

Sri Geetaansha Digitals

Hyderabad | Visakhapatnam | Kakinada | Vijayawada | Ongole

Print

Compactable Pigment Inks Available at Low Cost

News Print Rolls Available at Reasonable cost

For More Details: 93948 55244, 9059465965

Devotee Dies Of Suffocation During Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra In Puri; Over 100 Injured, 52 Rescued



Puri: A tragic incident occurred during the Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra in Puri when a devotee lost his life following a sudden jostling in the crowd. According to initial reports, the devotee fell to the ground during the rush of pilgrims and suffered severe suffocation. He was immediately rescued and rushed to the Puri District Headquarters Hospital in a critical condition. However, doctors declared him dead after examination.

The incident briefly triggered panic at the venue as thousands of devotees had gathered to witness the chariot procession of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra. Authorities quickly intervened to restore order and manage the crowd. The administration said the situation has since been brought under control and an investigation has been launched to ascertain the exact circumstances that led to the devotee's death. Further details, including the identity of the deceased, are awaited. The overwhelming rush of devotees on the iconic Grand Road led to multiple suffocation incidents, with over 120 pilgrims injured and several others experiencing breathing difficulties amid the heavy congestion along the procession route. Special Rescue Unit (SRU) teams responded swiftly

and launched rescue operations. 52 affected devotees were safely evacuated and provided with immediate medical assistance and first aid at the site. Reacting to the incident, former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed deep sorrow over the devotee's death and called on the state government to strengthen crowd management measures to ensure the safety and convenience of devotees. A similar crowd crush had also occurred during the Puri Rath Yatra last year, reportedly triggered by a combination of crowd management failures, infrastructure shortcomings and logistical disruptions. The incident claimed three lives and left more than 50 people injured.

thorities quickly intervened to restore order and manage the crowd. The administration said the situation has since been brought under control and an investigation has been launched to ascertain the exact circumstances that led to the devotee's death. Further details, including the identity of the deceased, are awaited. The overwhelming rush of devotees on the iconic Grand Road led to multiple suffocation incidents, with over 120 pilgrims injured and several others experiencing breathing difficulties amid the heavy congestion along the procession route. Special Rescue Unit (SRU) teams responded swiftly

moving Dharmendra Pradhan," Kejriwal said in a post in Hindi. Speaking at the site, Kejriwal said the government must address the concerns of students and young people affected by repeated paper leaks. "Every year, exam papers get leaked and youth pay the price," he said. "I appeal to the government to listen to students and Wangchuk." He drew a parallel with his own past involvement in the 2011 anti-corruption protests at the same location alongside Anna Hazare. "While coming here today, I was reminded of April 4, 2011," Kejriwal said. "Three

New Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal, the national convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and former Delhi chief minister, has called for the removal of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and his replacement by activist Sonam Wangchuk. Kejriwal made the remarks on Thursday while visiting Wangchuk at Jantar Mantar, where the latter is leading a protest over alleged irregularities in national examinations, particularly the NEET medical entrance test. "Sonam Wangchuk should be appointed as the country's Education Minister by re-

moving Dharmendra Pradhan," Kejriwal said in a post in Hindi. Speaking at the site, Kejriwal said the government must address the concerns of students and young people affected by repeated paper leaks. "Every year, exam papers get leaked and youth pay the price," he said. "I appeal to the government to listen to students and Wangchuk." He drew a parallel with his own past involvement in the 2011 anti-corruption protests at the same location alongside Anna Hazare. "While coming here today, I was reminded of April 4, 2011," Kejriwal said. "Three



years later, that government lost power because it failed to listen and allowed arrogance to overtake accountability." Kejriwal praised Wangchuk for undertaking an indefinite hunger strike on behalf of students across the country. He commended the young

protesters for demanding a fair and transparent examination system. Wangchuk began his fast on June 28 as part of a larger agitation by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), which has been demonstrating at Jantar Mantar for more than 25 days, calling for Pradhan's resignation.

"Sonam Wangchuk Should Be Education Minister": Arvind Kejriwal

Mira Road: 1 Dead, 1 Critically Injured After Crane Collapses Near Residential Complexes

Mumbai: A major accident was reported in Mira Road on Thursday evening after a huge crane reportedly collapsed near the JK Iris and JP North residential complexes, leaving one person dead and another critically injured. The incident occurred in the vicinity of JK Iris and JP North, with the majority of the crane crashing into the parking area of the Iris complex. A portion of the crane also fell towards the JP North Alexa building, causing damage to the premises. Visuals from the scene showed the broken sections of the crane lying on the ground as residents and bystanders gathered around the accident site. Debris from the collapse was seen scattered across the area. Authorities confirmed that one person died in the incident, while another sustained critical injuries and was rushed for medical treatment. Their identities were not immediately known. Further details regarding the circumstances leading to the incident and the extent of the damage.



May the Nation Prosper with the Blessings of Lord Jagannath: Pawan Kalyan

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July 16: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan expressed hope that the nation would prosper under the blessings of Lord Jagannath. On the occasion of the sacred Jagannath Rath Yatra, he offered his respectful prayers to Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Goddess Subhadra. He stated that the Rath Yatra is a divine celebration symboliz-

ing faith, devotion, and the eternal bond between God and devotees. Pawan Kalyan shared his message through a post on X (formerly Twitter). He said that as the sacred chariots move forward, he prays that Lord Jagannath's blessings bring peace to every heart, strength to every family, and hope to every life. He further expressed the wish that the Lord guide every-

one on the path of righteousness and fill their homes with happiness, prosperity, and well-being. He also prayed for the wisdom and courage to serve society with humility and devotion. On this auspicious occasion, Pawan Kalyan hoped that the divine grace of Lord Jagannath would illuminate people's lives and lead them toward a future filled with peace, unity, and spiritual strength.

Nara Bhuvaneshwari Offers Prayers at Tirumala Temple



From Our Staff Reporter Tirupati, July 16: Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, visited the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala on Thursday. She entered the temple through the Vaikuntham Queue Complex in the morning and participated in the darshan of Lord Venkateswara during

the VIP Break Darshan. On the occasion, TTD Chairman B.R. Naidu, Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao, and Additional Executive Officer Venkaiah Chowdary welcomed Nara Bhuvaneshwari and made arrangements for her darshan. She later offered special prayers after having darshan of the presiding deity inside the temple. Following the darshan, Vedic

scholars blessed her at the Ranganayakula Mandapam. The TTD Chairman and officials presented her with theertha prasadam and sacred silk garments (Shesha Vastram) of the deity. Nara Bhuvaneshwari prayed for the well-being and happiness of the people of Andhra Pradesh and sought blessings for the state's continued growth and development.

Police Must Conduct a Comprehensive Investigation into These Incidents: Pawan Kalyan

From Our Staff Reporter Kakinada District, July 16: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan made important remarks regarding the incidents that occurred in Gollaprolu and Moolapeta in U. Kothapalli Mandal of Kakinada district. He stated that decisions taken under the influence of alcohol and in moments of anger not only shatter families but also push the future of those involved into darkness. Pawan Kalyan said that the incidents in Gollaprolu and Moolapeta are examples of this. He directed the Kakinada district police to conduct a thorough investigation into both cases and take legal action against those responsible. He also advised officials to identify sensitive areas and organize awareness programs to prevent such incidents from recurring.

Rakesh Dies in Moolapeta

In Moolapeta village of



U. Kothapalli Mandal, a dispute broke out between a group of youths and a young man. In the incident, Rakesh (25), a resident of Rameswaram village in Pedapudi Mandal, lost his life. Rakesh had come to Moolapeta on Wednesday to attend the funeral of his grandmother Vemagiri Ramanamma. During the visit, Rakesh's sister went to a local shop, where five local youths allegedly behaved indecently and harassed her. When Rakesh confronted and reprimanded them, one of the youths, identified as Vamsi,

allegedly stabbed him in a fit of anger. Rakesh later died while undergoing treatment in hospital.

Lingam Arjunudu Dies in Gollaprolu

Lingam Arjunudu, husband of former Gollaprolu Municipal Ward No. 2 Councillor Sandhya, had gone to Darapalli Waterfalls along with his friends. At the same location, he reportedly got into an argument with a local resident named Bachala Maruti Pawan Kalyan over an issue. The argument escalated into a serious confrontation. During the altercation, Bachala Maruti Pawan Kalyan allegedly stabbed Arjunudu in the abdomen. Arjunudu was shifted to Karthikeya Hospital in Pithapuram for treatment, but his condition worsened and he later died in the hospital. Responding to both incidents, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan directed the police to carry out a comprehensive investigation and take action according to law.

Jagan's Conspiracies Aim to Destroy Livelihoods of Lakhs of People: Yanamala

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July 16: Senior Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader and former Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnu strongly countered the remarks made by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on the aquaculture sector. Yanamala alleged that Jagan wants to completely destroy the aquaculture industry and deprive the lakhs of people who depend on it for their livelihoods of employment opportunities. He criticized Jagan for failing to understand how constantly changing international markets significantly influence the domestic market.

Yanamala further accused Jagan of having previously damaged overall economic development during his tenure in power and pushing Andhra Pradesh into a severe financial crisis. He said that while in office, Jagan neglected the aquaculture sector by withdrawing incentives and concessions that should have been provided to the industry. Yanamala demanded that Jagan explain why the aquaculture sector in the state declined sharply despite growth in both international and domestic markets. He advised Jagan to stop creating obstacles to the state's economic development and to act as a responsible political leader.



Nadendla Brahmam Chowdary Suffers Brain Stroke; Minister Lokesh Wishes Him a Speedy Recovery

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, July 16: Andhra Pradesh Minister for Education and Information Technology Nara Lokesh responded to reports that Nadendla Brahmam Chowdary, Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Kamma Corporation, suffered a brain stroke and is undergoing treatment at Manipal Hospital. Minister Lokesh enquired about Brahmam Chowdary's health condition and expressed hope for his speedy recovery. He conveyed his wishes through a post on X (formerly Twitter). It may be recalled that

Brahmam Chowdary recently married Gautami Swetha, and Minister Lokesh had attended the wedding ceremony and blessed the couple. Lokesh said he was praying for Brahmam Chowdary's quick recovery. He also spoke with Gautami Swetha, Brahmam Chowdary's wife, over the phone and offered his support and condolences to the family. He assured the family that both the government and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) would stand by them during this difficult time. The minister also spoke

directly with doctors at Manipal Hospital to obtain details about Brahmam Chowdary's condition. He requested the medical team to provide the best possible treatment and take all necessary measures to ensure a speedy recovery. Lokesh expressed hope that Brahmam Chowdary would recover soon and return to normal life. He stated that the government is continuously monitoring his health condition. Several political and social leaders have also expressed concern over Brahmam Chowdary's health and are praying for his early recovery.



EDITORIAL

Skill is the key to small jobs

The job disparity caused by technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in the Indian organized sector is a matter of grave concern. This is completely eliminating middle and lower level jobs like data entry and customer support. The demand for high-level jobs like AI programmers is increasing. This is reducing the opportunities for new entrants. In the organized sector, hundreds of people used to be hired for a project. Now, all those tasks are being completed by artificial intelligence (AI) tools. This is reducing the number of new recruitments. The safety of employees who rely solely on routine tasks is at risk. In line with the rapidly changing technology, it is imperative for employees to learn AI, machine learning and data science skills. Manpower planning (human resource planning) in the Indian banking sector is already undergoing changes. Traditional banking jobs are declining due to digital banking, AI and automation. The demand for technology, data analytics and cybersecurity skills has increased in these jobs. Private banks have cut thousands of jobs.

Even as government banks are hiring, outsourcing is on the rise. Scheduled commercial banks are one of the largest organized sectors in the country with over 18 lakh employees. However, the number of employees in private banks is declining due to the increasing use of technology, automation and artificial intelligence. According to a recent report, HDFC Bank, the largest private sector bank in the country, has reduced its headcount for the first time in nine years. The total number of employees at the end of March 2026 was 2,11,000. This is 1.6 percent less than the previous year. This is due to increased use of technology and AI. However, while the number of non-supervisory staff in this bank has decreased by 5%, the number of supervisory staff has increased by 11% as of March this year. This shows how technology and AI are having a negative impact on non-supervisory staff. With this, more than 8000 staff members have been reduced in HDFC Bank in a single year. Similarly, the situation of the public sector bank State Bank of India is not different at all.

It is noteworthy that although the number of employees in this bank has increased from 3.8 percent to 2,45,000 as of March this year, all of them are officers and associates. The number of subordinate and other level staff has decreased to 7 percent. The number of non-supervisory staff has declined sharply. The situation is similar in other banks. How is human resource management in the case of banks? In this context, it is very necessary to use modern technology to survive and earn profits in the current competition. This will greatly reduce the need for non-supervisory staff. Therefore, the goal of providing employment to a large number of people in line with the current or future changes should not be ignored. Banks and other organized sector managements must be able to implement technology. Government policies should also focus on the goal of imparting skills, depending on the time. However, policymakers argue that 46% of the country depends on agriculture for their livelihood, and this should be reduced. But if we are to shift away from the agricultural sector, there will be no change unless training programs are widely implemented to improve job skills.

The aim is to ensure that some of those working in the agricultural sector get employment in small and medium enterprises. But achieving this change is easy to talk about but very difficult to do in practice. If state governments or local governments provide training to low-skilled employees on new technologies, these training programs will make them useful in the new world to come. This will help employees overcome the challenges of these changes easily. The jobs available to workers without any special training are very few. At the same time, those who have learned appropriate skills in artificial intelligence and modern technologies will have more job opportunities. In the manufacturing and service sectors, there will be more demand for employees with technical knowledge who can operate and maintain machines or robots. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, which was formed on November 9, 2014 to provide vocational education and employment training to the youth, is responsible for coordinating various institutions providing skill training in the country. Since the vision of the ministry is 'Skill India', it is the responsibility of the government to formulate appropriate policies and procedures in a transparent manner.

Why Was A Russian Doomsday Plane In Iran Recently? Inside The 'Tu-214PU'

Russia dispatched a Tupolev Tu-214PU airborne command post, often referred to as a "doomsday plane", to Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport. A Tu-214PU aircraft took off from Moscow and landed in Tehran at around 10:10 am (IST) on July 13. The deployment coincided with escalating US and Israeli airstrikes on Iranian military infrastructure after the collapse of a regional ceasefire. The heavily modified Tupolev Tu-214 is operated by the Rossiya Special Flight Squadron and contains advanced, hardened communication and command systems. It enables senior officials to coordinate state affairs and military operations from the air in high-threat environments. The arrival is widely interpreted as a signal of high-level crisis diplomacy and tightening strategic cooperation between Moscow and Tehran. Analysts and commentators have pointed out that while this move doesn't mean Russian troops are entering the fight, it's a massive power signal to Washington, that Russia remains closely aligned with Iran and is prepared to support coordination at a high level. During the ongoing Ukraine war, at least on five occasions, President Putin or his foreign minister has used the 'N' word. Putin's nuclear sabre-rattling has been part of the Russian escalate-to-deescalate strategy that he himself was the author of as a young official. In late 2022, Putin even ordered a drill of Russia's strategic deterrence forces, which included intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarines, and heavy bombers, the entire Russian nuclear triad. Interestingly, both the US and Russia have special airborne presidential command posts to manage major hostilities, especially a nuclear war. These are appropriately called the "Doomsday" airborne command and control aircraft. Doomsday aircraft are essentially large transport aircraft fitted with special, long-range communication equipment, along with some other

security features.

Russian Doomsday Aircraft "Maxdome"

The Russian President's "Doomsday" aircraft is a specially configured Ilyushin Il-80 "Maxdome", which is also referred to as "Flying Kremlin". Interestingly, it was seen flying low over Moscow in early May 2022 during a rehearsal for Victory Day celebrations. Given the repeated threats of nuclear weapon use in the early days of the Ukraine war, such a flypast raised concerns in the strategic community. Earlier, Russian President Putin had said that he won't "brag" about nuclear weapons but will use them "if necessary". The Maxdome had last participated in such a flypast in 2010. The Il-80 Maxdome is a modified Ilyushin Il-86 airliner converted into an airborne command-and-control centre and a presidential office in the sky. The aircraft reportedly made its first flight in 1985 and was inducted in 1987. Four were built, and three are still in service. Such aircraft are required for cases when the ground-based command infrastructure may be destroyed in the event of nuclear war or a major disaster. The Il-80 aircraft has no windows, except cockpit windcreens and direct-view side panels. This is meant to protect the sensitive electronic equipment and the people inside from nuclear radiation and the ensuing electromagnetic pulse. There is only the upper deck forward door on the left and the aft door on the right. There is only one air-stair door, instead of the normal three. Even the aft cockpit windows are blocked with baffles. Like the E-4B, the aircraft has a dorsal SATCOM canoe, believed to house advanced satellite communications equipment and a trailing wire antenna mounted in the lower aft fuselage for very low frequency (VLF) radio transmission and reception. These could be for communication with ballistic missile submarines. The aircraft can be refuelled in flight.

Il-96-400M



Russia's next doomsday plane would be the Il-96-400M. It is an upgraded version of the four-engine civil airliner. The plane is currently under development by Russia's United Aircraft Corporation (UAC). Designated under "Project Zveno-3S", at least one prototype airframe has been completed and is being converted to replace the aging fleet of Ilyushin Il-80 aircraft. The flight range of the new aircraft will be double that of its predecessor, and it will communicate effectively with strategic nuclear forces within roughly 6,000 kilometres. The aircraft will have a very powerful self-defence system and will always be escorted by air-defence fighters. It will also have much better nuclear and thermal effects shielding, acoustic control, and upgraded air-conditioning to cool the more powerful heat-generating electronics. The aircraft is planned to be inducted end-2026. In 2020, one of the aircraft was infiltrated through the cargo hatch and robbed while undergoing maintenance. Thirty-nine pieces of radio equipment, some having gold and platinum electric components were stolen in this rather embarrassing incident.

Tupolev Tu-214PU-SBUS

The Tu-214 VIP is also a presidential aircraft with a maximum range of 9,200 km. Tu-214PU-SBUS is an airborne command-and-control (C2) variant. It can be visually distinguished from the standard Tupolev airliner by two prominent features on top of the fuselage: a canoe-shaped pod along the upper spine, and a second, dome-shaped bulge further back, which houses the dedicated satellite and radio communica-

tion hardware.

American Doomsday Aircraft

In the USA, these aircraft are officially called the National Airborne Operations Centres (NAOC). They are also equipped with a full set of traditional analogue flight and navigation instruments as they are less affected by cyberattacks. The US's airborne command posts have been operational since the early 1970s and can be termed as a Cold War legacy. The planes are essentially flying war rooms and are manned by military strategists and communication aides. The Boeing E-4, also called the "Night Watch", evolved from the Boeing 747-200B and was part of the National Emergency Airborne Command Post (NEACP) programme. The E-4B made its first flight on June 13, 1973, and was inducted into service in 1974. At least one E-4B is reportedly always on alert station, and satellite technology offers it worldwide communications using a wide range of frequencies. The aircraft's main deck has been configured into several operational areas. These include designated areas for command and communications, briefing and conference, data analysis, etc. The aircraft can accommodate up to 112 people. The Joint Chiefs of Staff direct the E-4B operations, and the operational execution is by the US Strategic Command. Traditionally, one E-4B always stood by at Andrews Air Force Base in a Washington DC suburb for quicker access to the President during a global crisis. When the US President travels outside of North America, an E-4B is positioned

at an airbase near his destination. A more modern replacement for the E-4 is being devised. The Boeing E-6 Mercury is based on the Boeing 707-320. The latest variant, the E-6B "Looking Glass", entered service in 1998, and can communicate directly with fleet ballistic missile submarines and also remotely control Minuteman ICBMs using the Airborne Launch Control System. The E6-B has the capability to fly for 72 hours before refuelling. TACAMO (Take Charge and Move Out) is the term used for survivable communications. These aircraft remain on alert near Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska.

An Airborne Operations Centre

The Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC) is the US Air Force's program to replace the aging E-4B fleet. Built as a militarized Boeing 747-8i, it functions as a survivable, mobile command post allowing national leadership to direct nuclear and conventional forces during a severe crisis or nuclear attack. The E-4C fleet is expected to replace the E-4B NAOC platform by around 2036. There was a proposal to have a single multi-task aircraft to replace the E-4B, RC-135 Rivet Joint, E-3 Sentry, and E-8 Joint STARS. The Northrop Grumman had proposed a Boeing 767-400ER platform to be called E-10 MC2A. It was to be built by a consortium between Northrop Grumman, Boeing, and Raytheon, as a central command authority for all air, land, and sea forces, including unmanned, in any combat theatre. The proposal was finally shelved because of funding constraints.

Why Britain Is Finding It So Hard To Deport A Pakistani 'Grooming Gang' Leader

This could almost be the plot of a political thriller. Britain's home secretary, herself of Pakistani origin, wants one of the country's most notorious grooming gang ringleaders deported after he completed a 22-year prison sentence recently. But Pakistan, his country of origin, is refusing to take him back. Britain is in a bit of a fix. A legal loophole has so far prevented Shabir Ahmed's deportation. The government now wants to change the law. But even if Parliament closes that loophole, what if Pakistan still refuses to accept him? Now the plot thickens. What happens when a country decides that a convicted foreign criminal should no longer remain within its borders, but the country of origin refuses to take one of its own nationals back? You might say Britain can change its own laws. That's easy and it's being proposed. But changing another country's mind is much harder. The British parliament may discover that rewriting legislation is the easy part. Persuading Pakistan to cooperate could prove far more difficult. For now, Britain has been left looking after a man nobody wants. The justice system has punished him. The government wants to deport him. Society abhors him. Yet the country Britain wants to send him to is refusing to take him back.

A String Of Lapses

A quick word about the background. Popularly known here in the media as the Rochdale case, of which Shabir Ahmed's

case is a part, is one of the darkest chapters in Britain's grooming gangs scandal. Over the past two decades, investigations in towns including Rochdale, Rotherham, Oxford, Telford, and Newcastle uncovered organised groups that sexually exploited and trafficked vulnerable girls, often over many years. Successive inquiries exposed shocking failures by police, councils, and social services. Time and again, authorities were accused of ignoring victims or failing to intervene despite repeated warning signs. While the majority of the most notorious gangs involved men of Pakistani heritage, the government has cautioned against treating child sexual exploitation as a crime linked to any one ethnic group. The Home Office found offenders came from a range of ethnic backgrounds, including local White folks. At the same time, the organised nature of many of the Pakistani-origin gangs has fuelled a continuing political debate over whether fears of being labelled racist prevented the authorities from acting sooner.

The Shabir Ahmed Story

Whatever the official figures may say, perception matters in politics. Today, many people associate Britain's grooming gangs primarily with offenders of Pakistani origin. Whether that perception is entirely fair or not is almost beside the point. It has shaped public opinion and political debate. Earlier this year, even Elon

Musk entered the controversy, accusing the British establishment of going soft on the grooming gangs because of the ethnic background of some of those involved. Shabir Ahmed was identified as one of the ringleaders of the Rochdale network and was convicted for his role in the abuse. He walked out of prison recently after serving 22 years. That, dear readers, is the background of the case Shabir Ahmed, a UK-Pakistan dual national, lost his British citizenship after his conviction more than two decades ago. His case has become the latest test of a problem confronting many democracies. What happens when a country decides that a convicted foreign criminal should no longer remain within its borders, but the country of origin refuses to take him back? The government is right to close any loophole that allows dangerous offenders to avoid deportation simply because of an outdated legal provision. Few would argue that a convicted child sex offender should benefit from a technicality created more than half a century ago. If Parliament believes the law no longer serves the public interest, Parliament has every right to amend it. But legislation cannot compel another country to act, can it? What options does Britain have now then?

Options Before The British Government

One idea already being discussed is to hit Pakistan where it hurts - visas. Shadow Home

Secretary Chris Philp, the Conservative Party's spokesman on home affairs, says Britain should simply stop or sharply restrict visas if Pakistan refuses to take Ahmed back. It's not a completely new idea. Britain has used visa restrictions before against countries that refuse to cooperate over deportations. Some European countries have done the same. The logic is, if you want the benefits of close ties, easier travel, and cooperation, you must also accept your own nationals back when requested. Could Britain go further? Why not? Could it impose diplomatic or even economic sanctions? Again, why not? But sanctions sound easier than they are. Pakistan is not just another country on Britain's map. The two cooperate on security, intelligence, and counterterrorism. There is trade. Then there is the human angle. Millions of British Pakistanis have families, businesses, and emotional ties across both countries. Any punitive action would hit far more people than one convicted criminal. Which brings us to an uncomfortable question. Should thousands of ordinary Pakistanis (students, tourists, businessmen, and families) pay the price because their government refuses to cooperate over one convicted criminal? There are no easy answers. But there is another question too. What message does Britain send if it simply shrugs its shoulders and says, "Well, there is nothing we can do"? The Labour government

must not only genuinely do something, but it must also be seen to be taking out-of-the-box steps to get rid of the man no one wants on this soil. If the state decides someone no longer has the right to remain in the country but cannot actually remove him, sooner or later, people begin asking whether the system really works. That is why the Shabir Ahmed case has become much bigger than Shabir Ahmed. It is turning into a test of whether a modern democratic state can enforce its own decisions when another sovereign country refuses to cooperate.

A Shouting Match

There is another trap Britain should avoid. The deportation debate should not become another political shouting match over the grooming gangs themselves. That debate has already become deeply polarised. The crimes were horrific. Nobody disputes that. Successive inquiries have exposed shocking failures by police, councils, and social services to protect vulnerable girls. Those institutional failures are now part of Britain's recent history and should never be forgotten. Understanding how those crimes happened remains important. But today Britain faces a difficult question. What happens after justice has run its course, but deportation becomes impossible? The issue has inevitably become politically charged. Ignoring organised criminal gangs because of political sensitivities is unacceptable.

Free Motor Scooters Distributed to Eligible Persons with Disabilities: Union Minister Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar



Guntur, July 16 (Pen Power): Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications, Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, said that the Andhra Pradesh Government is distributing free motor scooters to eligible persons with disabilities to promote self-reliance, improve employment opportunities, and facilitate easier access to education and workplaces. Speaking at a distribution programme organised by the District Welfare Department for Persons with Disabilities at the Zilla Parishad office in Guntur on Thursday, the Minister said the government is implementing several welfare initiatives to empower persons with disabilities and help them lead independent lives with confidence. He stated that the free motor scooter scheme is aimed at supporting beneficiaries in commuting

for education, employment, self-employment, and other essential needs. The initiative, he said, would reduce transportation difficulties, improve their quality of life, and enhance their social and economic empowerment. Dr. Chandrasekhar said that under the scheme, the government is providing 1,750 motor scooters across the state, with 10 beneficiaries from each Assembly constituency, at 100 percent subsidy, involving an expenditure of ₹23 crore. As part of the programme, 70 beneficiaries in Guntur district received motor scooters. He also noted that motor scooters worth ₹1.20 crore were distributed to persons with disabilities in the Guntur Parliamentary constituency through CSR funds. He reiterated that the State Government remains committed to the welfare and overall development of persons with disabilities and will continue to take necessary measures for their empowerment.

Tadikonda MLA Tenali Sravan Kumar said the government is committed to the welfare of persons with disabilities and is taking steps to issue SADAREM certificates division-wise. He added that efforts are also being made, with the support of the Union Minister, to provide house sites to eligible beneficiaries. Sattenapalli MLA Kanna Lakshminarayana, State Chairman of the Welfare Corporation for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens G. Narayanaswamy, District Library Chairman G. Koteswara Rao, Zilla Parishad Chairperson Henry Christina, Assistant Director of the Department for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities Venkata Ramanappa, ZP CEO Jyothi Basu, and other officials attended the programme.

NTR District to Organise World Photography Day Competitions in Three Categories



Vijayawada, July 16: NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshminisha has announced that district-level photography competitions will be organised as part of the World Photography Day celebrations on August 19. Outstanding photographers will be honoured with cash awards and certificates in recognition of their creativity and contribution to the field of photography. The Collector unveiled the official poster for the competitions at the Collectorate on Thursday in the presence of Information and Public Relations Department officials and photojournalists. He invited photojournalists, amateur photographers and studio photographers from across NTR district to participate and submit their entries on or before August 5. The competitions will be conducted in three categories. The first category is Andhra Pradesh Heritage, Tourism and Culture with photographs related to NTR district. The second category focuses on Youth, P4, Economic Development and Welfare, while the third category is for the Best News Photograph. In each category, the first prize carries

₹10,000, the second prize ₹7,000, and the third prize ₹4,000. In addition, six encouragement awards of ₹2,000 each will also be presented. Each participant may submit up to three photographs in each category, with a maximum of nine photographs across all three categories. The photographs must have been taken between June 12, 2025, and July 31, 2026, should be of 12×10 inches in size, and must have been captured within NTR district for publicity purposes. Entries containing watermarks or digitally manipulated images will not be accepted. The decision of the jury regarding the selection of winners will be final. Original photo entries may be submitted directly or sent by post to the District Public Relations Officer (DPRO) Office, State Guest House, Vijayawada – 520002. For further details, participants may contact K. Ravi, Divisional PRO, at 9010156550. Senior officials of the Information and Public Relations Department and several photojournalists attended the poster launch programme.

Voluntary Blood Donation Camp Held at Aditya University



Gandepalli, July 16: The NSS Unit of Aditya College of Pharmacy and the School of Pharmacy, Aditya University, in association with the Government General Hospital (GGH), Kakinada, organised a voluntary blood donation camp on Wednesday. Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr. M. Srinivasa Reddy said the camp was conducted at the request of the GGH Blood Bank. Dr. Rajeswari highlighted

the importance of voluntary blood donation and encouraged healthy individuals to donate blood regularly.

A total of 43 students voluntarily donated blood. The college management, Principal Dr. K. Ravi Shankar, faculty members, and NSS officials appreciated the students for their enthusiastic participation and commitment to community service.

No Moral Right to Lecture on Aqua Farmers: Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar



Amaravati, July 16: Andhra Pradesh Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar on Thursday alleged that former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has no moral right to speak about aqua farmers, accusing the previous YSRCP government of weakening the power subsidy system for the sector. In a press statement, the Minister said the coalition government restored the subsidy policy and ensured eligible aqua farmers receive electricity at a subsidised rate of ₹1.50 per unit. He also stated that power subsidies are being extended to farmers, aqua farmers, weavers, goldsmiths, and barbers.

Ravi Kumar further alleged that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's recent tours were politically motivated and claimed that the coalition government remains committed to development and welfare.

Shankar Vilas Bridge Will Be Opened as Scheduled: Union Minister Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar

Guntur, July 16: Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications, Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, on Thursday inspected the ongoing construction works of the Shankar Vilas Bridge in Guntur along with Guntur West MLA Galla Madhavi. Speaking to the media after the inspection, the Minister said the government is making every effort to complete the bridge within the announced timeline. He stated that only a few minor issues remain, while construction is progressing rapidly. Work on two to three bridge pillars is still pending, and a few additional girders are yet to arrive. However, all necessary steps are being taken to ensure the project is completed on schedule.

Dr. Pemmasani expressed confidence that the bridge will be opened to the public next year after all remaining works are finished. He added that the workforce would be increased, if required, to avoid any delay in execution.

Referring to the proposed infrastructure developments in Guntur, the Minister said the district is set to benefit from several Road Over Bridges (ROBs). He noted that compensation beyond the required norms is being provided to affected landowners. However, regarding the proposed project at Shyamala Nagar, he said some residents have been demanding an Under Bridge (RUB) instead of an ROB. He appealed to the public to extend their cooperation, emphasizing that large infrastructure projects can be completed only with public support.

He further announced that if a consensus is reached



among local residents, the government will soon issue a land acquisition notification for the Shyamala Nagar project. Reiterating his commitment, Dr. Pemmasani said the Shankar Vilas Bridge would be completed within the promised deadline by resolving all issues related to materials and construction.

The inspection was attended by Lift Irrigation Corporation Chairman Pilli Manikyala Rao, Industrial Corporation Chairman Degala Prabhakar, Vaddera Corporation Chairman Mallela Eswar, DCMS Chairman Vadranaam Haribabu, Municipal Commissioner Mayur Ashok, R&B SE Srinivasa Murthy, Railway Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Srinivas, and other officials.

Union and State Ministers Visit Polavaram Project, Review Rehabilitation Works



Rampachodavaram, July 16: Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Steel Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma and Andhra Pradesh Minister for Health, Medical and Family Welfare Satya Kumar Yadav visited the Polavaram Project area on Thursday to review the progress of rehabilitation and infrastructure works. They were accompanied by Rajahmundry MP Daggubati

Purandeswari and other public representatives. The visiting dignitaries were warmly received by Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar. During their visit, they offered special prayers at the Sri Sri Sri Gandhi Pochamma Temple in Devipatnam Mandal. Temple authorities accorded them a traditional welcome and presented Theertha Prasadam. On the occasion, the District Collector presented a framed portrait of Goddess Gandhi Pochamma to the ministers as a memento. Later, Collector K. Dinesh Kumar briefed the Union and State Ministers on the development of rehabilitation colonies, the civic amenities being provided to displaced families, the progress of rehabilitation measures, and key aspects of the Polavaram Hydroelectric Project. The officials also explained the ongoing infrastructure works and the steps being taken to improve facilities for project-affected families. Among those present were MP Daggubati Purandeswari, MLC Somu Veerajulu, MLA Nallamilli Ramakrishna Reddy, BJP State President P. V. N. Madhav, Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, Rampachodavaram RDO K. Swathi, along with officials from various departments and other public representatives.

Hindi Study Material Released for Class 10 Students

Vijayawada, July 16: NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshminisha on Thursday unveiled Hindi study material for Class 10 students to help them score better marks in the SSC examinations. The Collector said the material has been prepared in a simple and student-friendly manner, covering important questions, grammar topics, and exam-oriented content. He encouraged students to use it along with their textbooks to improve their performance in Hindi and achieve better results. District Education Officer L. Chandrakala, Samagra Shiksha Additional Project Coordinator Ramesh Babu, District Common Examination Board Secretary Umar Ali, Hindi Resource Person Satish, and other officials were present at the launch.



Collector Reviews Implementation of Presidential Orders–2025



Rampachodavaram, July 16: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar directed officials to ensure the transparent and timely implementation of the Presidential Orders–2025 as per the government's schedule. Reviewing the progress at a district-level meeting held at the ITDA Conference Hall on Thursday, the Collector instructed of-

ficials to complete cadre reorganization, finalization of seniority lists, disposal of objections, collection of employee option forms, and staff allocation strictly in accordance with government guidelines. He also stressed inter-departmental coordination to complete the process without delays.

Speed Up Electoral Roll Revision Work: CEO Vivek Yadav



Paderu, July 16: Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav on Thursday directed district election officials to expedite the Special Summary Revision of Electoral Rolls–2026 and complete all pending works within

the stipulated timeline. During a video conference with Collectors and Joint Collectors, the CEO reviewed progress across the state and appreciated the Alluri Sitarama Raju district election machinery for reducing suspicious voter registration cases from 29.87% to 9.87%. He instructed officials to resolve the remaining doubtful cases through field verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) using the mobile app. The review also focused on duplicate voter entries, missing voter details, photo updates, and rationalisation of polling stations. District Collector T. Nishanthi and Joint Collector Tirumani Sri Pooja participated in the review meeting.

India Unveils First Hydrogen-Powered Train



Indian Railways is set to flag off India's first Hydrogen Fuel Cell Trainset, a train that generates its own electricity onboard using hydrogen, the cleanest fuel known. It produces near-zero emissions at the point of use. This milestone marks the latest chapter in the evolution of how Indian Railways has powered its trains, reflecting India's broader journey from coal and steam to cleaner, more sustainable sources of energy. Over the past 12 years, rapid electrification has significantly reduced dependence on imported diesel, paving the way for the next leap in clean rail mobility. Today, with over 99% of Broad Gauge routes electrified, Indian Railways is taking that journey a step further. Unlike conventional electric trains that draw power from overhead lines, the Hydrogen Fuel Cell

Trainset generates electricity onboard through a chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen, with water vapour as its only by-product.

In a sense, the train once again carries its own source of power, as steam and diesel locomotives once did. But instead of burning traditional fuels such as coal or diesel, hydrogen generates electricity inside the train using oxygen from the atmosphere, eliminating combustion and dependence on an external power supply. As electricity is generated onboard through clean hydrogen technology, the train represents the greenest form of rail propulsion, powering the future of sustainable mobility. To complement this advanced propulsion system, India has equipped the train with multi-layer safety systems capable of detecting hydro-

gen leaks, heat, flames and smoke. With an operational speed of 75 kmph on the Jind-Sonapat section and a design speed of 110 kmph, the train is not only safer but also faster on this 89 km route.

Most hydrogen passenger trains currently operating globally comprise only two or three coaches and are primarily deployed on short regional routes. In contrast, the Indian Railways trainset has been configured as a 10-coach passenger train with a capacity of around 2,600 passengers, demonstrating the scalability of hydrogen-powered rail transport for high-capacity passenger operations.

But hydrogen is famously flammable, and that naturally raises a question in everyone's mind: is it safe to put thousands of passengers on a train running

on a gas that can catch fire so easily? Here is a simple explanation of how the train works, and everything Indian Railways has done to make it safe.

How Does a Hydrogen Train Actually Work?

Unlike conventional diesel locomotives that burn fuel to generate mechanical power, a hydrogen train carries a small power plant onboard in the form of a Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) fuel cell. Hydrogen stored in the train's cylinders combines with oxygen from the surrounding air inside the fuel cell, producing electricity that powers the traction motors and turns the wheels. The only direct by-products of this electrochemical reaction are water vapour and heat. There is no combustion, no smoke and no tailpipe carbon emissions.

In simple terms, the process is almost like magic: Hydrogen + Oxygen + Electricity + Water Vapour = The Train Moves. What appears to be magic is actually clean science at work, converting hydrogen directly into electricity inside the train. The only direct by-product is water vapour. There is no smoke or direct carbon emission, contributing to a greener Indian Railways.

PDUNASS Inaugurates Three-Day Training Programme on Recovery Management for Regional Labour Commissioners (Central)

The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Academy of Social Security (PDUNASS), New Delhi, inaugurated a three-day Training Programme on "Recovery Management" for Regional Labour Commissioners (Central) yesterday. The programme, being conducted from 15 to 17 July 2026, marks another significant step in PDUNASS's expanding role as a national institution for capacity building through inter-institutional collaboration. While established as the apex training institute of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), PDUNASS has increasingly been partnering with allied institutions under the Ministry of Labour & Employment to strengthen professional competencies across the broader social security and labour administration ecosystem. The programme is being attended by 26 Regional Labour Commissioners (Central) from across the country and has been designed to enhance their understanding of the legal, procedural and practical dimensions of recovery proceedings while promoting the adoption of best administrative practices.

The inaugural session was graced by Shri Kumar Rohit, Director PDUNASS, along with Shri Amit Vashist, ACC PDUNASS Faridabad Campus, and Shri Saurabh Suman Prasad, RPFC-I, PDUNASS. The programme is being conducted under the guidance of Shri Rizwan Uddin, RPFC-I & Chief Learning Officer, as Course Director, and Shri Dharendra Meena, RPFC-II, as Deputy Course Director. Addressing the



participants, Shri Kumar Rohit emphasized that recovery management extends well beyond the mere enforcement of statutory provisions. During an interactive discussion, he invited participants to explain the existing mechanism for initiating recovery proceedings, wherein it was deliberated that Recovery Certificates issued by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) are executed through the District Magistrate. He observed that while statutory powers provide the legal authority for enforcement, their effective exercise requires officers to possess a sound understanding of the legal framework, procedural fairness, administrative prudence and professional integrity. Highlighting the human dimension of public administration, the Director noted that recovery officers invariably interact with individuals facing diverse financial and personal circumstances. While strict adherence to law remains fundamental, he emphasized that effective communication, empathy and persuasive engagement are

equally important in facilitating voluntary compliance and ensuring that statutory objectives are achieved in a fair and citizen-centric manner. He remarked that combining legal expertise with behavioural competencies not only improves the effectiveness of recovery proceedings but also strengthens public confidence in government institutions. The Director observed that the contemporary governance landscape requires public administrators who are legally proficient, professionally competent and people-centric. He noted that such capacity-building programmes play an important role in nurturing officers capable of balancing statutory responsibilities with responsive and compassionate public service delivery. The three-day programme comprises expert-led sessions on the statutory framework governing recovery proceedings, procedural safeguards, practical challenges, case studies and emerging best practices, providing participants with practical insights for effective

discharge of their responsibilities. The programme further reinforces PDUNASS's emergence as a premier national institution for capacity building, fostering cross-institutional collaboration and knowledge exchange across organizations engaged in labour administration and social security governance. Through such initiatives, the Academy continues to contribute towards developing a skilled, future-ready and citizen-centric public service ecosystem. The Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Academy of Social Security (PDUNASS) is the apex training institute of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) under the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India. Established in 1990, PDUNASS undertakes training, research and consultancy in the field of social security and has increasingly expanded its capacity-building initiatives through collaborations with institutions across the labour and social security ecosystem.

CSIR-NIScPR and Office of CGPDTM signed MoU to Strengthen Access to Global Knowledge Resources through NKRC

In a significant step towards strengthening access to high-quality scientific, technical and intellectual property information, the Office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, and the CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) today for participation in the National Knowledge Resource Consortium (NKRC). The MoU signing ceremony was held at Saraswati Hall, Boudhik Sampada Bhawan, Dwarka, New Delhi, in the presence of senior officials from both organizations. The MoU was formally signed by Prof. (Dr.) Unnat P. Pandit, Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM), and Dr. Geeta Vani Rayasam, Director, CSIR-NIScPR. The event commenced with a welcome to the dignitaries, followed by presentations highlighting the activities of both organizations and the role of NKRC in providing seamless access to world-class scientific and technical information resources. In her address, Dr. Geetha Vani Rayasam, Director, CSIR-NIScPR, emphasized that the collaboration extends beyond providing access to scholarly information through NKRC. She highlighted that both organizations have immense potential to work together in areas such as patent information services, intellectual property management, science communication, science policy research, capacity building, digital knowledge management, and dissemination of scientific information. She expressed confidence that the partnership would evolve into a long-term strategic collaboration benefiting researchers, innovators, policymakers and the intellectual property ecosystem



of the country. She also highlighted the overview of CSIR-NIScPR, highlighting its contributions in science communication, scholarly publishing, digital information management and science policy research. She also emphasized that it is high time for government organizations to collaborate more effectively to ensure the optimal utilization of resources. Delivering the keynote address, Prof. (Dr.) Unnat P. Pandit, Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, congratulated the NKRC team and CSIR-NIScPR for successfully managing and expanding the National Knowledge Resource Consortium over the past 25 years. He described the collaboration as particularly significant as CGPDTM joins NKRC during its Silver Jubilee year. He observed that becoming a member of NKRC would enable CGPDTM to gain access to a large collection of high-quality scientific, technical, patent and bibliographic resources while achieving substantial cost savings through the consortium model. He further expressed optimism that the partnership would open avenues for collaboration in several other areas of mutual interest, including intellectual property, innovation support and knowledge services. A detailed presentation on the NKRC was

delivered by Mr. Mukesh A. Pund, Head, Digital Information Resources Division (DIRD) and Coordinator, NKRC. He outlined the evolution of NKRC over the last twenty-five years, its governance framework, subscription model, resource-sharing mechanism, and its role in negotiating national-level licenses for scientific information resources, which lead to significant notional savings for subscribing institutes. NKRC also works together with PM-One Nation One Subscription for implementation and providing access to major e-resources. The presentation highlighted that NKRC currently serves 82 member institutions, including organizations under CSIR, the Department of Science & Technology

(DST), and the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). He also showcased the extensive collection of electronic resources available through NKRC, including hundreds of international scholarly journals, standards, patent databases, bibliographic databases and specialized research tools that support scientific research, innovation and technological development across the country. Ms. Geeta Kumari, Examiner of Patents & Designs, presented the importance and expected benefits of NKRC membership for the Office of CGPDTM, emphasizing how enhanced access to global scientific and technical literature would strengthen patent examination, prior-art searches and evidence-based decision making.

Telangana's N Pravallika wins relay gold at Asian Under-23 Championships

Hyderabad: N Pravallika of Telangana made India proud as she was part of the Indian women's 4 x 400m relay team that won a historic gold medal at the Asian Under-23 Athletics Championships in China. India's quartet of Shravani Sangle, Sandra Mol Sabu, Pravallika and Nofisa clinched gold in 3:33.62s with a dominant performance. Hosts China and Kazakhstan settled for silver and bronze respectively. Sandra's brilliant second leg gave India a decisive lead before Pravallika and Nofisa brought home a memorable victory. Pravallika, a student of Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS), along with Shravani Sangle, Sandra Mol Sabu and Nofisa, clinched the honours.

MoS Labour & Employment, Shobha Karandlaje, leads Visit of BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers to Bosch Global Software Technologies and CII Green Business Centre in Hyderabad

The Labour and Employment Ministers and Heads of Delegation from BRICS countries, accompanied by the Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Sushri Shobha Karandlaje, visited the Bosch Global Software Technologies campus and the CII Green Business Centre (CII-GBC) in Hyderabad today. This is a part of the 12th BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM), organised in Hyderabad under India's BRICS Presidency. The visit highlighted India's growing leadership in digital innovation, artificial intelligence (AI), Global Capability Centres (GCCs), future-ready skilling and sustainable industrial development. During the visit to Bosch Global Software Technologies, the delegation interacted with senior industry leaders from Bosch, CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) and Global Capability Centres (GCCs) representing sectors such as healthcare, automotive and manufacturing. The discussions show-

cased how GCCs are driving innovation, research and development, product engineering, AI-enabled solutions and global business transformation. The interaction also focused on strengthening industry-academia collaboration, promoting women's leadership, leveraging AI to transform workplaces, and building an inclusive, future-ready workforce. The delegation was apprised of India's rapidly expanding GCC ecosystem, comprising over 2,100 Global Capability Centres employing more than 2.36 million professionals. Hyderabad, home to nearly 400 GCCs, has emerged as one of the country's leading innovation hubs, reinforcing India's position as a preferred global destination for technology, engineering and digital transformation. At the CII Green Business Centre, the Ministers were briefed on India's efforts to promote green buildings, resource efficiency, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices and sustainable industrial development. The Centre of Excel-



lence has played a pioneering role in enabling Indian industry to adopt environmentally responsible business practices while enhancing competitiveness, resilience and quality employment. As part of the programme, the BRICS Ministers and Heads of Delegation participated in a ceremonial sapling plantation at the CII Green Business Centre, reaffirming the collective commitment of BRICS countries towards environmental sustainability and a greener

future. The visit provided the BRICS delegations with an opportunity to witness India's vibrant innovation ecosystem, highly skilled workforce and strong commitment to sustainable development. It underscored India's vision of leveraging technology, innovation, skills and sustainability to shape the future of work and foster inclusive, resilient and sustainable economic growth under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

INDIAN NAVY SET TO COMMISSION THE LATEST ASW SHALLOW WATER CRAFT MALVAN



The Indian Navy will commission Malvan, the second of the Mahe-class Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Craft (ASW-SWC) on 22 July 26. The ceremony will be pre-

sided over by Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, Chief of the Air Staff, in the presence of Vice Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Com-

manding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command. Other senior naval officers, representatives from Cochin Shipyard Ltd., Kochi, veterans and distinguished guests will be in attendance. Built at Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi, Malvan epitomises India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision in modern naval shipbuilding and design. With over 80 percent indigenous content, the ship ex-

emplifies India's growing mastery in warship design, construction and integration. Compact, yet formidable, the ship reflects agility, precision and endurance - qualities essential for asserting dominance in shallow waters. The upcoming commissioning of Malvan marks the continued induction of a new generation of indigenous shallow-water warriors - sleek, swift and proudly Indian.

Border infrastructure to remain indispensable in future technology-driven warfare: Raksha Mantri at BRO Strategic Infrastructure Conclave

“BRO is adopting niche technologies to build world-class infrastructure, strengthen national security & advance Viksit Bharat goal”

“Connectivity is an essential component of civilisational development, Govt has ensured that no resident of a remote area feels cut off from mainstream”

“Innovation, research & execution excellence are key to future-ready strategic infrastructure”



New Delhi: “Even as state-of-the-art weapons and platforms are being inducted into the defence forces to address the challenges posed by the evolving nature of warfare, ports, airfields, roads & tunnels will continue to play an indispensable role in the fu-

ties, and modern technologies, basic infrastructure is central to enabling military operations.

“Sometimes, the first front of a war is not at the border itself, but on the road that leads our soldiers to the frontline. Therefore, the person who builds that road is as vital a guardian of national security as the soldier who stands at the border,” said Shri Rajnath Singh as he commended BRO for adopting niche technologies to establish robust infrastructure and carry forward Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi-led Government’s resolve of building world-class infrastructure, continuously strengthening national security, and transforming India into a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Raksha Mantri highlighted that, over the past six and a half decades, the BRO has transformed itself

from a mere road construction agency to one of the world’s most respected strategic infrastructure organisations. He stated that achievements such as Atal Tunnel, Umling La Pass, and Sela Tunnel stand as living testaments to BRO’s capability and hard work, adding that its dedicated personnel have repeatedly proven that with a spirit of service to the nation, any challenge can be overcome even in harshest of conditions.

Terming BRO as a front-line organisation in adopting latest technologies, Shri Rajnath Singh made special mention of ‘tunnelling technology’, which has brought about the revolution from metro construction in cities to highway development in mountainous regions. The speed with which BRO constructs roads and highways across some of the world’s most challenging terrains is

unprecedented, he said, calling it a reflection of the combined strength of human resolve and modern technology.

Raksha Mantri described ‘connectivity’ as an essential component of civilisational development, reaffirming the Government’s resolve to provide all forms of connectivity through roads, rail, air, and digital infrastructure. “The focus laid on infrastructure post-independence did not match the nation’s capabilities and requirements. We have ensured that no citizen residing in a remote area feels cut off from the mainstream. We are developing border villages, once referred to as the last villages, into the country’s first villages under the ‘Vibrant Village Programme’. A nation with robust infrastructure is the one with a bright future. The infrastructure we are building today will define our civilisation for the next one or two centuries,” he said.

Asserting that infrastructure development is not solely the Government’s responsibility but a collective effort, Shri Rajnath Singh urged the industries to innovate, academia to advance in research, engineers to develop solutions, and administrators to implement them on the ground. “Together, we must create an ecosystem that fosters excellence, where every stakeholder performs their role with utmost dedication,” he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Director General Border Roads Lt Gen Harpal Singh stressed that the measure of strategic capability is no longer defined solely by what we build; it



is increasingly determined by how intelligently we plan, how rapidly we execute, how effectively we monitor and how sustainably we maintain infrastructure assets. He emphasised that BRO has embarked upon a journey of organisational transformation driven by technology, innovation and institutional reforms. He added that emphasis is being laid on digital planning, AI-enabled solutions, modern construction methodologies, mechanisation and stronger collaboration with industry and academia to build resilient and future-ready strategic infrastructure.

During the event, Raksha Mantri presented awards to various BRO Projects recognising their outstanding performance and excellence in infrastructure development. He also launched two digital platforms for Project Management and Recruitment, marking another significant step in BRO’s digital transforma-

tion and organisational modernisation.

Rajnath Singh also released three flagship BRO publications ‘Path Pradarshak’, ‘Oonchi Sadken’ and ‘Path Vikas’ which document the Organisation’s achievements, engineering innovations, best practices and future vision. As a tribute to the indomitable spirit, unwavering commitment and selfless service of BRO Karmayogis, the BRO Anthem was also unveiled.

The two-day conclave, which commenced on July 15, 2026, served as a platform for deliberations on emerging technologies, innovative engineering solutions, digital transformation in planning, project monitoring and execution to improve productivity, sustainable construction methodologies and best practices aimed at accelerating the development of strategic infrastructure in India’s border regions. The event brought together senior

military leadership, policymakers, infrastructure experts, BRO officers, industry leaders and technology partners to collectively deliberate upon the future of strategic infrastructure development.

The conclave was organised into various thematic sessions covering the complete lifecycle of strategic infrastructure development - from planning and design to execution, monitoring and adoption of future technologies. Each session involved deliberations on topics related to the theme ‘Enhancing Capability through Technology, Innovation and Execution Excellence’ with an aim to arrive at practical solutions for development of future strategic infrastructure, emphasising that future strategic infrastructure must be delivered not merely by working harder, but by working smarter through technology, innovation and execution excellence.

Over the Past Year, ICAR Developed 386 Improved Varieties Across 44 Crops, Including 94% Climate-Resilient and 29 Biofortified Varieties: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

- ICAR is the Trailblazer of India's Agricultural Transformation: Union Agriculture Minister

- Farmers are the soul of agriculture, while scientists are its brain: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

- ICAR Celebrates 98th Foundation Day, Reaffirms Commitment to Science-led Agricultural Transformation



New Delhi: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) celebrated its 98th Foundation Day in New Delhi today, reaffirming its commitment to advancing science-led, climate-resilient and farmer-centric agricultural development for realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Celebrated annually on 16th July, ICAR Foundation Day commemorates the establishment of the Council in 1928. Over the past 98 years, ICAR has played a pivotal role in strengthening India’s agricultural research, education and extension

systems, driving technological innovations, enhancing productivity, improving farmers’ livelihoods and ensuring national food and nutritional security.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare and Rural Development, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj; Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel, Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj; Shri

Bhagirath Choudhary, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare; and Shri Ram Nath Thakur, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare, attended the event as Guests of Honour. Shri K.V. Raju, Member, NITI Aayog, and Shri Naresh Pal Gangwar, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan described ICAR as the trailblazer of India’s agricultural transformation, stating that the Council’s scientific research and innovations have significantly contrib-

uted to the country’s record achievements in foodgrain, horticulture, milk and fisheries production. He informed that ICAR developed 386 improved varieties across 44 crops during the past year, of which 94% are climate-resilient and 29 are biofortified. Emphasizing that “farmers are the soul of agriculture, while scientists are its brain,” he underscored the need for demand-driven research, climate-resilient agriculture, self-reliance in pulses and oilseeds, quality agricultural education, commercialization of technologies and wider dissemination

of innovations through the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (VKK) network.

Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj called for expanding the outreach of research through the VKK network to ensure faster transfer of technologies from laboratories to farmers, livestock keepers and fishers. He expressed confidence that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying and ICAR would further strengthen research, innovation and technology dissemination, accelerating farmers’ prosperity and contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Ram Nath Thakur, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare said that the remarkable progress achieved in the agriculture and dairy sectors reflects the Government’s commitment to farmers’ welfare and rural prosperity. He expressed confidence that ICAR would continue to play a pivotal role through scientific research, innovation and technology in realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Bhagirath Choudhary, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare observed that India’s journey from food scarcity to self-reliance reflects the collec-

tive efforts of agricultural scientists and farmers. He emphasized that science-led research, natural farming and farmer-centric innovations are essential to addressing climate change, improving soil health and achieving self-reliance in pulses and oilseeds. He also stressed the need to further strengthen ICAR to realize the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat.

Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel, Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj stated that the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 can be realized only through science-led agriculture, advanced technologies and innovation. He highlighted the importance of promoting technologies such as sex-sorted semen, artificial insemination, embryo transfer, fisheries, natural farming, micro-irrigation and nano-fertilizers to enhance farmers’ income and make agriculture more productive and sustainable.

Presenting ICAR’s annual achievements under the theme “Reflecting on 365 Days, Reimagining Agriculture for Viksit Bharat 2047,” Dr M. L. Jat, Secretary, DARE & Director General, ICAR, highlighted the Council’s major accomplishments during 2025-26 and outlined its roadmap for ad-

vancing agricultural research, innovation, education and extension. He stated that increased production in crops, horticulture, livestock and fisheries generated an additional economic value of nearly ₹1.70 lakh crore during the year, with agricultural research contributing an estimated ₹55,000 crore, demonstrating the substantial returns on investment in agricultural science.

Dr Jat further informed that scientific technologies reached nearly one crore farmers directly and over five crore farmers through media and social media platforms, while 18 international MoUs strengthened ICAR’s global collaborations. He reaffirmed ICAR’s commitment to promoting science-driven, demand-led and sustainable agricultural transformation for building prosperous farmers and realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Earlier, the programme commenced with the welcome address by Shri Gyanendra D. Tripathi, Additional Secretary, DARE & Secretary, ICAR.

On the occasion, 43 improved crop varieties, 17 advanced agricultural technologies and 14 publications were released. The new technologies included Basmati rice and climate-re-

silient rice varieties tolerant to saline and alkaline soils, export-oriented mango production technology, India’s first indigenous African Swine Fever vaccine, a Digital Swine Disease Atlas and an affordable cassava harvester for smallholders. Appointment letters were also handed over to 150 temporary daily-wage workers, regularizing their services.

To accelerate technology commercialization and last-mile delivery, 72 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with 51 industry partners, facilitating faster transfer of ICAR-developed technologies to farmers.

The Foundation Day celebrations were attended by senior officials of the Government of India, former Secretaries and Directors General of ICAR, Vice-Chancellors of Agricultural Universities, Directors of ICAR institutes, scientists, innovators, representatives from industry, farmer organizations, development partners and students.

As India advances towards the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047, ICAR remains committed to promoting innovation-driven, climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture through cutting-edge research, strategic partnerships and farmer-centric technologies.

Take Off Your Uniform And Fight Elections': Pakistan MP Dares Asim Munir



'Pakistan's army chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir, has come under sharp attack from senior politician and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who challenged him to step down from the military and test his popularity through elections. Addressing a public gathering in Pakistan's Punjab on Sunday, Rehman said, "If you want to do politics, then take off your uniform and come. Take part in the election. You will get to know how many votes people in uniform receive." He said the army has a clearly defined role and should stay within its constitutional limits instead of influencing politics. 'Army Cannot Decide Who Rules Pakistan'

Rehman accused the military of interfering in Pakistan's political system and said choosing or removing governments was never the army's responsibility. "You have the power to give government to whomever you want and to take governments away from whomever you want. It is not the army's job to decide who forms the government and who leaves," he said. He also claimed that Pakistan was falling apart and questioned the military's growing control over civilian affairs. His remarks come as Asim Munir is increasingly seen as Pakistan's most influential figure, with many believing his influence now extends well beyond military matters and often overshadows Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Rehman's criticism also follows the government's decision to include Munir in a high-level committee on popula-

tion issues, a move that has further fuelled debate over the military's expanding role in governance. **Rejects Calls For Civilians To Take Up Arms** The veteran politician also opposed suggestions that ordinary Pakistanis should form militias to fight terrorism, arguing that protecting the country is the military's duty. "They say, 'Our soldiers are being martyred.' My friend, your soldiers wear the uniform and receive salaries precisely because they are supposed to fight for the country's security. Why do you place the burden of their blood on me? They are paid from the taxes collected from my blood and sweat for this very purpose," he said. Rejecting calls for civilians to arm themselves, Rehman added, "Yet you tell us to raise mi-

litas, take up weapons, and fight armed groups ourselves. I have not taken any salary. I will not raise a militia." He warned that such a strategy would only push Pakistan towards long-term violence. "You will leave, but you are pushing my land into personal vendettas that will last for generations. You are driving it towards perpetual violence and bloodshed."

'Government Has Lost Control In Balochistan' Rehman also painted a grim picture of the security situation in Balochistan, claiming large parts of the province remain outside the government's control. "There were insurgencies in Baloch areas of Balochistan. The entire Baloch region had slipped out of Pakistan's control. Even today, the writ of the Pakistani government does not exist there," he said. He further claimed that the unrest, once limited to Baloch-majority areas, has now spread into Pashtun regions as well. His remarks come amid rising extremist violence in both Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding to the growing criticism of Pakistan's security policies and the military's expanding influence over the country's political system.

We Will Kill Trump': Iran's New Billboard Puts US President In A Coffin



"Amid reports claiming Iran has hatched a plot to kill Donald Trump, a gigantic corner billboard has come up in Enghelab Square in central Tehran, showing the US president lying in a coffin. The political symbolism and Tehran's defiant narrative are carried forward for the passerby by a nearby statue depicting the fist of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated at the start of the US-Israeli war on Iran. Iran has long used public spaces as a tool of political communication. But since the beginning of the war against the US-Israeli forces in late February, giant billboards -- reflecting revolutionary imagery, war memorials, and ideological messages -- have been placed in some of the busiest and most visible parts of Tehran as part of the Islamic republic's broader visual communication strategy. The new hoarding shows the US president's body peeking out from an open black coffin. In the picture, his hair is disheveled, and his eyes and mouth are closed, as his hands rest on a red tie atop a protruding stomach. At the far end of the coffin, his feet point straight up. Splattered across the black coffin are threats like "We Will Kill

Trump," written in both Persian and English. The white graffiti on the backdrop of the black coffin appeared like a blackboard wall erected for mourners during the memorial ceremonies for Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's former supreme leader, who was killed as the war began on February 28. The billboard's graffiti referred to the former Supreme Leader as a martyr and had messages like "In memory of Minab's children," referring to the city in southern Iran where a strike hit an elementary school at the beginning of the war, according to a report by The New York Post.

The 'Kill Trump' Messaging Threatening or mocking imagery on Iranian billboards is nothing new. In May, a bilingual billboard targeted to Western -- specifically American audiences -- featured Trump's mouth sutured on top with a rendering of the Strait of Hormuz, alongside the English phrase "The Breaking Point." Another billboard demonstrates Iranian military power through the image of a massive fishing net spread across the Persian Gulf. Inside the net are captured American aircraft, drones and naval vessels. But these billboards rarely

have such lucid messaging. It coincides with the vengeance seen in recent weeks among the Iranian public on behalf of Ali Khamenei and others killed in US-Israeli strikes. Recently, a conservative newspaper in Iran also published a list of people to be targeted as revenge for the killing of Khamenei, including the leaders of the US, Israel, and European countries. The list features photos of 13 foreign leaders, including US President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, among others.

'Cowardly Crime Against Children': Iran Slams US Attack Near Cancer Hospital



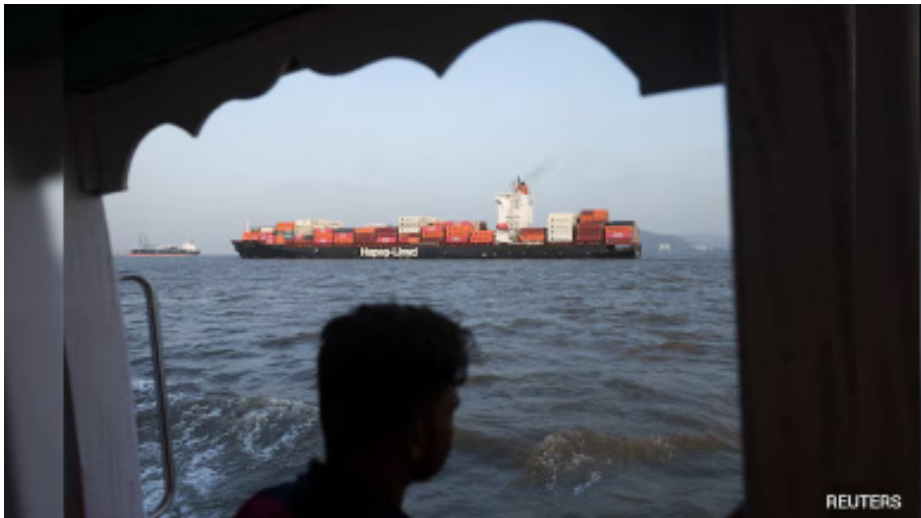
Iran on Thursday accused the United States of launching a "barbaric attack" after a fresh round of airstrikes overnight, some of which impacted a child cancer treatment department in Shahid Baghaei Hospital. The hospital which provided chemotherapy treatment for cancer patients, including children, had to be evacuated. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmacel Baqaei said that the attack was "reminiscent of Israel's atrocities against healthcare facilities". He said that the attack caused severe suffering and anxiety to the children who were hospitalised. He posted on X claiming that

211 patients who were undergoing chemotherapy were evacuated. "This constitutes a cowardly war crime against the most innocent of human beings - children who are bravely fighting for their lives," Baqaei wrote on X. He added, "Those who ceaselessly preach human rights, yet deliberately turn a blind eye to the targeting of hospitals and health centers, have forfeited every shred of moral credibility." In Iran, explosions were heard in several locations, including Qeshm Island, Bandar Abbas, Sirik, Chabahar, Konarak, Rask City, Khondab, and the western city of Khorramabad, ac-

cording to a report by Al Jazeera. The American strikes also hit an Iranian army barracks, killing at least seven troops and wounding hundreds of people across the country, Iranian officials said. Overall, Tehran said at least 35 people have been killed, and more than 300 people have been injured in American strikes so far. US Central Command (CENTCOM) said it targeted Iranian military capabilities used to threaten vessels freely transiting the vital waterway. The US military also said one of its aircraft fired on and disabled an empty oil tanker that was trying to break the naval blockade of

Iran's ports. **Iran's Response** In response, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said they targeted the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, where air sirens rang out as attacks against civilian targets were intercepted, while Jordan's armed forces said they had downed three missiles from the Islamic Republic. IRGC also claimed it has intercepted and destroyed an "enemy" MQ-9 drone over the southwestern city of Andimeshk, according to the Tasnim news agency. The Iranian force said the aircraft was brought down by a new air defence system operated by its aerospace force. **US-Iran Talks Still On** Despite renewed hostilities, mediated talks between the two sides have not formally ended. But Iran's top negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, warned that "a memorandum of understanding only has meaning when its clauses are valid and being implemented". "If Iran is not to derive any benefit from the memorandum of understanding, we have no reason to adhere," he said in a statement.

India's Big Move To Protect Indian Sailors Amid US-Iran Conflict In Hormuz



New Delhi: New Delhi has directed shipowners, ship managers, and recruitment companies not to deploy Indian seafarers on vessels undertaking trips through the Strait of Hormuz amid renewed fighting between the United States and Iran. The move came after two Indian seafarers were killed in attacks on vessels near the strait over the last three days, as tensions escalate in the Middle East. India is the world's third-largest supplier of seafarers, with more than 300,000 sailors working across global shipping fleets. Since the outbreak of the conflict in the Middle

East in February this year, at least 13 Indian nationals have been killed in the Gulf region, government sources said. **The Order** "No deployment of Indian seafarers on vessels undertaking voyages involving passage through the Strait of Hormuz until further orders," the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA) said in an order issued on Wednesday. In a post on its X handle, the maritime regulator said the move was aimed at safeguarding the safety, security, and welfare of Indian seafarers amid a "significant" increase in

risks faced by commercial ships -- including Mombasa B, Al Bahyah, GFS Galaxy, MT Wedyan, and Al Rekayyat -- operating in the conflict-affected region. "In view of the heightened security situation in the Persian Gulf region ... the Directorate considers it necessary to adopt enhanced precautionary measures to safeguard the interests of Indian seafarers serving on board ships operating in the region," the order said. It also directed masters of vessels to ensure that they are sufficiently vigilant about the security situation in the Persian Gulf, the

Strait of Hormuz, and adjoining waters and called for continuous monitoring of navigational warnings. For emergency assistance, the DGMA asked seafarers and vessels to immediately contact the DG Communication Centre (MMDAC) or the Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre—Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR). The DGMA said it continues to closely monitor the evolving security situation in the Gulf region and remains committed to safeguarding the safety, security, and welfare of Indian seafarers. **The Growing Hormuz Problem** The advisory comes amid heightened tensions in the Middle East after US strikes on Iranian military installations stoked fears of a wider regional conflict and potential disruptions to shipping through Hormuz. Reports claim that the United States targeted Iran's coastal defence and missile facilities on Wednesday after reimposing a naval blockade on its ports. In response, Iran threatened to curb more regional energy exports, saying it was engaged in an existential war with the US.

India Reacts To Stabbing Of Hyderabad Man For His Religion In Utah

Washington: The Consulate General of India in San Francisco has reacted to the racist attack on an Indian man inside a shopping mall near Salt Lake City in the US state of Utah because of his faith. The Indian mission said it was deeply saddened by the tragic stabbing of Hyderabad resident Syed Sohailuddin, who allegedly suffered more than 15 stab wounds and remains in critical condition. In a statement posted on X, the consulate said it is in close contact with Sohailuddin's family and friends and is ready to provide all possible consular assistance. "We remain engaged with local authorities and will continue to monitor the matter closely," the post read.

The Anti-Muslim Attack The Utah police have arrested one Peter Michael Larsen on suspicion of attempted murder and carrying a prohibited dangerous weapon. Larsen told police he repeatedly stabbed Sohailuddin because "he believes he is a catalyst and he intends to kill Muslims." An affidavit filed by the authorities in court said that releasing Larsen from jail would be dangerous, "based on his violent actions today" and his ideologies. Larsen, 48, was on parole for a previous violent felony when he attacked the Indian man. Bystanders were able to get the knife out of the suspect's hand before police arrived at the scene at Valley Fair Mall. A

witness told FOX 13 News that before attacking, the suspect asked Sohailuddin, who was working at a mall kiosk, where he was from, his name, and if he was Muslim. **Renewed Fear** The incident has sparked concern among Indians living in the US, with calls for all necessary support for the victim and his family back home in Hyderabad. There have also been appeals to facilitate emergency humanitarian visas for close family members to travel to the United States during the medical emergency. Sohailuddin's family in Hyderabad is awaiting updates on his condition and has appealed for prayers for his speedy re-

covery. The Utah stabbing has renewed concerns over the safety of Indians in the United States. Last month, 28-year-old elangana native Anshul Kuncha was shot dead in Philadelphia after being lured to a vacant apartment through a fake pizza delivery order. A 14-year-old suspect has since been arrested and charged with murder in the case. In October 2025, Hyderabad student Chandrashekar Pole was also shot dead while working part-time at a convenience store in Dallas, Texas. The incidents have raised fresh concerns over the safety of Indian nationals, particularly students and young professionals, in the US.

"Trading Is Haram": Top Pak Cleric's Fatwa Against Crypto Spooks Investors

Islamabad: As Pakistan focuses on efforts to regulate and promote the cryptocurrency sector by building a framework for virtual assets, a prominent Islamic scholar has released a fatwa stating that dealing in digital currency is haram under Islamic law. The religious ruling, issued by Islamic scholar Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani through a prominent Sunni Islamic seminary, Darul Uloom, in Karachi, casts doubt on the government's rapid embrace of crypto in the Islamic nation of more than 240 million people. Pakistan has long ranked among the world's largest crypto markets by retail activity. Islamabad has moved fast to formalise that demand, exploring tokenised state assets and advancing

licences for crypto exchanges that are expected to be issued in the coming months. The digital currency has also helped Islamabad in cozying up to the Donald Trump administration in Washington. Pakistan has signed a deal with an affiliate of World Liberty Financial, the main crypto business of the US president's family, to explore using its \$1 stablecoin for cross-border payments, part of what Islamabad calls "crypto diplomacy." **The Crypto 'Fatwa'** The fatwa was issued by a group of religious scholars at the Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi seminary, including a leading authority in Islamic finance, Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani. It was issued in response to a query about paying for

books and an online course with crypto. The Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi seminary, whose rulings carry wide influence among Muslims well beyond Pakistan, ruled in June that, as of now, cryptocurrency is not wealth under Islamic law, and therefore not a valid means of payment. While the ruling does not carry legal force, the seminary has claimed that its ruling enjoys support from several other Islamic scholars. **The Concerns** Experts have pointed out that the edict, as it stands, could become "a hurdle to broader, bank-led crypto adoption beyond Pakistan's urban trading community." So far, however, crypto trading volumes have appeared unaffected," Waqas Ghani, head

of research at JS Global Capital, a Pakistani brokerage and investment banking firm, told news agency Reuters while expressing his concerns. Pakistan's virtual assets regulator has also asked the Islamic seminary to draw a distinction between speculative cryptocurrencies and asset-backed digital tokens. **A Plea For Religious Regulation** Bilal bin Saqib, chairman of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA), told Reuters he had asked for the clarification after the seminary ruled last month that crypto-based purchases were not permissible under Islamic law. Saqib said the regulator is in discussions with the seminary to assess digital assets by category, not as a single class. "

Mithali Raj advocates split captaincy: Smriti Mandhana for Tests and ODIs, Shafali Verma for T20Is



New Delhi: Smriti Mandhana is more suited to lead India in the longer formats after Harmanpreet Kaur's tenure ends while the much younger Shafali Varma can be handed the reins of the T20 side following another pre-mature exit from the World Cup, former captain legendary Mithali Raj said. Harmanpreet, 37, led India to a pathbreaking ODI World Cup title last year but under her leadership, the team has not been able to crack the code in ICC events in the T20 format, dating back to 2018. The selectors may finally move on from her following the Asian Games in Japan in September-October. In an interview with PTI, women's cricket icon Mithali said time has come to groom more leaders in the national set up, she also wants more clarity over players' roles in the side and improvement in the fitness department that is adversely impacting India's pace attack and fielding, which was way below par in the recent T20 World Cup. "Yes, we did not qualify for the semifinals for the second time in a row but that cannot be the only reason or criteria to come to conclusion that you need to change the leader. Because I believe that there are few boxes that one need to actually see if the player ticks those

boxes. Geographic Reference "One is, of course, the fitness, I feel is very important. Harman in the last two, three years, you see the physio quite often on the ground, every game, when she's playing, there are few games that she was unavailable. So, you obviously would want your captain to be fit and available for all games. And unfortunately, all of us age, so she's not the fittest," said Mithali. Mithali said Harmanpreet has also been inconsistent with the bat over the past three to four years. "If you see Harman's form in the three World Cups, the Dubai T20 World Cup, the ODI World Cup, and the recently concluded T20 World Cup (in UK), we've seen that a pattern is that, she gets those 15, 20 runs but it always takes her three to four games to get her 50 in the World Cup. "And the third factor is that, you know, does she fit into the scheme of things in the next cycle of your One Day World Cup or a T20 World Cup? So, I think whoever is in the position to take this decision have to factor these things," one of India's greatest woman batter to have graced the game, said "And if you're thinking that only because the T20 World Cup hasn't gone well for India, then there is a change needs to hap-

pen there. Even the coach (Amol Muzumdar) is accountable because both captain and coach take the decisions of the playing XI." On the road ahead for the Indian team across formats, Mithali wants the seasoned Smriti to lead the Test and ODI teams even though she should have got the opportunity long time ago. For the T20 format, Shafali and Jemimah Rodrigues are the two options India have, said Mithali. "I at least thought Smriti would lead the ODI format two, three years back. But now also, with the experience that she has, the vast experience, at least the one-day and Test format should be given to her and perhaps the T20 to someone younger, I feel, in the T20 format. But one day, clearly, you need experience." "For T20Is, I think Shafali. Her format is T20Is. And she has led under-19 World Cup. Why not Shafali? Jemi too of course, yes. She has led in the WPL. But I do believe that whoever they pick, they need to give them some time to settle. Because all of us got time to settle in our role as a leader," said Mithali. The 43-year-old who captained India to the 2017 ODI World Cup final feels the team management and selectors have not done much to groom more leaders in the senior team and even at the India A level. Geographic Reference "Since the start of the Under-19 World Cup, honestly, I've not seen any Under-19 player being groomed for the leadership role. And that is where I believe that growth is not just giving players opportunity in the 15 or in the 11. Growth is also about adding players into the leadership group. "So far, the leadership group for the longest time has been these two (Harman and Smriti). But we've never had a

third person who we can think that, okay, this person can lead in their absence. And sadly, that's where we are at the moment. But I would like to also state that I was able to lead for so long as BCCI invested in me, same way like it did in Harman. "Shafali Verma led India to U-19 World Cup title but she was not given leadership role. Why? Ditto for Niki Prasad, who should have been made India A skipper. So, I don't understand the thought process here. We don't have a roadmap. We don't think about two years down the lane, where do you see Indian team? We are only thinking about series to series. We don't have a long-term plan," said Mithali, the leading run getter in Women's ODIs. On pace bowlers breaking down frequently and the below par fielding seen in the recent ICC, Mithali said both those issues were linked to fitness. In the batting department, she would be want to see more finishers like Richa Ghosh to be developed. India news updates "Fast bowling is obviously a skill which also goes hand-in-hand with fitness. And I believe, sometimes we pick players when they are still growing (in experience). Apart from the skill, they're still understanding what is the fitness regime as a fast bowler that you need to go through or you need to follow. "As far as fielding is concerned, it also boils down to your individual training. Like all of us, when we go back home, we are all focusing on our batting, on our bowling. But not particularly on fielding. We only do that when we come into the camps. There might be some players who would be working on their fielding. But as a team, if we want to do well, we need to give equal attention to all departments."

Leaving Rajasthan Royals was the toughest decision of my career, says Sanju Samson on trade to CSK



New Delhi: India wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson has revealed that leaving IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals after more than a decade long association was one of the toughest decisions of his career. World news digest But the strong bond he shared with Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Ruturaj Gaikwad made his move to Chennai Super Kings an easy transition. "Moving on from RR was a very big decision for me. I believe that after playing for a team for some time, you start to feel like this is your team and nobody can remove you. But, I always had the awareness that there is a limited time for everyone at one place," Samson, who led the Royals for five years before moving to CSK through a trade ahead of IPL 2026, told JioStar's 'Superstars'. "You do your part, and you move out and after the end of IPL 2025, a point came when I felt that I should move on. I told myself that the boys are ready, and RR is ready to play without Sanju Samson. That is when I thought of leaving," he added. The Kerala cricketer said he had a few options on the table after quitting RR but chose Chennai Super Kings because it felt like the

perfect fit for his game. Samson added that finally donning the iconic yellow jersey was a special feeling. "There were two or three options at that time. But honestly, CSK, Mahi bhai's influence, the franchise itself, and my friends there, especially Ruturaj, meant I had great connections. Based on what I had heard about CSK from other players, I felt that this franchise was my type. "If I go there, it will be very good for me. I had wished for that, but a trade is a tricky thing. I want to go there, but do they want me? And the original team needs to get what they want in return. Everyone has to agree. It was a major turning point. Luckily, I ended up in CSK. It was a great feeling," he said. Growing up, the 31-year-old Samson idolised Dhoni and his fearless batting style, often going to bed dreaming of the day he would get the chance to represent India. World news digest "The way he carried himself and his aggressive batting style really attracted me. He used to appear in the ads, and I would cut out his picture and stick it in my diary. Every kid has an idol, and Mahi bhai was mine. "As a child, I used to watch India play every day. Mahi bhai would be

captaining and winning matches. I would go to sleep thinking, 'I have to play one day too.' I used to dream of batting with him, building a partnership, and fielding alongside him." Now part of the CSK setup, Samson said one of his biggest dreams is to bat alongside Dhoni. Dhoni missed the entire 2026 IPL season with a calf injury, but Samson said he hasn't given up hope of playing alongside him. Recalling how he got his first IPL opportunity, Samson said he spent the first few matches on the Rajasthan Royals bench before finally gathering the courage to approach then captain Rahul Dravid. "He calmly explained that I needed to be patient and that my time would come. I was frustrated and disappointed after hearing that, so I took out all my anger in the nets. I would go to the nets and hit sixes, thinking, 'I'll show them.' His lucky break came when wicketkeeper, Dishant Yagnik bhai, got injured. "It was my first match. I scored 27 not out batting at number 6. I also got three-four dismissals while keeping the wickets. But in the next match, Dishant bhai was fit again, and I was dropped."

BCCI president Mithun Manhas congratulates Devajit Saikia on key ICC appointments

New Delhi: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Mithun Manhas congratulated Secretary Devajit Saikia after he was elected Chair of the ICC Governance Review Committee and appointed as a member of the ICC Franchise Leagues Committee during the International Cricket Council's Annual Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. The ICC Board approved the formation of two new sub-committees during its Annual Meetings, with Saikia being entrusted to lead the newly constituted Governance Review Committee. He will work alongside Cricket South Africa's Dr Mohammed Moosajee and ICC Independent Director Dr Ros Rivaz. Saikia has also been named a member of the newly established Franchise Leagues Committee, which will be chaired by Bangladesh Cricket Board president Tamim Iqbal. Following the announcement, Manhas described the appointments as recognition of Saikia's contribution to cricket administration and expressed confidence in his ability to contribute to the game's global growth. Reacting to the development, Manhas praised his



colleague for earning the prestigious international responsibilities as he wrote on X, "Heartiest congratulations to my colleague at @BCCI, Devajit Saikia ji, for being elected as the Chair of ICC Governance Review Committee & as a Member, ICC Franchise Leagues Committee at the recent ICC Annual Conference at Edinburgh, Scotland." Manhas said the appointments reflected Saikia's sustained contribution to the administration of the sport, as he added, "This distinguished appointment is a fitting recognition of unwavering commitment and invaluable

contribution to the administration and growth of cricket." He also expressed confidence that Saikia's experience would help strengthen the game's governance at the international level. "I am confident that his experience and vision will further strengthen the global development of our sport." Manhas concluded his message by wishing the BCCI Secretary success in his new responsibilities within the ICC. "I extend my best wishes for a successful and impactful tenure @lonsaikia @ICC." The Governance Re-

view Committee is one of two new board sub-committees established by the ICC to oversee key aspects of cricket administration. Alongside Saikia's leadership of the governance panel, the newly formed Franchise Leagues Committee includes representatives from the Bangladesh Cricket Board, Cricket Namibia, the England and Wales Cricket Board, Cricket Australia, and the BCCI, reflecting the ICC's continued focus on strengthening governance structures and the rapidly expanding franchise cricket landscape.

Virat Kohli's belief system never changes even when the going gets tough, says Abhishek Nayar



New Delhi: Former India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar has highlighted Virat Kohli's unwavering belief in his own methods as the defining trait behind the batting great's sustained success, recalling a conversation with the former India captain during a difficult phase in Australia. Sharing the anecdote while reflecting on Kohli's mentality, Nayar said the 36-year-old's confidence in his process never wavered despite a string of low scores, a quality he believes separates the game's elite from everyone else. Nayar revealed that he reached out to Kohli after the batter endured a difficult ODI series in Australia, where he registered two ducks. Having only recently moved on from the Indian team setup, Nayar remained in contact with Kohli and wanted to check on how he was coping with the lean spell. "I've known Virat for a really long time, but one thing I realised in the recent past is that the reason Virat Kohli is Virat Kohli is because of the belief systems he has. No matter what happens, that belief never changes," Nayar told JioStar. According to Nayar, Kohli's response reflected the calmness and conviction that have become synonymous with his career as he stated, "When

Virat was struggling in Australia and had those two ducks in the ODI series, I'd just come out of the Indian team, so we were still in touch. I asked him if everything was okay and whether there was anything he wanted to talk about. He simply said, 'No, all good. It's part of the game.'" Wanting to share a technical observation, Nayar sought Kohli's permission before offering his thoughts. The former India captain, however, politely declined, choosing to trust his own instincts, but Kohli's subsequent performance only reinforced Nayar's admiration for his mindset. South Asians & Diaspora "I then said, 'I have an observation. Do you want to hear it?'" He smiled and replied, 'No, I'll do it my way.' I laughed. After the next game, I

got the answer, 'I did it my way'," Nayar revealed. For Nayar, the episode perfectly encapsulates what distinguishes players who consistently deliver at the highest level. He believes champions rely on years of experience and an unshakeable faith in their own process, especially when results are not going their way. He also explains that experiences like these have only deepened his admiration for two of India's modern-day batting icons. "For me, that is the hallmark of Virat Kohli. The great players know how to do it when the going gets tough. We can analyse, imagine and envision, but they've done it repeatedly at the highest level. That's why my respect for players like Virat and Rohit is so much," he stated.

Asian Boxing Championships: Vishvanath Suresh and Ganga win gold as India conclude men's campaign with five medals

Hyderabad: India concluded its campaign in the men's section at the Asian U-19 & U-23 Boxing Championships with strong performances in the finals, securing two gold and one silver medal in U-23, while U-19 boxers added two silver medals in Jakarta.

In the Under-23 men's finals, India delivered an impressive showing with two gold medal finishes. Vishvanath Suresh (50kg) clinched gold after a closely fought 3-2 victory over Japan's Daichi Iwai. Ganga (55kg) also secured gold, edging past Kazakhstan's Bexulatin Boranbek by a 3-2 split decision. Vanshaj (65kg) fought valiantly in the final but settled for silver after a 4-1 loss to Uzbekistan's Ilkhomjon Ergashev.

Lakshay Raichandani double century helps India U-19 draw first Youth Test against Sri Lanka



Galle (Sri Lanka): Opener Lakshay Raichandani's gritty first-innings double century was the standout performance as India's first Youth Test against Sri Lanka U-19 ended in a draw here on Thursday. Resuming overnight

on 196, Raichandani completed his double century before being dismissed for a superb 207 off 324 balls. Wicketkeeper-batter Manav Krishna also impressed with a patient 100 off 153 deliveries and was the last man out as India amassed 576,

securing a 152-run first-innings lead after Sri Lanka U-19 had declared on 424 for 9. In their second innings, Sri Lanka U-19 scored 178 for 6 before declaring. With no realistic chance of a result, the four-day match ended in a tame draw. Besides Raichandani's double century, that came off 324 balls and included 22 boundaries and three sixes during a marathon 492-minute stay at the crease, it was Krishna who played a pivotal role in guiding India U-19 to a sizeable first-innings lead. The keeper-batter struck a patient century off 153 deliveries, keeping alive

India's slim hopes of forcing a victory. India off-spinner Yashbardhan Singh Chauhan claimed four wickets (4/49) to put Sri Lanka U-19 under pressure, but opener Dulnith Sigera's defiant 72 and a resilient middle-order effort from Kavija Gamage (51) and the unbeaten Chamika Heenatigala (21 not out) ensured the hosts batted out the match and secured a draw. The second Youth Test will begin in Colombo on July 20. Brief scores: Sri Lanka U19 424 for 9 decl & 178 for 6 decl. India U19 576 all out. Match drawn.

Raasa Gummadi Brings Rayalaseema Mass To Korean Kanakaraju

The promotional campaign for Varun Tej and Merlapaka Gandhi's Korean Kanakaraju continues to gather momentum. After the impressive response to the teaser and first single, the makers have now unveiled a vibrant new poster announcing the film's second single, Raasa Gummadi, which will be released on July 19. The newly released poster is a riot of festive colors, celebration, and infectious energy. Varun Tej sports a rugged yet stylish yellow outfit, flashing a charming smile while pulling off energetic dance moves with effortless flair. His lively body language and electrifying screen presence hint that Raasa Gummadi is set to become one of the album's biggest highlights. Daksha Nagarkar looks stunning in a beautifully crafted red ethnic ensemble. Her radiant smile, graceful expressions, and playful chemistry with Varun Tej instantly grab attention. The poster perfectly captures the earthy flavor and vibrant Rayalaseema mass vibe, promising a colorful, foot-tapping folk entertainer. With music composed by S Thaman, expectations for Raasa Gummadi are naturally high. If the poster is anything to go by, the song is poised to deliver an energetic blend of local flavor, festive beats, and crackling chemistry. Korean Kanakaraju is gearing up for a grand worldwide theatrical release on August 7.



Which TV Actress Did Samantha's Oo Antava Better?

In recent times, every other aspiring actress, Instagram reels stars and others are busy finding a blue blouse and a similar short length skirt, to make sure that they look like Samantha Ruth Prabhu from "Oo Antava", and then trying to dance in ecstasy like the spicy star heroine. Here is what is said about these sirens who tried to replicate and imitate Samantha on the small screen. During the Sankranti eve, senior anchor Rashmi Gautham tried to do her Oo Antava Oo Oo Antava stunt. Though the lack of curvaceous body is quite visible in her acts, her seductive expressions have worked out in her favor. At the same time, another budding actress Vishnu Priya also did dance for the same song in similar attire. While she lacks grace in dance, surely her skin show on the small screen is making viewers go gaga over it. And then comes other small time TV Serial artists like Aishwarya Vullingula who appear in Hyper Aadhi's skits, and she too has done the Oo Antava song. While her dance and expressions are



poor, surely she's more pretty than all the others who has done it. Similarly, we have Bigg Boss fame Ashu Reddy doing the same on YouTube as she came up with a cover song for Oo

Antava. While she looks like a clone of Samantha, there is no need to talk about the rest of the things. As the song stood top on YouTube charts and also the reels done with this song are

getting millions of views, every actress and social media starlet out there are coming up with a video for this hot item number. No doubt, these young hotties are saying, Taggedhele!!

Chennai Love Story Bets Big on Shock Value



After the success of Baby, Sai Rajesh and SKN are back with Chennai Love Story. The romantic drama is one of the most awaited films, and the buzz surrounding the film has gone up considerably ahead of its July 24 release. Directed by Ravi Namburi, the film stars Kiran Abbavaram and Sri Gouri Priya in the lead, and they have hyped the film a lot. What has caught everyone's attention is the way the lead pair is promoting the film's interval and second-half twists. During recent promotions, Kiran Abbavaram stated that the interval block will leave audiences shocked, while heroine Sri Gouri Priya went a step further, saying that no one would have imagined such an interval and that the second half would completely turn the story on its head.

These are bold claims at a time when Telugu audiences have become accustomed to routine twists and shock-value moments. In recent times, films like Lenin featured decent twists that worked well for the narrative, but viewers are no longer impressed by surprises that exist only for the sake of it. This is where Chennai Love Story faces its biggest test. The makers have repeatedly promised a fresh love story and an emotional experience unlike anything seen before. The big question now is whether Chennai Love Story will deliver a genuinely fresh shock value or whether expectations have been raised a little too high. The answer will be known on July 24.

Simran Choudhary's Rain-Drenched Saree Look Turns Heads



Simran Choudhary is winning hearts with her latest photoshoot, and it has nothing to do with a film release. The Ee Nagarani Emaindi actress, who has appeared this year with Vanaveera, a movie that failed to strike a chord with audiences, is currently trending for a completely different reason. Her rain-soaked pictures in a white saree have taken over social media, with fans and photographers alike showering praise on the visuals. In the viral set, Simran is seen twirling and laughing amid the rain, dressed in a printed white saree paired with a matching blouse, her hair damp and her expression carefree. The monsoon backdrop, combined with the candid, joyful energy she brings to the frame, has struck a chord that Vanaveera couldn't. Simran seems to be proving that sometimes, it's not the big screen but a rainy afternoon that makes an actress the talk of the town.

Will Odyssey Affect New Telugu Releases?



The Telugu audience have always been extremely encouraging and receptive of quality films, regardless of the language and the star cast. This is perhaps the main reason why every other language filmmaker aspires to have a significant release in Telugu states in hope of encouragement here.

Now we have the case of Hollywood film Odyssey, which is releasing in theatres on July 17. This film comes from the rich Legacy of Director Christopher Nolan, who has a humongous following in India and also primarily in the Telugu states.

Now that this film is releasing in theatres on July 17, a lot is expected of

it at the ticket counters. As of now, the advance bookings in Multiplexes across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have been very solid for this film. This was always expected to be the case, considering the patronage that Christopher Nolan has, and also the kind of scale that this film is promising. Telugu audience have also been waiting for a solid commercial appeal on the big screens, and they are bound to encourage any film that fits into this category. With so many factors leading into the hype surrounding this Christopher Nolan film, the natural expectation is that it would have a solid weekend at the box office in Telugu

states. This strong trend for this film could spell bad news to other films at the theatres this weekend. As of now, Lenin is the only notable Telugu film that is running successfully in theatres, and this could be affected by Odyssey at least in Plexes. And then we have a bunch of small films arriving on July 17, and they could also be affected by this Nolan film.

In the corresponding week, we have two notable releases in the form of Jana Nayagan and Chennai Love Story. It has to be seen what kind of an impact these two films who have due to Odyssey if it manages to pull Telugu audience in substantial numbers in the first place.