Interstate drug racket busted, Ugandan woman held

The arrest of the woman in Bengaluru after Chittoor I Town cops seize 70 gram MDMA from two youth during a raid in Chittoor

Hans News Service
Chittoor

A routine anti-drug operation in Chittoor has resulted in the exposure of an alleged interstate synthetic narcotics network, with investigators tracking the supply chain to a rented house in Bengaluru where a Ugandan woman was arrested. The breakthrough came after Chittoor I Town police seized 70 grams of MDMA from two youths during a raid at an open ground between the APSRTC bus stand and Chittoor railway station on July 17. The accused were identified as B Venkata Kashi Vardhan (25), a native of Vijayawada, and Arja Siri Naga Murali (21) from Machilipatnam. A case was registered under Crime No 87/2026 under Section 22(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. During interrogation, one of the accused allegedly disclosed that the contraband had been procured from Nasuuna Aisa, a 48-year-old Ugandan national residing in Bengaluru. Based on the information gathered, including financial transactions and mobile phone records, a special police team conducted a late-night raid at her residence and arrested her on Wednesday.

Chittoor I Town CI Chinna Peddaiah disclosing the case details on Thursday

According to Chittoor I Town CI Chinna Peddaiah, the syndicate used public transport to move drugs across states while avoiding highway checkpoints by frequently changing buses. The accused also allegedly coordinated deliveries through WhatsApp location sharing, verifying the identity of buyers in person before handing over the narcotics in exchange for cash. The investigation further revealed that the synthetic drugs were allegedly routed from Mexico through Delhi before reaching distribution hubs in Bengaluru and Chennai, from where they were supplied to Andhra Pradesh.

Police also found that Nasuuna had earlier been arrested in Bengaluru in 2021 in a drug-related case. Despite her visa expiring in 2024, she reportedly continued to stay in India, citing pending court proceedings. She was produced before a court in Chittoor and remanded to judicial custody at Nellore central jail. Police said efforts are underway to identify and apprehend other members of the network.

Discoms get 1,380.70 cr for advance tariff subsidy

APSPDCL gets the highest allocation of Rs 603.13 cr; CPDCL Rs 445.17 cr and EPDCL Rs 332.39 cr

Hans News Service
Vijayawada

THE state government accorded administrative sanction for the release of Rs 1,380.70 crore as advance tariff subsidy to the state's three power distribution companies (discoms) for the financial year 2026-27. The sanction was issued through GO Rt No 53 by the energy department on Thursday.

Energy special chief secretary K Vijayanand issued the order approving the subsidy under the provisions of Section 65 of the Electricity Act, 2003, aimed at providing timely financial support to the state-owned power utilities.

As per the GO, the Andhra Pradesh Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (APSPDCL) has been allocated Rs 603.13 crore, the highest among the three discoms. The Andhra Pradesh Central Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APCPDCL) has been sanctioned Rs 445.17 crore, while the Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited has been allocated Rs 332.39 crore as advance tariff subsidy for the current financial year.

The government stated that the subsidy has been released under the quarterly budget relaxation up to the third quarter of the 2026-27 financial year. The total budget available for the third quarter of the current financial year is Rs 2,744.40 crore. Of this, the government has sanctioned Rs.1,380.70 crore towards the subsidy for the three discoms, leaving a remaining available budget of Rs 1,363.70 crore for the rest of the quarter.

The assistant secretary to the government and drawing and disbursing officer (DDO), energy department, has been directed to remit the sanctioned amount to the respective bank accounts of the three discoms.

The order further directed the chairman and managing directors of discoms, along with the member convener of the AP Power Coordination Committee (APPCC), to take necessary action for implementing the government's decision.

Foreign study tours for TG teachers

Hans News Service
Hyderabad

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy has blasted the Bharat Rashtra Samithi for its demand that he must relinquish education portfolio. The Chief Minister also castigated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for India's mounting debt burden.

Claiming that one lakh additional enrollments in government schools is testimony of the successful implementation of breakfast and mid-day meal schemes, the Chief Minister announced foreign study tours henceforth for government teachers every year.

Interacting with the delegates of Finland and Germany Exposure Programme on Thursday, he questioned the BRS

whether the party is aware of the initiatives of breakfast and mid-day meal schemes introduced in all schools and junior colleges. The enrollment of one lakh additional students this year is a great achievement in school education, Revanth Reddy said and added that the government is spending Rs 1.08 lakh on each student whereas the parents spend only Rs 50,000 on children attending private schools.

The Chief Minister instructed the authorities to prepare a report by December outlining an action plan for the upcoming academic year.

The plans should be formulated by taking every mandal into a cluster. Further, he said that the state government would provide teachers with opportunities to go abroad for further studies.

He asserted that the government has launched a slew of initiatives not for politics or votes but to provide quality education to the poor.

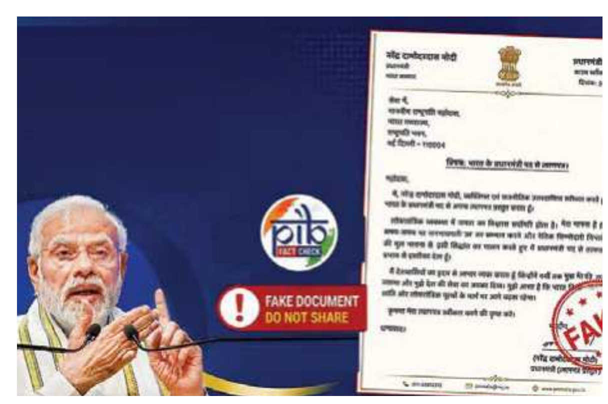
"Let us transform our government educational institutions into world-class destinations", the Chief Minister observed and added: "We all should dedicate five years to society and to transform the future for generations to come and work with the goal of making Telangana a role model for the nation."

'PM Modi has not resigned'

PIB DEBUNKS SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTS

New Delhi

THE Centre on Thursday rubbished social media reports claiming that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resigned from his post. The viral posts on the internet had a copy of a letter, bearing the Ashok Chakra emblem and what appeared to be PM Modi's signature, stated that he was resigning as the prime minister citing "personal and political responsibility". Debunking the claim, the Fact Check unit of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said "no such letter has been issued by the Prime Minister". The fake resignation letter was shared by several users on social media sites, including Facebook, claiming that the prime minister has



resigned. "A letter purportedly signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is being circulated on social media. No such letter has been issued by the Prime Minister, nor has it been signed by him," the PIB said in a social media post. It also warned internet users to verify any claims through official sources before sharing.

The fake letter comes days after the PIB debunked doctored videos circulating on social media that showed PM Modi making threatening remarks against the protestors at Jantar Mantar over the paper leaks.

Oppn protests in Parl over police action on students

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The MPs carried large banners and placards demanding accountability for the police action and sought an official apology from union Home Minister Amit Shah.

In the Rajya Sabha, Congress president and Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge demanded the resignation of Amit Shah over the alleged police crackdown. He launched a sharp attack on the Centre during the debate on the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, calling the proposed amendments "hogwash" for failing to address systemic issues behind examination malpractices.

Holding Amit Shah directly responsible for the police action at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, Kharge condemned the use of tear gas, lathi-charge, and other coercive measures against students demanding justice. He called for Shah to either resign or appear before Parliament to explain the conduct of law enforcement and demanded a Supreme Court-monitored inquiry into the alleged police excesses.

Kharge expressed solidarity with the protesting students, accusing the government of attempting to silence youth voices instead of addressing their concerns. "The youth are asking for justice for their future. Instead of listening, they are being beaten and suppressed. Is this how a democratic government treats students?" he questioned.

He called for comprehensive reforms and urged the government to implement recommendations of the K Radhakrishnan Committee and overhaul agencies like the National Testing Agency (NTA) to restore trust in the examination system. He also questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the government's delayed response, asking why action was taken only after nationwide protests and public outrage.

The protest comes amid sustained Opposition attacks over the Centre's handling of the examination controversy and follows repeated allegations that students protesting the NEET paper leak were subjected to excessive force by the Delhi Police during demonstrations at Jantar Mantar. Opposition parties have alleged that peaceful protesters were lathi-charged and detained, charges that the government has rejected.

Inside the Lok Sabha, proceedings were repeatedly disrupted as Opposition members continued to press for a discussion on the alleged police excesses and broader concerns surrounding examination reforms. Amid the uproar and slogan-shouting by Opposition MPs, the House was adjourned till 2 pm.

PM DISCUSSES WEST ASIA CRISIS IN KEY CABINET MEET

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The Prime Minister directed that all necessary measures be taken to ensure uninterrupted fertiliser supplies. Officials indicated that sufficient stocks are available for the upcoming Rabi sowing season as well as for next year's Kharif crop.

The safety of Indian seafarers serving on domestic and foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones was also discussed. Prime Minister Modi asked officials to establish a mechanism for providing timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families. He also stressed that all efforts must be made to protect Indian citizens and the Indian community from the impact of the ongoing conflict.

The meeting took place against the backdrop of heightened tensions in West Asia following the recent US-Israel conflict involving Iran. Attacks on oil and cargo vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and threats issued by Yemen's Houthi militia against shipping near the Bab al-Mandab have raised concerns over energy and trade flows.

Ship traffic through the Bab al-Mandab has reportedly declined in recent days, while shipping activity in the Black Sea has also faced disruptions due to the intensifying Russia-Ukraine conflict.

India remains heavily dependent on imports for its energy needs, with a significant share of supplies traditionally passing through these sensitive maritime corridors. The disruptions have therefore prompted a whole-of-government response aimed at reducing vulnerabilities.

PM Modi also emphasised the need to accelerate the use of renewable energy sources, including solar power and other non-fossil-fuel options, to strengthen India's long-term energy independence. He called for a unified and coordinated mechanism for regular monitoring of developments so that appropriate measures can be implemented quickly to protect citizens and national economic interests as the global situation evolves.

Parliament clears Vande Mataram Bill

Continued from page 1

The noisy scenes continued even as the House proceeded with legislative business.

The legislation seeks to amend the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, to include the national song Vande Mataram under its ambit. At present, the law provides penal provisions for disrespecting national symbols such as the Constitution, the national flag and the national anthem, with punishment of up to three years' imprisonment. Once it comes into force, insulting, obstructing or causing disturbances during the singing of Vande Mataram will attract the same punishment — up to three years in jail, a fine, or both.

The bill is part of the Centre's push to mark the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram, written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875 and first published in his novel Anandmath in 1882. Over the past few months, the Union government has issued directions to states on the rendition of the national song at official functions.

Centre defends ethanol blends

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Gadkari, however, said studies by government agencies and automobile manufacturers indicate that the reduction in fuel efficiency in certain E10-designed vehicles is limited to about 2-6%. "However, the same is influenced by several factors, including driving conditions, driving habits and vehicle maintenance," he said, stating that E20 petrol can reduce fuel economy by 2 to 6% depending on the vehicle category and vintage.

The clarification comes amid growing debate about the government's Ethanol Blending Programme. The Delhi Taxi and Tourist Transporters and Tour Operators Association has announced a protest march to Parliament on August 4. Amid concerns over possible vehicle damage and reduced mileage from ethanol-blended fuel, reports suggest sales of 100-octane premium petrol—the only grade exempt from ethanol blending—have more than doubled in recent months amid concerns over possible vehicle damage and reduced mileage from ethanol-blended fuel.Critics also argue that consumers will have to bear recurring annual costs due to lower fuel efficiency, a burden that could rise if the ethanol content in petrol is increased further.

The minister said the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas introduced the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme through a phased, scientifically validated and consultative process involving NITI Aayog, automobile manufacturers, Oil Marketing Companies, the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), the Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) and other technical institutions.

"E20 offers a higher-octane rating, superior anti-knock characteristics, cleaner combustion and smoother engine performance. E20 improves acceleration and ride quality while reducing carbon emissions. These studies also established that legacy vehicles do not exhibit variation in performance or abnormal wear and tear due to E20," he said

Officials ruled out any immediate move to increase ethanol blending in petrol beyond the current 20%, saying any decision on higher blends would be taken only after detailed scientific and technical studies and consultations with all relevant stakeholders.

AP preferred destination for global investors: Lokesh

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The policy, he said, aims to build a complete clean energy ecosystem in Andhra Pradesh covering solar modules, battery manufacturing, green hydrogen, green ammonia, transmission infrastructure, storage systems, and world-class manufacturing facilities, positioning the state as a global producer and exporter of clean energy technologies.

Highlighting the significance of the Tata Renewable Energy project, Lokesh said it comprises a 400 MW solar power plant at Pattikonda in Kurnool district and a 400 MW wind power project at Kanekal in Anantapur district, creating an integrated 800 MW hybrid renewable energy facility. He said the project would generate around 4,000 jobs during construction and provide stable lease income to more than 1,100 farming families for nearly three decades. He also recalled the longstanding association between the Tata Group and the Telugu States, adding that the government's commitment to "Simple, Speed and Stability" has helped attract leading global investors and industrial houses to Andhra Pradesh.

Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh, with its long coastline, abundant renewable resources, and modern ports, is well positioned to become India's gateway for exports of green hydrogen, green ammonia, and other clean energy products. He invited Tata Power to collaborate with the proposed Centre of Excellence being established jointly by the state government, IIT Tirupati, and the University of New South Wales, Australia, for advanced research and skill development in renewable energy technologies. He appreciated Suzlon for its contribution to the wind energy sector and for establishing manufacturing and skill development facilities in Anantapur to strengthen the State's industrial ecosystem.

Recalling the support he had received during his Padayatra in the erstwhile Kurnool district, Lokesh said the government is committed to bringing more industries to the region while preparing local youth with industry-relevant skills through closer collaboration between ITIs and industries. He said employment opportunities would increase only when skilled manpower is readily available and urged young people to combine hard work with talent to benefit from the state's industrial growth.

Ministers T.G. Bharath, Tata Power CEO and MD Praveer Sinha, Tata Power Renewable Energy CEO and MD Sanjay Banga, Suzlon Vice-Chairman Girish Tanti, legislators, district officials, and company representatives attended the programme.

PURI HOLDS TALKS WITH TEAM BHARAT

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On Wednesday, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri reportedly met representatives of Team Bharat, the group led by activist Tehseen Poonawalla protesting the hurried E20 rollout, ahead of its planned protest on Friday. However, the protesting team's joy was short-lived as Poonawalla was detained by Delhi Police personnel the very next day (Thursday) and his Instagram account got suspended. The activist, who appreciated the minister earlier, was furious with the action and said he was not scared of any minister and would continue to expose the "ethanol scam".

Security beefed up at Bhogapuram for PM's visit

Continued from page 1

The Prime Minister will then proceed to the public meeting venue in an open-top vehicle, where more than 13,000 tribal women and students will welcome him with Dhimsa dance. Rehearsals are in full swing in Bhogapuram for the mega event which is expected to gain a place in the Guinness World Records for the highest participation. The inauguration is slated for 11:30 am, followed by the public meeting. Apart from inaugurating the new airport, the Prime Minister is scheduled to inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for various other development projects worth Rs.17,912 crore. Besides the Bhogapuram Airport, the Prime Minister will inaugurate an aviation hub, a skill development centre and an educity, among others. A fleet of buses will ferry people from various parts of North Andhra for the public meeting.

US launches 'heavy' strikes on Iran

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Iran and the US have engaged in escalating strikes and counter-strikes since a ceasefire in April, aimed at pausing the months-long war, fell apart in June.

The US has blockaded Iranian ports and bombed Iranian sites, while Iran has fired missiles and drones at US assets in countries across the Middle East and targeted shipping in the economically important Strait of Hormuz, connecting the Gulf and Arabian Sea.

On Wednesday, news outlet Axios cited an unnamed US official as saying that Trump had met Saudi defence minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, who had conveyed that Saudi Arabia wants to de-escalate tensions. The BBC has contacted the White House for comment.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian government said a fire at a port on Wednesday had been caused by a drone attack. Egypt, a US ally, has not previously been directly attacked during the war.