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"For India, AI Means All Inclusive" : PM Modi At VivaTech 2026 In Paris



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday projected India as a global technology powerhouse and a key innovation partner for Europe, highlighting the country's rapid digital transformation, thriving startup ecosystem and inclusive approach to

ensuring that technology benefits all sections of society. "Where convention fails, innovation can help," Modi said, reiterating a message he first delivered at VivaTech in 2021 when the world was grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic. He argued that the same principle remains relevant today as nations face new forms of disruption. The Prime Minister's address came at a significant moment in India-Europe relations. He noted that 2026 had been a "special year" following the conclusion of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement earlier this year, describing it as a landmark pact that would deepen trade, investment and technology partnerships. "With the launch of the India-

France Year of Innovation this year, France is serving as an important bridge that is bringing the tech ecosystems of India and Europe closer," PM Modi said. Highlighting India's digital achievements, PM Modi pointed to the country's digital public infrastructure as a model for inclusive development. He said India had built the world's largest digital identity system and one of the largest digital payments ecosystems. Referring to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), he said, "Half the world's real-time digital transactions happen in India today." He also noted that Indian visitors could now use UPI in France, including at iconic locations such as the Eiffel Tower and Paris Airport.

After PM Modi-Trump G7 Meet Amit Shah holds security talks with US envoy

New Delhi: US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday and the two held a discussion on strengthening cooperation in the field of security, particularly in counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics. This comes a day after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump at the G7 summit in Evian-les-Bains, France. In a post on X, Shah said, "Met U.S. Ambassador to India, Mr. Sergio Gor in New Delhi today. Had a detailed discussion on further strengthening cooperation between India and the U.S. in the

area of security, particularly in counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics." He said under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India is firmly committed to advancing the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and ensuring that the people of both nations benefit from the bilateral relationship. In his post on X, Gor termed his meeting with Shah "excellent". "We had a fruitful discussion on enhancing collaboration to combat terrorism, shield our people from narcotics and illicit drugs, secure our borders, and jointly bring criminals to justice in both nations," he said.



In another post, Gor said, "Back in New Delhi after a great trip to the G7 in France. Lots of positive outcomes between the United States and India!" During his meeting with Trump on Wednesday, PM Modi raised the issue of seafarers' safety, urging that their protection be given the highest priority during the implementation of Washington's peace deal with Iran, even as the two leaders focused on taking steps to repair bilateral ties that witnessed severe strain over the past year.

'Sena-Congress Merger Plan': What Six Rebel MPs Told Lok Sabha Speaker

Mumbai: The six rebel parliamentarians from Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena - who are trying to force their exit and merge with the Eknath Shinde faction - met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Wednesday. Sources told the wantaway six told Birla that the Thackeray's faction - the 'original' Shiv Sena before

Shinde's June 2022 revolt - had deviated from its ideology. Specifically, the six claimed senior Thackeray Sena leaders had plans to eventually merge with the Congress, part of the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi bloc and the ex-chief minister's ally. This 'merger', they said, was the reason for their jumping ship. They also

requested Birla to allocate House seats near the seven occupied by MPs from the Eknath Shinde faction. This has been a deja vu time for Thackeray, an unhappy reminder of Shinde's rebellion, the fall of his MVA government, and his forced resignation as the chief minister of Maharashtra. Sources told

the rebels had been unhappy with Thackeray's leadership, pointing to the party boss apparently ignoring calls to visit their constituencies and a lack of poll-time support. They complained also that even Aaditya Thackeray, his son, seemed off limits to them. Over the past 48 hours, though this drama has been

playing out behind closed doors for months, the Thackeray camp has hit back. Strongman Sanjay Raut leading an invective-laden press conference yesterday and repeating those sentiments today. In a sense, the meeting with Birla crystallises the Sena 2.0 revolt.



We Have Put a Check on Drugs Through the EAGLE System: Home Minister Anitha

From Our Staff Reporter Anakapalli, June 18: Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha stated that the government is taking an extremely strict approach toward the eradication of ganja and narcotic drugs. She said that protecting the youth from the menace of substance abuse is one of the government's primary objectives. On Thursday, police officials scientifically destroyed 20,876 kilograms of ganja and 23 kilograms of hash oil at the Ramky Coastal Waste Management Plant located within the Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City limits. Speaking to the media on the occasion, the Home Minister outlined the government's anti-drug initiatives.



stated that ganja smuggling networks are being continuously monitored through CCTV surveillance. She added that investigations into drug-related cases are being carried out on a fast-track basis. She advised young people to stay away from narcotic substances and urged parents to pay close attention to their children's behaviour. De-

claring that the state has launched a war against ganja, the minister praised the police department for its efforts to build a drug-free society through initiatives such as Chaitanya and Sankalpam. She said the police machinery is working machinably to create a society free from the influence of drugs and narcotics.

'Talliki Vandanam' Scheme to Be Extended to Orphaned Children: Minister Lokesh

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, June 18: Minister Nara Lokesh stated that Andhra Pradesh has emerged as the number one state in the country in the utilization of PM SHRI funds. He congratulated the officials who helped the state achieve the top position under the PM SHRI scheme. The minister conducted a review meeting with Education Department officials on Thursday and directed them to take steps for the construction of 844 smart kitchens across the state. He also instructed officials to expedite the distribution of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Vidyarthi Mitra kits and said the goal is to complete distribution before the Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM). Lokesh directed officials

to provide bunk beds for 1.06 lakh girls studying in 430 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs). He ordered immediate measures for the installation of 53,180 bunk beds. The minister also stated that bunk beds should be provided in AP Residential Schools and Colleges. He instructed officials to distribute kits to 2.03 lakh students studying in government junior colleges. He suggested removing unnecessary conditions in granting permissions to private and unaided schools and made it clear that private school fee structures must be displayed on notice boards and in the public domain. The minister directed that the benefits of the 'Talliki Vandanam' scheme should also be extended to or-

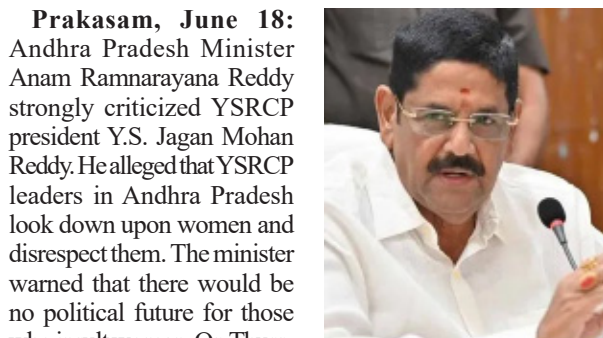
phaned children. He instructed officials to focus on distributing funds through District Collectors for children without guardians. He also suggested exploring a mechanism to directly transfer funds into the bank accounts of orphaned children. Lokesh announced that Telugu Academy books would soon be made available online. He said steps are being taken to facilitate the sale of Telugu Academy books through Amazon and Flipkart. The minister emphasized the need to focus on improving students' learning abilities and attendance. He instructed officials to prepare a special action plan for Kurnool, Anantapur, Markapur, Alluri, and Polavaram regions. He further directed



that measures be taken to ensure student attendance across the state does not fall below 95 percent. Officials were instructed to implement the Mid-Day Meal Scheme with quality and transparency. Lokesh also called for special coaching for students lagging behind in Mathematics, Science, and Telugu. He advised teachers not to ne-

No Political Future for Those Who Insult Women: Minister Anam Warns YSRCP

Prakasam, June 18: Andhra Pradesh Minister Anam Ramnarayana Reddy strongly criticized YSRCP president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. He alleged that YSRCP leaders in Andhra Pradesh look down upon women and disrespect them. The minister warned that there would be no political future for those who insult women. On Thursday, Anam toured Prakasam district and participated in several programmes. Speaking to the media on the occasion, he said it was deeply unfortunate that YSRCP leaders were making derogatory remarks about women. He asserted that no political party has survived after insulting women. Minister Anam stated that the government is simultaneously promoting welfare and development. He said



that the NDA alliance is working towards the establishment of "Rama Rajya." He alleged that during Jagan's tenure, even divinity and religious values were not given due respect. The minister explained that the government is moving forward with the vision of creating a spiritually enriched Andhra Pradesh. He clarified that the coalition government is providing equal importance to Hinduism

as well as all other religions. Minister Anam said that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is giving importance to Hindus, Muslims, and Christians alike. He stated that Rs.50.45 crore has been allocated for the reconstruction of temples across Andhra Pradesh. The minister said the government is prepared to facilitate the construction of 20 to 30 temples in every Assembly constituency. He added that 230 lakh would be provided for temple construction if 15 cents of land is available. Expressing his desire to see a temple in every locality, Anam Ramnarayana Reddy said that the government is committed to the goals of welfare, development, and a spiritually vibrant Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh Lost Five Years for the Mistake of Voting for YSRCP: Minister Gottipati

From Our Staff Reporter Ongole, June 18: State Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar expressed concern that Andhra Pradesh had lost five years because of people voting for the YSRCP. He took a swipe at former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that he spent the five years of power "sleeping at home." The minister also accused the former Chief Minister of attempting to take credit for the development works being carried out by the present government. He remarked that deception and false promises had become synonymous with Jagan Reddy's party. Speaking in Prakasam district on Thursday, Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar said, "The coalition gov-

ernment is moving forward with trust, development, and welfare. Public confidence in the coalition has increased because it is not only fulfilling its promises but also delivering visible development. We are spending Rs.33,000 crore on pensions and Rs.10,000 crore on education. As promised, we have filled 16,000 teacher posts." The minister alleged that during the YSRCP government's tenure, not even a basket of soil was laid for development works. He claimed that no significant road construction was undertaken in any region and accused YSRCP leaders of obstructing the progress of projects such as Veligonda. Gottipati further criticized Jagan



Mohan Reddy, alleging that he misled the public by claiming to have dedicated the Veligonda Project to the nation without completing it. The minister stated that since the coalition government assumed office, Irrigation Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu has been reviewing the Veligonda Project every month. He said that Rs.900 crore has been sanctioned for the rehabilitation and welfare of people living in villages affected by submergence due to the project. Gottipati Ravi Kumar also said that, in the coming days, leaders of the coalition parties would visit households across the state and engage directly with the people.

EDITORIAL

Ensuring food security despite lack of rain

On the one hand, there are fears that agriculture will be affected during the Kharif season due to the effect of El Nino, but on the other hand, the central government is assuring that there will be no El Nino effect on food security as the center currently has huge stocks of food grains. However, prices will be under control only if these stocks are distributed and sold properly without wasting them. A scheme called Open Market Sale Scheme is being implemented for this. Due to the lack of rain due to the effect of El Nino, more than 200 districts in the country are facing a threat to agriculture in this Kharif season. Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are among the 12 states where the effect of El Nino is particularly high. Since the rains do not fall on time, the production of crops that depend heavily on water requirements like rice is under threat. However, it is noteworthy that the Centre currently has a record foodgrain stock of 122 million tonnes as of June 1. This is enough for the consumption of paddy throughout the year. The total stock includes 68.43 million tonnes of paddy and 53.41 million tonnes of wheat. Out of these huge stocks, 56 million tonnes are required annually to provide free foodgrains to over 80 crore beneficiaries, while the current stocks are sufficient to supply free foodgrains to government welfare schemes for almost two years. Therefore, the country is assured of food security. Even if normal rainfall is not recorded due to the effect of El Nino, there is no threat to the availability of basic food. Foodgrains like wheat and rice can be sold to a large number of consumers including state governments through the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS). State governments can purchase food grains directly from FCI for their welfare schemes. The OMSS scheme aims to maintain food security, prevent wastage of stocks and control prices in the market. The food grains production in 2025-26 was 176.04 million tonnes, and the government has set a target of achieving a higher production of 176.16 million tonnes in 2026-27. This includes 123.15 million tonnes of paddy, 8.4 million tonnes of pulses, 28.92 million tonnes of oilseeds and 13.56 million tonnes of small grains. 31.04 million tonnes of maize is being produced. However, agricultural scientists suggest that the OMSS scheme requires huge allocations for the proper utilization of food grains and that the rice quota allocation at subsidized price for ethanol (fuel) production should be reduced. The government had earlier allocated rice from the Food Corporation of India for ethanol production at a huge subsidy of Rs 2320 per quintal. However, in the wake of growing food security concerns and rain-related shortages, former Agriculture Secretary Siraj Hussain suggested that these allocations should be drastically reduced to maintain rice stocks and keep prices under control. Also, the government currently has stocks of up to 4.5 million tonnes of pulses. It is very important to keep their prices under control. Meanwhile, according to the Meteorological Department's estimate, while the normal rainfall is 62.1 mm, only 42.4 mm has been received till June 15. This means that there is a 32 percent deficit in rainfall across the country. The central government is usually preparing advance plans to deal with this. In particular, the cultivation of pulses has started very slowly. As of June 12, the area under pulses has decreased by 43 percent compared to last year. The sowing of seeds of crops like lentil, gram, and gram has dropped drastically. Farmers in key areas of Karnataka and Maharashtra where pulses are produced the most are waiting for rain. Till June 12, lentil seeds have been sown in 0.09 lakh acres. The area under this crop is 57 percent less compared to last year. Gram was sown in 0.27 lakh acres, while last year it was sown in 0.35 lakh acres at the same time. That is, the area under cultivation has decreased by 22 percent. Last year, gram was sown in 1.54 lakh acres, while this year it has been sown in 0.69 lakh acres. That is, the area under cultivation has decreased by 55 percent. There is severe rainfall deficiency in some parts of northeastern Karnataka and Maharashtra. Peas are grown in Latur, Solapur and Telangana in Maharashtra. In Latur, the cultivation of lentil has not yet started. In some parts of Kalaburgi in Karnataka, the cultivation of lentil has started after rains a few weeks ago. However, rains are needed for the seeds to settle. In the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where pulses are mainly grown, the cultivation of crops like lentil, gram, etc. is carried out till mid-July, but the farmers say that it is very late when the crop is available.

Collateral Damage, No Regret
: Indian Sailor Killings And India-US Equation

Three Indian mariners on a merchant ship off the coast of Iran and Oman are killed by the US Navy, but the US did not think it politically appropriate to express regret at this loss of life. Whatever the circumstances that led to this killing, some words of regret from the US would have been normal. After all, the merchant ship was unarmed and was not posing any military threat to the US warship. The US used military force against it, knowing that civilian casualties could result. Even if there was no deliberate intention to inflict casualties, but "collateral damage" occurred, why not express regret? Is there no moral obligation to condone the death of civilians in a military action, particularly against a non-military target? What is worse in this case is that India is a comprehensive global strategic partner of the US. Both countries have cooperated for many years to promote maritime security in the Indian Ocean. The two countries regularly hold elaborate naval exercises. Both are members of the Quad, along with Japan and Australia, which has, amongst its several tasks, maritime security in the Indo-Pacific area.

Maritime domain awareness is another major area of cooperation between the two countries. A US officer is stationed in our Information Fusion Centre- Indian Ocean region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram, which is a maritime security and intelligence sharing hub established by the Indian Navy. It actively collaborates with international partners to monitor shipping traffic and combat threats across the region. India maintains a reciprocal liaison officer in the US Central Command HQs in Florida as part of deepening maritime, counterterrorism, and undersea domain awareness cooperation with the US. The Gulf area falls under the US Central Command and not the US Indo-Pacific

Command. It is, therefore, surprising that with such levels of institutional cooperation, the likelihood of a very large number of Indian crews on commercial vessels being physically endangered in an area which is the biggest source of supply of oil and gas not only to India but to Asia in general was not discussed, and some protocols to protect their lives were not devised.

Iran's step to control the flow of commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, however objectionable or legally questionable it may be, was in response to the US/Israeli war on Iran. Before the attack, the passage through the Strait was free, even when relations between Iran and the US had been hostile, and Iran had been subject to draconian sanctions by the US. The US violated the UN Charter in attacking Iran. The US policy of oil and other sanctions on Iran and imposing them on third countries if they disregard these sanctions has no basis in international law. The US may have political reasons to sanction Iran because of its regional policies or its nuclear programme, but that does not mean that the US is acting in accordance with international law or the UN Charter. The US is exercising its power unilaterally because it has the muscle to do so. Accordingly, the US blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and the prevention of Iran from exporting oil constituted unilateral decisions by the US.

Commercial shipping would have no legal obligation to adhere to the blockade, though prudence would demand a careful assessment of the physical risks of violating it, given the deployment of US naval forces in the area. If individual ships, for whatever reason, felt that they could run the risk of passing through the Strait of Hormuz, they would not be acting illegally -- they would sim-



ply be risk-taking in defying US orders. If the commercial vessels were shutting off their transponders, etc., to breach the blockade, the question arises as to who gave the US the legal authority to act against them. As it happens, the US has not formally declared war against Iran. On top of it, under the US Constitution, the power to declare war lies with Congress and Trump's military action against Iran without Congressional approval is an issue of contention in the US itself. In this background, the US Navy firing on commercial shipping in international waters would be all the more legally questionable. India's own initial reaction to the killing of our three mariners on MT Settebelo was much too circumspect. True, the vessel was not under the Indian flag, and it knowingly circumvented the US blockade, but because three Indian nationals were killed by the US Navy, this necessitated a strong reaction from us. Instead, we seemed to want to give an escape clause to the US by referring to sanctions, OFAC and the US blockade in our initial comments.

We eventually condemned the attack on June 10, but without saying who was respon-

sible. The US Navy was not named. With public anger mounting, the US C'dA was summoned the second time after the US Navy struck MT Jalveer, which also carried Indian crew members (20) but without causing any casualties. This time, we lodged a strong protest against the continuing attacks by US naval forces on commercial vessels carrying Indian sailors in the Gulf of Oman, which, we recalled, had already resulted in the tragic and avoidable loss of three Indian lives. The MEA once again conveyed its deep concern over the use of lethal and deadly force against civilian shipping, adding that "such actions are unacceptable and undermine the safety, security and stability of international maritime commerce in a sensitive region at a difficult time". The US C'dA was requested to convey India's strong concerns to its authorities and to ensure that US forces operating in the region took all necessary measures to prevent the loss of civilian life. The government obviously felt that, with the US ambassador out of the country, summoning the C'dA was not enough and that our concerns had to be communicated at the political level.

External Affairs Minister

Jaishankar spoke to US Secretary of State Rubio and reiterated India's strong protest at the attacks by the US Navy in the Gulf that killed three Indian mariners, stating that such lethal actions against commercial shipping were not justified. Rather surprisingly, Rubio's read-out of the exchange with Jaishankar was unusually harsh and peremptory. He said that he stressed to EAM that all commercial vessels should immediately comply with orders from US forces, which seek to uphold peace and security in the Strait. He underscored that violations of the US blockade and the illicit transport of Iranian oil will not be tolerated. Rubio implicitly not only justified the killing of three Indian mariners under the circumstances but also warned that this could happen again, as the US will not tolerate the violation of its unilaterally imposed blockade. There is not even a pro forma expression of regret at the killing of nationals of a friendly country. A wiser diplomatic approach would have dictated some balancing of a tough message asserting the fundamentals of the US position with the palliative of regret. But Rubio preferred to snub us.

Social Media Monopoly Looked Unbreakable For A Decade. It Doesn't Anymore

Algorithms built the social media order. And for the better part of a decade, nothing has seriously threatened it. Instagram and Facebook together give Meta command of roughly 44% of all global social advertising spend. TikTok has mounted the only credible challenge, growing ad revenues 28% year-on-year. YouTube, vast in reach and chronically undercounted in social rankings, anchors the ecosystem across mobile, TV, and desktop. These four platforms have divided global attention between them with a precision that makes the word competition almost quaint. Threads peaked and retreated. Bluesky is a footnote. That, until last week, was the complete story.

Against this entire backdrop, X has always looked like an anomaly. Influential beyond its scale, volatile beyond its fundamentals, and perpetually described as either the future of public discourse or a cautionary tale about Elon Musk's ego project. Both framings missed the point. The real question about X was never about the platform. It was always about the architecture Musk envisioned around it.

That architecture is now visible. Most observers have not fully absorbed what has happened. X is no longer a social media platform sustained by Musk's personal conviction and positioning. It is the media and distribution layer embedded inside the world's most valuable company.

xAI acquired X in March 2025. SpaceX acquired xAI in February 2026. SpaceX then



went public in June 2026 in the largest IPO in recorded history, raising \$86 billion at a \$1.77 trillion valuation, with markets pushing the combined entity past \$2.5 trillion within days of listing. X, the social network, now sits inside a publicly traded conglomerate spanning orbital infrastructure, satellite internet, AI compute, and enterprise software. This has no precedence in the history of social media. Four things change as a result. The first is acquisition currency. The SpaceX IPO did not give Musk capital. It gave him something more powerful: a stock at stratospheric valuation where a \$60 billion acquisition represents barely 3% dilution. The logic was demonstrated imme-

diately. Within days of listing, SpaceX acquired Cursor, the market-leading AI coding platform built by Anysphere, for \$60 billion in all-stock. A direct competitive strike at Anthropic's Claude Code and OpenAI in the most contested battleground in enterprise AI. Musk paid \$60 billion and barely moved his equity. That is what a near \$3 trillion valuation enables.

The second is market obligation. Investors did not price a \$1.77 trillion IPO on rocket launches and Starlink subscriptions alone. They priced in AI infrastructure dominance, orbital compute, enterprise software at scale, and global platform reach. X is a named component of that thesis. A larger

X means more users, stronger distribution for Grok, a richer training data stream, and a more credible enterprise narrative for the combined entity.

The third is the most underappreciated. Grok is xAI's consumer AI product and its most direct rival to ChatGPT and Gemini. It currently trails Anthropic, OpenAI, and Google in the frontier AI market. But Grok carries a structural data advantage no competitor can replicate or purchase: real-time, unmediated access to the full X conversational corpus. Every breaking news thread, every political argument, every market-moving signal that surfaces first on X flows directly into Grok's training and inference architecture. Scaling X is

not a media strategy. It is a data acquisition strategy. The social network and the AI platform are not separate bets. They are the same. The fourth is what purely financial analysis misses. Musk's outsized political and institutional influence flows directly from X. His ability to shape regulatory decisions, move markets, and command governmental attention in the United States is predicated on platform reach. Replicating that in other major markets matters enormously, not just for X's advertising yield, but for Starlink's market access negotiations. X is the soft power instrument of the entire industrial empire. Its strategic value cannot be reduced to ad revenue multiples.

Foolproof Arrangements in Place for NEET (UG) 2026 Re-Examination: Collector



Vijayawada, June 18: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha has directed officials to ensure foolproof arrangements for the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination scheduled on June 21.

Reviewing preparations at a coordination meeting on Thursday, he stressed strict adherence to National Testing Agency (NTA) guidelines and emphasized the importance of safeguarding students' future. The Collector said the examination will be held at 31 centres across the district from 2:00 PM to 5:15 PM, with candidates allowed entry between 11:00 AM and 1:30 PM. He instructed officials to ensure smooth biometric verification, adequate drinking water, power supply, sanitation, security, medical facilities, and traffic management. Electronic gadgets, including mobile phones and smartwatches, will not be permitted inside examination centres. All departments were asked to work in coordination to ensure the examination is conducted smoothly and without any lapses.

Headline: Rs 610 Crore Development Projects Launched in Mangalagiri Constituency

Guntur, June 18: Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar and Andhra Pradesh IT & Education Minister and Mangalagiri MLA Nara Lokesh on Wednesday launched and dedicated development works worth over ₹610 crore in the Mangalagiri constituency. The leaders inaugurated the ₹604.32-crore Underground Drainage (UGD) project covering Tadepalli, Mangalagiri, and Pedakakani areas, aimed at improving sanitation, public health, and urban cleanliness.

They also launched lake development works near Kaza village with ₹3.30 crore CSR funds, which include a walking track, greenery, and public amenities. In addition, the newly developed Vaikuntha Maha Prasthanam in Old Mangalagiri, completed at a cost of ₹3.25 crore, was dedicated to the public.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Pemmasani said the Centre and State governments are working together to transform Mangalagiri into a model constituency, while Nara Lokesh reaffirmed his commitment to fulfilling development promises and enhancing public infrastructure.



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Centre Sanctions Rs 25 Crore for Skill Development of Rural Youth in Andhra Pradesh

Guntur, June 18: Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications, Dr. Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, announced that the Central Government has sanctioned ₹25 crore as its share under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) to promote skill development and employment opportunities for rural youth in Andhra Pradesh. He said the funds would help expand industry-oriented skill training programmes and create better livelihood opportunities for young people in rural areas. The Minister noted that the allocation would strengthen rural livelihoods, enhance em-

ployment prospects, and contribute to the state's overall development.

Dr. Chandrasekhar expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan for supporting Andhra Pradesh's growth and youth empowerment initiatives.



Tight Arrangements in Place for NEET-UG 2026 in Prakasam District



Ongole, June 18: Prakasam District Collector P. Rajababu has directed officials to make foolproof arrangements for the smooth and transparent conduct of the NEET-UG examination scheduled on June 21. A total of 1,821 candidates will appear for the national-level entrance test at six examination centres across the district. The exam will be held from 2:00 PM to 5:15 PM, while PwD candidates will be given additional time until 6:20 PM. At a coordination meeting held at the Collectorate, the Collector instructed officials to ensure strict security measures, CCTV surveillance, biometric attendance, traffic management, uninterrupted power supply, medical assistance, and special RTC bus services for candidates. He emphasized inter-departmental coordination to ensure the successful conduct of the examination without any disruptions.

Collector Reviews Horticulture Development Plans in Polavaram District

Rampachodavaram, June 18: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar has directed horticulture officials to prepare a comprehensive action plan for the expansion of horticulture crops during the 2026-27 financial year. Reviewing the department's plans on Thursday, he emphasized promoting oil palm, cashew, mango, lemon, banana, flowers, and vegetable cultivation among tribal farmers under various government schemes. The Collector also instructed officials to prepare village-wise and mandal-wise plans for the supply of horticulture plants and discussed the expansion of drip irrigation facilities. He said the government's primary objective is to improve the economic condition of tribal farmers through horticulture-based livelihoods. Officials from the Horticulture Department attended the review meeting.



SSR House-to-House Survey Progressing Smoothly in Krishna District: Collector



Vijayawada, June 18: Krishna District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha said the house-to-house survey under the Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls is progressing smoothly across the district as per the Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines. A total of 2,74,614 enumeration forms have been distributed so far among the district's 17.13 lakh voters, while 10,870 forms have been digitized. The Collector said the exercise is being monitored closely across all seven Assembly constituencies to ensure transparency. BLOs will continue distributing and collecting forms until July 14, visiting each household at least three times. The survey aims to include all eligible voters and remove ineligible, deceased, permanently migrated, and duplicate entries, ensuring a clean and accurate electoral roll. The Collector urged citizens to actively participate and support the voter list revision process.

Door-to-Door Distribution of Voter Enrolment Forms Underway in Polavaram Constituency



Rampachodavaram, June 18: As part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are distributing voter enrolment forms door-to-door across 399 polling stations in the Polavaram Assembly constituency, said Electoral Registration Officer and Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar. The constituency has 2,78,518 voters, and special measures have been taken to ensure every voter receives a form. Voters have been asked to fill out the forms, attach the required documents, and submit them to BLOs within the stipulated time. The initiative aims to improve the accuracy and transparency of the electoral roll.

Two Years of Trust – Development & Welfare Programme Held in Rampachodavaram

Rampachodavaram, June 18: The Andhra Pradesh Government's "Two Years of Trust – Development & Welfare" programme was held on a grand scale at Rampachodavaram on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said the comprehensive development of tribal communities remains the government's top priority, with over ₹4,000 crore worth of infrastructure and welfare projects being implemented in Polavaram district. MLA Miriyala Sirisha Devi stated that the coalition government, under Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, has accelerated development and welfare initiatives, including support for farmers, women, students, and pensioners. ST Commission Chairman S. Bojji Reddy highlighted the government's focus on tribal welfare through housing, drinking water, livelihood, and skill development programmes. The event was attended



by public representatives, officials, and beneficiaries of various welfare schemes, who shared their experiences and views on government initiatives.

Coalition Government Celebrates Two Years of Governance in Ongole

Ongole, June 18: The Andhra Pradesh government's two-year governance celebrations were held grandly in Ongole, with District In-charge Minister stating that the coalition government is committed to building a welfare-oriented, developed, and spiritually enriched Andhra Pradesh. Addressing the event, ministers highlighted the implementation of key welfare schemes, infrastructure development projects, and investments across the state and Prakasam district. Several ministers, MPs, MLAs, senior officials, and public representatives attended the programme, while exhibitions showcasing government achievements and welfare initiatives were also organized.



Kakinada Leads in Development and Welfare: Leaders



Kakinada, June 18: Public representatives at the "Two Years of Trust – Development and Welfare" celebrations held at Suryakala Mandiram in Kakinada said the district has emerged as a frontrunner in implementing development and welfare programmes under the coalition government over the past two years. District Collector M.N.

Harendhira Prasad highlighted key achievements, including ₹364 crore assistance to 2.5 lakh students under the Taliki Vandanam scheme and ₹146 crore LPG subsidy for 17.05 lakh beneficiaries under the Deepam scheme. Several MPs, MLAs, MLCs, and leaders of the TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP attended the event.

Aditya University Conducts Workshop on AI Tools

Gandepalli, June 18: The Department of Information Technology at Aditya University, Surampalem, inaugurated a three-day Faculty Development Program on "AI Tools by KPMG." Resource persons Kuldeep Tiwari, Ayushman Ghosh, and Omkar Jagtap trained faculty members on AI tools, prompt engineering, multi-agent workflows, and their applications in teaching, research, and content creation. Around 200 faculty members participated in the workshop. Senior university officials, including Vice-Chancellor Dr. M.B. Srinivas and other academic leaders, attended the inaugural session.



All Arrangements to Be Completed Ahead of Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan's Visit



Rajamahendravaram, June 18: District Collector Keerthi Chekuri directed officials to complete all arrangements ahead of Deputy Chief Minister's visit to Munikoodali Ghat in Seethanagaram mandal on June 22. The Collector said the ghat will be developed as a model Pushkar ghat in view of the 2027 Godavari Maha

Pushkaralu. Plans include widening the ghat, improving access roads, parking facilities, sanitation, drinking water, lighting, and crowd management infrastructure. Officials were instructed to ensure all proposed development works and facilities are ready for presentation during the Deputy CM's visit.

Special Grievance Redressal for Persons with Disabilities on June 20

Kakinada, June 18: Kakinada District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad announced that a Special Grievance Redressal Programme for persons with disabilities will be held on June 20 at the Prajavani Hall in the Collectorate from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Beneficiaries can

submit petitions related to pensions, assistive devices, education, employment, healthcare, welfare schemes, and other issues directly to officials. The Collector urged persons with disabilities across the district to make use of this opportunity to resolve their grievances.

Naga Chaitanya showers praises on Balan: The Boy



The buzz surrounding Balan: The Boy continues to intensify, and Naga Chaitanya's enthusiastic response may be one of the strongest indicators yet of the film's potential. Following a special viewing, the actor openly praised the thriller and predicted that it would resonate strongly with audiences, particularly in Telugu-speaking regions. In a zoom call, he expressed his admiration for the film, "After watching the film, it still stays with me. Even when I'm talking about it, I'm getting goosebumps. It's full of surprises. Hi Jeethu Madhavan... Firstly, I thought it's a mother and son film, a family film. But, oh God. I saw 10-15 minutes and after that I never expected that the film would steer away like this. The film is full of surprises." Naga Chaitanya added, "Audience will come to the theatre without any idea and will be surprised for sure. Jeethu, both

your films Manjummel Boys and Aavesham are rockstars in Telugu, and this one is going to join this list for sure. You won't expect the story and unexpected things happen due to the screenplay." The writing, visuals, music, everything came together perfectly. Congratulations for this success, Jeethu Madhavan and Chidambaram." His remarks about experiencing goosebumps even after the screening suggest the film leaves a lasting emotional impact. With Priyadarshan calling it

one of the best films of the past two years and Naga Chaitanya praising its surprises and storytelling, Balan: The Boy appears poised to enter theatres with considerable momentum. Annapurna Studios releasing the film tomorrow Grandly.

Too Early Noise On Rajamouli's Next!

SS Rajamouli is a tough taskmaster who takes months or years to complete a project. Not that he wastes time on production, but he prefers perfection and quality. He is currently working on Mahesh Babu's Varanasi, and there is absolutely no time for him to think about anything else in his career now. All he is doing is getting things done and speeding up the work of Varanasi to meet the release day deadline next year. In the meantime, there are reports about his next film, but it is too early to speculate. Rajamouli always deals with his films, one after the other, and never im-



mediately gets rushed into something. He takes ample time before arriving at a con-

clusion on what he has to do next. Interestingly, the massive post-production work of

Varanasi is keeping him occupied day and night, and there is no time to even discuss a collaboration with another actor. Already, there are multiple reports going on social media regarding his next. The reality is that it is impractical to talk much about this at this point in time. We can speculate or discuss what Mahesh Babu can do next, as the actors usually plan their projects well in advance, but Rajamouli has no time for anything other than Varanasi. However, Rajamouli is indeed planning yet another biggie after Varanasi, but it will be a surprise whenever it gets materialized.

Venky-Kalyan Ram film Reminds Fans Of A Malayalam Hit



The launch of Anil Ravipudi's much-awaited multistarrer featuring Venkatesh and Kalyan Ram has generated significant excitement among Telugu cinema fans. The latest buzz suggests that the two stars will be seen as brothers-in-law, with the story revolving around the humorous conflicts and situations that arise between them. Keerthy Suresh and Krithi Shetty are reportedly playing the female leads. Interestingly,

industry circles are drawing comparisons with the Malayalam hit Guruvayoor Ambalanadayil, a 2024 comedy-drama that centered on the chaotic relationship between two soon-to-be brothers-in-law amid a family wedding. The film, starring Prithviraj Sukumaran and Basil Joseph, became a major commercial success thanks to its entertaining mix of comedy, misunderstandings, and family

emotions. However, fans are hoping that Ravipudi doesn't simply recreate the Malayalam film. The director has built his reputation on taking familiar storylines and packaging them with his own brand of commercial entertainment, humor, and mass appeal. The fact that the film is being mounted as a Sankranthi 2027 entertainer further indicates that it will carry a much bigger Telugu flavor. If the basic

setup is indeed inspired by Guruvayoor Ambalanadayil, the challenge will be to offer enough freshness. Fortunately for the makers, Anil Ravipudi has repeatedly proven that he can transform simple premises into crowd-pleasing entertainers. If he adds his trademark comedy and emotional moments, this combination could turn into one of the biggest family entertainers of 2027.

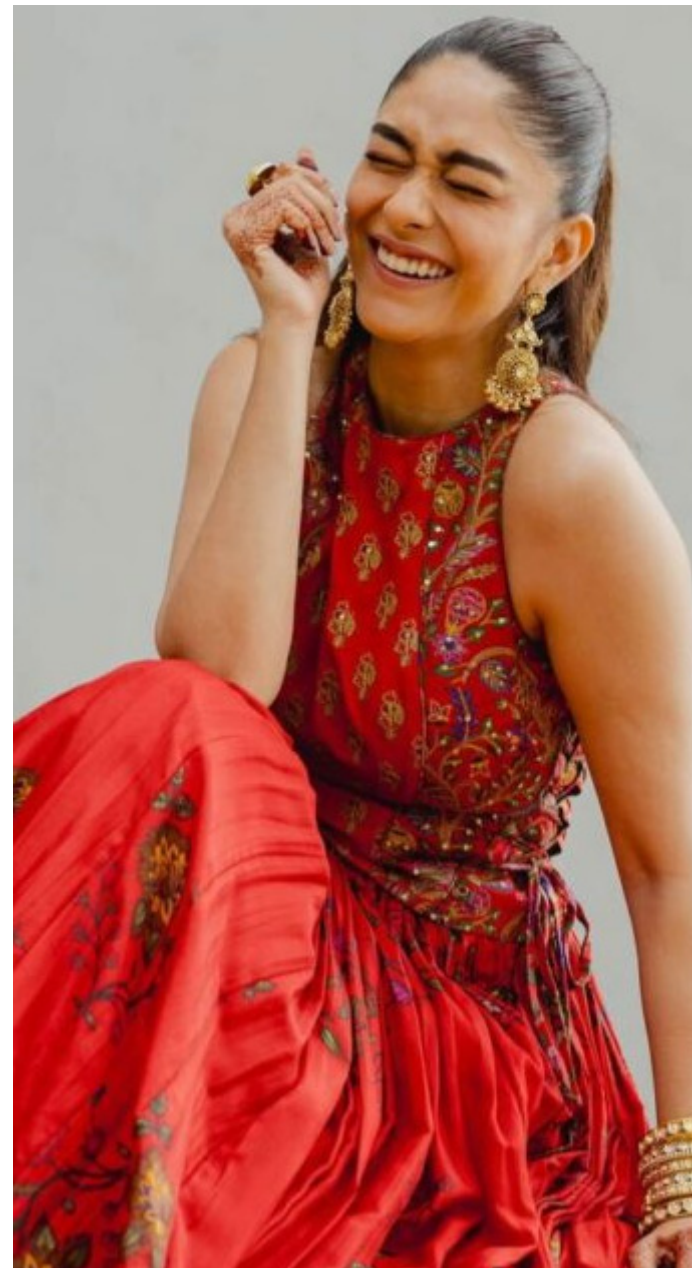
Kriti Dazzles In Bold Striped Skirt



Kriti Sanon made a striking appearance at the Bandhu 2.0 song launch for her upcoming film Cocktail 2. She wore a strapless black bodice with cutout detailing and a statement gold buckle belt, paired with a colorful striped skirt in black, white, green, orange and purple. Her wavy hair and bold earrings completed the look. The actress has been receiving praise for her on-screen chemistry with Shahid Kapoor in the film.

Bandhu 2.0, a recreated version of the popular track Tumhi Ho Bandhu, brought Kriti, Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna together for a lively dance number, composed again by Pritam. Cocktail 2 is directed by Homi Adajania and also stars Rashmika Mandanna in the lead. The film, which explores themes of love and friendship, is scheduled to release in theatres this Friday, June 19. Written by Tarun Jain and Luv Ranjan, the trailer has already created buzz among viewers.

Mrunal Thakur Bewitches Fans with Ethnic Style



Mrunal Thakur is proving she's just as comfortable in ethnic wear as she is in glam western fits. The actress recently treated fans to a set of stunning traditional looks, each one radiating its own distinct charm. In the first photo, she breaks into a hearty laugh in a vibrant red floral anarkali set, paired with chunky gold jhumkas, a stack of bangles and mari-gold garlands for a festive touch. The second look has her resplendent in a deep red sequin-bordered saree with an embellished blouse, exuding quiet elegance against an ornate backdrop. For the third, Mrunal opted for a blush pink kurta set with intricate gold embroidery and a flowing dupatta, finished with statement jhumkas for a regal touch. On the work front, Mrunal's film Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai continues to hold steady at the box office. The David Dhawan directorial, also starring Varun Dhawan and Pooja Hegde, has comfortably outpaced Kangana Ranaut's Bharat Bhagya Vidhaata, which opened to a muted response. The film has crossed over Rs 70 crore worldwide so far.