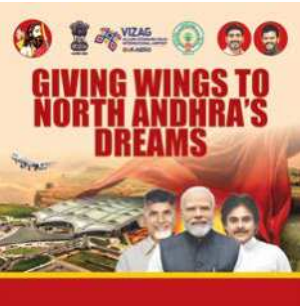
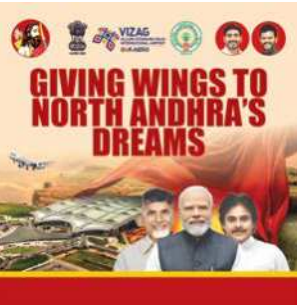




THE Hans India



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

For Advertisement PI Call: 8096967713 Follow @ / thehansindia / thehansindiaweb / thehansindia / TheHansIndiaWeb / thehansindia Book your Copy: 97055 55551



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



₹5,641 Crore
State-of-the-Art
Greenfield Airport



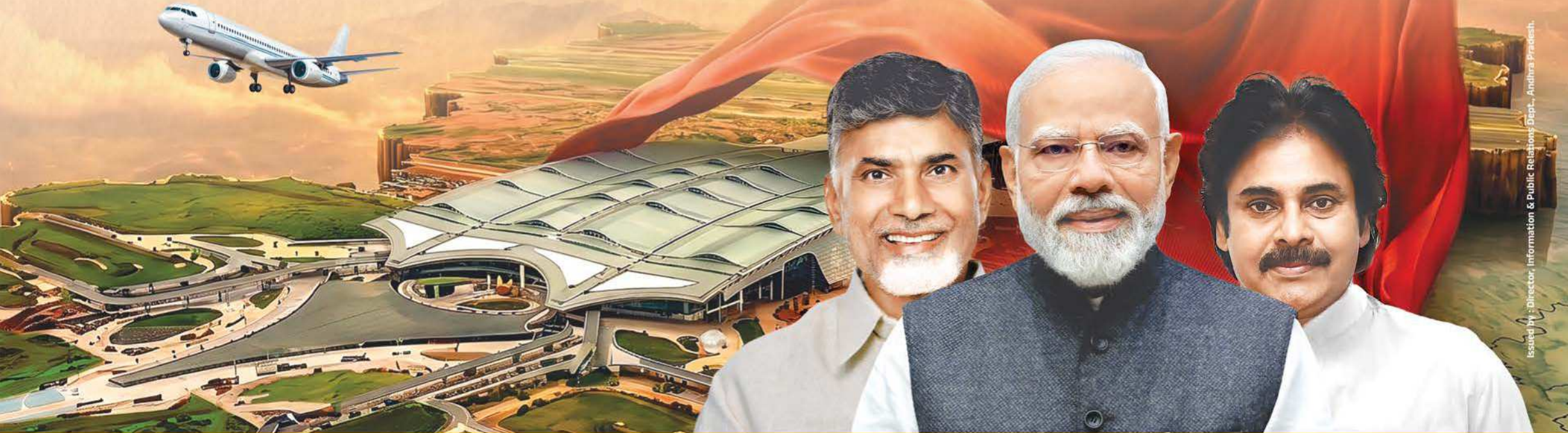
First
Comprehensive
Civil Aviation Hub



6 Million Passengers
(Expandable to
40 Million in the future)



25,000 MT Cargo
Handling Capacity



₹6.13 Lakh Crore
investments in Uttarandhra



189 industries and
projects initiated



5.57 Lakh
employment
opportunities

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.

The Visakhapatnam Economic Region accounts for a substantial share of

• 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

the state's proposed investments, driven by projects in information technology, data centres, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, renewable energy and heavy industries.

Major investments announced in recent years include hyperscale data centres, artificial intelligence infrastructure, steel manufacturing, pharmaceutical expansion and green hydrogen projects.

Bhogapuram Airport is expected to serve as a key gateway for these industries by improving global connectivity for businesses, investors and skilled professionals.

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

cargo 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 sub-

stantial 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.

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

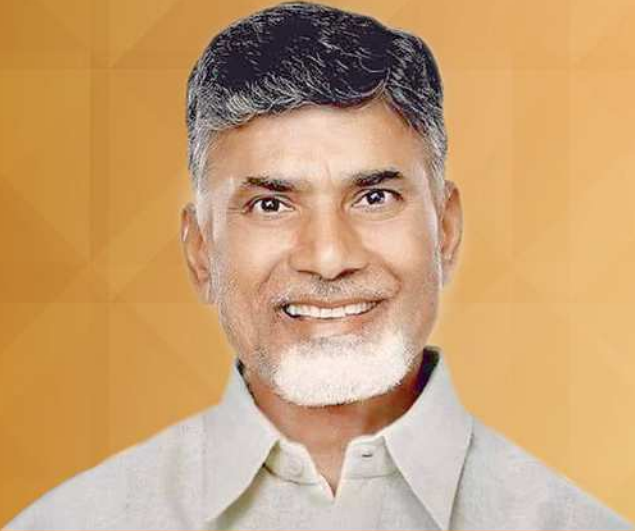
JUSTICE Ravi Cheemalapati of the Andhra Pradesh High Court has directed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the toll management to remove barricades erected at the exit point connecting the Vijayawada West Bypass National Highway to the Seed Access Road near the Venkatayapalem toll plaza,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





सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India



Growth. Opportunity. Prosperity.

Andhra Leads the Way

Inauguration & Foundation Stone Laying for Power Transmission, Civil Aviation, Highways & Semiconductor Projects Worth about ₹18,000 crore

by
Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Saturday, 01st August, 2026 from 10:00 am onwards | Bhogapuram, Andhra Pradesh



Inauguration of

**Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport**

**Transmission Scheme for Solar Energy Zone in Ananthapuram (Ananthpur) (2500 MW) and Kurnool (1000 MW)**

**Khammam-Devarapalle Package V**
Four lane Access Controlled Green field highway from Gurvaygudem to Devarapalle section of NH-365BG

**Transmission System for Kurnool Wind Energy Zone / Solar Energy Zone (AP) - Part-A & Part-B**

**Khammam-Devarapalle Package IV**
Four lane Access Controlled Green field highway from Recherla to Gurvaygudem section of NH-365BG

**Four-Lane Tadipatri Bypass**
Four lane Tadipatri Bypass on NH-67

Foundation Stone Laying for

**Transmission System for Integration of Kurnool-IV REZ - Phase-I (for 4.5 GW)**

**High-Level Bridge on NH-565**
High-level Bridge at Lingasamudram on Penchalakona - Yerpedu section of NH-565

**Semiconductor packaging and testing facility Projects in Tarluvada, Vishakhapatnam phase I**

Benefits

- Boost economic growth, investment, industrialization and employment in Andhra Pradesh
- Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport will enhance air connectivity for North Andhra, South Odisha and Chhattisgarh, supporting tourism, trade and logistics
- Power Transmission projects will facilitate integration of renewable energy from Kurnool and Ananthapuram RE zone into National Grid and improve power availability across Southern India
- Support India's energy transition and sustainable development goals
- High-level Bridge at Lingasamudram on Penchalakona-Yerpedu link will enhance connectivity to key religious destinations - Penchalakona, Tirupati (Lord Balaji) and Sri Kalahasti Temples
- Improve regional connectivity, road safety and travel efficiency between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana through the four-lane Khammam-Devarapalle highway
- Reduce congestion and enhances road safety through the Tadipatri Bypass
- Semiconductor Project in Tarluvada, Visakhapatnam will create job opportunities and reduces import dependence, strengthening India's semiconductor value chain

in the august presence of

Shri S. Abdul Nazeer
Governor, Andhra Pradesh

Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu
Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

Shri Nitin Gadkari
Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways

Shri Manohar Lal
Union Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs; and Power

Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu
Union Minister of Civil Aviation

Shri Ashwini Vaishnav
Union Minister of Railway; Information and Broadcasting; and Electronics and Information Technology

Shri Shripad Naik
Union Minister of State of Power and New & Renewable Energy

Shri Jitin Prasada
Union Minister of State of Commerce and Industry and Electronics and Information Technology

Shri Ajay Tamta
Union Minister of State of Road Transport & Highways

Shri Harsh Malhotra
Union Minister of State of Road Transport & Highways and Corporate Affairs

Dr. Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani
Union MoS of Rural Development; and Communications

Shri Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa
Union Minister of State of Heavy Industries; and Steel

Shri Murlidhar Mohol
Union MoS of Cooperation; and Civil Aviation

Shri K. Pawan Kalyan
Deputy Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh

Shri Nara Lokesh
Minister, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh

Shri B.C. Janardhan Reddy
Minister for Road & Buildings, Infrastructure and Investments, Andhra Pradesh

Shri Gottipati Ravi Kumar
Minister of Energy, Andhra Pradesh

Shri Appalanaidu Kaliseti
Member of Parliament

Shri Bastipati Nagaraju Panchalingala
Member of Parliament

Smt. Dr. Byreddy Shabari
Member of Parliament

Shri Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu
Member of Parliament

Shri Ambica G. Lakshminarayana Valmiki
Member of Parliament

Shri Maddila Gurumoorthy
Member of Parliament

Smt. Daggubati Purandeswari
Member of Parliament

Shri Putta Mahesh Kumar
Member of Parliament

DD News Watch the Event live on DD News

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 lawless? 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 Nanmapaneni, 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 Shrelekha 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)

South Coast Rly GM inspects Nandyal-Guntur section

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GUNTUR

SOUTH Coast Railway general manager Sandeep Mathur on Friday conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Nandyal-Guntur section, including detailed en-route inspections, to review safety standards, infrastructure development, operational efficiency and

passenger amenities across the section.

The inspection commenced at Nandyal Railway Station, where he carried out a detailed review of the ongoing Amrit Bharat Station Scheme redevelopment works. He inspected various passenger amenities and assessed the progress of infrastructure development and directed officials

to maintain the quality and pace of execution while ensuring minimal inconvenience to passengers. He inspected the Crew Lobby and Running Room, where he reviewed the facilities provided to running staff. Stressing the importance of employee welfare, he emphasised that providing comfortable and modern amenities to frontline rail-

way personnel is essential for ensuring safe, efficient and customer-oriented railway operations.

He inspected Gajulapalli Railway Station, where he examined the Signalling & Telecommunication (S&T) Relay Room. Further, he continued the inspection of the under construction tunnel in the Chalema-Diguvametta section of Guntur

Division. He conducted a thorough review of the tunnel construction activities and its key safety protocols. He directed officials to ensure adherence to qualify standards, high safety protocols and timely completion.

At Markapuram Road Railway Station, he carried out an extensive review of railway safety systems and station infrastructure.

Release of water from Veligonda by Sept 1

MARKAPUR

DISTRICT collector M Vijaya Suneetha inspected the construction progress of the Pula Subbaiah Veligonda Project on Friday and said that all efforts were being made to complete the works and release water by September 1, as directed by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu.

The collector entered the twin tunnels in special vehicles and inspected the Tunnel Boring Machine removal works in detail. Speaking on the occasion, Vijaya Suneetha informed that the lining work in Tunnel 2 had progressed quickly. About a month ago, more than 2000 metres of lining work were pending. That



Markapur district collector M Vijaya Suneetha inspecting works of Pula Subbaiah Veligonda Project on Friday

has now come down to about 460 metres, she said. She directed officers to complete the remaining 460 metres of lining work before August 15. She assured that basic amenities and infrastructure works in the rehabilitation colonies

for 11 villages facing submergence would be completed very soon. She also said that all arrangements were being made to shift displaced persons who had already received compensation to their respective colonies.

176 petitions received at special PGRS

HANS NEWS SERVICE
DARSI

PRAKASAM district Collector P Raja Babu conducted a constituency-level public grievance redressal programme at the Mandal Parishad office in Mundlamuru of Darsi constituency on Friday.

Darsi TDP in-charge Gottipati Lakshmi also took part in the programme. Speaking to reporters after the programme, Raja Babu informed that about 176 petitions, including 127 from the revenue department, were received. He said that 66 petitions



Collector P Raja Babu, Joint Collector Kalpana Kumari, Darsi TDP in-charge Gottipati Lakshmi participating in the special grievance programme in Mundlamuru on Friday

had major issues, and steps would be taken to resolve all of them fully. Revenue

and non-financial matters would be resolved within a set time, he assured.

Officers would visit petitioners at their homes, understand their problems, and take steps to resolve them to the petitioners' satisfaction, he added. Raja Babu said that the state government was giving special attention to this programme.

Joint Collector Kalpana Kumari informed that most petitions were related to revenue, land resurvey, and delimitation.

Revenue Divisional Officer Vijaya Jyothi, ZP CEO Chiranjeevi, DPO Anupama, BC Welfare Officer Venkateswarlu, and other district officials attended the programme.

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

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

CHIEF Minister A Revanth Reddy has announced that EV and drone technology courses would be offered in ATCs and Young India Skills University. A special wing would also be established in the university for offering foreign 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. 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 countries.

Slow land acquisition triggers delay in bullet trains from Hyderabad

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



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

paths.

The Union Government is expediting the completion of the 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. 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.

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.

Cabinet green-lights PM-KISAN scheme extension till 2030-31

Continued from front page

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.

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.

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.

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

Continued from front page

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 includ-

ing 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 estab-

lish 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.

SIR: 3.71 crore voters file enumeration forms in AP

Continued from front page

The CEO said the verification exercise identified 15.22 lakh deceased voters, 22.30 lakh voters who had either shifted their permanent residence or were found absent, and 7.37 lakh duplicate registrations, that is, electors whose names appeared in two or more locations.

Vivek Yadav said steps have been initiated to ensure that duplicate voters are retained at only one location in the electoral roll. He added that genuine electors whose names are omitted would be allowed to apply for inclusion through Form-6. He urged

voters to verify their details through the Election Commission of India mobile app or the CEO's official website and announced that claims and objections can be filed from July 31 to August 30.

The CEO said the final electoral rolls will be published on October 3, emphasising that no voter's name will be deleted without prior notice and due inquiry. He reiterated that the Election Commission is committed to ensuring a transparent revision process so that no eligible voter is excluded and no ineligible person is included in the electoral rolls.

PM Modi to inaugurate Alluri International Airport today

Continued from front page

"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 green-field airport is among the fastest-completed international airports in the country. Developed by GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Limited (GVIAL) under the PPP model at a cost of Rs 4,727 crore, the airport spans 2,703 acres, including land earmarked for an aviation hub and aviation education city. The airport features a 3,800-metre runway capable of handling wide-body aircraft such as the Boeing 777, Boeing 787 Dreamliner and Airbus A330, along with modern passenger processing systems, smart surveillance, self-baggage check-in facilities and advanced navigation infrastructure. It has an initial capacity to handle 6 million passengers annually, with

expansion plans to increase capacity to 40 million passengers in future phases.

A dedicated cargo terminal with an annual handling capacity of 25,000 metric tonnes and cold-chain infrastructure is expected to strengthen exports of pharmaceuticals, marine products, and other high-value goods. The airport is also designed with sustainability features, including a 5-MW solar power plant, rainwater harvesting, water recycling systems and LEED Platinum-compliant infrastructure.

The government expects the airport to emerge as a catalyst for investments in aviation, aerospace, defence, logistics, manufacturing, tourism and exports, while supporting the development of the Visakhapatnam-Bhogapuram growth corridor as a major economic hub on India's east coast.

Meanwhile, Air India has announced its initial flight schedule from the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, paving the way for commercial operations soon after the inauguration.

Vizag Coaching Yard remodelling set to give major boost to rail infrastructure

- The remodeling project paves the way for Visakhapatnam to handle a larger number of originating, terminating trains
- The additional infrastructure will strengthen Visakhapatnam's ability to accommodate more originating and terminating services
- The remodelling also proposes electronic interlocking, replacing or upgrading existing signalling and route-control arrangements with a modern computer-based system



Additional platform works are in progress at Gnanapuram in Visakhapatnam



Gnanapuram railway station entrance which is set to be transformed
Photos: Vasu Potnuru



Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy inspecting APSRTC zonal workshop on Friday

VASU POTNURU
VISAKHAPATNAM

VISAKHAPATNAM is poised for a major railway infrastructure expansion, with Indian Railways approving a comprehensive remodelling of the Visakhapatnam coaching yard at an estimated cost of around Rs 299 crore. The project aims to increase train-handling capacity, ease operational constraints and improve passenger facilities at one of the busiest railway hubs on the east coast.

The ambitious remodeling assumes greater significance as Visakhapatnam continues to grow as a major metropolitan, industrial and tourism hub, generating increasing demand for additional train services. Indian Railways identified Visakhapatnam among major cities where originating train capacity is targeted

for substantial enhancement by 2030. Earlier plans for the yard envisaged additional passenger platforms, stabling lines and modern electronic interlocking as part of the capacity augmentation programme.

As part of the latest Rs.299-crore proposal, six new platforms and six additional railway lines are planned, while the existing six platforms are proposed to be widened. The expansion would provide greater flexibility for receiving, dispatching and handling trains and could reduce the pressure created when several services arrive or depart within short intervals. Wider platforms are expected to provide more space for passengers and improve movement during peak hours, holidays and festival seasons.

The additional infrastructure will strengthen Visakhapatnam's ability to accommodate more originating and terminating services. At present, limitations in terminal and yard capacity influence the introduction and handling of additional trains. Expanding the number of lines and platforms would create room for

future growth as passenger demand rises.

A major passenger-oriented component of the project is the proposed development of a new entrance on the eastern side of the station. This would effectively improve access to the station from both sides and streamline passenger movement more efficiently instead of concentrating traffic around the existing approaches. The plan includes surface parking and a redesigned circulation system intended to streamline the movement of private vehicles, taxis, auto-rickshaws and other modes of transport around the station.

The eastern-side development could become particularly important as the railway station serves passengers from different parts of the expanding Visakhapatnam urban area. Better segregation of arriving and departing vehicles and improved pedestrian movement could help reduce congestion around station entry and exit points, especially during the arrival and departure of major long-distance trains.

The remodelling also pro-

poses electronic interlocking, replacing or upgrading existing signalling and route-control arrangements with a modern computer-based system. Electronic interlocking is designed to safely coordinate signals, points and train routes while providing railway operators greater flexibility in handling movements through a complex station yard. With additional platforms and lines being created, the signalling upgrade will be a crucial part of improving both capacity and operational safety.

The Rs 299-crore project comes amid a much broader railway infrastructure push in Andhra Pradesh. In April, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the state had received a record railway allocation of Rs 10,134 crore and announced that the South Coast Railway Zone would become effective from June 1, 2026.

Visakhapatnam is also set to benefit from major capacity expansion on the railway corridor towards Rajamahendravaram. The Union Cabinet approved multi-tracking of the Rajahmundry-Visakhapatnam section as part of a Rs 24,815-crore

package covering projects in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, further strengthening the terminal capacity in Visakhapatnam as the surrounding network gains additional line capacity.

Once implemented, the coaching yard remodelling will fundamentally change how Visakhapatnam railway station handles trains and passengers. The combination of six new platforms, six additional lines, widening of the existing platforms, modern electronic interlocking, an eastern-side entrance, surface parking and improved circulation facilities is expected to address present bottlenecks while creating capacity for future growth.

More importantly, the project paves the way for Visakhapatnam to handle a larger number of originating and terminating trains as railway traffic grows in the region. Along with the operationalisation of South Coast Railway and other major rail capacity projects around the city, the yard remodelling is set to strengthen Visakhapatnam's position as a major railway gateway for Andhra Pradesh and the east coast.

Transport Minister calls for cost-efficient APSRTC operations

- Inspects the APSRTC zonal workshop and reviews its functioning
- Says that RTC workers and passengers were like two eyes of the APSRTC and that their interests should be valued

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

TRANSPORT Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy on Friday called upon APSRTC employees and officials to work collectively towards reducing operational costs while further improving the quality, reliability and efficiency of services offered to passengers.

Inspecting the APSRTC zonal workshop, the minister reviewed its functioning in detail. During the visit, he toured

key sections, including the engine, machine shop, electrical, body shop and unit departments and examined the maintenance and repair activities being carried out at the facility.

Interacting with officials, Ramprasad Reddy sought details about the quality of bus maintenance, repair procedures and workshop operations. He stressed that adherence to prescribed maintenance standards was essential to ensure the safety of passengers, improve vehicle reliability and provide better services across the APSRTC network. APSRTC Visakhapatnam Regional Manager B Appalanaidu briefed the minister on the functioning of the workshop and explained various maintenance and technical activities undertaken by the facility. Emphasising the crucial role of both employees and

passengers in the growth of the public transport organisation, the Transport Minister said RTC workers and passengers were like two eyes of the APSRTC and that their interests should be valued.

Highlighting APSRTC's preparations for future transportation requirements, Ramprasad Reddy said the corporation was introducing electric and CNG buses as part of efforts to modernise its fleet, improve efficiency and meet emerging mobility needs.

Later, the minister felicitated retiring employees at the workshop, recognising their contribution and years of service to APSRTC. As Transport Minister, he would extend all possible support whenever APSRTC and its workforce required assistance, he assured the employees.

COUNTDOWN STARTS!



On the eve of the Alluri Sitaram Raju International Airport's inauguration, digital screens at the Beach Road in Visakhapatnam highlighting the significance of the ceremony.
Photo: Vasu Potnuru

Session held on 'Leveraging Technology, Innovation and Intellectual Property for HEIs Excellence'



Speakers, management personnel and faculty members at the Vizianagaram campus

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

SATYA Institute of Technology and Management in Vizianagaram, in association with the National Research Development Corporation, NRDC, Government of India, and the Japan External Trade Organisation, JETRO, organised an interactive session on 'Leveraging Technology, Innovation and Intellectual Property for HEIs Excellence'. The programme aimed to promote research, innovation, intellectual property awareness, technology commercialisation and international collaboration among higher educational institutions.

Addressing the participants, Nakano Hiroyuki, senior director, Intellectual Property Rights, JETRO, shared valuable insights into Japan's innovation ecosystem, global intellectual property practices and growing importance of international research collaborations. He emphasised that higher educational institutions should foster a strong culture of innovation, encourage patent generation, and develop globally competitive technologies through partnerships with industry and

international organisations. He also expressed JETRO's keen interest in strengthening academic, research, and innovation collaborations between Japan and India. Delivering the keynote address, BK Sahu, regional manager, National Research Development Corporation, highlighted the vital role of Intellectual Property Rights in protecting innovations and transforming research into commercially viable technologies.

Earlier, VG Prasanna, dean, research and development, SITAM, presented the institutional profile and showcased the institution's achievements in research, innovation, intellectual property, industry collaborations and entrepreneurship. The JETRO and NRDC delegates highly appreciated the institution's remarkable achievements in research, innovation, and intellectual property creation. They commended the institution for fostering a vibrant research culture and for its sustained efforts in encouraging faculty members and students to develop innovative technologies with significant social and industrial impact. Director of SITAM M. Sashibhushana Rao felicitated the JETRO and NRDC dignitaries on the occasion.

'Leadership goes beyond command'

- India@100 will be defined not only by economic growth but by institutions that continuously evolve, innovate and remain resilient in the face of change
- The conclave highlighted the central role of women leaders in shaping not only organisations but also the broader ecosystems around them
- Through thought-provoking deliberations on leadership, the conclave underscored the importance of equipping women to lead transformational change across sectors

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

LEADERSHIP is not just about the command one holds but about collaborating and creating growth opportunities for coworkers and building a conducive ecosystem at workplace,



Chairperson of IWN AP Usha Pantula along with others at the CII IWN AP chapter's leadership conclave organised in Visakhapatnam on Friday

emphasised deputy chairperson of Visakhapatnam Port Authority Roshni Aparanji Korati.

Delivering an inspiring talk at the 'Confederation of Indian Industry Indian Women Network Andhra Pradesh Leadership Conclave 2026' organised at Fluentgrid Limited, Rushikonda, the deputy chairperson called for breaking away from preconceived notions of new-age leadership and bringing positive change to others' lives. "Instead of being identified more as the first woman deputy chairperson of the

port, I would rather like to be recognised for the team-centric and infrastructure-led decisions I have made for the organisation," she underlined, encouraging women leaders to make meaningful decisions that help the team grow along with them and contribute to the institution they work for. Themed as 'Leading India@100 - Resilient Systems for the Future', the CII IWN AP chapter's leadership conclave brought together leaders from industry, government, academia and entrepreneurship to deliberate

on how the systems built today will determine the resilience, sustainability and future-readiness of India as it moves towards the centenary of its independence by 2047.

Chairperson of IWN AP Usha Pantula reiterated that this gender-agnostic conclave shifted the focus from merely adapting to disruption toward building enduring institutions, leading through uncertainty and creating human-centered systems where technology, policy and economic growth work in tandem to serve society.

Delivering the theme address, chairperson of CII IWN Southern Region Sivapriya Balagopal, said, "Women are not just participants in India's growth story but are architects of India@100. By strengthening women's leadership, entrepreneurship and decision-making, we are building resilient institutions and an inclusive future that will benefit generations to come." She

encouraged women leaders to step beyond economic matrices and engage in bold thinking for meaningful collaboration resulting in purposeful action.

Addressing the gathering, vice chairman of CII Andhra Pradesh G Sambasiva Rao said, "When women lead, organisations become more resilient, innovative and inclusive. Empowering women through opportunities, mentorship and entrepreneurship is not only a matter of equity but a strategic imperative for building a stronger Andhra Pradesh and a developed India by 2047."

The conclave included seven stalls set up by women entrepreneurs, providing them a platform to exhibit their products and connect with industry leaders and participants. Sudha Mavuri, vice chairperson, IWN Andhra Pradesh, Vasudha T, past chairwoman, Ramadevi Gourineni, past chairwoman, among others, were present at the event, which included panel sessions.

Raising awareness among exporters and industry stakeholders

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM:

FOCUSING on the ATA Carnet and UN TIR system, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with the Vizagapatam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), organised a workshop in Visakhapatnam. The objective of the workshop was to raise awareness among exporters and industry stakeholders about essential international customs documents. The event saw participation of over 75 persons, primarily from the exporting community. The platform provided a valuable opportunity to enhance understanding of temporary import and export procedures, helping participants navigate cross-

border trade complexities more efficiently.

Principal Commissioner of Customs, Visakhapatnam Commissionerate N. Sridhar, in his keynote address, said, "Mechanisms such as the ATA Carnet and the TIR system are designed to reduce the documentation burden and simplify customs procedures for the temporary movement and transit of goods." He further urged industry stakeholders to effectively use these internationally recognised trade facilitation mechanisms to expand their business opportunities in global markets.

Satish Kumar Reddy, trade facilitation expert and consultant, Asian Development Bank (ADB), highlighted the salient features of the ATA Carnet

and the UN TIR system during his presentation. The Visakhapatnam workshop gave participants a comprehensive understanding of the

operational aspects of the ATA Carnet and the UN TIR system and offered exporters, importers, logistics service providers and other stakeholders an

interactive platform to raise queries, share concerns and seek clarifications on procedures relating to the temporary movement and transit of goods.

Hans India Classifieds

LOST OF PASS PORT

I, CHAVANJANEYULU S/O CHAVASA PRASAD, R/O. D.NO-27-3-98, SRI NAGAR, VISAKHAPATNAM, LOST MY ORIGINAL PASSPORT NO.K6867449 WHILE I AM TRAVELLING, FROM MY VILLAGE GAJUWAKA TO PENDURTHI TRAVEL BY AUTO ON 27-06-2026.IF ANYONE FOUND MAY PLEASE CONTACT: 9515268074

CHANGE OF NAME

I VENKATA RAMANA VIROTHU (New Name) S/o. Virothu Appala Naidu Previously called VIROTHI VENKATA RAMANA (Old Name) R/o. D.No.1-28,Kothavalasa, Visakhapatnam A.P. Now changed my name from VIROTHI VENKATA RAMANA (Old Name) to VENKATA RAMANA VIROTHU (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as VENKATA RAMANA VIROTHU (New Name) for all purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I MAMATA BHUYAN (New Name) W/o.Dalai Manoj Kumar, Previously called MAMATA DALAI (Old Name), Kamakhya Nagar 1st line Gajapati Odisha Now changed my name from MAMATA DALAI (Old Name) to S.PRIYADHARSHAN (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as MAMATA BHUYAN (New Name) for all purposes.

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I UPPARAPALLI VENKATA RAMANA MURTHY (New Name) S/o.U. Venkata Ramnath, Previously called UPAPARAPALLI VENKATA RAMANA (Old Name) R/o.14-29-5,Nedakankarao Veedhi, Anakapalli A.P. Now changed my name from UPAPARALLI VENKATA RAMANA (Old Name) to UPAPARALLI VENKATA RAMANA MURTHY (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as UPAPARALLI VENKATA RAMANA MURTHY (New Name) for all purpose.

CHANGE OF NAME

I S.PRIYADHARSHAN (New Name) S/o. K.Santha Kumar ,Previously called PRIYADHARSHAN (Old Name)R/o.F.No202, Kasturi Nagar, Old CBI Down Road, 3 Town Police station,Pedda wallair ,Visakhapatnam A.P. 530017. Now changed my name from PRIYADHARSHAN (Old Name) to S.PRIYADHARSHAN (New Name) hence forth I will be Called as S.PRIYADHARSHAN (New Name) for all purposes.

Majhi meets Shah for Centre’s support

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Friday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, seeking their support to strengthen industrial security and expand rail connectivity in the State, saying both were crucial for accelerating economic growth.

During separate meetings in New Delhi, Majhi discussed issues relating to industrial development, internal security, railway infrastructure and long-term economic planning, according to a statement issued by the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO). In his meeting with Shah, the Chief Minister said Odisha was moving rapidly on a path of development, progress and prosperity, and sought the Centre’s support in strengthening industrial security to sustain the pace of industrialisation.

Majhi also briefed the Home Minister on the State’s developmental initiatives, law and order situation, internal security and implementation of various welfare schemes, the statement said. Majhi said Odisha had been recognised as a “Naxal-free State”, creating a conducive environment for socio-economic development.



He said the State government was implementing Central and State welfare schemes in erstwhile Left Wing Extremism-affected areas through the ‘Gramodaya Yojana’, asserting that the law and order situation was under control due to proactive policing. The Chief Minister also informed Shah about the Centre’s support for the revival of sugar mills and said the State’s “double-engine government” had earned people’s trust through direct public outreach and speedy grievance redressal.

According to the CMO, Shah appreciated the State’s development and welfare initiatives and assured all possible support from the Centre to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Odisha. Later, Majhi met Vaishnaw and discussed strengthening railway infrastructure, expediting pending railway projects and improving connectivity

across the State. “Our priority is to enhance regional and industrial connectivity to accelerate economic growth. With the continued support of the Union government, we are steadily advancing towards a developed and prosperous Odisha,” Majhi said in a post on X after the meeting.

The Chief Minister also met NITI Aayog member and Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) member K V Raju to discuss Odisha’s long-term economic roadmap and district-level GDP estimation. The discussions also covered policy frameworks for Special Marine Zones and Special Farming Zones aimed at promoting balanced regional development, generating livelihood opportunities and accelerating sustainable economic growth in the State, officials said.

Odisha Mahanadi swells as 14 Hirakud Dam gates open

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

HEAVY rains in the upper catchment triggered the Hirakud Dam to discharge a huge amount of water into the Mahanadi, swelling the river and impacting seven lakh people in 20 of the State’s 30 districts as low-lying areas got inundated. The rise in the water level of the Mahanadi river led to the swelling of several of its tributaries, aggravating the situation.

However, no rain in the past one day has come as a respite for the State.

Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari, who reviewed the flood situation, said 14 gates of the Hirakud Dam have been opened, discharging over two lakh cusecs of water due to a huge inflow from the upper catchment areas of the Mahanadi in Chhattisgarh.

Earlier, only two gates were open. “The water will take around 36 to 40 hours to reach Mundali near Cuttack,” the minister said. By Friday morning, the water level in the reservoir stood at 623.52 feet against its full storage capacity of 630 feet.



The dam was receiving approximately 3,69,322 cusecs of water per second, while about 65,543 cusecs were being released downstream. Pujari said more than eight lakh cusecs of water at Mundali should be discharged within 36 hours, making space for the excess water being discharged from the Hirakud.”

“It is a big respite that there is no rain across Odisha since the past 24 hours in the State and also in upper catchment areas,” the minister said. He

said some areas in Kataka, Puri, Khordha and Jagatsinghpur districts have been inundated and all preparations were being made to mitigate people’s suffering. The State is operating 520 relief centres in north and coastal regions where provisions have been made for around 2 lakh people, he said, adding that around 1.90 lakh people have so far been evacuated to safety. Special Relief Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil said the recent flood has im-

pacted over seven lakh people in 20 of the State’s 30 districts. He said 136 rescue teams of the NDRE, ODRAF and fire services have been deployed in various districts.

The rise in the water level of the Mahanadi has led to its tributaries -- the Luna, Karandia, Chitropala, Paika, Salia, Devi, Kandala, Kuakhai, Kushabhadra, Daya and Bhargavi -- to swell, he said, adding that three persons have so far died in flood-related incidents.

Officials said leaves of all government employees in the affected 20 districts have been cancelled and public access to barrages and embankments was restricted. Devotees were barred from visiting the Dhabaleswar Shiv Temple for 48 hours in Kataka district. According to the Water Resources Department, water levels in Baitarani, Brahmani, Jalaka, and Budhabalanga have receded, but fresh breaches of embankments have inundated new areas.

Sahoo drove horticulture growth

C B SINGH
RAYAGADA

ODISHA’S horticulture sector bid farewell to Rayagada’s Deputy Director of Horticulture, Chittaranjan Sahoo, who retired on Thursday. His distinguished three-decade career was defined by innovation, institution-building, and an unwavering commitment to farmers’ welfare.

Over a 30-year career, Sahoo modernised Odisha’s horticulture by advancing scientific farming, protected cultivation, quality planting materials, post-harvest systems, and farmer training.

Before moving to Rayagada, Sahoo served as in-charge of the Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Horticulture in Deras, Bhubaneswar. He boosted the production of quality fruit plants, hybrid vegetable seeds, and flow-



ers. Under his leadership, the centre grew into a top training hub in Odisha, benefiting many farmers, agri-entrepreneurs and also helping students learn new skills. Throughout his career, Sahoo continuously upgraded his professional expertise through specialised training at leading national institutions, such as MAN-AGE, the Extension Education Institute, the National Institute of Plant Health

Management, the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research in Bengaluru, and INDOCERT in Kerala.

Sahoo helped local farmers grow more mango, cashew, banana, and papaya crops. He also taught them how to use protected farming and grow vegetables out of season in Koraput, Jharsuguda, and Sambalpur. By sharing modern tools and safe methods, his work helped farms grow larger yields and made life better for the workers. As colleagues, farmers, and well-wishers gathered to bid him farewell, Chittaranjan Sahoo retires leaving a profound legacy. His impact is measured not just by completed projects or accolades, but by the thousands of farmers he empowered and his lasting contributions to Odisha’s horticulture sector.

Brahmapur stands against trafficking

SUNIL MOHAN PATNAIK
BRAHMAPUR

AN awareness programme marked the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons at Brahmapur railway station, with a call to strengthen measures against human trafficking and ensure protection of women and children from exploitation.

Organised by ISRD Sakhi One Stop Centre, Ganjam, in collaboration with Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP), the programme featured a human chain, an awareness rally, and a public meeting. Hundreds of railway employees, vendors, porters, sanitation workers, hawkers, and auto-rickshaw drivers participated in the campaign.

Brahmapur Municipal



Corporation Commissioner Akavaram S Reddy urged citizens to remain vigilant against human trafficking and oppose violence against women, adolescents, and children. She stressed the need for grassroots awareness, early identification of vulnerable persons, and co-ordinated efforts by law enforcement agencies and community to prevent trafficking

and exploitation.

The speakers highlighted the importance of educating the public about the various forms of human trafficking, ensuring justice, medical care, and psychological support for victims, and addressing the root causes of the crime through stronger preventive measures and effective enforcement.

Among those who ad-

dressed the gathering were Shitanshu Kumar Panda, President of Berhampur Civil Court Bar Association; Kalyani Sanghamitra Devi, Deputy Commissioner of Brahmapur Municipal Corporation; Durga Prasad Brahma, Station Manager; Vivek Kumar, RPF Officer; Epili Srinivasa Rao, In-charge CTE; Ch Bishnu, Chief Health Inspector; Gopinath Kolaka and Kailash Chandra Behera of the GRP, along with several representatives of civic bodies, voluntary organisations, and railway stakeholders.

The participants took a pledge to remain alert, resist trafficking networks, and work collectively towards building a safe and exploitation-free society. The programme was presided over by Sudhir Sabat, Director of ISRD.

Two get lifer for Ganjam double murder

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BRAHMAPUR

A court in Ganjam district sentenced two persons, including a 27-year-old woman, to life imprisonment for the murder of a mother and her seven-year-old son in 2024, a government counsel said. Additional District Judge Sangeeta Pani sentenced G Devendra and D Gunnama of Chudialanjia village for the murder of D Neelabeni, 28, and her son, D Rushi, within Jarada police station limits on February 19, 2024. Additional Public Prosecutor Santoshini Purohit said. The court delivered the judgment after examining 39 witnesses, including police personnel, and scrutinising relevant documents. Police had recovered the bodies of the mother and son from their house on February 19, 2024, and sent them for post-mortem.

Pujari counters Naveen, says CM upholds Raj Dharma

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA Minister Suresh Pujari rebutted Naveen Patnaik’s “feasting in Delhi amid flood horrors” jibe at the BJP, saying Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi was discharging “Raj Dharma” by pursuing a resolution to the Mahanadi water dispute with Chhattisgarh in the national capital.

Majhi was in Delhi on Thursday, where he attended a high-level meeting under the chairmanship of Union Water Resources Minister C R Patil over Mahanadi water distribution and management, which was also attended by Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Dev Sai. Seeking to capitalise on Majhi’s absence from Odisha as the State remained on a high alert for floods across the densely populated coastal belt, the Opposition parties



accused the BJP government of lacking sincerity in tackling the calamity.

“Are Odisha’s BJP leaders feasting in Delhi amid the horrors of the floods in the State? While the entire State is reeling from flood conditions due to relentless heavy rain, the Chief Minister and BJP’s top leaders and MPs are currently in Delhi,” Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Naveen Patnaik had

said on social media.

Hitting back, the State’s Revenue and Disaster Management Minister asked Patnaik to understand the ground situation before criticising the government. Majhi was in Delhi to attend a tripartite meeting on the Mahanadi water dispute with Chhattisgarh, an issue the previous BJD government of Naveen Patnaik failed to resolve, Pujari said.

“The meeting was chaired

by the Union Jal Shakti Minister. Chief ministers of both Odisha and Chhattisgarh attended the meeting along with their chief secretaries and other senior officials,” he said, asserting that Majhi was discharging “Raj Dharma”. He also raised questions on Patnaik’s absence from the ground.

“The people of Odisha had him as chief minister for nearly 25 years. But where is he now when the State needs leadership?” Pujari asked. The minister undertook an aerial survey of the flood-affected areas in north Odisha and held review meetings on Thursday. Pujari said he was in constant touch with MLAs across party lines in the around 20 districts staring at imminent floods. All people’s representatives and Panchayati Raj department officials are actively working on the ground, he said.

DGP reviews security ahead of Prez visit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ODISHA DGP Y B Khurania on Friday directed authorities to ensure strict adherence to protocols laid down in the Blue Book for VVIP security during President Droupadi Murmu’s scheduled three-day visit to the State from August 3, officials said. “The DGP directed that all units concerned strictly adhere to the established protocols laid down in the Blue Book for VVIP security. Nodal officers are being designated to ensure seamless coordination of all security-related duties across departments,” a statement by the Odisha Police Headquarters said.

Khurania reviewed security and safety arrangements for the upcoming visit at a meeting attended by senior



officials, including Director (Intelligence) R P Koche, ADGP (Law & Order) Sanjay Kumar, ADGP (SAP) Rajesh Kumar, Commissioner of Police (Bhubaneswar-Kataka) S Devadatta Singh, Principal Chief Security Commissioner (PCSC), East Coast Railway (ECoR), Alok Bohra, IGP (CR) Satyajit Naik and SP, CID-CB, Vivekananda

Sharma.

According to the President’s itinerary, Murmu is scheduled to arrive in Bhubaneswar by a special aircraft from New Delhi on August 3 afternoon and proceed by road to Jagadguru Kripalu University near Banki in Kataka district to inaugurate the institution. She will return to Bhubaneswar for the night.

On August 4, the President will undertake a train journey from Bhubaneswar to Brahmapur, from where she will proceed by road to Taptapani in Ganjam district. At Taptapani, she will offer prayers and perform aarti at the Maa Kandhuni Devi Temple in Gobindapur panchayat under Sanakhemundi block and participate in a tree plantation programme.

Officials said the train journey has been scheduled in view of the India Meteorological Department’s rain forecast. As part of the security preparations, anti-subotage checks will be carried out as a top priority at all venues and along the travel routes. Track patrolling has been intensified, and all level crossings on the route will remain manned throughout the visit, the statement said.

ODISHA ISSUES SOP FOR RESETTLING BONDED LABOUR

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR

ASSERTING that the State government would ensure strict legal action against middlemen and agents involved in trafficking vulnerable people for bonded labour, Odisha’s Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan on Thursday released the revised Central Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Bonded Labour in Odia language.

Harichandan unveiled the SOP at a function

marking 50 years of the Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 1976 in the country. The SOP provides guidance to frontline officials on the identification, rescue, release, repatriation and rehabilitation of bonded labourers, including those rescued from other States. Officials said the availability of the document in Odia would facilitate more effective implementation across districts and improve coordination among government departments.

More than 200 released

bonded labourers from across Odisha assembled here under the umbrella of Shramavahini, a registered survivor-led collective with over 4,000 survivors as members. Addressing the gathering, the minister said the State government would ensure stringent legal action against traffickers and middlemen involved in recruiting vulnerable persons into bonded labour.

“We will strengthen investigation and prosecution to ensure offenders are brought to justice swiftly

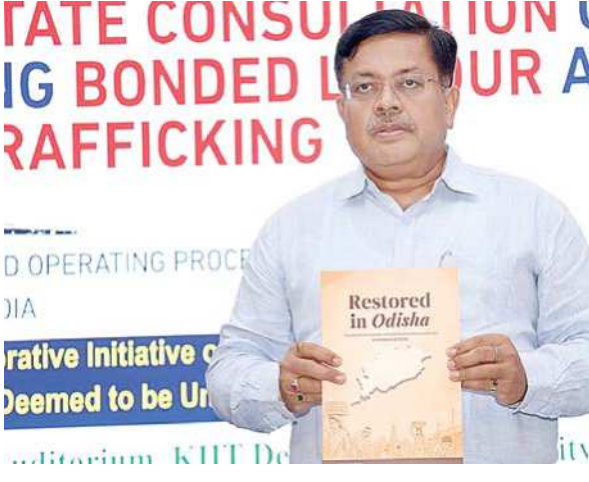
and face stringent punishment. Our objective is to create a strong deterrent and send a clear message that bonded labour and human trafficking will not be tolerated in Odisha,” he said. The minister also released ‘Restored in Odisha’, a publication documenting the State government’s initiatives, policy reforms, rescue operations, rehabilitation measures and inter-departmental efforts to combat bonded labour and human trafficking.

A panel discussion on

strengthening systems to address trafficking for bonded labour brought together representatives of the State government, legal experts, academics and civil society organisations. Participants discussed improving victim identification, access to justice, inter-State coordination and community-based prevention mechanisms. Survivors who shared their experiences spoke of the importance of timely rescue, rehabilitation and sustained community support

in rebuilding their lives and preventing re-trafficking.

Shramavahini secretary Ranjita Rana, herself a released bonded labour survivor, urged the State government to institutionalise February 9 as an annual Bonded Labour Abolition Day across all districts to strengthen public awareness and prevention efforts. She said similar government-led observances in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana had helped reinforce community vigilance.





COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2026

Lovepreet lifts silver

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.



Lovepreet Singh

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-



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.

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 Gusain, 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.

'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.

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."

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

Fadnavis calls for evacuation of dangerous buildings

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.

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.

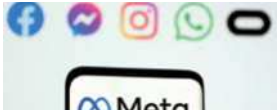
Total expenses in the quarter under review were higher at Rs 50,000.3 crore as compared to Rs 35,585.4 crore in the year-ago period, the company said. Cost of materials consumed in the first quarter shot up to Rs 32,013.2 crore from Rs 21,936.8 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, it added.

"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.



‘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 promoscope 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.

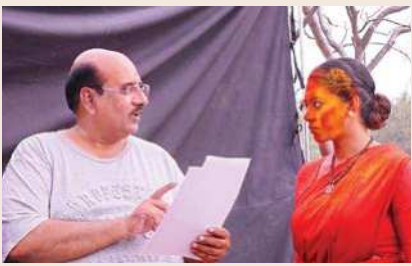
Besides, the film also stars Bollywood legend Naseeruddin Shah apart from the National Award-winning Dhanush in the lead. With the title 'OM: Chapter 1', it is anticipated that the makers will roll out the subsequent parts of the film too which

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.

