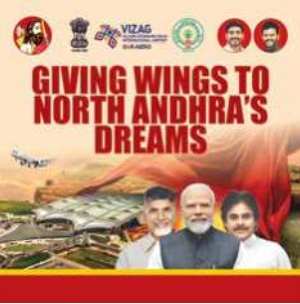
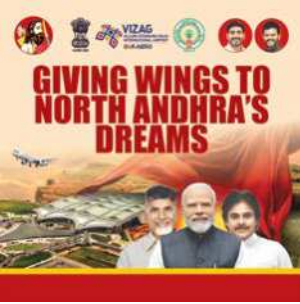




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GIVING WINGS TO NORTH ANDHRA'S DREAMS

THE ALLURI SITARAMA RAJU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

will be inaugurated by

Shri Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

In the presence of

Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh

Shri Konidela Pawan Kalyan

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh

Shri Nara Lokesh

Hon'ble Minister for Education & IT,
Andhra Pradesh

**Shri Kinjarapu
Ram Mohan Naidu**

Hon'ble Union Minister for Civil Aviation

Location
Bhogapuram

Date: 01-08-2026
Time: 10:00 AM



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Greenfield Airport



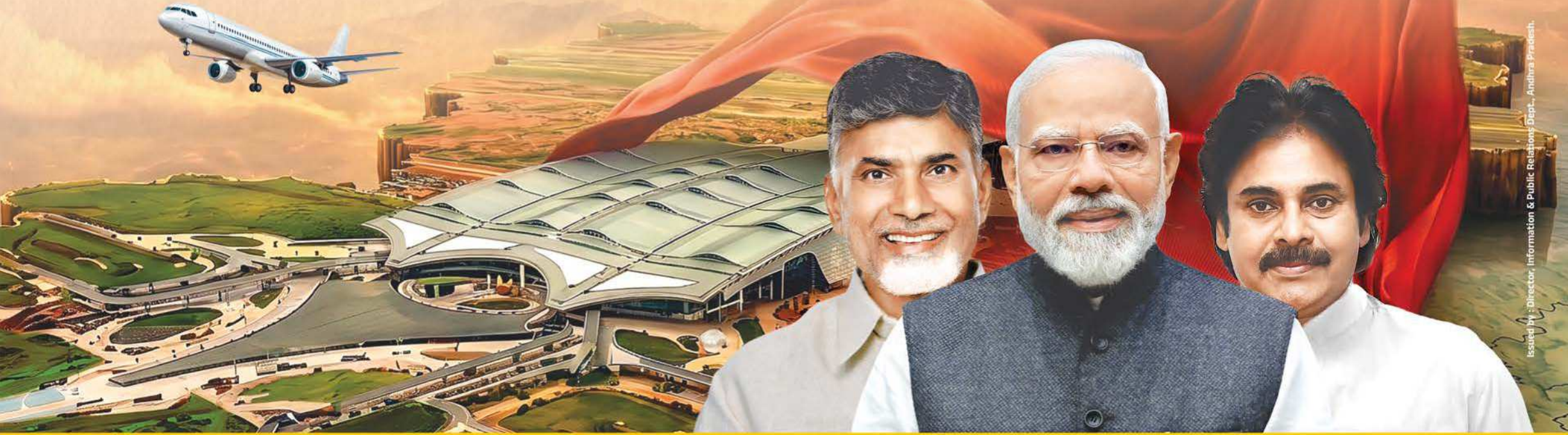
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40 Million in the future)



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Handling Capacity



₹6.13 Lakh Crore
investments in Uttarandhra



189 industries and
projects initiated



5.57 Lakh
employment
opportunities



Ten killed in building collapse in Bhiwandi

THANE: At least 10 people were killed and three others injured after a four-storey residential building, tagged as 'dangerous' in 2020 by the local civic body and currently undergoing repairs illegally, collapsed in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district, officials said on Friday. Hectic efforts were on to rescue three other residents believed to be still trapped under the rubble, several hours after the collapse, they said.

Continued on Page 5

AVERAGE RAINFALL DURING 2ND HALF OF MONSOON TO BE BELOW-NORMAL:IMD

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Whether a word is parliamentary or unparliamentary depends on who says it

Slow land acquisition triggers delay in bullet trains from Hyd

The project connects Hyd to Bengaluru, Mumbai and Chennai

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

CAN a project involving the launch of three bullet trains be grounded on schedule if the administration moves like the Nilgiri Mountain Railway passenger train, also known as the Ooty Toy Train?

That seems to be the crux of the issue relating to the proposed bullet train corridors connecting Hyderabad to Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai, positioning Hyderabad as a major national high-speed rail hub.

For context, the Telangana Cabinet has already approved the revised alignments and land allocations



The Union govt is expediting the completion of the DPRs and land acquisitions for bullet train terminals and alignments

for the three proposed bullet train corridors. The Cabinet cleared the allocation of 400 acres of land near Shamshabad for a central station and depot. The three routes form a core part of the Union government's expansion

ed high-speed rail framework, covering over 500 km across Telangana out of a total 2,028 km network length for these specific southern/western paths.

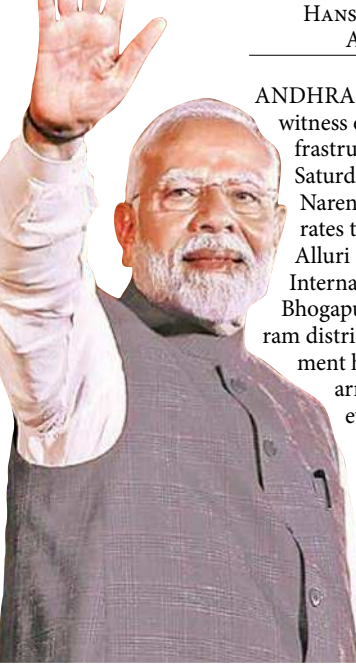
The Union Government is expediting the completion of the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) and land acquisitions

for bullet train terminals and alignments. The bullet train project connecting Hyderabad to Bengaluru, Mumbai and Chennai was announced recently. However, the National High Speed Rail Corporation (NHSRC) is not happy with the slow pace of land acquisition in view of hurdles, including resistance from local people. The NHSRC, on its part, is moving fast. It has sought the state government's help for expeditious land acquisition. The corporation has been enquiring about the hurdles faced by the state government in acquiring 400 acres of land near Shamshabad for the common high-speed rail station and rolling stock depot. Continued on Page 5

AP POISED FOR BIG ECONOMIC PUSH

Modi to inaugurate Alluri International Airport today

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI



ANDHRA Pradesh is set to witness one of its biggest infrastructure milestones on Saturday as Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the Rs 4,727-crore Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district. The state government has made elaborate arrangements for the event, describing the airport as a transformational project for Andhra's economic growth, connectivity, and industrial expansion. The Prime Minister will also lay foundation

State gears up for grand inauguration of Rs 4,727-crore Bhogapuram airport
PM Modi to also unveil Rs 18,000-cr developmental projects



stones for, or dedicate, developmental projects worth nearly Rs 18,000 crore, including the ASIP semiconductor project at Bhogapuram, the transmission system for Phase-I of the Kurnool-IV Renewable Energy Zone, and major National Highway projects.

Continued on Page 5

Trump mulls \$100,000 fee on work visas

The proposed fee would significantly impact foreign graduates seeking to work in the US after completing their studies

WASHINGTON

THE United States is planning to impose a \$1,00,000 fee on visas issued to international students for working in the US after graduation from an American university, The Wall Street Journal reported. The Trump administration

move comes after a US court struck down a proposal to levy a \$1,00,000 fee on H1-B visas.

According to The Wall Street Journal, the Department of Homeland Security is mulling the high fee on Optional Practical Training (OPT) visas which are an



extension of F-1 visas issued to students.

The OPT programme allows foreign graduates to work for one to three years on their student visas in areas di-

rectly related to their studies.

Roughly 4,19,000 foreigners were working on OPT in 2024, the latest year for which data are available.

Tech companies, which conduct most of the recruitments from US universities, opposed the \$1,00,000 fee on H1-B visas.

A DHS spokeswoman said in a statement: 'No policies should be considered final until formally announced.'

Continued on Page 5

ATCs, Skills University to offer EV, drone tech courses: CM

Reviews 'Shakti' Department

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy has announced that EV and drone technology courses would be offered in Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) and Young India Skills University. A special wing



would also be established in the university for offering for-

eign language courses.

At a review of the 'Shakti' Department attended by Minister Vivek Venkataswamy and top officials, the Chief Minister said that the requirement of skilled personnel to service electric vehicles being increasingly used has been felt.

Continued on Page 5

WINGS TO THE DREAMS OF NORTH ANDHRA

GRAND INAUGURATION OF

VIZAG

ALLURI SITARAMA RAJU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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by

SHRI NARENDRA MODI

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Saturday, August 1, 2026

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Godavari floods throw life out of gear

- Lorry drivers stranded near Veerapuram as floodwaters surround sand excavation ramp
- Villages on the banks of the river inundated cutting off transportation
- Bridge at Turubaka village in Dummugudem mandal inundated
- Vehicular traffic affected on highway between Bhadrachalam and Vekatapuram

PV SATYANARAYANA
BHADRACHALAM

INCESSANT rains in the upper catchment areas of Bhadrachalam continued to push large volumes of water downstream on Friday, prompting the district administration to intensify relief and rescue measures across flood-prone areas. According to officials, the water level touched 48 ft triggering the second flood warning, while the river was carrying an estimated 1.144 million cusecs of floodwater.

Officials informed that 49 villages in the Bhadrachalam division have been affected by the floods. This includes six in Aswapuram mandal, nine in Bhadrachalam, eight in Burgampahad, five in Dummugudem, eight in Charla, five in Manuguru, and eight in Pinapaka.

Floodwaters surrounded a sand excavation ramp near Veerapuram village in Charla mandal, leaving several lorry drivers and villagers stranded. Revenue officials rushed to the spot after receiving the information and launched rescue operations to shift those trapped.

Meanwhile, with the increase in water level, flood waters inundated many villages on the banks of the river cutting off transportation to the villages.

A bridge at Turubaka village in Dummugudem mandal was also inundated. Vehicular traffic was affected on the national highway between Bhadrachalam and

49 VILLAGES AFFECTED AS RIVER CROSSES SECOND WARNING LEVEL AT BHADRACHALAM



Rescue and relief: ITDA sets up flood control room

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHADRACHALAM

THE Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) has set up a dedicated flood control room at Bhadrachalam as the Godavari river continued to swell on Friday, prompting authorities to intensify relief preparedness in flood-prone tribal and low-lying areas.

ITDA Project Officer B Rahul urged people from tribal villages and other inundation-prone habitations to report flood-related problems through the helpline numbers operated by the ITDA and

the Sub-Collector's office. "The ITDA flood control room can be contacted at 7995268352, while the Sub-Collector's office can be reached at 08743-232444 and the district flood control room at 7981219425," he said.

Meanwhile, district administration advised residents of low-lying and riverbank villages to remain vigilant, avoid venturing into floodwaters and co-operate with officials in the event of evacuation. Rescue and relief teams have been kept on standby to respond to any emergency arising from further rise in the river level.

Vekatapuram.

Notably, Ministers Tum-mala Nageswara Rao and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy directed the district and mandal level officials to be alert and take measures to avoid loss of life and property.

In addition, the district administration has advised residents of low-lying and riverside habitations to remain vigilant and be prepared to move to safer locations if the water level continued to rise.

Officials said the flood situation was being closely monitored as heavy inflows from the Godavari's major tributaries, including the Indravati and Pranahita rivers, continued due to widespread rainfall across Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and the Vidarbha region.

Earlier in the day, the first warning level of 43 ft was crossed in the morning following which authorities placed the district machinery on high alert.



Floodwaters inundate the road between Bairagulapadu and Sunnambatti in Dummugudem mandal

Collector and SP review situation

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KOTHAGUDEM

DISTRICT Collector Ankit conducted an extensive field inspection of the flood situation at Bhadrachalam on Friday after the Godavari river crossed the second warning level, directing officials to remain on high alert and ensure the timely evacuation of residents from vulnerable low-lying areas. The Collector, accompanied by Superintendent of Police Rohith Raju and Bhadrachalam Sub-Collector Mrunal Shrestha, inspected several flood-prone locations, including the Vista Complex sluice, river embankments and bathing ghats, to assess the impact of the rising river.

During the inspection, he ordered continuous surveillance at vulnerable locations and asked officials to keep the public informed about the evolving flood situation. Officials also briefed the Collector



on the extent of floodwater reaching the Koonavaram-Bhadrachalam main road. The Collector said the district administration was monitoring the situation round the clock and that teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and District Disaster Response Force (DRF) had been kept on standby for emergency response. The SP urged residents to exercise extreme caution, warning them against entering the river or venturing into inundated areas to take selfies or shoot videos.

44 stranded at sand quarry rescued



HANS NEWS SERVICE
CHARLA (KOTHAGUDEM)

"FORTY-four truck drivers and labourers stranded at a sand quarry after the Godavari river suddenly swelled in Bhadradi Kothagudem district were rescued by revenue and police officials on Friday," authorities informed.

The incident occurred near Veerapuram village in Charla mandal where floodwaters inundated the quarry following a sharp rise in the Godavari.

Water reportedly rose to around six feet around the site, trapping workers and truck drivers who had arrived for sand transportation.

On receiving information, Charla Tahsildar Srinivasulu, Circle Inspector Raju Varma, and Sub-Inspector Narsi Reddy rushed to the spot

and launched a rescue operation with the help of fishing boats and excavators.

All 44 stranded persons were safely shifted to Veerapuram village without any casualties.

The rescued workers said they had entered the quarry on Thursday and Friday for routine operations, but the river level rose suddenly, cutting off their escape route.

The incident caused anxious moments for the workers' families and prompted an immediate response from the district administration. Officials wearing life jackets ventured into the flooded area to evacuate those trapped.

Meanwhile, the road connecting Kothapalli and Dandupeta villages was submerged under floodwaters, disrupting traffic between the two villages.

TEMPLE'S SAFETY REVIEWED



SP Rohith Raju inspecting construction work at the Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam on Friday, while reviewing the safety protocols being implemented in view of the rising Godavari water levels

SAYING GOODBYE...



A felicitation ceremony marking the retirement of Nushitha, the Executive Director (ED) of the SC Corporation and District Welfare Officer, was held on Friday at the IDOC conference hall in Gadwal in which the District Collector Rizwan Basha Shaik commended her services

STUDENT SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN



District Congress Committee (DCC) President A Sanjeev Mudiraj participated in the 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' signature campaign organised by the Jawar Bal Manch at Vagdevi College in Mahabubnagar on Friday

Sri Chaitanya Global Vista fetes elected students



KHAMMAM

THE Sri Chaitanya Global Vista School at Rudramma-kota organised a felicitation programme on Friday for

students who won the recently held school elections. Chief guest Dr Sumanth Moparthi appreciated the school for promoting leadership and democratic val-

ues among students. Chairman Mallempati Sridhar, Director Sri Vidya, Principal Dr. Jayasudha and AGM Chetan Madhur congratulated the winners.

Govts weakening Dalit unity in the garb of justice: Dr Ratnakar

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHABUBNAGAR

ALLEGING that the implementation of SC sub-categorisation threatens the existence of the Mala community in Telangana, Mala Mahanadu and RAKS National President Dr RS Ratnakar said his organisation would continue its peaceful agitation until legal changes are made in Parliament.

Addressing a press conference in Mahabubnagar on Friday, Dr Ratnakar alleged that the Congress government had laid the foundation for SC sub-categorisation, which later expanded across



the country. He said that since the benefits under SC reservations are already limited, both the Central and State governments must clarify how equal opportunities would be ensured for all Scheduled Caste communities across India, including all SC groups in

the Telugu states. He accused governments of weakening Dalit unity in the name of social justice. He demanded that the principle of social justice should not be confined to reservations alone but should also be reflected in the distribution of national wealth and

representation in Union and State Cabinets.

He also called upon elected representatives from the Mala community in both Telugu states to raise their voice on the issue and unite to safeguard the interests of their community.

BJP seeks regular EO for Jamalapuram temple

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

BHARATIYA Janata Party (BJP) district president Neluri Koteswara Rao urged the government to appoint a regular Executive Officer (EO) for the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple at Jamalapuram.

Rao visited the temple on Friday and offered special prayers. Expressing concern over the temple's administration, he said it was unfortunate that the prominent pilgrimage centre continued to function without a full-time Executive Officer.

He also sought the allo-



cation of special funds for infrastructure development and other facilities at the temple. The BJP leader called

upon the Endowments Department to ensure that the temple's traditions and Agama practices were protected

and that no activities contrary to established customs were permitted.

He also demanded the closure of alleged illegal liquor belt shops operating in and around the temple precincts and nearby villages, stating that such activities were detrimental to the spiritual atmosphere of the pilgrimage centre. Several BJP leaders, including mandal president Anumolu Suresh, district SIR convenor Shyam Kiran, senior leader Nuthakki Narasimha Rao, Shakti Kendra in-charges, BLAs and party workers, participated in the programme.

Election Commission extends SIR deadline to August 10

- Draft electoral rolls on August 17
- Claims, objections from Aug 17–Sept 16
- Final electoral rolls on October 19
- State digitisation at 77.12%.
- Hyderabad records 56.31% digitisation.
- Rangareddy at 63.43%.
- Medchal-Malkajgiri at 61.37%
- Yadadri Bhongir tops with 94.25%

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) extended the final deadline for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process on July 31, fixing August 10 as the new cut-off date for submitting enumeration forms. According to the revised schedule released by the ECI, this marks the second time the election body has pushed back the submission deadline. Initially set for July 24, the deadline was previously extended to August 3 before being further extended to August 10.

As per the revised SIR timeline, the rationalisation

and reorganising of polling stations will be completed by August 10, followed by the publication of draft electoral rolls on August 17.

The designated period for filing claims and objections will run from August 17 to September 16, while the official notice period for disposing of claims and objections spans from August 17 to October 15. The final publication of electoral rolls will take place on October 19.

The ECI was compelled to extend the schedule due to incomplete digitisation of enumeration forms across the state. Official records reveal that none of the 33 districts managed to achieve 100 per cent digitisation.



Progress in urban districts like Hyderabad, Rangareddy, and Medchal-Malkajgiri remained poor, barely crossing the 50 per cent mark. Digitisation stood at 56.31 per cent in Hyderabad, 63.43 per cent in Rangareddy, and 61.37 per cent in Medchal-Malkajgiri. Conversely, Yadadri Bhongir led the state with 94.25 per cent completion, followed closely by Janagao at 91.44 per cent.

Field officials distributed enumeration forms to all 3,38,26,448 voters across Telangana.

Out of these, digitisation has been successfully completed for 2,60,88,334 voters, representing an overall state progress rate of 77.12 per cent.

The extension provides election authorities additional time to bridge the gap and complete data entry ahead of the draft roll publication.

Rs 1L reward for PHC with highest deliveries

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WANAPARTHY

DISTRICT Collector Adarsh Surabhi announced that delivery records of PHCs would be reviewed monthly and Rs 1 lakh would be sanctioned to the centre conducting highest deliveries.

"Proposals for any equipment required at PHCs should be submitted," said the collector on Friday during a review meeting with Health officials and medical officers regarding seasonal diseases, TB eradication, and ANC registration. He ordered officials to ensure an increase in ANC registrations at PHCs and to see they are completed in a timely manner. "The deliveries at PHCs needs to be increased and awareness created among poor pregnant women to opt for government hospitals, instead of private ones, for childbirth," he said.

Surabhi instructed officials to undertake proactive preventive action in areas where dengue, Malaria and Chikungunya were recorded last year; medicines be kept readily available to treat emergencies such as snake/dog-bites; to take measures to eradicate TB and to ensure that blood tests are conducted and treatment provided to anyone exhibiting symptoms of cough and fever.

Police bust ganja racket, arrest two

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KODAD (SURYAPET)



THE local police arrested two persons involved in ganja trafficking while another suspect remains on the run. Police seized 2 kg of ganja, a motorcycle, and a mobile phone from the accused, Kodad DSP Srinivas Reddy informed.

Addressing a media conference at the Kodad Town Police Station on Friday, the DSP stated that acting on credible intelligence, police teams conducted surveillance and inspections near Durgapuram Stage on the outskirts of the town. During the operation, two individuals were caught red-handed while allegedly selling ganja.

The DSP said that special police teams have been deployed to trace and arrest the

absconding accused. During the investigation, police found that the arrested individuals had been involved in several criminal cases in the past. Authorities are now conducting a detailed probe into their criminal history as well as the wider ganja supply network linked to the case.

Srinivas Reddy warned that the police would not

tolerate any illegal activities related to the sale, transportation, or storage of narcotic substances in the district. He said stringent action would be taken under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and that the police department would continue conducting special drives to eliminate drug-related crimes.



State warehouse corporation Chairman and Yellandu Assembly constituency SIR Coordinator Rayala Nageswara Rao along with MLA Koram Kanakaiah conducting a field inspection of the SIR process in Kommagudem and Mamidigudem villages on Friday

FEE REIMBURSEMENT ROW

BC student leaders attempt to lay siege to RDO Office

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

LEADERS of the BC Students' Association, led by Rakesh Datta, on Friday attempted to lay siege to the Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) office in Khammam, demanding the immediate release of pending fee reimbursement funds for students across Telangana.

The protesters, accompanied by hundreds of students, took out a rally from Kalvoddu to the RDO office.

The demonstration caused traffic congestion near the Old Bus Stand after the protesters staged a



sit-in on the road. When the demonstrators attempted to enter the RDO office premises, police intervened

and stopped them. Following the protest, the RDO came outside the office and received a memorandum

submitted by the BC Students' Association. Addressing the gathering, Rakesh Datta alleged

that nearly Rs 8,000 crore in fee reimbursement dues remained pending and urged the state government to release the funds immediately. He requested the RDO to ensure that the representation is forwarded to the Chief Minister for prompt action. The protest was attended by BC State Secretary Bhashaboyina Upender, Town President Sheelam Upender, R. Dharma, BJYM District President Shasanala Sairam, Shyam, Sai Harshith, BC student leader Kaveri, and around 500 students. Police maintained security during the protest, and no untoward incidents were reported.

Slow land acquisition triggers delay in bullet trains from Hyd

Continued from front page

Although the state administration has been directed to expedite land acquisition, officials concerned said that the government has been facing formidable challenges to complete the land acquisition due to local factors. Court directions and resistance by local people against the land acquisition could stall the process if the state government does not address the issue expeditiously.

Now, the major challenge is to realign the bullet train track and station locations

if the land acquisition is not completed in a time-bound manner. Farmers have already raised objections over land acquisition at Bahadurguda, where the government proposed to acquire 500 acres of land for a bullet train hub. State officials have been told: "The Union government will not give a clearance to the realignment of the bullet train routes unless the land acquisition is completed. The state government has to resolve the land issue to ensure the approval of the bullet train projects by the

Centre immediately".

It is learnt that environmental issues are also creating trouble for laying bullet train tracks alongside the Vikarabad forest area. The demand for realignment of the Hyderabad – Chennai bullet train has already been raised in the old Nalgonda district. Ministers and opposition leaders from BRS and BJP are demanding bullet train route in their Assembly segments. All these issues should be resolved before finalising the alignment of the bullet train between Hyderabad and Chennai.

Cabinet okays extension of PM-KISAN scheme

This will enhance farmers' capacity to invest in agriculture

NEW DELHI

THE government on Friday extended the PM-KISAN scheme for the next five years till 2030-31 with a total outlay of over Rs 3.15 lakh crore, a decision aimed at providing financial support to farmers. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, launched in February 2019, eligible land-holding farmer families get financial assistance of Rs 6,000 per year. The amount is transferred directly into their bank accounts in three equal instalments. Nearly Rs 4.5 lakh crore have been disbursed so far under this scheme. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved continuation of the PM-KISAN scheme from 2026-27 to 2030-31, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters here. A total financial outlay of Rs 3,15,614 crore has been approved for the Scheme during this period, he added. "The approval reiterates the government's commitment that the prosperity of farmers forms the foundation of the nation's prosperity," the government said in a statement.

The extension of the scheme will enhance farmers' capacity to invest in agriculture, improve productivity, help reduce agricultural risks and strengthen the rural economy, it added. Through this scheme, timely and transparent income support is being provided to eligible farmer families through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. Talking about the successful implementation of this programme, the government said it has



so far disbursed more than Rs 4.47 lakh crore directly into farmers' bank accounts through 23 instalments under the scheme. Under the 23rd instalment, more than 9.49 crore farmers benefited, with over Rs 18,984 crore released. "Women farmers have received more than Rs 1.06 lakh crore under PM-KISAN, and nearly one out of every four beneficiaries is a woman farmer," the statement said. The government highlighted that the assistance provided under PM-KISAN has enabled farmers to make timely investments in seeds, fertilisers, irrigation, agricultural machinery and other agricultural requirements. "This has enhanced farmers' productive capacity, reduced their dependence on informal credit and strengthened the financial stability of rural households," it added. Further, the government said that the impact of the PM-KISAN Scheme has been assessed by various independent institutions. According to the evaluation conducted by the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) of NITI Aayog, more than 92 per cent of beneficiaries reported that the amount was used for agricultural activities and agricultural investment. Around 85 per cent of beneficiaries confirmed an improvement in agricultural income and a reduction in dependence on informal credit.

2020 DELHI RIOTS Ex-AAP leader gets lifer for killing IB officer Ankit Sharma

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Friday sentenced former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and four co-convicts to life imprisonment for the murder of Intelligence Bureau officer Ankit Sharma during the 2020 Delhi riots, saying the case did not fall within the "rarest of rare" category warranting the death penalty. The judgement was pronounced by Additional Sessions Judge Praveen Singh in the presence of Hussain and others amid tight security. The judge awarded the sentence after hearing arguments on the quantum of sentence and denied the state contention to award death penalty to the convicts, saying the prosecution was not able to prove that they were beyond reformation.

The courtroom was packed with lawyers and senior Delhi Police officials including Crime Branch's Joint Commissioner and DCP. The family of Hussain was so present in the court. In its order, the court said, "I find myself unable to agree based on the SPP that the convicts are beyond reformation or have such a fiendish character that their continued existence, even in prison, will be a menace to society. For the other offences the convicts have been found guilty of, they must face the full force of the law." It said that the state has not bought anything on record to establish that any of the convicts has any violent disposition or propensity to crime. "The final test that law requires me to undertake before I conclude that this case invites capital punishment is whether the convicts are beyond redemption and there being no chance of reformation, it is now firmly established in our criminal jurisprudence that death penalty is of the last absorption," the judge said. On being asked about his sentence, Hussain said the high court will serve him justice.

Average rainfall during 2nd half of monsoon to be below-normal: IMD

NEW DELHI: India as a whole is most likely to witness below-normal rainfall during the second half of the southwest monsoon from August to September, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its monthly forecast issued on Friday.

The rainfall is expected to be less than 94 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA). The LPA of rainfall over the country as a whole during the August to September period, based on historical data of 1971 to 2020, is 422.8 mm. LPA refers to the rainfall recorded over a particular region in a given period, such as a month or a season, averaged over a long period, typically 30 to 50 years.

ATCs, Skills University to offer EV, drone tech courses: CM

Continued from front page

The significant increase in the use of drones in agriculture is also creating job opportunities. In this context, the Chief Minister instructed the officials concerned to introduce courses on EV servicing and drone technology in ATCs as well as the Skills University.

The establishment of a dedicated department within the university to facilitate learning of foreign languages such as German, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Russian was discussed in the meeting.

Revanth Reddy asked the authorities to establish a dedicated wing by hiring instructors from the respective countries, alongside local experts proficient in the respective foreign languages.

The Chief Minister took a decision to strengthen the TOMCOM (Telangana Overseas Manpower Company) by entrusting it with the responsibility of the entire process -from providing training, organising job fairs to facilitating passport services and securing good job opportunities for the aspiring youth in foreign

Ten killed in building collapse in Bhiwandi

Continued from front page

A portion of the Kohinoor Building in the Balaji Nagar area of the powerloom town, around 50km from Mumbai, came crashing down at 11.20 pm on Thursday. Rescue workers from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Thane Disaster Response Force (TDRF), and the municipal fire brigade pulled out ten bodies as heavy machinery and sniffer dogs were deployed to look for survivors under the debris of the four-storey structure, said the officials of the district disaster management cell.

The structure comprised 48 rooms, 12 on each floor. Around 9 pm on Thursday, residents heard "loud cracking sounds" emanating from the building, an official said. Fearing the worst, locals immediately helped evacuate many families to other locations. However, while some occupants were still making their way out, the 'B' wing of the building caved in, he said. The officials said five of the deceased were identified as Shamim Shaikh (32), Ranjeet Singh (45), Miraj Rasul Shaikh (34), Santosh Kumar Pandey (42) and Shamim Ansari

(30). The Bhiwandi Nizampur City Municipal Corporation (BNCMC) said it had identified the building as "dangerous" in September 2020, and finally issued eviction notices on June 5 this year, subsequently disconnecting electricity and water supply.

But despite that, the property owners initiated structural repair works without obtaining any permission from the civic body. Hours before the crash, on July 30, 2026, a civic team led by an Assistant Municipal Commissioner visited the site and noticed structural instability.

Modi to inaugurate Alluri International Airport today

Continued from front page

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, who shared the Prime Minister's announcement on social media, said Andhra Pradesh is ready to welcome him.

"The Bhogapuram Airport will give wings to the development aspirations of north Andhra," the Chief Minister posted. The Prime Minister is scheduled to arrive at 10.45 a.m. and will be received by Governor Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Union and State ministers. He will inaugurate the passenger terminal, go around the airport, and later travel in an open-top vehicle to the public meeting venue, where he will address a public gathering.

A grand cultural welcome has been planned with 13,500 tribal women performing the

traditional 'Dhimsa' dance, while 200 students will present a Kuchipudi performance inside the airport terminal. The state government is also organising a drone show at the Visakhapatnam Beach Road themed "Giving Wings to North Andhra's Dreams."

The newly built airport has been extensively decorated to showcase Andhra Pradesh's rich cultural heritage. Visitors will be greeted by large-scale Etikoppaka artwork at the entrance, while the interiors feature leather puppetry, the Bobbili Veena, Banganapalli mango motifs, and several other displays reflecting the state's history, traditions, and artistic legacy.

Constructed in just 31 months—nearly five months ahead of schedule—the greenfield airport is among the fastest-completed international airports in the country.

Trump mulls \$100,000 fee on work visas

Continued from front page

At DHS we are always having conversations about how to use all tools in our arsenal to protect the integrity of our legal immigration system."

In addition to the H-1B and student visas, officials at the State Department are also weighing attaching a \$1,00,000 bond on applicants for green cards outside the US, redeemable only after they move to the US and become citizens.

The OPT program is one of the primary attractions for international students choosing to study in the US.

Without OPT, most international students would be forced to leave the US immediately after graduation, taking the skills they gained at American universities to foreign markets.

Govt, CJP must have meaningful engagement

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Delhi state government's announcement against pursuing any further adverse legal action against the NEET (UG) examination irregularities' protestors is some progress, and it can possibly cool tempers on both sides. Still, it is not a very reasonable decision. It doesn't provide immunity to those with criminal antecedents. It may be recalled that the Delhi police filed cases against those who were allegedly involved in the violence that broke out during Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP's) July 20 'Chalo Sansad' march from Jantar Mantar to the Parliament. Police personnel also reportedly identified 2,873 people through CCTV footage who allegedly attacked them and van-

dalised vehicles during the march. Almost a 1000 among them are said to have criminal records. The reasonableness of this decision is questionable. Who decides whether the behaviour of a protestor is law-less? The police and other official agencies have proved to be partisan; they have done everything to kill or curtail the stir; they shut down 16 Metro stations in central Delhi and blocked the internet in the area. Worse, there are reports that the protestors, even minors, are being detained or arrested in different parts of the country.

The Supreme Court had to step in; on Tuesday, it ordered the release of all under-18 protestors, who were arrested during the agitation. Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, whose

cockroach remark led to the launch of CJP, directed the authorities to preserve the digital and personal data of the agitators. This is not to say that no agitator did anything wrong; a small section of them attacked cops, injuring many. The guilty should face the consequences, but the government's attitude has stiffened since the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as the union education minister. This reflects the repressive measures adopted by the Narendra Modi government in the aftermath of the end of the stir. In such a situation, it is difficult to determine the truth about the violence that was unleashed. What both sides, the government and the CJP, need to do is lower the temperature so that meaning-

ful dialogue can be furthered in the interests of students. Prolonged confrontation, mutual distrust, and increasingly hostile rhetoric are unlikely to produce durable solutions. Instead, they risk deepening political polarisation while diverting attention from the substantive issues that originally brought thousands of students onto the streets. A democratic society must be able to distinguish between legitimate dissent and criminal conduct.

Peaceful protest is an essential constitutional right, and its exercise should not automatically invite punitive action. At the same time, acts of violence, vandalism, or assault cannot be justified under the guise of public protest and should be addressed through fair, trans-

parent, and evidence-based legal processes. For the government, rebuilding public confidence requires more than announcing limited legal relief. It demands credible assurances that investigations into alleged offences will be impartial, that no innocent protester will be harassed, and that due process will be followed without political bias. Equally, organisations leading the agitation have a responsibility to ensure that demonstrations remain peaceful and disciplined, preventing fringe elements from hijacking a movement centred on students' concerns. Responsible leadership on both sides is essential to prevent further escalation. Only by replacing confrontation with communication can both sides contribute to an outcome that protects democratic values while addressing the genuine anxieties of the country's youth.

LETTERS

Rise in tech startups augurs well

PROPOS "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease" (July 31). More Indian startups are choosing to list on the stock market—18 did so last year, raising over Rs 41,000 crore, while another 28 are waiting. This shows growing confidence given the profitability rate they have achieved. Investors, especially ordinary retail shareholders, are slowly losing their fear of such companies. This shift from traditional businesses to tech startups is good for India, as it attracts foreign investment and aligns with a global AI-driven economy. But founders must price their shares fairly and deliver on their promises. Public listing is not an exit strategy; it is a tool for faster growth.

K Chidanand Kumar, Bengaluru

A major boost to entrepreneurial culture

PROPOS "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease" (THI, July 31). India's start-up success should not remain concentrated in a few metropolitan centres. Smaller cities and towns possess talented entrepreneurs who often lack access to funding, mentoring and incubation support. Expanding digital infrastructure, improving access to venture capital and strengthening local innovation hubs can help bridge this gap. Public listing by successful startups should inspire a wider entrepreneurial culture across the country. Inclusive growth will ensure that the benefits of innovation reach every region, creating employment, encouraging local enterprise and contributing to balanced national development.

K Sakunthala, Coimbatore-641671

Take up financial literacy campaigns

THIS is with reference to "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease." The renewed interest in startup IPOs is encouraging, but retail investors should approach these offerings with careful evaluation rather than market enthusiasm. Many technology companies have promising ideas but limited profitability, making valuations difficult to assess. Investors must study financial statements, cash flows and business sustainability before subscribing. Companies, in turn, should provide clear disclosures without overstating future growth prospects. Financial literacy campaigns can also help first-time investors make informed decisions. Healthy capital markets depend on responsible companies as well as informed investors.

S M Jeeva, Chennai-32

Listing brings greater responsibility

PROPOS "More tech-enabled startups tap equity market as concerns ease". Listing on the stock market brings greater responsibility. Investors expect listed startups to maintain high standards of corporate governance, transparent accounting and ethical leadership. Strong internal controls, independent boards and timely disclosures are essential for preserving public confidence. Rapid expansion should never compromise financial discipline or compliance. Sustainable success ultimately rests on credibility.

Pon Arun Kumar, Tiruchengode (TN)-637211

A beacon of hope for H-1B visa holders

I refer to the report on Senator Alex Padilla's bill proposing a Green Card path for long-term US residents, including Indian H-1B visa holders. For decades, skilled immigrants have driven innovation and economic growth, yet laws that have not been changed since 1986 leave thousands in legal limbo. Modernizing the registry rule to grant permanent residency to those living in the US for seven-plus years is a compassionate, practical step. The lawmakers should support this vital bill to ensure stability for hardworking families.

Aahana Misra, Hyderabad

Anti-Paper Leak Bill is a welcome move

STRONG laws are necessary to prevent examination malpractices and protect students, who have worked diligently. The proposed penalties and faster investigations under the Anti-Paper Leak Bill can help restore confidence in the examination system. However, authorities should also strengthen security, improve digital monitoring, and ensure the law is implemented fairly and effectively. This reform can create a transparent and trustworthy environment for students across the country.

Himasri Nanmpapaneni, Hyderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Do you have any civic issues? Are any roads in your locality damaged? Do you have any complaints against govt departments? Are any private companies taking you for a ride regarding sales and service? The Hans India will publish your complaints, concerns and grievances in these columns on every Wednesday. Mail the details along with relevant photographs if any, to hanspeoplesvoice@gmail.com -Editor

BENGALURU ONLINE

Cop's son among 9 held in hydro ganja racket

TUMAKURU: In a startling case, the son of a police officer, whose father had been involved in creating awareness against drug abuse, has been arrested for allegedly running a hydro ganja trafficking network in Tumakuru. The racket was unearthed after police received a confidential tip-off through a QR code-based public information system introduced to combat narcotics.

The breakthrough came after a tip was received on July 10 through the QR code initiative launched by Tumakuru Sub-Division Deputy Superintendent of Police Chandrashekar. The system allows members of the public to anonymously share information on drug-related activities while ensuring their identity remains confidential.

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

Want to feel depressed? Watch Parliament sessions



DO you want to slip into a state of depression? The easiest way is to switch on your television and watch how increasingly unaccountable and irresponsible many of our public representatives have become. Follow it up by watching prime-time television debates and the descent into despair will be even faster.

It is indeed a sad story. They do not allow Parliament to function, and the party spokespersons repeat the same, often illogical, arguments on television night after night. Ironically, leaders who constantly demand accountability from the government seem to forget that accountability is expected of everyone. No opposition or ruling party can dictate how Parliament should function or how television anchors should conduct debates. Politics cannot become a daily exercise in shifting the goalposts.

Barring the discussion on reforms to plug examination paper leaks, particularly NEET—which itself was hardly productive—and the bill on Vande Mataram, there has been virtually no meaningful legislative business during the monsoon session so far.

Having covered Parliament for long, I have never witnessed any Opposition behaving in this manner. There were always sharp confrontations, heated exchanges, protests and even walk-

PARLIAMENT NEEDS ACCOUNTABILITY FROM BOTH SIDES

outs. Proceedings were occasionally stalled for a day or two. But there was also a willingness on both sides to negotiate. After consultations with the Speaker, a workable understanding would emerge, and Parliament would get back to business.

Today, however, disruption has become the objective rather than the means.

The Opposition insists that the Prime Minister and the Home Minister must be physically present before any discussion can begin. That would have been understandable had they used this demand to compel the government to agree to discussion on law and order and the alleged police excesses during the student protests. Instead of cornering the government through a structured debate backed by facts, pointed questions and supplementary interventions, they prefer to stall proceedings altogether. Parliament cannot be treated this way.

Question Hour is among the most effective parliamentary instruments available to Members of Parliament. It enables them to raise issues about the state and their constituency, seek answers from ministers and hold the government accountable. This is followed by Special Mentions, through which MPs draw attention to pressing public concerns. Both have been sacrificed at the altar of political confrontation.

The decorum of Parliament is steadily eroding because of the "my way or the highway" approach. Whenever the Opposition is questioned about repeated disruptions, the standard response is that running



Parliament is the government's responsibility. Does that absolve the Opposition of all responsibility? Is it not equally their duty to question, challenge and expose the government through informed debate? Why prefer posting comments on X rather than confronting ministers inside Parliament?

Unfortunately, this has become a familiar pattern not just in Parliament but also in several State Assemblies. Between 2014 and 2019, Andhra Pradesh witnessed repeated disruptions by the YSRCP, accompanied by daily theatrics outside the Assembly. In Telangana, during the BRS regime, the Assembly adopted the practice of suspending members even for minor disruptions, and now they themselves protested on several occasions. Contrast that with what is happening in Parliament today, where disruptions continue for days with virtually no consequences. Perhaps Parliament should seriously consider a "no work, no pay" policy and recover the day's expenditure from all parties, including the ruling party, whenever applicable.

For the past two weeks, taxpayers' money has been wasted while Parliament has remained largely dysfunctional. Ironically, the biggest loser is the Opposition itself. Instead of cornering the government over its omissions and commissions, it is allowing the government to escape scrutiny because debates are simply not taking place.

Even when discussions are held, they rarely remain focused. The debate on NEET reforms was a classic example. Much of the Opposition's intervention revolved around rhetoric rather than presenting a credible roadmap for reforming the examination system. This only makes the government's job easier.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra resorted to an unnecessary personal remark when she referred to IIT Madras Director Dr V Kamakoti as a "gaumutra expert." Rahul Gandhi, while strongly criticising the government, neither endorsed nor specifically challenged the provisions of the proposed reforms, nor did he place a concrete alternative before the House. Instead, the debate descended into

exchanges involving words such as "idiots." Such language may generate headlines, but it contributes little to parliamentary discourse.

It was equally unfortunate to hear the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, invoke Manusmriti in a debate where it had little relevance and remark that the Home Minister would be "dragged out" of his room. Although he later clarified that he was referring to public anger, such language was unbecoming of a leader of his stature. The Rajya Sabha is often described as the House of Elders. Its members should set standards of parliamentary conduct, not lower them. Equally disturbing were the comments made by Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) spokesperson Saurav Das, who argued that there was nothing wrong with the filthy remarks made against the Prime Minister by one of the protesting girls. According to him, anyone aggrieved could seek legal recourse by filing a defamation case. Such responses only encourage the normalisation of abusive political discourse. God save the country if such Gen Z comes to power in future.

What was even more disappointing was the complete absence of empathy for the policemen injured during the June 20 protests. Nearly 250 policemen were reportedly injured. When questioned by the media, Rahul Gandhi responded by asking whether the journalist was from the BJP while one of his party spokespersons remarked that policemen were merely doing the job they were paid for. Does it mean they don't deserve sym-

pathy? What kind of attitude is this?

The Opposition also appears obsessed with pellet guns while ignoring the larger challenge of maintaining law and order. Even the Supreme Court has observed that there cannot be a blanket ban on their use. Did Congress governments never authorise their use in Jammu and Kashmir? Were crowd-control measures not employed during protests at JNU and elsewhere?

Parliament cannot be reduced to a stage for political theatre. The Congress, in particular, appears to have drifted away from parliamentary traditions established by leaders such as

Indira Gandhi and several other stalwarts who combined sharp criticism with substantive debate. They fought governments fiercely, but they also recognised the sanctity of Parliament.

The ordinary citizen is left wondering whether the nation's representatives are interested in solving problems or merely producing political spectacle. In the process, the genuine concerns of students are getting buried beneath a battle for political credit.

If the Opposition believes that disruption alone will propel it to power, it is making a serious miscalculation. Public confidence is earned not through slogans, social media posts or daily headlines, but through constructive engagement, informed debate, credible alternatives and a clear long-term vision for the country. Parliament was created to hold governments accountable, not to make accountability itself a casualty.

(The author is former Chief Editor of The Hans India)

Fraud on court: Judges, advocates and the fiduciary crisis

CHOLLETI

INDIA'S courts are experiencing a crisis of institutional confidence — not from judicial malfeasance, but from structural vulnerabilities that permit conduct appearing to compromise impartiality. A lawyer defends one side, then appears against it. A judge's child receives hundreds of government cases through prosecutors appearing before the same judge. No rules forbid it. No mechanism stops it. This is not merely a governance failure but a betrayal of the foundational compact between courts and citizens — one playing out in quiet procedural rooms, far removed from grand courtroom drama.

The Kakinada Episode-Fraud named:

Advocate S Pranathi represents landowners from Kakinada in a property dispute. Months later, as the State's Special Government Pleader, she switches sides and opposes them. Her husband, Meka Rahul Chowdary, steps in to argue her abandoned brief. The Kakinada Municipal Corporation simultaneously reverses its own legal position without explanation. The Andhra Pradesh High Court on July 28 — in Review Petition No. 2 of 2026 in WP Nos. 11254 of 2013 and 13428 of 2015 — examined the docket orders, vakalatnamas, and the conduct of the counsels involved, and found evidence of collusion, professional misconduct, conflict of interest, and "a deliberate attempt to commit fraud on this court."

The court was unsparing: "The Counsel appearing for the State and its instrumentalities have failed in discharging their fiduciary duty." It ordered a criminal probe by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), calling for a report within twelve weeks. This case is a symptom — not an exception. It illuminates four interconnected failures: the collapse of professional ethics among advocates; unspoken nepotism in government counsel appointments; absence of meaningful recusal standards for judges, and inadequacy of the Bar Council disciplinary machinery.

The oath forgotten:

The Advocates Act, 1961, and Bar Council of India Rules prescribe unambiguous standards.

They demand respect for courts, impose fiduciary duty — loyalty, confidentiality, undivided allegiance. An advocate who switches sides, or whose spouse argues the opposite brief, violates this core compact. Under Section 35, State Bar Councils can punish misconduct with reprimand, suspension, or permanent removal from the roll.

Yet disciplinary action remains slow and inconsistent. In March last year, the Bar Council of India issued a directive against advocates advertising through social media influencers — a development that would have been inconceivable a generation ago, and one that speaks to how far institutional drift has gone. When the Bar Council is issuing social media advisories instead of conducting disciplinary proceedings against ethical violations, the profession's moral compass has drifted dangerously off course.

When family becomes the conflict:

Beyond individual misconduct lies a systemic question: whether children of sitting judges receiving government counsel appointments creates an appearance of institutional conflict that a democracy cannot afford to ignore. Last December, the Delhi High Court heard public interest litigations by the First Generation Lawyers' Association, challenging preferential allotment of lawyers' chambers to relatives of retiring advocates — a practice the court found prima facie violative of Article 14. In the same month, the government was asked to explain its empanelment of over 650 advocates as Central Government counsel in the Supreme Court, several reportedly enrolled only in 2024–2025, many yet to clear the All India Bar Examination.

In August 2025, the Allahabad High Court in Jubeda Begum v. UPSRTC decried an "entitlement culture" in state counsel appointments, recalling the Supreme Court's 1991 ruling in Kumari Shreilekha Vidyarthi v. State of U P that mandated transparent, merit-based procedures. Justice Ajay Bhanot observed that "modes of appointment which accord weight to accidents of inheritance and neglect achievements of merit cannot be countenanced." The human cost is felt by the first-generation lawyer — the son of a farmer, the daughter of a schoolteacher — who watches

In Rajasthan, the government amended its eligibility criteria to accommodate the son of a senior official as Additional Advocate General, notwithstanding the mandatory ten-year practice requirement. When the nepotism allegation surfaced publicly — ahead of PM Modi's visit to Jodhpur in August 2024 — the appointee resigned. Contrast this with Justice Sujoy Paul, who in early 2024 voluntarily sought transfer from the Madhya Pradesh High Court to the Telangana High Court because his son practised in the same court.

the doors of patronage remain closed while they swing open for the well-connected.

The recusal question-Justice must be seen:

No episode illustrates the tension between judicial privilege and public confidence more sharply than the Delhi High Court recusal controversy of 2026. Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, appearing in person in the CBI's revision petition against his discharge in the excise policy case, sought recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on the ground that both her children were empanelled as Central Government counsel — work allocated through the same senior law officers appearing against him in her court.

In April, Justice Sharma dismissed the recusal applications, holding that her children's professional engagements created no financial or personal stake in the outcome, and that accepting such grounds would require "a large part of the judiciary" to recuse in similar cases.

The observation, while judicially defensible, sits uneasily alongside principle. The Restatement of Values of Judicial Life, adopted by all Supreme Court judges in 1997 under Chief Justice J S Verma, urges that where close relatives of a judge may gain undue advantage, the judge should — in the interests of the appearance of justice — opt for transfer. This is a voluntary ethical code with no

enforcement mechanism. The asymmetry is stark: Rule 6 of the Bar Council Rules prohibits advocates from practising before courts where a close relative serves as a judge — but that obligation binds the advocate, not the judge.

In Rajasthan, the government amended its eligibility criteria to accommodate the son of a senior official as Additional Advocate General, notwithstanding the mandatory ten-year practice requirement. When the nepotism allegation surfaced publicly — ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jodhpur in August 2024 — the appointee resigned. The system responded not to principle, but to political pressure.

Contrast this with Justice Sujoy Paul, who in early 2024 voluntarily sought transfer from the Madhya Pradesh High Court to the Telangana High Court because his son practised in the same court. That act of quiet integrity, barely reported, is precisely the standard the system needs — and rarely demands.

The way forward:

None of these amount to an indictment of the judiciary or the Bar. The overwhelming majority of advocates serve with dedication, and most judges discharge their duties with independence. The system is not broken — but its foundations are being tested in ways that demand structural response, not merely individual virtue.

India needs a binding, transparent, and institutionally reviewable judicial recusal framework. It needs merit-based, publicly disclosed criteria for government counsel empanelment. It needs the Bar Council's disciplinary machinery to function with the urgency this moment demands. And it needs ordinary litigants — carrying nothing but faith in the court's impartiality — to have that faith restored. The Andhra Pradesh High Court's order is, in one sense, proof that the system can work: a judge saw fraud, named it, and acted. That is reason enough for measured hope. The question now is whether the institutions around that judge will do the same.

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



Building a future-ready workforce through skills-integrated education

India's demographic advantage can become an economic strength when education equips students with skills that translate into meaningful employment. While millions of young people earn degrees each year, employers are increasingly seeking practical capabilities, adaptability, problem-solving and communication skills alongside academic knowledge. This article explores why a skills-first approach is gaining importance in higher education, how skill-integrated universities are connecting classroom learning with industry experience, and why improving employability should remain a key priority. As India works towards its Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, aligning education more closely with workforce needs could play an important role in supporting long-term economic growth and opportunity.

- **Skills improve employability:** Employers increasingly value practical skills, problem-solving, communication and adaptability alongside academic qualifications.
- **Experiential learning matters:** Internships, apprenticeships, industry projects and hands-on training help bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace expectations.
- **Future jobs demand adaptability:** Rapid technological change and evolving industries require graduates who can continuously learn, innovate and work across disciplines.
- **Industry-academia collaboration is growing:** Skill-integrated universities are aligning curricula with industry needs to prepare students for real-world careers.
- **Education supports national growth:** Strengthening employability through skills-focused education can help India build a future-ready workforce and contribute to the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision.

KULDIP SARMA

As young Indians prepare for careers in a rapidly changing world, one of the important challenges they face is not only finding employment but also developing the skills employers increasingly expect. While higher education has expanded significantly over the years, many graduates continue to face a gap between academic learning and workplace readiness.

Strengthening employability has therefore become an important priority for educators, policymakers and industry alike. India's large youth population presents a significant opportunity. Converting this demographic advantage into sustained economic growth will depend, in part, on ensuring that education equips students with practical knowledge, transferable skills and the ability to adapt to evolving workplace requirements.

A stronger focus on skills alongside academic learning can help bridge this gap by making learning more closely aligned with livelihoods. For decades, higher education in India has largely focused on knowledge acquisition. While strong academic foundations remain essential, employers today are also looking for graduates who can solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively and apply knowledge in real-world situations. This growing



ing emphasis on applied learning has increased the importance of skill integration within higher education.

Skill-Integrated Universities and Experiential Learning

Unlike conventional models where classrooms and workplaces often function separately, skill-integrated

universities seek to connect academic learning with practical experience. Through internships, apprenticeships, industry projects and hands-on learning, students gain opportunities to apply classroom concepts in professional settings. Such experiences can make education more relevant while helping students develop

workplace confidence.

This approach is particularly relevant as industries continue to evolve through advances in technology, digitalisation and changing business models. Many emerging careers require graduates who can learn continuously, adapt to new environments and work across disciplines. In this context, employability

increasingly depends not only on qualifications but also on practical competencies and lifelong learning.

Skills as an Enabler of National Development

India's young population remains one of its greatest strengths. However, realising the full potential of this demographic advantage requires sustained investment in education, skills and opportunities for meaningful employment. A skills-first approach is not limited to vocational education or job readiness. It also involves creating stronger connections between education, industry and career pathways, ensuring that students graduate with both academic knowledge and practical capabilities. Increasingly, institutions across the country are adopting industry-aligned curricula, experiential learning models and work-integrated programmes to support this objective.

Looking Ahead

As India progresses towards its Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, discussions around higher education are likely to focus not only on expanding access but also on improving learning outcomes and employability. Universities are increasingly expected to prepare graduates who can contribute to innovation, productivity and inclusive economic growth. Bringing learning and livelihoods closer together through stronger industry engagement, practical learning opportunities and skill development can help students navigate a changing world of work. Skill-integrated universities represent one important approach within this broader transformation, supporting graduates with the knowledge, capabilities and adaptability needed for the future. The author is Pro-Chancellor and Co-Founder, Medhavi Skills University

PGDM course in agribusiness management launched

A Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) in Agribusiness Management, reflecting the growing demand for professionals equipped to work at the intersection of agriculture, technology and business. The AICTE-approved programme has been designed to address changing trends in the agriculture sector, where digital technologies, climate-smart farming, precision agriculture, artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and agritech innovations are playing an increasingly important role, introduced by Vignana Jyothi Institute of Management (VJIM), Hyderabad.



representatives, including Indira Reddy, beekeeper, National Bee Board member and founder of Sacred Honey. The curriculum covers areas such as agritech, AI-enabled agriculture, precision farm-

ing, agribusiness analytics, food processing, supply chain management, agri-finance, commodity markets, rural marketing, sustainability and entrepreneurship. Alongside classroom instruction, stu-

dents will participate in field visits, internships, industry immersions, live consulting projects and interactions with business leaders, practitioners and progressive farmers to gain practical exposure.

UoH fills 92% of Ph.D. seats through entrance-based admissions

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) has completed admissions to its Ph.D. programmes through the university entrance examination and interview process for the 2026-27 academic year, filling nearly 92 per cent of the available seats. According to the university, 170 of the 185 Ph.D. seats offered across 27 subjects were filled, resulting in an admission rate of 91.89 per cent. The admission process concluded on July 30 following a multi-stage selection procedure comprising a written entrance examination and interviews. The university conducted the Ph.D. entrance examination on June 6 and 7 at seven centres across the country. Candidates shortlisted on the basis of their written examina-



tion were interviewed between July 9 and 11. Admissions were finalised by inviting candidates in a 1:3 ratio, based on their combined performance in the written test and interview. The university said admissions for Ph.D. programmes in another 17 subjects will be conducted separately through UGC-NET and CSIR-UGC-NET scores after the National Testing Agency (NTA) an-

nounces the results. Earlier this month, the University of Hyderabad also completed admissions to its postgraduate programmes across 42 disciplines. Between July 13 and 17, a total of 1,201 students were admitted against 1,463 available seats, recording an admission rate of 82.09 per cent. Admissions to the postgraduate courses were based on candidates' performance in the CUET-PG 2026 examina-

tion. Eligible candidates were invited for counselling in a 1:10 ratio, with wait-listed candidates being considered subsequently to fill category-wise vacancies in various departments. The university is now preparing for admissions to its undergraduate and integrated master's programmes. Counselling for 17 programmes is scheduled to be held on August 13 and 14, 2026. Candidates shortlisted on the basis of their performance in the CUET-UG 2026 examination will be notified through the university website on August 3. The admissions process forms part of the university's annual intake across undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes for the 2026-27 academic session.

TODAY IS WORLD LUNG CANCER DAY

Healthy lungs: Why awareness matters

Lung cancer is one of the most common diseases affecting the lungs, making awareness and prevention important for people of all ages. While it is more common in older adults, learning about lung health early can encourage healthy habits that last a lifetime. One of the most effective ways to protect lung health is by avoiding tobacco in all forms and staying away from second-hand smoke. Clean air, regular physical activity, a balanced diet, and good indoor ventilation also contribute to healthier lungs. Wearing protective masks in areas with heavy pollution or dust can further reduce exposure to harmful particles. Students can play an im-



portant role in spreading awareness by encouraging healthy lifestyles within their families and communities. Understanding how the lungs function, recognising the importance of clean air, and supporting smoke-free environments are simple yet meaningful ways to promote well-being.

Awareness also includes paying attention to overall respiratory health. If someone experiences persistent breathing difficulties or other unusual symptoms, seeking timely medical advice is always a sensible step. Early health check-ups and informed decisions can support better health outcomes.

100 smart vision glasses distributed by UoH for visually impaired

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) distributed 100 Smart Vision Glasses (Ultra Version) to visually impaired beneficiaries as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative aimed at improving accessibility and independent living through assistive technology. Organised by the University's Empowered Committee for Differently Abled Persons (ECDAP), the programme brought together beneficiaries from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. In addition to participants from across Telangana, the recipients included students studying at higher education institutions in Hyderabad who had travelled from states such as Haryana, Odisha and West



Bengal. Each Smart Vision Glasses device, valued at approximately Rs 48,000, is equipped with features that enable users to read printed text in major Indian languages and English, identify people and objects, recognise currency notes, and detect obstacles while walking, supporting greater independence in everyday activities.

The initiative was supported by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) under its CSR programme and implemented by the Blind Vision Foundation, Bengaluru. The devices were developed by SHG Technology Private Limited. Speaking at the event, Prof. Pammi Pavan Kumar, Coordinator of ECDAP,

highlighted the university's continued efforts to promote accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities, particularly students pursuing higher education and career opportunities. Prof. Sai Prasad, Co-coordinator of ECDAP, said advances in assistive technologies are creating new opportunities for inclusive education and independent living. ECDAP member Sri N. Annavaram noted that innovations such as smart vision devices are transforming mobility and day-to-day navigation for visually-impaired individuals. During the programme, Gopi Krishna, Vice-President (CSR & Corporate Communications) at the Blind Vision Foundation,

demonstrated the capabilities of the Smart Vision Glasses, while Project Manager Navneet Kumar explained how user feedback continues to shape improvements in the technology. The event was attended by faculty members, disability support professionals and representatives from collaborating organisations, including Prof. Rajsekhar Veshwarapu, Director of the Cell for the Disabled at the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. The organisers acknowledged the support of NPCI, the Blind Vision Foundation, the University administration and student volunteers in conducting one of the university's significant accessibility-focused outreach initiatives.



Five lifestyle changes that support women's emotional wellbeing at every age

Stress hits differently depending on your age, but the habits that keep women grounded through it barely change over time. These five simple practices work just as well at 25 as they do at 65

DR ANJALI JAISINGHANI

A woman in her 25 and a woman in her 60 carries different pressures. The habits that steady them are almost the same. Emotional wellbeing responds to small, repeated choices far more than to big ones. Here are five that hold up across a lifetime.

1. Protect your sleep. Sleep is the first thing most women give up when life gets full. It is also the thing they can least afford to lose. A short night makes the next day heavier. Patience runs thin. Small problems start to feel large. You do not need a perfect routine to fix this. A steady bedtime and a darker, quieter room do most of the work. Begin there and the rest gets easier.



2. Move in a way you will come back to. This is not about weight or how you look. Movement changes how you feel, and it works fast. A walk after dinner. Ten minutes of stretching in the morning. A swim on the weekend. What you choose matters less than whether you return to it. So pick the thing you will actually keep doing, and let it be enough.

3. Keep your close relationships warm. Loneliness arrives

quietly. A new city at 25. A house full of small children with no time to think. A quiet home at 60 after they have gone. One honest conversation with someone who truly knows you can do more than a week of holding it together alone. Send the message first. Make the call you keep putting off.

4. Learn to say no. So much of a woman's stress comes from carrying more than she ever agreed to. Saying no is not selfish. It is how you



stay steady enough for the things that actually matter to you. Turn down one extra obligation and you protect your time, your energy, and your peace. It feels hard at first. It gets easier every time you do it.

5. Notice when you are not okay, and reach out early. Pretending you are fine is not strength. The braver thing is to catch the low sooner and do something while it is still small. Name what you are feeling. Write it down. Talk to a friend, or someone trained to help, before it grows heavier. The goal was

never to carry it forever. It is to work through it and come out the other side.

None of this asks you to change your whole life. It asks for a few small returns to yourself on an ordinary day. Do that often enough, at any age, and you build a steadiness that no single fix can give you.

(The writer is a NIMHANS-trained psychiatrist and Chief Medical Officer of Menthra India, an AI emotional wellbeing platform built on the belief that people deserve to resolve what they carry, not simply manage it)



EAT HEALTHY

Monsoon health guide: Staying ahead of colds, coughs and allergies

The monsoon shower makes everything feel a little more alive. The monsoon shower brings us relief from the heat. The monsoon shower also brings some problems. We get sniffles and sore throats and coughs that just will not go away. The monsoon shower makes our allergies act up for no reason at all.

Why Illness Spikes During the Rains

The reason is because of how germs act in weather. Water in the air allows viruses and bacteria to stay around for a time than they do in dry air. Also, when it is raining outside people often stay inside. Those enclosed, not well-ventilated areas help infections spread from one person to another. Dampness also helps mold and dust mites grow, which is not good, for people who have allergies. The good news is that most of this can be avoided if you add a habit to your daily routine.

Wash Your Hands, Often

It sounds basic, but washing your hands properly — before meals, after coming home, after sneezing or coughing, and after touching things like door handles or railings — cuts down your exposure to germs significantly. Keep a hand sanitizer around for times when soap

and water aren't an option.

Don't Ignore Wet Clothes and Damp Spaces

Sitting around in a damp shirt after getting caught in the rain won't give you a cold by itself, but it does wear down your body's defenses over time. Dry off quickly, let your shoes and raincoats air out properly, and try to keep your living space free of lingering moisture, since damp corners are exactly where mould likes to grow.

Eat Well to Keep Your Immunity Up

What you eat matters a lot. Relying on fruits vegetables grains and enough protein helps keep your immune system working the way it should. Warm soups and herbal teas aren't just nice on an evening they really help if your throat feels scratchy.

Watch Out for Allergy Triggers

Seasonal allergies tend to flare up during monsoon — sneezing fits, itchy eyes, a blocked nose, or a dry cough that lingers. Washing curtains and bedding regularly, dusting often, and wearing a mask in dusty areas can help. If you have asthma, stay extra cautious and keep in touch with your doctor during this season.

Don't Skimp on Sleep

Sleep deserves more credit than it usually gets. Skimping on rest weakens your body's ability to fight off infections, so a consistent sleep schedule, paired with light exercise or even a bit of yoga, goes a long way.

Be Mindful of Water Quality

The water quality is something that you should really pay attention to. This is because the flooding that happens during the monsoon season can get into the water supplies and make them dirty. So, it is an idea to drink water that has been filtered or boiled. You should also make sure to rinse your fruits and vegetables well. When it comes to food try to avoid eating at places that do not look clean. The water quality is very important so you should always be careful, with the water you drink. The food you eat.

Know When to See a Doctor

If symptoms like high fever, chest pain, or breathing trouble show up, don't try to tough it out or reach for antibiotics on your own — most colds are viral, and a doctor's advice is the safer route. With a bit of care, the monsoon can stay what it's supposed to be: a season to enjoy, not endure.

Manushi Chhillar recalls emotional toll of retaking medical entrance exam after 2015 paper leak

Actress and former doctor Manushi Chhillar opened up about the emotional and mental challenges of retaking the medical entrance examination after the 2015 paper leak.

The actress in a heartfelt conversation with Soha Ali Khan during the latest episode of the latter's YouTube talk show, All About Her, opened up about the emotional turmoil she had to go through and also explained how tough the entrance exam is.

The episode, featuring Manushi alongside renowned psychiatrist Dr. Anjali Chhabria, explored the immense pressure surrounding India's competitive entrance examinations, academic burnout, anxiety, and emotional resilience.

During the conversation, Soha asked Manushi, "I want to take you back to 2015, if I may. You had prepared for months, secured a good rank, and done well in the exam. What was it like to be told that the exam had been cancelled and that you had to prepare all over again?"

Reflecting on the experience, Manushi said, "There are two aspects to this, one is my personal experience, and the other is understanding the reality that most students in the country face. I had parents who had gone through the same journey years



ago, so I was mentally prepared for the process. But it was still incredibly difficult because I had to sacrifice everything that brought me joy. I was a Kuchipudi dancer, I loved painting, and I had to put all of that aside for a year to focus entirely on my entrance exam." She added, "While it was one of the toughest phases of my life, I realised it wasn't the hardest compared to what many other students were going through. I met students whose parents had borrowed beyond their means to send them to coaching centres. Many had moved cities, lived in cramped PG accommodations, and spent every single day preparing for one exam."

Speaking about the aftermath of the paper leak, the actress shared,

"When you're told that after months of preparation you have to continue for another 45 days, you wonder how much more you have left to give. But I also recognise that I had immense privilege and support."

Manushi credited her parents for helping her maintain balance during the preparation period.

"One thing my parents insisted on was an hour of exercise every day, no matter what. Whether it was basketball or going to the gym, it gave me an outlet, helped me stay connected to people outside the exam bubble, and protected my mental health. Many of my peers didn't have that luxury. Some had already returned to their hometowns after their accommodation leases ended, losing the

environment they needed to continue preparing," she said.

Later in the conversation, Soha asked Manushi whether there came a point when she realised medicine was no longer the path she wanted to pursue. Responding to the question, Manushi said, "It was gradual. It wasn't as though I woke up one day and decided I didn't want to do it anymore. I genuinely loved studying medicine. But by the time we entered college, most of us were completely exhausted."

She further reflected, "Our seniors used to joke that you would only be happy during the first two days and the last two days of medical college. Looking back, I think it was burnout. We believed clearing the entrance exam was the finish line, only to realise there was an even bigger mountain waiting for us."

For the uninitiated, Manushi Chhillar, who was crowned Miss World 2017, holds a medical MBBS degree. Though she pursued medicine after clearing the medical entrance examination, Manushi later ventured into films and made her Bollywood debut opposite Akshay Kumar in Samrat Prithviraj in 2022. She has been a part of movies like The Great Indian Family, Bade Miyan Chote Miyan, and Operation Valentine.

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12 Seventeen for Caesar (4)

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16 Dons or wears (4,2)

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21 Spanish dictator (6)

22 Ship's complement (4)

23 ___ arms : riled ? (2,2)

25 The front part of a ship (3)

28 Sleeper's woe (5)

29 Fool (7)

30 Self-important character (7)

31 Of or pertaining to gold (5)

SOLUTION TO JULY 31

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SOLUTION TO JULY 31

Actress Karisma Kapoor has opened up about her experience of judging Fevicate Idea Labs Season 3. She shared how motherhood has shaped her perspective towards understanding children's creativity and imagination. Speaking about the experience, Karisma said, "What I loved most about Fevicate Idea Labs was that it celebrates something every child naturally has curiosity and imagination. We often associate judging with performance, but here it was about listening to ideas, understanding how young minds think and encouraging them to dream a little bigger."

"Spending time with these children was genuinely inspiring because they look at the world with such honesty and originality. As someone who is a mother myself, I found that especially meaningful, and I hope every child watching feels encouraged to keep creating, asking questions and believing in their ideas."

The four-episode grand finale, set to air over two weekends starting tomorrow on Nickelodeon and JioHotstar, will feature Karisma mentoring and celebrating some of the country's most talented young innovators across two age groups — 5 to 8 years

and 9 to 14 years. Selected from over 3 lakh applicants, the 12 finalists will showcase their unique ideas based on art, well-being and science. Karisma is currently seen judging the reality show "India's Best Dancer Season 5," alongside Geeta Kapur and Terence Lewis. Haarsh Limbachiya serves as the host of the dance reality show.

On the big screen, Karisma Kapoor was last seen in the neo-noir psychological crime thriller series "Brown," where she portrayed Rita Brown, a troubled and determined investigator. The series premiered on ZEE5 on June 5, 2026.

Speaking about her role, Karisma Kapoor had shared that in her over three-decade-long career, she had played several strong female characters. However, she noted that what made Rita Brown unique was that her strength came not just from her courage, but also from her vulnerability and quiet resilience. The actress said in a statement, "Over the years, I've played many strong women, but Rita's strength lies in her fragility and silence as much as in her courage." "Living with this character stayed with me long after the camera stopped rolling, and I think that's what made the journey so personal and transformative for me."



GCCs, tech power office leasing to record high in H1

Six major cities clock 41.6 mn sft absorption, up 7% year-on-year

National Insights

- Bengaluru leads with 32%
- Pune captures 15.4%
- Delhi-NCR contributes 15%
- Hyd leads GCC leasing at 73%
- Technology sector drives 35% demand

NEW DELHI

OFFICE space absorption across India's six major cities reached a record 41.6 million sq. ft in H1 2026, up 7 per cent YoY, a report said.

The report from international real estate advisory firm Savills India said that new supply remained stable at 23.7 million sq. ft. in the first half, easing 5 per cent YoY.

Consequently, India's total Grade A office stock now stands at 872.7 million sq. ft as of Q2 2026. However, the



overall vacancy rate at June-end declined to 13.2 per cent from 14.7 per cent the corresponding period last year.

"India's office absorption is projected to remain close to last year's record levels, supported by steady occupier activity," the report noted.

"The office market experienced a period of moderation in H1 2026 as occupiers adopted a more measured approach amid geopolitical uncertainties and evolving global economic conditions," said Naveen Nandwani, MD, Commercial Advisory and Transactions, Savills India.

"While this slowdown is real and reflects cautious decision-making, it should be viewed as a strategic pause rather than a structural shift. India's office market continues to be underpinned by strong GCC expansion, a deep talent pool and sustained corporate confidence," Nandwani said.

As businesses rethink their real estate strategies, the firm expects demand to become

more selective and quality-driven, paving the way for the next phase of growth, he added.

Bengaluru reinforced its position as India's leading office market, capturing 32 per cent of the total office space absorption in the first half of 2026. Pune followed with a 15.4 per cent share, while Delhi-NCR contributed 15 per cent to the total leasing.

Technology continued to dominate office leasing activity, accounting for 35 per cent of total absorption, while flexible workspaces and BFSI followed with 18 per cent and 15 per cent share, respectively. Large-sized office transactions accounted for 53 per cent of the total leasing volume. GCCs leased 20 million sq. ft., accounting for 48 per cent of India's total office absorption.

While Hyderabad city recorded the highest GCC share, accounting for 73 per cent of total leasing by GCC firms, Bengaluru stood at the second position with 65 per cent share.

Institutional bets on warehousing rise 53%

Investments touch \$49 mn as leasing activity remains resilient

NEW DELHI: INSTITUTIONAL Investments in warehousing and industrial segment of Indian real estate rose 53 per cent in January-June to \$49 million, according to Vestian.

US-based real estate consultant Vestian on Tuesday said in a statement that the leasing of warehousing and industrial space rose 16 per cent annually to 22 million sq ft in the first half of 2026 across seven major cities -- Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Chennai, Kolkata, Pune, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. The consultant stated that the leasing activity remained resilient during the first half of 2026, indicating healthy occupier demand.

The demand was primarily driven by 3PL (third-party logistics), consumer goods & services; and engineering and manufacturing sectors, it added. Leasing activity increased on the back of sustained manufacturing expansion, robust domestic consumption and ongoing infrastructure upgrades.

Institutional investments in warehousing reached \$49 million during the first half of this year, up from \$32 million in the year-ago period. Despite the increase, Vestian pointed out that the sector continued to account for just 1 per cent of the total institutional investments during H1 2026. This reflects a cautious investment environment. Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian, said, "India's warehousing sector is undergoing a structural transformation, evolving beyond



traditional priorities such as supply chain optimisation, operational efficiency, and proximity to demand centres." He noted that sustainability has emerged as a key differentiator, with occupiers increasingly seeking Grade-A green warehouses that align with their ESG commitments and long-term business objectives. "Backed by supportive government policies and sustained infrastructure development, this transition is expected to accelerate further, reinforcing the sector's appeal to both global occupiers and long-term institutional investors," Rao said.

Hyderabad's housing supply rises 2.9% in Q1

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

HYDERABAD'S residential market recorded a mixed performance in the April-June 2026 quarter, with buyer demand declining 6 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) even as new housing supply expanded by 2.9 per cent and the rate index rose a further 2.4 per cent, among the strongest price

gains recorded across major Indian cities this quarter, according to the Magicbricks PropIndex AMJ 2026 report. Buyers remained strongly oriented toward larger housing configurations. 3 BHK homes accounted for 53 per cent of total buyer demand during the quarter, the highest share recorded among major cities in the report, and 57 per cent of available inventory, well above the national average, where 3 BHK homes make up 46 per cent of active supply.

Prasun Kumar, CMO, Magicbricks, said, "Hyderabad continues to distinguish itself as one of India's most mature and future-ready residential markets. While demand saw a temporary moderation this quarter, buyer preferences clearly point to a structural shift toward larger homes and premium living."

Mall space shortage deepens as fresh supply falls 57%

NEW DELHI

FRESH supply of retail spaces in shopping malls declined 57 per cent to 0.9 million sq ft during January-March across seven major cities due to delays in construction activities, according to Anarock. Real estate

consultant Anarock reported that gross leasing of retail spaces in malls stood at about 4.1 million sq ft in the first half of the year as against just 0.9 million sq ft of new completions of retail spaces. The seven major cities are -- Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad,

Chennai and Kolkata. Anuj Kejriwal, CEO -- Retail & CEO -- Europe, Middle East & Africa at Anarock Group, said, "The supply problem is cumulative and escalating - data of India's top seven cities over the past 16 years shows a persistent mismatch between Grade A retail supply and leasing demand."

While new mall completions fluctuated sharply on a year-on-year basis, he noted that the leasing demand has steadily absorbed available Grade A space, pushing vacancy rates lower.

"We now have a chronically supply-constrained

market where retailers' biggest challenge is not drawing shoppers but finding the right spaces to serve them in," Kejriwal said. In 2023, the top seven cities added 5.3 million sq ft of new Grade A retail supply against gross leasing of 6.5 million sq ft.

BIZ BRIEFS

SBI Card partners with Google Pay

SBI Card, a pure-play credit card issuer and Google, jointly announced the launch of 'Google Pay Flex SBI Card' as part of the Flex by Google Pay offering. Salil Pande, MD, SBI Card, said: "At SBI Card, our focus is on creating best-in-class products that make transactions simpler, seamless, and more relevant for our customers. Launch of the Google Pay Flex SBI Card is a significant step in that direction."

SSI Mantra logs milestone

SSI Innovations International has conducted a robotic telesurgery between Hospital Internacional de Colombia and Mohak Bariatrics and Robotics, Indore, spanning an approximate 22,000 km fibre network distance. The robotic sleeve gastrectomy was remotely performed from Colombia by Dr Sudhir Srivastava, Founder, Chairman and CEO of SSI Innovations International, along with Dr Victor Raúl Castillo Mantilla and Dr Jonathan Caceres Prada.

Dell expands its portfolio

Dell Technologies has expanded its premium consumer portfolio in India, with the launch of new models across XPS, Dell and Alienware, lineup. The new launches include, ultra-light XPS 13, AI-powered Dell 145 and 16S laptops, and upgraded Alienware 15 gaming laptop. The range targets students, professionals, creators, and gamers, combining AI capabilities, premium design, strong performance, sustainability, and expanded nationwide availability with attractive pricing and offers.

Modi, UK PM Burnham pledge to deepen strategic partnership

LEADERS AGREE TO EXPAND COOPERATION ACROSS TECHNOLOGY, DEFENCE AND CLEAN ENERGY WHILE LEVERAGING THE INDIA-UK TRADE PACT

NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Andy Burnham on Friday vowed to take the India-UK comprehensive strategic partnership to "new heights" and fully harness the trade and investment opportunities presented by the recently-operationalised bilateral trade deal. Modi and Burnham discussed key aspects of the two-way ties during a phone conversation. In a social media post, Modi said he congratulated Burnham on assuming the charge of the top office and conveyed his best wishes for a successful tenure. "We



agreed to work together across sectors such as technology, innovation, defence, security, clean energy, education and people-to-people ties and take the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to new heights," he said. "We will also collaborate closely to fully harness

the trade and investment opportunities presented by the recently operationalized India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, for the shared prosperity and well-being of both our people," Modi said. A British readout said Burnham began the conversation

by reflecting on the strength of the UK-India partnership and the significant impact it has had on local communities across the UK. "The prime minister set out his ambitions to further enhance the UK-India relationship, including through the UK-India Vision 2035 framework and strong people-to-people links," it said.

Burnham praised the contribution Indian communities in the UK make to the fabric of UK society, with Modi noting the links between the two leaders' own home cities of Manchester and Ahmedabad, in Gujarat, which he called the "Manchester of India", it said.

RBI data shows bank credit to industry surged 19.2% in June

MUMBAI

BANK credit to industry recorded a robust growth of 19.2 per cent in June compared to 6.3 per cent in the year-ago period as large companies as well as MSMEs displayed broad-based expansion, according to RBI data released on Friday.

On a year-on-year basis, non-food bank credit grew by 18.3 per cent as on the fortnight ended June 30, 2026, compared to 9.3 per cent during the corresponding fortnight of the previous year (June 27, 2025), the central bank said.

It has released data on sectoral deployment of bank credit for June 2026, collected from 41 select scheduled commercial banks which together account for about 95 per cent of the total non-food credit. Advances to agricultural and allied activities registered a year-on-year growth of 16.8 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent in the corresponding fortnight of the previous year. "Credit to industry recorded a robust y-o-y growth of 19.2 per cent (6.3 per cent in the corresponding fortnight of last year)," RBI said. All sub-sectors -- 'Micro and Small', 'Medium' and 'Large industries' displayed a broad-based expansion.

Among major industries, credit to infrastructure, all engineering, food processing, textiles, construction, basic metal and metal products, petroleum, 'coal products and nuclear fuels' and 'chemical and chemical



products' marked buoyant year-on-year (y-o-y) growth. However, 'rubber, plastic and their products' and 'wood and wood products' segments witnessed marginally subdued growth. According to the data, loans to the services sector registered a growth rate of 21.4 per cent y-o-y (8.8 per cent in the corresponding fortnight of the previous year), supported by accelerated growth in segments such as non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), commercial real estate, and trade.

Also, credit to the personal loans segment recorded a growth of 15.8 per cent, as compared with 11.7 per cent a year ago. While segments such as vehicle loans and housing grew steadily in double digits, credit card outstanding registered a decelerated growth, the RBI said.

Digit Life enters retirement segment

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

Go Digit Life Insurance Limited (Digit Life Insurance), a new-age life insurance company, announced its entry into the retirement segment, launching two variants of Digit Life Pension Plan, a general annuity plan.

The plan will give customers a choice between two distinct retirement income solutions. Digit Sukoon will offer 100 per cent guaranteed annuity, while Digit Boss will combine guaranteed annuity with a variable annuity portion linked to the Nifty 50 Index.

Designed to deliver income for life, the plan is available for both individual

and group customers and will also be available on its app and website.

Sabyasachi Sarkar, MD, Digit Life Insurance, said: "Retirement planning needs are changing rapidly, and customers today are looking not just for lifelong income, but for solutions that reflect their own financial priorities: certainty for some, and a measured participation in market-linked upside for others. "With Digit Life Pension Plan, we are bringing both these needs together in one product architecture, while giving customers the flexibility to tailor payouts and retirement income structures in a way that makes the most sense to their individual needs."

Star Health's Q1 profit rises 25%

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

STAR Health and Allied Insurance Company posted a net profit of Rs550 crore for the quarter ended June 2026 (Q1-FY27), a 25 per cent increase YoY (Year-Over-Year). Underwriting profit for Q1-FY27 was Rs111 crore against Rs16 crore for a year ago. The company attributed it to healthy premium growth and operating efficiencies.

The company recorded Gross Written Premium (GWP) of Rs 4,287 crore during Q1 FY27, representing a growth of 19 per cent YoY. On the same basis, fresh retail health GWP for the quarter stood at Rs 730 crore, a 37 per cent YoY increase.

Maruti Suzuki Q1 profit slips 9.1% despite record sales

NEW DELHI

THE country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Friday reported a 9.11 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 3,446.9 crore in the first quarter ended June 2026, hit by high material costs, despite posting record quarterly vehicle sales.

The auto major, which had posted a net profit of Rs 3,792.4 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal, said its board also approved four CBG (compressed biogas) projects in the first phase with a budget of Rs 561 crore.

Total revenue from operations was up 35.9 per cent at Rs 52,469.8 crore in the first quarter as against Rs 38,605.2 crore in the same period of 2025-26 fiscal, Maruti Suzuki



India said in a regulatory filing.

Total expenses in the quarter under review were higher at Rs 50,000.3 crore as compared to Rs 35,585.4 crore in the year-ago period, the company said. Cost of materials consumed in the first quarter shot up to Rs 32,013.2 crore from Rs 21,936.8 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, it added.

"Material costs had started to increase in the quarter and were seriously aggravated during the war..." the company said, adding that it had an impact on its bottomline.

Govt to question Meta's global team over algorithmic bias

NEW DELHI: The government will question Meta's global team - summoned after the social media company briefly restricted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post - on issues relating to algorithmic bias, the platform's algorithmic processes and their role in public order, sources said on Friday.

The questioning next week comes against the backdrop of the government's summons to Meta's top executives after Prime Minister Modi's recent Facebook post addressing India's youth and promising stringent action against paper leaks was briefly restricted on the platform. While the US-headquartered social media giant had attributed the incident to a technical glitch and apologised, the Ministry of



Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had found the explanation "inadequate". The company had said that the content was removed "in error" and was restored on the platform. Government sources on Friday pointed out that the matter is not just about technical aspects, but about "national security and public order".

Sources said that Meta's global team - expected in Delhi sometime in the middle of next week - will be "categorically" asked to clarify on issues around algorithmic bias, how their algorithm operates, and the company's role in public order.



COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2026



Seema bags discus bronze; Neeraj, Rohit, Yashvir in javelin final

GLASGOW

WEIGHTLIFTER Lovepreet Singh's Commonwealth Games record-breaking silver medal headlined an eventful day for India, while discus thrower Seema Kaliramna bagged a bronze medal and Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, along with two compatriots, advanced to the men's javelin throw final. Lovepreet produced the performance of his career, setting a Games record of 176kg in snatch before finishing with a total of 388kg (176kg+212kg), just one kilogram behind New Zealand's David Andrew Liti (389kg).

The Punjab lifter carried a commanding 10kg lead into the clean and jerk but Liti overturned the deficit with a Games record lift of 223kg in his final attempt after Lovepreet failed to complete a courageous 217kg lift that

would have secured gold.

"I thought I would win gold after snatch but it was up to God. A little disappointed that I couldn't lift in my final attempt in clean and jerk. I have lifted more in training," said Lovepreet.

The silver improved Lovepreet's bronze winning effort from the previous Games in Birmingham and completed India's weightlifting campaign with eight medals -- one gold, six silver and one bronze.

India added another athletics medal through Seema Kaliramna, who committed three successive fouls but clinched bronze in the women's discus throw with a

best effort of 58.65m.

The 27-year-old, who made a successful return to competition after motherhood last year and is also pursuing a PhD, produced her medal-winning throw in the third round before fouling her final three attempts.

Fellow Indian Nidhi Rani finished fourth with a best effort of 55.67m. Jamaica's Samantha Hall won gold with a Games-leading throw of 61.66m, while Canada's Julia Tunks claimed silver with 60.67m.

Neeraj Chopra, Rohit Yadav and Yashvir Singh all progressed to men's javelin throw final despite difficult, gusty conditions that prevented any athlete from breaching the automatic qualifying mark of 84m. Chopra finished fifth with 79.61m, while Rohit (78.37m) and Yashvir (78.36m) placed ninth and 10th respectively as all three Indians advanced. "The conditions were not the best for javelin throwers. It was not only cold but also windy... nobody was able to decode the wind," Chopra said after qualification.



Indian boxers dominate

Jadumani, Arundhati, Jaismine, Preeti, Ankush storm into finals

Glasgow: Arundhati Choudhary stunned defending champion Rosie Eccles of Wales in a split decision in women's 70kg class, while world champion Jaismine Lamboria (women's 57kg), Preeti Pawar (women's 54kg), Ankush Panghal (men's 80kg) and Jadumani Singh (men's 55kg) also sailed into the Commonwealth Games final as Indian boxers produced a dominant display here on Friday.

Arundhati beat her Wales opponent 4-0 in a messy and ill-tempered women's 70kg category semifinal as the Indian held on to her good show in the first two rounds, forcing Rosie to receive a standing count during that time.

Jaismine was so dominant in her 57kg semifinal bout that she won in a Referee



Ankush Panghal and Preeti Pawar

Stops Contest (RSC) decision after the Lesotho boxer received her third standing count in the closing seconds of the second round.

Jadumani Singh also entered the men's 55kg final after beating P P M Haoseb of Namibia in a unanimous 5-0 decision in the semifinals. Meanwhile, Preeti out-punched Zambia's Catherine Mwape 5-0 while Ankush Brushed aside Joshua Ofori

by a similar margin.

The 22-year-old from Bhiwani, Preeti, who is an Asian Games bronze medalist, powered to a 5-0 win to set up a clash with Canada's Scarlett Delgado.

Ankush was equally dominant against Ofori, who resorted to repeated clinching after being comprehensively outboxed in the opening two rounds sealed a one-sided 5-0 verdict.

Triple jump: Chithravel, Prabhu pounce into final

GLASGOW

THERE was better news in the men's triple jump as national record holders Chithravel (16.41m) and Prabhu (16.26m) advanced to Saturday's final after finishing second and third in qualification. Tejaswin Shankar also remained in medal contention in the men's decathlon, ending the opening day in second place with 4,339 points after five events, just 14 points behind Canada's Damian Warner (4,353).

The Indian's standout per-



formance came in his pet high jump event, where he cleared 2.15m for 944 points, while his 7.82m effort in long jump earned him 1,015 points.

However, Animesh Kujur missed the men's 200m final after clocking 20.65 seconds to finish sixth in his semifinal, while Vishal TK also bowed out after placing sixth in his 400m semifinal with a time of 46.33 seconds.

Indian pair stays unbeaten in lawn bowls

The Indian men's pair of Navneet Singh and Dinesh Kumar registered their third successive win, edging Botswana in a tie-break after the teams split the opening two sets.

The Indians dominated the first set 9-2 before Botswana levelled the contest by winning the second set 4-3.

Navneet and Dinesh, however, held their nerve in the tie-break to preserve their unbeaten record and strengthen their hopes of reaching the knockout stage.

Unnati, Tanvi enter semis of Taipei Open

TAIPEI: India's Unnati Hooda and Tanvi Sharma won their respective women's singles matches to enter the semifinals of the Taipei Open badminton tournament here on Friday.

Kiran George, however, lost his men's singles quarterfinal match against Japan's fourth seeded Yudai Okimoto 21-12 21-10 in 33 minutes. Hooda clinched a straight-game 23-21 21-16 victory over compatriot Devika Sihag to reach the last four stage, while Tanvi got the better of Thailand's Supanida Katethong 21-15 18-21 21-14 in a gruelling 54-minute quarterfinal clash.

Earlier in

the day, the all-Indian quarterfinal contest between Hooda and Sihag started with a fiercely contested first game, where the former held her nerve to win it 23-21. Hooda was off to a great start, racing to an 11-3 lead before Sihag staged a spirited comeback to level the scores at 21-21. However, Hooda held her composure in the closing stages, winning the next two points to clinch the opening game. In the second game, the third seeded Hooda maintained her momentum and capitalised on her leads to wrap up the match 21-16 against eighth seed Sihag in 42 minutes.

The 18-year-old Hooda will next face the winner of the quarterfinal between Chinese Taipei's Chiu Pin-chian and Vietnam's Nguyen Thuy Linh.

Bumrah to play in Lanka Test series

NEW DELHI: India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been cleared to play next month's two-Test series against Sri Lanka by the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

Bumrah was picked subject to fitness as he had suffered an impact injury during the recent ODI series against England. He had to sit out of the third ODI at Lord's due to the injury.

"Jasprit Bumrah has recovered from his impact injury. He has cleared the fitness Tests mandated by the COE. Hopefully he will be available for both games as he is integral to the team's plans," a senior BCCI official told PTI on con-



ditions of anonymity.

The two-Test series against the islanders will get underway on August 15 in Galle, and the second match will be played in Colombo from August 23.

India need to win seven of their remaining nine Tests of this World Test Championship cycle in order to remain in contention for a summit clash berth.

'Delhi protesters identified via fingerprints on stones'

Will suggest CM Fadnavis to recommend Patil's name for the Nobel Prize in the field of scientific research: Raut; Uddhav speaks to Abhijeet Dipke, assures him of Opposition's backing

MUMBAI

MAHARASHTRA Bharatiya Janata Party minister Chandrakant Patil has claimed the Delhi Police have collected the fingerprints of protesters from even the smallest stones allegedly used during the CJP agitation in the national capital, which will be linked to the Aadhaar numbers for their identification.

The remark made by the Higher and Technical Education Minister at a Press conference in western Maharashtra's Kolhapur, drew



mocking comments from Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, who said he would suggest Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to recommend Patil's name for the Nobel Prize in the field of scientific research.

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) led a month-long protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi over examination pa-

per leaks. The demonstration escalated into clashes, barricade breaches, and stone-pelting.

The most intense violence broke out on July 20, when thousands of protesters attempted a 'Sansad Chalo' march to Parliament, leading to clashes in which demonstrators as well as security personnel were injured.

Shiv Sena-UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday spoke with Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke over phone, and assured him of the Opposition's support.

Thackeray also asked Abhijeet's mother about his marriage plans. A video of the conversation was shared on social media.

Sena (UBT) leader Chandrakant Khaire visited Dipke's residence here, and facilitated a conversation between him and Thackeray, a former Maharashtra Chief Minister, over a video call.

"I was there for an hour at his place. Uddhav Thackeray assured that the entire Opposition stands unitedly with Abhijeet Dipke," Khaire told reporters.

The CJP leader told Thackeray that he will keep fighting for students till their demands are fulfilled.

Major dead, 2 Lieutenants injured as SUV hits camel

JAISALMER: An Army officer of Major rank was killed and two Lieutenant-rank officers were injured after their private SUV collided with a camel and overturned near the Jaisalmer Military Station late Thursday night.

The deceased has been identified as 30-year-old Major Hamza Arif, a resident of Indore, Madhya Pradesh. According to officials, the officer had been married only a month ago.

The accident occurred approximately 6 km from the district headquarters when a camel suddenly appeared in front of the officers' private SUV as they were returning to the military station from Jaisalmer city. The impact caused the vehicle to overturn five times and drag for nearly 100 meters before crashing near the military boundary wall. The camel also died on the spot.



Upon receiving news of the crash, Army personnel and officers rushed to the scene to rescue the three trapped officers from the mangled remains of the vehicle. They were rushed to the military station, where Major Hamza Arif succumbed to his injuries during treatment. The two other officers, identified as Lieutenant Abhinav Rathore and Lieutenant Ayushman Gussain, sustained injuries and are currently undergoing treatment at the Military Hospital.

According to ASI Jagdish Charan of the Sadar Police Station, the police received a late-night report that a vehicle had overturned after colliding with a camel on the road past the War Museum. Upon reaching the site, they found a dead camel by the roadside, which was subsequently moved. A private SUV was also found severely damaged near the military boundary wall.

Kerala govt to withdraw cases against NEET protestors

KOCHI: The Kerala government has decided to withdraw all cases registered in connection with protests held across the state in support of the NEET agitation in Delhi, Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala said on Friday. Speaking to reporters in Thiruvananthapuram, Chennithala said the decision was taken following requests received from Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister V D Satheesan. He said several youth organisations and political parties had organised demonstrations across Kerala expressing solidarity with the protests over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination. "Several cases were registered in connection with those protests. We received many requests seeking withdrawal of these cases. The chief minister forwarded all those representations to me, and I have directed the DGP not to proceed further with any of these cases," Chennithala said.

Suwendu alleges Rs 15K cr revenue leak under Mamata

BIRBHUM

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Friday alleged an around Rs 15,000 crore revenue leak in Birbhum district over the past 15 years, and said it would not have been possible without the support of the previous dispensation.

Multiple government departments were either complicit or remained silent under directions from the "highest level", he alleged during a press conference.

His allegations came against the backdrop of police recovering Rs 28.5 crore in cash and 15 kg of gold from absconding stone trad-



er Tullu Mondal's residence in West Bengal's Birbhum as part of a wider crackdown on alleged illegal mining and revenue leakages in the district.

Police suspect a substantial portion of the cash rep-

resented revenue allegedly siphoned off. The district has for long been under the scanner over allegations of illegal quarrying and organised crime linked to stone trade.

Targeting his predecessor Mamata Banerjee, Adhikari said, "An organised racket siphoning off revenue for years... cannot function without the concurrence of the head of the institution."

"Without the support of former chief minister Mamata Banerjee, it is impossible for such a large racket to have operated for so long. Institutional corruption happens only when the head of the institution encourages corruption."

Fadnavis calls for evacuation of dangerous buildings

NEW DELHI

MAHARASHTRA Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said authorities should evacuate "dangerous" buildings with greater persuasion and, if necessary, use force to save lives, following the collapse of a dilapidated structure in Bhiwandi that killed nine.

Speaking to reporters, Fadnavis said the Bhiwandi building had been classified as a C1 structure, which means it was unsafe for habitation.

"It is very unfortunate. It was a C1-category building. The local municipal commissioner informed me that around 25 people had already been evacuated. Despite this, the contractor continued the repair work, after



which the incident occurred," he said. Fadnavis expressed condolences

to the families of those who lost their lives and said the state government

would provide financial assistance to the next of kin of the deceased.

He said he had directed the municipal commissioner to initiate legal action against the contractor.

Explaining the classification, the chief minister said a C1-category building is considered dangerous and unfit for occupation.

"Life is important. Saving lives is equally important. People living in C1-category buildings should be evacuated with greater persuasion and insistence.

If required, some force can also be used to evacuate them from such dilapidated structures. However, there are some restrictions as per the court orders. Still, I feel saving life is also important," he said.

ASR Airport launch

Visakhapatnam goes into celebration mode!

- City organises a number of activities highlighting the significance of the new airport
- The Dhimsa dance presentation is expected to gain an entry into the Guinness World Records for the largest participation
- Along with other regional attractions, efforts are underway to promote the globally-popular Araku coffee

RANI DEVALLA
VISAKHAPATNAM

AS the countdown for the inauguration of Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport commences, Visakhapatnam breaks into a celebration mode.

For the past few weeks, the new airport in Bhogapuram has been hogging the lime-light for apparent reasons.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi arriving to inaugurate the Greenfield airport on August 1 (Saturday), an army of ministers, public representatives and Collectors from North Andhra



A full-dress rehearsal of the Dhimsa dance organised in Bhogapuram

districts got on their toes to pull out all stops to ensure smooth execution of the inaugural.

Emphasising the significance of the Greenfield airport and its economic impact on the region cultural programmes, a beach walk and a flash mob under the theme 'Proudly Vizag,' and a 5-K run were featured in Visakhapatnam.

In addition, an impressive drone show highlighting the airport was featured at the Beach Road.

Customised vehicles with digital screens highlighting Bhogapuram Airport were seen at various places in the city. Among other features, north Andhra's tradition and culture are set to take centre stage during the air-

port inauguration. While 200 Classical dancers will welcome Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the terminal, as many as 13,000 tribal women will perform the mammoth Dhimsa at the venue.

Along with the Dhimsa dance presentation, which is expected to gain an entry into the Guinness World Records for the largest participation, authorities concerned are also focusing on promoting regional attractions, including the globally-popular Araku coffee.

Extensive transport arrangements are in place to mobilise people for the 'public sabha' that will follow the inaugural ceremony. Parking space has been arranged to station around 1,400

buses. Food arrangements have been made for close to 73,000 people.

Arrangements related to drinking water, traffic management and parking lots have been wrapped up.

With Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu keen on highlighting North Andhra tradition, a wide awareness campaign has been initiated with the theme focusing on 'wings to the dreams of North Andhra'.

Meanwhile, schools have been declared holiday both in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram on August 1.

On the eve of the Prime Minister's visit to Bhogapuram for the airport launch, Visakhapatnam exuded a festive charm.

Bhogapuram opens gateway to north Andhra's economic revolution

VARAPRASADA RAO K

AMARAVATI: The inauguration of the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday marks a major milestone in Andhra Pradesh's infrastructure development and is expected to strengthen North Andhra's position as an emerging industrial, technology and logistics hub.

The new airport is expected to provide direct international connectivity to the region, reducing dependence on airports in Hyderabad, Chennai and Delhi for overseas travel and cargo movement.

The improved connectivity is likely to lower logistics costs, facilitate exports and enhance passenger convenience, supporting the region's growing industrial base.

The airport comes at a time when north Andhra is witnessing significant investments across multiple sectors.

Besides passenger services, the airport has been equipped with a modern

• Beyond aviation, the project unlocks a new economic geography for North Andhra

• From exports and AI to tourism, semiconductors, manufacturing and logistics, the region prepares for liftoff

• Bhogapuram ends North Andhra's dependence on Hyderabad, Chennai and Delhi for global connectivity

terminal featuring temperature-controlled cold-chain facilities with an annual handling capacity of about 25,000 metric tonnes. This is expected to benefit exporters of pharmaceuticals, marine products, processed foods, textiles and garments by enabling faster access to international markets.

The project also includes plans for an integrated aviation ecosystem comprising an aviation hub, Aviation Edu-City, aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility, logistics parks, Aerocity development and commercial infrastructure.

These projects are expected to attract further investments and create substantial employment opportunities in the region.

The airport will complement other major infrastructure initiatives underway in North Andhra, including the Mulapeta Port, the proposed Visakhapatnam-Rajahmundry High-Speed Rail Corridor, the Visakhapatnam Seafront Corridor and the Vizag Bay City project, strengthening the region's role as a key economic corridor.

The improved connectivity is also expected to boost tourism by providing easier access to destinations such as Araku Valley, Lambasingi, Borra Caves, Kailasagiri, Visakhapatnam's beaches and Buddhist heritage sites.

The state government has highlighted that the airport terminal reflects Andhra Pradesh's cultural heritage through displays of Etikoppaka handicrafts, leather puppetry and the Bobbili Veena. Thousands of tribal artists are scheduled to perform the traditional Dhimsa dance to welcome the Prime Minister during the inauguration ceremony.

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DGP reviews security for PM's visit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIZIANAGARAM

DIRECTOR general of police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta on Friday reviewed the security and bandobast arrangements for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bhogapuram on August 1, Saturday, where he will dedicate the newly constructed Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport to the nation.

The DGP inspected the Integrated Command and Control Centre, the airport terminal building, the public



DGP Harish Kumar Gupta inspecting security arrangements at Bhogapuram airport on Friday as

meeting venue, and the area designated for the traditional Dhimsa dance performance.

During the inspection, EAGLE IG Ake Ravi Krishna informed the DGP that

nearly 3,000 CCTV cameras had been installed across strategic locations and integrated with the Command and Control Centre to monitor crowd movement, traffic, parking areas and the public meeting venue in real time.

District SP A R Damodar briefed the DGP on the security arrangements made by the district police. The DGP directed senior officers to ensure close coordination with field personnel for effective security, traffic management and crowd control. He instructed officials to allow entry to the venue

only after thorough security checks and to ensure the safe dispersal of the public after the event.

The DGP also directed officials to install large sign boards along the National Highway leading to the airport to guide motorists to designated parking areas.

Additional DGP (law & order) N Madhusudan Reddy, Greyhounds and OCTOPUS IG Srikanth, Visakhapatnam range IG Gopinath Jetty, SP A R Damodar and other senior police officers accompanied the DGP during the inspection.

State govt dissolves governing bodies of 19 universities

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE state government has initiated a major overhaul of university administration by dissolving the governing bodies of 19 state universities and removing the nominated members appointed during the previous YSRCP government's tenure.

Official orders issued on Friday said the decision applies to members appointed under the nominated category. However, the government

• Nominated members appointed during previous regime removed

clarified that there will be no change in the status of ex-officio members, who will continue in their positions.

The move marks the beginning of a broader restructuring of governance in higher education institutions across the State. As part of the exercise, the government has

already constituted a new governing body for Andhra University (AU), with similar reconstitution expected for the remaining universities in the coming weeks.

Officials said the restructuring is aimed at reorganising the administrative framework of universities through the appointment of new governing bodies in accordance with the government's policy. The process of constituting fresh governing bodies for other state universities is now underway.

Yeleru lifeline secured amid drought: Nimmala

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KAKINADA

DESPITE the looming impact of Super El Nino and severe drought conditions, the government is ensuring irrigation water to the Yeleru ayacut, water resources minister Nimmala Ramanaidu said on Friday.

During his tour in Kakinada district, the minister inspected water levels in canals under the Yeleru ayacut. Jaggampeta MLA Jyothula Nehru and Prathipadu MLA Varupula Satya Prabha accompanied him.

Ramanaidu directed irrigation officials to immediately utilise operation and maintenance funds for de-

silting and urgent repairs to the Yeleru Project Main Canal. He said the reservoir was originally designed to depend on local water sources, but prevailing drought conditions have made irrigation through Yeleru waters alone impossible.

To address the situation, the government will divert Godavari waters into the Yeleru reservoir through the Pushkara Lift Irrigation Scheme and the left canal. He said Yeleru would not have received even a drop of water without the Pushkara scheme and credited its conception to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

The minister said Chief Minister Chandrababu

Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan had directed officials to give special attention to farmers in the Yeleru and Pithapuram Branch Canal ayacuts. He urged farmers to cultivate less water-intensive crops, adopt water conservation measures, prioritise drinking water and insure their crops.

Later, the minister inspected bridge construction works at NH crossings near Bendapudi in Tondangi mandal and Arempudi in Sankhavarum mandal under Tuni constituency.

Ramanaidu said the government is accelerating Polavaram Left Canal works to fulfil the long-pending dream of north Andhra.

YSRCP seeks CBI probe into DSC-2025, justice for youth

Submits representations to district collectors across state

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TADEPALLI

THE YSRCP on Friday submitted representations to district collectors, joint collectors and DROs across the state, demanding a CBI probe into the alleged irregularities in DSC-2025 teacher recruitment and raising several issues concerning students and unemployed youth.

The statewide programme was held on the call of YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The party demanded that education minister Nara Lokesh resign, taking moral responsibility for the alleged

irregularities in the recruitment process. It also sought a comprehensive CBI investigation into all allegations, including the reported question paper leak, changes in rules and government orders, and alleged irregularities in sports quota appointments. Party leaders questioned why the government was unwilling to order a CBI inquiry if it believed the recruitment process had been fair and transparent.

The representations also urged the government to immediately clear the pending Vidya Deevana, Vasathi Deevana and fee reimburse-

ment dues. The party further demanded implementation of the election promise of providing an unemployment allowance of Rs. 3,000 per month to every eligible unemployed youth.

YSRCP leaders submitted representations in all districts of the State, including Srikakulam, Parvathipuram Manyam, Kakinada, Dr B R Ambedkar Konaseema, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru, Krishna, NTR, Guntur, Palnadu, Prakasam, SPSR Nellore, YSR Kadapa, Annamayya, Anantapur, Tirupati and Chittoor.

Senior leaders, former



YSRCP leaders submitting a memorandum to the collector on alleged DSC scam in Vijayawada on Friday

ministers, MLAs, MLCs, former MPs, district presidents and constituency coordinators participated in the programme.

In Anantapur, party leaders

also handed over a pen drive containing a video that they claimed was related to alleged irregularities in the DSC merit list and sports quota appointments.

Godavari flood levels rise; alert in six districts

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

STATE Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) has sounded an alert as flood levels in the Godavari River continue to rise following heavy rainfall in the upstream catchment areas. Officials warned that the river is likely to reach the first danger warning level by Friday night and the second danger warning level by Saturday.

APSDMA managing director Prakhar Jain said the administrative machinery in East Godavari, Konaseema, Kakinada, West Godavari, Eluru and the Polavaram region has been placed on high alert. A total of three NDRF and three SDRF

• Second danger warning likely on Saturday as upstream inflows continue to increase

• Residents of low-lying and Lanka villages advised to move to safer locations

teams have been stationed at Amalapuram, Rajamahendravaram, Chinturu, VR Puram and Jangaredygudem for emergency response.

As of 7 pm on Friday, the Godavari water level stood at 49.8 feet at Bhadrachalam, 16.35 metres at Kuna-



Godavari river at Rajamahendravaram on Friday (Photo M Krishna)

varam and 10.26 metres at Polavaram, while inflow and outflow at the Dowleswaram Cotton Barrage were recorded at 5.39 lakh cusecs.

With flood levels expected to rise further, Prakhar Jain directed officials to evacuate residents of low-lying areas and Lanka (river island)

villages to safer locations and rehabilitation centres as a precautionary measure. "The situation is being monitored round the clock. People should avoid crossing flooded roads, streams, culverts and causeways, and stay away from the river for bathing, swimming or fishing," he said.

The DMA also forecast light to moderate rainfall in isolated parts of Manyam, Alluri, Polavaram, Anakapalli, Kakinada, Konaseema, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru and Tirupati districts on Saturday.

The public has been advised to remain vigilant and contact the emergency helplines 112, 1070, or 1800-425-0101 for assistance if required.

HC orders removal of barricades at Venkatayapalem toll exit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

JUSTICE Ravi Cheemalapati of the Andhra Pradesh High Court has directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the toll management to remove barricades erected at the exit point connecting the Vijayawada West Bypass National Highway to the Seed Access Road near the Venkatayapalem toll plaza, providing relief to commuters, including advocates, court staff and local residents.

The issue arose after the toll operator installed barricades at the exit leading to the Seed Access Road, preventing vehicles from directly accessing it. Commuters alleged that they were being forced to pass through the toll plaza, make a U-turn on the highway and cross the toll gate again before reaching the service road. When motorists questioned the arrangement, police personnel deployed at the site allegedly diverted vehicles through the toll plaza. Aggrieved by the restrictions, advocate Sriram Jaswanth of

• Directs NHAI and toll management to remove barricades blocking access from Vijayawada West Bypass to the Seed Access Road

• Court found a prima facie case against the restrictions, rejecting the proposal to allow access only during specified time slots

Gollapudi filed a writ petition before the High Court. Senior counsel Y V Raviprasad, appearing for the petitioner and instructed by Mangena Sri Ramarao, argued that the Venkatayapalem toll plaza had been established only about 17 km from the Kaza toll plaza, contrary to Rule 8 of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008, which generally prescribes a minimum distance of 60 kilometres between toll plazas. He further contended that Venkatayapalem falls within the notified capital region and that erecting a toll plaza in such an area was legally questionable.



‘Declassified: Operation Sindoor’ to reveal the untold story behind India’s counter-terror mission

INDIA'S high-profile military operation, code-named Sindoor, will see its declassified version when the documentary series Declassified: Operation Sindoor uncovers the events around it in detail. The project's teaser trailer was unveiled earlier this week (August 5th), with the series scheduled to air on August 15th, on Discovery and discovery+.

Declassified: Operation

Sindoor follows the events leading up to, during, and following the operation, from the first preparations to its tactical and military implications. The documentary series will provide first-hand insight from defence officials, analysts, soldiers, and journalists.

It was a dawn attack on nine terrorist camps in Pakistan and Pakistan Administered Jammu and Kashmir conducted under Opera-

tion Sindoor. The Ministry of Defence confirmed that the attack targeted terror camps and that it was a well-planned surgical strike. The operation came in response to the Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 25 Indian citizens and one Nepalese national, with India claiming to have retaliated due to Pakistan's unwillingness to act against the perpetrators. Moreover, according to defence ministry officials,

the operation sent out a strong message to Pakistan that India would respond to cross-border terrorism despite the tension between the two nations, as both countries possess nuclear weapons. The series will feature several prominent military leaders, including General Anil Chauhan, Lt. Gen. Rajiv Ghai, Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, General Upendra Dwivedi, Lt. Gen. Pratik Sharma, Air

Chief Marshal A. P. Singh, and others.

"The declassified series will present an inside view into one of India's most powerful military operations, giving viewers unparalleled access to the people who made it happen," said Sai Abishek, Head of Factual Entertainment, Lifestyle, and Kids – South Asia, Warner Bros. Discovery. "Declassified: Operation Sindoor marks the debut of



our new franchise, Declassified, which will delve deeper into some of the most significant moments in history, revealing never-before-told

insights and first-hand perspectives only available to us."

Declassified: Operation Sindoor will go further than

simply recounting history, offering additional crucial information about the Sindoor operation for those interested in the subject.

‘I’m Game’ trailer: Dulquer Salmaan steps into the high-stakes world of gambling

THE I'm game trailer has been out today, introducing the audiences to a stylish crime thriller centered around gambling and featuring Dulquer Salmaan in the lead role. The film is directed by NahasHidayath, the man behind the blockbuster RDX, which sees its dubbed version on the way as well. Although primarily a Malayalam movie, I'm Game will be released across India in various dubbed languages.

The trailer sees Dulquer Salmaan playing a gutsy gambler who seems to control the flow of both high-rolling markets as well as underground matches. The I'm Game trailer showcases the protagonist's luxurious lifestyle, but also delves into his psyche, where the psychiatrist (played by KayaduLo-



har) seems to have a differing opinion about the man's thoughts.

As the 90-second promo-scope unravels, it becomes clear that I'm Game is primarily set in places associated with gambling activities – be it inside a high-class casino, a rowdy cricket stadium, or a corporate office space. Moreover, it seems

that the game and money are at the center of virtually everything that happens in the film. NahasHidayath appears to have taken a different route this time around as compared to the highly successful RDX. While the director managed to pull off an excellent action entertainer with the former project, I'm Game sees him attempting to

make a commercial film that touches upon a rather controversial topic.

The I'm Game trailer may not indicate a substantial emotional quotient, but the very fact that such a film is being made in Malayalam suggests that the movie possesses a certain degree of appeal. The film has impressive cast that includes names like Mysskin, Antony Varghese, Samyuktha Viswanathan, Vinay Forrt, and Kathir apart from the lead pair of Dulquer Salmaan and KayaduLohar. Jimshi Khalid has been handling the camera, while the music has been composed by Jakes Bejoy. Notably, the film is set to release during the Onam holiday, which makes it even more anticipated as one of the biggest Malayalam movies of the year.

Mammootty wraps shooting for Dhanush's ‘OM’

THE makers of Dhanush's upcoming project OM have announced another good news as the team confirmed that Malayalam superstar Mammootty has completed his part of the shoot for the much-anticipated action entertainer directed by Rajkumar Periasamy.

MammoottyKampany shared a video on social media welcoming the veteran actor back in Kochi after wrapping up his portions for the film. Earlier, director Rajkumar Periasamy had stated that in the film, Mammootty has played a character named Karthikeyan, which has a great impact on the story. The team has been busy with the shoots as the film has been progressing at a rapid pace after wrapping up the crucial portions in Malaysia. During the trip, the cast and crew celebrated the actor's National Award along with National Award-



winning singer Dhanush, director Rajkumar Periasamy, and editor Kalaivanan on the sets of the film.

As the makers had announced that the film will hit the theatres on October 16, as per the latest reports, the release date might get postponed. Though the report stated that an official confirmation might be out any day

now, neither the makers nor the team have confirmed the report yet.

Besides, the film also stars Bollywood legend Naseeruddin Shah apart from the National Award-winning Dhanush in the lead. With the title 'OM: Chapter 1', it is anticipated that the makers will roll out the subsequent parts of the film too which

will take the story forward.

The first look of the film that went viral on social media introduced Dhanush as a woodcutter involved in the illegal trade of red sanders being chased by the police. The action-filled promos promise to deliver a mass entertainer that will see Dhanush's old avatar back on the big screen. As Wunderbar Films unveiled the title of the film, they mentioned that it is one of the most expensive projects that Dhanush has ever been a part of and promised the fans that it marks the return of Dhanush's classic hero persona.

Starring Sai Pallavi and Sreeleela, the film features music by Sai Abhyankkar, cinematography by EzhilArasu, editing by Kalaivanan R, and costumes by Kavya Sriram. With Mammootty completing his shoot, the fans are excited to know more about Dhanush's OM.

All set for ‘Agadha’ trailer launch



Agadha makers have announced that the trailer of Agadha is all set to be unveiled on August 3 at 12 PM, which will create more hype around the film's worldwide release. After the great response to the teaser and posters of the film, the makers are now ready to take the audience deeper into the supernatural world of Agadha with a mysterious look.

For the announcement, a new poster of the film has gone viral, which features a female ascetic in the middle of a mysterious forest. The new poster of Agadha promises to deliver unexplored mysteries of the divine world with a blend of supernatural forces, thrill, and much more.

Agadha is a mystic divine thriller directed

by M.S.Raju, known for his association with Tollywood. The film is also Raju's self-written venture, as he has written the story and screenplay for Agadha, which marks his passion project.

Agadha has been produced by Kasi VisalakshiBalusu under Sri Adi Varaha Productions LLP, while the film is presented by Ajay K. R. This pan-Indian flick is being simultaneously made in 5 languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi, and is all set to release worldwide on August 14. With its intriguing teaser, Agadha created a massive mystery and horror-packed vibe around its release date, which has now fetched the film a great response from the viewers. Thus, the makers are now confident that Agadha trailer will leave the audience more thrilled than ever. With such an amazing concept, Agadha is indeed one of the most anticipated films of this year.

Vicky Kaushal to gain 25 kilos for his next!



AFTER the massive success of Chhaava; Vicky Kaushal is set to board on his most challenging role. The actor will play the lead role in the mythological film Mahavatar, where he will essay the role of the legendary Parashurama.

The actor will reportedly transform his body to gain more than 25 kilos to match the legendary figure of the character in the mythological story. Vicky Kaushal will once again work with celebrity fitness trainer TejasLalwani for his fitness and nutritionist needs. The two had worked together before for Chhaava. The actor's transformation will begin soon for the project. The actor has been working out extensively for the historical drama and has undergone a strict diet. The film will begin its shoot in December 2023, and the pre-production work is already underway.

The film is directed by Amar Kaushik, who has given some hit films in the Stree Franchise. The project has already created a lot of intrigue among the movie buffs as it will mark the directorial debut of Amar Kaushik in the mythological genre while his co-star Vicky Kaushal will be seen playing one of the most legendary and iconic characters in the Indian Mythology.



THE makers of Toxic: Fairytale for GrownUps have released a mesmerizing picture starring Kiara Advani ahead of the film's release, adding another compelling chapter to the promotional adventures of one of Indian cinema's most anticipated films. The poster celebrating Kiara's birthday showcases the actress in a majestic and glamorous look that has fans buzzing about her global stardom.

Starring Yash, Toxic has been making waves since its announcement, and the fairytale actioner is all set to create a historic footprint in the filmography of the year, with its larger-than-life appeal and star-studded cast. The much-awaited film is all set to release globally on August 26th and has been garnering tremendous attention for every bit of its promotional content that has been unveiled so far. Toxic, directed by Geethu Mohandas, has been entertaining movie buffs with its intriguing teasers, theatrical trailer, and chart-dominating songs Tabaahi and Madhoshi, giving a glimpse into the extravagant world of the film. With the exciting content released, the film has successfully captured the audience's attention with its promising action-packed narrative and fantastical treatment of the story.

Besides the star-studded lead pair of Yash and Kiara Advani, the film also features Nayanthara, Tara Sutaria, Huma Qureshi, and Rukmini Vasanth in prominent roles. With its current rate of progress, Toxic is bound to be one of the highest-grossing films in the country.



Kiara's dazzling poster from 'Toxic' unveiled

Yami Gautam speaks about career struggles

YAMI Gautam talked about one of the darkest times in her career, saying that she almost quit Bollywood after a few failures and then her two successful movies made her realize her stardom.

Speaking in one of her recent interactions, the actress opened up about considering quitting movies. She said that there was a time when everything seemed to be going wrong and she failed to get good roles. This made her to think about quitting as she was fed up with the failures and disappointments. Yami Gautam said everything turned around

for her with the Uri: The Surgical Strike and Bala fame and both of them made her realize that she was one of the most bankable stars in the industry.

Talking about her upcoming projects, Yami Gautam was recently seen essaying the role of ShaziaBano in Dhurandhar: The Revenge, the much-anticipated super hit film directed by her husband Aditya Dhar. The actress is all set to be a part of NayiNaveli, the supernatural drama directed by Balaji Mohan. The film revolves around an ideal bride who appears to have changed everybody's life in Meerut and her suspicious brother-in-law who starts doubting if she is a human or a ghost. The actress will be seen sharing screen space with Rajesh Dubey in the film which promises to give the audience another powerful performance from Yami Gautam.

