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AAP Leader Satyendar Jain, 5 Others Arrested In Delhi Jal Board Tender Case

New Delhi: The Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi government has arrested former Delhi minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Satyendar Kumar Jain along with five others in connection with irregularities in the tendering process for the augmentation and upgradation of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) under the Delhi Jal Board (DJB). Those arrested include Udit Prakash Rai, a former IAS officer and former CEO of the Delhi Jal Board; Ankit Srivastava, a former contractual consultant with the DJB; and three private individuals: Nagendra Yadav, proprietor of AN Enterprises, Raja Kumar Kurra, owner of Euroteck Environment Pvt. Ltd., and Pankaj Verma, proprietor of Srijanhar.

The arrests have been made in connection with FIR No. 10/2024, registered on May 11, 2024, at the Anti-Corruption Branch police station. The case was filed under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended in 2018, along with sections of the Indian Penal Code relating to cheating, criminal breach of trust, cheating by persons bound to



AAP Chief Arvind Kejriwal Reacts To Satyendar Jain's Arrest, Calls Case 'Fabricated'

protect interests and criminal conspiracy the case was registered following a complaint by the Directorate of Vigilance, Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

AAP National Media In-Charge Reacts

Reacting to Jain's arrest, AAP National Media In-charge Anurag Dhanda accused the BJP of political vendetta and claimed that Jain was being targeted because he is the party's co-in-charge for Punjab, where elections are due.

Dhanda questioned Jain's

involvement in the tender process, pointing out that the tender was issued in October 2022, while Jain had been in jail since May that year in connection with a separate case. He alleged that Jain's arrest was part of a "baseless conspiracy" driven by political motives, claiming that the BJP was apprehensive about facing the AAP in the upcoming Punjab elections. Dhanda further accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP of targeting Jain for political reasons, saying the arrest was linked to his role as AAP's Punjab co-in-charge.

"BOOK MAHATMA GANDHI TOO" - Congress Chief On Complaint Over Vande Mataram Row

New Delhi: Amid the ongoing controversies over the rendition of Vande Mataram at the party headquarters and then at party's event in Goa, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday questioned the basis of a complaint filed against party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

He said that if singing the national song in its earlier version was a crime, then complaints should also be filed against Mahatma Gandhi, and former prime ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The remarks came after the BJP attacked Congress leader Sonia Gandhi for allegedly signaling to stop the full rendition of the national song during the Independence Day function at the party headquarters on Saturday. Kharge had unfurled the Tricolour at the party headquarters during the Independence Day celebrations, followed by a rendition of Vande Mataram.

Sonia Gandhi was reportedly the first to notice that the singers were continuing with the full version. She allegedly gestured towards Kharge and later appeared

to communicate with the singers, asking them to stop. The Congress, however, said that Sonia Gandhi was gesturing to arrange for a chair for Kharge, who had been standing for a long time. "This is a pack of lies. Sonia Gandhi did not do that. Our Congress president is not in good health; he cannot stand for long periods... so Sonia Gandhi gestured regarding the management of the proceedings, not to stop the singing of Vande Mataram," Congress leader

Udit Raj had said. A complaint was also filed on Monday with the Delhi Police against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, seeking registration of an FIR over an alleged attempt to disrupt the singing of Vande Mataram at the Congress headquarters. Speaking to reporters, Kharge said: "Well, look, what complaint will they file? We sang the same Vande Mataram that Mahatma Gandhi sang. We sang what Jawaharlal Nehru sang.



Mumbai Police Initiate In Absentia Trial Against Hafiz Saeed, 5 Others For 26/11 Attacks

New Delhi / Mumbai: The Mumbai Police have officially started the legal process to conduct an 'in absentia' trial against six absconding Pakistani accused involved in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks in 2008.

Hafiz Saeed, the Mumbai attacks mastermind, is the chief of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba terror outfit. The United Nations sanctioned Lashkar-e-Taiba in 2005 over its links to Al-Qaeda

and the Taliban, and the United States in 2008 added Saeed to its global terrorism list. A coordinated assault by a group of 10 terrorists sent shockwaves through India and the world. The terrorists had entered the city of Mumbai on the night of November 26, 2008, via sea route and over the course of four days, they killed 166 people and injured 300, in some of the busiest parts of the city. Special Public Prosecutor

Ujjwal Nikam, while speaking, confirmed that the trial proceedings will move forward against the key absconding accused: Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Zakiur-Rehman Lakhvi, Sajid Mir, Abu Alqama, Asim alias Abu Qahafa, and Major Abdur Rehman Pasha. The Mumbai Police sent a formal letter to Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam requesting the initiation of trial proceedings under Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. Prosecu-



tor Ujjwal Nikam confirmed that a trial court has already issued a proclamation against all six absconding accused.

If Invited to Discuss DSC, Jagan Is Avoiding It: Union Minister



From Our Staff Reporter KURNOOL, Aug. 18: Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu criticised YSRCP chief and former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying that he was avoiding a discussion on DSC-2025 in the Assembly despite Minister Nara Lokesh inviting him to participate. Ram Mohan Naidu urged Jagan to accept Lokesh's challenge and attend the As-

sembly debate. Speaking at Orvakal near Kurnool on Tuesday, the Union Minister said Lokesh was ready to discuss the Mega DSC in the Assembly. He alleged that Jagan was refusing to attend the discussion out of fear that his alleged conspiracy would be exposed in the Assembly. He criticised Jagan for trying to protect his political existence by spreading misinformation against the coalition

government. Ram Mohan Naidu recalled that Jagan was the person who had made teachers stand outside liquor shops and alleged that Jagan harboured anger and resentment towards teachers.

The Union Minister said thousands of teacher posts had been filled through the Mega DSC in a completely transparent manner, without any irregularities. He claimed that the coalition government had filled teacher posts on a scale not achieved by any previous government. He also praised Minister Nara Lokesh for his efforts to attract investments to the state and said Andhra Pradesh had witnessed unexpected development within just two years. Later, Ram Mohan Naidu met CEOs of various drone companies at the Drone City being developed at

Palakolanu in Orvakal mandal near Kurnool. He said the Drone City would gain recognition not only in India but across the world. Drone usage is increasing across various sectors, he said. While the country needs around 600,000 drones, only about 40,000 drones are currently available, he explained. He said Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was giving special attention to the Drone City project in Kurnool district.

The Union Minister said drone companies were coming forward after being impressed by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision. The Drone City would be developed across 600 acres in Orvakal, with facilities for drone manufacturing, production and training. Companies setting up operations there would receive incentives and con-

cessions from the State government, he said. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recognised the potential and capabilities of drone technology. Modi's vision was to manufacture drones domestically using Indian technology and export them to other countries, he recalled. Ram Mohan Naidu also said the Centre had banned the import of drones from abroad. He said the Drone City was being established jointly under the aegis of the Central and State governments and would be India's first major integrated Drone City. He said meetings would be held with various drone companies to review their requirements and obtain their suggestions. The Union Minister expressed happiness over the participation of representatives from around 150 drone companies in the programme.

BCs Were Wronged Under Previous Government, TDP Stood by Them: Minister Atchannaidu

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August, 18 : Minister K. Atchannaidu said justice was done to Backward Classes (BCs) only during the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) governments. Speaking in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly on Tuesday during a discussion on BC empowerment and reservations, he said N.T. Rama Rao (NTR), after founding the TDP, brought people from weaker sections into the Assembly and provided 20% reservation in local bodies. He recalled that N. Chandrababu Naidu, as Chief Minister in 1995, introduced 34% reservation for BCs. He said that if changes were to be made to the existing law, it should have been amended accordingly. Atchannaidu accused the Jagan government of attacking and suppressing weaker sections after coming to power. He said BCs had stood by the



TDP since its inception and alleged that this was why the YSRCP targeted the BC community.

The Minister criticised the previous government for increasing reservations while claiming to support weaker sections, but issuing a new government order instead of amending the existing law. He alleged that the government had cases filed in court through a YSRCP sympathiser seeking cancellation of the res-

ervations. He said that after suffering a setback in court, the government did not approach the Supreme Court, thereby causing injustice to BCs. Atchannaidu said the present government had convened a special Cabinet meeting today to discuss and decide on providing reservations to BCs in local bodies. He appealed to the weaker sections to support the Telugu Desam Party in the upcoming local body elections.

Madhav Makes Key Remarks on Local Body Elections

From Our Staff Reporter VISAKHAPATNAM, Aug. 18: BJP Andhra Pradesh president PVN Madhav said the party would contest the upcoming local body elections in alliance with the coalition partners. He said a committee headed by Minister Satyakumar had been formed in view of the local body elections. He called upon party leaders and workers to work with the goal of securing victory in the elections.

Madhav was speaking at a meeting with BJP leaders and workers in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. He said a strong government was functioning in the country.



Development Reaching Every Village Under PM Modi

Madhav said development had reached every village under the leadership of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He called for the BJP flag to be hoisted in every village and said the party should have a ward member in every village. He also

urged party members to secure chairperson and other key positions.

He directed elected representatives and office-bearers to hold another meeting and asked party workers to take Mann Ki Baat closer to the people. He highlighted the establishment of the South Coast Railway Zone with Visakhapatnam as its headquarters and said the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant had been protected.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant Moving Towards Profits

Madhav said the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was now moving towards profitability. He said Polavaram water

would reach Visakhapatnam by the end of this month.

He said two resolutions would be introduced at the party's executive committee meeting on Tuesday and directed leaders and workers to participate in every programme announced by the party. He called for the BJP to reach every locality and urged workers to strengthen the party while adhering to coalition dharma. Madhav said the BJP would celebrate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday under the banner "Seva Sankalp". He called upon party workers to ensure that the sun rises and the lotus blooms.

CM Chandrababu, Minister Lokesh Extend Birthday Greetings to Nirmala Sitharaman

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August, 18 : Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh extended birthday greetings to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. They prayed for her good health, happiness and long life and wished that she would continue to lead the country's development with immense energy. Chandrababu and Lokesh conveyed their wishes through posts on social media platform X.

CM Chandrababu's X Post

"Heartfelt birthday greetings to Hon'ble Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. I wish you a long, healthy and happy life. I hope you continue to guide the nation's progress with the same dedication and tireless energy and achieve many more successes," CM Chandrababu said.

Minister Lokesh's Greetings



Minister Nara Lokesh also wished Nirmala Sitharaman on her birthday. He expressed his hope that her distinguished service to the nation would continue. He prayed for good health, happiness and greater strength for the Union Minister and wished her many more successes in the coming year.

EDITORIAL

Aadhaar Is Ours... But the Crores Are Theirs!

Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced as a key reform aimed at bringing transparency to the country’s economic system, curbing tax evasion and streamlining business transactions. The digital system has increased the scope for monitoring commercial transactions. However, it is alarming that some fraudsters are exploiting loopholes in the same digital system to commit GST fraud worth crores of rupees. More dangerously, they are using the Aadhaar, PAN, bank accounts and biometric details of ordinary people to project them as owners of fake firms. Recent incidents reveal how sophisticated the strategies adopted by fraudsters have become. Reports indicate that poor people, small traders, fruit vendors and lorry drivers are being lured with promises of small payments and persuaded to hand over their personal documents. Using these documents, fake firms are registered, GST numbers obtained, fictitious purchase and sales invoices generated, and huge amounts of Input Tax Credit (ITC) claimed on the basis of those invoices. Crores of rupees in transactions are being recorded in the name of victims without their knowledge. The fundamental question here is: If business worth crores of rupees is being conducted in the name of an ordinary person, why does it not appear suspicious to the concerned systems? If a person who has so far been earning a modest livelihood suddenly becomes the owner of a business with a turnover of crores of rupees, can that really be considered a normal development? If purchases and sales worth crores are recorded within a few months in the name of a lorry driver or a small trader, why does the digital system not detect whether there is a genuine business behind those transactions? The need for risk-based alerts within the GST system to identify such abnormal transactions in advance is clearly evident. Input Tax Credit is one of the most crucial components of the GST system. It enables a trader to deduct the tax paid on purchases from the tax payable on sales. This is an effective mechanism for reducing the tax burden on genuine businesses. But if ITC is obtained by generating fake invoices even though no actual purchases have taken place, it can cause huge losses to government revenue. One fake invoice can become the basis for another fake invoice and eventually turn into a tax fraud involving crores of rupees. In such circumstances, the theft and misuse of personal identification details of ordinary citizens becomes even more dangerous. Once Aadhaar, PAN, bank account details, mobile numbers and biometric information fall into the hands of others, preventing their misuse becomes extremely difficult. A person who hands over his documents for a small amount of money may later be forced to answer for transactions worth crores of rupees carried out in his name. It would be unfair to blame ordinary people in such cases. Fraudsters deliberately target people with limited digital awareness and exploit their financial needs. They may be tempted by assurances such as, “We will give you some money,” “We need your documents,” “We will register a company in your name,” or “We will use your bank account.” However, it is not justifiable to place the entire responsibility on the victim merely because he carelessly handed over his documents. The crucial questions must be: Who actually committed the crime? Who benefited from it? Who operated the firm? Who conducted the transactions? The government also has a major responsibility in this matter.

Simplifying the GST registration process is necessary. But security safeguards must be strengthened simultaneously so that a simplified system cannot be exploited by fraudsters. If a newly registered GST entity suddenly shows an unusually high turnover, an automatic risk alert should be triggered. Data analytics should be used to examine the place of business, bank transactions, invoice patterns and the relationship between purchases and sales. If transactions worth crores are recorded in a person’s name despite being completely inconsistent with his profession, income or previous business history, the system should verify them rather than treating them as routine transactions. For example, if a small-scale worker or driver suddenly records a turnover of ₹20 crore or ₹30 crore in his name, a special scrutiny should automatically be initiated. If it is a genuine business, the business owner will have nothing to fear; if it is a fake firm, the fraud can be detected at an early stage. The objective of GST reform is not to create difficulties for honest taxpayers but to prevent tax evasion. Therefore, equal priority must be given to four areas in the next phase: strict action against fake firms, speedy investigation of fake invoices, immediate suspension of suspicious ITC claims, and protection for ordinary citizens whose identities have been misused. Technology should not become a weapon for criminals. It should become a protective shield for ordinary citizens. If fraud worth crores is committed in a person’s name, the system must first ask, “Who committed this crime?” and not merely, “Whose name is this?” The government has a responsibility to ensure that an ordinary citizen’s Aadhaar number does not become a weapon in the hands of fraudsters, that crores of fake invoices are not generated in his name, and that he does not ultimately end up being treated as the accused. The next phase of GST reform should therefore focus not merely on tax collection, but also on protecting ordinary citizens from tax fraud.

Mumbai's 'Marathi' Test For Cabbies, And The Art Of Fixing The Wrong Problems

Mumbai has long possessed the legendary, slightly chaotic ability to absorb every dialect, dish, and economic refugee that lands upon its humid shores. It is a city whose soul is forged in transit, fuelled by cutting chai, and sustained by an army of auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers navigating standard traffic jams while keeping up a running commentary on local politics.

Recently, however, the Maharashtra state government threw a linguistic spanner into the gears by insisting that non-Marathi-speaking cab and auto drivers undergo formal language training to master the local tongue. The deadline arrived, rain disrupted the classes, and political factions immediately demanded a grace period, not out of a sudden bout of leniency, but because the monsoon managed to drown the logistics before the grammar lessons could fully sink in. The controversy highlights a classic urban tension: is this policy a reasonable expectation of basic integration, or is it unnecessary provincial chest-thumping that undermines the financial capital’s famous cosmopolitanism?

A Valid Argument - Almost Understand the impulse behind the directive, one must first empathise with the anxieties of local cultural preservation. Language in India is rarely just a tool for commerce; it is an inheritance, a flag, and, occasionally, a battlefield. The argument for requiring transit workers to learn Marathi rests on a straightforward, pragmatic premise. If you are operating a public service within a state, possessing a rudimentary grasp of the state’s primary language is not a tyrannical demand; it is a courtesy to the millions of local residents who use those services daily. When a commuter steps into a yellow-and-black taxi after a long day in the suburbs, negotiating a fare or explaining a shortcut shouldn’t require complex pantomime or an emergency translation app.

Proponents of the new rule can reasonably argue that expecting a driver to learn basic

vocabulary, to understand and specify directions, numbers, or addresses (and also to offer polite greetings, but cabbies are not usually known for those!) is hardly an oppressive act of cultural erasure. It is simply the baseline of civic integration, ensuring that the local culture is respected rather than treated as an inconvenient background detail in its own home.

Yet, the moment one shifts focus from civil courtesy to mandatory enforcement, the logic begins to wobble under the weight of Mumbai’s economic reality. The city did not become India’s financial locomotive by enforcing strict linguistic purity at the entry gates. It thrived precisely because a driver from Uttar Pradesh, a passenger from Bengal, and a street vendor from Bihar could communicate in a fluid, grammatical mutant known as ‘Bambaiya Hindi’, a vernacular constructed almost entirely out of shared survival instincts, a collective disregard for the niceties of grammar, and expressive hand gestures. Demanding formal Marathi proficiency transforms an informal, working solution into an administrative hurdle.

Only In Mumbai

The irony of the situation is heightened by the administrative rollout itself: a state mandate issued at the peak of the monsoon season and promptly derailed by heavy rains, leading politicians to plead for a hundred-day extension so drivers can learn how to say “straight ahead” in proper Marathi. The entire episode captures the theatre of Indian governance, where grand cultural crusades inevitably collide with the mundane reality of flooded schoolhouses and missing instructors.

Critics also reasonably point out that targeting cab and auto drivers carries a whiff of selective enforcement, if not outright class bias. The corporate boardrooms of Bandra-Kurla Complex and the luxury high-rises of Worli are populated by international executives, bankers, and tech entrepreneurs



who haven’t mastered a single sentence of Marathi - they might even order a ‘vada pav’ in Hindi - yet no one threatens to revoke their permits or mandate afternoon grammar classes. The burden of carrying the torch of regional heritage falls disproportionately on those at the bottom of the economic ladder, who are already working fourteen-hour shifts in stifling heat.

Some of Mumbai’s taxi drivers could well benefit from remedial driving lessons, but putting them into a classroom feels less like an attempt at genuine cultural enrichment and more like political theatre designed to appease local vote-banks during election cycles. When regional pride becomes an entry barrier to basic livelihood, cosmopolitanism gives way to parochialism, signalling to the rest of the country that Mumbai’s famous openness comes with fine print written strictly in the local script.

Whose Anxieties?

And yet, framing the debate as a stark choice between total open-market globalisation and narrow nativism misses the pragmatic middle ground where Mumbai actually lives. A middle-class commuter navigating the city’s streets does not require a driver to quote seventeenth-century Marathi

poetry; they simply need to get to the station without a communication breakdown. Likewise, a driver attempting to make a living has little interest in ideological debates over sub-national identity; they simply want to earn their daily fare without fear of harassment or bureaucratic penalties. The reasonable resolution lies not in rigid mandates backed by immediate punitive measures, nor in the arrogant dismissiveness that treats local languages as irrelevant or obsolete. The solution rests in low-stakes, accessible, and practical language familiarisation that aids communication without threatening livelihoods. Ultimately, Mumbai’s strength has never been uniformity, but its remarkable capacity to absorb diversity and invent commonalities out of chaos. People will always learn the rudiments of any language they absolutely need, out of sheer necessity. Rarely will they achieve a certifiable level of fluency in it; all they need is enough to get by. That much of Marathi, I dare say, most taxi drivers know already, just enough to be able to ask for directions from a bunch of locals at a street corner. And, of course, it is more important for them to know the roads than to know the language.

A Self-Assured Metropolis

The city’s identity is robust enough to survive non-native drivers, just as regional culture is resilient enough to thrive without relying on mandatory language requirements. If the state government genuinely wishes to promote Marathi, the path lies through gentle encouragement, accessible learning resources, and mutual respect, rather than rigid deadlines that get washed away by the first heavy shower of the monsoon season. As for taxi drivers, a checklist of key Marathi phrases and expressions made available along with your driving license, for example, would go a long way. Or maybe, a basic instructional app that the taxi-wallahs could download on their phones, listen to, and learn from while they are cruising around looking for customers?

Until then, as drivers scramble to learn their Marathi verbs and politicians argue over extension periods, passengers will continue doing what they have always done in Mumbai: jumping into the nearest rickshaw, offering a mix of Hindi, Marathi, and English, and hoping the driver knows a shortcut around the traffic to get you to your destination. I’m just waiting for the day the Maharashtra state government requires passengers to speak in Marathi too...

Rs 1.05 Lakh Crore Lost: Inside The Dangerous Rise Of India's Gen Z Stock Traders

India’s investor profile is dynamically shifting to its core demographic dividend: a tech-savvy, enterprising youth population that seems to be taking on more risk in the stock market for higher returns. Reports indicate how the average Indian investor is barely in their early 20s, with half of them being in the under-30 age group.

From being 25% of the total NSE registered investors in FY20, the Gen-Z segment rose to account for 40% of them in FY25. RBI data also confirms this sharp demographic change: the share of sub-30 age investors had jumped from 22.6% in March 2019 to 38.9% by July 2025. The National Stock Exchange’s Market Pulse report for June 2026 records that the median age of the Indian investor has fallen from 38 in March 2020 to 33 today.

Investors under 30 now account for 37.9% of the total investor base, up from 23.5% five years ago. They also made up 59% of all new registrations so far this financial year. The country’s demat accounts, which stood at roughly 21.3 crore in November 2025, are estimated to have crossed 23 crore by June, and a large share of that growth - just brokerages alone put the figure near three in four new accounts - belongs to investors below 30.

This is not a marginal trend. It is close to becoming the market’s centre of gravity.

What merits greater attention beyond this shift is the extent to which India’s youth is walking into one of the most information-asymmetric arenas in finance, where the safeguards between risk and return on investment are blurry. With graduate unemployment at record highs, secure jobs scarce, and asset prices outpacing incomes, equities (and especially derivatives) have become the default “Plan B” for a generation that was otherwise told that education guarantees stability in upward mobility towards higher-income and wealth accumulation.

A Generation Without a Safety Net

It would be tempting - and not entirely wrong - to read this as a story of desperation amongst youth, who are keen to achieve higher income-returns on risk-driven investment. The Periodic Labour Force Survey 2023-24 shows Gen Z unemployment (among those aged 15 to 26) running at 11.9%, against just 2% for millennials. Among Gen Z graduates specifically, joblessness stands at 29% for men and 36.9% for women. Barely one in five employed Gen Z workers has any social security cover at all. A college degree, which was meant to be a ticket to stability, has for a large section of India’s youth become simply a longer wait in a more crowded queue. It would be too easy to stop here. But desperation alone can not

explain why so much of this new money is flowing specifically into equities, and, increasingly, into the riskiest end of equities, rather than into gold or real estate, or simply staying in a bank account, as it did for their parents’ generation. Something else has changed about how young India relates to the market itself.

How a Volatile Market Became The Answer

Part of the answer lies not with young investors but with the system that shaped them. Over the last two decades, India quietly replaced the idea of a guaranteed pension with the market-linked National Pension System, made the Systematic Investment Plan the default answer to savings, and built, through Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar-based KYC and UPI, the easiest on-ramp into formal finance anywhere in the world. This was, by most measures, a successful and necessary reform integrating the state-society compact for better digitisation and adoption of technology. But it also had a side effect, wherein an entire generation grew up believing, correctly, that fixed deposits lose to inflation and that equities are where real wealth is built. They are doing what they were taught to do. The problem is not that they entered the market. It is what happens once they are inside it.

This is where India’s specific moment has an interesting trajectory and where the “higher

information asymmetry” reasserts at the heart of equity investing itself. Recent research on Indian brokerage apps finds that gamified features such as streaks, badges, leaderboards, and social trading feeds correlate strongly with higher trading frequency and shorter holding periods, and that the effect is sharpest among the youngest and least experienced users. Alongside this has grown the influence of the “fintluencer”, an unregulated but highly trusted content maker for many young investors, whose advice on options and small-cap bets travels faster than any SEBI disclosure ever could. None of this has made equity markets genuinely simpler to understand. It has only made them feel that way on a phone screen, which may be more dangerous. There is also a narrower, very Indian reason for the timing of this shift. Parliament’s Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, banned real-money fantasy sports and card games outright, shutting down an industry that, by some estimates, had drawn in nearly 45 crore Indians and cost them close to Rs 20,000 crore a year. But the appetite for a fast, skill-flavoured bet did not vanish with the ban. It needed a new legal address, and the options segment of the stock market, open to anyone with a PAN card, was the nearest one standing.

The Price Of That Answer

The consequences are

plainly visible in SEBI’s own data. The regulator’s July 2025 study found that 91% of individual traders in the equity derivatives segment lost money in FY25, with net losses widening 41% over the previous year to more than Rs 1.05 lakh crore. A separate SEBI update showed the share of F&O traders under 30 rising from 31% in FY23 to 43% in FY24, even as more than three-quarters of loss-making traders kept trading after consecutive bad years. A companion study on intraday cash trading found that under-30 investors made up 48% of that segment by FY23 and lost money at a higher rate than the market as a whole. None of this is solved by telling young Indians to be more patient. It calls for SEBI to regulate app design with the same seriousness it applies to advertising, for financial literacy to reach students before their first trade rather than after their first loss, and for an honest conversation about a job market that has made impatience feel like the more rational choice. The market, driven by the irrational exuberance of the young, as ever, will keep taking the other side of that bet. The more useful question is why it has become so easy, and so tempting, to place it, and what kind of implications it can have for a young demographic that is already finding it difficult to be directly part of income- or wealth-generating opportunities.

Farmers Urged to Choose Water-Saving Crops



Ongole, Pen Power, Aug 18: Prakasam District Collector P. Rajababu urged farmers to cultivate crops that require less water while providing better returns, in view of the possibility of lower rainfall this year. Speaking to the media

at Prakasam Bhavan on Tuesday, the Collector said special measures were being taken to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply across the district. Water availability for nearly 37 lakh livestock is also being monitored.

He said 12,131 borewells have been mapped for livestock needs and water is being stored in summer storage tanks using supplies from Ramateertham and Gundlakamma reservoirs.

The Collector warned

that available water should be used only for drinking purposes and strict action would be taken if it was diverted for irrigation or fish ponds.

1077 Toll-Free Call Centre

A special call centre has been set up at the Collectorate with the 1077 toll-free number to report drinking water, livestock water, borewell and motor-related issues. The centre will function from 8 AM to 6 PM, with arrangements to operate round the clock if required. Officials will take steps to resolve complaints within 24 hours, he said.

Every Grievance Must Be Resolved with Quality: Collector



Ongole, Pen Power, Aug 18: Prakasam District Collector P. Rajababu directed officials to ensure quality resolution of every grievance registered through the PGRS. During a review meeting with district and

mandal-level officials on Tuesday, the Collector said repeated grievances were mainly due to inadequate resolution. He warned that disciplinary action would be taken against officials who mark grievances as re-

solved without actually addressing them.

He stressed close monitoring of sanitation, garbage collection, school cleanliness and pothole-free roads, noting low public satisfaction levels in

these areas through IVRS feedback.

The Collector also directed officials to take advance measures to prevent drinking water shortages, including repairing non-functional borewells and making alternative arrangements in schools and welfare hostels.

He further instructed officials to ensure that notices issued to 1.96 lakh voters under SIR reach the concerned voters at the field level. Officials were asked to improve public satisfaction with government services through effective monitoring and timely action.

Bureaucratic Reforms: From Colonial Administration to Citizen-Centric Governance



Vijayawada, Pen Power, Aug 18: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra

Singh said the government is transforming the colonial-era administrative system into a more citizen-centric and service-oriented governance model. He said the average time taken to resolve public grievances has come down from 157 days in 2014 to 15 days currently. Through CPGRAMS, citizens can submit grievances in 22 languages, while the

number of grievance officers has crossed one lakh.

Under Mission Karmayogi, around 1.65 crore government employees have received skill-based training through the iGOT platform.

The Minister highlighted reforms including the abolition of interviews for Group-C and non-gazetted Group-B

posts, removal of old attestation requirements and repeal of over 1,600 obsolete laws. He also said special leave and childcare facilities are being provided for women employees.

He stated that the objective of the reforms is to transform the colonial system of centralized authority into a governance system focused on serving citizens.

Public Awareness on PM Rahat Scheme Urged

Vijayawada, Pen Power, Aug 18: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeesh directed officials to create widespread awareness about the PM Rahat Scheme, launched by the Central Government to provide immediate medical treatment to road accident victims. He said eligible victims can receive cashless treatment up to ₹1.50 lakh under the scheme. A person who takes an accident victim to a hospital within one hour may also be eligible for a ₹25,000 Good Samaritan in-



centive. The Collector urged people not to fear legal complications and to help accident victims reach hospitals quickly.

The district recorded 583 road accidents from Janu-

ary to July 2026, a 13.5% decline compared to the previous year. Officials were directed to identify black spots and take immediate preventive measures.

Commissioner of Police

S.V. Rajasekhar Babu stressed strict drunk-driving checks and greater road-safety awareness, noting that pedestrians and two-wheeler riders are particularly vulnerable to accidents.

Provide Quality Healthcare at PHCs: Collector



Guntur, Pen Power, Aug 18: District Collector C.M. Sai Kanth Varma directed medical officers to provide quality

healthcare at Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and make them role models in public service. During a review meeting with PHC medical officers, the Collector said Guntur district has adequate facilities and a conducive working environment, and urged doctors to make effective use of them. He stressed treating patients with

compassion and speaking to them with care, stating that a positive approach can provide confidence and relief to those seeking treatment. He urged medical officers to uphold professional ethics and lead their teams by example.

The Collector directed officials to achieve 100% of the performance indicators set by the gov-

ernment and Health Department and ensure that every PHC achieves an 'A' grade wherever possible. He warned that strict action would be taken against officials who fail to improve their performance. District Medical and Health Officer K. Vijayalakshmi, District Panchayat Officer B.V. Naga Sai Kumar and medical officers attended the meeting.

JJM Works to Be Accelerated for Safe Drinking Water to Every Household

Kakinada, Pen Power, Aug 18: Kakinada District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad directed officials to speed up Jal Jeevan Mission works to provide safe and clean drinking water to every rural household. Reviewing the programme at the Collectorate on Tuesday, the Collector said the district aims to make every village a 'Har Ghar Jal' village by 2028. Of 389 villages, 75 have been identified for the status and 61 have already been declared Har Ghar Jal villages. Out of 3,79,185 households, drinking water is currently being supplied to 2,96,777 households. Of the 1,007



JJM works sanctioned, 596 have been completed. Officials were directed to complete the remaining works within the stipulated time while maintaining quality. The Collector

also ordered proper chlorination of drinking water sources, filling all 22 summer storage tanks, and bringing 120 completed OHSR tanks into use at the earliest. He directed offi-

cials to prepare Water Security Plans for every village by August 31 and take preventive measures to avoid drinking-water contamination and diseases such as diarrhoea.

Tirupati to be Developed as 'City of Lakes and Tanks'



Tirupati, Pen Power, August 18: TUDA Chairman Dr. Dollars Divakar Reddy said a major project is being planned to transform Tirupati into an international-level "City of Lakes and Tanks." The project, estimated at ₹750-800 crore, aims to link and

develop 34 lakes and tanks in five zones, helping prevent urban flooding, improve water storage and address drinking water shortages.

Germany's KfW Bank, ICLEI and APUIAML representatives are providing financial and technical sup-

port. A dedicated sewage network and treatment facilities will prevent untreated wastewater from entering water bodies.

In the first phase, canal development from Peruru Tank to Avilala Tank and development of Avilala Tank are being taken up at

an estimated cost of ₹30 crore. Several tanks will also be beautified and developed as tourism destinations.

The project includes groundwater recharge measures, utilisation of surplus water from Kapila Theertham and development of Ananthasagaram Tank as a major tourism hub.

Dr. Divakar Reddy said the initiative aims to provide a permanent solution to both flooding during monsoons and water scarcity during summer, while making Tirupati a model for water conservation and urban flood management.

Gobardhan Biogas Plants in Ashram Schools



Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, August 18: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar directed officials to take

steps to establish Gobardhan biogas plants in all government Ashram schools across the district. During a review

meeting held at the ITDA office on Tuesday, the Collector instructed officials to identify schools requiring biogas plants and submit a

report within 15 days. He also directed authorities to regularly clean drinking water tanks and submit photographic reports. The Collector stressed daily sanitation activities in villages, segregation of wet and dry waste, preparation of vermicompost, and effective use of sanitation vehicles. He urged officials to promote eco-friendly alternatives to single-use plastic through Green Shops and strengthen cleanliness in tourist areas. He directed all departments to work in coordination, clear pending sanitation works within deadlines, and ensure better sanitation services through public participation.

Collector Directs Officials to Ensure Robust Preparations for Panchayat Polls



Paderu, Pen Power, Aug 18: Alluri Sitharama Raju District Collector T. Nishanthi directed officials to make comprehensive preparations for the upcoming Gram Panchayat elections. During a review meeting with DPO,

DLPOs, RDOs, MPDOs and Deputy MPDOs on Tuesday, the Collector reviewed polling station identification, basic facilities and identification of SC, ST and BC voters across 244 gram panchayats.

MPDOs were instructed to per-

sonally inspect polling stations and ensure drinking water, toilets, electricity, furniture and ramps for persons with disabilities. Draft polling station lists will be published on August 23, objections resolved by August 26 and the final

list issued on August 31 after the Collector's approval. The SC, ST and BC voter identification process has also been launched, with draft lists to be published on August 25 and final lists on September 7 after approval in Gram Sabhas.

Ganapati Navratri from September 14 to 22



Kakinada, Pen Power, August 18: District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad said elaborate arrangements would be made for the immersion of Ganesh idols during Ganesh Chaturthi. At a review meeting with officials and festival

committee members, the Collector urged devotees to use eco-friendly clay idols and natural colours. Organisers must obtain necessary permissions from the Revenue, Police, local bodies, Electricity and Fire departments before setting up pandals.

He directed officials to identify suitable immersion points, arrange cranes, lighting, medical camps, boats and swimmers, and ensure sanitation and uninterrupted power supply. Idol processions must have prior police permission and follow designated routes and immersion slots.

The Collector also instructed organisers not to burst crackers and to stop the use of loudspeakers after 10 p.m. He appealed to festival committees to cooperate with the district administration and ensure peaceful and environmentally friendly celebrations.

Aadhaar Biometric Update Mandatory for Children

Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 18: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeesh urged parents to complete the mandatory Aadhaar biometric update for children without delay. The biometric update for children aged 5–7 years and 15–17 years will be available free of cost until September 30, 2026. Officials informed that biometric updates are pending for 68,654 children in the district.

The Collector reviewed Aadhaar enrolment and update services at the District Aadhaar Monitoring Committee meeting held at the Vijayawada Collectorate. He directed officials to create greater awareness through schools, Anganwadi centres and junior colleges.

He also instructed officials to strengthen permanent Aadhaar centres at the Collectorate, RDO and Tahsildar offices to make Aadhaar services more accessible to the public.



Special Focus on SIR Notices and Hearings



Visakhapatnam, Pen Power, August 18: District Collector M. Abhishek Kishore directed officials to give top priority to the issue and delivery of notices and the hear-

ing process under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Reviewing the progress through a video conference with EROs, AEROs and election officials, the Collector instructed them to complete 100% notice issuance within the stipulated deadline without any delay.

He expressed dissatisfaction over the progress in Bheemili constituency and ordered officials to speed up the process. Officials in East constituency were asked to clear pending deliveries, while North constituency officials were directed to upload completed hearing details in the BLO app.

The Collector also instructed officials in West and Gajuwaka constituencies to accelerate the SIR process and clear pending notices immediately.

He stressed close coordination among officials to ensure timely completion of notice issuance, delivery, hearings and data updates.

Collector Directs Officials to Ensure Transparent Local Body Elections

Ongole, Pen Power, Aug 18: Prakasam District Collector P. Rajababu directed officials to make all necessary preparations for conducting local body elections in a free and transparent manner. At a review meeting held at Prakasam Bhavan on Tuesday, the Collector instructed officials to conduct an effective door-to-door survey of SC, ST and BC voters. Elections are expected to be held for 514 panchayats, covering 5,847 polling stations and 10,70,670 voters.

He announced that the voter survey would continue till August 22, followed by voter identification, draft list publication, objections and verification. The final SC, ST and BC voter list should be released on September 7.

The Collector also directed officials to create awareness about newly formed divisions and wards following delimitation, prepare polling stations, appoint ROs and AEROs, and keep sufficient ballot boxes ready.



Officials were instructed to document every election-related activity and remain fully prepared, except in areas covered by court cases.

Officials Directed to Gear Up for Local Body Elections



Kakinada, Pen Power, Aug 18: Kakinada District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad directed officials to make comprehensive preparations for the conduct of local body elections in the district. At a review meeting held at the

Collectorate on Tuesday, the Collector instructed officials to prepare for Gram Panchayat, ZPTC and MPTC elections as per government directions.

He directed officials to conduct a door-to-door verification of SC, ST and BC voters from August 18 to 22 and publish the final list on September 7. Polling stations should be inspected and the final list prepared by August 31.

The Collector also directed officials to publish MPTC and ZPTC lists by August 22 and draft ward-wise voter lists for Tuni, Peddapuram, Samalkota, Gollaprolu and Yelawaram municipalities on September 3.

He stressed coordination among all departments to complete the election-related arrangements smoothly and ensure transparent conduct of the elections.

No Compromise on Quality of Renovation Works: Collector

Guntur, Pen Power, Aug 18: District Collector C.M. Sai Kanth Varma directed officials to ensure there is no compromise on the quality of renovation works under the 'Change' programme in residential and educational institutions. Reviewing the programme with officials on Tuesday, the Collector said renovation works are being undertaken in 36 residential and educational institutions across the district. He stressed providing a pleasant environment along with all essential facilities.

ties.

Officials were instructed to ensure one toilet for every 10 persons, besides making arrangements for rain-water harvesting, solar power generation and proper waste management.

Officials from Social Welfare, BC Welfare, Tribal Welfare, Minority Welfare, AP Education and Welfare Infrastructure Development Corporation, Roads & Buildings and NEDCAP departments attended the meeting.

Arrangements Reviewed for BRICS Sports Ministers' Visit

Visakhapatnam, Pen Power, Aug 18: District Collector Abhishek Kishore inspected arrangements at various locations selected for the visit of BRICS Sports Ministers and delegates to the BRICS Sports Ministers' Meeting-2026. The Collector reviewed preparations at Rushikonda Beach, where a high tea is planned, and directed officials to ensure international-standard arrangements, cleanliness and visitor facilities. At Thotlakonda Buddhist Complex, he instructed officials to set up welcome gates and banners and arrange local guides to explain its historical and Buddhist significance. He also directed officials to make arrangements for photo sessions. The Collector said general visitors would not be allowed at Thotlakonda on August 22 and ordered officials to publicise the restriction in advance. He also inspected Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary and asked of-



officials to explore including the Visakha Museum and Aircraft Museum in the delegates' itinerary. Officials were directed to prepare and submit the final tour plan.

18-Year-Olds to Get Special Voter Enrollment Drive

Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, Aug 18: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said a special drive will be

conducted to enroll all eligible youth who have completed 18 years of age as voters. During a meeting with representatives of political parties, the Collector said BLOs have been appointed at all 399 polling stations in the district. He said 8,514 voters remain unmapped, while notices have been generated for 16,182 voters and served to 15,537.

The Collector said verification would be conducted regarding deceased, absent and migrated voters before removing ineligible names from the electoral rolls. He also directed political parties to submit suggestions and objections within the stipulated time.

He said the electoral rolls



would be comprehensively updated by the end of October and assured that the election process would be conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner.

Skill Training and Job Opportunities for Tribal Youth

Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, Aug 18: Polavaram District Joint Collector Surapathi Prashanth Kumar said steps are being taken to provide better private-sector employment opportunities to educated tribal youth. Under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), the Amara Raja Skill Development Centre (ARSDC), Petamitta, Chittoor district, is offering skill training to youth aged 16 to 30 years.

Candidates who have passed or failed Class 10 will receive 24 months of training, while Intermediate-qualified candidates will undergo 18 months of training. A monthly stipend of ₹13,192 to ₹13,392, along with hostel and food facilities, will be provided.

The Joint Collector urged unemployed tribal youth under Rampachodavaram ITDA to make use of the opportunity. Interested candidates can submit applications at the ITDA office. For details, contact Shireesha: 6302131385 or AO, ITDA: 9573938533.



MP Purandeswari Meets South Coast Railway GM



Rajamahendravaram, Pen Power, Aug 18: Rajahmundry MP Daggubati Purandeswari met South Coast Railway General Manager Sandeep Mathur in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday and requested development of Kovvur, Godavari, Rajahmundry and Nidadavole railway stations. She urged the railway authorities to restore halts for Simhadri Express, Sarkar Express and Rayagada Express at Kovvur station, besides restoring previously operated train services between Rajahmundry, Bhimavaram and Narasapur.

BJP East Godavari district president Pikki Nagendra said Purandeswari was making efforts to restore train halts at Kovvur. Railway officials reportedly said all halts could not be restored at once and assured that efforts would be made to restore them in phases.

Officials Told to Work Together for Polavaram District Development



Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, Aug 18: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar

directed officials of all departments to work in coordination for the overall development of

the newly formed Polavaram district. During a review meeting at the ITDA office on Tuesday, the Collector

instructed officials to prepare proposals for development works in all villages and complete ongoing projects within the stipulated time. He stressed sanitation measures to prevent seasonal diseases and called for faster resolution of public grievances through coordinated efforts. Officials were also directed to ensure that government welfare schemes reach every eligible beneficiary through effective field-level monitoring. The meeting was attended by senior officials from various departments, including health, malaria control, fisheries, horticulture, civil supplies and engineering departments.

Collector Inspects EVM and VVPAT Warehouse



Kakinada, Pen Power, Aug 18: Kakinada District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad in-

spected the EVM and VVPAT warehouse near the Collectorate on Tuesday along with revenue,

police and election officials. The Collector reviewed the security arrangements for the elec-

tronic voting machines and VVPAT units and directed officials to maintain strict security to prevent any untoward incidents. He said the EVM warehouse is being jointly inspected every month by revenue, police and election officials, with inspection reports being submitted to the Election Commission of India. District Revenue Officer Dr. T. Tippenaik, Kakinada Urban Tahsildar V. Jitendra, Collectorate Election Superintendent M. Jagannatham and other officials participated in the inspection.

2 Mumbai Doctors Who Kept Jinnah's Illness A Secret To Get Pakistan's Highest Civilian Award



Islamabad: Two Indian Parsi doctors based in Bombay (now Mumbai) are set to receive Pakistan's highest civilian award for keeping Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah's terminal illness diagnosis a secret during the crucial period before Partition in 1947. Islamabad has nominated physician Dr Jal Ratanji Patel and radiologist Dr Jal Dhaybho-Koo for the Nishan-e-Imtiaz award for their "quiet but extraordinary service" in ensuring that knowledge of Jinnah's terminal illness remained limited to just the members of his inner circle, announced Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and head of the

Awards Committee. In a post on X, Ahsan Iqbal noted that Dr Patel and Dr Dhaybho-Koo had examined Jinnah's X-ray in 1946 and concluded that his tuberculosis had reached an advanced stage and he had only a year or two to live. But they maintained professional confidentiality about the seriousness of his illness -- a secret that many historians believed could have altered the timing of partition and the creation of Pakistan. "I feel honoured to have had the privilege, as Chairman of the Awards Committee, of nominating for the Nishan-e-Imtiaz two remarkable doctors, a physician and a radiologist, both members of Bombay's Parsi

community, who faithfully guarded the secret of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's terminal illness," Iqbal wrote. "By maintaining absolute professional confidentiality at such a critical moment, these doctors performed a quiet but extraordinary service. Their fidelity to their professional oath inadvertently became a significant contribution to the circumstances that made the creation of Pakistan possible," he added. Pakistan's honour for Dr Patel and Dr Dhaybho-Koo comes 78 years after Jinnah's death and will be formally conferred on them posthumously at a ceremony in March 2027.

Jinnah's Health

Struggles

According to the Pakistani minister, Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of British India, later acknowledged that if he had known the extent of Jinnah's illness, he might have delayed Partition, potentially altering the course of history. By not disclosing Jinnah's medical condition, the two doctors rendered "quiet but extraordinary service" at a decisive moment, he added.

In his book 'Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin', historian and academic Akbar Ahmed notes that Jinnah had been suffering from tuberculosis since the 1930s -- a fact only known to a few close confidants, including his sister Fatima Jinnah.

Tuberculosis was a highly lethal disease at the time, with no effective antibiotic treatment. Jinnah reportedly kept the severity of his condition from the public due to concerns that it could undermine his political image and leadership. By the time of India's partition in 1947, Jinnah's health had significantly worsened. He died of pulmonary tuberculosis on September 11, 1948, just over a year after partition.

Indian-Origin Grandma, Living In US For 27 Years With Green Card, Detained By ICE



Washington: An Indian-origin woman, who has lived in the US for 27 years and is a Green Card holder, has been detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), even after an immigration judge dismissed an effort to remove her from the country months ago.

Venkata Narsamamba Vasamsetty, a grandmother of two who has been a lawful permanent resident (LPR) in the United States since 2013, was taken into custody during a scheduled ICE check-in on August 11. She is being held at an ICE detention facility in Georgia, despite a US judge's May ruling terminating the government's prior deportation case against her. Newsweek reported, citing data collected through ICE's Online Detainee Locator System. The case against Vasamsetty's immigration status reportedly stemmed from a federal government's allegation that she had abandoned her lawful permanent residency when she spent several months in India in 2022. However, her family and lawyer argue that during her extended stay in India, Vasamsetty was taking care of an ailing parent and recovering from COVID-19. They also argue that Vasamsetty maintains substantial ties to the United States through her family, employment, and home. While LPRs are allowed to live in the US permanently, green-card holders can still face removal proceedings under federal immigration law in some cases. One such circumstance is a permanent resident's absence from the US for more than

six months. This could raise questions about whether they intended to abandon their US residence.

About Venkata Vasamsetty

Vasamsetty has lived in the US for 27 years and worked as a teacher for special-needs students in North Carolina, according to a LinkedIn post by immigration attorney Zoe Wilson, a friend and former colleague of Vasamsetty's daughter, Yashaswini Vasamsetty, who is herself an employment-based immigration attorney licensed in Texas and New Jersey. According to Wilson, she had received the family's permission to discuss the case publicly. She noted that Vasamsetty is a green card holder with no criminal history, has lived lawfully in the US for over 27 years, and has maintained lawful immigration status throughout that time. "She has been a Lawful Permanent Resident, a green card holder, since 2013. She has NO criminal history. She is a public school teacher who primarily works with special-needs children. She is a mother to two U.S. citizen children. She has two US citizen grandchildren. Her home, her family, her career, and her life are here and have been here for over 27 years," she wrote. Wilson also noted that Vasamsetty is "severely diabetic" and "requires glucose monitoring and medical care."

Case Against Vasamsetty

According to Wilson, Vasamsetty travelled to India in July 2022 to care for her elderly, critically ill parents. Her return to the US was delayed after she con-

tracted COVID-19 and experienced additional health complications. She "became ill enough that she was hospitalised in India for nearly two weeks. After she was discharged, there were other medical issues that further delayed her ability to make a long international trip. When she was finally well enough to travel, she returned home to the United States through Raleigh-Durham International Airport in February 2023. She had been outside the country for about 7 months," she wrote.

What US Law Says

Wilson circled back to US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) guidelines that state that "permanent residents are free to travel outside the United States, and temporary or brief travel usually does not affect your permanent resident status. If it is determined, however, that you did not intend to make the United States your permanent home, you will be found to have abandoned your permanent resident status." Permanent residents who have been outside the US for over 180 days can sometimes face scrutiny upon reentry to examine whether they maintained US residency and intended to keep America as their permanent home. "She wasn't packing up her life in the United States. She wasn't moving back to India. She wasn't leaving with the intention of giving up her green card. At the time she left, she was literally in the process of buying a home in North Carolina to be her primary residence. Then, while she was in In-

dia, she completed that purchase," Wilson wrote. "Any reasonable person should be able to look at the facts of Mrs Vasamsetty's circumstances and understand the difference between a temporary, medically complicated trip and one with intent to actually abandon their green card," she added.

The Defence

Talking to NRI Pulse, Vasamsetty's attorney, Helen Parsonage, noted that in its case, the Department of Homeland Security has alleged that Vasamsetty's seven-month stay in India demonstrated that she abandoned her permanent residency, and therefore she was placed in removal proceedings.

Vasamsetty countered the allegations by submitting documentation proving she worked to maintain her life in the US while she was out of the country. Parsonage noted that DHS failed to meet a court-imposed deadline to submit evidence supporting its case, leading to an immigration judge dismissing the removal proceedings on May 19, 2026. Since then, Vasamsetty has continued to report for scheduled ICE check-ins. She was detained on August 11 when she reported at the agency's Charlotte office. According to Wilson, ICE claims she "isn't a green card holder." After she was taken into custody, Vasamsetty's legal team on August 13 filed an emergency habeas corpus petition challenging her continued detention, and a federal judge ordered immigration authorities to explain within three days the legal basis for her detention. According to the NRI Pulse report, ICE's latest filing does not concede that Vasamsetty's detention was unlawful, nor does it order her release. Instead, it indicates that if the federal court applies its recent precedent, she would be entitled to an immigration judge to consider whether she can be released on bond. So, if the federal court rules in favour of the government, Vasamsetty is expected to receive a bond hearing within seven days.

Trump Bombs US Foreign Policy In Swings At Oman, South Korea Over Iran War



Washington: US President Donald Trump started his week by burning two American allies over his war of choice in Iran. He ordered the Pentagon to scale back joint military exercises with South Korea as the war in Iran stretches the limits of US aircraft carriers. He also threatened to bomb Oman, one of the mediators between Washington and Tehran, after his long-broken memorandum of understanding with Iran reached its 60-day expiration date.

His critics believe Trump is striking out badly on foreign policy by making decisions built on personal squabbles rather than his critical security relationships. But his recent jabs at Muscat and Seoul are not isolated incidents. They are symptomatic of his foreign policy, which seems to stem from his gut rather than advice from diplomats and experts.

What Trump Did

On Sunday, Trump took to his Truth Social platform and ordered his war secretary, Pete Hegseth, to "substantially reduce" annual joint military exercises with South Korea, designed to prepare Seoul against threats from North Korea. He said South Korea wouldn't help with his war against Iran and cited his "good relationship" with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in his latest instance of undermining long-standing alliances with global partners. Trump said the exercises were "costly" and inappropriate

because Kim had always been "unthreatening and respectful" to him. The US president also took aim at South Korea, saying it had refused his offer to take part in what he called the "denuclearisation" of Iran. South Korea reacted to Trump's new decision on the exercises in measured terms, expressing hope that the Trump-Kim relationship "will lead to meaningful dialogue". But the businessman president's abrupt move triggered concerns among Republicans and Democrats alike that the United States under Trump's leadership is not a reliable ally and seems to suggest US disengagement from Asia. Regarding Oman, Trump threatened on Monday

that it will bomb the Gulf nation-- an American ally- if it "gets in the way" of a US deal with Iran on the Strait of Hormuz, as he called for Tehran to surrender in a war that has become a growing political burden. Control of the waterway, which Iran has effectively closed since the conflict began on February 28, remains at the heart of the deadlock between Tehran and Washington. Iran's coast flanks the northern side of Hormuz, while Oman sits on the south. "If Oman gets in the way, we'll bomb the shit out of them," Trump told Fox News journalist Trey Yingst, referring to ongoing talks between Oman and Iran on control of the strait, which lies between the two countries. Oman, a US ally in the Gulf, has not publicly commented on Trump's remarks. Washington has a security agreement with Muscat that allows it to access Omani airfield and port facilities for military purposes. But Tehran and Muscat have been discussing for weeks future navigation arrangements through the route, and Iran's foreign ministry said earlier Monday the two sides were workin

Trump Cites Indian Poll Chief's Question To Make A Case For Save America Act

Washington: US President Donald Trump has cited India's election system and voter identification requirements as he renewed his call for the passage of the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) America Act, which seeks stricter citizenship requirements to vote in US elections. Taking to his Truth Social platform, Trump recalled that India's

Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, recently asked the US administration about why elections in America are held without a valid photo identification card, as he made a case for mandatory photo IDs for every US voter to curb "electoral fraud". Trump noted that not even one per cent of voters in India used postal ballots in the recent general elections,

and every voter had a valid photo identity document. "Earlier this month, India's Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, asked our Administration -- How can you have Elections in the US without a valid Photo ID," Trump wrote. Trump made these remarks to drum up support for the SAVE America Act, which would require Ameri-

cans to show proof of citizenship to register to vote, impose a nationwide voter identification requirement and severely limit voting by mail. "India's last election had 646,000,000 voters! Less than one per cent voted by mail, and every single Voter had to have a VALID Photo Identity Document." "We need to pass THE SAVE AMERICA ACT, now," he asserted.

Delhi HC puts JNU admissions based on deprivation points on hold

New Delhi : The Delhi High Court has directed Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) to keep on hold admissions and all further action based on its "deprivation points" system for the 2026-27 academic session, observing that the mechanism prima facie permits the university to effectively add marks to a candidate's score in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET). Justice Jasmeet Singh, while hearing a petition challenging JNU's deprivation-point policy, said that allowing the university to add marks to scores secured by candidates in a competitive entrance examination could undermine the sanctity of the examination. The court directed that until the next date of hearing, JNU shall not finalise admissions on the basis of deprivation points and shall not take any further steps based on such points in relation to admissions. The matter has been listed for further hearing on August 24.

The petition has been filed by Amit Mehra, an aspiring postgraduate stu-



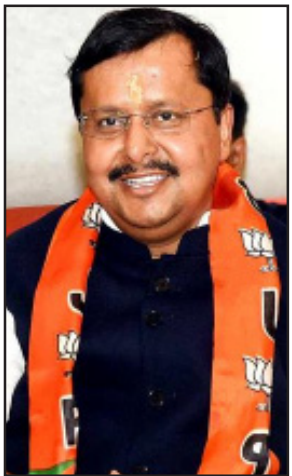
dent, challenging Section V of JNU's e-Prospectus for the academic session 2026-27. The petitioner has specifically questioned the provision under which candidates can receive up to 12 deprivation points, based, among other factors, on the geographical location of their previous schooling. Under the policy, one deprivation point is equivalent to three marks. This means that a candidate could potentially receive an additional 36 marks through the deprivation-point mechanism. The petitioner has sought directions to JNU to prepare merit lists, rankings and admission

outcomes solely on the basis of candidates' raw CUET scores, normalized marks or percentiles, without adding deprivation points or other regional weightage. JNU opposed the plea and submitted that the deprivation-point system formed part of its policy intended to ensure adequate representation of students from different parts of the country. The university's counsel also relied on the First Schedule of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Act, 1966, which requires the institution to take special measures to facilitate students and teachers from across India to join the university.

The university further submitted that the policy had been considered and approved by its Academic Council following due deliberation. However, the High Court said it was prima facie unable to accept JNU's contention. The court observed that through deprivation points, the university had effectively altered the marks obtained by a student in the entrance examination. It noted that the mechanism gives JNU the ability to add up to 12 points to a candidate's score. The court further observed that the provisions relied upon by JNU did not, prima facie, authorise the university to add marks to scores obtained by candidates in a competitive examination. Justice Singh observed that if such a mechanism were permitted, the sanctity of an entrance examination could be compromised. The court said allowing a university to alter a candidate's score after a competitive examination would run contrary to the basic concept of such an examination.

BJP appoints state in-charges for UP, Punjab, and Gujarat ahead of Assembly Elections 2027

New Delhi : Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president Nitin Nabin announced the appointment of state in-charges and co-in-charges for Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Gujarat with immediate effect. According to a press release issued by the BJP, National General Secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Vinod Tawde has been appointed as the Uttar Pradesh in-charge, while National Secretary Jagdish Ishwarbhai Patel has been appointed as the co-in-charge. For Punjab, National General Secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Dr Satish Poonia has been appointed as the state in-charge. In Gujarat, Rajya Sabha MP and BJP National Headquarters In-charge Tarun Chugh has been appointed as the state in-charge. The party said that appointments of in-charges for other states will be made in due course. Meanwhile, the existing Prabharri arrangement will continue in those states. The appointments come into effect immediately. This develop-



ment comes ahead of the Assembly elections in 2027 in these three states, as the party is expected to step up its campaign.

This comes after the new team of BJP chief Nitin Nabin was announced on Monday, and is a mix of experience and youth, with the media team also reflecting continuity with change. Party MP Anil Baluni continues to lead the media team as the Convenor. The party has entrusted key responsibilities to a new set of General Secretaries, including former Amethi MP

Smriti Irani, former Tripura CM Biplab Deb, Sunil Bansal, Vinod Tawde, Gajendra Patel, Satish Poonia, Harish Dwivedi, and Sanjay Bhatia. Furthermore, several senior leaders have been named as National Vice Presidents. This list includes former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, former Uttarakhand CM Tirath Singh Rawat, Ram Madhav, Baijyant Jay Panda, D Purandeshwari, Rekha Verma, Varshaben Narendrabhai Doshi, Bharti Pravin Pawar, Manpreet Singh Badal, Lal Singh Arya, Prof. M. Nagaraja, Prof. Tariq Mansoor, and Madhuchandra Kar. Notably, six among the thirteen new vice presidents are women. The appointment of National Secretaries reflects a broad geographical reach, featuring Kavita Patidar from Madhya Pradesh, K. Surendran from Kerala, Dr. Bhola Singh from Uttar Pradesh, Pradip Varma from Jharkhand, Jagdish Ishwarbhai Patel from Gujarat, Sandeep Pathak

from Delhi, Phangnon Konyak from Nagaland, Sangeeta Yadav from Uttar Pradesh, Anil Antony from Kerala, M. Venkateshan from Tamil Nadu, Manoj Tigga from West Bengal, Siddharth Shambhu from Bihar, Swadesh Singh from Delhi, Shri Mriganka Deo Barman from Assam, Rohan Gupta from Gujarat, and Jai Prakash from Delhi. In terms of specialised roles, Piyush Goyal has once again been entrusted with the responsibility of National Treasurer. Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Chugh has been named the Central Office In-charge. Gujarat MP Hemang Joshi will take charge of the Yuva Morcha, while the Mahila Morcha will be overseen by Roop Kumari Choudhary from Chhattisgarh. Anil Baluni, a Lok Sabha MP, will continue as Media Convenor, supported by co-convenors Ashish Usha Agrawal, Pradeep Bhandari, and Siddharth Yadav. Deepak Mhaskey of Chhattisgarh has been named as the Social Media Convenor.

"Abhijeet Dipke is a worker for AAP, how did he become a student": Kiren Rijiju takes jibe at CJP founder

New Delhi : Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju targeted Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke, alleging he is an Aam Aadmi Party worker attempting to pass himself off as a student leader in the youth-led protests at Jantar Mantar. In an interview with news agency, Rijiju said that while the concerns raised by protesting students are genuine, AAP attempted to "hijack" the movement for its own ends. Responding to a question on whether he appreciated the emergence of young leadership through the recent student-led movements, Rijiju said the government takes student grievances seriously but drew a distinction between student activism and political opportunism.

"The students' concerns are valid, but the attempt by the Aam Aadmi Party and others to hijack the situation is not right. Abhijeet Dipke is from



Maharashtra, but he is an Aam Aadmi Party worker. How did he become a 'student'?" he said. He added that the government remains open to engaging directly with students over their genuine demands, but accused political parties of exploiting the movement following electoral setbacks. "Students have a certain passion, and one can engage in dialogue with them, but when political parties try to grind their own political axes by hiding behind students—that is simply not right," he said. Kiren Rijiju addressed the perception surrounding the BJP's

connection with Gen Z, rejecting the claim that the party is out of touch with younger people. He noted that traditional Asian cultural norms often expect youth to listen to their elders, making generational alignment a gradual process. To bridge this gap, Rijiju emphasised the need for ongoing, active dialogue with Gen Z. "There is no lack of connection. They are our own children. Ours are an Asian society. People in Asia are bound together by family ties. It is not like Western society. We remain connected. We live in a family environment where children are expected to listen to their elders. If one keeps provoking them to simply keep making demands, it will take time to bridge that gap; we need to listen to them and also explain things to them. There must be a continuous dialogue," he said. Dipke has previously worked with the Aam Aadmi Party before the beginning of the sa-

tirical movement, the Cockroach Janta Party, which came after Chief Justice of India Surya Kant's remarks about "cockroaches" and "parasites of society" during a Supreme Court hearing. Dipke's old X posts from 2021 to 2024, which showcased support for the AAP, further fueled speculations about his current relationship with the party. The CJP has also conveyed that it is going to remain as a pressure group at present, stating, "We are not forming a political party; we will operate solely as a pressure group." It is currently conducting a 'School Thik Karo' campaign to highlight the issues present in government schools in villages. The massive protest led by CJP from June to July, which culminated in the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as Union Education Minister, also saw support from various political parties, including AAP, Samajwadi Party.

Your unwavering commitment to accelerating nation-building through economic growth: Amit Shah wishes Sitharaman

New Delhi : Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on her birthday for commending her "unwavering commitment" to the nation's progress and her efforts to advance nation-building through economic growth. Shah took to his social media account X to extend his wishes to Sitharaman, a senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader, who is currently holding the portfolio of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. "Birthday wishes to Union Minister Smt @nsitharaman Ji. Your unwavering commitment to

the nation's progress is accelerating the realisation of Modi Ji's vision of nation-building through economic growth. May you always be blessed with good health and success," Shah posted on X, formerly Twitter. Born in 1959 in Tamil Nadu's Madurai, Sitharaman was first inducted as Defence Minister on September 3, 2017, a position she held until May 30, 2019. She subsequently took charge of the Finance and Corporate Affairs ministries on May 30, 2019, and continued in the portfolios until June 2024. She has been serving as Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister for a



second consecutive term since June 2024. Re-elected to the Rajya Sabha for a third term in July 2022, Sitharaman holds an MA in Economics and an M.Phil

degree. She pursued her studies at Seethalakshmi Ramaswamy College in Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, and Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

J-K: CRPF bunker vehicle overturns after collision with truck in Qazigund; personnel suffer minor injuries

Qazigund : A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) bunker vehicle overturned after it was involved in a collision with a truck in Jammu and Kashmir, officials informed. Some CRPF personnel onboard the vehicle reportedly suffered minor injuries in the incident. The injured personnel were immediately shifted to the 163 Battalion CRPF camp in Qazigund for treatment. Further details are awaited. Earlier, on July 20, two persons were killed, and five others were injured after a massive boulder rolled down a hillside and struck a passenger bus and two light motor vehicles at Ragi Nallah in J&K's Doda district on July 19. The heavy impact caused extensive damage to the vehicles and triggered panic among commuters along the route. Upon receiving information, rescue teams and local police personnel rushed to the spot, initiated immediate relief operations, and evacuated the injured to a nearby hospital for primary treatment. The injured individuals were subsequently shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC) in Jammu for specialised care.



Botad gets Vande Bharat connectivity as train begins running via Gandhigram route

Gandhigram-Botad : Botad Gujarat's Botad district gained direct Vande Bharat connectivity with the Sabarmati-Veraval service beginning operations through the Gandhigram-Botad route, following a change approved by the Railway Board. The revised route came into effect on August 17, bringing the semi-high-speed service to the town and improving rail connectivity for passengers travelling between Ahmedabad and Saurashtra.

Botad Assembly constituency MLA, Umesh Makwana, flagged off the Vande Bharat Express at Botad railway station and welcomed the train. Bhavnagar MP, Nimuben Bambhaniya, and the Bhavnagar divisional railway manager were also present, along with other representatives and railway employees. The service operates as train No. 26901 on the Sabarmati-Botad-Veraval route and No. 26902

in the return direction. The revised alignment takes the train through Gandhigram and Botad instead of its earlier route via Viramgam, Surendranagar and Rajkot. The change is aimed at providing a more direct connection between Ahmedabad and destinations in Saurashtra.

The new service is expected to benefit passengers from Botad and nearby areas travelling towards Sabarmati and Veraval. It will also provide a faster and more convenient option for devotees travelling to Somnath, as well as for traders, students, employees and other passengers. The revised service also includes a permanent halt at Chital in Amreli district, further extending Vande Bharat connectivity in the Saurashtra region. Alongside the Vande Bharat service, electric train operations have also begun on the Botad-Gandhigram railway route, according to officials. The development is



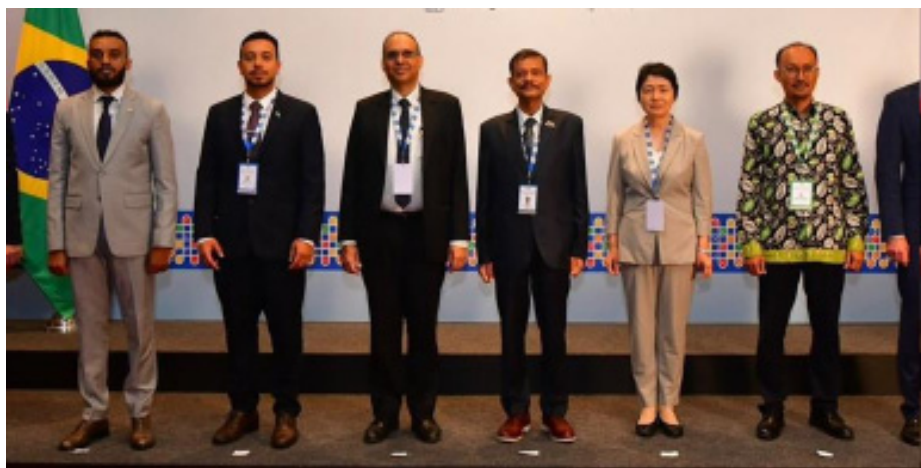
expected to improve the speed and convenience of rail travel for passengers using the corridor.

"I have made representations to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking better railway facilities for Botad," Makwana said. He has also sought additional Vande Bharat services connecting the town with major cities. Among the proposed routes are Bhavnagar-Botad-Vadodara-Surat-Mumbai and Bhavnagar-Botad-Sabarmati-Delhi. If introduced, the proposed

services would provide passengers from Botad and the Bhavnagar region with direct modern rail links to Vadodara, Surat, Mumbai, Sabarmati and Delhi. Makwana said, "Continuous efforts are being made to provide the people of Botad with better railway facilities and more convenient rail connectivity with important cities as well as religious and economic centres of the state. Necessary representations and efforts for the development of Botad's railway facilities will continue in the future as well."

India to strengthen digital cooperation among BRICS members

New Delhi: India has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen digital cooperation and future network technologies at the 7th 'BRICS ICT Working Group Meeting' in Pune, guided by its Chairship theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", according to an official statement. Amit Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, outlined the theme of the ICT Track under India's Chairship, "Innovate, Cooperate and Transform (ICT) for a Resilient Future", and its four pillars, at the three-day event. He said that the inauguration marks the beginning of an important week of engagement under the BRICS ICT Track and represents the continuation of a collaborative process that has been under-



way for several months. Since the commencement of India's Chairship of the BRICS ICT Track earlier this year, "we have worked closely together through successive Working Group meetings, thematic webinars, discussions on concept notes and regular exchanges among

experts and officials," said Agrawal. "These engagements have enabled us to share experiences, build a common understanding of our priorities and collectively shape the agenda before us today," he told the BRICS members. Notably, the Council of the BRICS In-

stitute of Future Networks reviewed the activities of the designated national branches, together with updates from the Study Groups on artificial intelligence, next generation communications, internet applications in Industry 4.0, and electromagnetic field exposure.

Raksha Mantri flags-off NCC's All India Girls High Altitude Long Trek 'Aparajita - Parang La 2026'

- Led by women officers of the three Services, 28 Girl Cadets to undertake a 250-km, 30-day trek traversing one of India's most challenging high-altitude routes

- The expedition is a powerful testimony to the courage, determination & growing capabilities of the nation's 'Nari Shakti': Rajnath Singh



New Delhi, August, 18 (PIB): Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh flagged-off the All India Girls High Altitude Long Trek 'Aparajita - Parang La 2026', a flagship adventure activity of the National Cadet Corps (NCC), during an event in New Delhi on August 18, 2026. The trek will traverse the Parang La Pass (5,578 metres, 18,300 feet), connecting the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh with the Changthang region of Ladakh and is regarded as one of the country's most challenging high-altitude

trekking routes. The team will be led by three women officers representing the three services. 28 Girl Cadets are participating in the expedition, with an average age of 19 years, the youngest participant being just 16 and a half years old. In his address, Raksha Mantri termed the participation of young girls in such a challenging high-altitude expedition as a powerful testament to the courage, determination and growing capabilities of the women of the country. The expedition team, accompanied by officers,

medical staff, instructors and support personnel, will undertake the approximately 250-km trek over 30 days through some of the most remote and challenging terrain in the Himalayas. The route of the expedition includes Kibber, Dumla, Thaltak, Bongrojen, Parang La Pass, Dak Karzong, Norbu Sumdo, Kiangdom and Korzok, traversing high-altitude deserts, glaciers, snowfields and river valleys. Extending his best wishes to the team for a safe and successful trek, Shri Rajnath Singh stated that such expeditions play an important role in developing leadership qualities, mental resilience, discipline and self-confidence among the youth. He commended the selected cadets for their physical and mental preparation, emphasising that the trek would be a life lesson for them in resilience, confidence and self-discovery. "The cadets would return from Parang La with not only memorable experiences but also a deeper understanding of their own inner strength," he hoped. Raksha Mantri exhorted the team members to keep

'safety', 'environment' and 'interaction with local communities' as their priorities throughout the expedition. "Strictly follow the guidance of instructors, avoid unnecessary risks, and adopt a zero-waste approach to protect the Himalayan ecology. Engage respectfully with local communities, understand their culture & traditions, and learn from their experiences. The expedition would become a defining milestone in your lives and inspire you to remain 'Aparajita' at every stage of life," he told the cadets.

The detailed list of items is also available on the SRIJAN Portal

Aatmanirbhar Bharat: DDP notifies 6th Positive Indigenisation List of 405 strategically important items

New Delhi, August, 18 (PIB): The Department of Defence Production (DDP), Ministry of Defence has notified the sixth Positive Indigenisation List (PIL) comprising 405 strategically important items with an estimated business potential of Rs 3,070 crore. The list contains Line Replaceable Units, sub-systems, sub-assemblies, spares, components and raw materials. These include 16 items of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and 389 items of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). The items cover a broad range of defence platforms and systems, including:

Air platforms such as Advanced Light Helicopter, Light Utility Helicopter, Su-30MKI, Light Combat Aircraft and AL-31FP Engine Armoured platforms including T-72, T-90 and BMP-II

Warships Missile systems such as Konkurs-M, Invar and MRSAM

Defence electronics including radars, sonars, fire control systems and satellite communication systems

High Explosive Anti-Tank ammunition and other critical defence equipment

SIXTH POSITIVE INDIGENISATION LIST OF 405 ITEMS

The detailed list of items is also available on the SRIJAN Portal

(srija.defence.gov.in). Each item has an indicative timeline for indigenisation. Upon successful indigenisation, these items will be procured from the Indian industry. The DPSUs and ICG will undertake indigenisation through various routes, including their 'Make' procedure and in-house development, with participation from the industry, particularly MSMEs. This sixth PIL marks another step in the Government's efforts to promote self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative. It is expected to further expand opportunities for the Indian industry, strengthen the domestic defence manufacturing ecosystem, promote investment & innovation, and contribute to reducing dependence on imports.

The DDP launched the SRIJAN Defence Portal in

August 2020 as a dedicated platform through which the DPSUs and Service Headquarters (SHQs) offer defence items to the industry, including MSMEs and start-ups, for indigenous development and production. Since its launch, the portal has facilitated the offer of more than 33,000 defence items for indigenisation by DPSUs and SHQs up to June 2026. These include 5,012 items notified under the first five Positive Indigenisation Lists. More than 15,700 defence items have been successfully indigenised, resulting in an estimated import substitution value of about Rs 9,000 crore over the last five years. In addition, DPSUs have placed procurement orders, including in-house production, worth approximately Rs 10,000 crore on domestic vendors up to March 2026.

Waste to Woods: Raichur Reclaims 22 Acres with Miyawaki Transformation



New Delhi, August, 18 (PIB): Raichur in Karnataka, has transformed the 35-acre Yakalasapura dumpsite into a green asset through scientific legacy waste remediation under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0). ~ 62,252 MT of waste has been processed and nearly 22 acres of valuable urban land, has been reclaimed so far. The restored site now supports sustainable land use, including a vibrant Miyawaki forest, demonstrating how former dumpsites can be converted into thriving ecological spaces. Under the SBM-U 2.0, cities across India are undertaking the transformation of legacy dumpsites into productive and environmentally sustainable spaces. In Raichur, Karnataka, this vision has been realized through the successful remediation of the Yakalasapura dumpsite, once a symbol of environmental degradation, now emerging as a model of ecological restoration and sustainable urban development. Spread across 35 acres, the Yakalasapura site had accumulated decades of municipal solid waste, creating significant environmental and public health concerns for nearby communities. The growing mountain of garbage not only occupied valuable urban land but also posed risks through leachate generation, foul odour, and environmental pollution. Recognizing the urgent need for intervention, Raichur City Corporation undertook a scientific legacy waste remediation project.

As a result of the intervention, 62,252 metric tonnes of legacy waste were scientifically processed and remediated. The project has led to the reclamation of nearly 22 acres of valuable urban land, significantly reducing environmental risks while improving the surrounding landscape. The successful clearance of the dumpsite marks a major milestone in Raichur's efforts to strengthen urban sanitation and environmental management. On the reclaimed land, remediation works have been completed and plantation activities commenced on 5 June, 2026. Raichur City Corporation has adopted an innovative approach to utilize the reclaimed land. Guided by the concept of "Toxic Waste to Ecological Wealth," the city is developing a Miyawaki forest across approximately 5-7 acres of the remediated site in collaboration with Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) and New India Space Limited. A total of 60,000 saplings have been planted. It is expected that within one year, the area will be successfully afforested, resulting in the development of a green cover over the reclaimed land. The plantation includes bamboo and other native species that contribute to soil restoration, carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancement, and improved air quality.

The transformed site was inaugurated on World Environment Day (5 June, 2026) by Hon'ble Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, underscoring the significance of the initiative in advancing environmental sustainability. The Yakalasapura transformation is more than a waste remediation project; it is a testament to the impact of effective urban governance, strategic investments, and sustained commitment to swachhata. By converting a long-standing environmental challenge into a thriving ecological space, Raichur City Corporation has created a replicable model for cities across the country working towards garbage-free and sustainable urban futures.

Gwalior-Chambal region will get a new impetus due to strengthened rail connectivity

Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region, and Dr. Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, inaugurated the converted Kailaras-Sabalgarh-Birpur rail section in Madhya Pradesh via video conferencing. They flagged off the extension of the Gwalior-Kailaras rail line to Birpur. The extension of the Gwalior-Kailaras rail service to Birpur will provide Birpur, Vijaypur, and Sabalgarh with direct rail connectivity to Gwalior, providing more affordable and convenient travel options to rural and tribal areas. This will improve access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities in Gwalior, as well as boost local business and regional economic activity in the region. Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnav said that the inauguration of the 56-kilometer Kailaras-Birpur section, which will benefit from gauge conversion, is a significant achievement for the Gwalior-Chambal region. He said that the project has been made a reality due to the collective efforts of all stakeholders. Shri Vaishnav said that this gauge conversion will benefit the people of more than 100 villages in Bamor, Joda, Kailaras, and Sabalgarh

tehsils of Morena district and Birpur, Shivpur, and Karahal tehsils of Shivpur district. Mr. Vaishnav explained that the rail link will be further extended to Sheopur Kalan and eventually Kota, connecting the region to major educational and industrial centers. He said that this project has been prioritized, and work on the 117-kilometer-long Birlanagar-Birpur section has progressed rapidly in recent years. Details of the commissioning process for various sections in this area are as follows. Mr. Vaishnav stated that work on the next section, from Birpur to Seroni Road (37 km) and from Seroni Road to Sheopur Kalan (33 km), is nearly complete. He expressed hope that the Gwalior-Sheopur Kalan railway line will be ready and available to passengers within the next few months. Mr. Vaishnav stated that this project will connect several important stations and contribute to the development of rail infrastructure in Madhya Pradesh. Highlighting rail development in Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Vaishnav said that the rail budget for Madhya Pradesh has increased from ?632 crore in 2009-14 to ?15,188 crore in 2026-27, a nearly 24-fold increase. He informed that rail projects worth approximately ? 1.55 lakh crore are currently underway in Madhya Pradesh. Eighty stations are being redeveloped in the state, five Vande



Bharat trains are operating, and seven Amrit Bharat trains are being introduced.

Mr. Vaishnav said that several new major projects have been launched in Madhya Pradesh, including the Manmad-Indore new line and several third and fourth line projects across the state. He said that the total cost of approved projects related to Madhya Pradesh during the third term of the current government is approximately ? 64,512 crore.

Mr. Vaishnav stated that over 5.54 lakh people have been recruited in the Railways since 2014. He said that electrification and modernization of the Railways are key priorities for the Government, and electrification has reduced Indian Railways' dependence on diesel and has also reduced

expenditure on imported fuel.

Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia said that this is a historic day for the Gwalior-Chambal region. He described the extension of the railway line from Kailaras to Birpur as a new beginning for the region. He said that the journey is being extended from Gwalior, Bamor, Sumaoli, Jaura and Kailaras to Birpur and will be further extended to Sheopur and eventually Kota. Shri Scindia emphasized that the railway line is not just a means of transportation, but will also facilitate access to education, healthcare, and other modern services. He said that the extension to Birpur will benefit the people of Kailaras, Sabalgarh, Rampahari, Vijaypur, and Birpur. He explained that the

Kailaras section currently provides transportation to approximately 10,000 people daily, but the extension will further expand the railway's reach and benefit a larger population.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav stated that the expansion of the railway network in Madhya Pradesh, including the Indore-Manmad new line, will open new routes and strengthen connectivity between the Gwalior-Chambal region and Malwa. He added that the project will develop a new industrial zone and benefit tourism and other economic activities.

Dr. Mohan Yadav emphasized the necessity of rail connectivity for the development of industries and employment. Highlighting the Gwalior-Chambal

region's potential in sectors such as battery energy storage, footwear, hydrogen, and tourism, he said that improved rail connectivity would boost these emerging sectors. Dr. Mohan Yadav said that the expansion of rail connectivity from Gwalior to Shivpur and Sheopur would add a new dimension to the development of Gwalior and the surrounding region. He added that the ongoing doubling, tripling, and quadrupling of railway lines across the state would further strengthen connectivity.

Speaker of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly Shri Narendra Singh Tomar and Member of Parliament from Morena Shri Shivmangal Singh Tomar along with other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

Agriculture and Rural Development family will work towards realizing the resolution of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's 'Saptdhara of Power' - Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

To implement the 'Seven Dhara of Power' announced by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, a resolution program of the departments under the Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Rural Development was organized today at the C. Subramaniam Auditorium in Pusa on the initiative of Union Minister Shivraj

Singh Chouhan. In this program titled 'New Direction to Agriculture and Rural Development through the Seven Dhara of Power', Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan administered the pledge to the officers, employees, scientists, farmers, lakhpatis, food processors, exporters and representatives of farmer producer organi-

zations to build a developed, prosperous, self-reliant and strong India. Ministers of State Shri Bhagirath Choudhary and Dr. C h a n d r a s h e k h a r P e m m a s a m y and secretaries of all four departments were also present in the program. On this occasion, Union Minister Shri Chouhan stated that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has laid out a clear path for the nation to build

a developed India through the "Seven Streams of Power." Agriculture and food processing are key strengths of this seven stream. Along with increasing agricultural production, the country must also focus on quality, safety, and production in accordance with global standards, so that Indian farmers' products can establish a strong presence in the global market. He stated that today's

program is not merely a formal event, but a collective commitment of the entire family involved in agriculture and rural development. This family includes farmers, scientists, officials, employees, processors, exporters, women from self-help groups, and farmer producer organizations, all as equal partners. Each individual's responsibility is important, and everyone must work together to make

the Prime Minister's vision a success. National interest is paramount. Union Minister Shri Chouhan stated that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has clearly urged the countrymen to prioritize national interest over personal interests and to make duty their identity. He emphasized that government service is not merely a means of livelihood, but a commitment to serve the nation and its people.

Sanjay & SundEEP Kishan's Sigma To Clash With AK 47

Venkatesh and Trivikram Srinivas most awaited film, *Adarsha Kutumbam* – *AK 47*, is slated for October 2, 2026 release, coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti. The team is busy with *Clashing* with *AK47* is SundEEP Kishan and Jason Vijay's *Sigma*. SundEEP Kishan's *Sigma* has caught all the attention as the film marks the directorial debut of Jason Vijay, son of Tamil Nadu CM and actor and TVK chief Vijay Joseph. This is going to have a big release in Tamil and Telugu. Given this, October 2nd will witness the clash of Trivikram Srinivas and new-age filmmaker Jason who is set for his debut. *Sigma*'s shoot was officially wrapped up in December 2025. Following post-production, the action-heist film produced by Lyca Productions is scheduled for a worldwide theatri-



cal release on October 2, 2026. Besides SundEEP, *Sigma* features Faria Abdullah, Sampath Raj and Raju Sundaram in prominent roles. Thaman has scored mu-

sic for *Sigma*. On the other hand, Venkatesh Daggubati and Trivikram's *Adarsha Kutumbam* has an ensemble cast including Srinidhi Shetty, Nara Rohit, Nivetha

Pethuraj, Rao Ramesh, and Vennela Kishore. Thaman is scoring the music and the film is bankrolled by Chinna Babu under Haarika and Hassine Creations banner.

#Mega158: Sankranthi Release Confirmed!

Megastar Chiranjeevi and director Bobby Kolli's *Mega158* is moving ahead at a fast pace. The team has already completed around 40 days of shooting and has also wrapped up the first half along with its editing. The makers are reportedly confident about the output. A big fight sequence has been shot for the interval, which is expected to be one of the major highlights of the film. The movie is being made on a massive scale with Venkat K Narayana producing it under KVN Productions. With Chiranjeevi's mass image and Bobby Kolli's style of presenting action, expectations are already high. The makers are planning a special announcement on August 22, on the occasion of Chiranjeevi's birthday. The film is also being lined up for a Sankranthi release, making the birthday update even more special for Mega fans.



Balayya Eyes Early Return For NBK 111 Despite Injury

Nandamuri Balakrishna is a true fighter and wears a devil-may-care attitude. Balayya, who severely injured his leg while shooting for *NBK 111*, underwent major knee surgery in July end. Even as Balayya is yet to recover from the injury completely, he informed the team *NBK 111* and director Gopichand Malineni that he would join the film's shoot next month and asked the team to make the preparations accordingly. The makers are planning to wrap up Balakrishna's shooting portions in early September as soon as he returns to the shoot and thus kickstart the post-production works and the film's promotions accordingly. Balakrishna is said to be committed to release *NBK 111* for December this year, ahead of the Sankranti 2027 race. Meanwhile, Sankranti has a very huge pipeline. Chiranjeevi's *Mega 158*, Venkatesh and Anil Ravipudi's *Film*, Nagarjuna's *King 100*, Ravi Teja's film with Vishnu and Hashit Goli, Sharwanand-Sreenu Vaitla's films are aiming for Pongal.



Hero's Directorial Debut Turns Into A Box-Office Nightmare

Vishal's directorial debut *Makutam* (Magudam in Tamil) has turned into a major box-office debacle. For Vishal, who took the additional responsibility of directing the film after Ravi Arasu's exit, this is a huge setback both as a debut director and the lead actor. The film was rejected by critics and audiences right from its release. The biggest problem is its outdated storytelling, routine treatment and overuse of familiar cliches. Instead of offering anything fresh, the film follows a formulaic and tiring template that frontally disconnects audience. The poor response was visible from the opening itself. The film opened to negative reviews and very low numbers. The weak word of mouth has made the situation even worse.

With the film struggling to attract audience *Makutam* is



heading towards a box-office disaster. If the reports are to be believed, the film's opening weekend gross is below the Rs 2 crore mark, it means the film would not even be enough to recover the basic theatrical release expenses.

I was a huge fan of Harbhajan, says Ashwin



"Under Dinesh Karthik's captaincy, I played Under-19 cricket for the first time. Back then, I used to bat a bit, and didn't bowl as much. So, whenever I bowled, I used to bowl with Bhajju Pa's bowling action because I was genuinely a fan," former India all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin said. In a chat with JioStar, Ashwin recalled how he was a huge fan of former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

"When Bhajju Pa came onto the scene, every day I used to copy his action while playing gully cricket. And actually, his dismissal of Ricky Ponting, and the dismissal of Matthew Hayden while bowling from over the stumps, during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, I watched all those matches very closely," Ashwin recalled.

"But I never thought I'd become an off-spinner. In my mind, it was always batting. But when he used to bowl, there was something about him, his character, his ability to stand up to everyone and take the fight. So, I really liked that generation. I was genuinely a fan of him, and from there, I never imagined I would come this far," he said.

On how constructive criticism served as fuel for him to

get better: Ashwin said: "After my first Australia tour, Sanjay Manjrekar wrote a long article. When I was returning, I read the whole thing, and after reading it, I got really angry. I actually felt bad. Anger was just a reaction, but I felt really bad. But after that, I slept on the flight and let it go."

"Back then, I didn't talk to Sanjay much. Then, after coming back home, I worked really hard for the next four years. I wasn't a gifted athlete. I worked very hard, and in 2015, he wrote another article saying that I was bowling so well now and that he wanted me to keep performing like that," he said. "Then I asked for his number and messaged him that I had felt bad back then, but his article came to me like a guru and changed my life. Because there was substance in what he said. So, if I ever get criticised, I just think about whether there's something to learn from it. If I feel there's something to learn, I take it," Ashwin said.

On James Anderson's remark after Virat Kohli's double hundred during England's tour of India in 2016, Ashwin said: "Jimmy Anderson is a great bowler and bowled really well throughout his career, with un-

believable skills! They batted first and made 450-odd in the first innings in Mumbai. After that, we were 330 for six at one point before Virat smashed a magnificent double hundred. He completely took control and helped us overhaul their score, and we got to 630-odd."

"We were about to inflict an innings defeat on them, and that very day, Anderson came for the press conference and said, 'This is India, let him come to England.' Man, how hard is it for you to give someone credit? So, I felt it was below the line. We have a lot of respect for him, but he shouldn't have said that," he recalled. For his part, JioStar expert Harbhajan Singh reckoned that sledging has reduced considerably since the advent of the IPL.

"After the arrival of the IPL, the sledging and banter have reduced a bit because earlier, it used to happen a lot. But the IPL brought everyone closer as you share the dressing room with those players, you meet them regularly, play alongside them, and sit and chat together. But I feel that in sport, a little bit of banter, a bit of exchange, should be there, as long as it doesn't cross the line," he said.

Vignesh Vermula and Saranya Devi win Asian Junior Blitz titles for India



Mumbai: Vignesh Vermula won the title in the Open section, while Saranya Devi clinched the Girls title as host nation India made a strong start in the Blitz category on the opening day of the Asian Junior Chess Championship 2026 at the ITC Maratha Sheraton in Mumbai. The championship was formally inaugurated by Jayraj Pathak (IAS), former BMC Commissioner, and the hosts started on a bright note by bagging the top spots in the Open and Girls Blitz Championship, respectively.

The biggest surprise of the tournament came from Vignesh Vermula, who started the event as the 23rd seed but produced a

remarkable performance to emerge as the Asian Junior Open Blitz Champion 2026.

Displaying exceptional speed, tactical alertness and consistency throughout the competition, Vignesh finished tied on points with compatriots Sharnarathi Viresh and Nandish V. S., but secured the title on superior tie-break scores. It was a day for the underdog in the girls' section as well, with Saranya, seeded 9th, impressed with her quick thinking and tactical precision to win the title. The top seed, Shohradova Lala of Turkmenistan, claimed the silver medal, while India's Sannidhi Bhat finished third.

Viresh claimed the silver medal in the Open

section, while Nandish completed an all-India podium by securing the bronze medal.

India's dominance was further underlined by the performances of Akshay Borganokar and Madhavendra Pratap Sharma, who finished fourth and fifth respectively. Among the overseas participants, Akhibay Imangali of Kazakhstan emerged as the highest-ranked foreign player, securing sixth place, while Shagldi Kurban durdyev of Turkmenistan finished ninth. The tournament proved disappointing for the top seed, International Master Mayank Chakraborty of India, who was unable to find his rhythm and eventually finished in 13th place.