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Legislatures Are Schools of Democracy: Lok Sabha Speaker



Jaipur, 15 July: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla here on Wednesday stated that legislatures are not merely law-making institutions, but "schools of democracy" where lawmakers learn the values of dialogue, discipline, consensus, and service. Highlighting the role and duties of lawmakers, he observed that they should clearly realize their obligations toward the people, as democracy is sustained not merely by constitutional provisions, but by public trust, dialogue, dignity, and a spirit of service.

He made these remarks while delivering the inaugural address at the 'Legislative Pride Journey: A Gathering of Former and Current Members', organized as part of the Amrit Mahotsav commemorating the 75th anniversary of Rajasthan

Vidhan Sabha. Describing Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha as the "first school" of his public life, Shri Birla noted that the democratic values, parliamentary traditions, and legislative conduct he imbibed in the House shaped his journey from a student activist to a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Member of Parliament (MP), and ultimately, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. He recalled learning the true essence of parliamentary democracy within the Vidhan Sabha: that while listening and healthy debate enrich democracy and shape history, personal differences only diminish it. He emphasized that every debate and every word spoken in the House ultimately becomes a lasting part of democratic history. Congratulating Vidhan Sabha on completing 75 years of its demo-

cratic journey, Shri Birla observed that the state's democratic consciousness extends far beyond the history of the Assembly itself, remaining deeply rooted in India's ancient traditions of dialogue, consultation, and participatory governance. He noted that the traditions of Sabha and Samiti, local self-governance, and public participation have remained integral to Rajasthan's social and political ethos, sustained through its Panchayats and representative institutions.

Further dwelling on the history and contributions of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha, he highlighted its significant role in promoting social justice, public welfare, and inclusive development through landmark legislation, meaningful debates, and visionary policymaking.

Abhaya Programme Launched to Instill Confidence Among Women: Vangalapudi Anitha

From Our Staff Reporter Anakapalli, July 15: Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha urged people across the state to remain highly vigilant against cyber crimes. She announced that a special task force is being set up to tackle cyber offences. On Wednesday, the Home Minister inaugurated the Abhaya Programme at Bharati Convention near Vempadu Toll Plaza in Anakapalli district. She also unveiled the Abhaya poster on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, Vangalapudi Anitha said that the Anakapalli Police had initiated a commendable programme under the slogan, "Women's Safety – Our Responsibility." She expressed happiness over launching the initiative and recalled that women have gained freedom through



many struggles. She stated that the police had introduced the Abhaya Programme to instill confidence and courage among women. The Minister emphasized that everyone should be aware of the laws. She said women are being protected through the Shakti App and Shakti Teams. Noting that parents work hard to educate their children, she advised students to study diligently and reach

higher positions in life. She encouraged girls to be courageous and said that anyone facing harassment should immediately call 112. She explained that the laws are very stringent and cautioned students not to ruin their bright futures. She also advised them to stay away from bad habits. The Andhra Pradesh Home Minister told students that life is precious and should be lived happily. She urged parents to closely monitor their children's behaviour and said that education alone can bring meaningful change in life. She announced that Abhaya Complaint Boxes are being installed in every school and college. The Minister also stated that a large number of drones are being used in Anakapalli district. She advised students to set clear goals and move forward

with determination. **Resolving Public Issues is the Government's Goal: Home Minister** Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha stated that resolving people's problems is the primary objective of the government. She conducted a public grievance meeting at her camp office in Nakkapalli and received petitions from citizens. She interacted warmly with the public, listened to their concerns, and resolved some issues on the spot. People from Payakaraopeta and various constituencies across the district attended the grievance programme. The Minister directed officials to resolve the remaining issues at the earliest. District, constituency, and mandal-level officials participated in the grievance meeting.

Jagan Is a Cancerous Growth on Kadapa: Minister Nara Lokesh

Kadapa, July 15: Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh once again launched a sharp attack on former Chief Minister and YSRCP President Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, describing him as a "cancerous growth on Kadapa." Lokesh said that during his earlier padayatra (foot march), he had alleged that Jagan was responsible for the murder of his own uncle, Y. S. Vivekananda Reddy, and maintained the same allegation even today. He criticized the YSRCP, calling it a "hit-and-run party." Referring to a recent road accident, Lokesh questioned whether it was not wrong when the son of a former



minister allegedly caused an accident that resulted in a person's death. He further stated, "When the son of a Union Minister committed a mistake, the minister immediately surrendered. What did you do when your former minister's son committed a mistake? Earlier, a person died after being run over by Jagan's vehicle

tyres. These incidents may seem trivial to them." **Brahmani Steels Land Allocation Criticized** Lokesh alleged that around 11,000 acres of land had been allotted to Brahmani Steels at a rate of ₹19,000 per acre. He claimed that only Gali Janardhana Reddy and Jagan Reddy benefited from the project. He said the government was taking back those lands through the legal process. The Minister alleged that Jagan had achieved nothing during his five-year tenure as Chief Minister. He claimed that during the YSRCP government, around 250 fishermen lost their lives, but compensation was not provided to any of their families.

Sai Krishna Case: Supreme Court Adjourns Hearing to July 23

New Delhi, July 15: A significant development has taken place in the Gade Sai Krishna lookout death case. The Supreme Court on Wednesday heard a petition filed by the Andhra Pradesh Government in connection with the case and adjourned the matter to July 23 for further hearing. The case was heard before

a Bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta. The Supreme Court granted one week to the respondent, suspended Krishnalanka Circle Inspector (CI) Nagaraju, to file his response to the petition submitted by the Andhra Pradesh Government. The Special Investigation Team

(SIT) approached the Supreme Court challenging the conditions imposed by the Andhra Pradesh High Court regarding Nagaraju's police custody. **AP Government Objects to High Court Conditions** In its order, the Andhra Pradesh High Court directed that the entire transit of the accused be re-

corded through continuous video recording. However, the State Government and SIT officials have objected to these conditions. The Andhra Pradesh Government argued that constant video surveillance could compromise the confidentiality of the investigation. It stated in its petition that there is a risk of sensitive details related to the investigation becoming public. SIT officials also contended that the High Court's conditions were creating obstacles in crucial investigative procedures, including the search for Sai Krishna's body and the reconstruction of the crime scene. **State Seeks Unconditional Custodial Interrogation** The Andhra Pradesh



Government requested the Supreme Court to permit the interrogation of the accused in custody without restrictive conditions so that a comprehensive investigation could be conducted. Taking note of the submissions, the Supreme Court sought a response from suspended CI Nagaraju and adjourned the hearing to July 23. A crucial decision on the SIT's request is expected during the next hearing.

Illegal Sand Mining Case During Jagan Regime: Key Witness Summoned by ED

New Delhi, July 15: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has intensified its focus on allegations of illegal sand mining that allegedly took place in Andhra Pradesh during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The ED

has accelerated its investigation following allegations against three prominent companies involved in sand mining operations. A key witness, Danda Nagendra Kumar, has been issued summons by the ED Hyderabad Zonal Office. The notices

were issued under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by Assistant Director Gajaraj Singh Thakur. Nagendra Kumar is scheduled to appear in person before the ED office in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

PoK Neither "Azad" Nor "Disputed" But "Occupied": Local Leader At Rally

Rawalakot (PoK): Pakistan's long-standing claim over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) came under fresh scrutiny as one of the leading faces of the ongoing protest movement openly rejected Islamabad's position during a massive rally in Rawalakot. Speaking before thousands gathered at Eidgah Ground, movement leader Sardar Aman Khan declared that the region was neither "Azad" nor "disputed", but an occupied territory. **'This Is Not A Disputed Territory'** Addressing the crowd, Khan directly questioned

Pakistan's decades-old narrative on PoK. "This is not a disputed territory... this is an occupied territory... it has been occupied," he said, drawing loud applause and chants from the gathering. **Movement Continues For Over 40 Days** The speech comes as protests in Rawalakot have continued for more than 40 days, with residents accusing Pakistani authorities of worsening conditions in the region. Khan also alleged that Pakistan had blocked the supply of food and medicines for the past three weeks, creating a humanitarian crisis. He ap-



pealed to people across the Line of Control as well as to India for support. **Protests Turn Deadly** The unrest has already turned violent. A day earlier, six civilians were killed

after Pakistani forces allegedly opened fire during clashes. Among those killed in the Baloch Sadhunati district were Zahid Mughal, Zafar Mughal, Arsalan Akbar and Wajid Hayat,

who was killed at the Matial Mira Bus Terminal in Rawalakot. Earlier this month, thousands of protesters gathered near the Line of Control, insisting that PoK was not a part of Pakistan. During one of the demonstrations, Khan told supporters that if the restrictions on food and other necessities continued, people in the region might look toward India for assistance. At the rally, Khan asked the crowd whether they should march towards the Line of Control. Protesters responded with repeated chants of, "Move towards it." Khan said that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir was not part of Pakistan and claimed that Pakistan needed the region more than they depended on Pakistan.

Will Reach Delhi Without Permission : Omar Abdullah On Statehood Protest

Srinagar: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has said he will lead a protest in Delhi on July 20 to demand the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, saying that the party will go ahead even if the Delhi Police deny permission for the demonstration at Jantar Mantar. The National Conference (NC) has stepped up its campaign for statehood resto-

ration, accusing the Centre of failing to honour repeated assurances on the issue. Jammu and Kashmir lost its special status under Article 370 and was bifurcated into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. In 2023, the Centre told the Supreme Court that statehood would be restored at the earliest after Assembly elections. The party has said it will hold

the protest on the first day of Parliament's monsoon session. "Regardless of whether permission is granted, we will reach Delhi on July 19 and go ahead with our protest programme on July 20," said Omar Abdullah. The National Conference has invited INDIA bloc contestants and several non-NDA parties to join the protest at Jantar Mantar on July 20.



Making Government Healthcare the People's First Choice Is Our Goal: Minister Satya Kumar Yadav

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, July 15: Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav said that development projects worth Rs.350 crore are ready in the state's AYUSH sector. The Minister participated in and addressed a one-day workshop titled "Medicinal Plants Are the Real Foundation of Health" held at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Wednesday. He said the government has initiated measures to expand AYUSH infrastructure. Four new AYUSH medical colleges have been established, and Ayurveda colleges are functioning at Dhamavaram and Pithapuram. The government is spending ₹70 crore on each college, he added.

Six Integrated AYUSH Hospitals to Be Launched Minister Satya Kumar Yadav stated that the government has approved six Integrated AYUSH Hospitals, including those at Tirupati, Tenali, and Nandigama, with an allocation of Rs.20 crore for each hospital. He said more than 1,500 AYUSH dispensaries have been modernized. The government is focusing on preventive and wellness healthcare and is implementing the 'Sanjeevani' Digital Health Platform. The Minister said plans are being made to inaugurate the new facilities next month in the presence of the Union AYUSH Minister. He added that the government is encouraging the cultivation of Ashwagandha, Moringa



(Drumstick), and Amla. **Public Confidence in Government Healthcare Increasing** Satya Kumar Yadav revealed that outpatient (OP) services in government hospitals have increased by 20 percent, while 255 open-heart surgeries have been performed at Guntur Government General Hospital (GGH). He also announced that an additional 325 MBBS seats

would be added for the academic year 2026-27. The Minister said public confidence in government healthcare services has increased significantly. He emphasized that the coalition government's objective is to make government healthcare the first choice of the people. The event was attended by Manthena Satyanarayana Raju, Aromatic Plants CEO Chandrasekhar, and other dignitaries.

EDITORIAL

How is the cancer epidemic growing?

Cancer is the number one major disease that poses challenges to public health. Far more than infectious diseases like Corona, Dengue, and Chikungunya that suddenly spread and claim hundreds and thousands of lives, the cancer epidemic that spreads like water under the carpet, surrounds people from all corners, and suddenly bites, is killing one crore people worldwide every year. A recent warning issued by the World Health Organization that one in five people in the world is infected with cancer, and 92 per cent of them will contract this disease at least once in their lives, is disturbing the rulers, public health systems, and the general public. These are not just statistics, but alarm bells ringing about cancer. While more than two crore cancer cases are registered worldwide every year, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has estimated that 1.4 million people are affected by this epidemic in India alone.

Once this disease was mostly found in people at the end of their lives. But due to bad habits like alcohol and tobacco consumption, uncontrolled eating habits, and air pollution, cancer is now also affecting middle-aged people. It is estimated that one hundred out of every one lakh people in our country are affected by cancer. Breast, cervical, oral, and lung cancer are widespread in India. Tobacco is the leading cause of cancer. Every year, 77 thousand people in India are infected with oral cancer, of which 52 thousand people succumb to this disease. Even though governments, sensing the danger, have banned tobacco products like gutka and khaini, these products entering the markets through illegal channels continue to claim people's lives.

It is no exaggeration to say that there is still no proper awareness about cancer among the lower middle class and low-income groups. The situation is already getting worse as people take herbal medicines or seek help from unqualified doctors, delaying the disease and coming to specialists in a timely manner. Doctors are telling us that if patients consult a doctor immediately after contracting cancer, they can be saved in 40 percent of cases. There is a possibility of defeating cancer by making lifestyle changes, adopting healthy eating habits, and staying away from bad habits like tobacco and alcohol. This disease should be included in universal insurance schemes to make cancer treatment accessible to the poor. Despite the prevalence of cancer, it is surprising that two-thirds of countries have not included this disease in their insurance schemes. The fact that cancer treatment centers are limited to state capitals and diagnostic centers are limited to district centers has become a great curse for the people of rural areas.

Keeping in mind the prevalence of the disease, setting up a diagnostic department in every primary health center and a treatment center at the mandal level will have the potential to curb the spread of the disease in rural areas. It can be said that the Telangana government has taken a step forward in this direction. It is commendable that cancer screening mobile vehicles have been brought to rural areas and cancer has been included in the Arogyasri scheme, making treatment available to the poor. Just as there are hospitals to cure cancer, it is necessary to set up awareness centers on this disease. Especially by setting these up in educational institutions and offices and providing awareness through experts on weekends, the desired benefit will be achieved to some extent. Above all, it is the responsibility of parents to tell their children how dangerous cancer is and to inform them about the need for health care. It is very important to teach healthy eating habits from an early age.

The Growing Drone Wars In Myanmar

The first phase of Myanmar's drone war belonged to the rebels. In the forests, hills, and borderlands, where young fighters had few bullets, fewer heavy weapons, and no air force, small commercial drones became a kind of improvised equaliser. They watched military columns from above, dropped explosives on outposts, guided ground assaults, and gave scattered resistance groups something the junta had long monopolised: the ability to strike from the sky.

Now, the war has entered a more dangerous second phase. The military regime, stung by years of drone attacks, has copied the resistance playbook, expanded its own drone fleet, and begun using unmanned aircraft to track, harass, and attack anti-junta forces. In response, resistance groups are no longer only using drones to attack. They are trying to survive them, with jammers, shoot-downs, improvised counter-measures, and, increasingly, reported FPV-style interceptor tactics.

Myanmar's civil war is becoming a drone war that is starting to fight itself.

Since the February 2021 coup, when the military overthrew the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar has fractured into a nationwide conflict involving the junta, long-established ethnic armed organisations, post-coup People's Defense Forces, and groups aligned with the shadow National Unity Government. The humanitarian toll has been catastrophic. Thousands have been killed and millions displaced. But the military balance has also changed in ways few expected in the first months after the coup.

The resistance began with almost nothing. Many of its recruits were students, programmers, engineers, delivery riders, farmers and former urban protesters who fled into jungles and borderlands after the junta crushed street demonstrations. They were outgunned by a military with Russian and Chinese aircraft, artillery, armored vehicles and decades of experience fighting ethnic insurgencies.

But they had something else: access to the global consumer-



drone economy.

Commercial quadcopters, agricultural drones, online tutorials, 3D printers, spare parts and cross-border smuggling networks became part of Myanmar's new insurgent logistics chain. ACLED, the conflict monitor, says resistance groups first used drones in December 2021 in Pale township, Sagaing Region. Since then, it has recorded more than 2,100 resistance drone strike events across more than 600 locations. Drones have become the resistance's "entire air force."

Specialised units emerged. Federal Wings and Cloud Wings became known for drone operations linked to the Karen resistance ecosystem. Shar Htoo Waw became a hub for drone knowledge, training and adaptation. Some groups used quadcopters and hexacopters; others built fixed-wing drones with longer range. They added cameras, first-person-view features, larger payloads and one-way attack designs.

The way anti-junta forces obtain and build this technology is central to the story. It is not a single pipeline. It is a marketplace war.

Some drones are imported as commercial or agricultural sys-

tems, often through border routes with China and Thailand. The Chin National Army showed The Guardian a fleet of commercial and agricultural drones, saying many were imported from China and some from Western countries; commanders said equipment moved largely through the China and Thailand borders rather than India, where controls were tighter.

Other groups buy components part by part. Reuters reported that a rebel unit called the Angry Bird Drone Rangers, led by a former long-distance bus driver, began with small DJI drones for reconnaissance, then built larger armed UAVs using instructions gathered from TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. Several drone components were available on regional e-commerce platforms.

In eastern Myanmar, a network engineer known as "3D" upgraded 3D printers that were used by the Karenni Nationalities Defence Force to produce drones, mortar stabilisers and other battlefield tools. One fixed-wing drone design, inspired by Ukraine's improvised drone ecosystem, used 3D-printed frames and other components smuggled across the Thai border. The reported production cost was around

\$5,000 per drone once parts were available.

This is not a polished defense industry. It is a wartime cottage industry stitched together from diaspora donations, border trade, internet learning, local workshops, and battlefield iteration. Some drone teams operate under camouflage netting. Others charge phones and laptops with solar panels or generators, use Starlink for internet access, and rely on 3D printers because replacement parts can take months to arrive through jungle routes.

The early results were dramatic. During Operation 1027, the major anti-junta offensive launched in late 2023 by the Three Brotherhood Alliance and its allies, resistance forces used drone swarms to batter military positions in northern Shan State. Local reports indicated one retreating soldier describing bombs falling from drones "like rain." The drones did not replace infantry, but they helped break the junta's defensive rhythm: reconnaissance first, drone strikes next, ground assault after that.

The symbolism peaked in April 2024, when resistance forces said they launched co-ordinated drone attacks on military targets in Naypyitaw, the

junta's fortified capital. The National Unity Government said special units of the People's Defense Force targeted the airport and military headquarters; the junta said it destroyed or seized more than a dozen drones. Even without independently verified damage, the attack pierced the aura of the capital's security. But the junta was watching.

By 2024, the military had begun building its own version of the rebel drone war. Myanmar's military started procuring thousands of Chinese commercial UAVs, including agricultural-style drones, and modifying them to carry locally manufactured munitions. The irony was that the weapons that had helped rebels embarrass one of Southeast Asia's most feared militaries were now appearing in the hands of that military. ACLED says the military's investment accelerated after the resistance's battlefield successes. The junta began using drones not merely as gadgets but as part of a combined aerial campaign: reconnaissance drones to locate resistance positions, artillery guided by aerial surveillance, kamikaze drones that hover before striking, and night-capable systems with infrared and thermal sensors.

Is Saudi Arabia Now Quietly Switching Sides In US-Iran War?

The recent escalation between the US and Iran has a major actor missing - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Iran pounded US bases in Bahrain and Kuwait and surprisingly even in Oman, the friendliest Gulf countries to Iran and ones where a majority of the mediation between Iran and the US has taken place - not only during the current conflict but decades ago, too. But, conspicuously, Saudi Arabia is not in the picture. Instead, it sent a delegation to the funeral of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in a joint US-Israel strike (much of the West had stayed away from the funeral), while Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, and the Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, are regularly speaking to each other.

In fact, recent Saudi posturing has been a far cry from the initial days of the war. Soon after the US and Israel launched joint attacks on Iran on February 28, reports appeared that Saudi Arabia had been urging for a war against Iran. To an extent, this was surprising, considering that just a couple of years ago, in 2023, Saudi Arabia had entered a China-brokered "truce" with Iran. The two had reestablished diplomatic ties and even exchanged some high-profile visits.

The Many Fears In The Kingdom

Yet, it was also true that Iran remained the regional hegemon, and its nuclear and ballistic missiles programme was viewed with deep suspicion across the region. Its proxies,

scattered around the region, had challenged almost all regional powers. In fact, the Saudis had waged a war for almost a decade with one of them - the Houthi militias in Yemen, with which the Kingdom shared a border. The Houthis did not hesitate to target strategic facilities inside the Kingdom, including the facilities at Saudi Aramco. With the war going nowhere, the Saudis were compelled to enter into a ceasefire agreement with the Houthis; it was also partially to extricate themselves from Yemen that the Saudis agreed to enter into an agreement with Iran. Given the fragile balance of power in the region, the Saudis, like a number of other Gulf states, could not have not welcomed a regime change in Iran, and expected Israel and the US to execute their goals. It was thus not surprising when reports emerged that even while calling for cessation of hostilities in public, the Saudis, in private, were rooting for war. Iran, however, changed the equation.

Learning From Losses

On the eve of war, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had made a round of all the Gulf states to drum up support in case of any military intervention by Israel or the US. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) even spoke to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian over the phone. When war did ultimately break out, Iran hit back hard at the US - at its bases across the Gulf region, including in Saudi Arabia, seriously damaging them, to the extent that the US is now reportedly mulling removing them further

away from Iran and relocating them to Israel. Iran targeted not just American military bases, but even strategic facilities like the Ras Tanura Refinery, the East-West Pipeline, the Manifa and Khurais oil Fields, and several other such sites. In using asymmetrical warfare, Iran further closed the Strait of Hormuz within a few days of the war, on March 4, 2026. This was the first time in all its history of conflicts that Iran had taken such a step. A fifth of the world's oil and gas disappeared from the markets, sending oil prices soaring. The Saudis expelled the Iranian military attache and covertly hit back at Iran.

But what did all of this mean for the Kingdom?

Iran's moves were catastrophic for Saudi Arabia. Not only did it bring in millions of dollars of losses, resulting in a first-quarter fiscal deficit, but it simultaneously showed that US defence and security protection was not foolproof. The Saudis had spent billions of dollars on defence deals with the Americans. Just last year, a year into President Donald Trump's second term, the Saudis signed a defence agreement with the US, worth a whopping \$142 billion. Ultimately, however, American bases on Saudi territory turned out to be a liability. Saudi Arabia lost out on energy exports and imports through the Strait of Hormuz. Worse, investor confidence has been dented in its NEOM mega-project, as a number of contracts had to be put on hold. The project is central to the implementation of the Kingdom's Vision 2030 plan to

diversify its economy beyond oil and gas.

A Cautious U-Turn?

It was thus not surprising that when the US launched Project Freedom to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the Saudis refused to join its forces. Their threshold for further attacks by Iran was low. It has also constantly been calling for de-escalation and restraint. They face other constraints as well. Following the closure of Hormuz, Saudi Arabia ramped up production of its East-West Pipeline, which connects to its Red Sea port of Yanbu on its western coast. Through Yanbu, it shipped crude both to Europe as well as to its other major markets in Asia, following a longer route via the (in)famous Bab Al-Mandeb Strait through the Gulf of Aden. But here's the catch: if Iran could close Hormuz, its proxies in Yemen, the Houthis, can similarly close off the Bab Al-Mandab chokepoint and target commercial shipping in the Red Sea, if the conflict escalates. They had already demonstrated the leverage they have over this route soon after the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza broke out in October 2023. In case they were to repeat their action now, it would be nothing short of catastrophic for the Saudis. Moreover, when the Saudis had intervened in the Yemen civil war in 2015, the Houthis had not hesitated to demonstrate that they could strike inside Saudi territory when they attacked Saudi Aramco's facilities. Just a day ago, by targeting Saudi territory, they demonstrated that they can and are prepared for a direct confrontation with

the Saudis again.

Saudi's Place In The Muslim World

Another major constraint is Saudi Arabia's elevated position in the Muslim world as the custodian of Islam's two holiest shrines at Mecca and Medina. It also leads the world's Sunni Muslims, who comprise almost 80% of the world's Muslims, while Iran is the leader of Muslims belonging to the other major sect, the Shiites, comprising almost 14% of the world's Muslims. This rivalry has characterised bilateral relations since at least the 1979 Iranian revolution. With the war, Iran has now emerged as a winner in much of the Muslim world, as also in much of the Global South. Here was an embattled country, constrained by years of sanctions, with diminished military power, standing up to two major nuclear powers in the world. It has even managed to drive a wedge between the US and its closest ally, Israel. While the recently concluded MoU with the US for a ceasefire, though now in tatters, also demonstrated that Iran would retain the balance of power in the region. Saudi Arabia cannot not be aware of this; neither can it ignore it. It has faced a number of challenges to its leadership of the Muslim world, and not all of them have been mounted by Iran, but by fellow Sunni countries. Challenges mounted domestically, too. Osama bin Laden had turned against his native country precisely because US bases had remained on Saudi territory. The Kingdom has a large youth population.

Guntur SP Conducts Surprise Inspection of Women Police Station



Guntur, July 15: Guntur District Superintendent of Police Vakul Jindal, IPS, conducted a surprise inspection of the Guntur Women Police Station on Wednesday and directed officers to ensure speedy investigation of crimes against women and prompt justice for victims. The SP was accorded a Guard of Honour on arrival. He inspected the station reception, counselling rooms, station premises, the STF office, and dormitories allotted to STF personnel. He also interacted with officers and staff, reviewed their responsibilities, and sought feedback on issues faced dur-

ing duty. The SP instructed police personnel to respond immediately to complaints from women, register FIRs without delay wherever required, complete investigations at the earliest, and file charge sheets promptly. He also reviewed old pending cases under investigation and directed officers to dispose of them on a priority basis. During the inspection, he examined crime records, FIR registers, case diaries, station records, property room management, visitor registers, and CCTNS entries, directing officials to keep all records updated and properly maintained. Emphasizing a victim-friendly approach, the SP instructed officers to treat women complainants with dignity and respect, conduct effective counselling in family dispute cases, and ensure professional investigation in criminal cases. He said providing a safe and supportive environment for women visiting police stations is the responsibility of every police officer. SP Vakul Jindal also directed the Women Police Station DSP, who serves as the liaison officer for Shakti Teams across the district, to strengthen monitoring and improve the effectiveness of all Shakti Teams. Women Police Station DSP Srinivasa Reddy, Circle Inspectors Anjaiah and Ramesh, SB CI-1 Mallikarjuna Rao, Sub-Inspectors Bhavani and Tarangini, Station Writer Johan, and other police personnel participated in the inspection.

Tribal Products to Get National Market Support: Polavaram Collector

Rampachodavaram, July 15: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said the district administration is taking steps to identify tribal artisans and promote their products at the national level to improve their livelihoods. Speaking at the Tribal Artisans Registration and Empowerment Mela, jointly organized by TRIFED and ITDA at the ITDA Conference Hall on Wednesday, the Collector said tribal products such as bamboo handicrafts, honey, organic cashew nuts, forest produce, and traditional handicrafts have strong market potential across the country. He urged tribal artisans to register with TRIFED to access wider marketing opportunities and government support. The Collector stated that registered artisans would be connected to national exhibitions and marketing platforms through TRIFED, enabling them to earn better income. He also emphasized the need to preserve traditional tribal crafts while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities through organized marketing. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar said the registration drive aims to connect tribal artisans with TRIFED's nationwide marketing network and Tribal India outlets, ensuring better market access and stable income. TRIFED Regional Manager



Bhaskar Jha explained the registration process, eligibility criteria, product procurement system, and various assistance available to artisans. He said selected products would be procured and promoted through TRIFED's national marketing network.

The dignitaries later visited exhibition stalls showcasing tribal products and interacted with the artisans. Officials from various departments, TRIFED representatives, ITDA staff, and tribal artisans participated in the programme.

Teachers Are the Guiding Force in Shaping Students' Future: Collector Keerthi Chekuri



Rajamahendravaram, July 15 (Pen Power): East Godavari District Collector Keerthi Chekuri emphasized that teachers play a vital role in ensuring quality education and the overall development of students. She was addressing a review meeting on improving educational standards held on Wednesday at the SKVT Degree College auditorium with headmasters, Mandal Educational Officers, and Deputy Educational Officers. The Collector said teachers have the responsibility of shaping students' lives by building their confidence, paying special attention to slow learners, and promoting discipline, values, and personality development. She noted that many parents are unable to provide proper academic guidance, making teachers the

primary mentors for students. Stressing that pass percentages alone are not the true measure of educational standards, she said the real indicator is how well students understand their subjects. She called for strengthening foundational learning skills among Class VI students and discussed measures to improve the learning abilities of students in Classes VIII, IX, and X. The Collector also reviewed the challenges faced by headmasters and discussed best practices being implemented in schools. District Educational Officer K. Vasudeva Rao, Samagra Shiksha Project Director S. Subhashini, around 200 headmasters, Mandal Educational Officers, Deputy Educational Officers, and other officials attended the meeting.

Andhra Pradesh Records Daily Power Demand of 280 Million Units: Energy Minister

Amaravati, July 15 (Pen Power): Andhra Pradesh Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar said the State is recording a daily electricity demand of nearly 280 million units due to changing weather conditions, but the government is ensuring uninterrupted power supply through advance planning and strengthened infrastructure. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Minister said the coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has implemented the "True-Down" policy for the second consecutive year, reducing electricity charges instead of increasing them. He claimed that while several governments have adopted the "True-Up" mechanism to raise power tariffs, Andhra Pradesh is the only State to implement a policy that lowers electricity charges. The Minister reiterated the government's commitment not to increase electricity tariffs for five years. He said power disruptions caused by strong winds are being restored quickly by electricity depart-

ment officials in coordination with local representatives and authorities. Highlighting infrastructure development, Ravi Kumar said the government is investing around ₹6,000 crore in strengthening the power sector. New substations, transformers, and other power distribution infrastructure are being developed across the State to meet the growing demand from households and industries. He added that all ongoing projects would be completed within the stipulated timeframe to ensure reliable and quality power supply.



SCoR BZA PR No.51 dated 15th June 2026

Vijayawada Division Organized Mega School Competitions ahead of Rayanapadu Amrit Station Inauguration

Vijayawada, Pen Power, July 15: As a prelude to the dedication of the redeveloped Rayanapadu Railway Station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on July 17, 2026, Vijayawada Division of South Coast Railway organised a series of student competitions in collaboration with PM SHRI Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 2, Vijayawada. The initiative aimed to create awareness among students about the transformation of Indian Railways and encourage their participation in the nation's infrastructure development journey. The outreach programme commenced with an Essay Writing Competition, in which 121 students enthusiastically participated. The young writers expressed their thoughts on the evolution of Indian Railways, the significance of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, and the role of modern railway infrastructure in national development. The campaign continued with Painting and Elocution Competitions, drawing enthusiastic participation from students across various classes. A total of 134 students showcased their creativity through colourful paintings depicting the transformation of railway stations and India's journey towards modern infrastructure, while 82 students eloquently presented their views on themes such as nation-building, railway modernization, and public infrastructure. Overall, 337 students participated in the three competitions, reflecting the enthusiastic response of the younger generation towards the ongoing transformation of Indian Railways and the redevelopment of Rayanapadu Railway Station into a modern satellite terminal. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Premkumar Lakhavath, Senior Divisional Personnel Officer, Vijayawada Division, appreciated the en-



thusiastic participation of the students and emphasized that such initiatives help foster a stronger connection between Indian Railways and the youth. He noted that involving students in awareness programmes inspires them to become active stakeholders in India's developmental journey. The redeveloped Rayanapadu Railway Station, built under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, features a contemporary station building inspired by the region's renowned Kondapalli art, enhanced passenger amenities, improved accessibility for Divyangjan, modern waiting areas, digital passenger information systems, and upgraded circulation facilities. The station is scheduled to be dedicated to the nation by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on July 17, 2026, marking another milestone in the modernisation of Indian Railways.

Free Solar Power for SCs and STs; Electricity Charges Reduced for the First Time: Minister Dola



Ongole, July 15: Andhra Pradesh Minister for Social Welfare Dr. Dola Sri Bala Veeranjanya Swamy said the State Government is providing free solar power systems to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) households and urged all eligible beneficiaries to take advantage of the PM Surya Ghar Scheme. The Minister inaugurated solar panels installed under the PM Surya Ghar Scheme at the SC Colony in Thurpu Naidupalem

village of Tanguturu Mandal in Prakasam district on Wednesday. Maritime Board Chairman Damacharla Satya was also present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Dola said the government is providing 100% subsidy for SC and ST beneficiaries, while other eligible households are receiving 40% subsidy for the installation of rooftop solar panels. He said the scheme enables households to generate up to 300 units of electricity per month, reducing the burden of electricity bills, especially for middle-class families. Beneficiaries can also sell surplus power generated from their solar systems to the government, creating an additional source of income. The Minister said the scheme would help meet future energy needs while promoting clean and renewable energy. He appealed to all eligible citizens to enroll under the PM Surya Ghar Scheme and benefit from the initiative. Highlighting the government's reforms in the power sector, Dr. Dola stated that the coalition government has introduced significant changes and, for the first time in the history of Andhra Pradesh, electricity charges have been brought down through a true-down adjustment.

Andhra Pradesh to Emerge as AYUSH Healthcare Hub with Rs 414 Crore Investment: Minister

Vijayawada, July 15 (Pen Power): Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav announced that the State government is investing ₹414 crore to transform Andhra Pradesh into a major AYUSH healthcare hub in the country. Addressing the State conference on "Sustainable Cultivation of Medicinal Plants, Economic Growth and Marketing Infrastructure" at Tummalapalli Kshetraraya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Wednesday, the Minister said the government is reviving AYUSH systems, including Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Yoga, Naturopathy, and Homeopathy, which had been neglected in recent years. He emphasized that the government is shifting its focus from disease treatment to preventive and wellness-based healthcare. The Minister announced the establishment of four new AYUSH colleges, including Ayurveda colleges at Dharmavaram and Pithapuram, a Unani college at Proddatur, and a Naturopathy Medical College at Visakhapatnam, which is nearing completion. He also said integrated AYUSH hospitals will be set up at Tirupati, Giddalur, Nandigama, Tenali, Tekkali, and Rampachodavaram. Over 1,500 AYUSH dispensaries across the State are being modernized at

a cost of ₹44 crore, while farmers are being encouraged to cultivate medicinal plants such as



Ashwagandha, Moringa, Amla, and Aloe Vera, which have strong global demand. The government will provide technical support and marketing assistance to help farmers increase their income. During the conference, the Minister launched a dedicated website to promote medicinal and aromatic plants, unveiled internationally recognized Ayurveda publications, and inaugurated the distribution of medicinal plant seeds to farmers. Senior officials, medical experts, farmers, and students attended the programme.

Awareness Programme on Entrepreneurial Skill Development Held at Aditya University



Gandepalli, July 15 (Pen Power): An awareness programme on Entrepreneurial Skill Development was organized by the Department of Civil Engineering (Alumni), Aditya University, Surampalem, with around 150 third and fourth-year students participating, Deputy Vice-Chancel-

lor Dr. M. Srinivasa Reddy said. The chief guest was Rithwik Mamidala, an alumnus of the 2019-2023 Civil Engineering batch and currently the CEO and Managing Partner of Sri Oceanic Shipping Services and Sri Arctic Logistics, Kakinada. He shared his entrepreneurial journey and business experiences with the students. Addressing the gathering, Rithwik encouraged students to think beyond conventional employment and explore entrepreneurship. He explained how innovative ideas can be transformed into successful businesses, discussed the fundamentals of launching a startup, and highlighted the essential skills required to become a successful entrepreneur. He also advised students to develop leadership qualities, innovative thinking, and a strong entrepreneurial mindset. The programme inspired participants to enhance their understanding of business opportunities and strive to become job creators rather than job seekers in the future.

Coordination Key to Integrated Development of Prakasam and Markapuram Districts: Minister Anam Ram Narayana Reddy

Ongole, July 15 (Pen Power): Andhra Pradesh Endowments Minister and In-charge Minister for Prakasam and Markapuram districts, Anam Ram Narayana Reddy, called for better coordination among government departments to ensure the integrated development of both districts. He was speaking at the District Review Committee (DRC) meeting held at Prakasam Bhavan on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, Social Welfare Minister Dr. Dola Sri Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy, MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, District Collectors P. Rajababu and Vijaya Sunitha, SP V. Harshavardhan Raju, public representatives, and senior officials. Discussions focused on key sectors including drinking water, irrigation, agriculture, roads, panchayat raj, and forests. The Collectors assured that issues raised by public representatives would be examined and resolved on priority. Minister Anam directed officials to prepare in advance for possible El Niño conditions to ensure adequate drinking and irrigation water. He warned against releasing water from tanks for fish harvesting, stating that strict action would be taken against those responsible. He also stressed the need for coordination between forest

and revenue departments in resolving land issues and supporting tribal livelihoods. Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar reiterated the importance of conserving water resources and instructed officials to ensure that roads damaged during pipeline works are restored immediately by contractors. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen public infrastructure and improve road safety. Social Welfare Minister Dr. Dola Sri Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy urged forest officials to work closely with the Revenue Department so that non-forest lands could be made available for industrial development wherever feasible. Several MLAs and public representatives raised issues related to drinking water supply, pending bills, forest land, road safety, irrigation projects, and infrastructure development. SP V. Harshavardhan Raju informed the meeting that crimes against women had declined by 23 percent in the first six months of the year compared to the same period last year and outlined measures being taken to prevent road accidents and curb drug trafficking. The meeting concluded with officials assuring coordinated efforts for the timely resolution of public issues and the overall development of Prakasam and Markapuram districts.

Elaborate Security Arrangements in Place for Chief Minister's Visit to Palnadu

Narasaraopet, July 15 (Pen Power): The Palnadu district administration has stepped up security arrangements ahead of the visit of



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who are scheduled to attend a Loan Mela at Narasaraopet on July 17. As part of the preparations, District Collector Kritika Shukla and In-charge Superintendent of Police B. Umamaheshwar conducted an Advance Security Liaison (ASL) inspection on Wednesday. They reviewed security arrangements at the helipad set up at Issapalem village, the Kodela Sivaprasada Rao Stadium where the event will be held, VIP and public parking areas, and the Chief Minister's convoy route. The officials instructed the concerned departments to ensure foolproof security, efficient traffic management, and smooth movement of the public during the programme. The In-charge SP directed police personnel to make comprehensive security arrangements and take preventive measures to avoid any untoward incidents or traffic congestion. Officials also said that advanced technology, including drones and CCTV cameras, will be used to continuously monitor the event venue, helipad, and convoy route. Police officials, SSG personnel, and officers from various government departments participated in the Advance Security Liaison inspection.

Collector Calls for Quality Education and Competitive Exam Preparation at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya

Kakinada, July 15 (Pen Power): Kakinada District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad emphasized the need to provide quality education and effective coaching for competitive examinations at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Peddapuram. Chairing the Vidyalaya Management Committee meeting on Wednesday, the Collector received a guard of honour from the NCC cadets before participating in the review. Principal S.S.C. Keerthi gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the school's academic progress, student achievements, and ongoing activities, which the Collector appreciated. Harendhira Prasad stressed the importance of training teachers in line with the National Education Policy and preparing students to achieve higher academic goals. He also interacted with parents' representatives, reviewed the institution's functioning, and encouraged students to make the best use of



the facilities available to excel in academics and competitive examinations. Trainee Assistant Collector Priya, IAS, advised students to focus on conceptual learning instead of rote memorization and begin preparing for competitive examinations from the school level. District Educational Officer P. Ramesh, District Medical Officer Dr. Anita, Roads and Buildings Department officials, M.R. College Principal Satyanarayana Murthy, parents' representatives, and faculty members attended the meeting.

Collector Directs Measures to Prevent Accidents at Mangamuru Road Junction



Ongole, July 15 (Pen Power): Prakasam District Collector P. Rajababu has directed officials to take immediate steps to prevent recurring road accidents at the Mangamuru Road Junction, one of the accident-prone locations in Ongole. On Wednesday, the Collector inspected the junction and reviewed the traffic situation along with officials. He instructed the Joint Committee to examine the feasibility of creating a diversion road and explore other measures to reduce accidents and improve road safety. Expressing concern over the frequent loss of lives at the junction, Rajababu emphasized the need for effective traffic management and long-

term solutions to prevent further mishaps. He also suggested diverting traffic, if necessary, to ensure the safety of commuters. District Superintendent of Police V. Harshavardhan Raju, who accompanied the Collector during the inspection, stressed the importance of strict traffic regulation and directed the concerned personnel to implement safety measures to reduce accidents in the area. District Transport Commissioner Sushila, Roads and Buildings Department Executive Engineer Gopi Naik, Municipal Commissioner Krishnayya, and other officials participated in the inspection.

Check Your Voter Details Before July 24: District Election Officer Eligible Citizens Urged to Ensure Their Names Are Included in the Electoral Roll

Rampachodavaram, July 15 (Pen Power): Polavaram District Election Officer and Collector K. Dinesh Kumar has urged all eligible citizens to verify their voter details before July 24, following the extension of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR-2026) programme by the Election Commission of India. In a press statement issued on Wednesday, the Collector said the district successfully achieved 100 percent targets across all 399 polling stations under the Special Intensive Revision programme with the active cooperation of the public. He stated that the Election Commission has extended the deadline for submission and verification of voter details till July 24, 2026, and appealed to every voter to make use of the opportunity. According to the Collector, voter details of 2,78,518 electors were verified in the district, out of which the digitization process has been completed for 2,38,294 voters. During the verification, 21,766 deceased voters, 8,387 shifted voters, 5,494 duplicate registrations in other constituencies, 4,545 absent voters, and 32 cases under other

categories were identified.

He advised that any voter identified under the "Shift Migration" category who is still residing within the same polling station area should contact the concerned Booth Level Officer (BLO) and submit the required documents before July 24. Appropriate action will be taken after verification in accordance with the Election Commission's guidelines. The Collector emphasized that ensuring the inclusion of every eligible citizen in the electoral roll is the primary objective of the Election Commission. He appealed to the public to spread awareness among family members, relatives, friends, and neighbours so that every eligible voter verifies their details. He further stated that public cooperation is essential to prepare an accurate and transparent electoral roll in Polavaram district.



Restore CC Roads Immediately After Pipeline Works: Palnadu Collector

Narasaraopet, July 15 (Pen Power): Palnadu District Collector Kritika Shukla has directed officials and contractors to immediately restore cement concrete (CC) roads damaged during pipeline laying works under the Jal Jeevan Mis-



sion (JJM) and Water Grid projects. She warned that contractors would face penalties if they failed to restore the roads promptly after completion of pipeline testing and commissioning. Chairing the 5th District Water and Sanitation Mission meeting at the District Collectorate on Wednesday, the Collector reviewed the progress of 604 JJM works worth Rs.240 crore. She said 368 works have been completed, 231 are in progress, and the remaining five projects should be taken up without delay. She also noted that the State Government has released Rs.38.58 crore towards pending bills, enabling faster execution of the remaining works.

The Collector said the district aims to make every village a "Har Ghar Jal" village by March 2028. Officials informed the meeting that out of 4.34 lakh rural households, 1.63 lakh have already received functional household tap connections, while the remaining connections will be provided under JJM and Water Grid Phase I and Phase II. Emphasising safe drinking water, Kritika Shukla instructed officials to install inline chlorination systems in all protected rural water supply schemes and ensure water quality testing before and after the monsoon. She also directed that chemicals for field testing kits be supplied to all gram panchayats within two days and that test results be uploaded through

the Sujalam App. Reviewing the Water Grid project, the Collector instructed officials to expedite forest clearances, DGPS surveys, and permissions for pipeline crossings on national highways. She directed the departments concerned to speed up construction and complete the commissioning of the Water Grid projects by December this year. District Forest Officer Krishnapriya, R&B Superintending Engineer Geetha Rani, Rural Water Supply Engineering Officer Chandrasekar, District Panchayat Officer Nageswar Naik, and other officials attended the meeting.

Preparations in Full Swing for Chief Minister's Visit: Polavaram Joint Collector

Rampachodavaram, July 15 (Pen Power): Preparations for the proposed visit of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister are progressing at a brisk pace, said Polavaram District Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar. On Wednesday, the Joint Collector inspected the helipad being developed at the Government Degree College premises in Rampachodavaram and reviewed the ongoing arrangements. He also visited the Junior College grounds, where preparations for the Chief Minister's programme are underway, and issued necessary instructions to the concerned officials. Speaking on the occasion, Prashanth Kumar said all departments are working in coordination to ensure that the arrangements are completed on schedule. He directed officials to complete the helipad, venue infrastructure, and other essential facilities well in advance to ensure the smooth conduct of the programme. The Joint Collector added that the detailed schedule of the Chief Minister's visit would be announced

to the public as soon as official approvals are received. He stressed that all arrangements should be made without



any lapses. District Revenue Officer P. Ambedkar, District Panchayat Officer Chandrasekar, Tahsildar C.H. Balaji, Executive Engineer I. Srinivasa Rao, Deputy Engineer Bhavani, and officials from various departments participated in the inspection.

Adequate Fertilizer Stocks Available for Kharif 2026: Guntur Collector



Guntur, July 15 (Pen Power): Guntur District Collector C.M. Saikanth Varma has assured farmers that sufficient stocks of urea and all other fertilizers are available for the Kharif 2026 season and urged them not to panic

or purchase fertilizers beyond their actual requirements.

The Collector said that 69 percent of the fertilizer sales for July have already been completed, while adequate stocks remain available to meet the remaining demand. He stated that fertilizer sales are being carried out exclusively through the e-PoS (Electronic Point of Sale) system to ensure transparency.

He warned that the district administration would take strict action against black marketing, overpricing, illegal stocking, and forced tagging of fertilizers. Farmers were advised to purchase fertilizers only as per their cultivation needs.

Speaking about the Jala Harathi-Jala Dhara programme, the Collector said that, as part of the State Government's 100-Day Action Plan, restoration of tanks, canals, and other water bodies in the district has increased the water storage capacity by 0.69 TMC. He added that the initiative would improve rainwater conservation, enhance groundwater recharge, and provide long-term benefits for agriculture and drinking water supply.

India-UK FTA To Boost Gems & Jewellery Exports With Zero Duty Access, Industry Sees Stronger Trade & Wider Global Opportunities



New Delhi: The implementation of the India-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is expected to significantly boost India's gems and jewellery exports by improving market access and eliminating duties on a majority of products, according to industry leaders. The agreement is expected to make Indian jewellery, diamonds and other precious stone products more competitive in the UK market, creating fresh opportunities for exporters and manufacturers.

Duty Cuts To Improve Competitiveness

India Bullion and Jewel-

lers Association (IBJA) President Prithviraj Kothari said the FTA will reduce the tax burden on jewellery, diamond jewellery, lab-grown diamond jewellery, polished diamonds and other precious stone products exported to the UK. He said lower duties would make Indian products more affordable for British buyers, leading to higher export volumes and stronger trade between the two countries. Kothari added that trade agreements benefit both nations by encouraging two-way commerce and expanding business opportunities across sectors.

Industry Sees Major Opportunity

Adil Kotwal, President of the Gems and Jewellery Manufacturer Association, described the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement as a landmark development for the sector. He said duties on 99 percent of products covered under the agreement will be eliminated, providing a significant advantage to Indian exporters and enhancing the global competitiveness of the domestic gems and jewellery industry. Industry participants believe the agreement will particularly benefit ex-

porters operating from manufacturing hubs such as SEEPZ while strengthening India's position in international markets.

India Expanding Global Trade Reach

Kothari noted that India has been actively signing free trade agreements with countries including Australia, while negotiations with several other economies are progressing. He said the government's policy support for exporters over the past decade has helped strengthen India's manufacturing and export ecosystem, enabling businesses to tap new global markets more effectively.

Markets Remain Watchful

Market expert Sunil Shah said Indian equity markets witnessed a technical rebound on Wednesday after the previous session's decline. However, he cautioned that elevated crude oil prices, currently around \$85-\$86 per barrel, remain an important factor that investors will continue to monitor despite easing from earlier highs above USD 112.

RBI's Dollar Mobilisation Measures Attract Over \$10 Billion Inflows So Far



Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) measures to attract foreign currency inflows have received a positive response, with around \$10-11 billion mobilised so far through various channels, Financial Express reported. Banks have shown strong interest in raising foreign currency funds through Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) or FCNR(B) deposits, External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) and Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs). The government and the central bank expect these routes to generate total inflows of around \$80 billion. The measures were announced by the RBI during its June 5 monetary policy review as part of efforts to attract foreign capital, strengthen the country's balance of payments position and improve overall liquidity conditions.

Under the package, the RBI introduced a dollar-rupee swap facility for fresh FCNR(B) deposits and a

concessional swap facility for eligible ECBs and OFCBs. Fresh FCNR(B) deposits with maturities of three to five years are eligible under the scheme until September 30, while the concessional swap window for ECBs and OFCBs will remain available until December 31. The central bank has also taken steps to make FCNR(B) deposits more attractive for investors. Earlier this month, the RBI clarified that banks could

provide loans against such deposits and create a lien on them, allowing depositors to access additional leverage. Following the clarification, several banks have introduced loan facilities of up to 90 per cent against FCNR(B) deposits. Interest rates offered on these deposits are currently attractive, ranging between 5.5 per cent and 7.1 per cent, increasing their appeal among investors. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra is scheduled to meet chief ex-

ecutives of public and private sector banks to review the progress of the foreign currency mobilisation initiative. The upcoming meeting follows discussions between the Finance Ministry and state-owned banks, where lenders reported strong investor interest in the scheme. The RBI's initiatives come amid efforts to strengthen external sector stability and attract foreign funds at a time of global economic uncertainty.

New RBI Integrated Ombudsman Scheme: How Customers Can Claim Up To Rs.33 Lakh Compensation

New Delhi: Customers whose complaints against banks or other financial institutions remain unresolved can now approach the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under its new Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, which allows compensation of up to Rs 33 lakh in cases involving proven financial loss and service deficiencies. The Reserve Bank – Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-OS), 2026, which came into effect from July, provides a free and independent mechanism for customers to escalate complaints against banks and other RBI-regulated entities if they are dissatisfied with the response received or if the grievance remains unresolved within the prescribed time.

Scheme Covers Multiple Entities

The scheme covers banks, certain non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), non-bank prepaid payment instrument issuers, credit information companies and other regulated entities notified by the RBI. In addition, customers must first lodge their complaint with the concerned financial institution. If the complaint is rejected, not resolved within the stipulated period or the customer is not satisfied with the response, it can be escalated to the RBI Ombudsman.

Compensation Framework Explained

Under the framework, the RBI Ombudsman can award compensation of up to Rs



30 lakh for consequential financial losses arising from a deficiency in service. Moreover, compensation of up to Rs 3 lakh may be granted towards the complainant's time, expenses, harassment and mental anguish, taking the total possible compensation to Rs 33 lakh. However, the RBI has clarified that the compensation is not automatic and depends on the facts of each case. The complainant must establish that the regulated entity's deficiency in service directly caused measurable financial loss or hardship.

Documents Needed For Claims

According to the framework, customers are advised to preserve documentary evidence such as complaint acknowledgement numbers, emails, screenshots, transaction records and responses from the financial institution, as these help establish the extent of the loss and support their claim before the Om-

budsman. The RBI said customers planning to approach the Ombudsman should keep ready a copy of the complaint submitted to the bank or regulated entity, the complaint refer-

ence number, account or transaction details, copies of the institution's response, supporting documents and a clear explanation of the loss suffered and the relief sought.

HDFC Bank Names Rajiv Kumar As Part-Time Chairman After Market Hours, RBI Approves Three-Year Appointment Effective July 15

Mumbai: HDFC Bank informed the exchanges after market hours on Wednesday that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of Rajiv Kumar as the bank's Part-time Chairman for a three-year term. According to the bank's regulatory filing, Kumar's tenure as Part-time Chairman became effective from 15 July 2026. The approval has been granted under Section 10B(1A)(i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. Rajiv Kumar succeeds Keki Mistry, who had been serving as the Interim Part-time Chairman. Mistry will continue on the board as a Non-Executive Non-Independent Director, ensuring continuity in the bank's governance structure. HDFC Bank had earlier informed stock exchanges on 29 June 2026 about its application seeking RBI approval for Kumar's appointment. The latest filing confirms that the banking regulator has now granted the necessary clearance.



Mumbai: Hours after the operationalisation of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), a senior British official said the landmark deal will deliver "tangible business outcomes" for both partner countries. Harjinder Kang, the UK's Trade Commissioner for South Asia and British Deputy High Commissioner to Western India, also hoped that the agreement would eventually lead to a jump in bilateral trade to USD 100 billion from the present USD 60 billion.

"... as of midnight, we are now able to send goods and services between the two countries on the new trading terms that we've agreed," he told PTI Videos in an interaction here. Nearly 99 per cent of the goods and services being exported by India to the UK, and 90 per cent of the goods and services imported by the country, will now attract lower or zero tariffs, he said, stressing that the deal will benefit consumers in both



countries by lowering costs. "... in effect, there are some very, very good tangible outcomes for both economies and for the customers and the buyers at the end-users of these things in both markets," he said. Kang said an analysis suggests that the trading capacity will increase by GBP 25 billion through the deal, and hoped that CETA will help elevate bilateral trade to USD 100 billion at an accelerated pace. He also singled out the financial services sector and,

in particular, Mumbai, the country's financial capital, to benefit from the deal. When asked about investments, Kang said the increase in confidence levels and expansion of the trading relationship should help in upping the trend of investments as well. The greater focus now is on creating awareness about the deal among businesses for them to take the best advantage of the pact, he said, adding that the UK has reached out to 10,000 local entities with the mes-

sage recently. Changes on the geopolitical front will have no impact on the bilateral trade pact, he said, adding that the key is to give businesses clarity "There is, as you can see, a lot of geopolitical turbulence right now, and it's good that two trusting partners such as India and the UK have agreed on this CETA. At least there's some degree of certainty now for businesses along this corridor, and certainly I think that will build," Kang said.

Raghav Productivity Enhancers Reports Rs.19.57 Crore Consolidated Profit In Q1 FY27

Mumbai: Raghav Productivity Enhancers Ltd (RPEL), 15 July 2026, reported a consolidated net profit of Rs.1,957.43 lakh for the quarter ended 30 June 2026. The company's total income for the quarter stood at



Rs.8,789.62 lakh. The consolidated profit of Rs.1,957.43 lakh for Q1 FY27 represents a notable rise from the Rs.1,167.90 lakh reported in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year (Q1 FY26). This is an increase of 67.69 per cent year-on-year. Total consolidated income for the quarter ended 30 June 2026 was Rs.8,789.62 lakh.

This is up from Rs.4,591.20 lakh in Q1 FY26, marking a 91.44 per cent increase year-on-year. Basic and diluted earnings per share for the quarter were Rs.4.26. This compares with Rs.2.54 per share in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Total expenses for the quarter amounted to Rs.6,315.29 lakh. This includes cost of materi-

als consumed at Rs.2,147.33 lakh, employee benefits expense at Rs.274.36 lakh, and other expenses at Rs.3,361.87 lakh. Compared to the previous quarter (Q4 FY26), the consolidated net profit saw an increase from Rs.1,516.18 lakh. Total income also rose from Rs.7,210.36 lakh in Q4 FY26 to Rs.8,789.62 lakh in Q1 FY27.

Reliance Industrial Infrastructure Reports Rs.2.84 Crore Q1 Profit

Mumbai: Reliance Industrial Infrastructure Limited (RIIL) reported an 11% year-on-year (YoY) rise in consolidated profit after tax to Rs.2.84 crore for the quarter ended 30 June 2026. The company had posted a profit after tax of Rs.2.56 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year. Consolidated revenue from operations for the quarter stood at Rs.8.64 crore. This marks a decrease from Rs.12.46 crore reported in Q1 FY26. RIIL's total income for the quarter was Rs.14.92 crore, up from Rs.13.72 crore in the previous quarter (Q4 FY26). Total expenses for the quarter increased to Rs.12.20 crore from Rs.10.02 crore in Q4 FY26. The company's consolidated profit before tax for Q1 FY27 was Rs.2.72 crore. This is a decline from Rs.3.47 crore in Q1 FY26. RIIL's share of profit from its associate, Reliance Europe Limited, for the quarter was Rs.27 lakh. This contributed to the overall consolidated profit.



Caliber Mining IPO Opens July 17 With Rs.402–424 Price Band,

Mumbai: Caliber Mining and Logistics Limited has fixed a price band of Rs 402-Rs 424 per equity share for its maiden initial public offering (IPO), which will open for subscription on Friday, July 17, and close on Tuesday, July 21. Investors can bid for a minimum of 35 eq-

uity shares and in multiples of 35 thereafter.

Issue Structure

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of Rs 400 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 50 crore by promoters Mohit Satishkumar Chadda, Anuj Krishanlal Chadda, Manish Krishanlal Chadda

and Rahul Roshanlal Chadda. Ahead of the public issue, the company completed a pre-IPO placement of up to Rs 100 crore in consultation with the book-running lead manager.

The company plans to utilise Rs 208 crore from the fresh issue to repay or pre-

pay certain borrowings. Another Rs 167 crore will be used to purchase commercial vehicles, plant and machinery, while the remaining funds will be allocated towards general corporate purposes. Under the book-building process, up to 50% of the net offer is reserved

for qualified institutional buyers, while at least 15% and 35% are earmarked for non-institutional and retail investors, respectively. Established in 2014, Caliber Mining and Logistics operates as an integrated mining services provider, offering overburden removal,

coal extraction and coal logistics. It serves customers across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, primarily working with subsidiaries of Coal India Limited, including Western Coalfields Limited and Northern Coalfields Limited.



Vice-President addresses Valedictory Session of Vidhayi Gaurav Yatra marking 75 years of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly

- *Winning elections is important, but serving the people is more important: Vice-President*
- *In a democracy, we may agree to disagree, but we must all remain committed to the people and the Constitution: Vice-President*
- *State Legislatures are the living heartbeat of Indian democracy: Vice-President*
- *Debate, discussion or even disruption must lead to a decision: Vice-President*
- *Public service earns lasting respect, not electoral victory alone: Vice-President*
- *History remembers Maharana Pratap, but it also remembers Chetak, every sincere contribution matters: Vice-President*



New Delhi, July, 15 (PIB): The Vice-President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, today addressed the Valedictory Session of the Vidhayi Gaurav Yatra: Former and Sitting Members' Conclave, organised as part of the 75th-year celebrations of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly at Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha in Jaipur Paying tribute to Rajasthan's rich legacy of sacrifice, cour-

age and patriotism, the Vice-President said that every generation of the State has strengthened the nation's democratic ethos. He noted that democracy flourishes when people deliberate with dignity and place the national interest above every other consideration. C. P. Radhakrishnan observed that while winning elections is important, serving the people is even more important. He said

elections are won through votes, but the lasting respect and affection of the people are earned through sincere public service. Appreciating the unique initiative of bringing together former and sitting legislators, he said such interactions preserve institutional memory and enable younger legislators to benefit from the wisdom and experience of their predecessors. He complimented Speaker Shri

Vasudev Devnani for conceptualising the conclave. Emphasising the importance of healthy democratic functioning, the Vice-President said that in a democracy, differences of opinion are natural. "We may agree to disagree, but we should all agree on one thing, our unwavering commitment to the people and the Constitution," he said. Recalling his message to Members in the Rajya Sabha, he added, "Debate, discussion or even sometimes disruption must lead to a decision." The Vice-President said that the strength of India's democracy does not rest only in the magnificence of its constitutional institutions. It rests equally in the quality of its debates, the dignity of its conduct and its commitment to constitutional values. He urged legislators to uphold these ideals in both letter and spirit. Sharing an experience from his tenure as a Member of the Lok Sabha, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan recalled that recommendations made by the Parliamentary Sub-

Committee on Textiles, which he had convened, ultimately led to the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme. He urged legislators to actively contribute through debates, and Committee work, noting that even a single constructive suggestion can lead to significant policy reforms. Quoting a verse from the Thirukkural, the Vice-President said that leaders who remain accessible and courteous earn the enduring trust of the people. He reminded Members that listening to citizens with empathy and treating them with dignity are as important as framing good policies. Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan described the State Legislatures as the living heartbeat of Indian democracy. He said that while Parliament reflects the aspirations of the nation, State Legislatures give voice to the hopes and concerns of every village, town and family. Calling attention to the responsibilities of elected representatives, the Vice-President said that every Member of a Legislature

carries a profound responsibility. Every time a citizen casts a vote, they place their faith in democracy, he observed, adding that this faith must be honoured every single day through integrity, humility and dedication to public service. Recalling his long association with Rajasthan's political leadership, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan said he had the privilege of working with former Chief Ministers Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and Smt. Vasundhara Raje, and acknowledged the contribution of former Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot to the State's democratic journey. He also fondly remembered his association with late Shri Rajesh Pilot during his tenure as a Member of the Lok Sabha. The Vice-President said public life demands patience, and sincere service is ultimately recognised. Invoking Rajasthan's glorious history, the Vice-President said history can never forget Maharana Pratap, but it also remembers the unmatched loyalty and sacrifice of his trusted horse, Chetak.

Prime Minister shares an article on how Bharat Tex 2026 reflects India's textile strength and vision 2030

New Delhi, July, 15 (PIB): The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi today, shared an article written by Union Minister of State, Shri Pabitra Margherita, on how Bharat Tex 2026 brings India's complete textile value chain under one roof, reflecting the nation's manufacturing strength, rich textile heritage and expanding global presence. Shri Modi remarked that it also reflects India's Vision 2030 roadmap for the textile sector. Modi posted on X: Union MoS Shri @PmargheritaBJP writes that @Bharat_tex 2026 brings India's complete textile value chain under one roof, showcasing the country's manufacturing strength, rich textile heritage and growing global presence. It also reflects India's Vision 2030 roadmap for the textile sector.

Prime Minister shares an article on India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the Agreement on Social Security

New Delhi, July, 15 (PIB): The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, shared an article written by Union Minister, Shri Piyush Goyal on the India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the agreement on Social Security, describing it as a significant milestone in the India-UK partnership. Shri Modi said that the two agreements would further deepen the economic linkages between India and the United Kingdom and translate the shared ambition of both countries into tangible opportunities for their people. Shri Modi noted that the CETA would provide fresh momentum to India's farmers, entrepreneurs and MSMEs by expanding access to the UK market across several vibrant sectors. He added that the agreement on Social Security would provide invaluable support to Indian professionals working temporarily in the United Kingdom and enhance the competitiveness of Indian enterprises.

This is a significant moment in the India-United Kingdom partnership! With the coming into force of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement and the Agreement on Social Security, our economic linkages are going to get even deeper. Together, these agreements translate our shared ambition into tangible opportunities for our people. The CETA will give fresh momentum to our farmers, entrepreneurs and MSMEs. Several vibrant sectors will gain stronger access to the UK market. It will also deepen cooperation in technology, professional services and innovation, while supporting greater mobility for skilled Indian talent. The social security agreement will provide invaluable support to Indian professionals working temporarily in the UK and strengthen the competitiveness of Indian enterprises. This moment reflects the trust between our democracies and our resolve to build a forward-looking partnership driven by trade, technology, investment and innovation. India and the UK will continue working together for shared prosperity.

UP Cabinet Clears Rs.10,998 Cr Varuna River Elevated Corridor Project

New Delhi (PIB): The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, today has approved the development of a 43.218 km Link/Connector Corridor connecting NH-31 and the Varanasi Ring Road along the River Varuna for decongestion of Varanasi city in Uttar Pradesh. The project comprises a 6/4-lane predominantly elevated corridor, including main carriageway, flyovers, loops, ramps and service roads, and will be implemented by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) at a total capital cost of Rs.10,998.32 crore, including a civil construction cost of Rs.4,565.33 crore and land acquisition cost of Rs.934.91 crore. The corridor is a major component of the Varanasi Decongestion Plan and will provide seamless connectivity between NH-31 and Kashi Railway Station, while substantially improving access to Varanasi Ring Road, Varanasi Airport, Kashi Railway Station, Varanasi City Railway Station, Varanasi Junction, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction, Ramnagar Port, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, the ghats of Varanasi and the adjoining Chandauli region. Designed for an operating speed of 80-100 km/h, the project will reduce travel time between NH-31 and Kashi Railway Station from approximately 40 minutes to 20 minutes, representing a reduction of nearly 50 per cent. It will significantly decongest the city's road network, improve road safety, reduce vehicle operating costs and facilitate faster, uninterrupted movement of passenger and freight traffic. The project will also strengthen regional connectivity by improving access to one Economic Node (Chandauli Social Economic Zone), one Social Node (Chandauli) and six major Logistics Nodes, thereby enhancing multimodal integration in line with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan. It will facilitate efficient movement of agricultural produce, industrial goods, construction materials and minerals, improving logistics efficiency and supporting sustainable economic growth across eastern Uttar Pradesh. Overall, the project will create a modern, access-controlled urban transport corridor that enhances connectivity, strengthens multimodal transport integration, promotes tourism and economic development, and improves the quality of life for residents and visitors to Varanasi.

Today's Horoscope



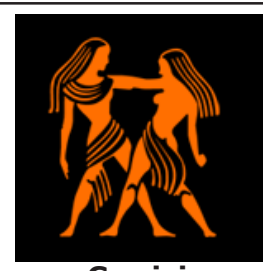
Aries

You can start your day with Yoga and Meditation. Doing this will be beneficial for you and you will maintain your energy levels throughout the day. Today, you will be able to earn money without any help or assistance. This period is also good for taking your parents into confidence regarding your new projects and plans. Plant a sapling today. Your boss will not be interested in excuses- Do your work to remain in his good books. You will not mind what people think of you today. Rather, you will prefer not meeting anyone in your spare time and enjoy the solitude. The demands of your spouse might give you some stress. Remedy :- Wearing pure silver bangle will improve your love life.



Taurus

Health will be fine despite some mental pressures. You will have problems hanging on to your money today- You are likely to overspend or misplace your wallet- Some losses due to carelessness are certain. Your thirst for knowledge will help you make new friends. Romance comes your way as friendship turns deeper. Use your intellectual power to your benefit. It will help you in completing professional projects and give new ideas. Natives of this zodiac sign need to understand themselves a bit better today. If you feel lost somewhere in the crowd, then take time for yourself and evaluate your personality. Frustration will increase between you and your love partner due to the lack of time. Remedy :- For increase in income, establish chandra yantra at the place of worship in your home.



Gemini

Find the solace in the company of children. The therapeutic powers of children not only those of your own family but even the off-springs of others can give you solace and calm your anxiety. You will make substantial gains if you invest on long-term basis. Share your happiness with your parents. Let them feel worthwhile as feeling of loneliness and depression are erased. What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for eachother. Love pangs will unable you to sleep today. Those associated with foreign trade are expected to get the desired results today. With this, the working natives of this zodiac sign can make full use of their talent at the workplace today. Remedy :- Keep Khirmi roots wrapped in a white cloth to improve health.



Cancer

Be an optimistic and look at the brighter side. Your confident expectations open the door for realization of your hopes and desires. Your dedication and hard work will get noticed and will bring some financial rewards for you today. You need to be patient with children or those who are less experienced than you are. Romantic moves will not pay. Auspicious day to start new ventures. Natives of this zodiac sign are very interesting. Sometimes they will feel alive amidst their friends, but would love to spend time alone at times. Adding to it, you'll be able to take out some 'me' time from your busy schedule. If you ignored small demands of your life-partner today like temptations for delicacies or just a hug, he/she might get hurt. Remedy :- To enjoy bliss and peace in the family, respect and love your mother.



Leo

Health can bloom by sharing happiness with others. Together with your spouse, you can discuss finances and plan your wealth for your future. You will have great time with friends but take extra care while driving. You may be overwhelmed by proposing as it unburdens you. Colleagues provide you with enormous support and new alliances are quite likely at workplace. Today, you will use your free time and try to finish the incomplete tasks which were not attended in the past. Romantic songs, aromatic candles, good food, and some drinks; the day is all about this with your spouse. Remedy :- Family life will be good by giving honour and respect to wise and just people, scholars, intellectuals and academicians.



Virgo

Neglecting your parents could mar your future prospects. Good times never last too long. Man's deeds are like the waves of sound. These rebound to produce a melody or a jarring noise. They are the seeds-we reap only what we sow. Today, you are likely to attain benefits from the help of your brother or sister. You are best to avoid raising issue that could upset your relationship with loved ones. Somebody may come between your love today. Be honest and to the point in your approach-Your determination will get noticed and so will your skills. Today people will pass compliments-which you have always wanted to hear. Remedy :- Have faith in God and prevent yourself from psychological violence, doing this will help you to maintain good health.



Libra

Victory celebrations will give you tremendous joy. You can share this happiness with friends to enjoy your joy. An old friend of yours can advise you on how to earn more profits in business today. If you follow his/her advice, you're definitely in luck. Make arrangement with your spouse to finish off pending household work. Personal guidance will improve your relationship. Natives who have a creative job can face various problems today. You can realize the importance of a job over creative work. You can spend your free time at any temple, gurudwara or any religious place today, away from unnecessary troubles and disputes. You know what, your spouse is truly your angel. Don't believe us? Observe and experience it today. Remedy :- Store Gangajal or holy water in a tin-based container and attain prosperity.



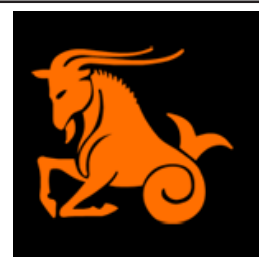
Scorpio

Your mind will be receptive to the good things. Perfect day to purchase items that would grow in value. In a happy-energetic-loving mood-your jovial nature brings joy and happiness to those around you. Don't disappoint your lover today- as it will leave you repenting later. The good mood of boss may make the entire environment at work quite happening. You know the importance of personal space, and you are likely to get a lot of free time today. In this time, you can play a game or go to the gym. Too much expectations today might lead you toward sadness in married life. Remedy :- Worship banana tree, and light ghee lamps near this tree on Thursdays, for a fulfilling love life.



Sagittarius

A day when rest will be important- As you have been facing lot of mental pressure recently- Recreation and entertainment will help you relax. Your financial life will prosper today. Along with that, you can get rid of your debts or ongoing loans. Pending household jobs will take up some of your time. Chances of facing agony of love on the cards today. Don't take your seniors for granted. A spiritual leader or an elder provides guidance. Your bad mood will be lifted up by your life-partner with some special surprises. Remedy :- For a successful professional life, offer raw milk on Shivalinga.



Capricorn

Your biggest asset is your sense of humour try to use it to cure your illness. Even though funds will slip easily through your fingers- your lucky stars will keep the finances flowing. You will have great time with friends but take extra care while driving. Exciting day as you receive gifts/presents from your beloved. It is also the good time to express yourself- and work on projects that are of creative nature. Today people will pass compliments-which you have always wanted to hear. Those who say that marriage is all about sex, they lie. Because today, you will know what true love is. Remedy :- Offer/flow raw turmeric in running water for great health.



Aquarius

Today you will have ample of the time to do things to improve your health and looks. Today, your parents may become worried because of your extravagant lifestyle and spending, and therefore you may have to fall prey to their anger. Good advice from family members will decrease your mental pressure. The day is fabulous in terms of your love life. Keep making love. Despite overburdened with work, you can remain energetic at your workplace. Today, you can complete all your tasks before the given scheduled time. Today, you will have free time on your hands, and you can use it to meditate. Therefore, you'll remain mentally at peace today. Love making is at its best when you can feel the emotional bond with your life-partner. Remedy :- Business/work life will be flourish by wearing multi-coloured printed clothes.



Pisces

Your swift action will motivate you. To achieve success- change your ideas with time. This would broaden your vision- widen your horizon- improve your personality and enrich your mind. Today, you need to stay away from such friends who ask you to loan money and then do not return it. Relatives will be willing to give you a helping hand. Physical existence is now of no consideration, as you feel yourself into each other in love all the time. It is going to be your day at work! You should learn to spend some time with the younger members of your family. Not doing this can hinder your efforts for familial peace. Today, you might get something in the morning, which will make your entire day amazing. Remedy :- Accept rice and silver from your mother and keep it in your home to improve your financial condition.

Indian women's hockey team begins World Cup preparations, says coach Sjoerd Marijne



New Delhi: Indian women's hockey chief coach Sjoerd Marijne believes the squad is entering the most crucial phase of its preparation with renewed confidence and enthusiasm as it gears up for the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 to be played in Belgium and the Netherlands, saying the players are fully committed to improving ahead of two major tournaments later this year. With just a month remaining before the World Cup begins on August 15, the Indian women's team is training at the Sports Authority of

India (SAI) Centre in Bengaluru after an unbeaten title-winning campaign at the FIH Nations Cup, a performance that secured valuable momentum heading into the global showpiece. India has been drawn in Pool D and will open its World Cup campaign against one of the pre-tournament favourites, China, on August 16. The team will then face South Africa on August 18 before concluding the group stage against England on August 20. Marijne said the prospect of competing at both the

World Cup and the Asian Games has created a positive atmosphere within the camp, with every player eager to make the most of the preparation period. "The team is very motivated for the upcoming period with the two major tournaments (World Cup and Asian Games) ahead. The players are excited, and you can clearly see that energy during our training sessions. Everyone is working hard every day, and there is a real hunger within the group to keep improving," Marijne said. Having lifted the FIH Nations Cup without losing a match, India enters the World Cup on the back of one of its strongest recent performances. The coaching staff is now focused on ensuring the team continues its upward trajectory while managing workloads during the final month before the tournament. Marijne explained that the emphasis remains on sustained improvement rather than dramatic changes, with fitness and consistent progres-

sion forming the cornerstone of the team's preparation. "Our focus remains on ourselves. We want to take another step forward, especially in terms of fitness, while continuing to improve the areas we have been working on over the past few months. We have a good balance of high, medium, and low-intensity sessions because you cannot train at maximum intensity every day. Our strength and conditioning coaches closely monitor every player to make sure the team is ready. I can see the progress we are making, both individually and as a team, and that gives me a lot of confidence going into the World Cup," he added. The simultaneous staging of the men's and women's World Cups in Belgium and the Netherlands from August 15 to 30 adds further significance to this year's tournament, with India hoping its recent progress can translate into a strong campaign on the biggest stage.

Back Kuldeep Yadav as frontline spinner for 2027 World Cup, Ravichandran Ashwin urges India

New Delhi: Former India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has strongly questioned the team management's handling of Kuldeep Yadav and has urged them to give the left-arm wrist spinner more opportunities in the lead-up to the 2027 ODI World Cup. In the six-wicket win over England at Edgbaston, India picked finger-spin bowling all-rounders Axar Patel and Washington Sundar ahead of Kuldeep. "In this Indian team, I will say this again. Both finger-spinning all-rounders will not fit into the combination for the 2027 World Cup. Whenever Kuldeep's place is made, and Harshit Rana is fit and firing, Harshit Rana becomes the third seamer. "Then it opens up a slot for Kuldeep. Kuldeep should get more backing. In that World Cup, Kuldeep Yadav's bowling was very important. He is a match-winning spinner. He can bowl in any phase. He has a good record in South Africa," said Ashwin on his YouTube channel 'Ash Ki Baat.' Expressing further disappointment over how Kuldeep has been managed, Ashwin also said the need of the hour is to build Kuldeep's confidence. "This management hasn't backed Kuldeep enough. They should back him more because he is a match-winner. "If he has to get into the 2027 World Cup with the right mindset, they should keep giving him chances. He should be given a lot more confidence. I would love for India to play

Kuldeep Yadav as the frontline spinner." With injuries to Rana, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Hardik Pandya, India has been auditioning Shivam Dube as a seam-bowling all-rounder. However, Ashwin cautioned against looking at Dube as a primary option for the 50-over format. "If Shivam Dube is a serious contender for the 2027 ODI World Cup, I think we are in a little bit of a spot of bother. My first-choice all-rounder will always be Hardik. Second choice, Nitish Kumar Reddy. "Whatever Shivam Dube did, I liked it. If Hardik is injured and Nitish is injured, then India should go to Shivam Dube. I liked the way they utilised him. He bowled six overs, which I really liked. He has bowled reasonably well. But he should be the last-choice all-rounder for ODI cricket," he added. Ashwin further lauded skipper Shubman Gill's recent batting exploits and captaincy credentials, as he top-scored with 80 before retiring hurt due to cramps and had his bowling changes mostly spot-on. "A player's confidence comes from where? He makes runs and finds himself in good places. And how does he bat? He has been batting phenomenally well. In the IPL as well. In the T20 squad, he hasn't found a place yet. "I will not be tempted. Forget all that. But the way he is batting in T20, and the way he has captained the Gujarat Titans, and the way he has captained the Test team, I am



really positive and hopeful of an authoritative captain in the 50-over format. The way he has captained and batted, I am very hopeful. Because India needs authority in the next generation of captains. "Shubman Gill's batting has a lot of quality. He will handle it somehow. He has got a great journey ahead of him. There is no need to talk about overseas conditions in a white-ball format because Shubman Gill is not a spring chicken. He has played a lot of international cricket. He has been on tours of Australia, South Africa and England. He did great batting in the Test se-

ries," he elaborated. With India set to play second ODI in Cardiff on Thursday, Ashwin earmarked young pacer Gurnoor Brar as a highly exciting fast-bowling prospect across formats, provided he is managed correctly. "He is very impressive. He is a tall bowler. He has air speed. He will be expensive. This is his first tour, but he has raw material. "He can be a real champion bowler for India. Not only in this format. He can bowl red-ball cricket. Highly impressive. Great future ahead. I hope we can look after him very well without injuries because he can serve Indian cricket for a long time."

India step up preparations for FIH Hockey World Cup 2026

Hyderabad: With just a month left before the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium and Netherlands 2026 begins, excitement is building as the Indian men's and women's teams intensify their preparations at the national coaching camps currently under way at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) Centre in Bengaluru. The prestigious tournament, scheduled to be held from August 15 to 30, will, for the first time, see both the men's and women's editions being held simultaneously at the same venues. The Indian men's team heads into the World Cup with renewed confidence following encouraging performances during the Rotterdam and London legs of the FIH Hockey Pro League, where they defeated reigning world champions Germany and Paris Olympics gold medalists the Netherlands, in addition to victories over Paki-

stan and a strong showing against England. "The players have come into the camp fresh (after a break following the Pro League tour of Europe), and you can see it in the energy on the pitch. The sessions have been sharp and competitive, with everyone eager to be back together," said the Indian Men's Hockey Team's Chief Coach, Craig Fulton. "The first few days have been about getting the legs moving again, re-establishing our standards, and now we are gradually building the intensity as we prepare for the World Cup." The Indian men's team, champions of the 1975 edition, has been drawn in Pool D alongside England, Pakistan and Wales, with their campaign beginning against Wales on August 15, followed by matches against England on August 17 and Pakistan on August 19. The match against England, one of the in-form



teams at present, promises to be a stern test. Recent battles between the two teams, including at the recently concluded FIH Hockey Pro League, have been close. However, the clash against arch-rivals Pakistan remains the marquee fixture of the first phase of the tournament. "We're doing strong conditioning work early in the week to build our physical base, before moving into more tactical, unit-based sessions as the week progresses," said Fulton.

"We're also doing a lot of small-sided games to keep decision-making sharp under fatigue, alongside daily video reviews to reinforce learning and specific work on our press and counter. It's about improving what we're already good at and continuing to build on those strengths." The Indian women's team, meanwhile, will enter the World Cup on the back of an emphatic campaign at the FIH Nations Cup, where they lifted the trophy with an unbeaten run. I

Hyderabad Marathon achieves historic World Athletics Silver Standard as registrations top 32,000



Hyderabad: The 15th edition of the NMDC Hyderabad Marathon, powered by the IDFC First Bank and the Government of Telangana, to be held on August 29 and 30 this year will be with a big difference. For the Hyderabad Marathon, which is India's second largest marathon, is now India's first marathon to receive the prestigious World Athletics ABW Silver Standard. And, the Hyderabad Marathon has attracted a record participants of more than 32,000 featuring across Full Marathon, Half Marathon, 10K and the 5K categories. "The 2026 edition has once again earned the World Athletics Label, reflecting its adherence to the highest international standards in race organisation, athlete services, course measurement, safety and event management," Rajesh Vetcha, Race Director, said on Wednesday. "This year's edition will offer a total prize purse of ₹45 lakh, attracting some of the finest athletes from India and abroad while delivering a world-class experience for every participant," Mr. Rajesh said. The Inclusive Run, organised in association

with the Adventures Beyond Barriers Foundation (ABBF), is a new initiative at the 15th NMDC Hyderabad Marathon that promotes inclusive participation in distance running, said Mr. Krishna Kumar Thakur, Director (Personnel), NMDC Ltd. "With over 300 participants with disabilities registered this year, the initiative reinforces the belief that running has no barriers and that everyone deserves an opportunity to experience the joy of sport," he said. Mr. Shreepad Shende, Chief Marketing Officer, IDFC FIRST Bank, said that the NMDC Hyderabad Marathon would now officially be a SheRACES accredited — recognising our commitment to safer spaces, equal opportunity, better support, and an inclusive race experience for women runners. "Because every pace belongs here. Every story matters here. Every runner deserves to feel seen, supported, and celebrated," he said. The guests unveiled the Marathon's medal designed by Neil Foley Designs and also the T-shirt. Two-time world women's boxing champion Nikhat Zareen said: "What

makes this marathon truly special is its inclusivity. It welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds, bringing together a diverse community of runners." The marathon continues to be one of India's largest charity fundraising platforms. This year, 40 NGO partners representing education, healthcare, women empowerment, sustainability and animal welfare are participating in the initiative. The charity platform has already raised over ₹2.03 crore towards its ₹4 crore fundraising goal, with contributions from corporates, communities and individual donors. The campaign will remain open until September 15, 2026. Arcesium emerged as the Highest Corporate Donor, contributing ₹30 lakh, while Blood Warriors Foundation became the Highest Fundraising NGO, raising an impressive ₹67.62 lakh. Divis Foundation for Gifted Children recorded the Highest Bib Sales among NGOs with 388 charity bibs sold. Emaan Chimote was recognised as the Highest Individual Fundraiser, raising ₹1.59 lakh for SAFA Society.

ICC Annual Conference: Devajit Saikia to head governance committee; Mauritius joins as 111th member



Edinburgh: BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia has been appointed as the Chair of the newly-constituted Governance Review Committee of the International Cricket Council (ICC), while Mauritius was formally inducted as the global body's 111th member during the recent Annual Conference in Edinburgh. In a significant administrative development, the ICC said its Board approved the establishment of two key board sub-committees to oversee crucial sectors of the global game. The Governance Review Committee will be headed by Saikia, with Dr. Mohammed Moosajee (Cricket South Africa) and Dr. Ros Rivaz (ICC Independent Director) serving as the other members. Additionally, the ICC has established a Franchise Leagues Committee, which will be chaired by the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) President and former men's captain Tamim Iqbal. This panel also includes Saikia, Dr. Rudie van Vuuren (Cricket Namibia), Richard Gould (England and Wales Cricket Board), and Todd Greenberg (Cricket Australia). Meanwhile, in a major boost to cricket's global footprint, the ICC approved Mauritius's admission as its 111th member, marking another important step in the game's continued global growth. "The addition of Mauritius reflects the ICC's commitment to expanding

cricket's reach, strengthening its presence in emerging markets, and creating greater opportunities for participation and development across the world," said the ICC in its statement. In another key financial decision, the Board approved a USD 12.82 million loan to Cricket West Indies (CWI) to support the member board's operations. The ICC Board also addressed critical administrative and compliance matters concerning several member nations. Regarding Sri Lanka Cricket, the ICC noted progress toward a revised Constitution but reiterated the need for elections to be held at the earliest. It further ruled that SLC will continue to be barred from representation at ICC Board meetings for the time being. As of now, SLC is being run by a nine-

member transformation committee after the government sacked the board's previous office bearers. The ICC also approved specific 'Reinstatement Conditions' for Cricket Canada, setting out the criteria that must be satisfied before its current suspension from ICC Membership can be lifted. Last month, ICC suspended Cricket Canada due to serious breaches of membership obligations, particularly towards governance and financial issues. The governing body also formally recognised the appointment of Iqbal, who won the BCB President elections earlier this year, as the member's Full Member Director, while agreeing to place France Cricket 'On Notice' following breaches of its mandatory Membership Criteria.

telangana athlete N Pravallika receives grand welcome after winning Asian U-23 relay gold

Hyderabad: International athlete N. Pravallika was given a warm welcome at the Hyderabad Airport on Wednesday on her return with a gold in the 4 x 400m relay event in the Asian under-23 athletics championship in Ordos (China) at Shamsabad, today at 1:30 AM, on her arrival after winning the Gold Medal in the 4x400m Relay at The Telangana Social Welfare Residential Degree & Junior College PDs & PETs Association, along with coaches, parents, and well-wishers. Mr. B.E. Stanley Jones, President, Telangana Athletics Association (TAA), was also given a touching reception.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Rama Laxman (Chairman), along with Chander (General Secretary), Harikishan (Treasurer), and Shamsher Ali (Organizing Secretary), congratulated Pravallika for bringing immense pride to India and Telangana.

Kiran Abbavaram's KA13 BTS: A Taste Of Joyful Ride

Kiran Abbavaram, first time is wearing multiple creative hats, leading the film not only as its protagonist but also as its story writer, screenplay writer, and director. Backed by Joy Films, the project is produced by Sudhakar Chaganti, with Suresh Yerra as co-producer. Devika Bhat is the leading lady. Mounted on an unprecedented scale for a Kiran Abbavaram film, the entertainer has already made an impact with its announcement poster. On the occasion of the actor's birthday, the team unveiled an exclusive making video from the first schedule, which has now been completed. Rather than simply showcasing behind-the-scenes footage, the video captures the enthusiasm, laughter, and strong bonding that define the atmosphere on set. One of its biggest highlights is Kiran Abbavaram's all-round involvement in the filmmaking process. Whether interacting with actors, discussing visuals with technicians, checking monitor outputs, or stepping in front of the camera for his performance, he appears deeply invested in every stage of production. The visuals further indicate that the film is being crafted as a complete entertainer, blending humor, emotions, energetic sequences, and commercial elements into a refreshing narrative. The video offers a glimpse of the joyful ride the film has in store for audiences. The project features cinematography by Viswas Daniel, music by Bheems Ceciroleo, production design by Sudheer Macharla, and editing by Santhosh Naidu. With a grand scale, a passionate creative vision, and Kiran Abbavaram taking charge like never before, the film has rapidly become one of the most eagerly awaited upcoming entertainers.



The Paradise team denies rumors about distribution rights

Nani is currently working on his most ambitious film, The Paradise, directed by Srikanth Odela. Mounted on a grand scale, the film has been in production for over a year, with shooting expected to be completed in the next two months. In recent days, several reports and social media posts have claimed that the film's distribution rights have already been finalized. However, producer Sudhakar Cherukuri and the production house, SLVC, have dismissed these reports as baseless.

Issuing an official clarification, the makers urged fans and the trade not to believe unverified speculation. The statement read: "We request everyone not to believe the rumours being circulated about the distribution rights of #TheParadise. Any official update will be communicated only through our official handles." "The Paradise" stars Kayadu Lohar as the female lead, with Mohan Babu playing a key role and Sonali Kulkarni appearing as Nani's mother. Music is composed by Anirudh Ravichander, whose first single, "Aaya Sher," has already emerged as a chartbuster.



Chennai Love Story: After Ram Charan and Akhil, Kiran Abbavaram to showcase a twist

Unexpected twists centered around the protagonist have become a noticeable trend in Telugu cinema. Recent films starring Ram Charan and Akhil Akkineni have used this narrative device to leave audiences surprised. In "Peddi," the revelation surrounding Ram Charan's character in the final act emerged as one of the film's biggest highlights. Similarly, "Lenin" featured several twists throughout the story, with its climactic revelation becoming a major talking point after the film's release. Now, industry buzz suggests that "Chennai Love Story," starring Kiran Abbavaram, also revolves around an unusual twist connected to its lead character. While the makers have kept the details under wraps, the speculation has added to the curiosity surrounding the romantic drama. Written by Sai Rajesh and directed by Ravi Namburii, "Chennai Love Story" stars Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gowri Priya as the lead pair. The film is slated for release on July 24.



Sreeleela Set to Lose Another Biggie?

Sreeleela is keeping a low profile when it comes to her career. She stepped away to complete her studies, and so far, 2026 has been a dull year for her as Parasakthi and Ustaad Bhagat Singh did not bring her much luck at the box office.

Sreeleela was also part of another interesting film, Lenin, and she had pinned a lot of hopes on the project. However, as the Akhil starrer kept getting delayed time and again, she walked out, and Bhagyashri Borse replaced her. Cut to the latest scenario, Lenin has turned out to be a hit, and Bhagyashri is getting all the limelight.

If that was not enough, news has emerged from the Tamil media that Sreeleela has been replaced in another big project. The rumor is that she has been replaced in Adhik Ravichandran's new Ajith film, with Kayadu Lohar, the new-age sensation, taking her place. Though an official confirmation is yet to be made, this news is slowly grabbing headlines.

Sreeleela started her career with a bang and bagged several big films, but multiple flops have held her back. She is all set to make her Hindi debut in Anurag Basu's film with Kartik Aaryan, but that project is also taking a lot of time and facing delays. With films slipping out of her hands and several high-profile projects getting delayed, Sreeleela is surely going through a slump and needs to make a strong comeback. One needs to see what kind of films does she act in the days to come.



Mrunal Thakur Dazzles In Shimmery Silver Gown

Mrunal Thakur is once again the talk of the town, this time over fresh dating rumours. After buzz around her and Dhanush a few weeks back, which she brushed off, speculation has now shifted to Team India cricketer Rishabh Pant, after the two started following each other on Instagram. Fans are convinced there's more to it, though neither star has confirmed anything.

Meanwhile, Mrunal continues to turn heads with her fashion game, recently stunning in a shimmery silver embellished cutout gown, paired with layered diamond and emerald necklaces, proving her style never dips even when her films do.

On the work front, 2026 hasn't been kind to Mrunal at the box office. She featured in three back-to-back releases, Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, Dacoit: A Love Story, and Do Deewane Seher Mein, all of which failed to click with audiences. Despite the flops, buzz is building around her reportedly joining Allu Arjun's much-anticipated Raka.

