

JPSC-JSSC aspirants intensify protest on day 19; Medical team visit site for checkup



Ranchi : JPSC-JSSC aspirants intensified their agitation at Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium over exam irregularities in Ranchi, as the protest across Jharkhand entered its 19th day on Wednesday. Following reports of declining health among students, a medical team reached the protest site to conduct checkups. SK Jha from Sadar Hospital stated that all protesters are currently stable, noting that health parameters, including blood pressure and oxygen levels, are normal for most students. He added that basic medical care is being provided to those feeling slightly unwell. "... We

checked the students this morning. All the candidates we examined are currently in a stable condition. There are no fresh complaints, and all parameters, including blood pressure and oxygen levels, are normal..." Those who are feeling slightly unwell are being monitored and given medicines and basic medical care..." said SK Jha. Meanwhile, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren yesterday accused the BJP of disrupting the functioning of the state Assembly and said the government was making every effort to address issues concerning the future of the youth, amid the ongoing protest over alleged irregu-

larities in JPSC-JSSC examinations. The Jharkhand Assembly was adjourned sine die a day ahead of its scheduled conclusion, with the Opposition pressing for a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations conducted by the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC). Speaking after the House was adjourned, Soren said, "We made every effort to ensure the House functioned. You witnessed currency notes being tossed and displayed in the House. Notes that are the very basis of their (BJP) presence here and the foundation of their politics.

‘Future and present strength of nation’

PM Modi shares Sanskrit verse praising youth



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday shared a Sanskrit Subhashitam highlighting the importance of winning people's hearts through one's vision, thoughts, words and actions. Sharing the verse on social media, the Prime Minister also highlighted the contribution of India's youth, describing them as not only the future of the country but also its greatest strength in the present. He said young people have earned a distinct identity across the world through their sensitivity, spirit of service and capabilities.

The Sanskrit verse shared by the Prime Minister reads: **“Chakshusha manasa vacha karmana chachaturvidham, Prasadayati yo lokam tam loko’nuprasidati.”**

The verse conveys that a person who wins people's hearts through their vision, thoughts, words and actions earns their trust, respect and goodwill in return. The Prime Minister's message underlined the significance of conduct and positive engagement in building strong bonds with people.

PM Modi releases Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography, recalls former President's guidance and warmth



New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday released former President Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography, 'Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles', and recalled his long association with Kovind. PM Modi praised his guidance and affection during his tenure as President. He said Kovind's autobiography would become a "cherished

legacy" for Indian democracy and society, urging people to read the book to understand his life journey and contributions to the nation. At the launch, PM Modi said, "Today, we have the opportunity to witness the launch of Ramnath Kovind ji's autobiography. I have known Kovind ji for a very long time and have had the opportunity to know him closely. His guid-

ance during his tenure as President, along with his special affection and warmth towards me, has been a truly valuable asset for me." "... Based on my understanding of his life and my knowledge of his capabilities, I can say with full confidence that Ramnath Kovind ji's autobiography will become a cherished legacy for Indian democracy and society.

AP Introduces New Reforms in Tax Administration; GST Officials Praise AI Technology

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 12: Officials of the GST Council Secretariat have praised the tax department reforms undertaken by the Andhra Pradesh government. They described Andhra Pradesh's AI-based tax administration as a model for the entire country and said it should be implemented nationwide. Senior officials of the GST Council Secretariat met Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday. The officials examined AI-based return scrutiny, audits and inspections at the Andhra Pradesh Commercial Taxes Department (APCTD). They also reviewed AI-based legal case management and investigation procedures.



The officials studied AI dashboards and real-time GSDP analysis using GST data. They visited the GST Suvidha Kendra and enquired about the services being provided to taxpayers. The officials extensively praised the performance of the Andhra Pradesh Commercial Taxes Department in adopting AI-based technological innovations. They

appreciated Andhra Pradesh's AI-based tax administration as a model that could be adopted by the Central Government and other states. They said AI would help speed up tax-related processes. They also stated that AI would make it easier to conduct business. According to the officials, AI-based tax administration would not only help increase the state's revenue but also contribute to higher national revenue. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu requested the Central Government to provide support for GSTN data and system integration to expand AI-based tax administration. He also urged the Centre to cooperate in sharing relevant data with the state.

We Will Ensure Justice for Masha Allah Scam Victims: Minister Anitha

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 12: Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha assured the victims of the Masha Allah scam that the government would take steps to ensure justice for them. A large number of Masha Allah scam victims attended the TDP grievance programme held at the party's central office in Mangalagiri on Wednesday. Around 200 victims submitted complaints during the grievance session. Speaking on the occasion, Home Minister Anitha said the government had decided to immediately investigate the scam. She stated that a Special Investigation

Team (SIT) had been constituted under the leadership of DCP Crimes Tirumaleswar Reddy. She said the government would take steps to ensure that the victims receive justice at the earliest. The Home Minister also spoke to the Vijayawada Police Commissioner regarding the victims' problems. She urged the public to remain alert against financial frauds and warned people not to believe fraudulent promises of high returns on small investments. She assured the public that strict action would be taken against gangs targeting the hard-earned money of poor

people through financial frauds. **Home Minister Helps Father and Seven-Year-Old Daughter** Home Minister Anitha extended assistance to a father and his seven-year-old daughter who came to the TDP grievance programme from Naidupeta. She directed the district Collector to provide employment to the father and medical assistance to his daughter. Home Minister Anitha said that resolving people's problems was the primary objective of the TDP grievance programme. The family said they had approached the TDP office with the hope that they would receive justice.

If You Have the Courage, Jagan Should Come to the Assembly: Home Minister Anitha

Amaravati, August 12: Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha strongly criticized YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and challenged him to come to the Assembly if he had the courage. She accused Jagan of making allegations against the government while touring the streets. She questioned whether Jagan had any bigger platform than the Assembly to discuss public issues. She urged him to set aside politics and attend the Assembly to debate public problems. Home Minister Anitha spoke to the media at the Telugu Desam Party office in Mangalagiri on Wednesday. She questioned why Jagan was not even giving the 11 elected YSRCP MLAs an opportunity to speak in the Assembly. She

accused him of violating the rights of the MLAs. She also said the allegations being made by YSRCP leaders regarding irregularities in the DSC recruitment process were completely baseless. **Jagan Has No Right to Talk About DSC Irregularities** Anitha said Jagan, who could not conduct even a single DSC recruitment examination during his five-year tenure, had no right to speak about irregularities in DSC. She said the coalition government signed the first file related to DSC within 150 days of coming to power. She stated that the government had the distinction of providing teacher jobs to around 16,000 candidates. The Home Minister accused YSRCP leaders of making allegations that insult the hard work of

DSC candidates. She appealed to them not to hurt the sentiments of candidates who had worked hard for five years to secure government jobs. She said officials had responded with evidence to every allegation raised regarding the DSC recruitment. **YSRCP Leaders Making Baseless Allegations** Anitha pointed out that YSRCP leaders had also faced setbacks in courts over their allegations. She alleged that YSRCP leaders were making baseless accusations only to create unrest among the public. She said the fear among YSRCP leaders was evident behind their demand for the resignation of Minister Nara Lokesh. She alleged that Jagan's objective was to politically defame Lokesh. She said the government was providing transparent



administration under Nara Lokesh's leadership. She stated that appointment letters had been handed over to 16,000 candidates, who were respectfully inducted into government service. She also mentioned that

constituency-wise meetings had been conducted with candidates selected through DSC. Home Minister Anitha advised YSRCP leaders not to play politics with candidates who had secured government jobs.

Photo Recognition Introduced to Prevent Fake Signatures by Some MLAs: Ayyanna Patrudu

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 12: Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu clarified that photo recognition was introduced to prevent some MLAs from putting fake signatures. He said the issue of disqualifying MLAs who have not attended the Assembly for six months is being discussed at various levels. He stated that the matter has also been brought to the attention of the Central Government and that they are waiting for guidance on the issue. Ayyanna Patrudu spoke to the me-

dia in Amaravati on Wednesday. He made it clear that being the Opposition is a status that can be granted only when there is sufficient numerical strength. He questioned whether flats in the new MLA quarters should be allotted to members who do not attend the Assembly. He said a decision would be taken after discussions with senior government leaders. **Why Should Those Who Do Not Attend Assembly Be MLAs?** Ayyanna Patrudu said a decision on the allocation of MLA quarters would be taken after discussions with the General Adminis-

tration Department (GAD). He questioned why those who do not attend the Assembly should continue as MLAs. Referring to the MLA quarters in Hyderabad, he said senior members used to prefer lower floors because there was only one lift. In Amaravati, however, there are more lifts, better ventilation and lower pollution levels, and therefore senior MLAs are preferring higher floors, he said. **Programmes Planned to Involve People in Independence Day Celebrations** Ayyanna Patrudu said programmes have been planned to ensure public participation in the Independence Day celebrations. Arrangements are being made for people to view the decorations at the Assembly on August 14 and 15. He said school students as well as members of the public would be allowed to visit the Assembly premises. A police band and cultural programmes will also be organised on the Assembly premises on both days, Ayyanna Patrudu said.



EDITORIAL

Mecca Agreement is a wake-up call for India

The changing security equations in West Asia have now reached a point where they are also affecting South Asia. The latest example is the Mecca Collective Defense Agreement signed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey. The main point of this agreement is that an armed attack on any of the three countries will be considered an attack on all three. The three countries will also work together in areas such as joint military exercises, training of defense forces, exchange of intelligence information, and technical cooperation. Although only three countries have signed this agreement so far, Egypt is also eager to join it. Military manpower, nuclear weapons capability, and war experience are Pakistan's strengths. Turkey has NATO experience, a developing defense industry, and modern weapons such as drones. Saudi Arabia has economic strength and abundant energy resources. The real purpose of this alliance seems to be to link the strengths of these three countries with each other. Needless to say, the extraordinary circumstances prevailing in West Asia were the reason for the emergence of this agreement. Rising military tensions between Iran and Israel, Iranian missile attacks on Gulf countries, the Gaza war, and differences between Israel and Turkey... all these are the reasons for the emergence of the latest alliance. Ironically, the three countries in this alliance have different security interests. India is the main challenge for Pakistan. Iran and Gulf security are the main issues for Saudi Arabia. Syria, the Kurdish issues, differences with Israel, and relations with Europe are key for Turkey. Achieving a consensus on a single military response amidst such diverse interests is not easy. That is why the future of the Mecca Agreement depends not on its declarations, but on its implementation. It will develop into a true security alliance only if systems such as a joint command, a coordinated surveillance system, joint military exercises, air defense cooperation, and linkages between defense industries are established. Saudi Arabia's dream is to conclude a NATO-style defense agreement. Although Muslim countries have called in the past for unity against terrorism, it has not materialized.

The recent attacks and tensions in the Gulf countries have led to a new agreement. However, it is ridiculous for some to compare this alliance, which has not yet opened its eyes, to NATO and describe it as an 'Islamic alliance'. NATO has a common command structure, military infrastructure, decades of organizational experience, and a coordinated defense plan. The Mecca Agreement has none of these. Should the remaining countries necessarily engage in direct war if one member country is attacked? Or will they be limited to political, intelligence, and weapons assistance? Key issues still need to be clarified. There is no doubt that this alliance will expand further in the future. The names of other countries like Egypt and Qatar are already being mentioned. However, increasing the number of members alone is not the criterion for the success of the alliance. As for India, although the Mecca Agreement is not directly against us, New Delhi should not ignore its effects. The reason is... the presence of Pakistan in this alliance. In the future, Pakistan is likely to receive more advanced defense technology, training, and intelligence support from Turkey. Saudi Arabia may also strengthen its existing defense ties with Pakistan. As for Turkey, it is known that it not only provided political and diplomatic support to Pakistan in Operation Sindoor, but also provided drones. Therefore, it is better for India to adopt a strategic stance with West Asian countries in advance, anticipating the consequences of another Operation Sindoor-like situation.

The Great IIT Dream Is Cracking: Why Even Top Degree-Holders Are Unable To Find Jobs

A few weeks ago, a 22-year-old growth marketer who dropped out of his engineering programme went viral on X for claiming he now earns nearly Rs. 4.86 lakh a month, arguing that an IIT degree is "just a tag".

The post reignited a debate that has been simmering in Indian classrooms and comment sections alike: is a degree - even one from the country's most coveted institutions - still a launchpad, or has it become a legacy people cling to out of habit? While Gen Z's aspirations around work are shifting faster than the job market can keep up with, most discussions tend to look at the employment side of the equation - that is, what happens after the degree.

The more uncomfortable question sits one step earlier: what is actually happening with higher education that seems to be setting so many young people up for disappointment.

Meet Lavanya Jain, who dropped out from his <https://t.co/Ws1j7hoGgc> final year at IIIT Noida. He says it was the best decision of his life. This 22-year-old now earns ₹4.8 lakhs per month, which is more than his college placement. ??

India's higher education structure has grown at a tremendous pace, which would have seemed quite unimaginable a generation ago. According to the AISHE 2021-22 survey of the Ministry of Education, the total enrolment touched approximately 4.33 crore students in 2021-22, up from a mere 3.42 crore in 2014-15.

A jump of about 91 lakh within a decade. Additionally, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) - which measures the share of the college-going age group in higher education - grew to 28.4% from 23.7%. Even

female enrollment has grown at a fast pace. The Gender Parity Index has stayed above 1 for a consecutive five years. This simply means that a higher proportion of young women are enrolling in college than young men, which is remarkable.

On paper, this looks like unambiguous progress. But a closer look will reveal that the composition of that growth is where the trouble begins. Within undergraduate enrolment, Arts remains the single largest stream at 34.2%, followed by Science (14.8%) and Commerce (13.3%), with Engineering and Technology trailing at 11.8%. That is not inherently a problem - a country doesn't need everyone in STEM. But it becomes one when you place it next to what the labour market is actually rewarding. The India Skills Report of 2026 has found that overall graduate employability stands at 55%, but it encompasses a steep gradient by stream. While Computer Science and IT engineering graduates have an employability of 78-80%, for core engineering, it falls to 70%, polytechnic diploma holders are placed at 32.9%, and ITI graduates at under 46%. A more conservative assessment by Mercer-Mettl India Graduate Skill Index of 2025, which tested over a million students across 2,700 campuses, claims that overall employability stands at merely 42.6%, with soft-skill readiness, such as critical thinking and communication, lagging further behind technical readiness.

Even within engineering, the stream everyone sees as "safe", the expansion has outrun demand in a very specific way. While there was an increased intake in Computer Science and AI programmes, this



pulled students away from core branches. The AICTE closed 58 engineering and technical colleges in the 2025-26 academic year alone and discontinued more than 950 technical courses. This was largely because these institutions could not attract enough students or retain qualified faculty. This follows an earlier wave in which the Education Ministry told Parliament that 5.62 lakh engineering seats had been cut or surrendered since 2019.

India isn't short of graduates. It is short of graduates whose training matches what a fast-changing, increasingly AI-augmented job market wants - and the system is only now, reactively, beginning to correct a decade of supply built on assumption rather than demand.

When Even the Top of the Pyramid Cracks

If the expansion paradox explains what's happening to the "mass" of Indian higher education, the IIT placement data explains why even the top of the pyramid is starting to feel unstable - and why a post from a college dropout could strike

such a nerve.

For years, an IIT seat was treated as a guarantee: clear the JEE, and the job (and the salary) would take care of itself. That assumption is fraying. RTI data compiled from multiple IITs paints a consistent picture over the last two placement seasons. At IIT Delhi, only 61% of students had secured jobs as of the 2024-25 cycle, leaving nearly 738 students without offers at that point. At IIT Gandhinagar, 59% of registered students were yet to be placed in the same season, even as average salaries for those who did get placed kept climbing. At IIT Tirupati, the figure was 46% unplaced, and IIT Indore reported 44% still unplaced with salary packages down compared to the year before.

Across several IITs - Dharwad, ISM Dhanbad, Hyderabad, BHU, Ropar, Indore, Kharagpur - roughly 30-40% of registered students had not found jobs by the final weeks of the placement season.

This is not a cyclical blip. The reasons are structural and layered: a global tech hiring slow-

down after pandemic-era overhiring, the entry of generative AI tools into exactly the kind of routine coding and analytical work that used to absorb fresh graduates, and a shift in employer preference away from broad, generalist engineering graduates towards very specific, applied skill sets in AI, data, and automation.

An IIT tag still opens doors that other degrees don't, and the aggregate salary numbers coming out of these campuses remain envious by any national standard. But the floor has become unpredictable in a way it never used to be, which is precisely what has made "Is the IIT degree still worth it?" a legitimate question. This is the throughline connecting the two data sets. If a Tier-1 institution with the country's most rigorous entrance filter cannot guarantee outcomes anymore, the problem isn't really about which college a student attends - it's about a certification-heavy system, at every tier, that hasn't rebuilt its relationship with a labour market that has fundamentally changed.

Why Akhilesh Yadav Is Suddenly Betting On Brahmins In Uttar Pradesh

In a counter to the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Dalit card, Akhilesh Yadav is now banking on Brahmins. Setting his eyes on Uttar Pradesh's Brahmins, who account for around 9-11% of the state's population, Akhilesh now claims that the 'P' in his PDA (Picchda, Dalit, Adivasi) bloc stands for 'Pandit'. On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Samajwadi Party's (SP) founding member Janeshwar Mishra, he organised a conference in Lucknow, where most of the Brahmin leaders of the Samajwadi Party were invited. During the meeting, Akhilesh said that Brahmins were being oppressed in Uttar Pradesh, and that his party respects every caste.

Punching Above Their Weight

Brahmins, however, are a small group in Uttar Pradesh in terms of population. In not a single one of the state's 403 assembly constituencies does the Brahmin population cross 50%. In fact, across 403 seats, only seven have a Brahmin population share of over 30%. And yet, no serious political strategist in Lucknow plans an election without a Brahmin outreach plan. That is because the community's power in the state has never come from numbers - it comes from spread, social standing, and, increasingly, from consolidation. Data compiled by VoteVibe shows just how thinly the Brahmin population is spread across Uttar Pradesh: 212 seats have a population of under 10%, and another 149 fall between 10-20%. Only 42 seats have over 20% Brahmin population. On paper, this should make Brahmins marginal players in a state where caste arithmetic dominates every ticket-distribution meeting. But narrow the lens, and

you find that a staggering 97 out of 403 seats have Brahmin populations that exceed 15%. In India's caste-conscious electoral culture, this is critical enough to swing a close contest. In effect, thus, the community can influence the results of almost one-fourth of the state's assembly.

SP's Stronghold To BJP's Fortress

In 2012, these 97 'Brahmin-influenced' seats were effectively Samajwadi Party territory. The party won 55 of them - more than half. The BSP took 19, the BJP managed a modest 12, and the Congress held on to seven. Five years later, that map was unrecognisable. In 2017, the BJP swept 87 of the same 97 seats - a sevenfold jump. The SP was reduced to three, the BSP to five, and the Congress was shut out entirely. The 2022 election saw a slight correction: the BJP's tally eased to 72, while the SP recovered to 21, but the broader picture held. The BJP remains the dominant force in seats where Brahmins carry weight, by a margin no other party has come close to challenging since 2017.

A Different Story

Seat counts reflect outcomes, but the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies' post-poll surveys reveal the underlying shift in loyalty. In 1996, the peak of the Ram Mandir-era Hindutva consolidation, as many as 71% of Brahmin voters backed the BJP. That support then went into steady decline through the Mandal-and-after years: 49% in 2002, 39% in 2007, bottoming out at 38% in 2012, as Mayawati's BSP courted upper-caste voters through its "social engineering" strategy and pulled a large share of the Brahmin vote away from the BJP. Then came the reversal. By 2017,

Brahmin support for the BJP had rocketed back to 83%. In 2022, it climbed further still, to 89% - arguably the most consolidated any single caste group's vote has been behind any single party in the state in recent memory.

Uneven Influence

Geographically, Brahmin electoral influence is not evenly spread across Uttar Pradesh. Of the 97 influenced seats, 42 sit in Central Uttar Pradesh and 41 in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, together accounting for 85% of all Brahmin-influenced constituencies. Western Uttar Pradesh, by contrast, has just 10 such seats, and Bundelkhand only four. Any Brahmin-focused campaign strategy, in other words, is really a Central-and-Eastern-UP strategy - the belt running through Lucknow, Ayodhya, Prayagraj, Varanasi, and the districts around them. Curiously, the number of Brahmin MLAs elected to the Uttar Pradesh assembly hasn't mirrored these dramatic vote swings. It has moved in a comparatively narrow band: 41 in 2002, 56 in 2007 (the BSP's social-engineering high point, when Mayawati fielded and won with a large number of upper-caste candidates), dipping to 47 in both 2012 and 2017, before rising again to 52 in 2022. Even when the community's votes swung wildly between parties, its representation on the floor of the assembly stayed comparatively stable - a reminder that parties across the spectrum have continued fielding Brahmin candidates, regardless of which way the community's vote was flowing that year - again reinforcing their influence. Also, the percentage of Brahmin MLAs in the assembly is 13, which is high for their actual population.



Why SP Is Now Wooing Brahmins

Put together, the data tells a clear story: the BJP's dominance among Uttar Pradesh's Brahmins isn't a one-election blip. It's almost a decade-long consolidation that has been held through two assembly elections in a row. For the opposition - a Samajwadi Party that recovered some ground in Brahmin-influenced seats in 2022, or a Congress that has been shut out entirely since 2012 - winning back even a fraction of this vote in Central and Eastern Uttar Pradesh could matter far more than the community's raw population numbers would suggest. The Samajwadi Party is banking on tensions between Brahmins and Rajputs, the 'Thakurvad' allegations under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and discontent

due to University Grants Commission (UGC) norms and the NEET paper leak, to tap the crucial Brahmin vote. While the Brahmin community wants power, the Samajwadi Party cannot name anybody other than Akhilesh Yadav as its chief ministerial face. In the BJP government, the community is represented by a Deputy Chief Minister post. So, switching would make little sense. Even in terms of ticket distribution, in 2022, the SP gave tickets to 39 Brahmins, the BJP to 68, and the BSP to 70. So, for a Brahmin candidate, the probability of winning on a BJP ticket is higher. In a state where elections are frequently decided by single-digit margins in dozens of seats, a caste group with strong influence in 97 seats and 89% consolidation behind one party is not a footnote. It is a foundation.

PIB Vartalap Media Outreach Workshop Held at Bapatla

BAPATLA, August 12, 2026: The Press Information Bureau (PIB), Vijayawada Regional Office, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, organized a one-day “PIB Vartalap” Media Outreach Workshop for district and rural journalists at Bapatla on Wednesday. Bapatla District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar, IAS, inaugurated the workshop and emphasized the crucial role of journalism in a democratic society. Describing the media as the “Fourth Pillar of Democracy,” he said journalists have a responsibility to keep people informed with credible and authentic information. The Collector noted that the media landscape has undergone a major transformation with the rapid growth of digital platforms and social media. He stressed the importance of media ethics, responsible journalism and verification of information, and urged journalists to use digital platforms constructively while taking care to prevent the spread of misinformation. Addressing the journalists, PIB Vijayawada Director Shri G. Suresh Kumar, IIS, said the Press Information Bureau serves as an important link between the Government and the media by providing authentic and timely information on government policies, programmes and initiatives. He encouraged journalists to focus more on developmental journalism and success stories instead of sensational reporting. He also highlighted the need for fact-checking and responsible dissemination of information, particularly in the rapidly changing social media environment. Senior officials from various Central and State Government departments participated in the workshop. Dr. G.



Anita, Professor, Department of Journalism, Acharya Nagarjuna University (ANU), spoke on effective communication and ethical values in journalism. Shri Samba Siva Rao, Senior Correspondent, made a presentation on journalistic opportunities for promoting the tourism sector in Bapatla. Shri K. Siva Krishna, Lead District Manager, also participated in the programme.

The workshop concluded with an interactive session in which journalists exchanged views and discussed various Central Government welfare schemes, developmental programmes and initiatives. The programme provided an opportunity for media representatives to gain greater insight into government schemes and strengthen responsible and development-oriented journalism.

Collector, DIG Inspect Parade Ground Arrangements

Guntur, Pen Power, August 12: DIG Raja Kumari and



Guntur District Collector C.M. Sai Kanth Varma inspected the arrangements at the Capital Parade Grounds

for the upcoming Independence Day celebrations on Wednesday. They reviewed preparations for the full-dress rehearsal on August 13, seating arrangements for the Chief Minister, ministers, judicial and All India Services officials, as well as entry routes for guests and the public and parking facilities. The officials also discussed the traffic plan in view of the expected vehicle rush and the preparation of tableaux showcasing the achievements of various government departments. SP Vakul Jindal, GMC Commissioner K. Mayur Ashok, CRDA Additional Commissioner Kollabathula Karthik, Joint Collector Ashutosh Srivastava, Protocol Director Mohan Rao and RDO K. Srinivasa Rao participated in the inspection.

R&R Package to Polavaram Project Displaced Families as per Government Norms

Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, August 12: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said the Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) package would be imple-



mented for families affected by the Polavaram Project as per government norms. He directed officials to ensure that rehabilitation benefits and compensation reach displaced families without delay. The Collector conducted a review meeting and video conference with officials at the ITDA office in Rampachodavaram on Wednesday to assess the progress of rehabilitation, compensation and R&R

works. He reviewed compensation to displaced families, infrastructure in R&R colonies, land-to-land arrangements and pending works. Officials were instructed to complete all pending works within the stipulated deadlines. The Collector directed officials to submit details of land identified for land-to-land compensation for tribal families in Gangavaram, Addateegala and Rajavommangi mandals. He also sought reports on horticultural crops and plants in villages affected by the project. Engineering officials were asked to coordinate the construction of R&R colonies at Lakkonda, Kothapalli, Yellavaram, Jaddangi and Vetamamidi. The colonies will have schools, Anganwadi centres, health sub-centres, drinking water facilities and internal roads. Officials were also directed to prepare DPRs for every work, submit regular reports on R&R funds and make arrangements for construction materials such as sand and metal. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, R&R Project Administrator Abhishek, Chintur ITDA Project Officer Shubham Nokwal, RDO K. Swathi and officials from various departments attended the meeting.

Salaries of MLAs Skipping Assembly Sessions Should Be Recovered: Speaker

Tuni, Pen Power, August 12: Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu said the Centre should bring legislation in Parliament to recover the salaries of MLAs who remain absent from Assembly sessions.

Speaking in Tuni on Wednesday, he said people elect MLAs with the expectation that their problems will be raised and resolved in the Assembly. He urged former Chief Minister and YSRCP leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to attend Assembly sessions and participate in discussions on public issues. The Speaker said cameras would automatically switch on when MLAs occupy their designated seats in the Assembly, and their attendance would be recorded based on the system. He said the Business Advisory Committee meeting on August 17 would decide the duration of the upcoming Assembly session.

Ayyanna Patrudu also criticised the opposition over alleged misinformation regarding



DSC recruitment, saying candidates who secured government jobs through DSC should not be ridiculed. He stressed that people are the ultimate decision-makers in a democracy and assured that public issues would be given priority during Assembly sessions.

Complete Electoral Roll Revision Transparently: Observer



Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, August 12: Polavaram District Electoral Roll Observer V. Prasanna Venkatesh directed officials to complete the 2026 Special Summary Revision (SSR) and digitisation of electoral rolls in a transparent and error-free manner. He stressed that no eligible voter should be left out of the list and no ineligible person should continue as a voter. At a review meeting held at the ITDA conference hall in Rampachodavaram on Wednesday, the observer reviewed the progress of the SSR with District Election Officer and Collector K. Dinesh Kumar, AEROs, BLOs and other election officials. Prasanna Venkatesh instructed BLOs to conduct 100 per cent field verification and clearly explain the purpose of the revision to voters during door-to-door surveys. Pending applications and complaints should be resolved as per election rules within the prescribed schedule. Special attention should be given to duplicate and ineligible voters in agency and border areas such as Chintur and Kukunoor, while ensuring proper enrolment of eligible PVTG voters.

Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said the Polavaram constituency had around 2.38 lakh voters before the SSR commenced. Despite difficult terrain, tribal areas and remote villages, the revision process was being carried out effectively with the support of BLOs. He said 38,947 names had been deleted, including 21,731 cases of deceased voters. Death certificates or panchnama declarations were digitised and uploaded through the Election Commission application after field verification. A total of 16,182 notices were issued, including automatic notices to 8,514 un-mapped voters. More than 7,600 suspected cases were also identified and verified. The Electoral Roll Observer expressed satisfaction over the door-to-door survey, digitisation and verification process and directed officials to complete the remaining work within the stipulated time. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, ITDA Project Officer Shubham Nokwal, DRO P. Ambedkar, RDO K. Swathi, AEROs, BLOs, supervisors and other officials attended the meeting.

MoU Signed with IIT Madras for Uppada Coastal Protection



Amaravati/Kakinada, Pen Power, August 12: A key step has been taken to protect the Uppada coast in Kakinada district, which has been severely affected by coastal erosion. An MoU was signed in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to entrust IIT Madras with the design, Detailed Project Report (DPR) and technical supervision of the proposed coastal protection wall. The project will be taken up at an estimated cost of ₹323 crore with approval under the Central Government's disaster management funds. The State Disaster Manage-

ment Authority will act as the nodal agency, while the AP Maritime Board will execute the works. IIT Madras experts will study coastal erosion, sea currents and wave impact before finalising the scientific design. The works are expected to begin in November, providing protection to coastal villages and fishing communities in the Uppada region. Kakinada Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad and officials from IIT Madras, SDMA and AP Maritime Board participated in the programme.

Regular Medication Key to Controlling HIV

Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 12: NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha said regular medication, timely medical testing and proper awareness are crucial for effectively controlling HIV. The Collector participated in an HIV/AIDS awareness rally organised by the District Medical and Health Department from the Old Government Hospital in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Students, medical staff and NGO representatives took part in the rally carrying placards and raising slogans on HIV prevention, treatment and government health services. Dr. Lakshmisha said people should not believe misconceptions about HIV and stressed the need to spread scientific information. Those diagnosed with HIV need not panic and can manage the condition by following doctors' advice and taking medicines regularly. AP AIDS Control So-

ciety Project Director B. Smarana Raj urged society to support people living with HIV and avoid discrimination



against them. He called for coordinated efforts by government departments, students, NGOs and the public to build a healthier society. DM&HO Dr. Shravan Babu, Additional DM&HO Bhanu Naik, IEC JD Manjula, nursing students, health department staff and NGO representatives participated.

Everyone Should Resolve to Contribute to Nation's Development

Nellore, Pen Power, August 12: State Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy called upon citizens to participate in the “Ane Nenu” (I Pledge) campaign launched by the state government to involve every citizen in the development of the country. Launching the programme at the Nellore Collectorate on Wednesday, the Minister urged people to share their vision for their personal, regional, state and national development by 2047, marking 100 years of India's Independence. He appealed to citizens to share their pledges on social media under the theme “Ane Nenu” and participate voluntarily by Independence Day. He also urged them to use the hashtags #ApGovernmentOfficial, #IndependenceDay2026, #MyIndiaMyVision, #PartnersInNationBuilding and #ApOfficialNews.



Speed Up Implementation of MoUs: Collector



Bapatla, Pen Power, August 12: Bapatla District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar V. directed officials to speed up the implementation of MoUs signed for tourism and industrial projects in the district. At a review meeting on Wednesday, officials informed that 12 projects with

investments of ₹852.16 crore are proposed, which are expected to generate direct and indirect employment for around 1,435 people. Several tourism projects, resorts and beachfront development works have been proposed around Suryalanka and Chirala. The Collector instructed officials to expedite land allotments, infrastructure works and necessary departmental approvals, and to regularly monitor the progress of each project. He also reviewed the progress of MSME parks being developed at Nayinipalle in Vetapalem mandal and Govada in Amruthalur mandal, directing officials to complete the works within the stipulated time. Progress of development works at Suryalanka Beach under Swadesh Darshan 2.0 was also reviewed, with instructions to complete pending works quickly while maintaining quality standards. DRO Lavanna, District Tourism Officer K. Binhar, District Industries Officer Ramakrishna, APTDC EE Srinivasa Rao and others attended the meeting.

Resurvey Must Be Conducted in Presence of Farmers



Kakinada, Pen Power, August 12: Joint Collector Apoorva Bharat, Kurmanath stressed transparency and accurate verification of land records and boundaries. He said Resurvey 2.0 aims to prevent earlier errors

and provide a permanent solution to land-related disputes. Officials should verify field measurements and documents in the presence of farmers and provide regular updates until accurate, government-certified pattadar passbooks are issued. Kurmanath said resurvey is currently being carried out across the state in multiple phases using around 2,800 teams equipped with advanced rovers. In Phase-5, surveys are being conducted in 1,343 villages in coordination with farmers. He said the department is working to make Andhra Pradesh a land-dispute-free state by March 2027, in line with government policy.

Dengue and Malaria Cases Decline Significantly in 2026

Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 12: NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha directed all departments to work in coordination to prevent seasonal diseases during the monsoon. The Collector said dengue and malaria cases have declined significantly compared to 2025. While 23 dengue and 41 malaria cases were reported in 2025, only 2 dengue and 3 malaria cases have been recorded so far in 2026.

He directed officials to strengthen disease surveillance, conduct timely blood tests for fever cases, eliminate stagnant water and mosquito breeding sites, and intensify larval control and fogging operations. Special surveillance was ordered in high-risk and low-lying areas.

The Collector also instructed private hospitals and laboratories to promptly report dengue cases to the district disease surveillance system and called for coordinated preventive measures from July to October.



The review was attended by DRO M. Lakshminarasimham, DMHO Sravan Kumar, District Malaria Officer D. Raju Naik and other officials.

Mother and Child Express Vehicles Launched in Guntur



Guntur, Pen Power, August 12: District In-charge Minister and State Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh launched 18 Mother and Child Express vehicles at the Kanuri Gymkhana Women and Child Health Centre on the GGH premises in Guntur on Wednesday. Speaking to the media, the Minister said the service aims to

encourage institutional deliveries and reduce maternal and infant mortality. The vehicles will transport pregnant women to hospitals and safely take mothers and newborns home after delivery. He said the fully air-conditioned vehicles are equipped with safety features and the service is available free of cost by calling the 102 call centre. Hospital staff will also accompany the beneficiaries during the journey. The Minister said the service, launched across the state on Tuesday, was introduced in Guntur district

with 18 vehicles as part of the government's Healthy Andhra Pradesh initiative. Local MLA Naseer Ahmed, GGH Superintendent Dr. Durgaprasad, DMHO Dr. Vijayalakshmi, DCHS Dr. Rangarao, RDO Srinivasa Rao and medical staff participated in the programme.

Digital Finance Awareness Programme for Nano Entrepreneurs

Gangavaram, Pen Power, August 12: A digital finance awareness programme for nano entrepreneurs was organised at the Ashram Girls' High School in Gangavaram under the Foundation for MSME Cluster, with the support of Mahindra Finance. Project Coordinator Raj Kumar and Master Trainer Akula Venkat explained various govern-

ment schemes, the importance of savings, digital financial services and the use of DigiLocker. Participants were also provided with awareness materials. District Coordinator E. Satish and Anganwadi Supervisors Kumari and Seetha participated in the programme. Around 55 nano entrepreneurs attended the session.

Organ Donation Can Give Others a New Lease of Life: Minister Satyakumar Yadav

Guntur, Pen Power, August 12: State Health Minister Satyakumar Yadav said organ donation is a noble act that can give a new lease of life to others. He called for greater public awareness on organ donation across the state. Speaking at an International Organ Donors Day programme organised by the Indian Red Cross Society, Andhra Pradesh State Branch, at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on Wednesday, the Minister said 93 people donated organs in 2025, benefiting 363 recipients. He praised families of brain-dead patients who came forward for organ donation and urged more families to take the humanitarian step. He said around 51,000 people across the state have registered online for organ transplants. Red Cross State Branch Chairman Y.D. Rama Rao said the organisation would conduct extensive awareness programmes on blood, eye and organ donation. He also welcomed the MoU with LV Prasad Eye Institute to establish Red Cross cornea centres across all districts. Red Cross Vice-Chairman P.



Ramachandra Raju, Ghazal singer Ghazal Srinivas, Dr. Sunita Chaurasia, Dr. Srihari Rao, DM&HO Dr. Vijayalakshmi and others attended.

Security Arrangements Reviewed for Godavari Pushkarams 2027



Rajamahendravaram, Pen Power, August 12: East Godavari SP D. Narasimha Kishore and District Collector Keerthi Chekuri inspected potential locations for setting

up Pushkar Nagar in Kotamuru and Katheru areas on Wednesday as part of preparations for the upcoming Godavari Pushkarams 2027. The officials reviewed arrangements for shuttle bus stops and routes to ensure smooth movement of devotees. They also inspected suitable accommodation facilities for police personnel deployed for Pushkaram security duties.

Traffic management, crowd control, parking, emergency services and other basic infrastructure requirements were discussed. Officials stressed the need for advance planning to ensure the Pushkarams are conducted safely and smoothly without inconvenience to devotees.

Additional SP (Admin) Patil Devaraj Manish, Joint Collector Y. Megha Swaroop, police officials and representatives of various departments participated in the inspection.

PIB 'Vartalap' Media Workshop Held in Bapatla

Bapatla, Pen Power, August 12: Bapatla District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar said the media is the fourth pillar of democracy and journalists play a crucial role in providing reliable information to the public. He inaugurated a 'Vartalap' media awareness workshop organised by the PIB Vijayawada Regional Office under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, for district and rural journalists in Bapatla. The workshop covered Central Government welfare and development schemes, contemporary journalism, success stories, responsible reporting and ways to counter misinformation on social media. Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar urged journalists to uphold ethical values and news credibility while providing useful and reliable information to the public.

PIB Vijayawada Director G. Suresh Kumar, IIS, said PIB acts as an important link between the government and media by providing authentic information on government policies and development programmes.



ANU Journalism Professor Dr. G. Anitha, Senior Correspondent Sambasiva Rao, Lead District Manager K. Shivakrishna and others participated in the workshop.

NTR District Aims to Become Ganja-Free



Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 12: NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha and Vijayawada Police Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhara Babu said coordinated efforts are underway to make NTR District free from ganja and other drugs. At a meeting on NCORD and Nasha Mukta Bharat, officials urged the public to report information related to ganja cultivation, transportation, sale or consumption through Eagle 1972. Informants' identities will be kept confidential, and rewards will be given for verified information. The Collector called for joint efforts by families, educational institutions, government departments and

NGOs to keep youth away from drugs. The Police Commissioner said drug-related incidents should not be linked to ganja based merely on suspicion and must be confirmed through scientific tests.

Officials said modern technology, including drones, is being used to identify ganja cultivation. Strict action will be taken under the NDPS Act against confirmed cases of drug use and trafficking.

The Collector and Police Commissioner also unveiled the "Say No to Drugs" wall poster and administered the "Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat" pledge.

Collector Joins Students in Cycle Rally in Bapatla

Bapatla, Pen Power, August 12: Bapatla District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar V. participated in a cycle rally along with students on Wednesday as part of the 80th Independence Day celebrations.

The rally began at the Municipal High School and concluded near the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue at Pedanandipadu flyover. Municipal Commissioner M. Hasini flagged off the rally.

At the Ambedkar statue, the Collector administered the Independence Day pledge to the students and called upon them to contribute to the goals of Viksit Bharat-2047 and Swarna Andhra Pradesh, while safeguarding the nation's sovereignty and unity.

He said cycle rallies were being organised across all mandals to promote patriotism and national unity. Similar rallies will be held in Repalle on August 13 and Chirala on



August 14. RDO Harikumar, DEO Srinivas Singh, Tahsildar Saleema, other officials and students participated in the rally.

Licences Of 3 Domino's Pizza Outlets In Mumbai Suspended Over Hygiene Issues



Mumbai: The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Wednesday said it had suspended the business licences of four Domino's Pizza outlets in the state, three of them in Mumbai. The action against the outlets operated by Jubilant Foodworks came after inspections that found out multiple food safety and hygiene violations. According to a press note by the FDA, the three Mumbai outlets whose licences got suspended include - Vile Parle (West), Borivali (West), and R-City Mall, Ghatkopar (West). Additionally, the

business licence of the Domino's Malkapur outlet in Satara's Karad was also suspended. The action was taken during a special inspection drive conducted between July 10 and August 11, 2026, the FDA said. The food safety authority also suspended the licence of a Sapphire Foods India Ltd. outlet in Karad, Satara, taking the total number of major chain restaurant outlets facing licence suspension in the action to five. The company operates popular fast food chains including KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell in India.

Food Safety Lapses

Flagged

At the Domino's outlets, the inspections found deficiencies relating to food storage, hygiene, pest control, temperature monitoring, cleaning and sanitation, food testing and maintenance of food-safety records. At the Vile Parle outlet, inspectors flagged issues including deficiencies in drinking water and food storage arrangements, pest-control and hygiene facilities, temperature monitoring of frozen food, sanitation of food-preparation areas and hand-washing facilities. The R-City Mall outlet was found lacking an

appropriate Cleaning and Sanitation Schedule, effective pest-control records, proper FIFO/FEFO practices, food-grade certification for materials coming into contact with food, hygiene compliance and food/water testing records. The Malkapur outlet in Satara was also found to have several non-compliances relating to infrastructure, equipment, cleanliness and pest control. At the Sapphire Foods outlet in Karad, the FDA flagged issues concerning the preparation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian pizzas. These included the absence of a separate oven and proper segregation arrangements, inadequate segregation of pans used for baking pizzas, and deficiencies in packaging information such as packing and expiry dates on sauces and toppings. The action against the Domino's outlets comes as part of a wider food-safety enforcement drive across Maharashtra. The regulator has stated that routine inspections will continue and that strict action will be taken against food businesses violating food safety and hygiene norms.

Air India Downplayed Phuket Plane Failures With 'Turbulence'? What Documents Say

New Delhi:A maintenance report printed out in the cockpit of Air India aircraft from Phuket to Delhi, which experienced a sudden loss of altitude of 300 feet during its cruise phase injuring several passengers, indicates that the aircraft had suffered a series of hydraulic faults. The report was published at 11:14 am on August 4, after the flight landed in Delhi.

Two hours later, at 1:14 pm, Air India issued a statement where they attributed the crisis onboard the aircraft to a "brief in-flight turbulence-related event during cruise, resulting in a momentary change in altitude." The airline said there have been no serious injuries and a small number of passengers and crew members with minor injuries requiring medical assessment have been taken to a medical facility at the airport for precautionary examination. Five hours later, at 6:55 pm, the airline updated their earlier statement, taking out the word turbulence but still downplaying the significance of what had happened. "Earlier today, Air India flight AI2379 operating from Phuket to Delhi experienced a sudden loss of altitude during cruise. After the momentary event, the aircraft continued normally and landed safely in Delhi at 11:07 hrs IST. The Airbus A-320 NEO aircraft was carrying 137 passengers and eight crew members. Of these, 13 passengers and four crew members sustained injuries and were taken to hospital for medi-



cal evaluation," the updated statement read, without mentioning any hydraulic failures. An A-320 NEO aircraft normally runs on three separate hydraulic systems, so that if one fails, the other two can still power the flight controls, landing gear, and brakes. On this Air India flight, warnings appeared showing low pressure in all three systems at 9:32 am, along with low fluid levels in two of the reservoirs. Hydraulics are what let pilots physically move the control surfaces of the plane - losing multiple systems together is far more serious than losing just one, since the backup systems are also being affected. Adding to the troubles, the autopilot also switched off at around the same time, at 9:32, and a fault was flagged in the left and right elevator controls (which help the plane pitch up/down), the report indicates. Shortly after, two emergency exit door warnings were triggered - one at 9:33 am (right front door)

and another at 9:35 am (right rear door). Then at 10:16 am, Engine 1's anti-ice system showed a fault linked to a valve pressure issue, and the autopilot disconnected again at 10:52 am. It's worth stressing that a "warning" on this kind of report doesn't necessarily mean total system failure. Modern aircraft are built with layers of redundancy and pilots are trained for exactly these scenarios, but a cluster of hydraulic and flight-control warnings happening together is exactly the kind of event that maintenance and safety teams would want to investigate closely. At no point does the Air India statement mention that the aircraft encountered serious technical issues. The other part of this report deals with the pilot in command who, sources say, had tested positive for psychoactive substances during the post-flight screening in Delhi. Another test was conducted some time later, and sources said on Tuesday

that this was also positive. Specifically, the test reportedly confirmed that the pilot had smoked marijuana, commonly known as weed. The pilot in command of the plane, Sudeep Vashistha, was on medication for "sleep difficulty", as per the airline's internal flight safety report accessed by NDTV. "I disclose, for completeness, that I had separately been experiencing sleep difficulty over a preceding period, related to personal circumstances, for which I had been prescribed medication by my family doctor," the pilot said in a flight safety statement. The sources said Vashistha was not in his seat with the co-pilot in command of the plane when it plummeted 300 feet. The pilot floated up, as did things in the cockpit, and this is when people who were not strapped in at the back of the plane suffered serious injuries. Both pilots have been derostered pending an inquiry.

Air India Pilot With Marijuana In His Bloodstream Was Also On Sleep Medication

New Delhi:The pilot in command of an Air India flight from Phuket to Delhi that encountered a sudden loss of altitude last week was on medication for "sleep difficulty", as per the airline's internal flight safety report accessed.

The pilot, Sudeep Vashistha, who has tested positive for marijuana in a drug test twice, said that the "sleep did not come easily" to him during the layover. The aircraft, AI-2379, carrying 137 passengers and eight crew members, had suddenly lost about 300 feet of altitude while it was flying from Phuket to Delhi on August 4. At least 20 passengers and four crew members suffered injuries. The Airbus A320neo aircraft later landed safely in Delhi. "I disclose, for completeness, that I had sepa-

rately been experiencing sleep difficulty over a preceding period, related to personal circumstances, for which I had been prescribed medication by my family doctor," Vashistha said in a flight safety statement. "During the layover, I personally attempted rest; sleep did not come easily, and I judged that light activity such as walking would be constructive for sleep quality," he said. He also said the roster duties, which he said were legally within the prescribed rest limits, were scheduled in a way that "compressed available daytime rest, which is often below the minimum required for adequate recovery". For the first flight, the pilot had to report for duty at 12:10 AM, which meant preparations needed to begin well before

10 PM - and getting good sleep before that was difficult. After landing, finishing post-flight duties and getting to the hotel in Phuket usually took 1.5 to 2 hours, which cut further into the time available to rest during the day - often leaving less than what's needed to properly recover, he said. For the second flight, Vashistha said he had to wake up at 3 AM IST.

Air India Pilot's Behaviour Under Probe

The Incident Report accessed by NDTV indicates that he was not in his seat, with the co-pilot in command of the aircraft when the flight plummeted 300 feet over Odisha. Sources indicate that he then went to the cabin to check up on injuries and reportedly told passengers not to film him

or the aircraft. Upon landing in Delhi, sources said the pilot was unsteady on his feet and had to be helped to sit down. Vashistha was also physically helped by an investigating officer as he submitted his urine sample.

The Party In Phuket

During the flight from Delhi to Phuket, the pilot had gone to the washroom and, as per protocol, had called a cabin attendant to sit in his seat, sources said. The attendant, sources said, was not good in handling the operation and was reprimanded by the pilot. Later, he wanted to make up and took all crew members to a party in Phuket before the return flight. Both pilots have been off-rostered pending an inquiry.

Brother Forced To Watch As Girl, 9, Raped By Neighbour In Madhya Pradesh

Bhind:A nine-year-old girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped in front of her minor brother by a man known to her family, in the Bhind district of Madhya Pradesh, while the siblings were returning home from school. The incident occurred on Tuesday in the Mehgaon police station area, with the accused being arrested. The survivor, a student of Class 4, was returning home with her elder brother, a Class 6 student. During this time, the accused, 21, stopped them and offered a ride home on his motorcycle. But instead of dropping them to their residence, he took them to a desolate location where he raped the girl in front of her brother, who was forced to watch the crime. When the boy, 11, protested and tried to intervene, the accused assaulted him too. He then left the siblings and fled the scene. By this time, the survivor was unconscious. Seeing this, the boy quickly ran home to alert the family. Relatives found the girl lying at the spot, and immedi-



ately took her to the hospital. Health officials confirmed the assault medically, and the family reported the incident to the Mehgaon police. Bhind Superintendent of Police Suraj Verma said multiple teams were formed and the accused, a resident of the same village who was well known to the family. He was arrested in less than 24 hours. Police are examining his criminal antecedents. The Bhind case followed an incident six days earlier in

Narsinghpur's Gotegaon area. A Class 3 girl returning from school was taken on a motorcycle by 28-year-old neighbour Annu Yadav on the pretext of dropping her home. He took her into the jungle, raped her and strangled her to death. Narsinghpur Superintendent of Police Rishikesh Meena formed multiple teams the accused was arrested within 24 hours of the recovery of the girl's body. The two incidents come amid a broader rise in crimes against children

across the country. According to NCRB data, 1.87 lakh cases of crimes against children were registered in 2024, nearly 6 per cent more than in 2023. POCSO Act offences alone accounted for 69,191 cases about 37 per cent of the total involving 70,132 child victims. More than 44,000 of these cases were registered under Sections 4 and 6 of the Act, which deal with penetrative and aggravated penetrative sexual assault, among the law's gravest offences.

Mussoorie Highway Sees 10-km Jam After Landslide, Tourists Stuck For Hours



Dehradun:A landslide has blocked the Mussoorie-Dehradun road, trapping tourists and commuters in a long traffic jam that stretched for hours. The debris came down during hill-cutting work for a road-widening project, amid continuing rain across Uttarakhand. The blockage, at a sharp bend known as 'Pani Wala Bend', brought vehicles to a standstill in both directions. Queues stretched nearly 10 kilometres, with even two-wheelers unable to squeeze through, and officials stopping movement altogether at several points as a safety measure.

Tourists Left Waiting For Hours

The blockage caused widespread inconvenience, particularly for out-of-state tourists unfamiliar with the route, while local commuters trying to reach work,

hospitals or the railway station were also badly affected. Officials from the district administration, along with concerned departments, have been deployed to clear the debris and get traffic flowing again. Ayush Chhabra, a tourist from Etawah in Uttar Pradesh, said, "The situation here is very bad. I have been stuck here in this massive traffic jam for more than an hour." He urged other travellers to stay away from the area for now. "I would particularly like to advise fellow tourists not to visit right now because the conditions are completely unpredictable with ongoing landslides, so everyone should prioritise their safety."

Ambulances Among Vehicles Caught In The Jam

Another commuter, who had travelled from Patel Nagar in Dehradun, said he

had been waiting for around an hour and a half. "What can anyone say about this road blockage? It is the same for everyone," he told NDTV. He praised the labourers working to clear the road under diffi-

cult conditions. "These poor workers have been working since night; they told me they haven't even had tea or water. I offered to pay for tea, but they said it couldn't be delivered here," he said. He pointed out that the disruption was affecting emergency services as well as ordinary travellers. "People are facing a lot of trouble trying to get to work, Mussoorie, the railway station, or the hospital, and even vehicles behind us like ambulances are struggling with no space to move," he added. Teams have been working to remove the debris and reopen the route, though the scale of the blockage means restoring normal traffic flow is likely to take time.

19-Year-Old Kidnapped, Gang-Raped By 6 In Maharashtra

Mumbai: A 19-year-old woman, who was standing at a roadside with a friend of hers, was kidnapped and gang-raped by six men in Maharashtra, police said. The incident, which took place, was reported from Talasari taluka of Palghar district. The police at the spot where the woman was raped While the woman was standing on the highway, six men, on two motorcycles, took her to a disused bungalow and sexually assaulted her, police said. A case has been registered against the six accused at the Talasari police station. One of them has been arrested, while three others have been detained. The police are actively searching for those still on the run.

Bottles Of Urine, 7,000 Tonnes Trash: Haridwar's Struggle After Kanwar Yatra

Haridwar:The annual Kanwar Yatra is over, and the Land of Gods now has mountains of trash to deal with. Nearly five crore pilgrims visited Haridwar, in 'Devbhoomi' Uttarakhand, to collect water from the Ganga this Sawan. As they made their way back after Shivratri, they left behind heaps of trash. Visuals showed discarded clothing, plastic items, and Kanwar structures scattered on the ghats. The ghat wasn't any less dirty at Har ki Pauri, the most iconic of the over hundred ghats in Haridwar. In the changing rooms, discarded water bottles filled

with urine were left behind. Videos showed cleaners without gloves or masks removing those bottles with just a shovel. The incident has sparked outrage among the locals. Describing it as "unfortunate", one of them pointed out the irony that devotees walk long stretches to reach the Ganga and then leave it in such a state. At least 7,000 tonnes of garbage has been moved to the dumping grounds in Haridwar, according to authorities, resulting in what resembles mountains of garbage. "Following Shivratri yesterday, all our teams worked through the

night to clean the ghats, as well as all parking areas and roads," said Municipal Commissioner Nandan Kumar. Not just Haridwar and Rishikesh, thousands of devotees trekked to higher reaches to collect water from the Ganga. During Sawan, an estimated 57,000 pilgrims visited Gangotri, which marks the source of the river considered sacred, in Uttarkashi. On their way back, the pilgrims left behind tons of trash, including discarded clothes, plastics, and other items, which poses a major threat to the ecologically sensitive area, the flora, and

fauna. This despite Gangotri being a designated plastic-free zone. The area is part of the highly sensitive Himalayan ecosystem, and the plastic accumulation indicates a blatant violation of the environmental rules. It not only poses a major threat to the forest resources, but many feel it also threatens the sanctity of the pilgrimage site. The forest depart ent undertook a special cleanliness drive in Gangotri after the conclusion of the Yatra. During the cleanup drive, as many as 57 sacks of waste were collected for disposal.

National Level Study on Students Suicides

New Delhi, August, 10 (PIB): National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) collects data on suicides from police recorded suicide cases. Comprehensive analysis of the data related to the accidental deaths and suicides in the country is published in the yearly Accidental Death & Suicide in India (ADSI) reports by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB). Year wise , State wise, Gender and Age group wise details of student suicides are available in the ADSI reports which are accessible at <https://ncrb.gov.in/accidental-deaths-suicides-in-india-year-wise.html> . As per these Reports, there are various causes of suicides like professional/career problems, sense of isolation, abuse, violence, family problems, mental disorders, addiction to alcohol, financial loss, chronic pain etc.

To address the issue of suicide, the Government is taking multi-pronged measures and provides psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well-being to avoid incidences of suicide. An initiative of Ministry of Education, MANODARPAN, covers a wide range of activities to provide psychological support to students, teachers and families for mental and emotional well being such as National toll-free helpline to provide guidance to callers through trained counsellor; live interactive sessions ‘Sahyog’ and Webinars ‘Paricharcha’ that are organized regularly to create awareness about the importance of mental health among all stakeholders, including students in all States/UTs etc. These sessions are telecast on PM e-Vidya channels and are also available on ‘NCERT Official’ YouTube Channel. The Central Board of Sec-

ondary Education (CBSE) has mandated the appointment of Counsellor & Wellness Teacher in every Secondary and Senior Secondary school affiliated with it in its Affiliation bye laws. In Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), there is a provision for engagement of two counsellors (one male and one female) in each Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) on contractual basis and total 830 counsellors have been engaged on contractual basis in JNVs across the country as of February, 2026. Further, directions have been issued to all KVs to appoint counsellors in all schools on contract basis for the time being.

UGC has issued advisory to HEIs in January, 2023 circulating the National Suicide Prevention Strategy framed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. UGC also issued Guidelines on 13.04.2023, which provide for promoting physical fitness and sports activities for students; creating safeguards against academic pressure, peer pressure, behavioral issues, stress, career concerns, depression and other issues on the mental health of students; to teach positive thinking & emotions in the student community; and to promote a positive and supportive network for students. UGC has launched an extensive anti-ragging outreach initiative across all of its official social media channels, including X (Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and YouTube. These campaigns feature short videos, banners, and other creatives disseminated in 21 languages to ensure wide accessibility and engagement. Further, UGC has taken action as per the UGC Regulations on curbing the menace of ragging

in higher educational institutions, 2009. Anti-ragging measures viz. establishment of 24x7 National anti-ragging helpline, anti-ragging workshops and seminars, mandatory inclusion of severe consequences of ragging in prospectus of institutions, mandatory online undertaking by students and parents every academic year, display of anti-ragging posters at prominent places in the institutions etc. have been taken to ensure compliance of the regulation. The Ministry of Education in July, 2023 has circulated a framework guideline on emotional and mental well-being of students in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) with request to take proactive measures to incorporate the same in the institutional functioning and instil a feeling of confidence in the student community. The guidelines emphasised counselling services, early distress identification, suicide prevention SOPs, student support networks, strengthened grievance redressal mechanisms, and periodic institutional review to ensure sustained effectiveness. Guidelines for Regulation of Coaching Centres (January 2024) has been issued by the Ministry of Education, which mandates student-support and protection measures such as counselling facilities, transparent fee structures, prohibition of batch segregation, and safeguards against practices that intensify academic pressure extending mental-wellbeing protections beyond campuses. An Integrated approach for Promoting Positive Mental Health, Resilience, and Wellbeing has been conceptualized under the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme. Under this integrated approach, two fort-

nightly sessions are being held with faculty of higher education institutions to empower them to address student mental health concerns for early intervention. Annual National Wellbeing Conclaves were organised at IIT Hyderabad in November, 2024 and at IIT Bombay in November, 2025. A Regional Workshop on Mental Health was organized on 12-13 July 2026 at IIT Madras, which brought together institutional leaders, faculty, students, and mental health professionals to share best practices and strengthen campus wellbeing ecosystems. At the institutional level, several HEIs are operationalising the framework through proactive, multi-layered models. For instance, IIT Kharagpur has implemented a comprehensive SETU (Support, Empathy, Transformation & Upliftment) framework, moving from reactive care to preventive, round-the-clock support. Adhering to the Ministry’s guidelines, IIT Madras, IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati, IIT Gandhinagar and IIT Roorkee have conducted workshops on Mental Wellness & Stress Management. All IITs, IIMs, NITs and IIITs have put in place dedicated mental health or counselling centres within their campuses, staffed with full-time or visiting professional counsellors, clinical psychologists, and in some cases, psychiatrists. A large number of institutes often host mental health training sessions to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and educate students about mental health issues. These sessions cover topics such as stress management, coping strategies, and recognizing the signs of mental health issues. Some Institutes offer on/off-campus counselling services, where stu-

dents can meet with mental health professionals.

To address the issue of mental health, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is implementing National Mental Health Programme in the country, which include outpatient services, assessment, counselling/ psycho-social interventions, continuing care and support to persons with severe mental disorders, drugs, outreach services, ambulance services etc at Community Health Centre (CHC) and Primary Health Centre (PHC) levels. In addition, the Government is also taking steps to strengthen mental healthcare services at primary healthcare level. The Government has upgraded more than 1.81 lakh Sub Health Centres (SHCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Mental health services have been added in the packages of services under Comprehensive Primary Health Care provided at these Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. A National Tele Mental Health Programme has been launched in 2022, to improve access to quality mental health counselling and care services in the country. As on 06.08.2026, 36 States/ UTs have set up 53 Tele Mental Health Assistance and Networking Across States (MANAS) Cells. More than 4325000 calls have been handled on the helpline number. The Government has also launched Tele MANAS Mobile Application, which is a comprehensive mobile platform that has been developed to provide support for mental health issues ranging from wellbeing to mental disorders. In addition, a video consultation facility has been introduced under Tele-MANAS, as an upgrade to the existing audio calling service.

APEDA Facilitates First-Ever Export of Mustard Honey by Dergang FPO from Tripura to Dubai

1 MT export opens new international market opportunities for Dergang FPO and local beekeepers

New Delhi, August, 10 (PIB): APEDA facilitated the first-ever export of 1 Metric Tonne of Mustard Honey by Dergang Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) from Tripura to Dubai. The export marks a new milestone for the FPO and the region by creating an opportunity for local beekeepers and farmers to access international markets through organised export-oriented production. The shipment represents the first-ever export of Mustard Honey from the area and opens new avenues for diversification of Tripura's honey value chain. The initiative is expected to encourage local farmers and FPOs to explore export opportunities and strengthen their participation in international agricultural markets. The export is expected to provide farmers associated with Dergang FPO with improved price realisation compared to prevailing local market opportunities. Better market access through exports can provide an additional income avenue for beekeepers while encouraging greater adoption of quality-focused and export-oriented honey production practices. The initiative was supported and hand-held by M/s Salt Range Foods Pvt. Ltd. which has been

working with Dergang FPO to strengthen bee production and facilitate the development of export-oriented honey supply. The collaboration has enabled the FPO to take its first step towards international market access while creating a structured opportunity for farmers to participate in the export value chain. The milestone is significant for Tripura's emerging agri-export ecosystem, particularly for the development of its honey and beekeeping sector. The state's diverse agricultural landscape and growing focus on organised farmer collectives offer considerable potential for expanding the production and export of quality honey and other agricultural products. The export of Mustard Honey demonstrates the potential of FPO-led aggregation and industry collaboration in connecting farmers with international markets. It is expected to encourage more FPOs and farmers in Tripura and the wider North Eastern Region to explore value addition, quality improvement and export opportunities. Encouraging the initiative, Agriculture Minister Shri Ratan Lal Nath, said, “The first-ever export of Mustard Honey by Dergang FPO is a significant achievement for Tripura's beekeepers and farmers. It demonstrates the potential of our local agricultural products to reach international markets and

create better income opportunities for farming communities. The Government of Tripura remains committed to strengthening apiculture and organic agriculture while supporting Farmer Producer Organisations in accessing wider markets. With coordinated efforts by farmers, FPOs, exporters and institutions such as APEDA, Tripura can further expand its presence in the global market for quality agricultural and organic products.”

The export consignment was flagged off by Agriculture Minister, Government of Tripura Shri Ratan Lal Nath. The ceremony was attended by Secretary, Agriculture & Horticulture, Government of Tripura Shri Apurba Roy, IAS, Executive Director, IFOAM Organics Asia Ms Jennifer Chang, senior officers from APEDA, representatives of the exporter, logistics partners and progressive beekeepers from the region. APEDA continues to work with State Governments, FPOs, exporters, processors and other stakeholders to facilitate agricultural exports from the North Eastern Region through market linkages, capacity building, quality assurance and export facilitation. Such initiatives contribute to creating sustainable market opportunities for farmers while expanding the global footprint of India's diverse agricultural products.

DGFT Ends Physical Duty Challans for Export Certificates

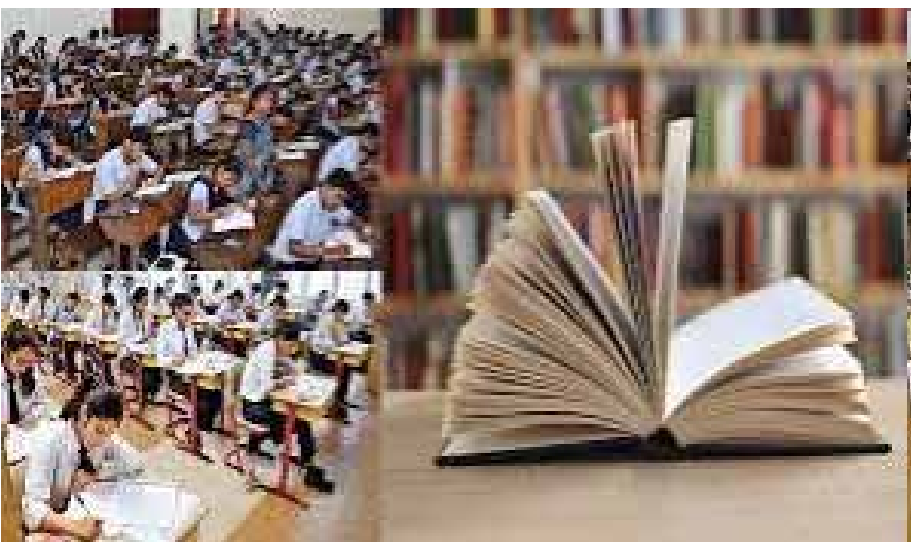
New Delhi, August, 10 (PIB): In a significant Ease of Doing Business measure for exporters, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has removed the requirement of submitting physical duty payment challans while applying for Export Obligation Discharge Certificates (EODC) under the Advance Authorisation (AA) and Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Schemes. Licence-wise voluntary duty payment data received from Customs/ICEGATE has been integrated with DGFT's online systems, enabling authenticated verification of such payments directly against the concerned authorisation. For voluntary duty payments made on or after 1 August 2026, exporters will no longer be required to submit physical challans along with their applications for closure of authorisations. Authenticated payment details will be made available to exporters on the DGFT Customer Portal, enabling them to verify that the payment has been correctly mapped to the concerned authorisation before filing the application. The same authenticated payment record will be available to the Regional Authorities on

the DGFT Back Office, eliminating the need for manual verification of payment particulars. This is expected to facilitate faster processing, reduce avoidable correspondence and bring greater consistency in decision-making across DGFT Regional Authorities.

The digital facility has been implemented through an API-based data exchange between DGFT and ICEGATE, under which duty payment particulars are transmitted electronically from Customs systems to DGFT's EODC processing workflow. The replacement of manual submission and verification with authenticated digital records is expected to shorten processing timelines, improve data accuracy, minimise human intervention and enhance transparency in the closure process. The measure is also expected to reduce transaction costs and compliance burden for exporters by reducing documentation, follow-up and physical interface, particularly benefiting MSME exporters handling closure formalities in-house. Trade Notice No. 15/2026-27 dated 5 August 2026 has been issued by DGFT for information of exporters and other stakeholders. The initiative

is part of the Government's broader digital transformation agenda for trade facilitation, aimed at creating a more efficient, predictable and trust-based regulatory environment. By strengthening integration between trade-related digital systems and reducing reliance on physical documentation, the measure reinforces the vision of “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance” and enables exporters to focus on trade and growth. The Advance Authorisation Scheme permits duty-free import of inputs that are physically incorporated in the export product, while the EPCG Scheme permits import of capital goods at concessional or zero customs duty, in both cases against an export obligation. Where the export obligation is not fulfilled in full, the authorisation holder regularises the case by voluntarily paying the proportionate customs duty saved along with applicable interest and thereafter applies for an EODC to close the authorisation. Earlier, proof of such payment was required to be submitted in physical form and verified manually by the Regional Authority.

Alignment of NCERT Syllabus with National Education Policy 2020



New Delhi, August, 10 (PIB): As per the recommendations of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has brought out the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) 2022 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023. These frameworks provide the basis for stage-wise and subject wise curricular goals, competencies, learning outcomes, syllabi, textbooks, pedagogy and assessment.

For developing National Curriculum Frameworks, National Steering Committee was constituted which followed bottom -up

approach of seeking inputs for the National Curriculum Frameworks from diverse stakeholders including teachers, parents, students, educational institutions, neo- and non-literates, subjects' experts, scholars, Anganwadi personnel etc., from across the states and UTs, a massive process of public consultations in face-to-face as well as digital mode was conducted. This process had benefited from the engagement of over 13 lakh interested citizens including students and parents at the national level through citizen-centric mobile app survey and over 1.5 lakh teachers, parents, students, and educationists at the state level through mobile app survey.

Over 1550 district-level consultations in 32 States and Union Territories were conducted. Inputs were also received from 35 groups of institutions, 8000 stakeholders who attended 12 consultations with Universities and Civil Society Groups. More than 600 position papers on 25 specifically relevant themes written by Focus Groups constituted by the States and UTs which all together had over 4000 experts, and 25 papers from the National Focus Groups by expert groups with over 175 members, constituted by the NCERT. These inputs were analyzed and relevant suggestions were included in the NCFs. Taking cognizance of these inputs, the NCF-FS was released on 20th

October, 2022 and NCF-SE was released on 23rd August, 2023.

As a follow-up of the NCFs, NCERT has constituted National Syllabus and Teaching-Learning Material Committee (NSTC). Under this Committee, 13 Curricular Area Groups (CAGs) and Textbook Development Teams (TDTs) for all the subjects and grades have been set up. NSTC has been assigned the task of development of teaching-learning material including textbooks. NCERT has also constituted National Curriculum Framework Oversight Committee (NOC) to look into the translation of NCF perspective in the new teaching-learning material including textbooks. NSTC, NOC and CAG include scholars, subject experts, renowned players, artists, teacher educators, faculty members of NCERT, officials from SCERTs, etc. TDT includes scholars, subject experts, teachers, teacher educators, faculty members of NCERT, faculty members from SCERTs, etc. With the support of NSTC, NCERT has brought out new syllabus and textbooks for Grades 1-9 and also a collection of learning resources- Jaadui Pitara

and e Jaadui Pitara for Balvatika 1, 2, and 3.

New teaching-learning material including textbooks and learning material are developed through detailed mapping of curricular goals, competencies and learning outcomes. The drafts undergo multiple rounds of academic, pedagogical, language and sensitivity review. The review process examines academic accuracy, age-appropriateness, inclusivity, constitutional values, gender sensitivity, cultural and linguistic relevance, pedagogical suitability and alignment with NEP 2020, NCF-FS 2022 and NCF-SE 2023. As a follow-up of the NCF-SE, Learning Outcome Document and Mandate Documents were developed, which served as guidelines for the development of new syllabi and textbooks along with NCF-FS and NCF-SE. NCERT, while reprinting its textbooks, every year, updates its textbooks in alignment with the relevant feedback from students, teachers and other stakeholders, without making any structural changes. For this purpose, also, if required, NCERT invites experts for finalizing the changes.

Soldier Strangles 7-Month-Pregnant Wife Over Affair, Told Family She Fell

Washim: A 28-year-old Indian Army soldier has been arrested in Maharashtra's Washim district for allegedly strangling his seven-month pregnant wife to death. The accused also attempted to pass off the crime as an accident. The accused has been identified as Dnyaneshwar Madne, who serves in the Army's 6th Maratha Battalion. Following a complaint from the victim's family, police have registered a murder case against the soldier and his parents. The victim's brother, Rahul Madne, has alleged the accused called the family at around 3 pm last Thursday and claimed his wife, Deepali, had slipped at their home. He also told them that she had been hospitalised. The accused took the woman to a private hospital, which referred her to a government-run facility. Suspecting murder, the doctors at the government hospital informed the police. The victim's brother has alleged that Madne had an affair with another woman and that he frequently harassed Deepali over it.

How Police Unearth Murder

Senior police officer Manish Thackeray stated that the police received a memo from the government hospital saying that a woman's body had been brought in an ambulance. "When our team arrived at the hospital, it was clear something was wrong. There were clear injury marks on the woman's neck," said the officer. Based on the complaint filed by the victim's brother, the police registered a murder case against the soldier and his parents.

Money, Faith And The State: India Checking Foreign Cash Twice Over

Ever since home minister Amit Shah tabled the Foreign Contribution Regulation ACT 2026 in parliament for discussion and eventual passage on August 12, it has invited criticism from opposition and evoked fears, especially among foreign missionaries, especially the Christian churches which receive large donations from churches in the USA and UK. Question being asked is when you already have the Foreign Exchange Management ACT which replaced the dreaded Foreign Exchange Regulation ACT , what was the need for a 2nd legislation , why not make do with one — duplicity could create confusion and fears. No. Certainly NOT. Government officials explain that where FEMA ends FERA starts. Let's examine how. Let's start with a simple example. A Kerala schoolteacher's remittance from her son in Dubai. A Delhi NGO's tree-planting grant from a European foundation. A tribal-belt trust in the Northeast running a school on American church donations. Three wires, one border crossed — and in New Delhi's eyes, three entirely different animals. India is often accused of regulatory overkill for making foreign money in response to two masters: the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), which the Reserve Bank policies, and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), which sits with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Critics call it bureaucratic doubling-down — one more Indian file, one more Indian stamp. The sharper question, though, is the one Indian commentators rarely ask: does the West really manage with a single law, as is popularly assumed? It does not. It has simply been ti-

dier about hiding the seam. Look closely at any major democracy and the same architecture reappears: an ordinary financial-conduct regime governing how money crosses the border, sitting beside a separate, harder-edged national-security regime governing who is being directed by a foreign power and why. The United States has banking and tax law for the first job and the 1938-vintage Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) for the second — a statute Washington has been enforcing with newfound zeal since 2025. The United Kingdom has money-laundering and charity law for ordinary flows, and since October 2025 a Foreign Influence Registration Scheme under its National Security Act for anything done in Britain at a foreign power's direction. Australia has its banking rules plus a 2018 Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme. France folds foreign-funding disclosure for associations into its 2021 law against "separatism," which forces any body receiving more than €10,000 from abroad to declare it and, if the sum crosses €153,000, submit to audit. Canada passed its own Foreign Influence Transparency and Accountability Act in 2024. Even Brussels is now drafting a Union-wide directive, after a Eurobarometer survey found 81 percent of Europeans call covert foreign interference a serious problem. So the real story is not that India insists on two laws while the West gets by on one. It is that every serious democracy runs the same two-track system — commerce on one rail, national security on the other — and India was, if anything, ahead of the curve, having separated the two as

far back as 1976. What distinguishes India is not the architecture but the intensity of political argument around it, because in India the second rail — FCRA — collides directly with the country's most combustible fault line: religion. Where FCRA gets personal: FEMA never asks what a donation is for. FCRA does, and nowhere does it ask more pointedly than in matters of faith. The freshly passed FCRA Amendment Bill of 2026, now moving through Parliament alongside revised rules notified in June, tightens that scrutiny further. Registration certificates will now have to name the exact purpose and the state of operation from a fixed government schedule; NGOs must show real utilisation of funds to keep their registration alive; and — the line that will draw the most ink — the amendment explicitly bars the use of foreign contributions for proselytisation, a restriction the government frames as applying equally to every faith and consistent with FCRA's long-standing position that foreign money should not be used to alter India's social and demographic composition through conversion-driven activity. That single clause sits atop a policy structure India has been building for years. Twelve of India's states now enforce anti-conversion laws, ten of them passed under Bharatiya Janata Party governments, with Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan recently toughening penalties into double-digit prison terms and, in Rajasthan's case, provisions for property forfeiture. The government's argument is straightforward: economically vulnerable communities — tribal populations and Dalits in particular —

are targets of inducement-driven conversion by missionaries and preachers backed by foreign money, and the state has a legitimate interest in shielding them from coercion dressed up as charity. Civil liberties groups and religious-minority organisations dispute almost every part of that account. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has argued that enforcement patterns suggest these laws are aimed less at genuine coercion and more at discouraging conversion away from Hinduism specifically. In Uttar Pradesh alone, more than 800 cases and nearly 1,700 arrests were recorded between 2020 and mid-2024, yet convictions remain rare — a gap that critics say points to harassment rather than crime prevention. They also note that decennial census data has shown the religious composition of India's population moving only gradually over decades, which sits uneasily with the political rhetoric of mass, engineered conversion. The government, for its part, points out that FCRA-registered entities are under 1 percent of all Indian NGOs and that faith-based welfare work — building temples, gurdwaras, churches and mosques, funding religious education — remains fully eligible for foreign funding across every community; it is proselytisation using that money, not religious charity itself, that is now barred. India is not alone in worrying about foreign-funded religion reshaping domestic society — it simply worries about a much larger slice of its population than Europe does. Germany, France and Austria have spent the past several years closing mosques and cutting off funding streams from

Turkey's Diyanet and Gulf-linked charities, citing radicalisation risks; a 2023 Europol assessment found at least twenty European mosques had received funding later linked to extremist networks, and France alone shuttered 89 mosques between 2020 and 2023 on national-security grounds. Berlin has moved to end reliance on Turkish state-trained imams altogether, training its own instead. The concern in the West, however, runs through a minority-within-a-minority — radicalisation among already-settled Muslim communities — rather than through anxiety about the wholesale religious rebalancing of the national population, which is the fear driving India's domestic debate. Scale, not principle, is what separates the two conversations: Europe worries about violent radicalisation at the margins; India worries, rightly or wrongly, about demographic arithmetic at the centre. That is the real distinction worth drawing. FEMA and FERA-style laws exist everywhere because every state wants to know where money crosses its border. FCRA-style religious scrutiny exists most sharply in India because nowhere else does foreign-funded faith intersect so directly with a ruling party's ideological project and a nation's oldest, rawest anxiety — who, ultimately, India belongs to. Whether the 2026 amendments strike the right balance between guarding against genuine foreign interference and constraining India's minorities will be litigated in courtrooms, newsrooms and Parliament for years to come. But the underlying design — two rails, not one — is not India's eccentricity. It is the world's default, worn more visibly here than anywhere else.

Student Protests In India Have Brought Unemployment Crisis In Focus

Protests of the “Cockroaches” (jobless) led by Cockroach Janata Party has (CJP) brought the unemployment crisis in India in focus that has compelled the ministers of the Union Government of India to come with their statements that Centre led by Modi has been doing a great job on employment and social security front. Though their claims are not believed in general and analysts raise their fingers on their deceptiveness veiling uncomfortable truth behind, they are still being reiterated by the ministers. The glaring example is the presentation of the Union Minister of Labour and Employment Dr Mansukh Mandaviya in which he reiterated the claim citing the Reserve Bank of India's data that more than 17 crore new jobs were created in India between 2014 and 2024. The presentation was made before NDA MPs. He has been citing this data which has already been questioned in its truthfulness because it showed sharp increase in employment even during the COVID-19 years when entire economy was at halt which even negative GDP growth of the country. Union Ministry of Labour and Employment has been always shying away from their own government data and love to quote RBI data. It is understandable, because even government data do not reflect the RBI data on employment generation. Take for example, the recent claim of Mandaviya, in which he said that every one per cent increase in GDP is generating 1.11 per cent employment growth, as compared to 0.008 per cent growth in employment seen twelve years ago. The intention of the claim was to show how the Centre under PM Narendra Modi has been performing. However, he forgets the reverse logic. What will happen when GDP decelerate? RBI data which he has been quoting for years had shown sharp

increase in employment even when GDP decelerated during COVID-19 crisis years of 2020-21 and 2021-22. Thus, he contradicts himself by giving contrasting data. Union Labour Minister also said that the NDA government placed employment generation and skill development at the centre of its vision for a developed India, contrasting it with the previous UPA government's tenure between 2004 and 2014. India was the world's 10th-largest economy during the UPA years and that employment growth remained slow, he said. The Union Government's presentation stated that the country created an average of 1.7 crore jobs annually during the decade. It was said that according to World Bank and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, India's unemployment rate declined to 3.1% in 2025, lower than the global average of 4.8%. It was also said that India's performance on employment indicators compared favourably with several major developed and emerging economies within the G20. Mandaviya claimed that the government's focus remained on youth employment and capacity building which led to improvements in workforce participation and employability. It was stated in the presentation that the youth employment rate has risen to more than 41.4%, while the employability of graduates has improved by 66%. Mandaviya cited NITI Aayog data to claim that nearly 25 crore people moved out of poverty between 2014 and 2023. The data has been questioned earlier on the ground that had it been true how it come that the number of people given free foodgrain did not declined? On Social security, he said that only 19 per cent, about 25 crore people were covered by at least one social sector scheme in 2015. However, by 2026, that number had risen to more than 101 crore

people, covering 68.4% of the population. It is worth noting here that it included free foodgrain being given over 80 crore people. The data is being used for statistical jugglery in several areas including to convince the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that India is doing a great work to support workers. However, the question remains unanswered — if poverty or working poverty declined, and 25 crore people were brought out of poverty, why numbers of poor receiving free foodgrains do not decline? The figure of 101 crore, that is over 68 per cent of the population, brought under partial social security coverage was also highlighted recently in ILO and BRICS Labour Ministers meetings testifying to a global recognition of India's social security coverage. In reply to a question in Lok Sabha, Dr Mandaviya said that more than 6.64 crore jobseekers have registered on the (National Career Service) NCS portal since inception, of which 2.89 crore are active jobseekers as on 15.07.2026. Also, more than 10.05 crore vacancies have been mobilized on the portal since inception, of which 17.68 lakh are active vacancies as on 15.07.2026. It should be recalled that NCS was launched in July 20, 2015, and hence the performance can't be said to be satisfactory, when several millions of people including youth, who are unemployed, or employed will little or without pay, and also without social security coverage that is required for working people. According to PLFS data for June 2026, unemployment rate among youth (15-19) years in Current Weekly Status (CWS) was 16.2 per cent, highest since April 2025 under the new data series. The government's propaganda on employment is thus understandable amidst youth protest spreading across the country.

When Demographic Dividend Turns Into Powerful Political Dissent

Mohan Bhagwat's attempt to open a conversation with India's younger generation carries significance precisely because such an intervention would hardly have been necessary if the political establishment were confident that the youth remained comfortably within its fold. The RSS chief's argument that young people are neither misguided nor directionless, and that they require discussion rather than dictation, may sound conciliatory. Coming after an extraordinary confrontation between students and the government over examination failures, however, it looks equally like political firefighting. The timing makes the message more important than its wording. Weeks of youth mobilisation over examination paper leaks culminated in a protest movement powerful enough to extract the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, an outcome virtually unimaginable when the agitation began. Young protesters demonstrated that they could organise outside established political structures, resist attempts to discredit them and force accountability from a government that initially appeared determined to outlast them. Bhagwat is therefore acknowledging a political reality that the BJP itself was slower to recognise: India's young people cannot indefinitely be treated as an audience for political mes-

saging while being denied agency when they question the system. This strikes directly at one of Narendra Modi's most carefully cultivated political identities. For more than a decade, Modi has repeatedly invoked India's demographic dividend, presenting the country's enormous young population as the engine of its transformation into Viksit Bharat by 2047. Youth entrepreneurship, start-ups, digital skills, innovation and aspiration occupy an important place in his political vocabulary. Government programmes such as MY Bharat and the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue are designed around precisely this narrative of young people as participants in national transformation. The difficulty is that a demographic dividend is not created by speeches. It requires functioning institutions, credible examinations, expanding employment, social mobility and confidence that merit will be rewarded. For young people, an examination paper leak is therefore not simply an administrative irregularity. It represents the possible destruction of years of preparation, family savings and personal sacrifice. A government may see an examination controversy as something requiring an inquiry, a new law or an administrative reshuffle. A 22-year-old who has spent three years preparing for that examination sees the collapse of the bargain

on which his or her future was constructed. This difference in perception helps explain why the Jantar Mantar mobilisation acquired political energy so quickly. The greater mistake was the tendency within parts of the political ecosystem to view dissenting students through the traditional vocabulary of political agitation. Governments everywhere dislike street protests. The BJP has an additional difficulty because its political culture has increasingly divided public discourse between supporters of the national project and those portrayed as obstructing it. Such a binary becomes dangerous when applied to a generation whose grievances are personal rather than ideological. A student demanding an examination without a leaked question paper does not require a political philosophy. Nor does a graduate searching unsuccessfully for employment need instruction about patriotism. When such frustrations are answered with suspicion, accusations of manipulation or suggestions that protesters have been misled, political authority begins confusing obedience with loyalty. That makes Bhagwat's intervention revealing. His emphasis on affection, explanation and consensus implicitly rejects the idea that young protesters should simply be instructed to fall into line. It also sug-

gests that the RSS understands something fundamental about the generational transition taking place. Gen Z does not respond naturally to hierarchical political communication. It has grown up with social media, instant access to competing narratives and an instinctive irreverence towards institutional authority. The same digital ecosystem that helped Modi bypass traditional media and establish a direct relationship with voters is now allowing young citizens to bypass political parties. That transformation should worry the BJP more than the emergence of another Opposition coalition. The youth mobilisation demonstrated that political organisation no longer necessarily requires conventional organisational infrastructure. A provocative slogan, shared grievance and decentralised online community can produce a movement before established parties fully understand what is happening. The Cockroach Janta Party phenomenon illustrated precisely that possibility. Its importance was never whether it would become a conventional political party. Indeed, keeping distance from electoral politics may preserve its appeal better than contesting elections. Its significance lies in demonstrating that a generation previously treated largely as a voting category can generate its own political language, leadership

and methods of mobilisation. If the Sangh genuinely believes that the younger generation deserves dialogue rather than dictation, the principle must apply when young people criticise governments associated with its ideological family. It cannot operate only as a public-relations correction after confrontation has already produced political costs. Nor can the BJP celebrate young people as innovators, entrepreneurs and nation-builders while treating them as politically immature whenever they challenge authority. There is nevertheless an opportunity embedded in the crisis. The government has already demonstrated, through Pradhan's departure and moves towards tougher examination safeguards, that political pressure can produce institutional responses. A broader correction could convert the confrontation into reform: examination systems that command confidence, transparent accountability when failures occur, faster recruitment, better alignment between higher education and employment, and a political culture that stops treating questioning as disloyalty. The deeper problem is one of credibility. For years, demographic dividend has been presented almost as an economic inevitability, as though possessing hundreds of millions of young citizens automatically guarantees national advancement.

IT Ministry Warns Social Media Platforms To Follow Indian Laws After Meta Controversy



New Delhi: Social media platforms, including Meta, must comply with the law of the land, IT Ministry sources said, as a parliamentary panel asked Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg to issue an "unqualified apology" within three days over the brief removal of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post recently. Meta stands to lose its "safe harbour protection" in India if it fails to do so in the stipulated deadline. A high-level Meta delegation met IT Secretary S. Krishnan in the national capital to discuss the erroneous takedown of the Prime Minister's video. They were also scheduled to meet Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Officials highlighted the need for clear compliance with existing rules and

raised concerns over instances of alleged misuse of platforms, including the arbitrary dropping of the Prime Minister's post, stressing that such issues need to be addressed on an urgent basis. According to preliminary information, representatives from Meta and other social media platforms responded that they already have stringent internal rules and fact-checking mechanisms and maintained that no misuse of their platforms is allowed deliberately or knowingly. This was the first round of meetings, with another round scheduled for Thursday, according to sources. Earlier, a Parliamentary Standing Committee took strong exception to the temporary removal of PM Narendra Modi's video

from Facebook and sought an apology from Zuckerberg. According to a letter sent to the Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), the committee viewed the removal of the Prime Minister's speech very seriously. The video, which featured PM Modi addressing students and Gen Z on examination-related controversies and the government's crackdown on paper leaks, was reportedly unavailable on Facebook for around five to six hours. The letter, signed by A. Jyothirmayi, Director in the Lok Sabha Secretariat, warned that the protection and immunity available to Zuckerberg could be reconsidered if an apology is not issued within the stipulated period.

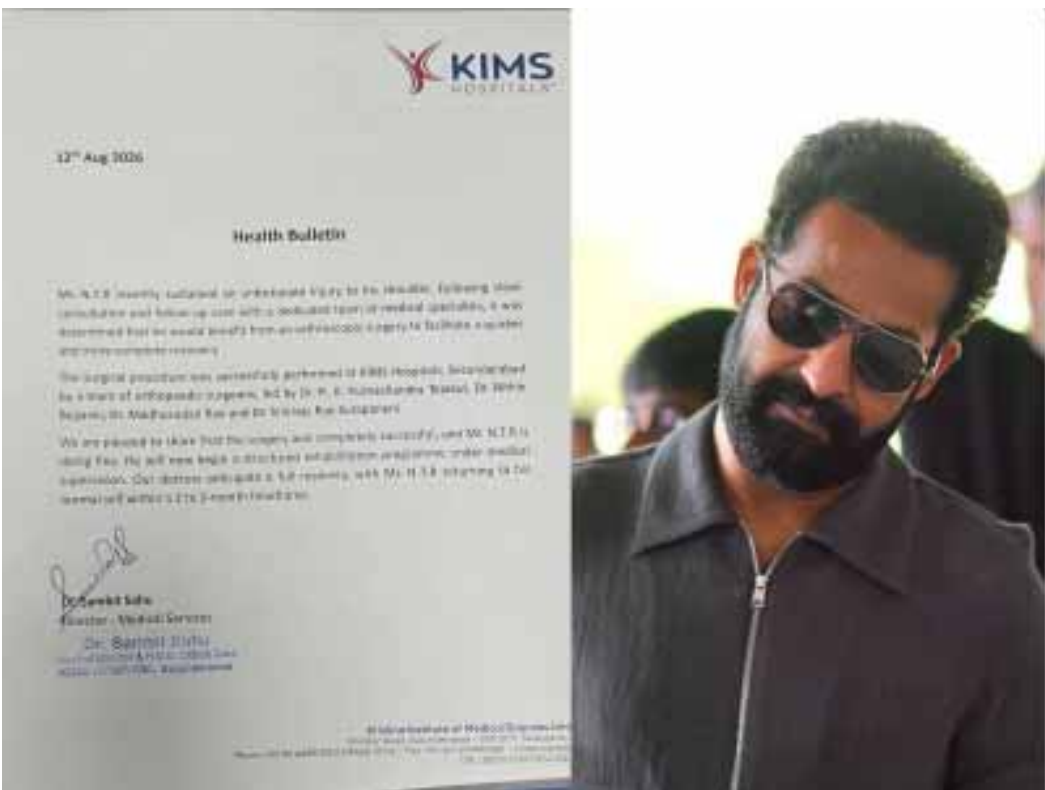
Irumudi Trailer: Ravi Teja blends devotion, family drama and action



Director Shiva Nirvana is known for family and romantic dramas, while Ravi Teja is best known for his mass entertainers and action-driven roles. Their combination in “Irumudi” appears to bring together these contrasting strengths. The trailer, released today, promises a family drama that gradually transforms into an intense action story with devotional elements.

The trailer begins by introducing Trinadh, played by Ravi Teja, as a doting father. Priya Bhavani Shankar plays his wife, while Baby Nakshatra is introduced as their daughter, Mani. The family’s simple and affectionate moments are shown alongside Trinadh’s devotion to Lord Ayyappa Swamy. The mood changes when the trailer reveals a series of abductions and killings of girl children in their village. This brings out another side of Trinadh, revealing the violent man beneath his calm and devoted persona. He becomes a man willing to go to any length to protect his daughter and other girl children. “Irumudi” appears to blend family drama, devotion and mass action while keeping some important elements under wraps. The trailer suggests that there could be a few surprises in store for audiences in the film. Ravi Teja looks refreshingly different and understated as a father, while Baby Nakshatra makes a cute impression as his daughter. Priya Bhavani Shankar also plays a key role in the family setup. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, “Irumudi” is scheduled to hit the screens on August 21. GV Prakash Kumar has composed the music.

NTR recovering well after successful shoulder surgery, says KIMS bulletin



Actor NTR has successfully undergone shoulder surgery at KIMS Hospitals in

Secunderabad, according to a health bulletin issued by the hospital on Wednesday, Au-

gust 12. The actor recently sustained a shoulder injury and, following consultations and

follow-up care with a team of medical specialists, doctors determined that an arthroscopic surgery would help facilitate a quicker and more complete recovery.

The surgery was performed at KIMS Hospitals by a team of orthopedic surgeons led by Dr. R. A. Purnachandra Tejaswi, along with Dr. Nithin Bejjanki, Dr. Madhusudhan Rao and Dr. Srinivas Rao Surapaneni.

The hospital stated that the procedure was completely successful and that NTR is doing fine. He will now begin a structured rehabilitation programme under medical supervision. Doctors anticipate a full recovery and expect him to return to his normal routine within two to three months.

Based on this recovery timeline, NTR may be able to resume work on his upcoming projects, including Dragon, around October or November, subject to his rehabilitation and medical clearance.

Ritika Nayak praises Varun Tej and Korean Kanakaraju, shares Mirai 2 update



Shalini Pandey turns bold: Topless backless pose from Italian summer



Shalini Pandey, who shot to fame with Arjun Reddy, has been experimenting with a bolder image lately. Although she went on to act in a few

Telugu films, the actress soon shifted her focus to Bollywood. After generating considerable attention with her debut, Shalini Pandey could

not make much headway in Bollywood. Of late, she has mostly been making headlines with her social media posts.

In her latest series of photos and videos on Instagram, where she has 2.3 million followers, Shalini shared pictures from her Italian summer. The actress posted bikini photos along with a series of bold backless pictures. One of the photos shows her posing topless from behind, while strategically covering herself with her hand.

The bold pictures have grabbed considerable attention, with fans flooding the comments section with reactions to her latest look.

Sharing the photos, Shalini wrote, “I miss who I get to be in an Italian summer. Free, silly, sun-bathed, just existing in my body, completely enjoying the privilege of being a woman, and getting to do all this with a friend who matches my freak. I miss that.”

The actress appears to be reminiscing about her Italian summer and the carefree moments she experienced during the trip. Her latest social media post has certainly caught the attention of her followers.

Why is Shraddha Kapoor taking on Prabhas at the box office?

Shraddha Kapoor is one of the popular stars in Bollywood. She has scored several major hits as a female lead, with the Stree franchise further strengthening her position. She also commands a massive following on Instagram, with more than 93 million followers.

Her popularity gives her films strong visibility and considerable opening potential in the Hindi market. Shraddha is now playing the lead role in the biopic “Eetha.” The film, which was earlier scheduled for release in August, has now been postponed to December.

The makers have announced December 4, 2026 as the new release date, and the decision has surprised many in the industry as well as fans. The reason is that Prabhas’s much-awaited “Fauji” is also expected to arrive in theatres

around the same weekend.

Prabhas is among the few Indian stars whose films consistently command massive openings across multiple markets. His pan-Indian following makes Fauji one of the most anticipated releases of the year. This has led to questions about the decision to release “Eetha” alongside “Fauji.” Fans are wondering whether the makers are confident that Shraddha’s film can hold its ground against a major Prabhas release, or if they are expecting “Fauji” to be postponed.

Shraddha and Prabhas previously shared screen space in “Saaho.” However, they have not reunited for another film since then. Now, their films could potentially face each other at the box office, making the December release clash an interesting one to watch.



Donga Na Koduku: Mythri Movie Makers to repeat Little Hearts sentiment

Mouli Tanuj Prasanth, the popular YouTuber who made his film debut as a lead actor with Little Hearts, is now gearing up for his second film, “Donga Na Koduku.” Little Hearts, a teenage romance, emerged as a surprise hit and helped Mouli make a mark as a lead actor.

Interestingly, his next film is being backed by one of the leading production houses in Telugu cinema, Mythri Movie Makers. The banner is currently producing big-scale projects such as Prabhas’s Fauji and NTR’s Dragon, while also backing this comparatively smaller youth-oriented film.

Donga Na Koduku is said to be a robbery crime comedy. The film has Sushmita Shetty as the female lead, while newcomer Sreenu Kambala is directing it.



The makers are also looking to repeat the release sentiment of “Little Hearts.” Mouli’s previous film arrived in the first week of September 2025 and went on to become a hit. Taking that sentiment into consideration, the team is reportedly planning to release “Donga Na

Koduku” on September 4, 2026.

If the plans materialise, the film will mark another September release for Mouli, with the makers hoping the timing works in their favour once again. Netflix has bagged the film’s OTT rights.