply chains, but the larger lesson is to diversify fuel sources. Dependence on imported oil leaves nations vulnerable to geopolitical tensions, shipping disruptions and price volatility. India should accelerate investments in solar, wind, tidal and geothermal energy, which are clean, green, neat, renewable and effectively inexhaustible. Every unit of energy generated domestically strengthens energy security while reducing pollution and import bills. The most durable solution lies in expanding indigenous renewable energy capacity and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Harsh Pawaria, Rohtak

EU is bang on: Strait of Hormuz

The editorial ‘India must diversify fuel supply chains despite US-Iran MoU’ prudently points out the need for India to be in its guard in expanding energy sources, notwithstanding the MoU being signed between the US and Iran facilitating the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. One prominent point that stands out is that Israel is not a willing entity to this deal. It is quite clear that the MoU is more on Iranian terms as the US wants to end the war in a hurry despite Israel’s consternation. India must think in terms of more fuel storages being built to tide over any future crisis. Meanwhile, the EU’s view that the Strait of Hormuz must be a free and unhindered sea route without any toll or restrictions is a level-headed proposition that the world wants urgently.

K R Venkata Narasimhan, Madurai

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BENGALURU ONLINE

Cabinet expansion decision rests with high command: Ahmed

BENGALURU: Amid growing political buzz over the Legislative Council elections and the much-anticipated Cabinet expansion in Karnataka, senior Congress leader and former minister Zameer Ahmed Khan met former MP D.K. Suresh in Bengaluru on Wednesday, triggering fresh speculation in political circles.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Zameer Ahmed said the Congress is a high-command-driven party and all decisions regarding Cabinet expansion will be taken by the party leadership. “I was expecting a ministerial berth in the first list, but it did not happen. I am hopeful of finding a place in the second list. Even if that does not happen, I have no disappointment. I have never publicly demanded a ministerial position.

My supporters have staged protests seeking representation for me, which is natural,” he said. Rejecting reports of dissatisfaction, Zameer asked reporters whether his face reflected any disappointment. He also highlighted his proximity to the party leadership, stating that he had actively campaigned for the Congress during elections in Kerala and Telangana. On the upcoming Legislative Council election, Zameer expressed confidence about the Congress securing victory. Referring to the Congress Legislature Party meeting held at a resort in Bidadi, he said around 140 legislators were united behind the party candidates. “We are fully united. Even if 28 legislators vote for a candidate, victory is assured.

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

Merit or birthright? Why Telangana’s ‘local only’ judge demand threatens impartial justice

CHOLLETI

An extraordinary general body of the Telangana High Court Bar Association (THCBA) on Monday passed a resolution requesting that the High Court and the Supreme Court collegium prioritise practising advocates “belonging to Telangana origin only” when recommending names for elevation to the High Court. The resolution invokes themes that resonate across India — representation, social justice and the value of lawyers who have sustained practice in a particular High Court — and raises fundamental legal and constitutional questions about who may be considered for judicial office and how the collegium should weigh ‘locality’ against merit and other legitimate criteria.

The resolution and the rationale:

According to the association’s extraordinary meeting and subsequent resolution, the request calls for the collegium to follow principles of social justice and ensure that elevation to the bench gives “proper representation to all the sections of people,” by prioritising advocates of Telangana origin, who practise in the Telangana High Court. The association’s stated concerns are familiar: local advocates are thought to have better knowledge of regional laws, languages, social contexts and institutional practices. Long standing practitioners claim an established relationship with the court and its litigational culture. And a perception exists that too many judicial vacancies are filled by outsiders or by candidates perceived as less connected to local bar and bench communities. These are legitimate policy concerns that speak to questions of trust, accountability and the bench’s social composition.

The Legal framework:

The constitutional text sets the outer bounds of eligibility. Article 217 requires a person to have been an advocate of a High Court for at least 10 years to be qualified for appointment as a High Court judge. Article 124 sets similar eligibility for the Supreme Court. These articles impose nationality and experience thresholds but are silent on place of origin or state of enrolment beyond the requirement of practice at a High Court. The Collegium process and the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) — the procedural matrix evolved by the Supreme Court and used by High Court collegia — stress merit, integrity, standing at the Bar, experience, published judgments and encourage regard for social diversity and representation. The MoP contemplates weight being given to professional standing and to consultative inputs from the local bar and judges. It does not, however, endorse categorical exclusion of candidates who are not of a particular state origin.

Precedents and bar-level pushback around locality demands:

Demands by bar associations and local bodies for prioritising local practitioners are not new. Reports show that bar bodies in different jurisdictions in India have protested proposals to elevate advocates, who do not practise regularly before a particular High Court, or asked that local counsel be given preference. Some associations have even threatened abstentions or abstaining from work when they believe consultative norms were ignored. Conversely, proposals to elevate advocates from the Supreme Court or advocates who practise mainly outside a High Court’s rolls have also drawn objections. These episodes demonstrate a recurring tension: local bars

want a say and protection for home-grown talent; collegia seek to balance merit, representation and institutional needs.

Legal and constitutional objections to ‘TG-only’ rule:

A categorical rule that only advocates of Telangana origin may be considered presents myriad problems. First, it risks conflict with equal treatment norms and the constitutional commitment to non-discrimination — appointments must be open to all who meet the constitutional eligibility criteria. Second, the constitution’s experience thresholds refer to practice in a High Court. They do not confer a right to geographic exclusion. Third, limiting the pool to state origin advocates may curtail merit: the collegium system, for all its scrutiny, seeks candidates with outstanding ability and temperament. Artificially narrowing that pool could compromise overall judicial quality. Fourth, such a rule may undercut impartial justice by introducing parochial pressures into what is designed to be a consultative but expert process. Finally, the practicalities of modern legal practice — interstate mobility, Supreme Court practice, multi-jurisdictional litigation — mean many of the best candidates have diverse practice footprints that transcend state borders. Constitutional text and the MoP do not support a parochial quota. They permit, instead, a nuanced approach that properly values local experience as one of several factors.

Weighing local practitioners:

That said, the association’s concerns have merit when framed as preferences rather than inflexible rules. Local practitioners often bring deep familiarity with state statutes, local languages and socio



legal context — qualities that improve judicial access and legitimacy. Where a High Court has a sustained deficit in representation by persons from particular social classes, castes, genders or regions of the state, active attention to homegrown candidates can promote social justice and public confidence. The collegium legitimately considers representational balance. The MoP expressly mentions social diversity and dispersal as considerations. The answer is not categorical exclusion but calibrated prioritisation: clearer consultative engagement with the local bar, well publicised shortlists that include local talent, and affirmative outreach to underrepresented communities within the state.

Practical recommendations to reconcile local claims and constitutional norms

A balanced way forward would preserve collegial independence while responding to legitimate local anxieties:

The High Court Collegium should publish general criteria it emphasises in each round (e.g., representation, local experience) and record consultative inputs from the bar — without compromising confidential elements of the vetting process.

Rather than an exclusionary demand, the bar association could submit a ranked shortlist of local advocates with verified credentials and judgments for the collegium’s consideration; this preserves the collegium’s final discretion while ensuring local talent is visible.

The MoP could be clarified —

Pawan fulfils ailing fan’s wish with personal visit

WARANGAL

ANDHRA Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday visited the residence of 17-year-old Niranjan in Hanamkonda, fulfilling the young fan’s long-cherished wish to meet him.

Niranjan, who is battling a rare genetic disorder that has left him bedridden, was personally comforted by the Deputy Chief Minister during the emotional visit.

Pawan Kalyan enquired about his health, interacted with his parents, and offered spiritual support by presenting Tirupati temple Teertha Prasadam. He also extended financial assistance of Rs.1 lakh towards medical expenses.

Moved by the family’s circumstances, Pawan Kalyan directed Jana Sena leaders to help improve the family’s livelihood by facilitating a canteen business. He further promised to arrange special prayers at the revered Bhadrakali Ammavari Temple and present a consecrated silver idol of Goddess Bhadrakali to the family.

The Deputy Chief Minister also fulfilled another wish of Niranjan by promising to arrange a pet dog after learning of the teenager’s fondness for



• During the interaction, Niranjan shared old photographs and videos of himself performing dance routines imitating Pawan Kalyan from the time when he was healthy, earning him the nickname “Chota Gabbar Singh”

• PK enquired about his health, interacted with his parents, and offered spiritual support by presenting Tirupati temple Teertha Prasadam

• He also extended financial assistance of Rs.1 lakh towards medical aexpenses

animals. During the interaction, Niranjan shared old photographs and videos of himself performing dance routines imitating Pawan Kalyan from the time when he was healthy,

earning him the nickname “Chota Gabbar Singh”.

Following the visit, Pawan Kalyan proceeded to the Bhadrakali Temple in Warangal to offer prayers.

Keep Hormuz open: Modi

Continued from page 1
"We met in Washington last time... since then we’ve been moving forward together. It is a joy for us that our teams are working together, we’re moving forward at a fast pace," Modi said.

Trump described the meeting as "great" as heaped praise on Modi. "I think India plays a big role in everything as long as he (PM Modi) is the leader. India is going to play a big role," Trump said in response to a question on whether New Delhi has a role to play in West Asia. "As long as I am at the White House, India has a friend in the US," he said, answering a question on the strain in India-US ties.

‘A TOTAL KILLER, A TOUGH TRADER’

Continued from page 1
"As long as I am President, they (India) have a great friend in the White House...Everyone here loves India, and they have tremendous respect for this (PM Narendra Modi) man," he added.

"People say he's such a nice man. I said he's very tough. He's a tough trader, and he loves the Indian people, but he also loves the USA.

He had 'Howdy Modi' in Houston. The stadium was full... We'll be going to India sometime in the future," Trump said.

In a potent remark, Trump, putting on display his bonhomie with the Indian leader, said his country would come to India's help should any country attack it. He, however, put a condition: PM Modi should be the leader.

"I think it is a great relationship...If they were attacked, we would be there to help them...If anybody attacks that man, we are going to be there...If they are attacked and he (PM Modi) is the leader, we are going to be there to help," he said.

‘We’re most famous couple’

Continued from page 1
While the audio isn't very clear, PM Modi appeared to refer to their popularity on social media to Meloni. To this, the Italian Prime Minister said, "Yes, we are the most famous couple on Instagram".

This came nearly a month after PM Modi, during his trip to Rome, gifted Meloni a packet of Parle's Melody toffee - in reference to the viral 'Melodi' term. Sharing the video of PM Modi's 'sweet' gesture on her social media accounts, Meloni wrote, "Thank you for the gift".

The post featured both PM Modi and Meloni holding a packet of the popular Indian candy, known by its 'very, very chocolaty' tagline, as they laughed over the cheerful internet trend. In the clip,

the Italian Prime Minister says, "Prime Minister Modi brought as a gift a very, very good toffee." "Melody," then said PM Modi.

'Melodi' - a blend of Meloni and PM Modi's names - began as an internet joke after their bilateral meeting in 2023. The term, often used in many viral clips and memes depicting warm, unscripted moments between the two leaders at multilateral summits, has racked up millions of views.

Meloni had used the term in a post first in 2024, along with a selfie with PM Modi. "Hi friends, from #Melodi," she had posted on X. In June 2025, she posted a selfie video with PM Modi from their G7 Summit interactions and captioned it as: "Hello, from the Melodi team." Since then, similar interactions

at global events have reinforced the perception of a warm personal chemistry between the two leaders.

However, the PM Modi-Meloni bond is not a mere photo opportunity; it is a foreign policy in motion. Italy has emerged as India's most consequential global partner, with both nations working towards the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) that anchors Rome as Europe's gateway to the Indo-Pacific. Bilateral trade between the two nations has crossed \$16.77 billion. Last month, PM Modi met Meloni over dinner during the last leg of his five-nation visit. They visited the iconic Colosseum, where the two leaders engaged in deep conversation over a wide range of subjects.

SAMAJWADI SPLIT NEXT?

Continued from page 1
In a cryptic post on X, Rajbhar alleged that senior SP leader Ram Gopal Yadav had approached the Centre amid mounting pressure over alleged corruption cases and claimed that several party leaders were preparing to switch sides. "A major split is going to happen in the Samajwadi Party.

Ram Gopal Yadav has submitted a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah ji. Everyone in Uttar Pradesh knows who the mastermind behind the mining scam and Gomti River Front scam is. As the noose tightens, the SP is getting anxious," the post in Hindi stated. Forget Maharashtra and Bengal— the

entire SP is sitting ready to join the BJP. Rajbhar added in the post. Responding to the claims, Samajwadi Party supremo took a sharp dig at the Uttar Pradesh minister, questioning his statements and motives. BJP engineered splits in many parties, poached SP MLAs, MLCs in Uttar Pradesh before, Akhilesh Yadav reportedly said.

On Rajbhar's remark, Akhilesh Yadav said, "Dana aur gana kab tak chalega yeh afsana (how long will their 'benefits and songs' continue)". Samajwadi Party spokesperson Manish Singh also responded, asking Rajbhar to assess his own capabilities first before commenting on SP.

Take yoga to every household: CM to officials

Continued from page 1

Naidu also directed officials to launch a dedicated Therapeutic Yoga programme for people suffering from chronic illnesses and other health conditions, integrating yoga more closely with public health initiatives.

As part of the Yoga Day celebrations, the Chief Minister will participate in a special yoga programme at the Undavalli Caves on June 20 alongside yoga guru Baba Ramdev, who is visiting Andhra Pradesh as a special guest. The state-level Yoga Day event will be held on June 21 at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium in Vijayawada, where arrangements are being made for 5,000 to 6,000 participants. Both Chandrababu Naidu and Baba Ramdev will attend the programme. Officials informed the Chief Minister that a contingency plan has also been prepared to conduct the event at the Ambedkar Kalavedika in Vijayawada with around 1,000 participants in case of adverse weather conditions.

Baba Ramdev is scheduled to arrive in the state on June 19 as part of the yoga promotion campaign and will meet the Chief Minister during his visit. During the review, officials reported that 2.6 lakh people have been trained as yoga instructors under the Yogandhra programme and that more than one crore people have registered to participate in Yoga Day events across the state. They also informed the Chief Minister that yoga programmes will be conducted at 1.33 lakh centres on June 21.

State-level yoga competitions are scheduled to be held in Vijayawada from June 18 to 20. On Yoga Day, the Chief Minister will also release the Yoga@Destination calendar outlining yoga-related activities planned across the state until next year's International Yoga Day. Government advisor Mantena Satyanarayana Raju, health and family welfare commissioner Chakradhar Babu, NTR District Collector Lakshmi Shah and Joint Secretary Ronanki Gopalakrishna were among those present at the review meeting.



Beach shack policy gets industry backing

Withdraw beach shacks proposal: YSRCP

Alleges that Visakha MP Sribharath has been lobbying for this for a long time

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TADEPALLI

YSRCP has demanded the withdrawal of the proposal for beach shacks along Visakhapatnam's RK Beach and slammed MP Sribharath for pushing it forward.

Speaking to the media here on Wednesday, party spokesperson Konda Rajiv Gandhi said that liquor would be sold all along the beachfront in the name of beach shacks, which is highly objectionable and not in tune with the promotion of tourism.

While health and education were the twin pri-

orities of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, it seems the coalition is concentrating on wine and dining.

He said the beach has a distinct ambience and sanctity, and devotional bells ring on festive occasions. "The Beach Road in Visakhapatnam has a slew of temples and serves as a place of relaxation for common people.

The proposed shacks would disturb the tranquility of the area. We demand that the proposal be withdrawn and that the city's peace and order be preserved. The MP's educational institutions

are also located along the beachfront, and his family has promoted the university at the cost of the age-old Andhra University," he said.

He said, "When there was turmoil at Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), the MP did not respond. When gross injustice was done to the railway zone, he remained silent.

However, he, a beneficiary of government land allotments, has come forward with a proposal for beach shacks, which we oppose tooth and nail and demand be withdrawn immediately," Rajiv Gandhi said.

feet to 3,000 square feet, stating that the current limit may not be sufficient to provide quality visitor amenities and operational facilities.

It further urged the government to permit the sale of all categories of alcoholic beverages and cocktails, similar to practices followed in leading beach tourism destinations across the country.

To encourage investor confidence, the association

recommended that licence fees remain unchanged during the licence period instead of being subjected to annual escalation. It also sought a minimum licence or lease tenure of five years, arguing that the proposed three-year period may not be adequate for infrastructure development and recovery of investments.

The association additionally requested the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Depart-

ment to frame comprehensive operational guidelines in consultation with stakeholders, including hospitality industry representatives and tourism operators.

Swamy expressed confidence that incorporating these suggestions would strengthen the policy, boost tourism, generate employment, and contribute significantly to the economic growth of Andhra Pradesh's coastal regions.

Telegram moves Delhi HC against govt curbs

Continued from page 1

He said that over 150 million users had been affected by the Centre's action on Tuesday. SG Mehta sought an adjournment, saying that he had not put several things on record. "If the court posts the matter for Thursday, then there is something shocking I can show. One channel starts, it is prohibited, and then another is started. And with a QR code, you can make a payment. This is continuous," he said. "This has not happened overnight. We have been dealing with complaints since May. I don't wish to go beyond this. This platform is being misused, and imagine the situation which may arise," Mehta added. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), acting on recommendations of the National Testing Agency (NTA), issued a direction

under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, restricting access to the Telegram platform in India till June 22, covering the day of the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination and its immediate aftermath. A separate direction requires Telegram to disable in India the message-editing feature for already-posted messages till June 30, 2026, addressing the specific structural feature through which the platform has been used to fabricate after-the-event "paper leak" evidence in respect of national examinations, according to an NTA statement. "Both measures have been taken in the interest of public order, in response to the organised use of the platform by cheating rackets to defraud candidates appearing for the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination scheduled on 21 June 2026," the NTA said on Tuesday.

CM calls for crop diversification

Continued from page 1

He ordered a meeting with tobacco buyers and suggested exploring storage options to help farmers secure better prices. He also called for plans to promote the cultivation of high-demand pulse crops and instructed officials to continuously analyse market trends before making crop planning decisions. Highlighting the need to improve farmer incomes, Naidu stressed value addition in agriculture and horticulture and directed officials to hold consultations with aqua farmers, industry associations and aqua feed manufacturers to address sector-specific concerns. Reiterating the government's commitment to supporting farmers during challenging times, the Chief Minister said all policy decisions should be aimed at improving farm profitability and ensuring long-term sustainability. Agriculture Minister K Atchannaidu, Chief Secretary G Sai Prasad and senior officials attended the review meeting.

Modi flags concerns over impact of West Asia crisis

Evian-Les-Bains: PM Modi on Wednesday proposed a framework to boost connectivity and trade by combining the strengths of the G7 nations, India and the Global South even as he flagged concerns over long-lasting consequences of the West Asia crisis on developing countries. The Prime Minister floated the proposal for setting up the International Mobilisation Partnership for Accelerating Connectivity and Trade (IMPACT) while speaking at an outreach session of the G7 summit in this French commune.

Meta starts charging for Instagram, Facebook & WhatsApp

Continued from page 1

These business plans are being tested in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Thailand and Bangladesh first. Importantly, none of this replaces the existing Meta Verified subscription. According to the experts, subscriptions could bring in \$20 billion of high-margin revenue annually by 2030. Deutsche Bank notes subscriptions could deliver as much as \$15.6 billion of additional revenue next year.

According to company data, 97.6% of Meta's revenue last year came from advertising, an alarming sign of the lack of progress it's made in growing beyond its core business in the last two decades since its founding.

In contrast, Google, a company also built on the back of ads, had more non-ad revenue a decade ago than Meta had last year. That probably explains Zuckerberg's sudden urgency more than anything else. In the meantime, users don't seem too enthused by the premium offerings that are more like a pay-to-play bet at the moment.

'If India is attacked, we will be there for Modi'

Continued from page 1

I can tell you this: without even having a contract – we don't have a formal [mutual defence] contract; you have to have the right contract – but if they were attacked, we would be there to help." In a light-hearted remark, Trump later said the United States would be there to support India under PM Modi's leadership and then later joked and said that the situation might be different under a different leader. "Now, if there is a new leader, I am not sure about it. But if they are attacked and he is the leader, we are going to be there to help," Trump said.

Uddhav Sena stares at split

Continued from page 1

Amid reports of "Operation Tiger" being underway to engineer a split in the Sena (UBT), the party has issued a whip directing all its Lok Sabha MPs to attend a meeting of the parliamentary party in Delhi on Thursday at 11 a.m. The whip was issued by MP Anil Desai, the party's chief whip in the Lok Sabha.

Sena (UBT) functionaries said party chief Uddhav Thackeray may also travel to Delhi in an attempt to pacify the MPs and could attend the parliamentary party meeting on Thursday.

Late on Tuesday, Sena (UBT) parliamentary party leader Arvind Sawant wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, requesting him not to entertain any claim seeking recognition of a separate group or a merger with another political party by the defecting MPs. Sawant said the party's claim that Shiv Sena (UBT) represents the "real Shiv Sena" remains sub judice before the Supreme Court and that his letter was being written without prejudice to that claim.

He was responding to reports that certain MPs elected on the Sena (UBT)'s symbol had either approached, or were contemplating approaching, the Speaker seeking recognition as a separate group or merger with another political party within the Lok Sabha.

Emotional availability is the new attraction: The rise of affectional dating

ASKARI JAFFER

Cool indifference, mystery, and emotional distance were once rewarded in the dating culture. The less invested you were, the more desirable you seemed. But that dynamic has quietly collapsed. Daters have come a long way, and they have emotionally matured. Modern singles are no longer chasing emotionally unavailable matches. 8 out of 10 single men and women from metros and suburbs explained that dating someone who isn't emotionally available for you can leave you feeling drained, confused, and constantly looking for clues and overanalysing every interaction trying to figure out whether they are in it for the long haul. Today, users are attracted towards emotional openness, consistent effort, and intentional communication. The new-age daters call it Affectional Dating.

Ravi Mittal, the Founder and CEO of India's most popular dating app

QuackQuack, commented, "Emotional availability came out as the strongest action trigger among the Tier 1, 2, and 3 daters in the last two years. From our surveys, we have noticed that more than 55% users lose interest in their match if they are emotionally aloof during the initial days of chatting. That "too cool to care" really doesn't work in modern dating. It's a major reset in online dating. Honestly, this is one of the reasons why the number of intentional matches on online dating platforms has risen."

End of the "Cool And Unbothered" Era

Less is more; that's not a concept the dating world believes in anymore, at least not when it comes to emotional availability. Dating advice has revolved around "no double texting," maintaining emotional distance during the early stages, and keeping an air of mystery to let the spark live longer. But after years of getting stuck in exhausting situationships and decoding dry texts, daters today have

The era of playing "cool and unbothered" in dating is fading, as modern singles increasingly value emotional openness, consistency, and genuine connection over mystery and emotional distance. A new trend called Affectional Dating is reshaping relationships, with daters prioritising vulnerability, intentional communication, and emotional availability from the very beginning

a brand new approach, and it is all about wearing your heart on your sleeve. More and more dating app users are prioritising their match's degree of emotional availability and intentionality over fleeting physical traits.

Vulnerability is not "Too Much."

There's a notable shift in how conversations are progressing on dating apps. Users might be taking their time to commit, but they are not afraid to open up early. Within the first 2 weeks of chatting, most daters already

start discussing emotional expectations, mental health management, baggage from past experience, boundaries, and even their relationship needs. This might have seemed too vulnerable too soon a few years back, but with the changing dating style, emotional openness from the beginning is becoming the norm. Over 41% of men and women in their 20s shared that pretending to be emotionally unaffected at all times and trying to keep up the wall while connecting with someone is exhausting.



Comeback of Affection

Five years back, showing affection openly was almost reduced to being cringe. People were cautious about when and where they are

being affectionate, especially on dating apps where connections happen virtually and one wrong move can make you seem unnecessarily clingy or needy. Most daters

would intentionally play cool to hold the upper hand in the connection. But the mentality has shifted dramatically in the last two years, when online matches are more

openly expressing their interest without worrying if they come off "desperate." The rise of Affectional Dating makes it easier for people to be their authentic selves.

LOOK OUT



Meet the artisans

Some art forms don't belong in museums. They belong in homes, in daily conversations, and in the hands of people who appreciate the story behind the object.

MAATI – The Crafts School, an initiative by Kadam India supported by the Tata Trusts, is bringing an immersive two-day showcase to Hyderabad in partnership with Mysore Saree Udyog. The exhibition celebrates the living traditions of hand-painted Madhubani art alongside contemporary Bihar craftsmanship. This curated exhibit is designed for textile connoisseurs, art and culture tastemakers, conscious textile retailers, architects, interior designers, collectors, and anyone drawn to authentic legacy artistry.

The heart of the showcase is four women artisans traveling from MAATI's clusters in Madhubani and Darbhanga.

This is a rare opportunity to meet the makers and engage directly with their creative processes and explore handcrafted textile collections that bridge generations of visual memory with contemporary living. Beyond design, the exhibition carries a real-world urgency.

MAATI works in regions of Bihar where

MAATI showcases Madhubani art and contemporary Bihar crafts in Hyderabad

recurring climate and environmental challenges threaten traditional ways of life year after year.

By creating direct market access and nurturing independent creative enterprises, the initiative supports artisan communities in building long-term, climate-resilient livelihoods.

The event offers a unique platform for Hyderabad's art, design, and textile community to engage with authentic handcrafted traditions while supporting artisan-led enterprises and the preservation of India's rich cultural heritage.

Dates: 19th and 20th June 2026.
Venue: MSU Store, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad.



Women led startups at India's first SHElterTech Accelerator organised by We Hub

WE Hub concludes India's First SHElterTech accelerator

WE Hub, India's first state-led nodal agency for women entrepreneurs, has successfully concluded the SHElterTech Acceleration Program, a first-of-its-kind initiative designed to position women founders at the forefront of innovation in the housing and construction sector.

Implemented in partnership with the Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter (TCIS), specialised center within the global nonprofit organisation Habitat for Humanity International, the program culminated in a Cohort Showcase and Industry Networking Meet that brought together Telangana's leading real estate developers, CSR foundations, architects, institutional investors and government stakeholders.

The closing ceremony was graced by VP Gautham, IAS, Managing Director, Telangana Housing Corporation Limited (THCL), as the Chief Guest.

The cohort featured innovative startups including Q Gen-Next Sustainable Technology Pvt. Ltd., Hubeco Green Ventures Pvt. Ltd., C-DISC Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Structural Integrated Panels Pvt. Ltd., Greenbanana Environment Solutions Pvt. Ltd., and ECOSTP Technologies Pvt. Ltd.

Addressing the gathering, VP Gautham, IAS, said: "The Government of Telangana is committed to expanding

affordable housing in urban areas and improving the quality of homes in rural communities. Achieving this vision requires smarter construction solutions that reduce costs, improve efficiency and shorten project timelines. Startups are critical partners in this journey. The innovators in this cohort are solving real-world challenges and developing practical solutions that can make a meaningful impact. We are ready to work with them."

SHElterTech was conceptualised to address a critical gap identified through the SHElterTech Gender Analysis Study, which found that women entrepreneurs in the housing and construction sector often face barriers not in technical expertise or ambition, but in accessing markets, capital and industry networks.

In response, WE Hub designed a focused Growth and Market Activation Program aimed at creating tangible business opportunities through customer pilots, strategic partnerships, investment access and regulatory support.

The cohort showcased a diverse range of innovations spanning modular construction systems, zero-excitation foundations, passive cooling technologies, sustainable building materials and nature-based water treatment solutions. These innovations align closely with Telangana's vision of creating faster,

greener and more sustainable housing infrastructure.

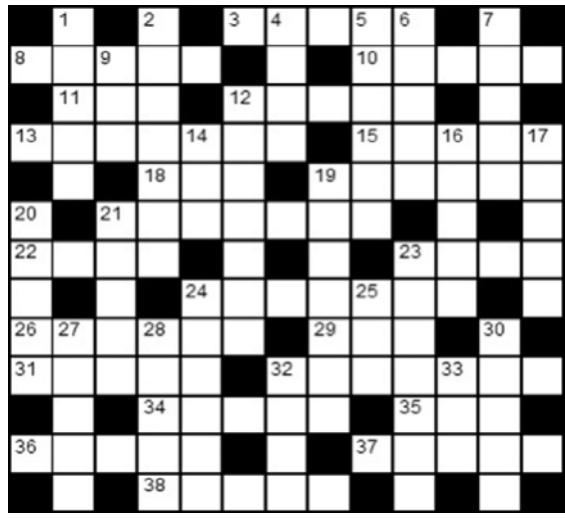
A key highlight of the program was structured business matchmaking, enabling founders to engage directly with enterprise buyers, developers, CSR partners and investors, transforming networking opportunities into potential pilot projects and commercial partnerships.

Reflecting on the program's impact, Sita Pallacholla, CEO, WE Hub, said: "Women founders in the housing sector consistently told us that while they had the capability and innovative solutions, they lacked access to customers, capital and decision-makers. Bridging that gap is exactly why WE Hub exists. SHElterTech demonstrates what becomes possible when women entrepreneurs are provided with the right ecosystem, opportunities and connections to scale."

The event was also attended by Soumya Chanda, Executive Director, Vasavi Group, along with representatives from leading real estate firms, investors and ecosystem partners.

With the successful completion of SHElterTech, WE Hub reinforces its commitment to fostering inclusive innovation and ensuring that women-led enterprises play a pivotal role in shaping Telangana's housing sector, economic growth and sustainable development.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

3 Pale green mosslike lichen (5) who is regretting? (4)

8 Around (5) 23 Just (4)

10 A dolt or a dullard (5) 24 First (7)

11 Automated online program (3) 26 Petroleum byproduct (6)

12 Moist (5) 29 Our country, abbr. (3)

13 A word that means the same (7) 31 Former French coin (5)

15 Jewel, trinket (5) 32 Power to convince (7)

18 Large (3) 34 Italian city (5)

19 Sacrificial tables (6) 35 Yes for Yves? (3)

21 Entourage (7) 36 Ringo ____ of the Beatles (5)

22 One feeling remorseful or one 37 Babble (3,2)

38 English county (5)

DOWN

1 Fortune-teller (5)

2 10th month (7)

4 Shanty town (4)

5 Fit to eat (6)

6 Check accounts (5)

7 Participant (5)

9 Harry Potter's best friend (3)

12 Sanitary principles (7)

14 The egg of a parasitic insect, esp. of a louse (3)

16 Mud hut (5)

17 Moneylending (5)

19 Public sale (7)

20 Suffering (5)

21 Amitabh's leading lady in many a movie (5)

23 Actors don't die they just ____? (4,3)

24 Brings upon oneself (6)

25 Suffix to denote continuation? (3)

27 Veracity (5)

28 Cave (5)

30 Offspring (5)

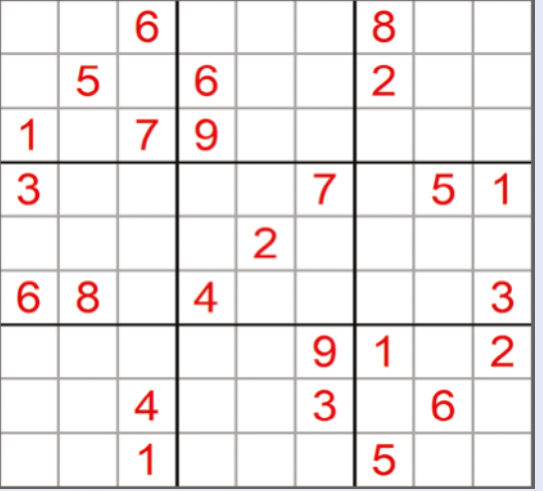
32 Refer to (4)

33 Religious sister (3)



Solution to June 17

SUDOKU





Solution to June 17



BIZ BRIEFS

Dark Chocolate range by ITC

Fabelle Chocolates, ITC's homegrown luxury chocolate brand, unveiled its new 64 per cent Dark Chocolate range. Crafted with premium Ghana OriginCocoa, the range features various flavours including, Cranberry Noir, Orange Eclipse and No Added Sugar Dark Chocolate Bar. Subash Balar, Business Head – Confectionery, ITC Ltd, said: "The modern Indian consumer is rethinking indulgence, seeking greater transparency, balance, and choice without giving up on experience."

ABHFL expands presence in TG

Aitya Birla Housing Finance Limited (ABHFL), a housing finance company, has expanded its footprint in Telangana with the launch of a new branch in Sangareddy. With this, ABHFL's total network in the state has increased to 10 branches. To mark the launch, the company is offering zero login fees along with spot loan sanctions of up to Rs50 lakh, valid from June 17 to 30.

GI ingredients by VAAA Super

Aeetus Enterprises LLP has launched VAAA Super Foods, a premium food brand focused exclusively on GI-tagged (Geographical Indication) ingredients sourced from their native regions and offered in single-origin form. The brand has debuted with three products — Lakadong Turmeric Powder from Meghalaya, Byadagi Chilli Powder from Karnataka, and Gulbarga Toor Dal from Kalaburagi, Karnataka. The products are available through Amazon India and the company's website.

SBI Life rolls out campaign

SBI Life Insurance, an insurance company has released a new Digital Video Campaign (DVC) under its long-standing #Papa-HainNa digital initiative, to commemorate Father's Day. The new digital film is based on the story of a father who discovers that preparing a child for the future is not only about shielding them from every challenge, but about empowering them to navigate life on their own – letting them fall so they can learn to rise, confidently.

Vedanta Power debuts on D-St

Vedanta Power Limited (VPL), the power generation business of Vedanta Group, listed its shares on the BSE and NSE. The historic listing ceremony on 15th June was led by Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal, formally marking Vedanta Power Limited's debut on the Indian Stock Exchanges. Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta Group, said: "24 years ago, Vedanta became the first Indian company to list on the London Stock Exchange and went on to become a FTSE100 company."

Since we have concluded the mother of all trade deals, we have been moving fast to deliver on our commitments. We will sign the Free Trade Agreement by the end of the year and accelerate work on an investment agreement

-UrsulaVon der Leyen, President, European Commission

Resilient India posts all-time high \$863 bn exports in FY26

Engineering goods, electronics, pharma and petroleum products powered record exports as SEZ expansion gathers pace

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S exports reached a record \$863 billion in FY2025-26, demonstrating resilience despite disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict and US tariffs, a senior Commerce Ministry official said on Wednesday.

Speaking at an outreach programme on the achievements of Gujarat's Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce Ajay Bhadoo said India's export ecosystem had remained strong through a challenging global environment.

"This has been a very difficult year, from US tariffs to the West Asia crisis, but India has proved its resilience," he said.

- Growth achieved despite US tariffs and West Asia conflict
- Exports have nearly doubled from \$441 billion in a decade
- Gujarat contributed around \$110 billion in exports



Bhadoo noted that India's total exports have nearly doubled over the past decade, rising from around \$441 billion to \$863 billion, driven by engineering goods, petroleum products, electronics, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, and chemicals.

He said Gujarat contributed nearly \$110 billion to the country's exports and would continue to play a key role in export growth.

The government plans to

promote more SEZs across the country. Bhadoo highlighted the recent notification of Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Pvt Ltd's semiconductor SEZ at Dholera as part of this effort.

Kandla SEZ Zonal Development Commissioner Dnyaneshwar B. Patil said Gujarat's SEZs accounted for around 21 per cent of India's total SEZ exports. Investments and employment in the state's SEZs have also risen

significantly over the past decade, with jobs increasing to more than 2.22 lakh.

Patil said four semiconductor SEZs, including projects by Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing, Micron Technology, Keynes Semicon and CG Semi Technologies, have been notified in Gujarat. He outlined a roadmap targeting 20 per cent annual export growth and 10 per cent annual employment growth from Gujarat's SEZs.

RBI removes rate caps on select NRI deposits till Sept 30

MUMBAI

THE Reserve Bank on Wednesday temporarily withdrew interest rate ceiling on fresh Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits of 3-5 years' maturity till September 30, a move aimed at attracting foreign capital.

It has also temporarily withdrawn restriction on interest rates on Non-Resident External (NRE) deposits of 3 years and above tenors, including deposits that are renewed upon maturity, till September 30, 2026.

"The interest rate ceiling applicable to fresh FCNR(B) deposits mobilised by banks, including the deposits that are renewed upon maturity, for three years and above



-- up to and including five years tenors, is temporarily withdrawn with effect from June 17, 2026, for the period until September 30, 2026," the central bank said in a circular.

The relaxation came into effect from Wednesday.

An FCNR (B) deposit is a term deposit account meant for Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to park overseas earnings in foreign currencies in India.

The notification also said interest rates on NRE/NRO

deposits should not be higher than those offered by the bank on comparable domestic rupee term deposits.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced a host of measures to attract foreign capital in the backdrop of rupee depreciating against the US dollar.

One of the measures was a facility of concessional forex swap for bearing the full hedging cost shall be provided till September 30, 2026 to AD banks for raising fresh 3-5-year FCNR(B) deposits. Separate notifications in this regard have also been issued for commercial banks, co-operative banks, regional rural banks, and small finance banks.

APITCO pacts with MSM Unify for skill development initiative

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

MSM Unify, an education and workforce platform of MSM Global Education Private Limited, has been empanelled by APITCO Limited as a training provider and consulting firm. The two years agreement, authorises MSM Global Education to perform assignments across skill development, capacity building, professional training, and educational consultancy in partnership with APITCO. The empanelment positions MSM Unify to participate in India's government-led skilling ecosystem.

Sanjay Laul, Founder, MSM Unify, said: "India's skilling challenge is not a government problem alone.

Centre garners ₹3,000 crore from GIC Re stake sale

NEW DELHI: THE government on Wednesday said it has sold a five per cent stake in the public sector reinsurance company, the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC), with an enthusiastic response from investors to the offer for sale.

The stake sale is expected to garner about Rs 3,000 crore to the exchequer, taking the total proceeds from five PSU disinvestments so far in the current fiscal to around Rs 16,000 crore.

Non-retail investors oversubscribed the offer for sale (OFS) on Tuesday, putting in bids worth Rs 4,000 crore. The OFS opened for retail investors on Wednesday.

"Offer for Sale (OFS) in GIC Re closed with enthusiastic response from the in-



vestors. Government of India has divested 5 per cent of its stake in GIC Re with full subscription of base and green-shoe offer," Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Arunish Chawla said on X.

Through the two-day OFS at a floor price of Rs 352 per share, the government proposed to divest 2 per cent of equity holding in GIC, with an additional 3 per cent as a green shoe option, taking the total stake dilution to 5 per cent, equivalent to over 8.77 crore shares.

Tesla expands India footprint with Hyderabad experience centre

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

AMERICAN electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla has entered the Hyderabad market with the launch of its first Experience Centre in Telangana.

Located at Knowledge City in HITEC City, the facility showcases the Model Y Rear-Wheel Drive and Model Y Long Range variants, which are now available for booking through Tesla's official website. The company has also started delivery and after-sales services from its facility at Bollaram Industrial Area. Customers who place orders before June 30, 2026, will receive a complimentary Wall Connector.

With the Hyderabad launch, Tesla now operates Experience Centres in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Gurugram. These centres offer customers hands-on access to Tesla vehicles, product demonstrations and test-drive opportunities. Test drives for the Model Y can be scheduled through the Experience Centre or Tesla's customer support.

The 2026 Model Y Premi-

The experience centre at HITEC City showcases Model Y variants; deliveries to begin in July



um Rear-Wheel Drive offers seating for up to five passengers, 2,138 litres of storage space and power-folding seats. Powered by ultra-responsive motors, it accelerates from 0 to 100 km/h in 5.9 seconds and delivers a WLTP-certified range of up to 500 km. Deliveries are expected to begin in July 2026.

Tesla also showcased the Model Y Long Range All-Wheel Drive SUV, designed as a family vehicle with a three-row, six-seat configuration. It offers a WLTP-certified driving range of up to 681 km, accelerates from 0 to 100 km/h in 5.0 seconds and

BoB offers up to 6.25% interest on NRI FCNR(B) deposits

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

BANK of Baroda (BoB) has announced that it is offering higher interest rates of up to 6.25 per cent p.a.to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) under the 'bob Legend FCNR(B) Deposit Scheme'.

The bank is offering 6.25 per cent interest rates on US Dollar deposits, 4.75 per cent on British Pound Sterling (GBP) and Australian Dollar (AUD) deposits, 5.15 per cent p.a. on Canadian Dollar (CAD) deposits and 3.75 per cent p.a. on Euro (EUR) deposits.

Further, NRIs can benefit from the dual advantages of wealth creation and liquidity by availing of the hassle-free overdraft/loan facility against FCNR(B) deposits, providing enhanced financial flexibility while enabling them to maximise their returns.

Domestic demand, reforms to cushion impact of rising crude prices: Crisil

Energy-intensive sectors may face higher costs, but broad-based growth drivers remain intact

NEW DELHI

India is expected to remain resilient despite elevated energy prices driven by the West Asia conflict, supported by strong economic fundamentals, structural reforms and healthy domestic demand, according to a report released on Wednesday.

A report by Crisil said that while a sustained energy shock could increase cost pressures across sectors and weigh on economic activity, India's growth outlook remains comparatively strong.

Although crude oil prices have moderated following the announcement of a memorandum of understanding between the US and Iran this week.

The report further stated that India's diversified economic structure and strong domestic demand could help cushion the impact of higher energy costs.

It identified that land transport, mining, agriculture, chemicals, rubber and plastic products among the sectors most directly exposed to higher energy prices.

These industries play a critical role in the economy and serve as key inputs for several downstream sectors.

In addition, pharmaceuticals, electronic products, processed food and metal products are likely to experience higher input costs if energy prices remain elevated.

However, sectors such as financial services, real estate and professional services face relatively limited direct exposure to energy related cost pressures despite accounting for a significant share of economic output.

Moreover, the report highlighted measures that could help mitigate the impact of rising energy prices.

Government support for fertiliser imports and domestic production, along with continued policy interventions, could help reduce pressure on the agriculture sector, it said. According to Crisil, India's economy has benefited significantly from structural reforms and stronger corporate balance sheets in recent years, which should provide a buffer against external shocks.

AI workforce tops 9.2 lakh as hiring priorities evolve

Demand shifts from experimentation to enterprise-wide implementation

MUMBAI

EMPLOYERS in India are now seeking deployment of artificial intelligence in governance and scaling up workflow, reflecting a shift in the hiring trend of AI talent from experimentation to execution, a report said.

Hiring demand has shifted decisively from AI experimentation to implementation, with employers increasingly seeking professionals who can deploy, manage, integrate and scale AI solutions across core business operations, according to staffing and workforce solutions company Qness Corp's 'India AI Workforce Analysis 2026' report.



The report, based on secondary data and 3.5 lakh job postings, found that India has around 9,20,000 AI professionals. Of them, 2,57,000 are in core AI roles and 6,63,000 in AI-embedded roles.

The report found differ-

ences in job descriptions. Global capability centres (GCCs) are hiring for reusable internal AI platforms, enterprise integration and governance, while IT services firms are recruiting to deliver AI across client pro-

grammes. Enterprises are hiring selectively to connect AI to finance, risk, operations, customer experience and employee systems, the report said. It said about 66-68 per cent of demand from 3.5 lakh active postings is for core AI roles, while 32-34 per cent is for AI-embedded roles.

However, this demand mix is the reverse of the supply base, where 72-74 per cent of the overall 9,20,000 workforce sits in AI-embedded roles and only 26-28 per cent are employed in core AI roles, said the report.

"What stands out in our analysis is the emergence of three distinct engines of AI growth. GCCs are building reusable AI platforms and

governance capabilities, IT Services are industrialising AI deployment at scale, and enterprises are embedding AI directly into business workflows and decision-making. Together, they are creating a new talent landscape where execution capability matters more than experimentation," Qness IT Staffing CEO Kapil Joshi said.

He said, more than 70 per cent of India's AI workforce now holds roles outside traditional AI specialists, while nearly one-third of all AI demand is emerging from business functions such as operations, customer service, marketing, finance, governance, and workforce management.

SpaceX overtakes Microsoft, becomes fourth-most valuable US company

NEW DELHI

SPACEX continued its stellar post-listing rally on Tuesday, overtaking Microsoft to become the fourth-largest company in the US by market capitalisation while announcing a \$60-billion all-stock acquisition of AI coding platform Cursor.

Shares of the Elon Musk-led company rose about 8 per cent in early trading, lifting its market value to nearly \$2.74 trillion. The gain pushed SpaceX ahead of Microsoft and further widened its lead over Amazon, valued at around \$2.65 trillion.

The latest rise extends a remarkable run since SpaceX's record-breaking stock mar-

ket debut on Friday. After soaring 20 per cent on its first full trading day, the stock has continued to attract strong investor interest, making it one of the most closely watched IPOs in recent years.

Investor enthusiasm has been driven by both SpaceX's core space and satellite businesses and its aggressive expansion into artificial intelligence. The acquisition of Cursor, a rapidly growing AI coding assistant valued at \$60 billion, marks one of the company's biggest AI bets. Cursor develops software that can autonomously write code and assist developers, competing with leading AI coding tools such as Claude Code and Codex.



Why the first five years form the most critical stage of learning and development

SIBI FAKIH

Early childhood is often viewed as a stage before “real education” begins. However, findings from developmental science and decades of research suggest that the first five years of life are not merely preparation for learning; they are the period during which the foundations of learning are established.

The significance of this stage is reflected in the rapid pace of growth that takes place during these years. The first 1,000 days, from conception to around a child’s second birthday, are recognised by international agencies such as WHO and UNICEF as a critical period for growth and development. The years that follow continue this process, extending into roughly the first 3,000 days of life and influencing brain development, cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, physical health, and social skills.

Research indicates that most neural connections are formed during the first few years, with nearly 85 per cent of brain development occurring before the age of five.

Experiences during this period can have lasting effects on how children learn, communicate, and interact with the world around them. Learning begins well before children encounter formal instruction. It develops through everyday experiences involving touch, language, play, movement, and secure relationships with caregivers.

This understanding has gained greater relevance in recent years. Developmental challenges are no longer confined to disadvantaged communities. While poverty and malnutrition continue to affect many children, concerns are increasingly emerging across socioeconomic groups. Excessive screen exposure, reduced physical activity, childhood obesity, delayed social development, emotional difficulties, and behavioural concerns are being observed among children from diverse backgrounds.

These trends highlight the importance of distinguishing academic readiness from developmental readiness. Early learning is not



limited to acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. It also includes developing communication abilities, emotional security, self-regulation, curiosity, and social competence. Healthy development depends on adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, opportunities for play, movement, and language-rich environments.

Evidence from longitudinal studies has consistently shown that children who receive appropriate nutrition, emotional support, and

cognitive stimulation during the early years are more likely to perform better in school, develop essential life skills, and participate productively in society later in life. These outcomes underline the importance of viewing early childhood as an integral part of human development rather than simply the beginning of formal education.

One challenge, however, is that structured learning and developmental support often begin relatively late. For many children, organised services become

available only through preschools or Anganwadis when they are around two-and-a-half to three years old. By that stage, much of the most rapid phase of brain development has already taken place. This highlights the importance of supporting children and families from the earliest stages of life.

Parents and caregivers play a particularly important role during this period. Research has demonstrated that simple and consistent interactions such as talking, reading,

singing, playing, and responding to a child’s cues contribute significantly to brain development and language acquisition. These activities do not require specialised resources but rely primarily on responsive and nurturing relationships.

Educational institutions also have an important role to play. Early childhood programmes need to support children’s overall development rather than focus exclusively on academic outcomes. Health, nutrition, emotional well-being, play, and learning are interconnected and should be viewed as complementary aspects of child development.

Teachers and caregivers working with young children benefit from an understanding of developmental milestones and the ways children learn during the early years. Knowledge of emotional development, communication, and age-appropriate learning practices can help create environments that support children’s growth and well-being. Addressing the needs of young children also requires collaboration across sectors. Health, nutrition, education, and



- Early childhood lays the foundation for lifelong learning, with nearly 85% of brain development occurring in the first five years.

- The first 1,000 days are critical, shaping future health, cognition, and emotional well-being.

- Modern childhood faces emerging risks, including excessive screen exposure, inactivity, obesity, and delayed social development.

- Parents are a child’s first teachers, and everyday interactions significantly influence development.

- Investing early is essential for Viksit Bharat 2047, requiring coordinated action across education, health, nutrition, and family support.

social support systems are closely linked during the early years. Strengthening coordination among different agencies and

community institutions can help ensure that children and families receive comprehensive support during this critical phase.



UoH alumni-led ATGC biotech showcases sustainable agri-tech at Bharat Innovates 2026 in France

HYDERABAD: The University of Hyderabad (UoH) alumni network found representation on the global stage as ATGC Biotech Pvt. Ltd., co-founded by two former students of the university, participated in Bharat Innovates 2026, an international showcase of India’s deep-tech ecosystem held in Nice, France, from June 14 to 16.

ATGC Biotech was among 120 high-potential startups selected to showcase India’s advances in biotechnology, healthcare, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, sustainability, space technology and advanced manufacturing. The event was organised alongside India-France bilateral engagements during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to France.

The company was founded by Dr. Markandeya Gorantla and Dr. V.B. Reddy, both alumni of the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Hyderabad.

Dr. Markandeya Gorantla completed his Ph.D. in Plant Sciences between 2000 and 2004 and earlier served as a Senior Research Fellow in the department.

He currently serves as Chairman and Managing Director of ATGC Biotech. Dr. V.B. Reddy obtained his M.Sc. in Plant Sciences, completed an Advanced Post-Graduate Diploma in Bioinformatics and later earned his Ph.D. in Plant Sciences from the university. He is the Executive Director of the company.

Established in Genome Valley, Hyderabad, ATGC Biotech focuses on pheromone-based crop protection technologies aimed at supporting sustainable agriculture. The company develops alternatives to conventional insecticides by using species-specific pheromone signals to manage insect populations.

During the event in Nice, the company announced two international collaborations. It exchanged a licensing agreement with Albaugh Europe, a division of the US-headquartered Albaugh Group, for six crop protection products based on ATGC’s patented CREMIT pheromone technology platform.

ATGC Biotech also strengthened its international presence

through SEMIOPHORE Ltd., a joint venture with Luxembourg Industries Ltd. The venture will focus on developing a portfolio of 18 products tailored for global agricultural markets.

The agreements were exchanged in the presence of Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, and Dr. Manish Diwan, Head of Research Innovation and Science-led Entrepreneurship Development (RFID) at BIRAC. The ATGC delegation also interacted with Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal during the event.

According to the company, its technology has been deployed across more than 200,000 acres and is being commercialised through partnerships in Europe, the Americas and Asia. The participation of the UoH alumni-led enterprise at Bharat Innovates 2026 highlights the growing role of Indian research-driven companies in developing technologies for sustainable agriculture and expanding their presence in international markets.

Today is International Picnic Day

Encouraging active play and social bonding

A day of outdoor fun and companionship during a special Picnic Day celebration aimed at encouraging active play and fostering healthy social interactions. The event provides young learners with an opportunity to step outside the classroom and participate in a variety of recreational activities. Through games, group exercises and free play, children were encouraged to stay physically active while developing teamwork and communication skills. A key highlight of the celebration is the picnic lunch, where students share meals and snacks with their friends, creating an atmosphere of friendship and togetherness. Teachers guides the children through interactive activities that promoted cooperation, sharing and positive social behavior. Such experiences play an important role in supporting children’s overall development by combining physical activity with opportunities for social bonding. Spending time outdoors also helps children appreciate nature and develop healthy habits from an early age.

GITAM launches school of education, adds programmes in AI, biotechnology & entrepreneurship

HYDERABAD: GITAM Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, has announced admissions for the academic year 2026–27, introducing a range of new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and launching the GITAM School of Education to strengthen its multidisciplinary academic ecosystem.

Among the key additions this year are four-year integrated B.A. B.Ed. and B.Sc. B.Ed. programmes under the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), a BBA in Entrepreneurship offered in association with the Bower School of Entrepreneurship, B.Sc. Microbiology, M.Sc. Biotechnology, M.Tech. in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, and M.Pharm. in Industrial Pharmacy, subject to approval by the Pharmacy Council of India.

The university said the new programmes have been designed to address emerging opportunities in areas such as artificial intelligence, life sciences, entrepreneurship and teacher education.

Admissions are open through the GITAM Admission Test (GAT) 2026 and recognised national



Prof Ramesh Vaddi, Dr Richa Sharma, Prof D S Rao, Dr Mamata, Prof Shamuel Tharu, releasing the school of B Ed, brochure in Hyderabad on Wednesday

and state-level entrance examinations, including TG and AP EAPCET, NCET, NATA, JEE, CUET and CAT. Merit-based scholarships of up to 100 per cent, covering tuition fees, food and accommodation, are available for eligible students.

The GAT 2026, a national-level entrance examination conducted by the university, will be held online on June 28, with applications open until June 26.

The Hyderabad campus offers programmes through its Schools of Technology, Science, Business, Humanities

and Social Sciences, Architecture, Pharmacy, Public Policy and the newly established School of Education. Academic offerings span disciplines such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cyber Security, Biotechnology, Architecture, Psychology, Economics, Media Studies and Teacher Education.

Prof. D. Sambasiva Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, GITAM Hyderabad, said, “The launch of the School of Education and the introduction of programmes in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence,

Entrepreneurship and Life Sciences reflect our commitment to preparing students for a rapidly evolving world. Through our Liberal Education framework and multidisciplinary environment, we aim to provide students with opportunities to develop the skills required for future careers.” He added that the university’s Liberal Education framework enables students to combine majors and minors across disciplines, allowing them to pursue personalised learning pathways.

IIM Ranchi to offer 12-week executive programme in product management in Hyd

HYDERABAD: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ranchi has announced a 12-week Executive Programme in Product Management, which will be offered at its Hyderabad campus from July 18. The programme is being conducted in collaboration with education platform Masai and will be delivered in a fully offline weekend format.

Designed for aspiring product managers, engineers, designers, students and early-career professionals, the programme covers the entire product lifecycle, including



customer discovery, product strategy, roadmap planning, execution, stakeholder management and product analytics. Spread over 72 hours, the programme includes 60 hours of faculty-led sessions by IIM

Ranchi and 12 hours of masterclasses by industry practitioners. Participants will also engage with industry leaders through bi-weekly sessions and undertake a capstone project, culminating in a

final presentation before a panel of faculty members and professionals.

The curriculum provides exposure to commonly used product management, collaboration, analytics and artificial intelligence tools, with a focus on practical application and project-based learning.

Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava, Director of IIM Ranchi, said the programme has been designed to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the product lifecycle and the skills required to contribute effectively in product-focused roles. Prof.

Manish Bansal, Chairperson of Executive Education and Consulting at IIM Ranchi, said the course combines academic frameworks with practical challenges and industry mentorship to offer participants a hands-on learning experience. The programme will be conducted at the IIM Ranchi Hyderabad campus on weekends. Candidates who have completed Class XII or higher are eligible to apply. Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a certification from IIM Ranchi and a project completion letter for the capstone assignment.



‘The Odyssey’ India premiere

Christopher Nolan, Matt Damon and Tom Holland to visit Mumbai



India is set to witness a landmark cinematic event as acclaimed filmmaker Christopher Nolan will visit Mumbai this July for the Indian premiere of his highly anticipated



mythological action epic ‘The Odyssey’. Joining the Academy Award-winning director will be Hollywood stars Matt Damon and Tom Holland, along with Oscar-winning producer Emma



Thomas. In a major recognition of the Indian market, Universal Pictures International has included Mumbai as an official stop on The Odyssey’s global premiere tour, alongside

prominent international cities such as London, Paris, and New York. Notably, this marks the first-ever Christopher Nolan film to have its premiere in India, underlining the growing significance of the country in the global entertainment landscape.

The grand premiere is scheduled to take place at PVR Icon IMAX, Phoenix Palladium, Mumbai. The film is slated for a worldwide theatrical release on July 17, with advance IMAX ticket bookings already open across India.

The Odyssey is being hailed as a technological milestone in filmmaking. Shot across multiple international locations, it is the first feature film in cinema history to be filmed entirely using IMAX cameras. The production utilizes newly developed IMAX film technology, promising an immersive large-screen experience for audiences worldwide.

Written and directed by Christopher Nolan, the film reimagines Homer’s legendary tale of Odysseus and his decade-long journey home following the fall of Troy. The project boasts an impressive ensemble cast featuring Matt Damon, Tom Holland, Anne Hathaway, Robert Pattinson, Lupita Nyong’o, Samantha Morton, Zendaya, and Charlize Theron. Produced by Emma Thomas and Christopher Nolan under their Syncopy banner, The Odyssey is among the most anticipated global releases of the year.

The Mumbai premiere is expected to become one of the biggest Hollywood events ever hosted in India, bringing together international cinema icons and Indian movie enthusiasts on a historic occasion.



Rakul Preet Singh focuses on growth, meaningful roles over stardom

Actress Rakul Preet Singh says her priority remains professional growth and meaningful storytelling as she continues to evolve in a career spanning multiple film industries. The actress recently opened up about her approach to acting, fame, and the growing influence of social media on performers.

According to Rakul, audience appreciation is the greatest reward for any actor, and she believes success should be measured by the impact of one’s work rather than celebrity status. She emphasized that while stardom is gratifying, her primary focus has always been on delivering memorable performances and being

part of stories that resonate with viewers.

Reflecting on her journey in cinema, Rakul revealed that she consciously chooses projects that challenge her creatively. The actress said she does not want to be confined to a specific image or genre and instead looks for opportunities that help her discover new dimensions of her craft. She believes every film should contribute to her growth as an artist and offer valuable learning experiences.

The actress also shared her perspective on social media and its effect on actors. Rakul noted that when she entered the industry, social media was not as influential as it is today. However, she feels that the digital space has

become increasingly powerful, particularly in recent years.

While acknowledging that online opinions can affect newcomers, Rakul advised actors to remain focused on their work and avoid getting distracted by constant commentary on social platforms. She stressed that paying excessive attention to online chatter can be counterproductive and may negatively impact an artist’s confidence and performance.

With a strong belief in authenticity and continuous learning, Rakul Preet Singh continues to shape her career around meaningful cinema and personal growth, reinforcing her position as one of the industry’s versatile performers.



‘The India Story’ poster unveils Kajal Aggarwal as a fierce lawyer

The makers of The India Story have released the film’s first official poster, offering a powerful glimpse into a socially relevant courtroom drama centered on the alarming issue of food adulteration. Backed by Zee Studios in association with MIG Production & Studios, the film is gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on July 24, 2026.

The newly unveiled poster features Kajal Aggarwal in the role of a determined lawyer, while Shreyas Talpade appears as a distressed father fighting for justice. A young girl portrayed as his daughter is also featured prominently, highlighting the emotional core of the narrative.

Adding to the intrigue, the poster showcases the iconic Bombay High Court in the backdrop, along with a pesticide cylinder placed inside a courtroom witness box. The imagery strongly hints at a legal battle linked to food contamination and its devastating impact on ordinary families.

Directed by Chetnan DK and written and produced by Sagar B. Shinde, The India Story aims to spotlight a major public health concern that affects millions but often receives limited attention. By combining emotional storytelling with legal drama, the film seeks to raise awareness about the dangers of food adulteration and its long-term consequences.

The project will be released in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil, expanding its reach to audiences across the country. The film’s technical crew includes cinematographer Nishant Bhagwat, music composer Mangesh Dhakde, editor Ashish Mhatre, lyricist Shakeel Azami, and sound designer Anmol Bhawe.

With its socially relevant theme, compelling characters, and thought-provoking premise, The India Story is emerging as one of the most anticipated issue-based dramas of 2026.

Hrithik Roshan cameo adds excitement to ‘Alpha’

The newly released Alpha trailer has significantly raised expectations for the upcoming action thriller, offering audiences a more impactful glimpse into the film than its previously released teaser. With the movie scheduled to arrive in theatres on July 3, the latest promotional material has successfully reignited interest and generated fresh momentum ahead of release.

Following a teaser that received a mixed response from viewers, the makers appear to have struck the right chord with the trailer. Packed with high-octane action sequences, stylish visuals, and stronger emotional undertones, the trailer presents a much more compelling picture of what audiences can expect from the film.

Leading the charge is Alia Bhatt, who impresses in a powerful action-oriented role.

The actress showcases a confident and intense screen presence, highlighting a new dimension to her on-screen persona. Sharvari also leaves a strong impact, with her action scenes emerging as one of the major highlights of the trailer.

Adding further intrigue is Bobby Deol, whose character appears menacing and formidable. His commanding presence enhances the suspense surrounding the film’s narrative. Veteran actor Anil Kapoor also plays a significant



role, bringing additional depth and gravitas to the ensemble cast.

One of the trailer’s biggest crowd-pleasing moments is the tease of a special appearance by Hrithik Roshan. The brief glimpse of the superstar has already become a major talking point among fans, strengthening the connection between Alpha and the expanding YRF Spy Universe.

With expectations riding high, Alpha is considered one of the most important upcoming projects from Yash Raj Films. Industry observers believe the film’s box-office performance could influence the future trajectory of the studio’s ambitious spy franchise.

If the teaser left audiences wanting more, the trailer has successfully delivered the excitement and scale many were hoping for, setting the stage for a highly anticipated theatrical release.

Pragya Jaiswal’s photoshoot gains traction

Actress Pragya Jaiswal continues to command attention on social media despite not having a film release scheduled this year. The actress, known for her elegant fashion choices and strong online presence, has once again become the center of discussion with a stylish new photoshoot that is rapidly gaining traction among fans.

The latest photographs showcase Pragya in a contemporary fashion ensemble featuring a lace bralette paired with a light blue oversized shirt. Complementing the look are white denim shorts that have become a major talking point on social media. The relaxed styling and modern fashion approach have earned appreciation from followers, with many praising her effortless sense of style.

Captured beside a sunlit window, the photos highlight the actress’s confidence and natural charm. Her minimal makeup, soft hairstyle, and understated accessories add to the overall appeal, creating a sophisticated yet relaxed look. The visuals reflect a blend of glamour and simplicity that has resonated strongly with fashion enthusiasts.

While fans continue to await updates regarding her upcoming film projects, Pragya has successfully remained in the spotlight through her active social media engagement. The actress frequently shares glimpses of her fashion shoots, travel experiences, and lifestyle moments, helping her maintain a strong connection with her audience.

Over the years, Pragya Jaiswal has built a reputation not only for her performances on screen but also for her evolving fashion choices. Her latest photoshoot further reinforces her status as one of the most stylish actresses in the industry.

Although there are no immediate movie releases on the horizon, the actress continues to make headlines through her fashion-forward appearances, proving that her popularity extends well beyond the silver screen.



‘Cocktail 2’ revives iconic song ‘Tum Hi Ho Bandhu’ with a new twist

As the release of Cocktail 2 draws closer, the makers have unveiled a refreshed version of the iconic chartbuster “Tum Hi Ho Bandhu,” bringing back one of Bollywood’s most-loved party anthems for a new generation of listeners. The recreated track is expected to play a key role in the film’s music album and has already generated considerable excitement among fans.

Actor Shahid Kapoor, who headlines the sequel, shared the song on social media with a playful message announcing the film’s arrival. The much-awaited romantic entertainer is scheduled for a theatrical release on June 19. Originally featured in the 2012 blockbuster Cocktail, “Tum Hi Ho Bandhu” became an instant sensation. The song was composed by Pritam, penned by Irshad Kamil, and sung by Kavita Seth and Neeraj Shridhar. It was picturized on Saif Ali Khan, Deepika Padukone, and Diana Penty. For the sequel, music producer Abhijit Vaghani has recreated the track with contemporary arrangements while preserving its original spirit. He revealed that the goal was to retain the song’s timeless energy while introducing modern musical elements that appeal to today’s audiences. The release of the revamped anthem follows the launch of other tracks from the film, including “Tujhko,” “Vallah,” “Mashooqa,” and “Jab Talak,” all of which have contributed to the growing buzz around the project. Serving as a spiritual successor to the original romantic drama, Cocktail 2 aims to recreate the magic of its predecessor while presenting a fresh story for audiences. With the return of “Tum Hi Ho Bandhu,” the film has added another nostalgic element to its promotional campaign, further raising expectations ahead of its release.

