



THE Hans India



WOMENIA **When Sakshi Tanwar aka Parvati revealed she is a party animal**
When Sakshi appeared on the chat show, "Koffee With Karan", host and filmmaker Karan Johar revealed that there was a sequence on the show where Sakshi had to dance, and she just took off, almost becoming Helen. **P8**

EDIT **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. **P6**

BUSINESS **Resilient India posts all-time high \$863 bn exports in FY26**
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. **P9**

YOUNG HANS **Why the first five years are the most critical stage of learning and development**
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. **P7**

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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 5**

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 United States 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 Page 5

'A TOTAL KILLER, A TOUGH TRADER'

Trump all praise for PM at G7 bilateral

EVIAN-LES-BAINS: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday



showed 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 5**



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy having breakfast with students after inaugurating Telangana Public School at Arutla in Ranga Reddy district on Wednesday

Maiden 'TG Public School' opens at Arutla

TPS will instil confidence in public edu system: CM

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy has declared that the Telangana government has introduced the concept of Telangana Public Schools to instil confidence in the public education system among parents.

For context, the Telangana Public School (TPS) is a flagship initiative of the state government designed to provide corporate-level, English-medium education to public school students. Driven by the Telangana Education Commission, the model aims to boost public

CM suggested that all his political opponents should visit Arutla Telangana Public School and study the govt's efforts to strengthen the public education system
Revanth affirmed that govt would establish a Telangana Public School in every Assembly constituency

confidence by offering international-standard academics, free transportation, and full meals (breakfast, lunch, and evening snacks) at no cost. **Continued on Page 5**



'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 P5**



Modi flags concerns over impact of West Asia crisis

REPORT: P5

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.

TG govt braces for de-siltation of irrigation projects



Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy reviews de-siltation of major reservoirs at the Secretariat on Wednesday

HYDERABAD

BETTER late than never. Much after the Southwest Monsoon advanced into Telangana and reached Hyderabad in the second week of June, with its progression across the state currently sluggish and weak due to a "weak Bay of Bengal branch", the state government has woken up to the dire need for de-siltation and sedimentation of all irrigation projects. For, the Irrigation Department has belatedly found that delay in de-siltation poses a big threat to the projects during heavy inflows in the monsoon season.

So, the Irrigation wing will undertake a detailed study of de-siltation models being implemented in other states and examine best practices that could be adapted to Telangana's conditions. A study of the national framework and guidelines issued by the central government on reservoir de-siltation and sediment management would also be done before the start of the works. At a high-level meeting, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy observed that the cost of delayed action could be enormous. **Continued on Page 5**



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 5**

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 Rajabhau 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 5**

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 5**

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 5**



India's defence production surges to Rs 1.78 lakh cr in 2025-26

NEW DELHI: India's annual defence production touched an all-time high of Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the financial year 2025-26, the defence ministry said on Wednesday. The milestone represents a 15.6 per cent growth over the previous fiscal year's output of Rs 1.54 lakh crore and a staggering 110 per cent increase since 2020-21 when the figure was Rs 84,643 crore, it said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the "remarkable rise" in India's defence production in recent years is the result of the collective efforts of the Department of Defence Production and all other stakeholders. "This upward trajectory is a clear indicator of the country's expanding defence industrial base," he said. "With sustained policy support, several new initiatives, increased private sector participation, and growing export capabilities, the defence production sector is poised for continued acceleration in the years ahead," he said.

Meta starts charging for Insta, FB & WhatsApp

NEW DELHI

Launches a new 'Meta One' subscription brand

META has officially started charging for Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. Not for the apps themselves, which remain free, but for a new layer of "Plus" features that the company is rolling out globally under a fresh subscription brand called Meta One.

Meta's bet is that enough power users and creators will pay for the extras to make subscriptions a meaningful new revenue line. While that is reasonable maths for a company with three billion users, it is also a signal that the free, ad-supported,

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 5**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Competitive exams may soon come with a nationwide lockdown

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SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH KAPIL



BRS working president MLA KT Rama Rao interacting with party leaders and workers during the meeting at Palair in Khammam district on Wednesday

KTR alleges rampant corruption in Revenue department

Targets Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy accusing him of amassing wealth through irregularities in land and mining-related deals

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

ALLEGING rampant corruption in the Revenue department, BRS working president KT Ramarao said while the State's revenues are declining, the wealth and influence of certain ministers are growing disproportionately.

Addressing the party workers in Palair constituency on Wednesday, KTR accused Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy of amassing wealth through alleged irregularities in land and mining-related dealings and questioned the status of investigations into previous enforcement actions against him.

He also alleged large-scale irregularities in revenue department and claimed that farmers were being subjected to uncertainty over land-related issues. Referring to recent controversies involving ministers and officials,

he slammed the Revenue Minister for behaving in arrogant manner and disregarding even fellow cabinet colleagues.

KTR further alleged that the Congress government had failed to fulfill several election promises, including farm loan waivers, housing schemes, enhanced pensions, unemployment assistance and welfare commitments made to various sections of society.

Targeting Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, KTR criticised what he described as the government's approach towards development and governance. He accused the administration of creating hardship for people through demolition drives and failing to deliver on major promises despite incurring substantial borrowings since assuming office.

The former minister defended the previous BRS government's record, stating that investments in ir-

rigation projects, welfare programmes, power supply, education and healthcare infrastructure had significantly contributed to Telangana's development. He cited projects such as the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Scheme and the establishment of educational and medical institutions in Khammam district as examples of achievements under the BRS regime.

Claiming that public dissatisfaction with the Congress government was growing, KTR urged party workers to strengthen the BRS at the grassroots level and mobilise support ahead of future elections.

MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, MLC Tata Madhu, former Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar, former MLA's Kannada Uppender Reddy, M Nageswara Rao, T Venkateswarlu, former ZP chairman L Kamal Raj and Several senior BRS leaders and local party functionaries attended the meeting.

Ponnam, Adluri throw down corruption gauntlet to Harish

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

POLITICAL tensions intensified after senior BRS leader T Harish Rao alleged a Rs 2,000 crore scam in tenders related to Telangana residential schools. Responding strongly, Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar and Adluri Laxman Kumar refuted the allegations and challenged Harish Rao to prove the charges, stating that both Ministers were ready to resign if corruption was established.

Ponnam Prabhakar questioned the basis of the allegations, stating that the total value of procurement tenders across welfare departments itself does not amount to Rs 2,000 crore. He said mak-



ing such serious accusations without evidence was inappropriate and could mislead the public.

The Minister defended the government's welfare initiatives, particularly those aimed at weaker sections,

and said departments working for the upliftment of poor communities should not be targeted with baseless claims. He alleged that such remarks reflected a negative attitude towards welfare programmes.

Ponnam said the government functions with transparency and is prepared to face any investigation if wrongdoing is proven. He warned that the people of Telangana would not accept attempts to create confusion

through false allegations.

Recalling his political journey, the Minister said he, along with Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar and other leaders, had built their political careers through public service and grassroots work. He said their commitment towards weaker sections and social welfare was evident through their actions.

Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar also reiterated that they were ready to face consequences if any corruption charges against them were proven. The exchange has added to the ongoing political debate between the ruling Congress and opposition BRS over allegations related to government tenders and welfare schemes.

PPA assures full protection for TG villages affected by Polavaram backwaters

HYDERABAD: The Polavaram Project Authority (PPA) has assured complete protection for Telangana villages likely to be impacted by backwater and submergence effects from the Polavaram Project, responding to concerns raised by former Irrigation Minister and Siddipet BRS MLA T. Harish Rao.

In an official communication, the PPA stated that all habitations in Telangana affected up to the project's Full Reservoir Level (FRL) would either be safeguarded through engineering measures or acquired under Rehabilitation and Reset-

tlement (R&R) provisions. The PPA assured that the issues pertaining to backwater impacts are receiving top priority and due administrative attention.

The assurance reiterates commitments made during an inter-state meeting held on April 8, 2025, involving officials from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The Authority said scientific assessments, flood-mitigation plans, and protective interventions would be implemented to prevent adverse impacts on villages, farmlands, and livelihoods in the Godavari basin.

12 BDS final year students suspended over ragging allegations

HYDERABAD

TWELVE final year students of GDC here were suspended for six months pending a police inquiry following allegations of ragging of first year BDS students at the college hostel. Government Dental College (GDC) principal Sarjeev Singh Yadav told mediapersons that the first year students informed orally on June 9 to the anti-ragging committee and submitted a complaint on June 11 that they were given instructions to "get alcohol, cigarettes, food" and do other personal work.

The first year students were also allegedly made to do "chair sit ups", push ups and were abused. When some interns tried to intervene, they were threatened and an intern suffered injury in the eye when he was attacked by the final year students.



The college authorities initially counselled the students that they would have no other way except complaining to the police if the ragging continued.

The parents of the final year students were also called and informed about the matter.

Later, 12 students were suspended for six months and a complaint was made to the Sultan Bazar Police Station. The police inquiry is underway, Yadav said. Further action would be taken as per police report, he said.

The group of students who are now facing allegations had earlier broke CCTV cameras on December 31 during New Year celebrations, he said.

The principal said a 'mentor-mentee' mechanism has been put in place in the college and parents also need to visit the institution at regular interval to enquire about the progress of their children.

Police said the principal of the dental college complained that 12 final year students ragged their juniors and that a case was registered.

Revanth will go Hitler way, says Harish Rao

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

BRS Deputy Leader T Harish Rao on Wednesday said that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who claims Hitler as his inspiration, would meet the same fate as Hitler. Rao made these comments while participating as the chief guest at the BRS Membership Enrollment and SIR Awareness Meeting held in Husnabad, Siddipet. Harish Rao recalled the contribution of senior leader Captain Lakshminantha Rao, who stood alongside KCR during the Telangana movement and was arrested at Alugunur crossroads while participating in the struggle.

Harish Rao said Husnabad had always enjoyed a special place in KCR's heart and has historically been the launchpad for many important political

Alleges widespread corruption in student fee reimbursements and welfare distribution systems

campaigns.

He noted that the region played a crucial role in the early growth of the party and later benefited from several developmental initiatives under the BRS government, including the establishment of the Husnabad Revenue Division, SP and DSP offices, Electricity DE office, a full-fledged RTC depot, the Gouravelli Project, and the development of Gandhi Mahasamudram tank.

Referring to the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, Harish Rao urged party workers to remain vigilant and ensure that genuine voters are not excluded from the electoral process. Harish Rao stated



that while BRS leaders resigned from their positions and made genuine sacrifices

for Telangana statehood, Revanth Reddy only indulged in political drama.

He alleged that when the movement demanded resignations, BRS legislators submitted originals, whereas Revanth Reddy resorted to theatrics by submitting photocopies. Rao further alleged that while fee reimbursement payments for poor students were being delayed, contractors continued to receive payments because commissions were involved, calling it commission mode governance.

Responding to remarks allegedly made by the Chief Minister about his height, Harish Rao said personal attacks would not divert attention from pending farmer assistance, crop bonuses, and unfulfilled promises.

Gymnastics instructor jailed for 20yrs for sexually assaulting preschool child

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

A Special Court of Rajendranagar, Ranga Reddy District has sentenced a gymnastics instructor to 20 years rigorous imprisonment for sexually assaulting a three-and-a-half-year-old girl at a private preschool under the limits of Miyapur Police station in 2019. According to the police, on June 20, 2019, the alleged accused Kura Kiran Sai, 31, took advantage of a delay in the

school van's arrival. The alleged accused took the girl to the top floor of the gymnastics room, sexually abused her, and fled after the sexual assault, leaving her in tears on the ground floor of the gymnastics area.

The school principal, Chilakamukku Deepika, 37, was also convicted for the severe negligence that caused the sexual assault to happen, and she was sentenced to three years in prison. Police said the victim's father filed a formal complaint after

noticing her abnormal behaviour. The victim expressed her pain, refused to return to school, and named the instructor as the sexual abuser. Based on the complaint, the police arrested both accused persons on July 2, 2019, and filed a charge sheet against them after the investigation. After a full-fledged trial, the Special Judge for Trial and Disposal of Rape and POCSO cases delivered the verdict, convicting the accused persons and awarding Rs 3 lakh compensation to the victim.

Take measures to strengthen solid waste mgmt system: DC to officials



HANS NEWS SERVICE

SURYAPET: District Collector Tejas Nand Lal Pawar has directed officials to strengthen solid waste management system in urban areas and ensure strict implementation of the guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court.

He warned that negligence in sanitation and waste management would not be tolerated. During a review meeting held at the Collectorate on

Wednesday, the Collector assessed the implementation of end-to-end waste collection and sanitation plans in the municipalities of Suryapet, Kodad, Huzurnagar, Ner-educhera, and Tirumalagiri.

He instructed municipal authorities to prepare comprehensive action plans for sanitation, waste collection, and recycling. Officials informed the meeting that Suryapet Municipality is now collecting waste in four cat-

egories: dry waste, wet waste, sanitary waste, and special-care waste, in accordance with the latest guidelines.

Around 80 per cent of waste is currently being successfully segregated and collected. The Collector emphasised the need to create greater public awareness through ward meetings.

He also directed officials to appoint dedicated in-charge officers for each dumping yard and ensure that all collected waste is either recycled or scientifically disposed of.

Highlighting long-term solutions, he recommended the establishment of bio-methanation plants for processing wet and vegetable waste.

The gas produced from these plants can be utilized for cooking purposes and for operating incinerators at Vainkunda Dhamams.

He instructed authorities to prepare plans for setting up such plants near market areas in Suryapet and Kodad. Officials reported that nearly one tonne of plastic waste is collected and processed daily.

Congress failed to deliver on poll promises, says Sabitha Reddy

Urges booth-level agents to remain vigilant and ensure that the names of party supporters, well-wishers and workers are correctly included in the electoral rolls

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

FORMER Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy alleged that the Congress party had come to power by making several promises during the elections but failed to implement them after assuming office.

She accused Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy of neglecting public issues and expressed confidence that the BRS would return to power in the next elections.

A BRS digital membership enrolment drive and awareness camp on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was held at Kuntla Ram Reddy Garden in Shadnagar under the leadership of former MLA on Wednesday.

Anjaiah Yadav, former Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy, Palamuru MLC Surabhi



Vani Devi, party leaders and a large number of workers attended the programme.

Speaking on the voter survey process, Sabitha urged booth-level agents to remain vigilant and ensure that the names of party supporters, well-wishers and workers were correctly included in

the electoral rolls. She also announced that the party would organise special training programmes on the issue.

Referring to the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, Sabitha Indra Reddy claimed that the government accelerated the project works only after sustained pressure

from the opposition BRS.

Palamuru MLC Surabhi Vani Devi said the aspirations of the people had been fulfilled with the formation of Telangana and highlighted the development achieved during the BRS regime in the fields of education, healthcare, agriculture and welfare.

She opined that the return of a BRS government was necessary for the continued welfare of the people.

Former MLA Y Anjaiah Yadav stated that the BRS government had played a significant role in the development of the Shadnagar constituency.

He said the Lakshmidivipalli Reservoir was the vision of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and alleged that the attitude of Congress leaders was responsible for delays in the project.

Party in-charge Baikani Srinivas Yadav called upon party workers to take the digital membership drive forward as a mass movement. He also urged party activists and polling booth agents to discharge their responsibilities effectively during the voter survey process.

Ponnam Prabhakar inspects RTC services on ground, interacts with commuters

- RTC services expanded during school and college hours to benefit students
- Free bus travel scheme helps women save up to Rs 3,000 per month
- Government resolves RTC staff issues and strengthens public transport



drivers and conductors to assess public transport services and gather feedback.

Speaking on the occasion, PonnamPrabhakar said the State government had increased RTC services during school and college hours to meet the growing demand from students. He noted that passenger traffic had increased significantly following the launch of the Mahalakshmi scheme, which provides free bus travel for women. To accommodate the growing number of commuters, the government had introduced new buses and expanded services on additional routes.

The Minister said women were saving between Rs 2,000 and Rs 3,000 every month through the free travel scheme.

He added that the government had resolved several long-pending issues of RTC employees and initiated the process for trade union elections.

Highlighting welfare initiatives, PonnamPrabhakar said the government was implementing programmes such as free electricity, LPG subsidy, RythuBharosa assistance and farm loan waivers while focusing on improving education and public services across Telangana.

HANS NEWS SERVICE KARIMNAGAR

TRANSPORT and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam-

Prabhakar, along with SC and Minority Welfare Minister AdhuriLaxman Kumar, reviewed RTC services in Karimnagar on Wednesday

by travelling in a bus from Vageshwari Engineering College to the NTR statue. The ministers interacted with students, passengers,

Bandi Sanjay assures providing infra for medical students

- Minister promises generator and sanitation facilities for medical students
- Urges cooperative societies to tap PM-KUSUM scheme for solar power income
- Women toilets to be built through CSR support after students raise concerns



HANS NEWS SERVICE KARIMNAGAR

UNION Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar assured students of the Government Medical College, Karimnagar, that their long-pending infrastructure issues would be addressed on priority. A delegation of medical students met the Minister at his MP office on Wednesday and submitted a representation highlighting several challenges faced on the campus.

The students raised concerns over frequent power outages affecting classes, the absence of a generator, inadequate sanitation facilities for female students at the

District Government Hospital, and the need for better academic and sports infrastructure. Responding promptly, Bandi Sanjay directed his office staff to take steps for arranging a generator at the earliest to ensure uninterrupted academic activities.

He also assured students that toilets for women medical students would be constructed through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. The Minister stated that proposals for a modern auditorium and sports stadium would be taken up

after ongoing infrastructure works were completed.

Later, during a visit to Choppadandi, Bandi Sanjay inspected a Jan Aushadhi Kendra and encouraged people to make use of affordable medicines available under the Central government scheme.

He also reviewed a solar power plant and called upon cooperative societies across Telangana to establish similar projects under the PM-KUSUM scheme, highlighting their potential to generate substantial annual income and promote sustainable energy development.

World Karate Day celebrated with enthusiasm at SFS School

Edla Venkatesh highlights importance of self-defence and discipline

NIZAMABAD

WORLD Karate Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at SFS School under the leadership of Telangana Lee Martial Arts Academy Founder-President and renowned karate master Edla Venkatesh. Karate students showcased their skills through kata and sparring demonstrations while raising patriotic slogans such as "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", "Jai Hind", and "Vande Mataram".

A special attraction of the event was a blindfolded

self-defence demonstration by Edla Venkatesh, who explained techniques to protect oneself from attackers and respond confidently in difficult situations. Addressing the gathering, he said karate symbolises discipline, regular practice, and self-confidence, urging parents to encourage children to undergo karate training for a secure and successful future.

Several students from different belt categories, including black belt holders Edla Rithvik, Sai Nihal and Vaibhav Tej, participated in the celebrations.



Collector hails growing demand for government school admissions

HANS NEWS SERVICE NIZAMABAD

DISTRICT Collector Ila Tripathi said that government schools are providing quality education on par with private institutions and urged parents to enrol their children in government schools to secure a bright future. She made the remarks during a visit to the Zilla Parishad Government High School at Borgaon (P) in Mopal mandal on Wednesday. Interacting with parents, the Collector expressed satisfaction over the increasing number of admissions in the school. Several parents informed her that they had shifted their children from private schools to government schools due to quality education and the high fees charged by private institutions.

The Collector said government schools were achieving excellent academic results and cited the Borgaon (P) school's 87 per cent pass rate

Parents urged to enrol children in government schools for a brighter future



in the Class X examinations as an example. She noted that the State government was giving top priority to education and continuously improving infrastructure and teaching standards in government schools.

She highlighted that students were receiving free textbooks, notebooks, uniforms, breakfast and mid-day meals. The government was also

conducting regular training programmes for teachers to improve teaching skills.

During the visit, Ila Tripathi directed officials to take steps to expand the school by acquiring adjacent land, as existing classrooms were insufficient for the growing student strength. She also interacted with students and distributed prizes, textbooks and notebooks.

Agriculture department cracks down on fertiliser price violations

MAO CONDUCTS SURPRISE INSPECTIONS, WARNS OF LICENCE CANCELLATION FOR VIOLATIONS

HANS NEWS SERVICE KAGAZNAGAR

MANDAL Agriculture Officer Ramakrishna conducted surprise inspections of fertiliser shops in Kagaznagar on Wednesday and directed dealers to sell fer-

tilisers only at government-fixed prices.

He warned that strict action, including cancellation of licences, would be taken against dealers found charging rates above the prescribed prices.

The officer said adequate

fertiliser stocks were available at all centres to ensure uninterrupted supply to farmers.

He also urged farmers to report any instances of overpricing to the Agriculture Department immediately.

ITDA assures action on tribal rehabilitation issues in Kadam Mandal

Project Officer Manda Makarand says grievances of Gond tribals will be taken up with senior officials for speedy resolution

HANS NEWS SERVICE KHANAPUR

ITDA Utnoor Project Officer Manda Makarand said that special measures would be taken to address the rehabilitation issues of tribals from Nachchan Ellapur village in Kadam mandal. He made the assurance during a special meeting held with Gond tribals at the ITDA office in Utnoor on Wednesday.

During the meeting, tribal representatives highlighted several concerns related to rehabilitation, land rights, cultivation of agricultural lands, and livelihood challenges.

They explained the difficulties they had been facing for years and sought government intervention for a permanent solution.

The Project Officer patiently heard their grievances, examined the petitions submitted by them, and reviewed issues con-



cerning land identification, rehabilitation procedures, and access to government welfare facilities.

Addressing the gathering, Makarand stated that the government was giving top priority to tribal welfare and development. He assured the participants that the issues raised would be brought to the attention of senior officials, including the District Collector, District Forest Officer (DFO), and Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO), for appropriate action.

He said all matters related to tribal rehabilitation would be examined thoroughly and resolved in accordance with government rules and regulations. Makarand reiterated ITDA's commitment to protecting tribal rights, improving living standards, and ensuring justice for affected families.

Former MP Soyam Babu Rao, ITDA officials, staff members, Gond tribals from Kadam mandal, and other representatives attended the meeting.

Kaleshwaram embarks on grand transformation with Rs 198 crore project

- Kaleshwaram to emerge as a major spiritual destination with modern facilities
- Pushkara ghats and riverfront infrastructure to be developed
- Adi Mukteshwara Temple revival planned with regular rituals

HANS NEWS SERVICE JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

THE historic Sri Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy Temple at Kaleshwaram in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district is set to undergo a massive transformation with a Rs 198-crore redevelopment project sanctioned by the Telangana government. The ambitious initiative aims to enhance the temple's infrastructure and accommodate the growing number of devotees visiting the shrine from across India and abroad.

Recognised as one of the rarest temples in the world with centuries of spiritual heritage, Kaleshwaram has witnessed a significant increase in pilgrim footfall over the years. Improved connectivity, including bridges across the Godavari River and better transport facilities, has further elevated its prominence as a major religious destination.

The redevelopment project has been taken up under the guidance of Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Endowments Principal Secretary Shailaja Ramayya. Authorities have planned extensive works to enable nearly 25,000 devotees to be accommodated comfortably within the temple complex.

As part of the reconstruction, the surroundings of the main sanctum will be renovated, while smaller gopurams, prakaram walls and subsidiary shrines will also be restored. The re-design of associated temples will be undertaken



in consultation with the Sringeri Peetham.

A major component of the project includes the development of Pushkara ghats along the Godavari River. Sacred bathing ghats such as Pakshi Tirtha, Vyasa Tirtha and Jnana Tirtha will be constructed with an allocation of Rs 60 crore.

The long-neglected Adi Mukteshwara Temple, regarded as an ancient shrine of great religious significance, will also be revived. Daily rituals will be resumed and improved access will be provided for devotees.

The master plan includes the construction of permanent structures along the Godavari riverbank, new roads connecting important ghats and several modern amenities for pilgrims. The first phase of the project, focusing on the southern side of the temple complex and subsidiary shrines, is expected to be completed by May 2027. Temple authorities stated that darshan of Sri Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy will continue uninterrupted during the reconstruction period. Devotees will be able to offer prayers at the Balavari established at the Adi Mukteshwara Temple. Special officers have also been appointed to ensure smooth management and prevent inconvenience to pilgrims during the redevelopment works.

Harish Rao targets Congress over delayed welfare schemes and irrigation projects

HANS NEWS SERVICE HUSNABAD

- Says Congress failed to fulfil promises to farmers, youth and weaker sections
- Urges BRS workers to protect genuine voters during electoral roll revision
- Alleges welfare schemes and irrigation projects are being neglected

FORMER Minister and BRS deputy floor leader Harish Rao alleged that the Congress government had failed to fulfil its promises to farmers, youth and weaker sections while neglecting several welfare and development programmes launched during the previous BRS regime.

Addressing a BRS membership enrolment and voter awareness meeting in



Husnabad on Wednesday, Harish Rao urged party workers to remain vigilant during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He called on party cad-

res to assist voters in completing required forms and ensure that eligible voters were not removed from the rolls. Recalling the Telangana statehood movement, Harish Rao

said BRS leaders had resigned from their posts and made sacrifices for the formation of Telangana. He alleged that Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had not made similar sacrifices despite holding the state's top office.

Highlighting development works carried out during the BRS government, he said Husnabad was upgraded as a revenue division and several key government offices were established in the region. He also credited the previous gov-

ernment with developing the Gouravelli project and Gandhi Mahasamudram tank.

Harish Rao further alleged that funds allocated for SC, ST and BC welfare had not reached the intended beneficiaries. He claimed that several welfare schemes introduced by the BRS government had either been discontinued or weakened, while irrigation projects and farmer assistance programmes were facing delays. Several senior BRS leaders attended the meeting.

Hans India Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I hitherto known as M A SHAHRUKH ARMAAN S/o M A RAFAEQ, R/o H.No 4-5-315, Ashok Nagar, Karimnagar Mandal, Karimnagar District, Telangana State-505001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **MOHAMMED ABDUL SHAHRUKH ARMAAN** (Th. 03696)

I, NITTU VANITHA W/o NITTU THIRUPATHI, residing at H.No 2-60/1, CHAMANPALLY VILLAGE, DHARMARAM MANDAL, PEDDAPALLI DISTRICT, TELANGANA STATE-505415, have changed the name of my minor son **NITTU JASVIK NANDAN** alias **NITTU JAISVIK NANDHAN**, aged (07) years and he shall hereafter known as **NITTU JASVIK** (Th. 03695)

I, SATHARAJI RAYAMALLU POSHANNA, R/o.1-17, Bommaraddipalli, Erraguntapalli, Dharmaram, Peddapalli, TS, changes my name as **SATHARAJI RAYAMALLU, S/o.POSHANNA NARSAYYA** (Th. 34250)

I KANUGADI RAJAGANGU (OLD NAME) R/O H.No: 2-39, JAKRANPALLY, KOLIPAKA, NIZAMABAD, TG I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AS **KALAKADI RAJAGANGU (NEW NAME) W/O KALAKADI RAJESHWAR** (Th. 34250)

I Jeregala Sayanna(Old name) S/o:Jorigala Sayanna Changed my name as **Jorigala Medhari Sayanna S/O:Jorigala Sayanna** R/o:H.No:3-20, Renjerela (vill), Mupkal (mdl) Nizamabad, TG (Th. 34250)

I Jeregala Laxmi (old name) W/o:Jorigala Medhari Sayanna Changed my name as **Jorigala Medhari Laxmi W/O:Jorigala Medhari Sayanna** R/o:H.No:3-20, Renjerela(vill), Mupkal(mdl) Nizamabad (Th. 34250)

I Jeregala Jamuna (old name) w/o: Jorigala Devendhar Changed my name as **Jorigala Jamuna W/O: Jorigala Devendhar** R/o: H.No: 3-20, Renjerela (vill), Mupkal (mdl) Nizamabad, TG (Th. 34250)

ALJIRA BEGAM (OLD NAME) R/O H.No:3-148, PONKUR VILLAGE, SARANGAPUR MANDAL, NIRMAL DIST, TS HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO **HAJRA BEGUM(NEW NAME) w/o ABDUL KHALEEL** (Th. 34250)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMMED AZIZ MOHAMMED JAHANGIR S/o. Mohammed Jahangir Gulam Rasul Shaikh, R/o.3-1-248/2/1, Kakatiya Cy, Hanamkonda, Hanamakonda- 506001, TS Changed My Name As **MOHAMMED AZIZ, S/o. MOHAMMED JAHANGIR** (New Name) (Th. 34250)

I, DILIPKUMAR S/O RAJAGANGARAM R/O H.No 1-51 Village Gandlapet Mandal Morthad District Nizamabad Telangana 503225 I have Changed My Name /Surname as **Mamidi Dilipkumar S/o Mamidi Raja Gangaram** (Th. 34250)

I KANUGADI AJAY S/O KANUGADI RAJESHWAR (OLD NAME)/O HNO:2-39, JAKRANPALLY, KOLIPAKA, NIZAMABAD, TG I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AS **KALAKADI AJAY S/O KALAKADI RAJESHWAR** (NEW NAME) (Th. 34250)

LOST

I, MOHAMMED ABUL RAFI ARIF S/O MOHAMMED ABUL GHANI ARIF R/O HNO:8-55, LINE GALLY, NIZAMABAD, TG I HAVE LOST MY **PASSPORT NO:G2570844** WHILE I WAS TRAVELLING ON MY BIKE 12-6-2026, FROM MY HOME LANE GALLY TO MY BUS STAND IF ANY FOUND CALL ME: 9700934786 (Th. 34250)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAZIA BEE W/o. KHURSHIED MIYA IMAM SAB (old Name As per mentioned Passport) H.No. 1-1-81, Tadkole 'X' Road, Banswada, Dist. Kamareddy, T.G. I Have changed as per my Aadhaar Card No. 9303 2792 4256 My New Name **RAZIYA BEGUM W/o. MOHAMMED KHURSHID MIYA** (Th. 34250)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, FATIMA TAMKEEN D/o. **ABDUL SHUKUR** (Old Name) Changed my name as **TAMKEEN FATHIMA D/o. ABDUL SHUKUR** (New Name) R/o. H.No: 12014/1, Moula Galli, Kotagiri Mandal, Nizamabad Dist. T.G. - 503 207 (Th. 34250)

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PAWAN FULFILS AILING FAN'S WISH WITH PERSONAL VISIT

Also fulfils another wish of Niranjan by promising to arrange a pet dog after learning of the teenager's fondness for 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"
- 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 expenses



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 animals. Dur-



ing 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.



FOOD POISONING SCARE

Over 20 children fall ill after eating pani puri in Sircilla

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJANNA SIRCIILLA

MORE than 20 children reportedly fell ill after consuming pani puri at KCR Nagar in Thangallapalli mandal of Rajanna Sircilla district, triggering concerns over food safety and hygiene standards in the area.

According to local sources, the children ate pani puri sold by a roadside vendor on Tuesday evening. By Wednesday morning, several of them developed symptoms including vomiting, diarrhoea and fever, prompting worried parents to rush them to the Government District Hospital in Sircilla.

Doctors at the hospital said the children were undergoing treatment and their condition was being closely monitored. Preliminary assessments pointed towards suspected food poisoning, though officials were yet to confirm the exact cause of

- RDO Sridhar Babu reviews treatment and directs officials to monitor victims
- Doctors suspect food poisoning as children undergo treatment at district hospital
- Residents seek action against unhygienic food vendors and illegal food units

the illness.

Health authorities were expected to investigate the incident and collect samples for analysis.

Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) Sridhar Babu visited the district hospital and interacted with the affected children and their family members.

He reviewed the medical facilities being provided and

directed hospital authorities to ensure the best possible treatment. The RDO also instructed officials to keep a close watch on the health condition of the children until their recovery.

The incident sparked concern among local residents, who alleged that several roadside food vendors and food preparation units in and around Sircilla were operating without proper hygiene standards and regulatory oversight. They claimed that inadequate inspections by the Food Safety Department had allowed unsafe food products to be sold openly.

Residents called for immediate inspections of roadside eateries and food preparation centres across the district. They urged authorities to take stringent action against violators and strengthen food safety monitoring mechanisms to prevent similar incidents in the future.

KAVITHA RULES OUT RECONCILIATION WITH BRS

- "I have closed the book called BRS. I am going to write a new history with TRS"
- Revealed that floating her own political outfit was never her original plan



HYDERABAD

TRS president K Kavitha has said that her association with the BRS, led by her father K Chandrasekhar Rao, is over and that she is focusing on building a future with her fledgling party.

She said, "Definitely, that chapter is closed. It is said that, in life, we have to turn a page sometimes and close the book sometimes. I have closed the book called BRS. I am going to write a new history with TRS (her own outfit Telangana Rakshana Sena)."

She was responding to a

question if reconciliation with BRS was possible if her father made an offer. In the backdrop of "bitter experiences" of not being able to deliver on crucial promises when the BRS was in power, she said she was going to people to build a "great Telangana," including achieving social justice. She revealed that floating her own political outfit was never her original plan.

Kavitha noted that her suspension from the BRS occurred without a show-cause notice or any semblance of internal democracy. Alleging that parties in Telangana, including BRS, were "heavily

focused on national issues", she said her party, Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS), would prioritise regional issues. Asked about her charge that BRS abandoned Telangana's aspirations, she criticised the party led by her father for "failing" to recognise most of the "freedom fighters" who fought for statehood, and said not enough was done for the families of those who sacrificed their lives for the cause. She wished she had fought harder for the cause during the BRS regime. Once BRS moved away from the core ideology, the umbilical cord between

the Telangana people and the party was severed, she said.

To a query on the principal rival of her party, Kavitha replied that the Congress is the main opposition as it is in power. According to her, the BJP and BRS are in "sleep mode", and only her TRS is launching protests on a host of public issues.

In response to Congress' criticism that she was part of the government when BRS was in power, she admitted that she could have done more on various issues during the previous regime, though one cannot go beyond a limit when part of a party. However, the Congress, now in power, cannot shift the blame to the party that was previously in power, she said.

Regarding her party's immediate goals, she said TRS has taken up struggles on public issues, including crop procurement and school fees regulation. In the long run, the TRS wants to ensure Telangana's share in Godavari and Krishna waters.

SMS to replace paper receipts at Mee Seva Centres

- Mee Seva goes paperless
- SMS receipts from June 19
- No more paper acknowledgements
- Receipts now on mobile
- Digital shift for Mee Seva
- Download receipts through SMS link
- Mobile-based acknowledgements

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN a major step towards digital service delivery, Mee Seva will discontinue the issuance of paper acknowledgement receipts for applications from June 19. Under the new system, applicants



will receive an SMS immediately after submitting their application, containing application details and a link to access the acknowledgement receipt.

According to official instructions, citizens can use the link provided in the SMS to view, download, or print the receipt whenever required. The move is aimed at reducing paper usage and improving convenience for applicants.

Mee Seva operators have

been directed not to issue paper receipts after the new system comes into effect. They have also been instructed to ensure that applicants provide a correct and active mobile number at the time of submission so that the acknowledgement SMS reaches them without delay.

Officials said operators must inform applicants that the receipt will be delivered through SMS and advise them to retain the message

until the requested service is completed and the certificate is issued. In cases where the SMS is accidentally deleted or lost, operators can use the "Resend SMS" option available in the Mee Seva system to send the acknowledgement again.

Operators have also been asked to assist citizens in accessing and downloading the receipt using the link provided in the message.

The department has warned that strict action will be taken against individuals, who continue issuing paper receipts or violate the new guidelines after June 19, 2026.

With the implementation of the new system, all Mee Seva application acknowledgements will be delivered digitally, enabling citizens to access their receipts conveniently through their mobile phones.

Mahesh Goud offers prayers at Jahangir Peer dargah



- Attends a traditional feast (Kanduru)
- Residents submit representations against establishment of dump yard in Siddapur



HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

TPCC chief Mahesh Goud has said that the Congress government, under the lead-

ership of Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy, is committed to the comprehensive development of the revered Hazrat Jahangir Peer Dargah, a symbol of communal har-



mony located on the outskirts of Innulnarva Gram Panchayat in Kothur mandal.

Mahesh Goud visited the dargah on Wednesday to attend a traditional feast (Kanduru) organised by his relatives. He was accorded a grand welcome at Kothur Y-Junction by Congress leaders and party workers under the leadership of MLA Veerlapalli Shankar. Later, accompanied

by MLA Veerlapalli Shankar and Waqf Board Chairman Azmatullah Hussaini, he offered prayers at the dargah and presented flowers and a ceremonial chadar.

During the visit, farmers and residents from Siddapur, Innulnarva and nearby villages submitted a representation opposing the proposed dumping yard on the Siddapur outskirts. Responding

to their concerns, Mahesh Goud said the State government has already sanctioned funds to provide essential amenities for devotees at the dargah. He assured that all developmental works would be undertaken without causing inconvenience to local residents.

On reports circulating on social media regarding the establishment of a dumping

yard in the area, Mahesh Goud clarified that such reports were merely rumours. He said only a proposal had been forwarded and emphasised that he and the Congress leadership were opposed to setting up the dumping yard at the proposed location. He assured the public that efforts would be made to prevent its establishment in the area and relocate the project elsewhere.

REVURI FLAGS OFF NEW RTC BUS SERVICE

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WARANGAL

REAFFIRMING the Congress government's commitment to strengthening public transport and rural infrastructure, Parakala MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy on Wednesday inaugurated a new RTC bus service connecting Warangal and Katrappalli via Khila Warangal, Stambampalli, Vasantapur, Vanchanagiri, Shayampet, Textile Park, Sangem and Kuntapalli. The MLA formally

launched the service at Katrappalli in Sangemmandal and later drove the bus himself up to Sangem, drawing cheers from passengers and local residents. Addressing the gathering, Reddy said the Congress government remained dedicated to providing better transport facilities and essential infrastructure to people, particularly those living in rural areas. He stated that the government was focused on the overall development of villages and was continuously identifying



and addressing public needs. According to him, ensuring access to reliable transportation was a key part of improving the quality of life for rural communities. Highlighting the government's welfare initiatives,

Reddy said women's empowerment and economic independence remained among its top priorities. He noted that the Mahalakshmi scheme, which allows women to travel free of cost on RTC buses, had significantly reduced travel expenses for poor and middle-class families. The MLA further said the government had introduced a model under which mandal-level women's federations purchase buses and lease them to the RTC, creating a sustainable source of income for women's

groups. He added that women across the state had collectively saved nearly Rs10,000 crore through the free bus travel scheme. Later, at a programme held at the Sangem MPDO office, Reddy distributed Indiramma housing sanction letters to 72 beneficiaries. Sarpanches, Congress leaders and government officials attended the event and expressed gratitude to the government for introducing the new bus service and extending housing benefits to eligible families.



MLA distributes Kalyana Lakshmi cheques

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KAGAZNAGAR

SIRPUR MLA Dr.Palvai Harish Babu distributed Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques to beneficiaries at RythuVedikas in Dahegaon and Penchikalpetmandals on Wednesday.

A total of 123 beneficiaries received financial assistance under the welfare schemes, including 83 beneficiaries from DahegaonMandal and

40 from PenchikalpetMandal. Addressing the gathering, the MLA said the State Government was committed to supporting the marriages of girls from eligible families through the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes. He encouraged people to avail themselves of the benefits offered under these initiatives.

Officials, BJP leaders, beneficiaries and local residents attended the programme.

'A total killer, a tough trader'

Continued from P1

"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. We 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.

Keep Hormuz open: Modi

Continued from P1

"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. Responding to a question on the Indian seafarers killed in the conflict zone, Trump said he had been briefed about the incident and added that efforts were underway to address the issue. "I heard about that. It is a rough profession. We (PM Modi and him) are reworking at it," he said.

India had protested the attacks after the vessels carrying the Indian crew was attacked thrice within a week as ministry of external affairs had summoned US envoy in Delhi.

India has been pressing the United States for months for a Trump trip, potentially as part of a meeting including Japan and Australia.

Modi flags concerns over impact of West Asia crisis

EVIAN-LES-BAINS: Prime Minister Narendra 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. Modi emphasised that modern economic growth cannot be measured solely by trade volume or GDP

numbers and that the true value of progress lies in its direction, and who ultimately benefits from it. The impact of the West Asian crisis on fuel, fertiliser, and food supply chains will have long-lasting consequences for the Global South, Modi said, adding the most vulnerable countries should not bear the burden of geopolitical crises. "If we truly want to strengthen international solidarity, the most vulnerable countries should not bear the burden of these crises alone," he said.

"Our international financial institutions must create support mechanisms that help developing countries absorb these shocks and maintain their economic resilience," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said the new framework to help the Global South can be modelled on the ambitious IMEC or India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor initiative. "Drawing inspiration from the IMEC vision, we can work on connectivity projects with countries in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands," he said. Combining the capital of the G7, India's talent, and the ownership of countries in the Global South, we could consider creating the International Mobilisation Partnership for Accelerating Connectivity and Trade, or IMPACT, he said. "Its objective should be to create corridors that connect trade, technology, energy, and opportunity," he added.

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

Continued from P1

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.

Telegram moves Delhi HC against govt curbs

Continued from P1

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.

'We're most famous couple'

Continued from P1

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 in-

teractions 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.

UDDHAV SENA STARES AT SPLIT

Continued from P1

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 am. 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.

Deal not final: Trump

Continued from P1

Trump further trained guns at Islamic Republic of Iran for "misbehaving for 47 years". The sentiment Trump expressed in his latest remarks was much harsher than what he earlier said at the same G7 gathering. He had called the potential deal a very "powerful document", announcing that its content could be out "pretty soon".

His remarks come just days ahead of an agreement expected to be signed in Switzerland on Friday. Vice President JD Vance and Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf are reportedly set to attend.

The talks on a final US-Iran settlement to end the conflict are set to begin immediately after the signing of the accord and continue over a 60-day window to flesh out its details.

Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had said that the US and Iran have "never been closer" to a deal, and Trump had backed that sentiment. Trump's fresh threats to Iran could hamper some progress made last week when both sides expressed hope of reaching an agreement soon.

The US naval blockade was observed to be lifted in part. Iranian oil tankers exited the zone in the Gulf blockaded by the US Navy, the Tanker-Trackers website reportedly said, calling it the country's "first crude oil exports in two months". It came after an Iranian deputy foreign minister said the two-month US naval blockade on Iranian ports had been lifted.

TG govt braces for de-siltation of irrigation projects

Continued from P1

He pointed out that severe flooding in Punjab last year inundated 16 of the state's 22 districts, forcing the government to spend nearly Rs 2,000 crore on flood-related damages and compensation. A substantial portion of such expenditure could have been avoided through timely preventive measures, including systematic de-siltation and restoration of drainage and storage capacities, he opined.

Uttam reviewed issues being faced by agencies engaged in the de-siltation of

the Kaddam Project and assessed the progress of works at the Lower Manair Dam (LMD) and Mid Manair Reservoir (MMR). He directed officials to come up with practical solutions to overcome operational bottlenecks and accelerate de-siltation efforts. He instructed the Chief Engineers of the Sri Ram Sagar Project (SRSP) and the Nizam Sagar Project to undertake a comprehensive assessment of de-siltation requirements in their respective projects and submit recommendations on

feasible measures for restoring lost storage capacity.

The Minister also cited the de-siltation of the Mangalam Dam in Palakkad district of Kerala as a successful example. The project, undertaken in 2017, demonstrated how scientifically planned de-siltation could simultaneously address reservoir sedimentation and generate economic benefits through the utilisation of excavated material. He said Telangana should study such successful models and adapt them to suit local conditions.

Meta starts charging for Instagram, Facebook & WhatsApp

Continued from P1

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. While it's still early days, features like profile customisation, story rewatch counts, secret story viewing, and more chat pins are unlikely to garner huge interest beyond power users and influencers.

Samajwadi split next?

Continued from P1

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 ahsana (how long will their 'benefits and songs' continue)".

TPS will instil confidence in public edu system: CM

Continued from P1

The Chief Minister affirmed that the government would establish a TPS in every Assembly constituency to provide quality education and train students in sports to produce India's talented sports persons in the future.

Addressing a public meeting after inaugurating the maiden Telangana Public School at Arutla in Manchal mandal of Rangareddy district on Wednesday, the Chief Minister asserted: "Telangana's future does not lie in glass-embellished

palaces or colourful walls. We firmly believe it lies within the classrooms."

"We are strengthening government schools based on the recommendations of the Education Commission. In all, 1,814 students have already enrolled in the Arutla Telangana Public School. It is matter of pride that 'No Admission' board had to be put up at a government school in view of the huge rush for admission," he said.

The Chief Minister mentioned that, as part of a move to nurture talented students, the government

has initiated steps to strengthen the government schools. The establishment of Telangana Public Schools was a sincere effort to revive the "abandoned public education system."

Revanth Reddy observed that many great leaders and officials studied in government schools. Former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao and himself also studied in government schools. The Chief Minister suggested that students must excel in education so that parents can live with self-respect. The Chief Minister emphasised

that every student should perform in their studies aiming to become IAS, IPS officers and future political leaders.

The Chief Minister warned his political rivals that they could lose their opposition status in the next Assembly elections if they do not stop making false allegations against the state government. He suggested that all his political opponents should visit the Arutla school and study the government's efforts to strengthen the public education system.

The Chief Minister

stressed that sports should be given importance to bring out talents in the schools. The Young India Sports University was established with an aim to help students excelling in sports win medals in Olympic Games. A sports training programme has been launched in the schools. He recounted how a football tournament was conducted in Hyderabad by inviting legendary Messi. He appealed to people to support the government, saying he is committed to transforming Telangana into a 'role model' for the country.



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

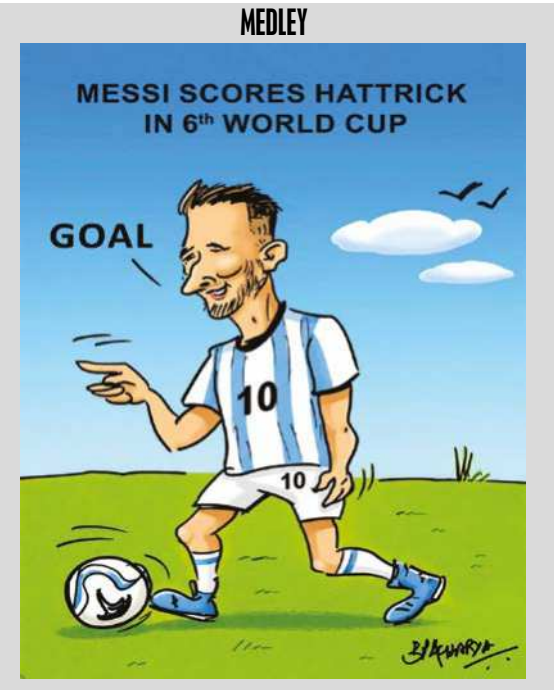
"model textbooks, supplementary materials, newsletters, journals, and educational kits, multimedia digital content, and other educational materials." What kind of "model textbook" can preach moral policing over accurate presentation of facts and visuals? This was not the first time that sanskaris have 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' 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-

our 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, 'Chandrasahas'.

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 'Kanya 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 Chitracharya, 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)

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

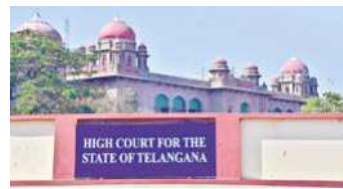
want a say and protection for home-grown talent; collegia seek to balance merit, representation and institutional needs.

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



HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA

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 —

through collegium practice directions or a public memorandum — to state how local practice and regional representation are weighed against other parameters.

To address social justice goals, the collegium and state authorities should foster mentorship and training programmes that increase the pipeline of high quality, diverse candidates from within the state.

If the bar fears opacity or perceived unfairness, it should press for greater procedural transparency (publication of non sensitive selection criteria and anonymised statistics on regional representation) rather than exclusionary membership rules.

Preference, not parochialism, should guide reform:

The Telangana Bar Association's demand reflects anxieties that many state bars across India have voiced—the desire for local representation, social justice and an accessible bench that understands regional problems. Those concerns merit serious engagement by the collegium and reformers. But constitutional structure, the Memorandum of Procedure, and the imperatives of judicial quality caution against categorical rules that close the candidate pool by place of origin. The healthier path is a principled, transparent consultative regime in which local experience is an honoured, measurable factor — one among several — that the collegium publicly recognises and actively cultivates, while retaining its constitutional duty to recommend judges on the basis of merit, integrity and the public interest.

(The writer is with the Cholleti Black-Robe Chambers, Hyderabad, and writes on economy, politics and law)

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 on 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>



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 guide 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.



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-excavation 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.

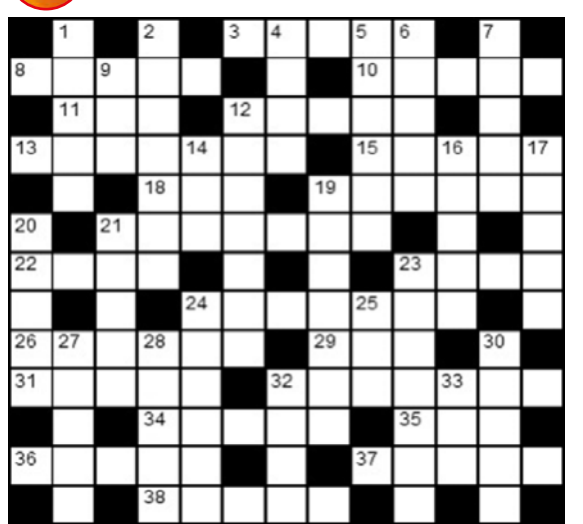
A key highlight of the program was structured business matchmaking, enabling founders to engage directly with enterprise buyers, developers, CSR partners and investors, transforming networking opportunities into potential pilot projects and commercial partnerships.

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)
 - 8 Around (5)
 - 10 A dolt or a dullard (5)
 - 11 Automated online program (3)
 - 12 Moist (5)
 - 13 A word that means the same (7)
 - 15 Jewel, trinket (5)
 - 18 Large (3)
 - 19 Sacrificial tables (6)
 - 21 Entourage (7)
 - 22 One feeling remorseful or one who is regretting? (4)
 - 23 Just (4)
 - 24 First (7)
 - 26 Petroleum byproduct (6)
 - 29 Our country, abbr. (3)
 - 31 Former French coin (5)
 - 32 Power to convince (7)
 - 34 Italian city (5)
 - 35 Yes for Yves? (3)
 - 36 Ringo ___ of the Beatles (5)
 - 37 Babble (3,2)
 - 38 English county (5)

SUDOKU

- 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

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

-Ursula Von der Leyen, President, European Commission

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

Aditya 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

Aetis 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."

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, Kaynes 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.

Gill is handling (the captaincy job) very well. His individual performance has also improved a lot. He is one of the finest players; I don't know why they don't select him for T20s. He is a good player for all formats and should never have been dropped from any format, - Mohammed Azharuddin



FIFA WORLD CUP 2026



Kylian Mbappe reacts after scoring a goal

Messi scores a hat-trick triumph

KANSAS CITY

LIONEL Messi celebrated his record-breaking sixth World Cup appearance with a hat-trick, powering defending champions Argentina to a comfortable 3-0 win over Algeria in a FIFA World Cup 2026 Group J opener at the Kansas City Stadium on Wednesday.

In the process, Messi equalled the all-time FIFA World Cup goalscoring record with his 16 World Cup goals, tying Miroslav Klose of Germany. He also notably holds the records for most caps (199) and most goals (117) for Argentina, while also holding the international record for most World Cup match appearances (26) and being the only player to score in the World Cup group stage, round of 16, quarterfinals, semifinals and final.

Messi started the day three adrift of Miroslav Klose's mark of 16 goals on the global stage, but within 76 minutes of this match he

was on level terms with the former Germany international.

Messi and Algeria's Fares Chaibi both had efforts ruled out for offside in a breathless opening, but Argentina's captain fantastic soon made his mark. Picking up possession 30 yards from goal, he expertly rolled his marker, surged forward and curled a superb finish beyond the grasp of Luca Zidane.

Algeria largely kept the reigning champions at arm's length for the rest of the half, with an Alexis Mac Allister header over the crossbar Argentina's only real chance.

Anis Hadj Moussa carved out one of the Fennec Foxes' better opening moments earlier, but a deflection took the sting out of his low effort and Emiliano Martinez gathered comfortably.

Messi was once again at the heart of Argentina's brightest attacking moments after the break. He first flashed a 20-yard effort over the bar before slipping in Lautaro Martinez, whose

dangerous cross was cut out by Zidane.

The Argentina talisman's second goal soon followed, with Zidane unable to hold Mac Allister's powerful strike, allowing Messi to pounce on the rebound and finish coolly with his right foot.

The 38-year-old completed his hat-trick with a trademark curling finish from the edge of the area, capping his 200th senior international appearance in style.

In his historic international career, Messi has guided Argentina to the 2021 and 2024 CONMEBOL Copa America titles and 2022 CONMEBOL-UEFA Cup of Champions crown and further cemented his legacy by leading his country to a historic FIFA World Cup title in 2022.

Having equalled Klose's record, Messi will have the chance to claim it outright when Argentina face Austria on June 22. Algeria, meanwhile, take on Jordan in their next Group J outing.

Mbappe sparks in France's 3-1 win over Senegal

EAST RUTHERFORD (US): Kylian Mbappe scored twice to move past Pele and Lionel Messi with 14 World Cup goals, Bradley Barcola added another as France rebounded from a surprisingly poor first half to beat Senegal 3-1 Tuesday in its opener.

Mbappe had 14 touches in the scoreless first half, the fewest of any player, then showed his brilliance when he put Les Bleus ahead in the 66th minute. He burst past Senegal captain Kalidou Koulibaly, turned onto a diagonal pass from Michael Olise and slid the ball past goalkeeper Edouard Mendy from just outside the 6-yard box. Barcola entered in the 80th and doubled the lead two minutes later, running onto Adrien Rabiot's through ball and lifting the ball past Mendy for his fourth international goal. Senegal forward Ibrahim Mbeye cut the deficit with an angled shot five minutes into stoppage time. Mbappe then had a spectacular long-range goal a minute later, over Mendy's outstretched arm and just under the crossbar.

Mbappe moved one ahead of Messi and Just Fontaine on the World Cup career scoring list and is tied with Germany's Gerd Muller, trailing only Brazil's Ronaldo (15) and Germany's Miroslav Klose (16).

RESULTS

- France 3 Senegal 1
- Iraq 1 Norway 4
- Argentina 3 Algeria 0
- Austria 3 Jordan 1
- Portugal vs Congo DR 10:30 pm

Fixtures (in IST)

ON THURSDAY

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

ON FRIDAY

- Switzerland vs Bosnia-Herzegovina 12:30 am at SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, California
- Canada vs Qatar 3:30 am at BC Place, Vancouver, Canada
- Mexico vs South Korea 6:30 am at Estadio Akron, Guadalajara, Mexico

Women's T20 WC

India hammer Netherlands by 95 runs for second win in row

LEEDS: India continued their winning run in the Women's T20 World Cup, crushing the Netherlands by 95 runs after posting a formidable 209 for five and then bowling out the opposition for 114 in 17.3 overs.

Young left-arm spinner Shree Charani led the charge with impressive figures of 4/19, while seamer Nandini Sharma, drafted in place of Arundhati Reddy, made an immediate impact with 2/22.

Part-time spinner Shafali Verma wrapped up the tail taking two in three balls to return with 3/20 in 3.2 overs.

Earlier, Smriti Mandhana and Shafali stitched together a 115-run opening stand as India posted 209/5 after the Netherlands elected to field.

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BRIEF SCORES:

India: 209/5 in 20 overs (Smriti Mandhana 74, Shafali Verma 55; Caroline de Lange 2/32) beat The Netherlands 114; 17.3 overs (Babette de Leede 28; Shree Charani 4/19, Shafali Verma 3/20, Nandani Sharma 2/22) by 95 runs.

Tri-series: India A crush Afghanistan A by 101 runs

DAMBULLA: A compelling all-round performance helped India A thrash Afghanistan A by 101 runs here on Wednesday, bolstering their chances of making the tri-series final.

After amassing 319 for nine riding on fifties by skipper Tilak Varma, Priyansh Arya and Kumar Kushagra, India A bowlers produced a unified show to bundle out Afghanistan A for mere 218 in 36.5 overs.

Nishant Sindhu was the pick of the bowlers as he returned 4/31 from his 6.5 overs, while pacer Yash Thakur claimed 2/48 from his seven overs. Anshul

Kamboj, Vipraj Nigam, Suryansh Shedge, and Anukul Roy claimed one wicket apiece.

For Afghanistan, Bahir Shah (57 off 52 balls; 4 fours, 1 six) and Faisal Shinozoda (46) provided some resistance but most of their batters failed to convert their starts.

India A: 319/9 in 50 overs (Tilak Varma 59, Priyansh Arya 58, Kumar Kushagra 58; Abdollah Ahmadzai 2/62) beat Afghanistan A 218 in 36.5 overs (Faisal Shinozoda 46, Bahir Shah 57; Nishant Sindhu 4/31, Yash Thakur 2/48) by 101 runs.

BRIEF SCORES:

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India seal ODI series with 170-run win

LUCKNOW: Captain Shubman Gill battled intense heat and cramps to produce a masterful 154, while the increasingly confident Ishan Kishan scored a statement century as India recorded a dominant 170-run win over Afghanistan in the second ODI here on Wednesday to seal the series.

India have taken a 2-0 unassailable lead in the three-match series. Afghanistan's decision to bowl first under the scorching afternoon sun backfired as Gill and Kishan, who scored his second ODI hundred in his comeback series, helped India put up a formidable 402.

The conditions were very demanding through out



the game with several players struggling with cramps while Gill also battled with an ice collar. In fact, the Indian skipper didn't return to the field once he got out.

BRIEF SCORES:

India: 402 all out in 49.5 overs (Shubman Gill 154, Ishan Kishan 125; N Kharote 4/76). Afghanistan: 232 all out in 44.3 overs (Rahmat Shah 79, Sediqullah Atal 42, Rahmanullah Gurbaz 41; Arshdeep Singh 3/45, Gurnoor Brar 3/60).

Hyderabad Heroes bag first win; Mumbai Dreamers stay unbeaten

Rugby Premier League Day 2

HYDERABAD: The second day of the Rugby Premier League season 2 witnessed hosts Hyderabad Heroes, and Mumbai Dreamers register wins at the Ganti Mohana Chandra Balayogi Athletic Stadium, Gachibowli, Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Hyderabad Heroes beat Delhi Redz 31-17 (men)

Looking to bounce back from their opening defeat, Hyderabad Heroes made a flying

start through Sumit Kumar and Maurice Longbottom. Despite sustained pressure from Delhi Redz, Taitaifono Tavita extended the Heroes' advantage before Luciano Gonzalez and Javed Husain brought the Redz back into the contest. Tavita struck again in the second half, while Patrick Odongo kept Delhi in the hunt. However, Wolfram Hacker's late

try sealed the victory for the Heroes. Mumbai Dreamers defeat Bengaluru Bravehearts 19-7 (men) Dreamers applied pressure on the Bravehearts early to gain territory. Bravehearts sustained the pressure but Lucas Mignot sprinted end to end to open the score with a try for Dreamers. Guillaume Bouche backed it up with another try for the Dreamers at the end of the first quarter.

Person of Indian origin hits jackpot of Rs. 5.5 cr in UAE

ABU DHABI: A person of Indian origin in Abu Dhabi, Shajeer vanga, has hit a jackpot of Rs. 5.5 crore in the UAE millionaire campaign conducted by the Sharja Islamic Bank within two months of opening an account. The bank announced details of the winners in its X account.

The campaign is conducted every year with a view to encourage the customers to make savings, with a prize money of 20 million dirhams. The customers who deposit 10,000 dirhams are eligible to take part in the regular draw, with the winners eligible to secure cash rewards and luxury vehicles.

Vanga has expressed his happiness over the good fortune in bagging the jackpot. He says after becoming aware of the millionaire campaign I decided to win the booty on some day or the other.

He says the cash award will change his life. "With it I will get my family to the UAE." Vanga has thanked the bank.

Nationwide showdown looms over VB-G RAM G

ACTIVISTS DEMAND REPEAL OF NEW SCHEME FROM JULY 1

NEW DELHI

DEMANDING the repeal of the proposed Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission - Gramin (VB-G RAM G), activists and workers' organisations on Wednesday announced protests against the new scheme from July 1.

Addressing a press conference here, members of the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, agricultural workers' unions and labour rights groups claimed that an analysis of the government's own data showed the promised 125 days of employment under the proposed scheme was neither financially backed nor administratively feasible. The draft rules released by the Centre expose the "shrinking employment guarantee" under the scheme, they alleged, adding that "The draft rules continue the opaque erasure of MGNREGA."

They further alleged that the proposed framework centralises powers with the Centre while reducing



According to an analysis by the activists, no major state would be able to generate even half of the promised 125 days of employment per active job card in the proposed interim allocations

the effective employment guarantee available to rural workers. According to an analysis by the activists, no major state would be able to generate even half of the promised 125 days of employment per active job card in the proposed interim allocations. "This law destroys the spirit of the rural employment guarantee act... There is already a downward trend in employment generated," activist Nikhil Dey said.

"The burden will be on the states, and the push

would be not to provide employment because the states will have to bear the expenditure," he said. All India Agricultural Workers Union General Secretary B Venkat said they would hold protests at every village against the new scheme.

"From July 1, nationwide demonstrations would be held at the village, block, panchayat and ward level. We will also hold some protests in Delhi," he said, adding that 'jail bhara' campaigns would also be held along with the Samyukt

Kisan Morcha (SKM). They will also approach Opposition parties to raise their issues.

According to figures released by groups, Andhra Pradesh would be able to generate only about 42 person days per active job card under the proposed allocation, while Chhattisgarh would generate 39 person days, Bihar 31, Karnataka 26, Madhya Pradesh 26 and Uttar Pradesh 28. Maharashtra would be able to generate only about 14 person days per active job card, they claimed.

The groups said the gap between the promised employment guarantee and actual allocations translated into massive funding shortfalls for states.

Based on their calculations, Madhya Pradesh would require an additional Rs 31,013 crore to provide 125 days of employment per active job card, while Rajasthan would need Rs 27,212 crore, Uttar Pradesh Rs 27,987 crore, Maharashtra Rs 22,549 crore, Karnataka Rs 17,481 crore and Bihar Rs 15,939 crore.

TMC's Guha held, third ex-minister behind bars

KOLKATA: Udayan Guha, the former West Bengal Minister in charge of the North Bengal Development Department in the previous Mamata Banerjee-led cabinet, was arrested on Wednesday from his residence in Phoolbagan, Kolkata.

Although the officials are yet to specify the exact charges under which Guha was arrested, sources said police had been trying to track him for some time.

However, a source in the state police said the former minister is accused of involvement in post-poll violence in his native district of Cooch Behar following the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections, which marked the beginning of the third consecutive term of Mamata Banerjee as Chief Minister.

Guha's arrest has likely been in connection with those cases registered against him in relation to the 2021 post-poll violence.

He is the third minister in the previous Mamata Banerjee-led cabinet to be arrested since the new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government led by Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari took charge on May 9.

Former state Fire Services Minister Sujit Bose was the first member of the previ-



Udayan Guha

ous cabinet to be arrested last month by the officials of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for his alleged involvement in the multi-core municipalities' job case.

Then on June 9, Ujjal Biswas, the former Correctional Services Minister in the previous Mamata Banerjee-led cabinet, was arrested on charges of illegally hoarding relief material of the state government.

Now, on Wednesday, Udayan Guha is the third minister of the previous cabinet to be arrested.

Udayan Guha is the son of Late Kamal Guha, who was an All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) leader from Cooch Behar district and a member of the Left Front cabinet in West Bengal for over two decades.

Udayan started his legislative career with AIFB, when for the first time he got elected from Dinhatra Assembly constituency in Cooch Behar district in 2011.

Mamata's protest walk sees low turnout

KOLKATA: Trinamool Congress president and former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday led a protest walk in central Kolkata against the recent hawkers' eviction drives carried out by the state administration across different parts of the state.

However, the event failed to make a mark because of fewer attendees. Although a public meeting was initially planned at the end of the protest walk from Esplanade to Subodh Mallick Square, both in central Kolkata, it was later cancelled.

The former Chief Minister left immediately after the protest walk ended.

Since the landslide defeat of Trinamool and Mamata Banerjee's personal defeat in the recently concluded West Bengal assembly elections, she has restricted her political programmes mainly to occasional video messages on social media.

After her nephew and Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee was attacked at Sonarpur in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal last month, she sat on a protest demonstration on June 2, which was her last public programme. On Wednesday, she led a protest walk against the hawkers' eviction. However, the event failed to attract a large number of attendees, with only a few front-ranking Trinamool leaders participating.

Major fire under control along Indo-Nepal border

KOLKATA: Quick response by personnel of the 41Bn Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB) prevented a fire at a market along the Indo-Nepal border from spreading and causing damage to life and property on the night of June 16.

A major fire broke out around 9.35 p.m. at the Bhatgaon Border Market, situated around 100 meters from the Bhatgaon company camp of the 41Bn SSB at Ranidanga in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

Personnel from the camp reacted immediately and rushed to the spot with fire extinguishers, sand buckets and water. They actively participated in firefighting operations, even after fire trucks arrived. The jawans helped in breaking open shutters and gates to allow firefighters access to the blaze.

Gujarat bus accident: Death toll touches seven

NEW DELHI/VADODARA: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday expressed condolences over the fatal luxury bus accident on the Vadodara-Jarod Road in Gujarat, as the death toll from the crash rose to seven and 28 people were injured, including two in critical condition.

In a post on the social media

platform X, HM Shah described the incident as "extremely tragic" and said his condolences were with the families of those who had lost their loved ones.

He said the local administration was providing medical facilities to the injured and prayed for their speedy recovery.

"The accident that occurred on the Vadodara-Jarod Road

in Gujarat is extremely tragic. My condolences are with those who have lost their loved ones in this accident. The local administration is providing medical facilities to the injured. I pray for the speedy recovery of those who have been injured," HM Shah wrote. The accident occurred at around 4 am. near Kotambi village when a luxury

bus travelling from Banswara in Rajasthan to Surat rammed into the rear of a truck parked on the roadside.

According to preliminary information, the truck had been halted while its driver was checking tyre pressure.

The collision crushed the front portion of the bus, trapping several passengers inside.

Local residents and passing motorists rushed to the scene before emergency services arrived and launched rescue operations.

Police, fire brigade personnel and teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) carried out a large-scale rescue effort.

Firefighters used a JCB

machine to separate the two vehicles and cut through the mangled metal of the bus to extricate trapped passengers.

Most of the passengers travelling on the bus were from Rajasthan. The injured were shifted to Sir Sayajirao General (SSG) Hospital and private hospitals in Vadodara, where treatment is continuing.

AP team studies Singapore models for Amaravati growth

- A delegation led by MA&UD minister Narayana visited Singapore to study global best practices in urban planning, sustainable infrastructure and scientific waste management
- Officials hold discussions with NUS Cities and Surbana Jurong on climate resilience, smart infrastructure, digital twin technology, urban analytics and capacity-building initiatives for Amaravati
- The team also examined Singapore's waste-to-energy and resource recovery systems at the Tuas South Incineration Plant, with plans to explore suitable models for Andhra Pradesh's urban development

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

A high-level Andhra Pradesh delegation led by municipal administration and urban development (MA&UD) minister P Narayana visited Singapore to study global best practices in urban planning, sustainable infrastructure and scientific waste management, with a focus on applying key learnings to the development of Amaravati and other cities in the state.

The visit was undertaken on the directions of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, who has stressed

the need to build Amaravati and major urban centres by adopting international standards in planning, governance and infrastructure development.

The delegation, which included MA&UD principal secretary S Suresh Kumar and APCRDA additional commissioner Praveenchand, held discussions with leading Singapore institutions such as NUS Cities, Surbana Jurong and the Tuas South Incineration Plant.

At NUS Cities, officials explored opportunities for collaboration in urban planning, climate resilience, gov-



Members of AP municipal administration and urban development department delegation at Tuas South Incineration Plant in Singapore on Wednesday

ernance, capacity building and data-driven city management. Discussions centred on how global expertise could support Amaravati, one of the world's largest greenfield capital city projects. Areas identified for possible cooperation included urban analytics, digital twin technology, climate studies, executive training programmes and the establishment of an Urban Futures Lab.

The delegation also visited the Surbana Jurong Innovation Hub in Singapore's Jurong Innovation District

to understand how urban planning can be integrated with economic development, sustainability and smart infrastructure. Officials examined technologies related to energy-efficient buildings, intelligent monitoring systems, green construction practices and innovation-led urban growth.

As part of its study on municipal solid waste management, the team toured the Tuas South Incineration Plant and interacted with officials of Singapore's National Environment Agency.

The visit provided insights into waste collection, waste-to-energy conversion, ash management, resource recovery and environmental safeguards.

Speaking during the visit, minister Narayana said the state government is committed to building clean, green and economically productive cities. He noted that Singapore's success highlights the importance of integrated planning, institutional coordination and long-term urban governance.

Principal secretary Suresh Kumar said the visit offered valuable insights for Amaravati's development and opened avenues for technical collaboration and knowledge exchange. He added that the government would examine suitable models and technologies that could be adapted to Andhra Pradesh's urban development and waste management initiatives.

The MA&UD department said the outcomes of the visit would be reviewed further to identify actionable partnerships, pilot projects and capacity-building programmes aimed at strengthening urban development across the state.

Amarnath hits back at TDP over 'fabricated' row

- YSRCP leader and former minister says his recent remarks were not meant against women but against home minister Anitha's comments

- States that irrespective of the party affiliation, women deserve to be respected and he will continue to support the party women

- Accuses the coalition gov't of using 'fabricated' controversies to divert attention from its failures

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

FORMER IT minister and YSRCP regional coordinator Gudivada Amarnath said that his recent remarks were never meant against women but in response to unparliamentary language used by home minister Vangalapati Anitha against Vijayamma, YS Bharathi Reddy and former chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan



Former IT Minister and YSRCP regional coordinator Gudivada Amarnath speaking at a media conference in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday

Reddy for quite a while. Despite their political affiliation, Amarnath told in a media conference here on Wednesday, that women deserve to be respected and that his family political legacy that continued for three generations always upheld dignity and values.

However, Amarnath claimed that controversy was deliberately created over his remarks by the TDP three days after his speech to gain political advantage and divert attention from the coalition government's alleged failures.

He questioned the selective outrage of TDP leaders, wondering why they were quiet when derogatory remarks were made against Y S Vijayamma, Y S Bharathi Reddy, former minister R K Roja, among

others, or when leaders in their own party made 'objectionable' statements targeting other women.

Referring to home minister Anitha's recent comments such as 'who is he?', 'that fellow', addressing a former minister, Amarnath said it clearly indicates her arrogance. "No matter what, I will continue to defend YSRCP leaders and workers against personal attacks and stand by my remarks against the Home Minister as I did not say anything wrong," he said. The former minister alleged that the coalition government is using 'fabricated' controversies to divert the attention from its failure in maintaining law and order in the state.

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 Home Minister's silence over such burning issues. "However, her attack on the opposition continues," he remarked. Underlining YSRCP's commitment to women and Dalit empowerment, Amarnath stated that leaders who insulted Dalits and were silent on derogatory remarks made against women have no moral right to lecture others on dignity and social justice.

Lokesh pitches Anantapur as satellite hub

- Invites Pixelpspace CTO to set up factory in AP after land hurdles in Bengaluru
- Promotes Space Cities, aerospace parks, and ready-to-use industrial ecosystems
- Continues AP's push to woo aerospace firms from Karnataka with investor-friendly policies

VIJAYAWADA

IT and electronics minister Nara Lokesh invited the chief technology officer (CTO) and founder of a company that builds and operates remote sensing satellites to Anantapur after the latter posted that getting land for making a satellite factory on the outskirts of Bengaluru is more difficult than making satel-



lites. "Trying to get land for making a satellite factory in the outskirts of BLR has been way more difficult than actually making said satellites," Kshitij Khandelwal, CTO and founder of Pixelpspace, posted on X.

Lokesh invited Kshitij to Anantapur near Bengaluru. "Kshitij, there's a new investor-friendly destination on the outskirts of Bengaluru. It's called Anantapur," he said.

He added that Andhra Pradesh is building Space Cities, aerospace parks and ready-to-go industrial ecosystems so founders can spend their time building sat-

ellites instead of hunting for land. The minister even asked the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) to contact Kshitij.

Earlier, responding to Kshitij's post, Karnataka's minister for large, medium industries and infrastructure development, M B Patil, said that his office would get in touch with him. This is not the first time that Lokesh has tried to woo aerospace firms from Karnataka. Last year in October, Lokesh extended an open invitation to aerospace companies to consider Andhra Pradesh as an option after then Karnataka Chief

Minister Siddaramaiah announced withdrawal of the proposed land acquisition in Devanahalli taluk for an aerospace park near Bengaluru, following opposition from farmers who were set to lose their land for the project.

"Dear Aerospace industry, sorry to hear about this. I have a better idea for you. Why don't you look at Andhra Pradesh instead? We have an attractive aerospace policy for you, with best-in-class incentives and over 8000 acres of ready-to-use land (just outside Bengaluru)! Hope to see you soon to talk across the table," Lokesh had posted while tagging a story on the Karnataka government's decision.

Earlier, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had ruffled feathers in Karnataka by offering a 10,000-acre land parcel in Anantapur district to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for potential expansion.

PMVBRY to disburse Rs 2,400 cr sops

- Over 1.92 cr first-time employees to get wage incentive up to Rs 15,000 in two instalments
- Employers eligible for Rs 3,000 per month per new hire, with extended benefits for manufacturing sector
- National event at Vignyan Bhawan to mark rollout; regional disbursal in Krishna district at VR Siddhartha Engineering College

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE Government of India has launched the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar



Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner Andrew Prabhu and Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-II Abdul Khader addressing the media in Vijayawada on Wednesday

Joyana (PMVBRY), formerly known as the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) Scheme, with the objective of promoting large-scale employment generation, improving employability, and expanding social security coverage across sectors, particularly in manufacturing.

With a total financial outlay of Rs 99,446 crore, the scheme aims to facilitate the creation of more than 3.5 crore jobs nationwide over two years. Of these, nearly 1.92 crore beneficiaries are expected to be first-time entrants into the formal workforce. The benefits apply to jobs created between August

1, 2025, and July 31, 2027.

Addressing a press briefing at the EPFO zonal office here on Wednesday, Andrew Prabhu, additional Central Provident Fund commissioner and Abdul Khader, Regional Provident Fund Commissioner-II, explained the significance and implementation of the scheme.

Under Part A, first-time employees registered with EPFO and earning up to Rs 1 lakh per month are eligible for an incentive equivalent to one month's wage, up to Rs 15,000, paid in two instalments after six and twelve months of continuous service. The second instalment

is linked to completion of a financial literacy programme.

Under Part B, employers will receive incentives of up to Rs 3,000 per month per additional employee for two years. Manufacturing sector employers will receive the benefit for an additional two years. The incentives are aimed at encouraging sustained employment and formal workforce expansion.

To mark the successful implementation of the scheme, a national-level event will be held at Vignyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on Friday, in the presence of the Prime Minister. Benefits worth approximately Rs 2,400 crore will be disbursed to eligible beneficiaries. In the erstwhile Krishna district, a regional event will be organised at VR Siddhartha Engineering College, Kanuru, with participation from public representatives, industry leaders, employers, employees and EPFO officials.

43 doctors dismissed for unauthorised absence

- Action follows disciplinary proceedings against doctors absent for up to four years
- 34 doctors submit resignations after notices; government processing cases
- Health dept cracks down on absenteeism across public hospitals

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE state government has initiated the process of permanently removing 43 civil assistant surgeons from service for prolonged unauthorised absence from duty, health minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav announced on Wednesday.

The minister said disciplinary action was taken after the doctors failed to respond to show-cause notices and charge memos issued under service rules, despite some remaining absent from government service for as long as four years.

The action comes a month after the government removed 51 doctors working in teaching hospitals under the Directorate of Medical Education for similar violations. The latest proceedings involve doctors serving under the Directorate of Secondary Health



Services, including specialists in General Medicine, Orthopedics, Gynecology and other disciplines.

According to the health department, a total of 118 permanent doctors were found to be unauthorisedly absent from duty. Under existing government rules, doctors who remain absent without authorization for more than one year are liable for removal from service.

Of the 118 doctors, 43 have now reached the final stage of disciplinary proceedings for dismissal. Another 34 doctors submitted their resignations after receiving show-cause notices and charge memos. The government is in the process of accepting the resignations of 15 doctors, while disciplinary inquiries are continuing against others.

Director of secondary health Chakradhara Babu said 11 inquiry officers have been appointed district-wise under the Andhra Pradesh Civil Services (CCA) Rules, 1991, to examine cases involving 19 doctors who resigned after charges were framed. Explanations will be sought and further action taken based on inquiry reports.

12 days on, missing toddler mystery deepens

- Search for the two-year-old girl from Ch Agharam enters its 12th day, with police probing all possibilities, including abduction, animal attack and family-related disputes
- Investigators have analysed CCTV footage, mobile data from 170 phones, surveyed all 470 houses and questioned nearly 150 residents, besides tracing seasonal workers and nomadic groups
- Search operations have been expanded to a 10-km radius covering water bodies and 11 hills, while the family's pet dog, which disappeared with the child and returned days later before dying, remains a key focus of the probe

KAKINADA

THE search for a two-year-old girl who went missing from Ch Agharam village in Kakinada district entered its 12th day on Wednesday, with police continuing an extensive investigation and exploring all possible angles, including abduction, an animal attack and family-related disputes.

The child disappeared on June 6 after reportedly walking towards a cashew plantation near her village



along with the family's pet dog. She was last seen near a fence bordering the plantation. A villager who noticed her tried to alert the family but was attacked by the dog when he approached. By the time relatives and villagers reached the spot about 35 minutes later, the child had vanished.

A large-scale search operation involving police, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), dog squads, technical teams, forest officials and other departments has been underway since then.

Police said they have examined CCTV footage, questioned transport operators and analysed mobile phone data from the area. Around 170 mobile numbers active near the scene at the time of the incident have been identified and are being scrutinised. Investigators have also surveyed all 470 houses in the village and questioned nearly 150 residents.

Authorities are tracing seasonal workers and nomadic groups that frequented the area during the cashew season. A group that had camped nearby with dogs before the incident is also being questioned. Police dis-

Home minister visits the family, vows full support

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KAKINADA

HOME minister Vangalapati Anitha on Wednesday visited the family of two-year-old Gnaneshwari, who has been missing from Tunni, and assured them of the government's full support in tracing the child.

Speaking to the family members, the minister described the disappearance of the toddler as deeply distressing. She said the grief of Gnaneshwari's mother, who has been anxiously waiting for her daughter's return, was beyond words. Anitha said the police swung into action immediately after receiving information about the child's disappearance and launched extensive search operations. She noted that investigators were examining both technical evidence and field-level inputs, with multiple teams conducting searches and pursuing all possible leads. The home minister clarified that the government had shown no negligence in handling



Home minister V Anitha interacts with the parents of the missing girl at Ch Agharam in Tunni mandal on Wednesday

the case. She said the investigation was being monitored on a daily basis and assured the family that search efforts would continue until the child's whereabouts were established.

"The government stands firmly with Gnaneshwari's family and will provide all necessary support," she said.

Anitha also expressed concern over what she described as misinformation being circulated on

social media platforms and certain YouTube channels regarding the case. She urged those spreading unverified information to stop immediately and warned that legal action would be initiated against individuals or platforms found disseminating false reports. The minister reiterated the government's commitment to finding the missing child and ensuring that the investigation proceeds without interruption.

missed speculation surrounding a local resident who had initially come under suspicion, saying repeated questioning by multiple teams revealed no evidence linking him to the disappearance.

Investigators are also examining the possibility of an animal attack. In coordination with forest officials, police recreated the circumstances of the disappearance by placing a

meat-filled doll at the location where the child was last seen and installing surveillance cameras to monitor animal movement. Residents have reported the presence of jackals, wild dogs, wild boars and pythons in the surrounding forested hills. The family's pet dog remains a key focus of the investigation. The animal disappeared with the child and returned four days later in a distressed con-

dition. GPS tracking later showed it had travelled nearly eight kilometres along a route previously identified by a police dog squad. Despite fresh searches, no clue was found. The dog subsequently died and underwent a post-mortem examination. Search operations have now been expanded from a six-kilometre radius to nearly 10 kilometres, covering water bodies and 11 interconnected hills.



'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.



'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 Chettan 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 Dhakke, editor Ashish Mhatre, lyricist Shakeel Azami, and sound designer Anmol Bhave.

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.

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.

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 Pentz. 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.