

# International air connectivity from Tirupati gets big push

► CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER PITCHES FOR DIRECT TIRUPATI-KUWAIT FLIGHT

► VIRTUALLY INAUGURATES REGIONAL AIRLINE FLY91'S OPERATIONS TO TIRUPATI

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 TIRUPATI

UNION Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu has pitched for direct international air connectivity between Tirupati and destinations like Kuwait, a long-standing demand of people from the region and overseas devotees visiting the temple city.

Despite Tirupati airport being accorded international airport status in June 2017, the pilgrim city has so far remained without a direct international flight connection. A direct service to Kuwait is expected to particularly benefit devotees and residents from the Rayalaseema region who have been seeking easier air



Tirupati Airport Director D Boominathan handing over the ceremonial boarding pass to a Hyderabad-bound passenger on Thursday

access to the Gulf country.

The minister made the remarks while virtually inaugurating the first flight of regional carrier FLY91 to Tirupati. With its entry into the city, FLY91 has added Tirupati as its 13th destination and its third station in the state. The airline has introduced direct services linking Tirupati with Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Rajahmundry.

The Tirupati-Hyderabad flight will operate daily, while services to Vijayawada will run four days a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Rajahmundry service will be available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The flight arrives from Hyderabad at 07.40 hrs, departs from Tirupati at 08.05 hrs and reaches Vijayawada at 09.15 hrs and again departs

from Vijayawada at 09.45 hrs and reaches Tirupati at 10.50 hrs. Similarly, the flight arrives from Hyderabad at 7.40 hrs, departs from Tirupati at 8.05 hrs and reaches Rajahmundry at 9.30 hrs and again departs from Rajahmundry at 10.00 hrs and reaches Tirupati at 11:25 hrs. Naidu said improved air connectivity was important for Tirupati, which receives millions of pilgrims every year.

He said efforts were under way to establish direct links with international destinations, including Kuwait, to make travel more convenient for devotees coming from abroad. The Hyderabad connection will provide passengers with access to a major aviation hub and onward links to several domestic and international destinations.

## PARIS SPACE SUMMIT

### Be co-travellers in our space journey: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for greater international cooperation, sustainability and inclusion in the exploration and use of outer space, saying that the growing number of actors and technologies in space requires collective responsibility. Addressing the first International Space Summit in Paris through video conferencing, PM Modi thanked French President Emmanuel Macron for the invitation and for taking the initiative to convene the summit.

He said space, which had inspired human imagination for centuries, now plays an important role in everyday life, influencing areas ranging from climate and agriculture to oceans and communities. "As orbits become more crowded, technologies more powerful, and actors more numerous, our choices must be clear: cooperation over confrontation; sustainability over short-term gain; and inclusion over exclusion," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister said India's approach to space cooperation is rooted in the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", or "One Earth, One Family, One Future", and called for the same spirit to extend beyond Earth.

## ‘Sexual assault’ cases against KTR, Harish Rao

Continued from P1

According to the FIR, a 33-year-old Armed Reserve Woman Police Constable (ARWPC) of the CAR Headquarters, Hyderabad, lodged a complaint with the Saifabad Police alleging that she was posted at the Legislative Assembly for bandobast duty at Gate No. 3.

Legislators T Harish Rao, along with K Taraka Rama Rao, D Sudheer Reddy, K P Vivekanand, Gangula Kamalakara, Padi Kaushik Reddy, Naveen Reddy, several other MLCs and their followers, came to Gate No. 3. Some of the MLAs were wearing black T-shirts bearing the slogan, "Congress has failed to implement its promises."

"Harish Rao loudly shouted at the women police on duty, stating, "Are you doing cheap politics by using lady constables as a shield?" At the same time, Taraka Rama Rao also publicly insulted them and loudly shouted, "Who is doing 'Shikhandi politics' by using women as a shield? Who is the local DCP here?" The said remarks were made with the intention of insulting the dignity and self-respect of the women police and intimidating them so as to prevent them from performing their official duties. Harish Rao removed his T-shirt and threw it towards

a police officer and stood semi-naked in front of them. MLC Naveen Reddy, MLA Sudheer Reddy and others, also removed their T-shirts and stood semi-naked at a very close distance from the complainant," said Saifabad Inspector K Nageswara Rao.

The woman police constable also alleged that the legislators, in an aggressive manner and while being semi-naked, shouted, "Where do they keep the women police?" Such conduct was deliberately carried out with the intention of outraging the modesty, dignity, and honour of the women police personnel. They behaved in such a vulgar and indecent manner despite knowing that they were women and were performing official duties.

Their conduct was intended to humiliate, intimidate, and sexually harass them and to prevent them from discharging their lawful duties. The entire incident was recorded by the cameras of various media channels present at the spot. The humiliation, fear, and distress caused to the women police personnel were clearly visible on their faces in the video footage. The complainant alleged in her complaint that the BRS MLAs and MLCs indulged in physically pushing against them amounting

to physical harassment and assault upon them. They deliberately approached them in a semi-naked condition, fully knowing that they were women police personnel on duty and could not leave the place of deployment.

They further attempted to forcibly enter the Assembly premises by pushing and jostling the women police personnel. During this process, they pushed and pressed against the chest area of the women police personnel.

Following the complaint, the Saifabad Police registered cases under section 74 (criminal force against a woman with the intent to outrage her modesty), 75(1) (offence of sexual harassment), 79 (intentionally insult a woman's modesty), 121(1) (voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt to a public servant to deter them from performing their official duty), 130 (criminal force), 132 (criminal force used to deter a public servant from discharging their official duty), 296 (speaks obscene words in or near a public place), 351(2) (deals with the punishment for basic criminal intimidation), 352 (intentional insults made with the intent) read with 3(5) (constructive criminal liability for acts done by several persons in furtherance of a common intention) of the BNS.

## Vikarabad district court site row: HC asks advocates to let administrative process take course

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

THE Telangana High Court on Thursday asked advocates opposing the proposed site for the Vikarabad district court complex to allow the issue to be decided through administrative process, observing that selection of a court site was essentially an administrative exercise.

The division bench of Chief Justice Apareesh Kumar Singh and Justice Ghouse Meera Mohiuddin heard a PIL filed by Vikarabad advocate Bandi Narayana and three others. The petitioners challenged the proposed 10-acre site at Billadakla/Mekalagandi for construction of the 10-plus-2 complex, claiming successive principal district and sessions judges had found it unsuitable.

P Varun Reddy, appearing for the petitioners, suggested alternative sites at the horticulture centre in Yennepally and at Shivarreddypet. He submitted that the proposed site was low-lying, had deep ditches and uneven ground; was difficult to access. He referred to earlier correspondence from district judges supporting a more convenient location near the railway station and RTC bus-stand.

# S-400, BrahMos on table at Modi-Putin meet

Continued from P1

India signed a \$5.43 billion (Rs 40,000 crore) deal with Russia in October 2018 for five S-400 Triumf regiments. Four have already been delivered and are operational. Three squadrons are deployed in Punjab, Rajasthan and the Jammu sector against Pakistan, while one is deployed in the north against China.

The S-400 was credited with a 300+ km intercept -- the longest-ever kill in Operation Sindoor in May 2025 -- taking out a Pakistani AEW&C aircraft

and helping establish air dominance. The fifth and final squadron was delayed due to the Russia-Ukraine war. It is now assured for delivery by November 2026.

Peskov also said the two countries were jointly producing BrahMos missiles and that it was time to consider upgrading them. "We are jointly producing the BrahMos missiles, and it is time to think about improving those missiles, adding some additional characteristics, making them more competitive in

the market and more effective," he said.

The BrahMos-NG (Next Generation) is a lighter 1.3-tonne missile compared with the 2.9-tonne BrahMos. It is smaller, has a speed of Mach 3.5 and a range of 400 km-plus, and can be carried by Tejas and MiG-29 fighter jets -- allowing six to seven missiles per fighter compared with one on the Su-30MKI at present.

Russia still accounts for 40% of India's arms imports for the 2021-25 period, down from 51%.

## It's certain: Xi to visit India for BRICS Summit

Continued from P1

"I have no information to provide regarding the question you raised," Guo Jiakun replied to a question on if the Chinese leader will be travelling to India this weekend to attend the BRICS leaders' meeting. The high-stakes visit marks Xi's first visit to India in seven years, following a chill in bilateral relations after the 2020 Galwan Valley border clashes that killed 20 Indians and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers.

The last time Xi visited India was in 2019 for an informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Mamallapuram near Chennai. Xi had first come to India in September 2014 when it was the first terms of both the leaders in office and had later visited Goa in 2016 to attend the BRICS summit. Bilateral ties between the two nations have improved in recent years, especially since PM Modi visited China last year and as both nations grapple with volatile relationships with the US. New Delhi has since then eased some of the restrictions on Chinese investment that it imposed following the 2020 clashes, focusing on electronics, capital goods, and solar cell sectors.

# India pushes Global South priorities amid trade tensions

Continued from P1

As global trade disputes and geopolitical realignments create economic headwinds, India is looking at addressing critical vulnerabilities in food security, energy stability and resilient supply chains, they said.

The summit in New Delhi is taking place against the backdrop of a global economy facing the adverse impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war, the West Asia crisis, especially the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, and the Trump administration's trade and tariff policies. With just a day left before the summit, it remains unclear whether the mem-

ber nations of the grouping have reached a consensus on a joint statement, as differences between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over the West Asia crisis persist. The grouping operates under a framework of consensus.

BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, with Indonesia joining in 2025. Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam became BRICS partner countries last year.

BRICS has emerged as an in-

fluential grouping as it brings together 11 major emerging economies of the world, representing around 49.5 per cent of the global population, around 40 per cent of the global GDP and around 26 per cent of global trade.

India's chairship of the grouping is centred on four pillars: resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability. In addition to these areas, the leaders will exchange views on strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation on common priorities and share perspectives on global and regional matters of mutual importance, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

## Bank strike today

Continued from P1

The latest conciliation talks were held at the office of the chief labour commissioner (central), with representatives of the UFBU, Indian Banks' Association (IBA), Department of Financial Services (DFS) and labour authorities.

The DFS representative appealed to the bank unions to reconsider the strike call in view of the BRICS Leaders' Summit during 11-13 September in New Delhi. The unions, however, maintained that they could not defer the strike in the absence of a favourable decision or a definite timeline for implementation of the five-day work week.

"Two rounds of online meetings were held today. There has been no concrete outcome on the five-day work week. The strike stands," said Rupam Roy, general secretary, All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC).

The September 11 action is the first in a wider programme announced by the UFBU.

The unions have also called a three-day nationwide strike during September 28-30 and have announced an indefinite strike from October 26 if their demands remain unresolved.

# Kishan, Laxman see filip to TG economic development

Continued from P1

Of these, five key projects related to Telangana, along with Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, were approved with an investment of Rs. 10,021 crore. These projects will develop a total of 540 km of railway line.

The Secunderabad-Ghatkesar-Kazipet route is like the lifeblood of the Telangana railway system.

Implementing multi-tracking on this route will reduce train congestion and improve passenger services.

Freight transport will be faster, directly benefiting Telangana industries, farmers, traders, and

youth. This decision reflects Prime Minister Modi's vision of a developed India and a developed Telangana.

These projects, designed in line with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, will strengthen connectivity among road, rail, industries and markets.

This will help reduce transportation costs and make supply chains more efficient.

Dr Laxman said, "The Modi government at the Centre is not limited to words, but is setting the direction for the development of the states with huge infrastructure investments. I

am grateful to the Prime Minister and the Central Railways for further strengthening railway connectivity in line with the aspirations of the people of Telangana."

The project, targeted for completion by 2029-30, will connect Telangana with national freight and industrial corridors.

Earlier, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy welcomed the decision and said freight trains will also reach their destinations faster, saving fuel and reducing freight charges. This

multi-tracking railway line can transport an additional 9.83 million tonnes of freight per year.

This will enable the transport of 7.06 million tonnes of coal, 0.73 million tonnes of iron ore, 0.65 million tonnes of food grains and 0.13 million tonnes of cement. The railway line, to be made available between Secunderabad and Kazipet, will also pave the way for better rail travel on the Vijayawada and Mumbai routes.

Thanking PM Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for approving the project, Kishan Reddy said he was happy about the

approval for the construction of the multi-tracking railway line between Secunderabad and Kazipet.

He said that after the formation of Telangana state, the railway budget allocations have increased 21 times over the last 12 years; with Rs. 36,286 crores being allocated to Telangana.

In addition, he said Telangana currently has railway projects worth about Rs. 50,000 crores under construction, and a final location survey is underway for railway projects worth another Rs. 50,000 crores.

## ‘Perform Or Perish’

Continued from P1

The Chief Minister took serious note of the deletion of the votes in the SIR and asked all the legislators to protect the voting rights of the people. He pointed out that 15 crore adult voter names have gone missing across the country.

Thanking all the MLAs for their cooperation during these 1,000 days of governance, Revanth Reddy said that all the legislators should be present in the House during the debates.

# DGCA orders drug test for all pilots

NEW DELHI: After the captain of an Air India flight that was involved in a sudden altitude loss incident last month tested positive for drug use, aviation safety regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordered all Indian airlines to conduct a one-time test for psychoactive substances on all their pilots by July next year, according to sources.

Indian airlines are estimated to have close to 14,000

pilots. Following the incident that involved a Phuket-Delhi flight, and before the DGCA ordered tests for all pilots across airlines, the Air India group had voluntarily initiated one-time random drug tests on the about 5,000 pilots employed by Air India and Air India Express.

Moreover, the draft of the new and likely more stringent norms on testing aviation personnel for psychoactive substance use is likely

to be related by the DGCA by month-end, according to Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu. Last month, Naidu had said that the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) suggested to DGCA that all pilots should undergo a dope test once a year, against the current regulation that requires 10% of the pilots to undergo random testing annually.

According to sources, while the DGCA was already

in the process of revising the regulations pertaining to testing of aviation personnel for psychoactive substances, the Air India incident led to calls for more stringent drug testing protocol and stricter disciplinary action in proven instances of drug abuse.

Even as consultations for revising the rules were on, the regulator decided to put all airline pilots through a one-time drug test over the course of nearly 12 months.

# Court frames charges against Lalu, family under PMLA act

Continued from P1

The court also said that the land transferred at Patna is proceeds of crime. "The proceeds of crime were enjoyed by the Lalu Family." Special Judge Vishal Gogne directed that charges be framed against the accused persons under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The court has directed the

accused persons to appear before the Rouse Avenue court on October 3 before Special Judge Prashant Kumar. The court has discharged the accused persons, namely: Gaurav Gupta, Nath Mal Kakrania, Rahul Yadav, Vijay Tripathi, Deoki Nandan Tulshyan, Rajiv Kumar Relan, Abhishek Finance Private Limited. While framing the charges,

the court said that Lalu Prasad Yadav, the then Railway Minister, fixed a tender of an IRCTC hotel in favour of his favourite company in lieu of a land Parcel. The Land at Patna was described as proceeds of crime by the ED. The court also said that it did not find that the investigation against Lalu Prasad Yadav was motivated by political vendetta.

# TG PR ACT AMENDED

Continued from P1

Seethakka said that funds were not being received on time due to treasury delays. "The previous government discriminated against panchayats. We are amending the law to rectify this," she said.

The Minister said that panchayat elections were delayed due to issues regarding BC reservations. Full funding from the Centre for that period was not

received. "We are spending Rs 50 crore monthly for gram panchayats. The second instalment of Rs 619 crore for the 2025-26 year is yet to be received. We are paying salaries to multi-purpose workers on the first of the month. The Centre's new policies are impacting village development," she said.

The Minister also said that the government had to face 40 per cent burden

under the VB-Gram-G scheme, which was earlier just 10 per cent. She alleged that the central forest laws were creating obstacles in the construction of roads in forest areas, which is causing inconvenience to the people.

Replying to a question, the Minister said a decision regarding the cheque-signing authority for deputy sarpanches will be taken soon.

## Telangana govt to make Musi money-spinner

Continued from P1

"Water availability in the Musi project and the demand for water for data centers, IT and industrial projects is under study. The price of water would be decided depending on the availability and demand in every season. How much revenue would be generated would be known only after the completion of the Musi first phase," the officials said.

## ‘Get off our roads, Mr Singh’

Continued from P1

The Sikh Coalition, a US-based civil rights organisation advocating for Sikh Americans, criticised the poster, saying it reinforces stereotypes about Sikh Americans and portrays members of the community as outsiders.

"Millions of Sikhs in the United States have the last name Singh, which means lion. We remain

fearless in identifying as Sikhs—even when our government portrays us as enemies," the organisation wrote in a post on X. Sikh Americans are also a significant presence in the US trucking industry. Industry advocacy groups have estimated that Sikh drivers make up a sizeable share of the country's long-haul truck-driving workforce.

