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PM Modi To Visit New Zealand Next Week, PM Christopher Luxon Announces



New Delhi, July 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will make his first official visit to New Zealand next week, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon announced on Friday. While confirming the visit through a post on social media, Luxon did not reveal the exact dates of Modi's trip. "I'm delighted to announce Indian Prime Minister @narendramodi will make his first official visit to New Zealand next week," Luxon said, describing the visit as an important milestone in bilateral ties.

I'm delighted to announce Indian Prime Minister @narendramodi will make his first official visit to New Zealand next week. India is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, and a country of enormous importance to New Zealand's economic prosperity. Highlighting India's growing global economic influence, Luxon said the country is one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies and is vital to New Zealand's economic future. He said the two nations are taking their relationship to the next level through the New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement, signed in April.

According to Luxon, the agreement is expected to create jobs, boost exports and support stronger economic growth in New Zealand. He said it would also open up opportunities for New Zealand businesses by providing access to India's 1.4 billion-strong market, bringing more income to Kiwi communities, creating employment and lifting wages, PTI reports. India and New Zealand signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) earlier this year to boost trade in goods and services and encourage investment between the two countries. The agreement gives duty-free access to 100% of India's exports to New Zealand.

"UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY" BJP Slams Opposition Over Letter To Chief Justice



New Delhi: The BJP has strongly criticised the Opposition bloc INDIA for trying to "undermine democracy" by fear-mongering and writing to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant with misinformation about the electoral process and the voter roll cleanup exercise Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

BJP MP Sudhanshu Trivedi pointed out the Opposition parties "face repeated failure due to their constant disregard and disrespect for public sentiment".

"The BJP strongly condemns the letter written to the Chief Justice of India, and the failed attempt to undermine democracy, by a few political parties that treat their respective parties as personal caste fiefdoms and face repeated failure due to their constant disregard and disrespect for public sentiment," Trivedi said.

"This entire matter has two facets - a legal one and a political one. From a legal standpoint, the Special Intensive Revision has been upheld as entirely reasonable and lawful by various courts; furthermore, such exercises have been conducted periodically by the Election Commission and the government of India in the past," he said.

The BJP MP highlighted that even from a constitutional perspective, the Opposition failed to present a single factual issue before the court, which "has raised suspicion in the public mind that their dream of capturing power in the states by relying on dubious voters is now crumbling." He said the tone and language used in the letter to the Supreme Court "mirror the arrogance witnessed during the Emergency era."

The Congress's own leader, Shashi Tharoor, had told a TV channel that the party benefited from SIR in Kerala because fake voters registered by the Communist parties were deleted, Trivedi said and challenged the Opposition to give an answer on this matter. "Meanwhile, your Karnataka leader DK Shivakumar instructs his party workers to engage in the SIR process with promptness and active zeal, yet here you are raising objections against it," the BJP MP said.

ISRO Bomb Threat Email Traced To Ghaziabad Sender Found Mentally Challenged

Ghaziabad / Bengaluru: Bengaluru Police have solved the hoax bomb threat case involving the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Headquarters after tracing the threatening email to Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. The suspect, who was identified through technical and digital evidence, was found to be mentally challenged, police said.

The incident came to light on July 2, when ISRO Headquarters (Antariksha Bhavan) on New BEL Road received an email threatening a bomb blast at the premises. Treating the threat with utmost seriousness, police teams rushed to the office and carried out a comprehensive search. However, no suspicious objects or explosives were found, confirming the email to be a hoax.

Following a complaint by the Administrative Officer of ISRO Headquarters, Sanjaynagar Police registered a case and launched an investigation.



A special team was constituted to identify the sender using technical analysis and digital forensic evidence.

The investigation led police to Ghaziabad, where the individual responsible for sending the email was identified and secured. Police also seized the electronic device used to send the threatening message, and forensic examination confirmed that it had been used to send the bomb threat email to ISRO Headquarters in Bengaluru.

During the course of the investigation, officials found that the accused was mentally challenged.

Key Decision on Tirupati Assembly In-Charge Appointment; AP TDP Chief Issues Orders

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July 2: The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leadership has appointed Manne Srinivasa Prasad as the party's in-charge for the Tirupati Assembly constituency. Andhra Pradesh TDP President and MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao issued orders to this effect on Friday. He stated that the appointment was made following the directions of TDP National President and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. Until now, M. Sugunamma had been serving as the Tirupati constituency in-charge. Recently, the government appointed her as Chairperson of the Andhra Pradesh Greening and Beautification Corporation, resulting in increased responsibilities and a busier schedule. Meanwhile, local leader Manne Srinivasa Prasad became more active in party affairs, raising party issues and organizing various programs in Tirupati. In view of his active role, the party leadership decided to appoint him as the constituency in-charge. The TDP leadership believes that he will not only strengthen the party further in the Tirupati Assembly constituency but will also effectively counter criticism from local



YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders. Sources indicate that the appointment has also been made keeping in mind the upcoming local body elections, where strengthening the party organization at the grassroots level is considered important.

Industries and Investments Are Essential for Andhra Pradesh's Development: Home Minister Anita

From Our Staff Reporter Vizianagaram, July 3: A major step has been taken towards the establishment of industrial parks in Andhra Pradesh. On Friday, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu virtually laid the foundation stone for industrial parks in Sringavarapukota Mandal of Vizianagaram district from Jammalamadugu in Kadapa district. The event was attended by In-charge Minister Vangalapudi Anita, Minister Kondapalli Srinivas, and Visakhapatnam MP M. Sribharat as chief guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Anita said that industries and investments are crucial for the development of the state. She remarked that the relationship between a farmer and his land is similar to that between a mother and her child. She stated that the NDA government is giving high priority to farmers. The minister announced that an MSME Park would be developed in the first phase across 535 acres. She added that the establishment of various industries in the park is expected to generate employment and livelihood opportunities for

around 45,000 people. Anita said that the S. Kota Assembly constituency would witness significant development in the coming years. Referring to the Bhogapuram International Airport project, she recalled that Opposition leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had once questioned how an airport could come up in a place where even a state-run bus service was limited. However, she said that the Bhogapuram Airport is now nearing completion and is ready for inauguration. She further noted that while people from North Andhra had migrated else-



where in the past, the region is now attracting people from different areas due to increasing development opportunities. The event was also attended by MLA Lalitha Kumari, MLAs Raghu Raju and Srinivas Naidu, DCMS Chairman Gompa Krishna, and government officials.

Don't Believe False Propaganda on E-Crop Registration: Minister Atchannaidu

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July 3: Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister Atchannaidu has urged people not to believe what he described as false propaganda by Opposition leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy regarding e-crop registration in the state. He alleged that Jagan has become an ambassador of falsehoods and that Sakshi has turned into a platform for spreading misinformation. The minister said that people are observing attempts to mislead farmers and that facts cannot be concealed through malicious propaganda.

Atchannaidu stated that during the Kharif 2025 season, e-crop registration was completed on 117.39 lakh acres belonging to 53.32 lakh farmers across the state. He said that e-crop registration under the coalition government has increased significantly compared to the registrations



carried out during the YSRCP government's tenure. He also noted that 99.7 percent of e-crop registration was completed during the Rabi 2025-26 season, which he described as evidence of the government's efficient performance. The minister further said, "Through the state government's APAIMS 2.0 platform, we have brought about a technological revolution in digital e-crop registration."

Modern technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), geo-referencing, and satellite technology are being used to ensure transparent crop registration. The digital crop survey is being implemented to deliver subsidies, crop insurance, and other government benefits to farmers more quickly. This system is emerging as a model for the entire country. Seeing the successes achieved by the coalition government, Jagan is resorting to misinformation campaigns. Even on the issue of coconut prices, Sakshi is publishing misleading reports. There are suspicions that such reports are intended to damage the coconut market. Attempts to influence the market through false propaganda will not be tolerated," he said.

Sai Krishna Case: SIT Reveals Key Findings Before Court



Vijayawada, July 3: Significant developments have emerged in the Gade Sai Krishna custodial death case, which has created a sensation across the state. In a memo filed before the court seeking the custody of Circle Inspector (CI) Nagaraju, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) disclosed several crucial findings related to the case. According to the SIT, important CCTV footage relevant to the investigation was not found at the police station. The forensic laboratory reportedly indicated that the footage may have been destroyed. The SIT also informed the court that suspicious stains had been identified

within the station premises. The investigation team stated that it had seized a lathi (baton) bearing suspicious stains, bones, burnt ash, and a partially burnt iron handcuff chain from the terrace of the police station. The SIT further said that statements recorded from certain individuals indicate that Sai Krishna died after sustaining severe injuries while in custody. In its memo, the SIT stated that if custody of CI Nagaraju is granted, investigators would take him to identify locations and gather further information regarding what happened to the deceased's body after the alleged incident.

Freedom of Expression Is Not a License for Abuse: Kandula Durgesh

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh strongly reacted to obscene posts, personal attacks, and misinformation being spread on social media. He warned that freedom of expression should not be treated as a license to use abusive language. He stated that the law would deal strictly with those who misuse social media. The minister expressed anger over what he described as a deliberate misinformation campaign against Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on social media. He alleged that the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) is attempting to weaken Pawan

Kalyan politically as part of a strategy to undermine the coalition



government. Durgesh said it is inappropriate to use the Deputy Chief Minister's name merely to gain views or engage in blackmail. He emphasized that while people have the right to question and criticize,

they do not have the right to cross acceptable limits. He also expressed the view that stronger regulation of social media is necessary. Speaking on the Rushikonda Palace issue, the minister said the facility would be utilized for tourism development and public visits. He revealed that an Expression of Interest (EOI) has been invited for this purpose. Durgesh stated that policies of the previous government had caused annual losses of around 77 crore to the Tourism Department and assured that steps would be taken to promote and strengthen the tourism sector in the future.

EDITORIAL

Are Prime Ministers and CMs who are criminals ineligible?

Even though the then Chief Minister Kejriwal, who faced serious allegations in the Delhi Liquor Policy case, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in March 2024, he decided to run the Delhi government from jail as the Chief Minister. He also ruled to some extent. A serious political uproar broke out at that time. However, two years later, in February 2026, the Delhi court acquitted Kejriwal in this case and gave him a clean chit, but in the meantime, many political developments had taken place against the AAP government. Also, due to lack of proper evidence against Manish Sisodia and others in the Kejriwal government's cabinet, the Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi dismissed the case in February 2026. Could those facing criminal charges have been clinging to their posts while the cases of those facing criminal charges have been going on for several years? The debate was prominent. There have also been arguments that it is not right to label people as criminals just because they are accused, and that they should be convicted only if the crime is proven. Such a situation has called into question the morality of leaders in positions of power, whether in the country or in the states. At a time when there is a debate about the consequences of this immorality without accountability to the people in a democracy, the central government has brought a new bill with the 130th Constitutional Amendment. According to this bill, if the Prime Minister, Chief Minister, state and central ministers are arrested for serious crimes punishable by more than five years and are in jail custody for 30 consecutive days, they will automatically lose their positions from the 31st day. When this bill and two other related bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 21, 2025, there was a huge uproar. While the central government strongly supported the idea of bringing political morality through these bills, the opposition opposed it, saying that this was for the sake of political factions. Congress leader KC Venugopal questioned whether this bill would apply to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was arrested in 2010 when he was the Home Minister of Gujarat. The opposition argued that the new proposed bill could have far-reaching constitutional and political consequences, especially in judicial investigations and cases that are still unresolved. In particular, they questioned whether the proposals of this bill were against the constitutional principle of presumption of innocence until proven guilty. With this, the Parliament sent these bills for scrutiny by a joint parliamentary committee with a voice vote. The 31-member Joint Parliamentary Committee, headed by former IAS officer, politician and BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi, was entrusted with the responsibility of examining these bills. While members of the main opposition parties like Congress, Trinamool Congress, Samajwadi Party, DMK and Left parties boycotted this committee, saying that there would be no meaningful benefit from participating in this committee, other neutral parties like NCP (Sharad Pawar), AIMIM, BJD, YSRCP and SAD participated in this committee. The scrutiny of this bill has been concluded. A key meeting of the JPC will be held on July 17 to finalize this draft report. Before that, the NDA members will submit their views to the committee. Only after compiling all this, the JPP will submit the draft bill with its recommendations to Parliament. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and the CPI have already submitted their views to the committee. This bill will be introduced in the winter session of Parliament to be held from July 20 to 27. The Centre says that this bill, which declares Prime Ministers, Chief Ministers and Ministers disqualified if they commit crimes, is of great importance. The government will give priority to some other limited bills, including the Women's Reservation Bill. Getting these bills passed is a test for the NDA government. It is very important to achieve a two-thirds (2/3) special majority for the 130th Constitutional Amendment required for the passage of the bill. The Centre is also set to pass the politically sensitive 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill to redistribute Lok Sabha seats among states based on the 2011 census. There is a demand for the implementation of the law providing 33 percent reservation for women in the legislatures (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) without any conditions by the upcoming elections. The Centre is trying to increase its numerical strength to implement these three laws. In the meantime, it is moving its feet to gather the support of opposition legislators by following a program of encouraging defections. It is expected to introduce the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill and the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill on the recommendations of the JPC in these sessions.

Latest UN Report On Israel Occupied Territories Exposes The Ruthlessness Of Atrocities

Every war leaves behind shattered cities, broken societies and grieving families. But some wars destroy something less visible yet infinitely more consequential: faith in the institutions created to prevent humanity from repeating history's darkest chapters. The latest report of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is therefore more than another meticulous chronicle of atrocities. It is a stark reminder that the international system is steadily losing either the ability—or the political will—to enforce the principles upon which it claims to rest.

For nearly eight decades, the post-1945 order has been built on a simple premise: no state, military or armed group stands above international law. The Geneva Conventions, the UN Charter, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court were designed not merely to codify legal norms but to ensure that power remained constrained by law. Yet Gaza and the occupied West Bank increasingly suggest that these institutions have become repositories of evidence rather than instruments of accountability.

The Commission documents an occupation that has become more entrenched, settlements more aggressive and civilian suffering more routine. It accuses Israel of creating conditions in which settler violence increasingly advances political objectives, while simultaneously exposing Hamas' systematic campaign of executions, torture and intimidation against Palestinians. Civilians find themselves trapped between state power and militant authoritarianism, with neither side exempt from legal scrutiny.

The temptation is to reduce the conflict to competing moral

absolutes. Israel invokes security and the trauma of October 7; Palestinians point to decades of occupation, displacement and overwhelming military force. Both narratives contain undeniable truths. Yet neither can justify deliberate attacks on civilians, hostage-taking, collective punishment, torture or demographic engineering. International humanitarian law was never designed to validate political narratives; it exists precisely to restrain them.

The Commission's most unsettling conclusion, however, lies beyond its catalogue of abuses. It exposes the widening gulf between documentation and accountability. The United Nations has become exceptionally proficient at recording violations through satellite imagery, digital forensics and witness testimony. Rarely has the world possessed such sophisticated investigative capacity. Yet political enforcement remains conspicuously absent.

This is the defining paradox of contemporary international governance. Never before has humanity known so much about atrocities while doing so little to stop them. Reports accumulate, emergency sessions convene, and resolutions proliferate, yet settlements continue expanding, rockets continue flying, hostages remain captive, and civilians continue paying the price. Every investigation strengthens the historical record while simultaneously exposing the institutional paralysis of those responsible for enforcing international law.

The West Bank illustrates this failure vividly. For years, settler violence was often portrayed as the work of isolated extremists beyond effective government control. The Commission challenges that narrative, suggesting instead that repeated failures to investigate attacks, prosecute offenders



and protect Palestinian communities have created an environment where impunity increasingly serves broader political objectives. When intimidation systematically displaces communities, alters demographics and reshapes territory, violence becomes more than a law-and-order problem; it becomes an instrument of policy.

Equally significant is the Commission's assessment of Hamas. While international attention has understandably focused on Israel's military operations in Gaza, the report documents Hamas' own use of executions, torture and public intimidation to consolidate control. These findings complicate the simplistic binary narratives that increasingly dominate global debate. Human rights cannot become conditional upon political allegiance. A legal system that excuses violations committed by one side while condemning identical conduct by another ceases to be universal. That principle now faces its greatest test.

The erosion of international credibility is not solely the con-

sequence of events in Gaza. It also reflects a geopolitical order in which law increasingly bends before strategic interests. Nowhere is this clearer than within the United Nations Security Council. The veto, originally intended to preserve great-power consensus, has evolved into a mechanism that frequently prevents collective action precisely when humanitarian intervention is most urgently required. Whether the conflict is in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan or Myanmar, the outcome has become painfully familiar: competing resolutions, diplomatic deadlock and continued civilian suffering.

The Gaza conflict has exposed these contradictions with unusual clarity. The United States continues to balance unwavering support for Israel's security with concern over humanitarian conditions. European governments remain divided between historical responsibility and domestic political pressure. Russia and China present themselves as defenders of international legality even as they face allegations of violating similar

principles elsewhere. Across much of the Global South, these inconsistencies have reinforced a growing belief that the rules-based order operates differently depending on whose interests are involved.

Whether entirely justified or not, this perception carries enormous geopolitical consequences. For decades, Western democracies derived moral authority from the claim that international law applied equally to allies and adversaries. As that consistency comes under question, so too does the legitimacy of the institutions they helped build. In international relations, perception often shapes reality. If accountability appears selective, states begin calculating geopolitical protection rather than legal responsibility. The implications extend well beyond the Middle East. Military planners across the world are studying Gaza not only as a battlefield but as a precedent. They are observing how urban warfare, prolonged sieges, humanitarian access and allegations of war crimes influence international diplomacy.

In Twelve Years Of His Rule, PM Narendra Modi Has Undertaken 102 International Trips

There is a photograph that has, by now, become a genre unto itself: Narendra Modi, garlanded or embracing, disembarking from an Air India One flight onto a red carpet somewhere between Washington and Abu Dhabi, Tokyo and Rio. Multiply that image by 102 and you have the defining visual record of India's most travelled prime minister—a leader who, as of June 2026, has undertaken 102 international trips to 81 countries since 2014, eclipsing even Indira Gandhi's well-worn passport. The question Indian taxpayers are increasingly entitled to ask is not whether Mr Modi has travelled a great deal. That is beyond dispute. It is whether the republic has received value commensurate with the spectacle—or whether twelve years of summit diplomacy amount, in large part, to an expensively produced foreign-policy travelogue. The bill, finally itemised: For years, the government resisted a consolidated accounting of what all this cost. That changed in February 2026, when the Ministry of External Affairs, responding to a written question in the Lok Sabha, disclosed that the Prime Minister's foreign trips between 2015 and 2025 had cost the exchequer ₹762 crore. The trajectory is instructive: annual spending crossed Rs.100 crore in 2024 and then Rs.175 crore in 2025, a year of marathon touring across Europe, the Americas, Africa and East Asia. Delegation sizes have swelled too, ranging from 27 to 72 officials per trip, with one five-nation tour in 2025 requiring 95 accompanying personnel.

The MEA's defence—that host nations absorb most hospitality costs, leaving India to fund security, delegation logis-

tics and the media contingent—is technically accurate and beside the point. Rs.762 crore is not a rounding error in a country where state governments routinely plead poverty over midday-meal budgets and drought relief. The real question was never the accounting line. It is the return on it. Has the diplomacy actually paid off? Any honest audit must concede that some of this travel produced hard outcomes. The India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, signed in 2022, has demonstrably deepened trade and drawn the UAE into the top rank of India's strategic investors—arguably the single cleanest success of the Modi diplomatic era. Washington has delivered the GE-HAL jet engine collaboration, expanding semiconductor cooperation and deeper intelligence-sharing arrangements, even if several of these remain mid-implementation rather than complete. The Quad, dismissed by sceptics a decade ago as a talking shop, has hardened into a genuine strategic platform binding India to the United States, Japan and Australia. France has moved past Rafale jets into space and civil nuclear cooperation. These are not nothing.

But set against this ledger is a longer list of ambitions still gathering dust. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train, promised as a flagship of the Japan relationship, remains years behind its original schedule. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, unveiled with considerable fanfare at the 2023 G20 summit as a rival to China's Belt and Road, has been becalmed by the very regional instability—the Gaza war, and now the aftermath of the 2026 Iran-US conflict—that a corri-



dor through West Asia was supposed to insure against. Infrastructure MoUs signed with African and Latin American governments have, by the government's own admissions in various parliamentary replies, progressed at a crawl.

This is the structural chink in India's diplomatic model: an MoU is a statement of intent, not a contract. Signing one generates a headline and a handshake photograph; deliv-ering on it requires financing to be arranged, environmental clearances to be secured, land to be acquired, and—most often the fatal step—private capital to actually show up. Indian and foreign officials involved in past summit preparations have long acknowledged privately that investment figures announced at events such as Vibrant Gujarat or the Voice

of the Global South summits are aspirational ceilings, not realised totals, and that the gap between the number announced on stage and the capital actually deployed years later is rarely reconciled in public.

Mr Modi did not invent the diaspora rally or the leader-to-leader hug. But he industrialised them. Howdy Modi in Houston, the toffee-sharing moment with Italy's Giorgia Meloni, the carefully choreographed embraces with leader after leader—these are not accidents of scheduling. They are the product of a deliberate communications strategy that treats foreign policy as a permanent campaign, engineered for the diaspora WhatsApp forward and the primetime split-screen as much as for any cable traffic between

foreign ministries. There is a legitimate argument that this branding has value: it projects confidence, signals that India is a nation worth courting, and generates diaspora goodwill that translates, eventually, into remittances and investment. There is an equally legitimate counter-argument that it has become a substitute for negotiating leverage—that the hug has, on occasion, been mistaken for the outcome. Whatever the balance sheet on individual partnerships, some structural Indian weaknesses have proven immune to prime ministerial mileage. Trade with China continues to expand even as the two armies remain locked in an unresolved Himalayan standoff. India's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat is exactly where it was in 2014—a perennial talking point, never a vote.

DRDO Team Inspects Proposed BDL Project Site at Donakonda Industrial Park



Ongele, pen power July 3: A team from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), accompanied by Prakasam District Collector P. Rajababu, visited the proposed project site of Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) at the Donakonda Industrial Park in Donakonda Mandal of Darsi Assembly Constituency on Friday. During the visit, district officials briefed the DRDO delegation on the proposed project site, existing infrastructure, connectivity, land availability, and future expansion possibilities. The team conducted a detailed inspection of the site and assessed its suitability for the proposed defence manufacturing project. Later, a review meeting was held at the Donakonda MPDO Office, where the District Collector and senior officials held discussions with the DRDO delegation. The project details were presented through a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the scope, infrastructure requirements, and implementation plan. Speaking to the media, District Collector P. Rajababu said that the DRDO team had undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the proposed BDL project in the Donakonda In-



dustrial Park. He stated that the Andhra Pradesh Government is giving high priority to industrial development and is committed to extending all necessary support for the establishment of the prestigious defence project. The Collector said the DRDO team reviewed key aspects such as land availability, transportation connectivity, water supply, power infrastructure, and other essential facilities. He assured that the district administration would provide full cooperation and ensure speedy completion of all required procedures through coordination among various government departments.

Rajababu expressed confidence that once the project becomes operational, it will significantly boost industrial growth in the Donakonda region, creating nearly 500 direct permanent jobs and around 2,000 indirect employment opportunities, thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the area. Among those present at the meeting were Darsi TDP In-charge Dr. Gottipati Lakshmi, Addanki RDO Vijaya Jyothi, APIIC General Manager Madan Mohan Rao, Industries Department General Manager Srinivasa Rao, District Land Survey Officer Ghouse Basha, representatives of the Industries Department, APIIC officials, and Revenue Department officials.

Historic First ASMITA South Zone Women Canoeing & Kayaking League to be Held in Visakhapatnam

- Competitions Scheduled on July 4 & 5 at Gambeeramgedda Reservoir

Visakhapatnam, July 3 (Pen Power) : Visakhapatnam is set to host the ASMITA South Zone Women Canoeing & Kayaking League 2026, the first-ever South Zone championship of its kind in India under the Khelo India initiative of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India. The prestigious event will be held on July 4 and 5 at the scenic Gambeeramgedda Reservoir from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The championship is being jointly organized by the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) and the Canoeing & Kayaking Association of Andhra Pradesh (CKAAP). Hosting the inaugural South Zone ASMITA Canoeing & Kayaking League marks a significant milestone in the promotion of women's water sports in the country. The official event poster was unveiled by in the presence of the Visakhapatnam District Collector and the Joint Collector, who assured full administrative support and coordination for the successful conduct of the championship. Women athletes from the southern states will compete in Sub-Junior, Junior, Senior, and Women's categories in Kayak and Canoe Sprint events over 200 metres, 500 metres, and 1,000 metres.

The championship aims to encourage greater participa-



tion of women in sports, identify emerging talent, and promote canoeing and kayaking across the country. It will also showcase the natural beauty and sporting potential of the Gambeeramgedda Reservoir as a premier destination for water sports. The organizers have invited sports enthusiasts, students, families, and the general public to witness this historic championship and extend their support to the participating athletes.

Remote Tribal Villages to Get Better Infrastructure: Collector



Rampachodavaram, July 3: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar has assured that necessary steps

will be taken to provide basic infrastructure facilities in remote tribal villages under Boddagandi Panchayat of Gurtedu mandal. Participating in the "One Month - One Constituency, Four Visits" programme along with MLA and Legislative Chairman Miriyala Sirisha Devi, the Collector reviewed local issues and directed officials to address problems related to roads, drinking water, electricity, housing and welfare schemes. He also inspected ongoing development works and assured tribals that their grievances would be resolved on a priority basis.

Bay City Project Key to Visakha Economic Region Development: Collector Abhishek Kishore

Our Bureau Chief P. Sree Kanth, Visakhapatnam, July 3 (Pen Power) : The proposed Bay City Project will play a pivotal



role in the development of the Visakha Economic Region (VER), District Collector M. Abhishek Kishore said while reviewing the project's planning and implementation at the Collectorate on Friday. Chairing a high-level review meeting, the Collector directed officials to prepare a comprehensive action plan covering detailed studies, infrastructure development, and phased implementation of the prestigious Bay City Project. Officials made a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the proposed Area Development Plan, Catalytic Projects, Spatial Study, land profiling, and the demarcation of Bay City boundaries. The meeting also reviewed future urban planning strategies and infrastructure requirements for the region. According to officials, the Bay City project will cover 13 villages spread across 51.88 square kilometres. The master plan includes the development of a 20.92-km coastal corridor, along with 111.79

km of new Greenfield and Brownfield roads, while the existing road network in the project area extends to 430.27 km. The review also focused on the construction of strategic road networks, identification of character zones based on regional potential, integration of upcoming development projects, and effective utilisation of government lands to support sustainable urban growth. Emphasising the importance of coordinated planning, Collector Abhishek Kishore instructed all departments to work in close coordination and prepare a long-term, integrated development strategy that addresses future infrastructure and economic needs, making Bay City a key growth engine for the Visakha Economic Region. The meeting was attended by GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg, VMRDA Commissioner Tej Bharat, Joint Collector Gobbilla Vidyadhari, and other senior officials.

BLOs, BLAs Urged to Ensure Success of Special SIR Campaign

- Special Camps in All Secretariats This Weekend; Help Desks Set Up to Assist Voters



Our Bureau Chief P. Sreekanth Visakhapatnam, July 3 (Pen Power) : District Collector M. Abhishek Kishore has appealed to Booth Level Agents (BLAs) of all political parties to actively participate in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) campaign being conducted on Saturday and Sunday and extend full cooperation by collecting and submitting completed Enumeration Forms to the Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

Addressing a meeting with representatives of political parties at the Collectorate on Friday, the Collector said that nearly 1.9 million Enumeration Forms have been distributed to voters across the district, while around 700,000 completed forms have already been collected and digitized. He stated that the district administration has intensified efforts over the past few days, resulting in a significant increase in the pace of form collection, with nearly 100,000 forms being collected every day. To facilitate the campaign, special camps have been organized in all village and ward secretariats during the weekend. Additional staff have been deployed to assist BLOs, and Help Desks have been established to guide voters in filling out the

forms and to clarify doubts relating to the 2002 Electoral Roll. The Collector clarified that no supporting documents are required while submitting the completed Enumeration Form. He also stated that merely submitting the filled form is sufficient and that voters will not lose their voting rights even if mapping has not yet been completed. He further informed that BLOs engaged in the SIR process have not been assigned any other duties, enabling them to focus exclusively on the revision exercise. The Collector urged BLAs to help dispel misconceptions among voters and create awareness about the importance of the SIR process. During the meeting, representatives of various political parties appreciated the efforts of the BLAs and informed the Collector that they have been working sincerely at the grassroots level to ensure the successful completion of the campaign. The meeting was attended by Joint Collector Vidyadhari, GVMC Commissioner Ketan Garg, DRO Visweshwara Naidu, representatives of TDP, BJP, INC, YSRCP and Jana Sena, Deputy Collector Govind, and Election Cell officials Shyam, Murthy and Ramakrishna.

NIT Andhra Pradesh Students Win Runner-Up Prize at National ABB Accelerator 2026

Tadepalligudem, July 3 (Pen Power) : Students of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Andhra Pradesh have brought laurels to the institute by securing Second Place at the prestigious national-level ABB Accelerator 2026 competition, held at ABB's Innovation Center in Bengaluru. The team emerged as runners-up in Theme 2: "Beyond Monitoring: AI Agents for Real-Time Pod Resource Discovery and Dependency Mapping," competing against more than 14,000 participants from over 1,600 teams representing educational institutions across the country. The achievement earned the NIT Andhra Pradesh team a cash prize of ₹1.50 lakh, highlighting the institute's growing excellence in innovation and emerging technologies. The winning team, SiliconKnights, comprised Soumyadip Das (III Year, Electrical Engineering), Kishan B (III Year, Electrical Engineering), Shivam Kumar (III Year, Mechanical Engineering), and Aaryan Shyam Pillai (III Year, Computer Science and Engineering). The team was mentored by Dr. Sankar Peddapati, Associate Dean, Training and Placements Cell, NIT Andhra Pradesh. The students developed an AI-powered observability platform for Kubernetes that automatically discovers cloud resources and maps dependencies among application pods without requiring manual topology configuration. Unlike conventional monitoring tools that provide isolated performance metrics, the solution reconstructs real-time relationships between pods, enabling efficient monitoring, faster troubleshooting, and improved resource management in cloud-native applications. The project showcases the practical application of artificial intelligence in cloud infrastructure and distributed computing. Sharing their experience, the team said the competition was an enriching learning journey. Within a month, they designed, refined, and optimized the prototype while continuously improving it through testing, technical presentations, and expert feedback. They also benefited from interactions with industry leaders, mentors, jury members, and fellow participants from across the country. The students expressed gratitude to the organizers of the ABB Accelerator, the University Relations Team, MyCareernet, HirePro, and the



ABB team for providing a platform that encouraged innovation. They also acknowledged the constant guidance of their faculty mentor, Dr. Sankar Peddapati, and the unwavering support of NIT Andhra Pradesh throughout the competition.

Congratulating the students and their mentor, In-charge Director Prof. Dr. N.V. Ramana Rao, Registrar Dr. P. Dinesh Sankar Reddy, Deans Dr. V. Sandeep, Dr. G. Ravikiran Sastry, Dr. N. Jayaram, Dr. Himabindu, and Dr. GB. Veeresh Kumar, along with Heads of Departments Dr. Sri Phani Krishna Karri, Dr. G. Santhosh Kumar, and Dr. Nagesh Battu, appreciated the team's outstanding achievement. They said the success reflects NIT Andhra Pradesh's commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and industry-oriented education, expressing confidence that it would inspire many more students to excel in national and international competitions. The accomplishment stands as another milestone for NIT Andhra Pradesh, reinforcing the institute's growing reputation for academic excellence, technical innovation, teamwork, and research-driven learning at the national level.

Resolution Sought on Bauxite Mining and 1/70 Act at G.K. Veedhi Mandal General Body Meeting

- Demand for Official Resolution to Protect Tribal Rights

G.K. Veedhi, July 3 (Pen Power) : The Mandal General Body Meeting held at Gudem Kotha Veedhi (G.K. Veedhi) in Alluri Sitarama Raju district witnessed strong opposition to bauxite mining activities and renewed demands for the effective implementation of the 1/70 Regulation, which protects the land rights of tribal communities in the Agency areas. Members questioned the recent collection of bauxite samples from forest areas and sought clarification from the authorities regarding the authorization under which the exercise was carried out. They expressed concern over the alleged secret collection of mineral samples and urged Mandal and District officials to explain the circumstances that led to the activity.

The members reiterated that, under the 1/70 Regulation and the Samatha Judgment, no mining activity or mineral sample collection can be undertaken in tribal areas without the prior approval of the Gram Sabha. They stressed that any violation of these legal provisions would undermine the rights of tribal communities. Speaking at the meeting, MPTC member Ampurangi Bujjibabu demanded the immediate suspension of all bauxite-related surveys and mineral sample collection,



stating that such activities pose a serious threat to the livelihoods of tribals, forests, and the environment. He also called for stringent action against illegal land encroachments by non-tribals in the Agency areas and against those responsible for collecting mineral samples in violation of the prescribed rules. He urged the authorities to adopt an official resolution on these issues.

Following the meeting, the MPTC members submitted a resolution memorandum to MPP Boyina Kumar, MPDO B.H.V. Ramana Babu, Vice MPP Sappagadda Anand, and Deputy Tahsildar Sitaram. The meeting was attended by MPTC members Ampurangi Bujjibabu, Jorangi Saraswathi, Krishnamurthy, Kumari, M. Satyanarayana, Lova Kumar, officials from various government departments, and other participants.

VIIT Hosts Alumni Talk on Long-Term Career Development



Visakhapatnam, Pen Power July 3: The Department of Artificial Intelligence & Data Science at Vignan's Institute of Information Technology (VIIT), Autonomous, Duvvada, organized an Alumni Talk on "Beyond B.Tech: Building a Successful Career for the Next 20–30 Years" at the Arthur Samuel Lab on Friday. The session was delivered by S. Tarun Kumar, System Engineer at Infosys and a distinguished alumnus of the institution. Addressing the students, he shared his professional journey and offered practical insights into career planning, emerging technologies, industry expectations, higher education opportunities, skill development, and long-term career growth. He emphasized that continuous learning, strong technical knowledge, effective communication skills, and adaptability are the key ingredients for achieving sustained success in the rapidly evolving technology sector.

Students actively participated in the interactive session, engaging with the speaker through a lively question-and-answer segment. The discussion provided valuable per-



spectives on current industry trends, career opportunities, and the competencies required to succeed in the IT industry. A memento was presented to the speaker in recognition of his valuable contribution. The programme was coordinated by Dr. J. Peter Praveen, Assistant Head of the Department, along with faculty members Dr. P. Visweswara Rao and Dr. Gouri Shankar Nayak. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. J. Sudhakar, Principal, Dr. V. Madhusudhana Rao, Rector, and Dr. T. V. Madhusudhana Rao, Head of the Department of Artificial Intelligence & Data Science, appreciated the initiative and reaffirmed the institution's commitment to strengthening alumni engagement and providing meaningful industry exposure to students through expert interactions, enabling them to build future-ready careers.

Digital India Completes 11 Years: Transforming Governance, Businesses and Everyday Life

New Delhi, July 3 (Pen Power): India has completed 11 years of the Digital India initiative, marking a major milestone in the country's journey toward digital governance, financial inclusion, and technology-driven public services. Launched under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the programme has significantly improved the ease of living for citizens and the ease of doing business across the country. Today, over 102.86 crore citizens are connected through digital networks, supported by 99.56 crore broadband subscribers. Affordable mobile data, costing around ₹8–10 per GB, has enabled average monthly data usage to reach 24.01 GB per user, making digital services accessible to millions. One of the biggest achievements has been the expansion of BharatNet, which has connected nearly 2.2 lakh Gram Panchayats with high-speed broadband. Combined with over 144 crore Aadhaar identities and the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) framework, the government has transferred ₹51.5 lakh crore directly to beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), reducing leakages and eliminating middlemen. Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has also transformed public service delivery. DigiLocker now has over 70 crore registered users and stores more than 900 crore digital documents, simplifying document verification and reducing paperwork. The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has facilitated government procurement worth over ₹19.51 lakh crore, creating greater opportunities for small businesses and first-time vendors to participate in government tenders.



The UMANG platform has become a one-stop digital gateway for government services, serving more than 11.6 crore users and providing access to 2,572 services, with nearly 798 crore transactions completed so far.

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) continues to set global benchmarks, processing nearly 75 crore digital transactions every day. The platform has become one of the world's largest real-time payment systems and is now operational in nine countries, including the UAE, Singapore, and France.

In the healthcare sector, the eSanjeevani telemedicine platform has delivered more than 48 crore free consultations, while the CoWIN platform successfully managed over 220 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses, demonstrating India's digital capability during the pandemic. Looking ahead, the government is focusing on emerging technologies through the IndiaAI Mission, offering affordable computing facilities to startups and students to promote innovation. At the same time, the Semicon India Programme has approved 12 semiconductor manufacturing and packaging projects worth ₹1.65 lakh crore. The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0, announced in the Union Budget 2026–27, aims to strengthen semiconductor manufacturing, design, and supply chains while supporting domestic chip design startups. As Digital India enters its second decade, the initiative is expected to further strengthen digital governance, innovation, and inclusive growth, contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Speed Up SIR Digitisation Process: Collector

Rajamahendravaram, July 3: District Collector Keerthi Chekuri has directed officials to expedite the digitisation process under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)-2026 of electoral rolls. Addressing a video conference chaired by Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav, she said that 38.98 per cent of voter enumeration forms in the district have been digitised so far, with 75,000 to 80,000 records being uploaded every day. Special action has been initiated in polling stations showing poor progress, and additional staff have been deployed to ensure 100 per cent completion of the digitisation process.



Forest Officials Review Polavaram Project Works



Rampachodavaram, July 3: Rajamahendravaram Circle Chief Conservator of Forests T. Jyothi and Chintoor Divisional Forest Officer D. Ravindranath Reddy inspected the ongoing forest department works in V.R. Puram and Kunavaram forest ranges under the Indira Sagar Polavaram Project on Friday. The officials reviewed the implementation of the prestigious Seed Balls programme and directed staff to ensure quality in seed selection, preparation and distribution during the monsoon. They said the programme would help in forest regeneration, expansion of green cover and biodiversity conservation.

Special Grievance Programme Receives 86 Petitions

Vijayawada, July 3: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshminsha and Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Ramamohan Rao participated in the Special Grievance Redressal Programme held at APIIC Colony Kalyana Mandapam on Friday. A total of 86 petitions relating to municipal administration, revenue, housing, education and other departments were received. The Collector directed officials to resolve all grievances within the stipulated time and said the programme aims to bring governance closer to the people by addressing issues at the constituency level quickly and effectively.



Collector Inspects Dharamavaram Rythu Seva Kendram

Kakinada, July 3: District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad conducted a surprise inspection of the Dharamavaram Rythu Seva Kendram in Prathipadu mandal on Friday. He reviewed the stock of seeds and fertilizers and interacted with farmers about the services being provided. The Collector distributed seeds to farmers and directed officials to ensure timely availability of quality seeds and fertilizers, maintain transparency in distribution and prevent any shortage during the ongoing Kharif season.



Intensify Malaria Control Measures: Collector

Rampachodavaram, July 3: District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar has directed officials to intensify malaria control measures in areas reporting fresh cases across the district. Following the detection of 15 new malaria cases on July 2, officials have been asked to launch extensive sanitation drives, conduct mass screening, and implement Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) and anti-larval operations without delay. The Collector also appealed to the public to prevent water stagnation around their homes and immediately visit the nearest government health centre if they develop fever symptoms.



Ayodhya Ram Temple Donation Theft Case: 'Those Found Guilty Must Be Given Severe Punishment,' Says RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale



Ayodhya: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale on Friday said the alleged theft of donations from the donation boxes at the Shri Ram Lalla temple in Ayodhya has deeply hurt the faith and sentiments of devotees across the country. He called for a thorough inves-

tigation and demanded severe punishment for anyone found guilty. In a statement posted on X, Hosabale said the incident had caused widespread pain and anger among the Hindu community. He said it was natural for the entire Hindu society, including the RSS, to expect the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust to

treat the matter with the utmost seriousness and take effective steps to address any shortcomings in the temple's management and operations. Statement issued by Dattatreya Hosabale, Sarkaryavah (General Secretary) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The grand temple constructed at the

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi has become a center of reverence, faith, and devotion for the entire Hindu society. Hosabale said restoring public confidence should be the top priority, as the Ram temple has become a symbol of faith and devotion for crores of devotees. He stressed that strong corrective measures were essential to ensure that people's trust in the temple remained intact. He also noted that, at the request of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, the Uttar Pradesh government had constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and initiated legal proceedings based on its recommendations. According to Hosabale, it is important that the investigation reaches its logical conclusion and that anyone found guilty is given severe punishment.

Punjab And Haryana HC Quashes FIR Against Woman Over Pet Dog Dressed As Lord Krishna, Says Act Was Protected Expression Of Devotion

Chandigarh: The Punjab and Haryana High Court has quashed an FIR registered against a woman for allegedly hurting religious sentiments by dressing her pet dog as Lord Krishna and posting its photographs on WhatsApp, holding that her act was an expression of devotion carried out in good faith and did not attract Section 298 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Justice Subhas Mehla held that the prosecution could not continue as the essential ingredients of the offence, including mens rea (criminal intent), were absent. The court observed that personal expressions of faith cannot be criminalised merely because they offend the sentiments of others. "Individual expression of the petitioner, shaped by her personal experiences, cannot be criminalised merely



because it does not align with the sensitivities of others. In the absence of mens rea, criminal proceedings cannot be initiated to validate subjective perceptions of hurt. Constitutional tolerance must override hypersensitivity, which leads innocent acts to be construed as desecration," the court said. The petitioner had ap-

proached the High Court seeking quashing of the FIR and the final report filed under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. The case arose from a complaint by a private individual alleging that the woman had hurt the religious sentiments of the Hindu community by dressing her pet dog in attire as-

sociated with Lord Krishna on Janmashtami and uploading the photograph as her WhatsApp status.

During the investigation, the petitioner, who is issueless, stated that she treated her pet dog as her child and had dressed it up as part of the festival without any intention of offending anyone's religious sentiments.

Govt Summons Meta Over Instagram Ads Promoting Child Sexual Abuse Material: Report

New Delhi: Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has directed officials of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to summon Meta over Instagram advertisements allegedly promoting child sexual abuse material (CSAM), sources said on Friday. The ministry is expected to seek a detailed explanation from the social media giant and ask it to clarify how such advertisements were allowed to appear on Instagram despite



the platform's content moderation mechanisms. The move marks the second instance this week of the Centre taking action involv-

ing Meta. Earlier on Wednesday, the government issued a notice to the company over WhatsApp's proposed username feature, expressing concerns that it could facilitate online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams and identity impersonation. The Centre directed WhatsApp to suspend the rollout of the feature until consultations with the government are completed and its concerns are satisfactorily addressed. The notice also asked Meta to explain

why proceedings should not be initiated against the company under the Information Technology Act and the relevant rules, arguing that the proposed feature could heighten cybersecurity risks. Additionally, the government reminded Meta that WhatsApp, classified as a significant social media intermediary, is obligated to comply with the due diligence requirements prescribed under the Information Technology Act and its associated rules.

India, New Zealand Ink MoU on Food Technology Education and Research



New Delhi: The National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli (NIFTEM-K), an Institute of National Importance under the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Massey University, New Zealand on 2nd of July 2026 in presence of Secretary

MoFPI Shri A. P. Das Joshi, Joint Secretary Shri Devesh Deval & a Senior team from NIFTEM-Kundli led by Dr Harinder Singh Oberoi Director NIFTEM-K. The MoU is aimed to strengthen academic and research cooperation in the field of food technology, food processing, innovation and higher education. The areas of cooperation include collaborative research



projects, joint applications for third-party funding, participation in seminars and academic meetings, exchange of faculty and researchers, student mobility programmes etc. Dedicated coordinators from both institutions will facilitate the implementation of collaborative initiatives. The agreement will remain valid for five years from the date of the last signature and may be renewed for another five-year term by mutual consent. The MoU

also safeguards the intellectual property rights of both parties and serves as a non-binding framework to foster future academic partnerships. This collaboration is expected to enhance international academic cooperation, promote innovation in food technology and processing, facilitate knowledge exchange, and provide greater opportunities for students, researchers and faculty members of both institutions.

Centre Launches Mission to Support Andhra Totapuri Mango Farmers

New Delhi: Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, has directed the constitution of a high-level expert committee under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to examine the challenges being faced by Totapuri mango growers in Andhra Pradesh and recommend appropriate measures for the long-term development of the sector. The decision follows the Union Minister's recent visit to Andhra Pradesh, during which he interacted with Totapuri mango growers. During these interactions, farmers informed the Minister that prices of the Totapuri mango variety, which is cultivated extensively for the processing industry, have declined significantly in recent months. They highlighted that the sustained fall in prices has adversely affected their incomes and created considerable financial stress among mango-producing farmers in the state. Taking immediate cognisance of the matter, Shri Chouhan directed ICAR to constitute an expert committee comprising

scientists and representatives of concerned institutions to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Totapuri mango sector. The committee has been entrusted with examining the entire value chain from cultivation and processing to marketing, domestic trade and exports and recommending suitable interventions to improve farmers' returns and strengthen the sector on a sustainable basis. According to an office order issued by the ICAR—Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture, Lucknow, the committee will be chaired by Dr. T. Damodaran, Director, ICAR—CISH, Lucknow. The other members of the committee are Dr. M. Shankaran, Head, Fruit Crops Division, ICAR—Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru; Dr. H.S. Singh, Principal Scientist, ICAR—CISH, Lucknow; Dr. D. Srinivasa Reddy, Professor, College of Horticulture, Anant harajupeta, Dr. YSR Horticultural University, Andhra Pradesh; and the Director of Horticulture, Government of Andhra Pradesh, or his or her nominee. The Union Minister has instructed the

committee to undertake field visits to the major Totapuri mango-growing regions of Andhra Pradesh within the next ten days. During the visit, the committee will interact with farmers, representatives of the processing industry, exporters, officials of the State Horticulture Department, Farmer Producer Organisations and other stakeholders associated with the sector to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the prevailing situation. The committee will examine the current status of Totapuri mango cultivation, production costs, farmers' incomes, processing capacity and utilisation, demand-supply dynamics, and the factors responsible for the recent decline in prices in domestic as well as export markets. It will also assess the challenges affecting different stages of the value chain and identify opportunities for improving efficiency, competitiveness and market access. Based on field observations, stakeholder consultations and scientific analysis, the committee will prepare a detailed assessment of the factors contributing to the decline in prices to facilitate evidence-based

policy interventions.

Upon completion of the field study, the committee will submit a comprehensive report to the Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare. The report is expected to include recommendations on measures for price stabilisation, promotion of value addition, enhancement of processing and export capacities, strengthening coordination among Farmer Producer Organisations, processors and exporters, and policy interventions required for the long-term and sustainable development of the Totapuri mango sector. The recommendations will serve as the basis for coordinated action by the Central and State Governments. Chouhan said that safeguarding the income and livelihoods of Totapuri mango growers is a priority for the Government. He stated that appropriate measures would be taken on the basis of the committee's recommendations to provide sustainable support to mango growers, strengthen the value chain and create new opportunities for value addition, exports, investment and employment in the sector.

Jitendra Singh Launches Third Batch of DAKSH Leadership Programme

New Delhi: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that India's "Whole of Government" approach calls for convergence of diverse individual and institutional capacities, where institutions and professionals contribute their respective strengths and expertise towards common national goals. The Minister said, capacity building is no longer confined to enhancing individual competencies but must also create synergy across institutions to prepare governance systems capable of meeting the aspirations of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Dr. Jitendra Singh was inaugurating the third batch of DAKSH (Development of Aspiration, Knowledge, Succession and Harmony), a year-long leadership development programme for senior executives of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), organised jointly by the Capacity Building Commis-



sion (CBC) and the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) at the SCOPE Convention Centre, New Delhi. The programme is being conducted in collaboration with the Indian School of Business (ISB) to prepare senior executives for future Board-level responsibilities through structured leadership development and capacity building. The inaugural ceremony was attended by Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, K. Moses Chalai; Chairperson, Capacity Building Commission, S. Radha Chauhan; Member (Administration), Capacity Building Commission, Alka Mittal; Chairman, SCOPE and CMD, NBCC, K.P. Mahadevaswamy;

Dean, Indian School of Business, Shri Madan Pillutla; Director General, SCOPE, Atul Sobti; Vice Chairman, SCOPE and CMD, Goa Shipyard Limited, Shri Brajesh Kumar Upadhyay, along with senior government officials, CPSE leadership and participants of the DAKSH programme. Congratulating the organisers and participants, Dr. Jitendra Singh said the participation of executives from some of the country's leading public sector enterprises reflects the growing credibility of the programme. He also appreciated the increasing representation of women officers in the current batch, describing it as a positive reflection of India's chang-

ing leadership landscape. The Minister said the Capacity Building Commission has emerged as one of the most significant governance reforms introduced under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision. Recalling its evolution, he said the Commission initially represented an entirely new institutional experiment in governance but has since established itself as an important pillar of capacity development across government. Dr. Jitendra Singh said the Government's governance philosophy has evolved from a Whole-of-Government approach towards a broader Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Nation framework.

DAC Approves Rs.52,000 Crore Defence Acquisition Proposals

New Delhi: The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under the chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh on July 03, 2026, accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) i.e., in-principle administrative approval to various acquisition proposals for the Defence Forces at an estimated cost of about Rs 52,000 crore. For the Indian Army, approval of granted for the procurement of Anti-Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) Electronic Warfare System 'AKASH TARANG', Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) Systems, Medium Range Surface-to-Air

Missile (MRSAM) Weapon System, Very Short Range Air Defence System (V-SHORADS), Active Protection System for Tanks and Jet Based Kamikaze Drone System. AKASH TARANG will provide effective anti-UAV protection to the Army Formations. The MPATGM will enhance the potential of the Infantry to counter mechanised threats of the adversary. The MRSAM system provides medium range air defence against a variety of stand-off aerial threats. The V-SHORADS with multi-spectral sensing will enhance counter-measure resilience and effectiveness of the Indian Army.

The Active Protection System will be capable of improving the defence mechanism of tanks and enhance their survivability. The Jet-Based Kamikaze Drones provide better Electronic Warfare capability with greater lethality and survivability while also being cost effective. For the Indian Navy, approval was given for the procurement of Multi Influence Ground Mine (MIGM), Naval Shipborne Unmanned Aerial System (NSUAS) and the setting-up of Land Based Testing Facility (LBTF) for Electric Propulsion System. The MIGM will deny freedom of ma-

noeuvre to the adversary. The NSUAS, equipped with advanced sensors, will enhance situational awareness of the Indian Navy. The LBTF will meet the testing requirements for Motors and associated Propulsion Systems of the Indian Naval assets. For the Indian Air Force, the approval was accorded for the procurement of Fixed-Wing Based High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (FW-HAPS) and other proposals. The FW-HAPS will carry out persistent Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance, telecommunication and remote sensing for the Indian Air Force.

DPIIT Engages Startups Under FICCI-Mercedes-Benz Innovation Challenge

New Delhi: Reaffirming its continued commitment to strengthening India's startup and innovation ecosystem, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) participated in a virtual interaction under the FICCI Mercedes-Benz Bharat Innovation & Business Ideas Challenge Programme. The FICCI Mercedes-Benz Bharat Innovation & Business Ideas Challenge Programme was launched to identify and support high-potential Indian startups developing innovative and scalable solutions across key sectors, including manufacturing, sustainability, education, decarbonization and automotive/EVs. Addressing the participants, Additional Secretary, DPIIT, Shri Ateesh Kumar

Singh congratulated FICCI and Mercedes-Benz India on the successful implementation of the programme. He said the initiative reflects the growing strength of India's innovation ecosystem and the immense potential of the country's young entrepreneurs. He noted that by providing timely mentorship and support, the programme empowers innovators to develop solutions aligned with national priorities. He added that such collaborative efforts are essential for driving innovation-led growth and strengthening India's position as a global innovation leader. As part of the programme, a structured post-funding mentoring and handholding framework has been announced for the

seven selected startups to accelerate their growth and enhance investment readiness. The initiative will provide targeted support across critical business, regulatory, financial, legal, investment and technology domains, enabling startups to build scalable, resilient and globally competitive ventures. Under this framework, the selected startups will receive specialised mentoring on regulatory and legal compliance, taxation and fund utilisation, fundraising strategy, valuation fundamentals, term sheet negotiations, data privacy, cybersecurity and intellectual property protection. The programme will also feature dedicated Demo Days, providing startups with opportunities to showcase their innovations, business

models and growth strategies before industry leaders, investors, mentors and ecosystem stakeholders. These interactions will help validate market readiness, strengthen strategic positioning and unlock potential partnerships and funding opportunities. Additionally, the selected startups will benefit from the "Sounding Board Programme", a strategic mentorship initiative designed to provide industry insights, expert guidance and leadership perspectives to help refine their business models, sharpen growth strategies and accelerate their journey towards market readiness and long-term success, thereby contributing to Bharat's vision of becoming a global hub for innovation and entrepreneurship.

TRAI Assesses Mobile Network Quality across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Districts in the State of Assam under Assam LSA

New Delhi: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released findings of Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Districts in the State of Assam under Assam LSA, during the month of April 2026, for information of general telecom consumers. The purpose of this drive test is to assess and verify real time quality of mobile network services (both voice & data) provided

by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). During the IDT, TRAI captures performance of TSPs for key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters like Coverage, Call Drop Rate (CDR), Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), data Download (DL) and Upload (UL) throughput etc., which are then published to inform Consumers and encourage TSPs to improve their services. These IDTs have been designed to capture on ground mobile network

performance of all TSPs across diverse usages environment like cities, hotspots, public transport hubs, etc. In this type of drive testing, live data and voice sessions are established using SIM cards from all TSPs over 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G networks. Multiple advanced test handsets are used, and the sessions are monitored and analysed in real-time using advanced Software Systems. TRAI, through its appointed agency, conducted drive

tests across City drive – 374.5 KMs, Hotspot locations - 13, Walk Test – 2.2 KMs in Assam State during 13th April 2026 to 17th April 2026 in Assam LSA. These tests were conducted under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office Kolkata. The observations presented in drive test reports represent the performance of the TSPs on the area/ route under test on the day/ time of conducting the drive test.

NHRC Seeks Report on Bengaluru Creche Abuse Case

New Delhi: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has taken suo motu cognizance of a media report about some toddlers being treated inhumanly by the nannies at a creche operating on the premises of an IT company in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Reportedly, the incident came to

light after a Child Helpline official received videos depicting cruelty towards toddlers of professionals working at the campus who leave their children at the facility while on duty. The Commission has observed that the contents of the news reports, if true, raise serious issues of

violation of human rights. Therefore, it has issued notices to the Karnataka Chief Secretary and Director General of Police, calling for a detailed report on the matter within two weeks. According to the media report, carried on 2nd July 2026, the video purportedly showed the nannies placing the

toddlers inside a washing machine, spraying water into their mouths using a toilet jet spray, locking them inside the toilets to silence them, forcing them to sit on Western-style commodes and threatening them to remain silent whenever they cried. The creche has been temporarily closed as a precaution.

Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya Calls for Stronger Industry–Youth Partnership through MY Bharat Digital Platform

- MY Bharat Platform Can Connect Every Young Indian with Opportunities: MoS Raksha Khadse
- Industry Association Conclave Strengthens Government–Industry Partnership for Youth Development



New Delhi, July, 3 (PIB): In a significant step towards strengthening collaboration between Government and industry for youth development, the Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, organised the Industry Association Conclave at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi, bringing together 20+ leading industry associations, corporates, public sector enterprises, CSR organisations and senior government officials to build strategic partnerships through the MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat) ecosystem. The conclave focused on expanding opportunities for young people through skilling, volunteering, in-

ternships, entrepreneurship, innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), while advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047. The inaugural session was graced by Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Ms. Deepti Gaur Mukherjee, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Shri Nitesh Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, along with representatives from leading industry associations and CSR

organisations. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said that India's demographic dividend can become its greatest strength only when youth are connected with meaningful opportunities through active partnerships between Government and industry. "Nearly 65 percent of India's population is below the age of 35. Our youth are India's greatest strength and soft power. By connecting them with industry through the MY Bharat Platform, we can unlock their potential and accelerate the journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047." Union Minister highlighted that the MY Bharat Digital Platform, envisioned



by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is designed as a single window platform that connects young people with opportunities for learning, volunteering, innovation, skill development and leadership. He urged industry associations to actively leverage their CSR initiatives to create structured opportunities for youth, promote entrepreneurship and experiential learning, strengthen youth engagement around industrial clusters, and partner in the development of Vibrant Villages with MY Bharat volunteers. Stressing the need to address substance abuse among youth, he called for collective action by Government, industry and civil society to channel young

people's energy towards constructive nation-building. Addressing the conclave, Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, called upon industry associations and institutions to integrate their youth initiatives with the MY Bharat Digital Platform. "Youth development is not limited to skilling alone; it is about creating responsible citizens who actively participate in building a stronger and more inclusive India. By aligning youth initiatives with the MY Bharat platform, we can ensure that opportunities reach every young citizen, including those in the remotest parts of the country." She emphasised that MY

Bharat serves as a bridge connecting talented youth with opportunities irrespective of geography and urged organisations to actively promote the Ministry's flagship initiatives through the platform. She noted that stronger collaboration between industry and youth would create new avenues for innovation, employment, entrepreneurship and community development. Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, highlighted that MY Bharat is evolving into a comprehensive digital ecosystem that identifies young people's aspirations and connects them with opportunities for learning, volunteering, innovation, entrepreneurship and employment.

TRAI Assesses Mobile Network Quality Across Gangtok and Pakyong Districts and from Deorali Bazar, Gangtok to Nathu La Pass along NH 310 in the State of Sikkim under West Bengal LSA

New Delhi, July, 3 (PIB): The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released findings of Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Gangtok and Pakyong Districts and from Deorali Bazar, Gangtok to Nathu La Pass along NH 310 in the State of Sikkim under West Bengal LSA, during the month of May- 2026, for information of general telecom consumers. The purpose of this drive test is to assess and verify real time quality of mobile network services (both voice & data) provided by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). During the IDT, TRAI captures performance of TSPs for key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters like Coverage, Call Drop Rate (CDR), Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), data Download (DL) and Upload (UL) throughput etc., which are then published to inform Consumers and encourage TSPs to improve their services. These IDTs have been designed to capture on ground mobile network performance of all TSPs across diverse usages environment like cities, hotspots, public transport hubs, etc. In this type of drive testing, live data and voice sessions are established using SIM cards from all TSPs over 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G networks. Multiple advanced test handsets are used, and the sessions are monitored and analysed in real-time using advanced Software Systems. TRAI, through its appointed agency, conducted drive tests across City drive – 102.8 KMs, Highway drive- 66.5 KMs, Hotspot locations - 5, in Sikkim State during 8th May' 2026 to 9th May' 2026 in West Bengal LSA. These tests were conducted under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office Kolkata. The observations presented in drive test reports represent the performance of the TSPs on the area/ route under test on the day/ time of conducting the drive test.

TRAI Assesses Mobile Network Quality across Bharuch city and nearby areas (in Gujarat LSA)

New Delhi, July, 3 (PIB): The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released findings of Independent Drive Test (IDT) conducted across Bharuch city and nearby areas (in Gujarat LSA), during the month of May 2026, for information of general telecom consumers. The purpose of this drive test is to assess and verify real time quality of mobile network services (both voice & data) provided by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs). During the IDT, TRAI captures performance of TSPs for key Quality of Service (QoS) parameters like Coverage, Call Drop Rate (CDR), Call Setup Success Rate (CSSR), data Download (DL) and Upload (UL) throughput etc., which are then published to inform Consumers and encourage TSPs to improve their services. These IDTs have been designed to capture on ground mobile network performance of all TSPs across diverse usages environment like cities, hotspots, public transport hubs, etc. In this type of drive testing, live data and voice sessions are established using SIM cards from all TSPs over 2G, 3G, 4G, and 5G networks. Multiple advanced test handsets are used, and the sessions are monitored and analysed in real-time using advanced Software Systems. TRAI, through its appointed agency, conducted drive tests across City drive – 361.2 KMs, Hotspot locations - 11 and Walk Test - 1.5 KMs in Bharuch city and nearby areas during 5th May 2026 to 8th May 2026 in Gujarat LSA. These tests were conducted under the supervision of the TRAI Regional Office Jaipur. The observations presented in drive test reports represent the performance of the TSPs on the area/ route under test on the day/ time of conducting the drive test.

Ministry of Law and Justice to Organise 'Reforms Utsav & Chintan Shivir 2026' at Mount Abu

New Delhi, July, 3 (PIB): The Department of Legal Affairs and the Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India, will jointly organise 'Reforms Utsav & Chintan Shivir 2026' on 4–5 July 2026 at Gyan Sarovar, Brahma Kumaris Headquarters, Mount Abu, Rajasthan. The two-day programme is being organised to review the Ministry's key achievements, highlight important legal and institutional reforms, and discuss the future roadmap for building a modern, efficient and citizen-centric legal system in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. The programme will be graced by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice.

The inaugural session will present the Ministry's vision for an efficient, technology-driven and citizen-centric legal ecosystem. The programme will include thematic presentations and brainstorming sessions on legal governance, Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR), legislative reforms, digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence, technology-enabled governance, institutional reforms, capacity building and administrative excellence. The discussions will focus on sharing ideas, identifying practical reforms and improving governance and service delivery.

The Chintan Shivir is expected to result in a Vision Document, reform proposals, recommendations for institutional improvements, a roadmap for digital transformation, and short- and medium-term action points for implementation across the Ministry. Senior officers and officials of the Department of Legal Affairs and the Legislative Department will participate in the programme, making it an important forum for discussion, collaboration and strategic planning. The event reflects the Ministry's continued commitment to innovation, good governance and institutional excellence. It is expected to support the ongoing efforts to build a transparent, efficient and future-ready legal and legislative ecosystem that contributes to the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Oldest accurately dated Banyan found in Munger, Bihar

New Delhi (PIB): A banyan tree in Munger, Bihar, estimated to be around 700 years old, has been identified as the oldest accurately dated banyan tree, *Ficus benghalensis*, using radiocarbon dating, a method that relies exclusively on scientific evidence rather than historical records or local lore. Banyan trees, with their intricate root and branch networks, provide habitats for a variety of wildlife, including birds and insects. They have also played a significant role in Indian social and cultural life for centuries. Traditionally, estimating their age relied on folklore, local stories or historical records, which were often inaccurate. These living representations of history were not scientifically dated previously due to a lack of a clear protocol. Field sampling and laboratory analyses revealed that the absence of distinct annual growth rings in most tropical broadleaf trees limited the application of conventional dendrochronological techniques, emphasising the need for alternative high-precision dating methods, including radiocarbon dating.

When Dr. Trina Bose from the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), was invited by the Bihar Forest Department to investigate and determine the age of the Munger Banyan tree, she recognised

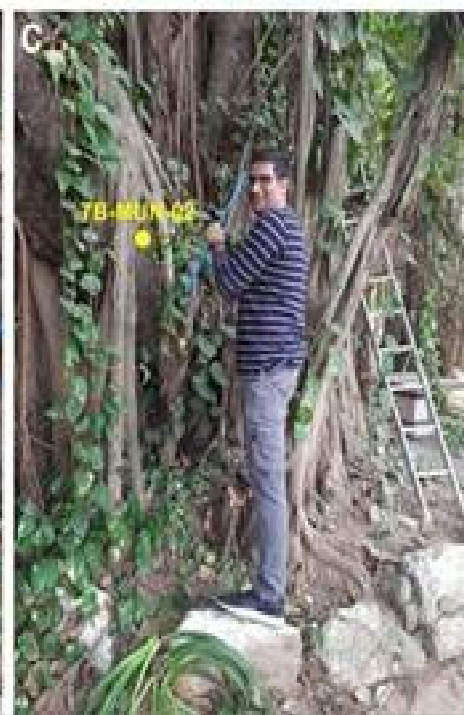
the limitations of conventional dating approaches for tropical broadleaf species. To address this challenge, she initiated the development of a new scientific approach for age determination. Dr. Bose led a research team comprising Dr. Mayank Shekhar and Dr. Akhilesh K. Yadava, who collaboratively developed and applied an innovative methodology to establish the age of the tree.

The research team, led by Dr. Bose and comprising Dr. Shekhar and Dr. Yadava, extracted alpha-cellulose, the most stable primary component of plant cell walls, from wood samples collected near the pith of a secondary trunk and an ancient primary branch. The pith is particularly important because it represents the earliest wood formed during the juvenile stage of secondary growth. The extracted cellulose samples were subjected to high-precision radiocarbon dating using Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS), followed by calibration against the latest IntCal20 calibration curve and OxCal software, enabling the team to establish a robust, reliable estimate of the tree's age.

This finding refutes earlier assumptions that the Munger Banyan was planted in front of the historic 'Burra Bunglow', which, based on architectural style, dates to the late Mughal-Early British period (~300 to 350 years old), as a venue for dialogue between

rulers and common citizens, village assemblies, religious ceremonies, and cultural exchanges. It establishes that the approximately 700-year-old tree is likely a surviving remnant of a natural forest that once existed in the region, and that it witnessed the construction of the building. Hence, this analysis redefines the order of historical events in this region.

The research published in the journal *Quaternary Research* provides a scientific method for accurately dating heritage trees, helping governments, forest departments, and conservation agencies identify and protect culturally and ecologically important trees. It strengthens the preservation of natural and cultural heritage by replacing uncertain age estimates with reliable scientific evidence. The methodology can also be applied to other ancient tropical trees worldwide and can help biodiversity conservation, heritage management, environmental education, and research on past climate and historical landscapes. This research represents a major breakthrough in the scientific dating of ancient trees in tropical regions, especially those of cultural significance, such as the Banyan, and will not only help determine the age of such trees more accurately but also support efforts to preserve natural, historical, and cultural heritage throughout South Asia and beyond.



CSIR-NCL Inaugurated its Revamped, State-of-the-Art Skill Development Center



New Delhi (PIB): CSIR–National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune, officially inaugurated its newly renovated, state-of-the-art Skill Development Center. The advanced facility was inaugurated by Dr. Ashish Lele, Director of CSIR–NCL, alongside Chief Guest Dr. Vinay Kumar, Nodal Scientist for the CSIR–Integrated Skill Initiative (CSIR–HRDC, Ghaziabad), and representatives from the Evalior Team, who sponsored the moderniza-

tion project through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. Other key dignitaries present on the occasion included Dr. Rajesh Gonnade, NCL Skill Nodal Officer, and Mrs. Kanika Goel, Controller of Administration (COA), NCL. The vision of CSIR–NCL through its Skill Development Program, under the CSIR's Integrated Skill Initiative (CSIR ISI) is to provide world-class high-end skilling in the national skill ecosys-

tem with an aim to create a high quality skilled workforce relevant to the current and emerging industry need in the core competency area of the laboratory. SDP activities are carried out through NCL's highly experienced scientific staff and state-of-the-art infrastructure. The upgraded facility is structured as a dedicated, fully integrated center designed to centralize and advance all skill development and technical training initiatives at NCL.

FIFA WC 2026: Colombia face Ghana in Round of 32 clash for place in last 16



Kansas City: Unbeaten Colombia will take on Ghana for the first time on the world stage as the rivals contest the last of the Round of 32 ties at Kansas City Stadium on Saturday, with an aim of reaching the Round of 16. As winners of Group K, Colombia are unbeaten so far at the FIFA World Cup 2026, having defeated Uzbekistan

and Congo DR and drawn with Portugal and their aim now is to reach the Round of 16 for the fourth time. As for Ghana, they will arrive in Kansas City on the back of a third-placed finish in Group L following a win over Panama, a draw with England and defeat against Croatia. They are targeting a third appearance in the Round

of 16 and hoping for third-time lucky given their two previous encounters with South American opposition in the World Cup knockout stage both ended in defeat, against Brazil in the 2006 Round of 16 and Uruguay in the 2010 quarter-finals. Colombia's only previous World Cup knockout tie against CAF opposition brought a 2-1 defeat by Cameroon in 1990.

How to watch Colombia vs Ghana live in India

Live streaming and live telecast of the FIFA World Cup 2026 football matches will be available on the Zee5 platform and app in India. A subscription will be needed. Live telecast of the FIFA World Cup 2026 will be available on the Unite8 Sports 1, Unite8 Sports 1 HD, Unite8 Sports 2, and Unite8 Sports 2 HD TV channels in India.

Hyderabad's 13-year-old martial artist Navjyot Singh Thakur enters Asian Book of World Records

Hyderabad: Hyderabad's 13-year-old martial artist Navjyot Singh Thakur has earned the rare official recognition from the Asian Book of World Records for performing 105 backfist punches in 10 seconds in the Teenage Female category. This remarkable achievement highlights her exceptional speed, precision, discipline, and dedication to martial arts. Navjyot Singh Thakur is a student of famous Indian Karate Grandmaster Hanshi Shaswat Kumar and is currently undergoing Senkoukai Karate training under his expert guidance. She prepared for this world record through disciplined practice and specialized coaching at Senkoukai Karate. Navjyot was inspired by her mentor, Hanshi Shaswat Kumar, whose own extraordinary achievement of 150 backfist punches in 10 seconds motivated her to pursue excel-



lence. Inspired by his dedication, discipline, and commitment to martial arts, she trained tirelessly and successfully created her own place in the world of records. A significant share of Navjyot's success also belongs to her parents, whose unwavering support, encouragement, sacrifices, and belief in her abilities played a vital role

throughout her journey. Their constant motivation, combined with the expert guidance of Hanshi Shaswat Kumar, helped her achieve this prestigious milestone at such a young age. Hanshi Shaswat Kumar said: "Navjyot's achievement is the result of discipline, hard work, determination, and the continuous support of her parents." "I am extremely proud of her dedication and perseverance. This World Record is not only her personal success but also a proud moment for her family, our academy, and the entire martial arts community," he said. He added, "I hope her achievement inspires many more young athletes." The Asian Book of World Records has officially recognized and recorded her outstanding achievement, making Navjyot Singh Thakur one of the youngest martial artists from Hyderabad to receive this prestigious

Goncalo Ramos scores late as Portugal beat Croatia 2-1



Toronto: Goncalo Ramos headed home a cross from Rafael Leao in stoppage time as Cristiano Ronaldo, who had earlier converted a penalty, watched from the bench while

Portugal defeated Croatia 2-1 on Thursday, ending Luka Modric's fifth bid for a World Cup title. Ronaldo had equalised in the 68th minute with a penalty, scoring his first

knockout-stage goal at a World Cup, before Ramos sealed Portugal's victory. The match ended in controversy as Croatia thought it had equalised at 2-2 in the closing moments, but Mario Pasalic was ruled offside following a VAR review and the goal was disallowed. Croatia fans threw bottles onto the field and whistled in protest. Croatia took the lead in the 53rd minute when Ivan Perisic scored from a cross by Josip Stanisic. Portugal will now face Spain on Monday in the Round of 16. Modric led Croatia to second- and third-place finishes in 2018 and 2022 but could not guide his team any further this time.

Argentina vs Cape Verde: Paul Masefield backs Lionel Messi to cruise past World Cup underdogs

Mumbai: As the reigning champions Argentina face tournament debutants Cape Verde in the Round of 32 of FIFA World Cup 2026, former England international Paul Masefield believes Lionel Messi and Co. have the quality and experience to comfortably progress but insists Cape Verde deserve immense credit for their historic run to the knockout stages. Reigning champions Argentina entered the knockout clash as favourites; Cape Verde's disciplined defensive displays and spirited run have made them one of the tournament's biggest success stories. "Argentina are the favourites, no question about that. They will do what they need to do, and they will go about the game in a positive way. Cape Verde have to be respected, especially with players like Vozinha in goal and Kevin Pina shielding the defence, but for me this is Argentina in cruise control, winning



this one comfortably," Masefield said on Zee5.

Despite predicting an Argentine victory, Masefield described Cape Verde's campaign as one of the defining stories of the World Cup. "What has really stood out for me with this Cape Verde side is their heart, passion and desire. They've been incredibly difficult to break down, and the results they've produced have been nothing short of phenomenal. It's been brilliant to see one of the minnows of world football

reach this stage, and now they get the opportunity to face the reigning champions. It's an unbelievable story," he added. Masefield also reflected on the enduring greatness of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, explaining why the debate over football's greatest player continues. "The biggest difference between Messi and Ronaldo is mentality. If you look at Ronaldo, he's worked incredibly hard to become uniquely physically fit, which is why his longevity has been so impressive.

Zverev, Berrettini storm into Wimbledon third round as Arthur Fery delights home fans

London: Alexander Zverev, the newly crowned French Open champion and the No.2 seed, and Matteo Berrettini breezed into the third round at Wimbledon, securing impressive wins at the All-England Club in London. Zverev, who seems to have taken a lot of confidence from his success at Roland Garros, produced a dominant 6-1, 6-3, 7-6(3) win over Valentin Royer, the world No.75 from France, in two hours and four minutes. "For two and a half sets, I played an almost perfect match," Zverev said after the match. "And then I lost a bit of focus, lost a bit of concentration, and he used it very well. And he made it very interesting in the end, but I was definitely happy to be through in straight sets. "I'm not old yet, but I'm getting to an age where I think you need to save energy, and I think it also builds confidence when you win easily, when you win in straight sets. "I think it helps with your confidence, especially for me at Wimbledon. I

love this tournament, but I'm still waiting for a big result. And if I continue playing like this, I definitely think it can happen this year." Berrettini, the 2021 Wimbledon runner-up, got the better of Arthur Fils at Centre Court, producing multiple aces and a superb performance that left the fans celebrating with him. The Italian, now ranked No.51, rebounded from the loss of a set to see off the No.20 seed Fils 6-4, 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 and is into the third round for the first time since 2023.

Local star Fery in the third round

Meanwhile, local star Arthur Fery booked his passage into the third round of the men's singles at Wimbledon with the biggest win of his nascent career. The 23-year-old, a former schoolboy educated just down the road from the All England Club, defeated Otto Virtanen 5-7, 7-6(3), 6-3, 6-3 to become only the fourth British wild card to reach the third round of the men's singles at Wimbledon since 2000.



Indian junior women's hockey team heads to United Kingdom for crucial exposure tour



Bengaluru: The Indian Women's Hockey team has departed from Kempegowda International Airport on Thursday night for its exposure tour of the United Kingdom,

scheduled from 5 to 14 July 2026. Led by new chief coach Tim White, the team will play seven matches across Scotland and England as part of its preparations for key up-

coming international tournaments, including the Junior Asia Cup. The young squad will be led by captain Khaidem Shileima Chanu, with Nidhi and Engil Harsha

Rani Minz as the two goalkeepers. The defensive unit comprises Pooja Sahoo, Supriya, Madhu, F. Lalbi Akiami, Lalneihpuii and Parwati Topno. The midfield features captain Chanu, Tanuja Toppo, Supriya Kujur, Pooja Malik, Binima Dhan, Geeta Yadav, Roshni Aind and Tanushree Dinesh Kadu. The forward line includes Sukhveer Kaur, Shashi Khasa, Lalrinpuii, Nisha Minj, Purnima Yadav, Kajal, Sanika Chandrakant Mane and Krishna Sharma. Through this competitive experience, coach White will look to fine-tune combinations and strategies to prepare for the tournaments ahead.

Deepti Sharma compares MS Dhoni's composure to Novak Djokovic's mental strength at Wimbledon

London: Indian women's cricket team all-rounder Deepti Sharma has drawn an interesting comparison between former India captain MS Dhoni and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, saying both sporting icons possess the rare ability to remain calm and composed in the most challenging situations. Deepti, who is attending Wimbledon for the first time, shared her thoughts on how Dhoni, like Djokovic, handles pressure with calmness. "When you talk about Djokovic, everyone speaks about his mental strength. He is someone who never gives up, no matter how tough the situation is. In cricket, I think MS Dhoni sir is very similar. He is known for being very cool and calm. Whenever pressure situations come, he handles them really well. It never looks like he is in a difficult situation. He handles pressure so easily," Deepti told Jio Hotstar.



"Both Djokovic and Dhoni have that rare quality of staying calm and strong when it matters the most. Watching them, we learn how to stay calm and find a way out of tough situations," she added. The Indian all-rounder also revealed that watching a Wimbledon match in person had been a bucket-list wish for years. "My dream was that one day I would come to watch a Wimbledon match, and it feels really good to finally be here. When you go to watch a match at an iconic venue like this, and when you have always seen it on TV but today you are seeing it live for the first time, it feels amazing. The atmosphere, the crowd, the energy – everything is different. I am really enjoying watching tennis at Wimbledon. It just feels great," she said. Deepti also named Djokovic as the player she admires the most, praising the Serbian's resilience and competitive spirit.

Rafael Jodar rallies past Pablo Carreno Busta to reach Wimbledon third round

London: Rafael Jodar, the NextGenATP star from Spain, came up trumps once again, rallying from a set down, conjuring a piece of Grand Slam magic to win in five sets, which kept his debut campaign at Wimbledon alive. The Spaniard rallied to a 3-6, 6-3, 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 win against his countryman Pablo Carreno Busta in a match that was suspended on Wednesday evening due to darkness. The two players returned to No. 2 Court with Carreno Busta leading by two sets to one and Jodar 2-1 ahead on serve in the fourth set. Jodar went on to rally for a three-hour, 43-minute victory. After leveling the match at two sets all, Jodar immediately carved out three break points at 0/40 in the opening game of the fifth.

Carreno Busta fended off those three break points to hold, but Jodar bounced back from that disappointment by reeling off the next four games to set himself on the path to victory.

Jodar's two-day win at SW19 marks the second consecutive Grand Slam event at which the fast-rising Spaniard has defeated the former World No. 10 Carreno Busta in five sets. At Roland Garros in May, he rallied from two sets down to defeat the 34-year-old Carreno Busta and reach his first Grand Slam quarter-final on just his second appearance at a major. Jodar's only previous experience at Wimbledon before this year came in 2024, when he reached the boys' singles quarter-finals. By winning his first



two matches as a professional at The All England Club (also his first tour-level matches on grass), the 19-year-old has become just the third Spanish teenager in the Open Era to reach the Wimbledon men's singles third round after former champions Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz. "It's difficult, because

you don't have a lot of time to reset your mind and to this new surface," Jodar said in his post-match press conference. "It's true, it's my first time playing on grass. It wasn't like that when I started playing on clay this season, because I had already played a lot when I was younger on clay. So I just try to adapt.

Alpha' Initial Reactions Worry Spy Universe Fans



The YRF Spy Universe, once considered Bollywood's most reliable franchise brand, appears to be facing a major test with Alpha. Starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvari, the female-led action thriller arrived amid consider-

able curiosity, but the initial reactions coming in from early viewers have sparked concern among fans of the franchise. Social media platforms have been flooded with mixed-to-negative responses since the

first shows began. While some viewers have appreciated the action sequences and the performances of the lead actresses, a larger section of the audience feels that the film fails to deliver the excitement and scale asso-

ciated with previous YRF spy films. Several movie lovers and early reviewers have pointed out that the franchise may be running out of fresh ideas. Comments suggesting that YRF should consider ending the spy universe rather than continuing to stretch it have become increasingly common online. Such reactions are particularly surprising given the massive success enjoyed by films like Ek Tha Tiger, War, and Pathaan. That said, it is still too early to write off Alpha. Initial reactions often do not reflect the final box-office outcome, and the film's true reception will become clearer as more shows are screened throughout the day. The weekend collections and audience response from family viewers will also play a crucial role in determining its fate. Even the cameo by Hrithik Roshan is not helping the much with its would of mouth. For now, however, Alpha has certainly raised questions about the future direction of the YRF Spy Universe, and fans will be watching closely to see whether the film can overcome its shaky start.

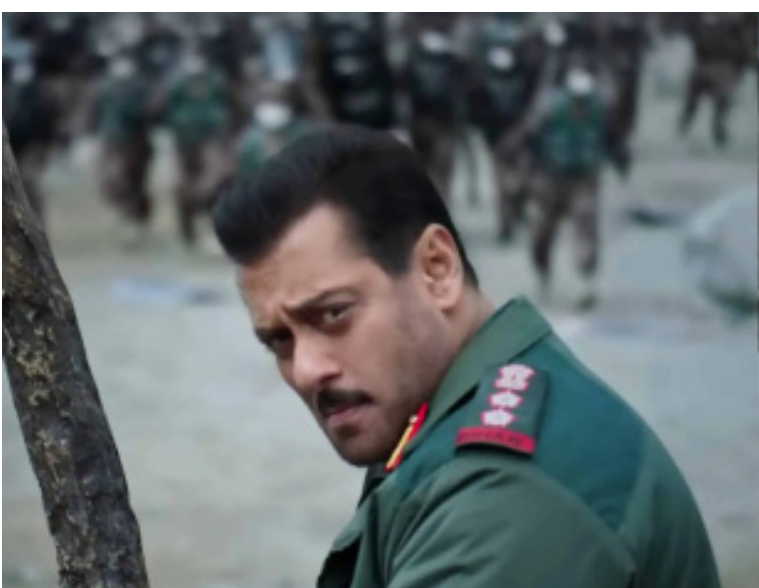
Pregnancy Won't Stop Samantha's Gym Routine



Samantha Ruth Prabhu has impressed fans once again with a stunning fitness video. The actress, who recently confirmed her pregnancy and announced that she will be taking a maternity break, shared a new clip of herself performing a suspension trainer workout while proudly flaunting her second-trimester baby bump. She leans back while holding the straps and uses her body weight to strengthen her arms, shoulders, back, core, and legs. The exercise requires balance, stability, and control, showing her dedication to staying active and healthy during pregnancy. Dressed in a fitted brown workout outfit, Samantha looks confident, graceful, and radiant as she completes the routine with ease. Meanwhile, Samantha's latest film Maa Inti Bangaaram has performed well, grossing approximately Rs 88.26 crore worldwide.

Salman's Maatrubhumi Faces Censor Trouble Again?

Salman Khan's upcoming film Maatrubhumi has landed in fresh trouble even after the makers reportedly made several changes suggested during the censor process. The film is still waiting for clearance, leaving its release plans uncertain. According to reports, the CBFC is yet to issue a certificate despite multiple rounds of discussions. The delay has surprised many as the team was believed to have addressed the major objections. The makers were expecting the film to move ahead smoothly after implementing the required modifications. However, the certification process has continued longer than anticipated. With the release date drawing closer, the uncertainty is beginning to worry the producers. Promotional activities and distribution plans could also be affected if the delay continues. The film is directed by Apoorva Lakhia and features Chitrangada Singh alongside Salman Khan. It is based on the Battle of Galwan, making it a sensitive subject that is likely receiving extra scrutiny. For now, the entire team is waiting for the final word from the censor board. Whether Maatrubhumi secures clearance in the coming days or faces further hurdles remains to be seen.



TFI Fans Expect National Award Glory For Kalki VFX

As the 2024 National Film Awards are expected to be announced this evening, Telugu cinema fans are eagerly backing Kalki 2898 AD for major honours. Many believe the Prabhas-starrer deserves either Best Film or Best Visual Effects recognition, calling it one of the most technically accomplished films ever produced in TFI history.



Iswarya Menon as Suvarna from Nagabandham movie Samantha's Bangaaram Back In Action



When Maa Inti Bangaaram posted an impressive second weekend, many expected the film to lose steam once it entered its third week. With new releases arriving and weekdays usually slowing collections, trade expected a gradual decline. Surprisingly, the film has remained steady despite witnessing a noticeable dip during the weekdays. More importantly, it has managed to hold its ground better than many had predicted. Now, the third weekend has begun, and the early trend looks encouraging. Even with fresh competition at the box office, Maa Inti Bangaaram appears to be attracting family audiences once again. The film is currently hovering around the Rs 90 crore mark worldwide. That puts it within touching distance of the prestigious Rs 100 crore milestone.

Everything now depends on how strongly the film performs over the next couple of days. A solid weekend could put the century mark well within reach. For Samantha, this is more than just a box office number. A Rs 100 crore finish would further strengthen her position as one of the biggest crowd pullers in South cinema. It will be interesting to see whether Maa Inti Bangaaram can gather enough momentum this weekend and complete a memorable century at the box office.