

'ORIGINAL FORCE IS DEAD'

Rahul Gandhi Launches Scathing Attack On RSS, Calls It 'Instrument Of Large Capital'

New Delhi: Congress MP and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi on Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), alleging that the organisation had been “captured” by large capital and had moved away from its original social base of small Indian businesses. Speaking at the Rachnatmak Congress National Convention, Gandhi said people should not be afraid of expressing their views and urged Congress workers and citizens to confront what he described as a “cowardly force”.

“A lot of people in India have been behaving like cowards,” Gandhi said, questioning why people should be afraid while confronting what he called a group of “jokers” and “clowns” who, according to him, had little understanding of India’s philosophy and history.

Gandhi said India could only be understood by engaging with its present-day expression. He added that the Congress would defend the RSS’s right to express itself if there was ever an at-



tempt to eliminate the organisation’s expression from the country. “The day there is a call to eliminate the RSS’s expression from the country, I will defend them, because they too have the right to express themselves,” Gandhi said, stressing that everyone should have the freedom to speak openly without fear. Gandhi alleged that the RSS had undergone a fundamental transformation, claiming that its original social base comprised small businessmen

such as goldsmiths, jewelers, blacksmiths and shopkeepers.

“The RSS as original force is dead. Now, RSS is an instrument of large capital,” he said, alleging that the organisation had been “utilised” and “captured” by large capital. Gandhi linked this transformation to economic and political developments, alleging that demonetisation and the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) had adversely affected the small-

business community that he associated with the RSS’s original base. He claimed that former BJP leader Pramod Mahajan initiated the process of bringing greater capital influence into the RSS, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed what he described as the “final corporatization” of the organisation. Gandhi further alleged that the RSS had become an “instrument” serving industrialist Gautam Adani, drawing a parallel with his repeated criticism of the Modi government’s alleged proximity to the Adani Group. The Congress leader also spoke about what he described as the pressure faced by sections of the media and public institutions. Gandhi claimed that many journalists privately disagreed with the prevailing political environment but felt compelled to continue working due to professional and family responsibilities. He said such concerns were understandable but argued that citizens also had a responsibility towards what he called the “National Spirit”.

Jairam Ramesh Lists 5 Opposition Wins, Says BJP Failed 2/3 Majority

New Delhi: Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Thursday highlighted what he described as five major achievements of the Opposition during the ongoing Parliament session, claiming that several key government initiatives were either not introduced or were postponed. Ramesh said the proposed One Nation, One Election legislation did not come up during the session. He also said the VBSA and Automatic Delegation measures were postponed, while the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). Ramesh identified what he called a “fifth achievement” as the ruling party’s failure to secure a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

He alleged that the BJP had attempted to strengthen its numbers by breaking opposition parties, referring to developments involving the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Shiv Sena, among others. “They are so eager for a two-thirds majority. They broke the parties. They broke TMC. They broke Shiv Sena,” Ramesh said. The Congress leader also



referred to speculation and media reports about the ruling alliance potentially reaching various numerical thresholds in Parliament, including 240, 250, 260, 300, 356 and even 360 seats. Ramesh claimed that the

current numbers show the BJP does not have the two-thirds majority required to push through certain constitutional changes. “Now you have come to know that there is no two-thirds majority. It is a defective majority. It is not a

majority. And they will never get it. No matter how hard they try,” he said. Ramesh concluded by saying that, in his view, the five developments represented significant achievements for the Opposition during the session.

Bar Council's Big Step On Students Opposing Chief Justice, Then A Withdrawal

New Delhi: The Bar Council of India today took back its order which barred students belonging to the 2026 batch of Hyderabad law college NALSAR from enrolling as advocates. Earlier today, the BCI directed every State Bar Council not to enrol any student graduating from

Hyderabad’s NALSAR University of Law in 2026 as an advocate until further orders after students of the institution protested against an invitation to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant to attend the university’s convocation. “After detailed deliberation, the @barcouncilindia has

modified its earlier directions concerning @NALSAR_Official. All 2026 passed-out students of NALSAR will now be entitled to seek enrolment with the State Bar Council of their choice. The factual inquiry will continue, and further action will follow on the basis of the report.

Politics of NTR's Era Should Return: Ayyanna Patrudu

From Our Staff Reporter Guntur District, August 13: Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu expressed his desire for the kind of politics seen during the tenure of late former Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao to return. He advised those aspiring to enter politics to learn from senior leader Kanna Lakshminarayana. Speaking to the media in Guntur district on Thursday, Ayyanna Patrudu said that nowadays people often do not vote for the same candidate a second time after



voting for them once. He noted that Kanna Lakshminarayana had won elections six times by earning the trust and affection of the people. Ayyanna said people and political leaders were different in the past compared to today. He praised Kanna for

his discipline, personally greeting people who met him and helping them whenever their work could be done. He said Kanna had worked by understanding people’s needs and addressing their concerns.

Ayyanna Patrudu said Andhra Pradesh would progress if others also worked in the same manner as Kanna. He remarked that politics has now become a business. He wished Kanna Lakshminarayana good health and expressed hope that he would continue serving the people for many more years.

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 13: Minister Narayana said Andhra Pradesh had become a state without a capital and that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu envisioned building an economic capital for the state. On Thursday, CM Chandrababu inaugurated the second phase of the Seed Access Road and the Steel Bridge over the Buckingham Canal.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said Hyderabad generated a major share of Telangana’s revenue. Similarly, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu benefited economically through Mumbai, Bengaluru and

Chennai respectively. He said the Singapore Government had provided the master plan for Amaravati free of cost. He added that Norman Foster’s London-based firm had been consulted for the construction of iconic buildings.

Building Amaravati on the banks of the Krishna River would ensure balanced development for all districts, he said. Narayana said Amaravati was centrally located between Srikakulam and Anantapur and had both rail and road connectivity. He recalled that the land pooling notification was issued in January 2015 and that farmers contributed 34,000 acres within just 58 days, without

a single litigation case.

He said it took three-and-a-half years to begin works in Amaravati, invite tenders and undertake other activities. During the remaining one-and-a-half years, the government spent Rs.10,000 crore on Amaravati, he said. Meanwhile, the YSRCP came to power and played what he described as a “three-capitals game,” bringing Amaravati’s construction to a halt. The party allegedly left construction companies’ contracts unresolved. After the coalition government returned to power, the contracts had to be technically closed with the companies and fresh tenders invited, he said. Narayana said the



quality of previously completed works was tested by IIT Chennai and IIT Hyderabad before construction was resumed. He said the Seed Access Road had been planned with underground infrastructure for electricity, gas, telephone and water services.

He alleged that the YSRCP had attempted to provoke farmers against Amaravati, but farmers nevertheless supported its construction. Narayana thanked Chief Minister Chandrababu for giving him the opportunity to participate in the development of Amaravati.

Ram Mohan Naidu Leads Tiranga Rally

New Delhi: The Ministry of Civil Aviation organised a Tiranga Rally today as part of the Independence Day celebrations under the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2026. Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, flagged off the rally in the presence of Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Shri Murlidhar Mohol; Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Shri Samir Kumar Sinha and officers and staff of the Ministry. The celebrations commenced with the inauguration of a Digital Video Wall by Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu and Shri Murlidhar Mohol, followed by the rendition of “Vande Mataram” by the dignitaries and participants.

The Tiranga Rally was thereafter flagged off by Union Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu. Officers and staff of the Ministry, its Attached and Subordinate Offices, Public Sector Undertakings and Autonomous Bodies joined the pro-



cession, carrying the National Flag. The rally proceeded from Udaan Bhawan to Aviation Park at Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, with Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Shri Murlidhar Mohol and Shri Samir Kumar Sinha leading the participating contingent. The rally witnessed enthusiastic participation from officers and staff, who joined the celebrations with the Tricolour, reflecting the spirit of unity and national pride associated with the Independence Day celebrations.

The rally culminated at Aviation Park with the rendition of the National An-

them, marking the conclusion of the programme. The Tiranga Rally was organised as part of the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2026, which encourages citizens to celebrate Independence Day by proudly displaying and engaging with the National Flag, reinforcing the values of national unity and pride. The event was also attended by Chairman, AAI Shri Vipin Kumar; DG, DGCA Shri Vir Vikram Yadav; DG, AAIB Shri G V G Yugandhar; DG, BCAS Shri Rajesh Nirwan and Chairperson, AERA Shri S K G Rahate, along with other senior officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Merit, Transparency and Justice Are the Benchmarks in Recruitment: Dola Veeranjanya Swamy

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 13: Andhra Pradesh Minister Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy said the coalition government had transparently filled more than 16,000 DSC posts in the state. Speaking to the media on Thursday, he said the Chandrababu government’s principle was to ensure that no meritorious candidate was denied justice. He said the large-scale recruitment was part of the government’s promise to provide 20 lakh jobs. The minister said the government had legally overcome hundreds of cases filed against the DSC recruitment and moved the selection process forward. He alleged that the opposition was unnecessarily creating controversy to obstruct the recruitment process. Regarding the previous government’s handling of



the APPSC Group-1 examination, the minister said the SIT report had raised serious questions. He questioned the allegations that answer scripts were evaluated by ineligible persons. He also asked why the evaluation was conducted at a private resort, how it was carried out without CCTV cameras and official supervision, and how answer scripts that were supposed to remain under APPSC custody reached a private location.

He further sought an ex-

planation regarding allegations that evaluation was conducted through personal Gmail accounts and Google Drive. He demanded answers regarding the qualifications of the evaluation panel. The minister said the complete facts behind the discrepancies in marks identified by the SIT should be brought to light. He questioned what the forensic report had revealed about corrections in OMR sheets and the use of whitener. He called for an investigation into corrections with mismatched signatures and the use of different inks. Questioning why different inks were used on the same answer sheet, he sought to know who was responsible. He said strict action should be taken against those responsible if irregularities were found in the recruitment process.

Devotees Alert: New Security Rules at Indrakeeladri



From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, August 13:

Temple authorities have introduced new security regulations for devotees visiting the Kanaka Durga Temple on Indrakeeladri. A complete ban on mobile phones has been imposed inside the temple premises. A new security gate has been installed at the scanning point, and strict checks will be conducted to ensure that mobile phones are not taken inside after scanning. Under the new rules, devotees must deposit their mobile phones before entering the queue lines. Special deposit counters have been set up for this purpose. Temple EO Sheena Naik has directed officials to further strengthen security checks. Temple authorities said robust security arrangements would be provided with the help of Home Guards and Agile Security personnel. Changes have also been made to the darshan queues to manage crowds. Officials said the counters for issuing darshan tickets have been relocated, while the counters distributing free Laddu Prasadam have also been shifted.

EDITORIAL

Tribunal reforms are welcome

Tribunals have a unique advantage in the judicial system. In resolving disputes related to financial systems, the judgments given by the Tribunal are subject to judicial review by the High Courts. However, these judgments are unable to fully address a significant institutional flaw. No Tribunal has resolved a single case without a judge hearing it. In this context, the introduction of the Tribunal Reforms Bill 2026 in Parliament can be said to be a welcome effort. This bill seems to have attempted to bring more independence, professionalism and transparency to the tribunal system, which has been repeatedly subjected to legal challenges and interference by the courts. Previous governments have faced difficulties in creating a system that is consistent with the standards set by the Supreme Court in the appointment of tribunals. In particular, the Supreme Court has repeatedly made it clear that tribunals exercising powers previously enjoyed by the High Courts should also have the same independence as the High Courts. The current bill seems to have learned lessons from these experiences.

Above all, the bill proposes the establishment of a National Tribunal Commission. The judiciary has been given priority in this. It is proposed to reduce the role of the administration and ministries in appointments and to set up a permanent system for the selection of members. This commission will be chaired by a retired Supreme Court judge or the Chief Justice of a High Court. In addition, there will be two retired High Court judges and two technical members. That is, out of the total five members, three will have a legal background, giving the judiciary a 3:2 advantage. Similarly, the search-cum-selection committees will also be chaired by a person with a legal background. The chairman will also have a casting vote in case of equality of votes. Another important and appropriate provision is that the government will recommend only one candidate for each vacant post, instead of giving panels with multiple names for selection. If the government continues to choose one of the government's nominees even if the committee, dominated by the judiciary, shortlists several candidates, the very idea of ensuring independence of appointments will be defeated. By recommending only one name, the final decision-making power will rest with the selection committee. The bill also proposes a five-year term for chairpersons and members. However, the age limit has been fixed at 70 years for the chairperson and 67 years for members. The minimum age limit of 50 years, which was struck down by the Supreme Court earlier, has not been brought back. Another important aspect is the attempt to institutionally distance the tribunals from the administrative ministries that often hear cases before them. It is proposed that the Commission assess the needs of funds, staff and infrastructure. The funds will be provided by the Government. The Bill also seeks to remove the disciplinary oversight of the members of the Tribunal to a greater extent from direct executive control and bring it into a more independent system. Perhaps the most important reform is in the system under which the Commission operates. So far, the Tribunal's appointments have been made on a case-by-case basis, often with sporadic searches, uneven evaluation of candidates and over-reliance on their reputation. Now, the Bill proposes to establish a permanent appointment system. That is, it will carry out the responsibilities of pre-identifying vacancies, advertising posts, examining applications, checking qualifications, etc. It is also proposed to exclude the relevant administrative ministry from these processes. The selected experts will examine the candidates' judgments, orders and cases they have resolved based on pre-determined criteria. At the same time, their honesty and integrity will be scrutinized separately. This will enable the committee to examine a comprehensive report on the candidate, without relying solely on interviews, personal contacts or informal information. This principle is correct. Talent should not be just claimed but proven. If the candidates' qualifications, evaluation criteria, and priority selection criteria for each aspect are determined in advance, the selection process will be more stable. Moreover, there will be an auditable record of the evidence for each decision. However, it will be premature to reach a final decision until this system is implemented. This bill was passed in the Lok Sabha on August 10 and in the Rajya Sabha on August 11 without any discussion. Overall, it is gratifying to propose this bill with reforms in the areas of tribunal appointments, management, independence, and judicial accountability.

Star Wars - China harbors military ambitions in space

Hong Kong: Space is a critical domain for China's military war machine, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Indeed, China is Asia's undisputed space champion, and it is increasingly alarming the USA with its rapidly expanding capabilities. Indeed, the US intelligence community's Annual Threat Assessment issued a few months ago specifically stated: "China has eclipsed Russia as the key US competitor in space. Beijing's rapid deployment of space capabilities positions it to use space to advance its foreign policy goals, challenge US military and technological superiority in space, and project power on a global scale." That statement illustrates just how far China has come. Its space capabilities now surpass those of Russia, the first country in the world to launch a satellite. In 2025, China conducted 92 orbital liftoffs, remembering that China's whole space program - whether labeled civilian or military - is handled by the PLA. This compares to the USA, which clearly separates civilian and military space efforts through NASA and the Pentagon respectively. Under paranoid levels of secrecy, Chinese satellite activities are far more expansive than those of the USA. Nor is Beijing merely seeking parity with American space capabilities, for it wants dominance in this space race. In fact, the PLA possesses six China-based spaceports that can launch into orbit next-generation heavy-lift rockets bearing entire satellite constellations. China will also attempt to perform a manned Moon landing by 2030.

Chinese official documents have referred to space as the "commanding heights" housing "indispensable strategic supports for winning informationized wars". They

also describe space as a "critical domain in international strategic competition". The PLA's important 2020 document Science of Military Strategy argued, "In the context of the new military revolution, space has already become a new domain of military conflict, not only changing the traditional form of warfare of mankind, but also expanding the struggle for national strategic interests." This is true, for the USA's aforementioned Annual Threat Assessment warned: "Disruptive attacks against space services have become more common and probably will be normalized during crises or periods of strained relations between nations. Adversaries are using jammers against US satellites, and the risks stemming from cyberattacks against satellite communications (SATCOM) are also growing as global reliance on digital systems expands the number of exploitable cyber vulnerabilities associated with space services." Key amongst what the USA calls "adversaries" is China. In fact, there is growing evidence that Beijing is rehearsing how to use space-based assets to perform offensive and counter-space operations. It has already been observed conducted "dogfights" in space. In March 2025, for instance, the US Space Force (USSF) observed "five different objects in space maneuvering in and out and around each other in synchronicity and in control," according to General Michael A. Guetlein, Vice Chief of Space Operations. Guetlein elaborated, "That's what we call 'dogfighting in space'. They are practicing tactics, techniques and procedures to do on-orbit space operations from one satellite to another". As an example from 2022, the American patrol satellite 'USA 270' report-



edly had a pair of recently launched Chinese satellites in its sights dead ahead whilst they were transiting "one of the most sensitive neighborhoods in space". However, one of the Chinese satellites then slowed down and maneuvered in behind 'USA 270' as it flew past, 22,000 miles above Earth.

While nobody was shot down - as occurs in real jet fighter combat - this encounter left American controllers wondering how to pilot their satellite's next move. It also raised questions about Chinese intentions, as the latter refines its ability to affect rapid aspect changes in its satellites. Half the problem is that China refuses to divulge its true space ambitions, despite claiming only peaceful and benign intentions. For example, Liu Pengyu, the Chinese Embassy spokesman in Washington DC, said in December 2025: "China is committed to the peaceful use of outer space, and opposes any

arms race in outer space or weaponizing it. China has no intention to engage in a space race with any country, nor do we seek so-called advantage in outer space." However, China's actions speak otherwise. It is the same on Earth in places like the South China Sea. Beijing cloaks its plans and actions in reassuring phrases, but it is busily stoking tensions by throwing its weight around. China has hastened development of satellite mega-constellations to provide SATCOM resilience, plus the country's thriving commercial space sector is driving innovation that benefits the PLA. It is also developing reusable rockets. The Pentagon's 2025 report on China's military noted, "Many of China's commercial companies are part of its military-civil fusion strategy to develop dual-use technologies in the commercial sector for eventual integration into the military. In 2024, commercial space devel-

opment was written into the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) government work report for the first time, demonstrating its increased importance." Are some of China's satellites designed to wage war against the space-based assets of other nations in orbital skirmishes? Does China intend to blind an adversary's sensing capabilities and shut down vital communications in a war or at some other critical juncture? Yes, both situations are extremely likely.

The Chinese TJS-3 satellite, for example, has approached other countries' satellites in geostationary Earth orbit multiple times. Yet China says it is just a communications technology test satellite. Beijing has also conducted close approach and rendezvous operations between different sets of satellites. Some, like Shijian-21, have robotic arms that can manipulate and reorient other satellites.

Indian Parliament And The Perils Of Empty 'Swagger'

The Indian Parliament has settled into a disturbing rhythm. The founding fathers of the Constitution had crafted it for debates that are focused on the welfare of the electors, and legislation that is filtered through the wisdom of each and every elected MP.

Thursday sharp at 11 am, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla walked up to his chair. The now-familiar crescendo, of Opposition MPs unleashing their lung power to disrupt the last six-seven hours of the proceedings, rose. Birla didn't ask them to sit. He didn't tell them to calm down. He asked everyone to stand up for the National Song. For a few minutes, the serenity of Vande Mataram echoed inside the House. And then the Speaker adjourned the House sine die, bringing the curtain down on the Monsoon Session of Parliament about seven hours before the scheduled end.

The 250-odd sq. feet, transparent-vinyl-walled portacabin 'media hut' in Parliament is placed at exactly the same radial distance from the old Parliament building's Gate No. 1 (past entry point for MPs) and the Makar Dwar, the entry point in the new building. It provides a ringside view of how things have transitioned and degenerated over time. For the 29th day, or the 19th sitting of the Houses, watching the MPs troop out without doing much work reminded me of what Senator Gracchus said in Director Ridley Scott's epic adventure drama, Gladiator. Gracchus had provided a cynical view of Roman politics by telling someone that the "beating heart of Rome is not the marble of the Senate; it's the sand of the Colosseum".

Each day of the now virtually-bombed and annihilated-by-disruptions Monsoon Session this year, MPs from both sides of the political fence emerged from the Makar Dwar like gladiators from the Colosseum, claiming victory. But it takes a bit of sitting back and

thinking to deduce that all parties and groupings across the various divides have been managing to have their way, and that there is only one loser: the voter. Reconfirming that distraction through spectacle is more effective than political accountability and performance.

The Congressmen's Newfound Swagger

Ask any journalist covering the monsoon session of Parliament what the key takeaway of the session is, and they will tell you that in the second half of the month-long session, the stand-out element has been the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, walking with the swagger of a winner inside or outside Parliament. This swagger has rubbed off on most Congressmen. They admit that this was in stark contrast to the session's earlier half, as not them, but the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) had stolen the headlines. The satirical platform achieved what had been mission impossible for the entire Opposition for 12 long years of the NDA rule. The Gen Z anger made the BJP leadership sack a minister right in the middle of a Parliament session. The Congress had initially stayed away from the protests. And thus, couldn't claim victory for Dharmendra Pradhan's ouster. Rahul Gandhi entered the arena late with a foiled sit-in outside the Prime Minister's residence. Then he shifted the goalpost. For the Congressmen, that shift brought a note of triumph - and the swagger. The CJP's trophy was Pradhan's resignation. But Rahul Gandhi and the Congress needed a more visible hit. So he picked the pellet-hit protesters, the crackdown on the protesters, Delhi Police's fumbles, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's silence on these to build a "missing" narrative. He wanted Shah to tell the House who ordered the crackdown. The government dug its heels in. Its gladiators laid down the rules for a statement by Shah. No dialogue till

there is disruption.

The remnants of the depleted INDIA bloc, after the DMK's exit and the TMC's desertions, realised the potential of the manufactured deadlock. The target was Shah - the man anointed by the BJP as 'Chanakya', the man who cracked the Article 370 code and decimated the Naxal threat. As the monsoon session ends, Rahul Gandhi is being credited by his party as the leader who made Shah squirm. A senior Congress leader bursting with pride told me, "Shah's aura is gone". That's the trophy with which the Opposition departed from the session.

But The Government Hasn't Lost Either

The latest monsoon session is an outing the government would perhaps like to forget. On day one, it had swarms of protesters battling on the streets to reach Parliament. Within days, it had to ease out Pradhan. Its attempts to stitch the numbers for the reintroduction of the Delimitation bill have not reached fruition. Its FCRA bill has faced internal dissent, external protests, and nudges from global superpowers. But does the government qualify to be a loser if the Opposition won? The answer is buried in the session track. In modern conventions, the Opposition can be called a winner if a key government legislation is defeated or a session is a wash-out and no legislation is passed. Put these parameters on paper, juxtapose the statistics from the session, and the picture gets muddled. The victor-loser lines blur. Although the government is not walking with a winner's swagger, it has its own collection of trophies from this session. The monsoon session of Parliament may have stayed log-jammed by the Opposition, but it was not a complete washout. The big-ticket FCRA or the Delimitation Bills may not have seen daylight, but the government managed to push through some 20-odd bills or legislation despite the din. Al-



most every bill listed for introduction at the start of the session was passed. Sample this. The theme of the session was crafting a new political recipe to seduce the 'Generation Z'. With the coveted demography in focus, the Opposition couldn't disrupt the passing of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill. By bringing stricter rules against exam paper leaks, the government offered an olive branch to Gen Z. Since the Opposition was under public scrutiny, the Bill saw 11 hours of debate in the Lok Sabha and 7 hours and 14 minutes in the Rajya Sabha. The government managed to pass the Bill for renaming Kerala as 'Keralam'. The Opposition couldn't stop the BJP's pet project, The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, which stems from declarations made in the Constituent Assembly by Dr Rajendra Prasad on January 24, 1950, stating that Vande Mataram holds a status equal to Jana Gana Mana. Then there is the shortage of judges in the Supreme Court; the government's Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2026, which increases the sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court of India from 34 to 38 judges (including the Chief Justice of India), sailed through.

But Who Lost - And How?

The government took four days after the July 20 protests to ease out Pradhan. The Opposition claimed it had a reason to disrupt the proceedings. Then, in a clever pivot, Rahul Gandhi asked Amit Shah to respond. On

the penultimate day, the Home Minister spoke. He dared the Opposition to submit a letter to the Speaker for a debate by 2 pm. "I am ready to answer the Opposition's questions on the police action." But the Opposition rejected Shah's proposal and said it was not interested in the Home Minister's "lectures". There are reasons why the issue never got resolved. The Opposition wasn't interested in a Shah response, as it would have diluted the "weak-Home-Minister" campaign it had constructed so carefully. The government, in turn, was hesitant to field the Home Minister all these days as it knew that once Shah spoke, the Opposition's next demand would be an apology by the Prime Minister.

So, the deadlock wasn't parliamentary; it was political. But the parallel fact alongside the deadlock and disruptions is the passing of some 20-odd bills during the session. They sailed through despite the Opposition's disruptions. Initially, the Opposition's strategy involved sloganeering and holding up placards while bills were being introduced or passed. But it soon realised that on the floor of the House, the government's numerical strength mattered more than its lung power, and that the bills were being pushed and passed despite the commotion. In the fading moments of the session, the Opposition changed tack. It started staging walkouts in the Rajya Sabha after sloganeering. That worked for both the government and the Opposition. The government got its bills, and the Opposition, its spectacle.

Tiranga Rally Held at Rampachodavaram

Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, August 13: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar called upon citizens to actively participate in Independence Day celebrations and contribute to the nation's development. As part of the Centre's 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, a grand Tiranga rally was organised on Thursday from the ITDA office to Ambedkar Centre at Rampachodavaram. The rally, spanning about 350 metres, was attended by Collector K. Dinesh Kumar, Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, OSD Javali, RDO K. Swathi, DSP Ashraf Ali and students from various schools.

The Collector urged people to hoist the national flag at their homes and promote patriotism and national unity. He also appealed to everyone to plant a sapling on August 14 and



15 and contribute to environmental protection. He reiterated his commitment to the development of tribal areas, protection of tribal, forest and land rights, and safeguarding tribal laws, culture and traditions. A pledge was also administered on contributing to the 'Swarna Andhra-2047, Vision-2047' goals. Deputy

Directors Rukmandayya and Sheikh Ahmed Shareef, DEO G. Sriram Murthy, DWMA PD Ram Prasad, ICDS PD K. Uma, District Horticulture Officer Devadanam, DDO Venka tanarayana, APO General DNV Ramana, District Malaria Officer Bhaskar, Tahsildar C.H. Balaji, MPDO Prasad, Deputy

MPDO Haribabu, DCHS Sambasiva Rao, Dr. Neelima, RI Nirmala, DE Nagaraju, CI Prasad, SI Ramesh, Principal Srinivasa Rao, A. Satyanarayana, Erramsetti Raju, HDFC Manager Teegala Muralikrishna, along with P.Ds, P.ETs, teachers, students and officials from various departments participated.

Alternative GO Sought to Protect Tribal Rights



Paderu, Pen Power, August 13: Araku MP Dr. Gumma Tanuja Rani met President Droupadi Murmu and urged immediate mea-

sures to protect the rights, employment and educational opportunities of tribal communities in Scheduled Areas.

The MP requested the introduction of an alternative government order to GO No. 3 in view of the Supreme Court judgment, en-

suring greater representation for local tribal people in government jobs, including teaching posts. She also sought a special policy to strengthen education and employment opportunities for tribal youth.

Tanuja Rani stressed the importance of strict implementation of the 1/70 land transfer law to protect tribal lands and livelihoods. She also urged protection of the constitutional rights and special safeguards provided to tribal communities in Scheduled Areas. The MP said the President responded positively and assured that the issues would be taken up with the Prime Minister, Governor, Chief Minister, Union ministries and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes for appropriate action.

Awareness Rally on Organ Donation

Kakinada, Pen Power, August 13: On the occasion of World Organ Donation Day, Medicoover Hospitals, Kakinada organised an awareness rally and flash mob on Thursday to promote organ donation among the public.

Kakinada District SP G. Bindhu Madhav and District Medical and Health Officer Dr. K. Anita flagged off the rally from the District Police Office to Bhanugudi Junction.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Bindhu Madhav said organ donation offers an opportunity to give a new lease of life to another



person. She called upon youth to dispel misconceptions about organ donation and spread awareness in society.

Students also performed a flash mob highlighting the

importance of organ donation. Additional SP (Admin) Dr. Mahanti Kishore Kumar, SB DSP K.V.V. Satyanarayana, Medicoover Hospital staff, KUDA Chairman Satya Talatam and stu-

dents from Aditya, Adarsha and other colleges participated.

The programme carried the message: "Organ Donation – A New Life for Another."

India's Space Achievements Inspire Youth



Gandepalli, Pen Power (Surampalem), August 13: National Space Day-2026 was celebrated at Aditya University to commemorate India's achievements in space research and promote scientific thinking, technical

skills and innovation among students. The event was organised by the Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) in association with IEEE Signal Processing Society Student Branch

Chapter and IEEE Vizag Bay Section ComSoc Joint Chapter. Around 250 students from Aditya University, Ideal Institute of Technology, NRI University, KL University and Sir C.R. Reddy College of Engineering participated. Chief Guest Dr. T. Sudheer Kumar, Professor of ECE at Vishnu Women's University, highlighted the importance of signal processing in satellite communication, radar, satellite imaging, remote sensing and telemetry, as

well as emerging fields such as AI and computer vision. Students participated in AI-based poster and model presentations and a quiz on space technology. Winners were presented with prizes and certificates. Deputy Pro-Chancellor Dr. M. Srinivasa Reddy, Registrar Dr. G. Suresh, ECE Head Dr. C.H. Janakidevi, IEEE Student Branch Counsellor Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao and School of Engineering Dean Dr. G. Sridevi attended the programme.



Rajya Sabha MP Chintakayala Vijay Supports Martyrs' Families

Anakapalli, Pen Power, August 13: Rajya Sabha MP Chintakayala Vijay donated his first month's salary of Rs.3 lakh towards the welfare of families of Army personnel who sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation.

He handed over the donation cheque to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Vijay said it was everyone's responsibility to support the families of soldiers who dedicate their lives to protecting the country. His gesture of donating his first salary has been widely appreciated.

Voter List Revision to Be Completed Transparently



Rajamahendravaram, Pen Power, August 13: East Godavari District Electoral Roll Observer K. Madhavi Latha directed officials and political parties to work in coordination and ensure a transparent and credible final electoral roll. During her first review meeting with political party representa-

tives, Electoral Registration Officers, supervisors and BLOs at the District Collectorate on Thursday, she said all stages of the Special Intensive Revision process should be carried out transparently. She instructed officials to ensure that no eligible voter is left out and to properly docu-

ment notices, claims, hearings and supporting documents. District Collector Keerthi Chekuri said special arrangements had been made at the Collectorate for quality checks of notices and claims disposed of by EROs. She said ASD voter lists were being displayed at polling stations and

Tahsildar offices, besides being uploaded on the district and Election Commission websites. The deadline for filing objections is August 30, while disposal of notices and claims will continue until September 28, 2026. The final electoral roll is scheduled to be published on October 3, 2026.

Speed Up Voter Registration Process: Collector

Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 13: Vijayawada District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeesh directed officials to speed up voter registration and ensure timely disposal of applications. During a video conference chaired by Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav, the Collector reviewed polling stations, voter registration and Forms 6, 7 and 8. Officials were advised to conduct special enrolment camps in colleges and educational institutions for youth aged 18-20 and promote voter registration through social



media. The CEO also directed officials to resolve minor issues faced by women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities and residents of hilly areas at the ERO/AERO level

without requiring them to visit distant offices. Collector Lakshmeesh said 57% of notices had been delivered and around 9,000 Form-6 and 6,000 Form-8 applications pend-

ing beyond the prescribed period were being processed on priority. Special voter awareness programmes will be conducted on August 22, 23, 29 and 30.

Electoral Roll Observer Inspects Polling Stations

Rajamahendravaram, Pen Power, August 13: East Godavari District Electoral Roll Observer K. Madhavi Latha inspected several polling stations in the Rajamahendravaram Urban and Rural constituencies on Thursday to review the implementation of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) programme. She reviewed voter list verification, corrections, new voter enrolment and deletion of names of deceased voters as per Election Commission guidelines. At Polling Station No. 155 in Gopal Nagar, she reviewed voter numbers, awareness activities and the progress of door-to-door verification.

In the Rural constitu-



ency, she inspected Polling Station No. 100 at Hukumpeta along with District Revenue Officer/ Rural ERO S. Bhaskar Reddy and Tahsildar Srinivas. She also re-

viewed the uploading of SIR data by BLOs through the mobile application and instructed officials to provide clear information to voters regarding additions, dele-

tions and corrections. Municipal Commissioner Rahul Meena, MPDO Armstrong, election officials, supervisors and BLOs participated in the inspection.

Voter List Revision to be Completed Transparently

- Special Awareness Drives on August 22, 23, 29 & 30



Kakinada, Pen Power, August 13: District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad directed officials to complete the Special Intensive Revision-2026 of electoral rolls transparently and within the Election Commission's prescribed schedule. During a video

conference chaired by Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav, the progress of notices, BLO meetings, draft rolls and Forms 6, 7 and 8 was reviewed. The Collector said notices had been issued for all 1,822 polling stations in the district. Of 31,695 notices issued, 7,335

have been delivered, while efforts are underway to deliver the remaining 24,360 notices. A total of 7,724 Form-6 applications, 219 Form-7 applications and 5,174 Form-8 applications are pending and will be disposed of after due verification. Special voter aware-

ness programmes will be conducted at booth level on August 22, 23, 29 and 30. Claims and objections can be submitted until August 30, with disposal targeted by September 28. The final electoral roll will be published on October 3, 2026, the Collector said.

Electoral Roll Observer Inspects Polling Booths

Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, August 13: Electoral Roll Observer V. Prasanna Venkatesh inspected polling booths in the Rampachodavaram constituency on Thursday and reviewed the voter list revision process. He inspected polling booths 179 in Maredumilli village and 172 in Kutravada village, checking voter numbers, awareness activities and basic facilities. He directed BLOs to ensure that all eligible 18-year-olds are enrolled as voters and that corrections and deletions in the electoral roll are carried out carefully. The Observer also visited the Ekalavya Model Residential School at Pedagedda village and reviewed student strength, teaching, food quality, classrooms, kitchen, storage facilities and cleanliness. He instructed officials to strictly follow the



prescribed menu and provide fresh, hot food to students daily. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, RDO K. Swathi, Tahsildar Ammaji, Deputy Tahsildar Dorakayya and Principal Sharma were present.



Gangothri Shines at National Badminton Championship

Paderu, Pen Power, August 13: Alluri District Joint Collector Tirumani Sripooja, IAS, congratulated badminton player Rajana Gangothri for her impressive performance at the National Badminton Championship. At an event held at the Collectorate on Thursday, the Joint Collector felicitated Gangothri and wished her greater success at national and international levels, bringing recognition to the district and state. The National Badminton Championship for the Deaf was held at the Jwala Gutta Academy of Excellence in Moinabad, Telangana, from August 3 to 5. Vijayawada's deaf athletes competed against seven regional teams and secured third place in the overall team category, winning the trophy.

Steps to Appoint Banking Correspondents in Every Village



Rampachodavaram, Pen Power, August 13: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar directed banks to take steps to provide banking services in remote villages and appoint banking correspondents (BCs) in every village.

At a district-level bankers' review meeting held at the ITDA conference hall on Thursday, the Collector reviewed rural banking services, financial inclusion, PM Jan Dhan accounts and loan disbursements. He suggested selecting edu-

cated local youth as BCs and providing them with proper training.

The meeting noted that priority-sector lending for 2025-26 exceeded the target of Rs.410 crore, with Rs.466.85 crore disbursed, achieving 113.86%. Against

the overall loan target of Rs.635 crore, banks disbursed Rs.703.42 crore, achieving 110.77%. The Collector also reviewed PM Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar linking, RuPay cards, loans to farmers and women's groups, fisheries, dairy and small industries. He directed officials to create greater awareness of government schemes and strengthen banking services across the district's 836 villages. Regional Bank Managers Nirmala Jyothi, Satish, Prasad Rao and Kiran Kumar, NABARD Manager Chakradhar, LDM Pradeep, Convener Gorle Bujji Babu, DRDA PD Dr. Ratnakar Rao and officials from various departments participated. The Collector later released pamphlets on micro and small industries.

High-Level Review on Velugonda Project and Displaced Families' Issues



Markapur, Pen Power, August 13: A high-level review meeting on the progress of the Poola Subbaiah Velugonda Project, rehabilitation colonies and issues of displaced families was held at the Markapur District Collectorate on Thursday. State Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu and State En-

dowments Minister and Markapur District In-charge Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy chaired the meeting. Officials briefed the ministers on the progress of project works, rehabilitation measures, basic infrastructure in colonies and pending demands of displaced families. The ministers directed officials to complete the

pending project works within the stipulated time and implement the assurances given to displaced families without delay. They also instructed officials to provide drinking water, roads, electricity and schools in the rehabilitation colonies on a priority basis and resolve the issues of displaced families sympathetically.

District Collector Vijaya Sunitha, Kanigiri MLA Dr. Mukku Ugra Narasimha Reddy, Markapur MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy, Giddalur MLA Mutthumula Ashok Reddy, Udayagiri MLA Kakarla Suresh, Yerragondapalem TDP in-charge Gudur Eriksson Babu, Joint Collector Puli Srinivasulu and Velugonda Project officials attended.

Complete SIR Notice Distribution by August 31: Collector



Paderu, Pen Power, August 13: Alluri District Collector T. Nishanthi directed officials to complete 100% distribution of notices under SIR-2026 by August 31.

Following a video conference chaired by Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav, the Collector reviewed the progress with EROs and AEROs. She instructed officials to speed up notice distribution and the verification process, ensuring that notices are delivered directly to the concerned voters.

Officials to focus on the timely disposal of Forms 6, 7 and 8, rationalisation of polling stations and

strict implementation of the latest Election Commission guidelines. The Collector stressed that

the SIR process should be completed transparently and efficiently without any delay.

Free 45-Day Skill Training for Kondareddy Tribal Youth



Rampachodavaram, August 13: ITDA Project Officer and Joint Collector S. Prashanth Kumar announced a free 45-day residential skill training programme in Dry Wall False Ceiling (DWFC) for Kondareddy (ST) youth. The training will begin in Vijayawada on August 17. Kondareddy ST male candidates aged 18-35 are eligible. A total of 20 candidates will be selected, with free accommodation and training provided. Successful trainees will receive NSDC certification and assistance in securing employment, with starting salaries of up to Rs.15,000 per month. Interested candidates should register at the ITDA office, Rampachodavaram, by tomorrow evening. For details, contact Shirisha (6302131385) or AO, ITDA (9573938533).

Organ Donation is a Gift of Life: Collector Rajababu



Ongole, Pen Power, August 13: District Collector P. Raja Babu urged people to come forward and support organ donation, calling it a noble service that can save lives. On the occasion of World Organ Donation Day, KIMS Hospitals,

Ongole organised a 3-km awareness walk to highlight the importance of organ donation. Collector P. Raja Babu and District SP V. Harshavardhan Raju attended the programme, while Ongole DSP Rayapati Srinivasa Rao flagged off

the walk. DSP Srinivasa Rao said one person's organ donation can help save several lives and stressed the need for greater public awareness. The walk began at the Collectorate and concluded at the SP Office. Doctors, medical and nurs-

ing staff, students, volunteers and members of the public participated with placards and slogans promoting organ donation. KIMS Hospital COO K. Anki Reddy, Dr. T. Sri Hari Reddy, consultants and other doctors also participated.

Grand 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Rally Held in Vijayawada

Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 13: A grand 'Har Ghar Tiranga' rally was organised in Vijayawada on Thursday to promote patriotism and national unity ahead of Independence Day. The rally, organised by the district administration, began at the Collectorate and concluded at Indira Gandhi Stadium. Students, youth, sportspersons, officials, police personnel and members of the public participated in large numbers, carrying the national flag. The city echoed with slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram."

District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeesh said citizens should remember the sacrifices of freedom fighters and contribute to nation-building. He called upon people to set goals for the



development of their villages, cities, state and country towards 2047. Commissioner of Police S.V. Rajasekhara Babu said the rally would strengthen patriotism and national unity and urged people to work collectively towards the Swarna Andhra-2047 vision. Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner H.M. Dhyan Chand said the enthusiastic participation would help take the spirit of 'Har Ghar Tiranga' to every household.

Viksit Bharat, Swarna Andhra 2047 Should Be Everyone's Goal: Collector

Ongole, Pen Power, August 13: District Collector P. Raja Babu called upon people to set individual goals and contribute towards achieving the Viksit Bharat and Swarna Andhra-2047 vision.

Around 3,000 students, government employees, local leaders and citizens participated in a grand Tiranga rally from Prakasam Bhavan to the Mini Stadium on Thursday, carrying the national flag and raising patriotic slogans. Addressing the gathering at the Mini Stadium, Collector Raja Babu said the freedom enjoyed today was the result of the sacrifices of great freedom fighters. He urged youth to play an active role in making India a leading nation in all sectors. He said



special programmes including Har Ghar Tiranga, selfie campaigns, tree plantation and Tiranga rallies were being organised for five days

to promote patriotism and awareness about the values of the freedom struggle. The participants took a pledge to contribute to the Viksit

Bharat and Swarna Andhra-2047 goals. Joint Collector Kalpana Kumari and senior district officials also participated in the rally.

Independence Day Arrangements Intensified

Markapur, Pen Power, August 13: District SP V. Harshavardhan Raju inspected the arrangements for the 80th Independence Day celebrations scheduled to be held at SVKP Degree College premises on August 15. The SP reviewed the parade ground, stage, security, traffic, parking and public facilities with officials and directed them to ensure adequate security and prevent inconvenience to visitors.

He also inspected the police parade rehearsal, received the ceremonial salute and hoisted the national flag. Reviewing the parade from the vehicle, he advised personnel to maintain discipline and coordination and participate with greater enthusiasm on Independence Day. OSD Navajyothi Mishra, SB Inspector



Nageswara Rao, DSP U. Nagaraju, RI Ramana Reddy, Town SI Viswanatha Reddy and other officials and personnel participated.

Grand Celebrations Planned for 80th Independence Day



Kakinada, Pen Power, August 13: The 80th Independence Day celebrations will be held grandly at the Kakinada Police Parade Grounds on August 15 at 9 AM, District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad said. State Deputy Chief Minister and Minister K. Pawan Kalyan will attend the celebrations as the chief guest. The programme will include flag hoisting at 9 AM, police salute, the chief guest's address, a police parade, development tableaux, cultural programmes and presentation of appreciation certificates. The Collector urged public representatives, officials, invitees and citizens to reach the venue on time and participate in the celebrations.

SCLR Final Link Opens, Cuts Travel Time by 35 Minutes



Mumbai: The long-awaited final stretch of the Santacruz-Chembur Link Road (SCLR) is now open to the public, completing the integrated 10.30-km SCLR network between the Eastern Express Highway (EEH) and Western Express Highway (WEH). According to reports, the 1.40-km Bharat Nagar Road (University Area)-Vakola Junction Elevated Corridor, built under SCLR Extension Phase II, marks the final and critical link in the network,

which has been developed progressively since the original SCLR was opened. The final link of the Santacruz-Chembur Link Road is now open, completing the integrated 10.30-km SCLR network between the Eastern Express Highway and the Western Express Highway. With the Phase I extensions and completion of Phase II, the SCLR network now provides end-to-end, signal-free east-west connectivity across the Eastern Express Highway,

Western Express Highway, Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC), Santacruz, Chembur, Kalina, Mumbai University, Tilak Nagar, Kapadia Nagar and Kurla.

According to the latest data from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), the newly opened elevated corridor establishes seamless two-way connectivity between BKC and the WEH. Traffic from BKC will merge directly with the SCLR cable-stayed bridge,

while traffic from the WEH will move from the existing Vakola Flyover onto the new elevated corridor. According to the MMRDA, the extension is expected to reduce travel time by up to 35 minutes. The completed network will allow motorists to bypass Kalina, Vakola and Kalanagar, while also reducing travel time on key routes. The project has further strengthened connectivity to BKC, Mumbai University, Mumbai International Airport, major commercial hubs and surrounding residential areas. The fully operational corridor is expected to ease congestion on several of Mumbai's key arterial roads while improving commuter convenience, road safety and overall travel efficiency. It is also expected to help reduce fuel consumption, vehicle operating costs and vehicular emissions.

Kolkata Hospital Nurse Found Dead In Locked Toilet; Anaesthetic Vials, Syringe Recovered

Kolkata: A 30-year-old nurse was found dead inside a locked toilet at the state-run NRS Hospital in Kolkata on Wednesday night, police said on Thursday. Empty vials of anaesthetic injection and a syringe were found inside the toilet. A post-mortem examination was underway to determine the cause of death. West Bengal Health Minister Sharadwat Mukherjee and senior police officers rushed to the hospital after news of the death emerged on Thursday morning. The incident at the 150-year-old hospital has raised questions about what happened in the period between the nurse disappearing from duty and being found inside the toilet. Kolkata, West Bengal: A 30-year-old nurse, Rupali Burman, was found unconscious inside a toilet at Nil Ratan Sircar Medical College and Hospital and was later declared dead. She had been on duty in the Gyne-



cology Department's High Dependency Unit and had gone to the toilet around. A police officer said the nurse was on duty on Wednesday night when she disappeared around 9.40 pm. Hospital staff began look-

ing for her and noticed that the door of a toilet had remained locked for an unusually long time. "They shouted her name, but there was no response. They broke the door and found her lying inside," the officer

said, requesting anonymity, Hindustan Times reports. Doctors examined the nurse and declared her dead. Police said the body was found on the first floor of the maternity ward and the area was cordoned off.

Woman Beggar Assaulted After Toddler Touches Bike, Accused Booked



Kapurthala : A disturbing incident of alleged assault outside the Mata Shri Bhadrakali Temple in Kapurthala has sparked widespread outrage after a video of the incident surfaced on social media. The video purportedly shows a man assaulting a woman beggar who was sitting near the temple gate. According to information available in connection with the incident, the woman was accompanied by children when the altercation began. The incident reportedly

stemmed from a minor dispute. Sources said that children sitting with the woman allegedly touched or tampered with a motorcycle parked outside the temple. The motorcycle owner is accused of becoming enraged over the incident and attacking the woman. In the viral footage, the man can allegedly be seen pushing the woman to the ground and hitting her with his footwear. Some devotees and passers-by intervened and attempted to rescue her. However, the accused allegedly

returned and kicked the woman again. The video subsequently circulated widely online, triggering anger among members of the public and demands for strict action against the accused. The woman, reportedly frightened by the incident, did not initially approach the police to file a complaint. Following the circulation of the video and intervention by administrative and social groups, police took suo motu cognisance of the matter. The incident also drew objections from the

Women's Commission and the Human Rights Core Committee, which called for stringent legal action. DSP Sub-Division Sheetal Singh took charge of the investigation. According to the DSP, the accused was identified through a preliminary inquiry and examination of the video footage. "The person involved in the assault has been identified as Vikas Sharma, son of Pawan Kumar, a resident of Sheikhupur," DSP Sheetal Singh said. Police said Sharma runs a shop directly opposite the temple. Police have registered an FIR against Vikas Sharma at City Police Station under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). According to DSP Sheetal Singh, police teams are conducting raids to locate the accused and he is expected to be arrested soon.

PM Modi Calls Harsimrat Kaur, Checks on Sukhbir Badal's Health

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal's wife, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, over the phone and inquired about his health. Meanwhile, Badal got injured in an attack at a gurdwara in Nanded, Maharashtra, today. He sustained an injury to his hand and was taken to a hospital for treatment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday spoke to Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal's wife, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, over the phone and inquired about his health, as the SAD chief was attacked earlier in the day at a gurdwara in Nanded, Maharashtra. Following the attack, Badal sustained an injury to his hand. However, he was immediately rushed to a private hospital in Nanded for medical treatment. According to the initial reports, Badal was at-



tacked with a sharp-edged weapon near Mata Sahib Gurdwara in Nanded. During the attack, a police personnel from his security detail was also injured while intervening in the attack. Subsequently, the incident occurred around 11 am, after which Badal was admitted to a hospital, as confirmed by Nanded Police. Inspector Santosh

Kendre, who was part of his security detail, was also attacked and sustained injuries. Police have detained one alleged attacker. The reports state that the assailant was Nihang Singh. Reacting to the incident, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has ordered an inquiry into the matter. Fadnavis, who also spoke to Sukhbir Singh

Badal on the phone, has sought information about the incident from the Nanded Superintendent of Police. Meanwhile, the reports state that Badal's condition is reported to be stable now. Further details in the case are awaited to know who the attacker is and what made him attack Badal, as an investigation into the matter is underway.

2 Uttarakhand brothers return from Russia after 3-month ordeal

Dehradun : Following the intervention of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and sustained efforts by the state government, two brothers from Pithoragarh, Anand Singh Karki and Bhupendra Singh Karki, who had been stranded in Russia for nearly 97 days, have safely returned home. According to a press release issued by the Chief Minister's Office, following their safe return, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami spoke to the two brothers over the phone and enquired about their well-being. He also spoke with the youths and their family members, taking detailed information about the entire episode. The family expressed relief at the safe return of their sons after a pro-

longed period and thanked the Chief Minister for his sensitive intervention and prompt efforts. According to the information available, the two brothers had been promised better employment opportunities abroad through a travel agency based in Sitarganj. The family alleged that they were charged around Rs 8 lakh in the name of securing employment, following which the brothers were sent to Russia. The two brothers left India on May 5, 2026, and reached Moscow on May 6. According to their family, after arriving in Russia, they were not assigned the work for which they had been sent abroad. Instead, they were allegedly made to perform other tasks against their wishes and were not



paid for the work. The family further stated that the two youths were not allowed to move around freely and were threatened when they refused to work. As they were unable to maintain regular contact with their family for a prolonged period, concern

over their safety continued to grow. During their last communication, the youths had also informed their family about drone or missile attacks in the vicinity of the premises where they were being kept, further deepening concerns about their safety.

Fadnavis Launches 4 MMRDA Projects, Boosts Mumbai Connectivity

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated four major infrastructure projects by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), aimed at improving connectivity and reducing traffic congestion in Mumbai. The four projects include the elevated road from Bharat Nagar Road, University Campus to Vakola Junction on SCLR-2, Chembur Metro Station under Phase 1A of Metro Line 2B, the launch of TBM-2 from the Thane side for the Thane-Borivali



Twin Tunnel project and the naming of the BKC flyover after Barrister Babasaheb Anantrao Bhosale. Speaking during the virtual inauguration, CM Fadnavis said, "Through MMRDA, we are inaugurating four important projects today.

To decongest the BKC G-Block, six links had to be prepared. But today, eight links have been completed." He said the Phase-2 landing of the elevated corridor at Bharat Nagar Road and Vakola Junction had caused some congestion on the Western Express Highway, but traffic was being managed. Fadnavis said Metro Line 2B was in its final stages and its completion would provide better connectivity to Mumbai. "Once all the integration is done, at least 90 lakh commuters will travel daily. The Central Government has

taken a very good decision," he said. Speaking about local train services, Fadnavis said local trains should be made as good as metro services. He said new automatic air-conditioned local trains would arrive by March 2030. "Travelling by metro and local train will become much easier now," he said. On the Thane-Borivali Twin Tunnel project, Fadnavis said the 23-km journey between Thane and Borivali, which earlier took around 90 minutes, would take a maximum of 12 minutes after the project is completed.

IndiGo flight from Kolkata lands safely in Chennai after left engine issue; full emergency withdrawn

Chennai : A full emergency was declared at Chennai Airport for IndiGo flight 6E-723 from Kolkata to Chennai after the aircraft developed a left engine inoperative condition, the Chennai Airport Authority said. Following the declaration, necessary emergency response arrangements were put in place to facilitate the safe arrival of the aircraft. The aircraft landed safely on Runway 25 at 11:37 PM with 224 persons on board. "A Full Emergency was declared at 2329 IST for flight 6E-723, operating from Kolkata (CCU) to Chennai (MAA), due to a left engine inoperative condition. The aircraft was expected to arrive at 2337 HRS, with the scheduled time of arrival being 2330 HRS," as per Chennai Airport Au-



thority. The Full Emergency was declared at 11:29 PM, as the aircraft was expected to arrive at 11:37 PM, against its scheduled arrival time of 11:30 PM. The Full Emergency was formally withdrawn at 11:47 PM, and all operations at the airport are normal, the Chennai Airport Authority said. "Following the declaration of the Full Emergency, the necessary emergency response arrangements were initiated to

facilitate the safe arrival of the aircraft. The aircraft subsequently landed safely at 2337 IST on Runway 25, with 224 persons on board. Full Emergency was formally withdrawn at 2347 HRS. All operations normal," the statement read. Last month, an international IndiGo flight bound for Mumbai from Dubai was forced to execute an unscheduled emergency landing at Gujarat's Rajkot Airport after pilots

received an alert indicating smoke in the aircraft's lower cargo hold, airport authorities said. The flight crew responded swiftly to the mid-air warning, declaring an emergency and requesting priority landing clearance from Air Traffic Control (ATC) at Rajkot. Emergency response teams, including fire tenders and medical units, were immediately deployed alongside the runway as a precautionary measure.

Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Convenes Two-Day National Workshop on Anemia Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan with Participation of Over 160 Representatives from All States and UTs



New Delhi, August, 13 (PIB): Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare convened a two-day National Workshop on Anemia Mukh Bharat Abhiyaan (AMB) on 12–13 August 2026 in New Delhi, bringing together over 160 participants from all States and Union Territories, along with representatives from the Ministries of Education; Women and Child Development; Panchayati Raj; Youth Affairs and Sports; and Tribal Affairs, as well as experts and development and implementation partners. The workshop focused on strengthening the implementation of the revised AMB Abhiyaan and translating the 7×7 strategy

from policy into effective action on the ground across the country. The revised AMB Abhiyaan Operational Guidelines, launched by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Shri J.P. Nadda on 29 June 2026 during the Conference of Central Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW), mark a decisive shift in India’s approach to addressing anaemia. Moving beyond a programme focused primarily on supplementation and prophylaxis, the revised guidelines adopt a comprehensive, evidence-based approach centred on testing, case-based management, treatment compliance, consumption of a diverse and

nutritious diet, and digital tracking through integrated portals for effective monitoring of beneficiaries. Addressing the workshop, Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, called for stronger convergence across health programmes and closer co-ordination among ministries to address Anemia comprehensively with better-aligned interventions, screening efforts and service delivery platforms. She also flagged the need to strengthen public awareness and extend supplementation efforts beyond pregnancy to younger age groups through a life-course approach. Speaking

at the Occasion, Smt. Aradhana Patnaik, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, National Health Mission, stressed the importance of effective implementation of the revised AMB Abhiyaan framework at the State, district, facility and community levels. She highlighted the transition from the earlier 6×6 framework to the strengthened 7×7 approach stressing on improving consumption and compliance to iron supplementation, strengthening beneficiary participation through Jan Bhagidari, and ensuring that State-level innovations and field experiences translate into measurable improvements in programme performance.

She further emphasised on digital tracking through the AMB Abhiyaan digital platforms and its linkages to existing portals. Ms. Meera Srivastava, Joint Secretary (RCH), MoHFW, underscored the need for a paradigm shift from a static, compliance-focused approach to one centred on testing, tracking and timely resolution. She emphasised greater transparency and accurate understanding of prevalence of anemia across beneficiaries, beneficiary-level digital line-listing and data management and integration with other health programmes. Dr. Rajiv

Bahl, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research, highlighted the importance of an evidence-based approach to anemia management. He stressed on the importance of evidence-based programme planning, emphasizing on timely testing, severity- and cause-appropriate treatment, repeat testing after three months, healthy iron-rich diets, newer iron formulations where appropriate, and implementation research to strengthen programme effectiveness. Dr. M. Srinivas, Member, NITI Aayog, called for a collaborative, holistic and multi-sectoral approach to anemia management.

Leaderless Student Protests Pose New Challenge To National Politics



Spontaneous student protests across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh are exposing a vulnerability conventional politics has been slow to recognise. Their importance lies not merely in the numbers gathering on streets or outside examination centres and government offices, but in the absence of the organisational structure that usually accompanies political mobilisation. There is no single party directing the agitation, no recognised leader issuing instructions and, frequently, no organisation capable of calling the protests off. That makes the phenomenon unusually difficult for the Establishment to manage. Governments are accustomed to dealing with organised dissent. Political parties can be spoken to, unions negotiated with, student organisations pressured and leaders detained. An agitation with an identifiable command structure gives the administration several points of intervention. A movement formed through accumulated frustration, online communica-

tion and local networks presents a very different challenge. What is appearing across parts of north and central India is less a conventional movement than a political mood finding physical expression. The connecting issue is growing anxiety among students and young jobseekers over examinations, recruitment, alleged irregularities, delays and the wider uncertainty surrounding employment. Different protests may have different immediate triggers, but their political significance comes from the fact that grievances are travelling across state boundaries without requiring a national organisation to carry them. One group watches another challenge authority and discovers that protest is possible. That is where Jantar Mantar acquires an importance far larger than the geography of central Delhi. The demonstrations there involving young people, examination candidates and activists provided something formal political opposition has often failed to provide: an example of confrontation

without waiting for established political structures. Jantar Mantar became a demonstration effect. Its importance was not that every protester elsewhere subscribed to the same political argument. The larger message was simpler. Young people with a grievance could gather, speak directly to power, circulate images and videos online and force an issue into public discussion without first joining a political party. That possibility is potentially transformative. Conventional politics has long depended on intermediaries. A citizen takes a grievance to a local leader, who carries it to a legislator, who raises it within the party or government. Student politics similarly evolved through unions affiliated to larger ideological or political formations. The emerging pattern threatens that chain because young protesters increasingly appear willing to bypass it altogether. Technology has accelerated the change. A protest no longer requires weeks of organisational preparation. Messages can circulate

through WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels, Instagram posts, YouTube videos and local networks within hours. A grievance once confined to a university campus or district recruitment centre can rapidly become part of a larger narrative about fairness, opportunity and institutional credibility. Leaderless mobilisation has weaknesses. It can dissipate quickly, demands can become fragmented and negotiations can become difficult because governments may not know who genuinely represents protesters. Rumours can spread rapidly and political groups may attempt to appropriate the movement. Yet those weaknesses are also what make such protests unsettling. A government cannot easily end a leaderless agitation by persuading one leader to withdraw. Detaining a few organisers may have limited effect when mobilisation is distributed across hundreds of informal networks. Discrediting an organisation becomes harder when protesters do not feel they belong to one.

The deeper danger for the ruling establishment is not necessarily that these demonstrations will immediately become an electoral movement. It is that protest itself may become normalised among a generation largely outside the culture of traditional mass politics. Young people entering public life today have little connection with an era when political mobilisation required party offices, printed pamphlets, unions and established student leaders. Their arena is increasingly digital, immediate and decentralised. They are accustomed to forming communities around issues rather than institutions. That behavioural shift could gradually weaken the monopoly political parties have exercised over dissent. Opposition parties should not assume they will automatically benefit. Leaderless protests can be as sceptical of opposition politicians as they are of governments. Attempts by established parties to enter such movements may provoke suspicion if participants believe their grievances are being converted into electoral capital. That is precisely why Jantar Mantar matters as both inspiration and warning. It demonstrated that political visibility could be achieved without surrendering control to a conventional party structure. If that lesson spreads, traditional parties may find themselves competing not only against each other but against an entirely different form of political participation. The implications are particularly serious because many of the grievances involve aspiration rather than ideology. These are not necessarily young people mobilising around abstract doctrines. They are candidates seeking examinations on time, transparent recruitment, credible results and employment opportunities. That makes their anger harder to dismiss as parti-

san opposition. A generation repeatedly told that education, competitive examinations and skills provide routes to economic mobility will judge the political system by whether those routes actually work. When examinations are delayed, vacancies remain unfilled or recruitment processes become disputed, frustration begins to challenge the larger promise that effort will be rewarded. Once that confidence weakens, politics becomes unpredictable. Governments often treat student unrest first as a law-and-order problem. Barricades, police deployment, restrictions and negotiations may contain individual demonstrations, but they cannot easily resolve the perception that opportunities are narrowing while expectations continue to rise. This is why scattered protests deserve more attention than their immediate size might suggest. The real development is not simply that students are demonstrating in several states. It is that they appear to be learning from one another without belonging to one another. A centrally organised movement can be dismantled from the centre. A political mood cannot. Jantar Mantar may therefore prove more consequential as an idea than as a protest venue. It has shown how a relatively small gathering can become a national visual reference point through social media. Every subsequent demonstration that borrows its confidence or tactics enlarges that effect. For conventional politics, this represents both opportunity and danger. Parties capable of listening without immediately trying to control these movements may understand an emerging generation better. Those that continue to view every mobilisation through the old categories of government versus opposition may miss the larger transition.

Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) receives 20 bids under the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent

New Delhi, August, 13 (PIB): Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) receives 20 bids through Global Tender on CPP portal for Selection of Manufacturers for establishing integrated Sintered NdFeB Rare Earth Permanent Magnet Manufacturing Facilities under the “Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnet (REPM)”. On 26th November 2025, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the “Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Sintered Rare Earth Permanent Magnet (REPM)” with a financial outlay of Rs. 7,280 Crore. The Scheme Notification was issued by MHI on 15.12.2025. Request For Proposal (RFP) was floated on CPP portal on 20th March 2026. The pre-bid conference was held on 7th April 2026. The last date for receiving bids was 12th August 2026 on CPP portal and the Technical Bids were opened on 13th August 2026 in the presence of the bidders at MHI The Scheme, a first-of-its-kind initiative, aims to establish a total capacity of 6,000 Metric Tons Per Annum (MTPA) of integrated Rare Earth Permanent Magnet manufacturing facilities in India, thereby enhancing self-reliance and positioning India as a key player in the global REPM market. The scheme envisions allocating the total capacity to five beneficiaries through a global competitive bidding process. Each beneficiary will be allotted up to 1,200 MTPA of capacity. The total duration of the scheme will be 7 years from the date of award, including a 2-year gestation period for setting up an integrated REPM manufacturing facility, and 5 years for incentive disbursement on the sale of REPM. Rare Earth Permanent Magnets are among the most powerful magnets in the world and are widely used in electric vehicles, wind turbines, high-end electronics, aerospace and defence systems. By building a complete value chain from NdPr oxide to finished magnets in India, the Scheme is expected to significantly reduce import dependence in this sector. This initiative by the Government of India is a landmark step towards strengthening the domestic REPM manufacturing ecosystem and enhancing competitiveness in global markets. By fostering indigenous capabilities in REPM production, the scheme will not only secure the REPM supply chain for domestic industries but also support the nation’s Net Zero 2070 commitment. It embodies the Government’s unwavering commitment to build a technologically self-reliant, globally competitive, and sustainable industrial base, in line with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Over 5.63 Lakh Villages Covered with Liquid Waste Management Arrangements under SBM(G) Phase II

SBM(G) Phase II Focuses on Sustainable Sanitation and Greywater Management in Villages
New Delhi, August, 13 (PIB): Sanitation is a State subject. Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) [SBM(G)] Phase II is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by States/UTs in respective jurisdictions. SBM(G) Phase II was launched with effect from 1st April 2020, with the focus on ODF sustainability with Solid & Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) and visual cleanliness in villages i.e. to convert villages from ODF to ODF Plus (Model). Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) monitors the status of Grey Water Management (GWM) under SBM(G) Phase-II as reported by States/UTs on the SBM(G) Integrated Management Information System (IMIS). As per the information reported by the States/UTs on the SBM(G) IMIS, as on 07.08.2026, out of 5,86,944 villages 5,63,809 villages are reported to have been covered with Liquid Waste Management arrangements. As per the SBM(G) Phase-II guidelines, various interventions can be undertaken for GWM such as constructions of soak-pit, leach-pit, magic-pit or kitchen garden at household level and Waste Stabilization Ponds, Constructed Wetland, Decentralized Wastewater Treatment System (DEWATS) and Phytotrid Technology at community/village level. The SBM(G) IMIS does not capture details of category-wise rural drains (for example: open, closed, kutchra, or pucca drain) or unconnected or inadequate open drains. As per the data reported by States/UTs on SBM(G) IMIS, as on 07.08.2026, a total of 42,98,194 community GWM assets have been reported. The State/UT-wise details of community GWM assets created, including community soak pits, drainage facilities and community treatment systems, as per data reported by the States/UTs on SBM(G) IMIS may be seen at Annexure-I. DDWS, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India has been providing financial and technical support to the States/UTs for implementation of SBM(G) Phase-II. In each Financial Year, funds are allocated to States/UTs based on their approved Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), past performance and budget availability. States/UTs can plan for providing sanitation and SLWM facilities under the program as per demand, local preferences, etc. as per their AIP. Apart from budgetary support from DDWS and the corresponding State share, the remaining funds are to be dovetailed by States/UTs from the Finance Commission grants to Rural Local Bodies and MGNREGS/VB-G RAM G. States/UTs can also converge funds from other Central/State schemes, as applicable, CSR funds, MPLADS/MLALADS and revenue generation through business models, etc. In addition to the SBM(G) Phase II Operational Guidelines, technical manuals and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are provided by DDWS to States/UTs for capacity building of Gram Panchayats on various components of the programme. Under SBM(G) Phase II, for Greywater Management, financial support of up to Rs.280 per capita for villages up to 5000 population and up to Rs.660 per capita for villages above 5000 population is provided. In addition, awareness generation and capacity building interventions are conducted by States/UTs at various levels to promote community participation, behavioural change and capacity building regarding GWM, including for preventing stagnation of wastewater in rural areas.

India rolls out 19 customised passenger coaches for Bangladesh Railway

New Delhi : Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala, is set to achieve another significant milestone with the rollout of the first rake comprising 19 LHB broad gauge passenger coaches for Bangladesh Railway on Wednesday. The Ministry of Railways said in a press release that the first rake comprises 03 AC Sleeper Cars, 03 AC Chair Cars, 11 Non-AC Chair Cars and 02 Power Cars. These coaches incorporate several unique design features and modifications, many of which have been developed for the first time in LHB-type coaches. The release further mentioned that the coaches have been specially customised to meet the operational and passenger requirements of Bangladesh Railway. The seating arrangement incorporates specially designed reclining chairs with stainless steel armrests and stainless steel footrests, offering multiple reclining positions for enhanced passenger comfort. The coaches are equipped with a number of passenger-centric features, including fans in AC coaches, an inte-



grated CCTV surveillance system, a passenger alarm system, partially openable windows, a Baby Care Room and a Prayer Room. Considering the specific operating conditions, the roof structure has been strengthened to withstand additional loading arising from passengers travelling on the roof during peak traffic periods. The release highlighted that a major technological feature is the incorporation of crashworthy design provisions complying with European Standard EN 15227. This required a comprehensive redesign of the car body shell to enhance collision performance and passenger

safety. The electrical system of these coaches has also been specially designed for 415 V operation, as against the conventional 750 V system used in Indian Railways coaches. It noted how the association between the Railway Coach Factory and Bangladesh Railway began with the successful supply of 120 LHB broad gauge passenger coaches during 2015-16. Building upon this successful partnership, Bangladesh Railway once again entrusted RCF, through RITES, with a prestigious order in 2024 for the manufacture and supply of 200 broad gauge passenger coaches in seven variants.

PoJK: Activist raises concerns over elections, supplies and protests



Rawalakot : The situation in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) remains tense, with a political activist from Rawalakot raising questions about recent elections, ongoing protests, and supply disruptions. At the same time, Jammu and Kashmir Joint Action Committee (JKJAAC) senior leader Sardar Shabir alleged killings, arrests, curfews and restrictions on the movement of people. In a statement recorded from Rawalakot on Tuesday, the PoJK political activist spoke about elections held in some areas of PoJK on Monday. He said that in some areas, election results had been "adjusted and compromised", while reports concerning the results in Haveli were still emerging. He said the two parties were in conflict and that there were law-and-order concerns. Ques-

tioning the conduct of the elections, the activist said that people had opposed the polls while protests had continued for around two months. He added that the elections were "selected" and based on the establishment, and questioned why those now recalling protests had not raised the issue earlier. He further described the elections as "not democratic", saying that elections conducted under the influence of force could not be considered democratic. The activist also said there had been no progress or development that could currently be made public regarding the issues being discussed. According to the activist, people in Rawalakot remained peaceful, determined and enthusiastic while participating in rallies in and around the city. He said people were providing assistance to others and that ra-

tion and other supplies were reaching those in need. The activist said ration vehicles continued to operate, adding that supplies that had earlier been coming through Rajpatan were now stopped at Kota. He claimed that supply to the area had been completely shut down. Separately, JKJAAC senior leader Sardar Shabir, in a statement, described the situation in PoJK in strong terms, saying that target killings had taken place and accused Pakistani forces of bringing "murderers" into the region. Sardar Shabir also claimed of sexual violence against women and children and added that people had been killed by LMGs and snipers. He alleged that many young people had been injured and claimed that around 100 people had been killed. He also alleged that women and children were being held captive.

"We own it": Trump reiterates "total control" over Strait of Hormuz

Maryland : US President Donald Trump reiterated his claims of full control over the Strait of Hormuz while also warning Tehran against any actions that could see a strong response. He made the remarks while speaking to the media and accused Tehran of 'lying' to him. Trump said, "I don't trust Iran. I'm the last person who trusts Iran. They've lied to me constantly. We have total control over the Strait of Hormuz right now. They don't have control. We have total control. We own it." The US President further warned Iran against taking any action, saying that it could face a forceful re-

sponse. "And at some point, maybe they'll do something and then they get blown away." He added that the United States is in a "good position" and said, "Right now, we're in a very good position. We have a country that has been a bully of the Middle East for fifty years... They are no longer the bully of the Middle East." Trump's remarks come amid heightened tensions over the global energy chokepoint. Meanwhile, Iranian state broadcaster Press TV reported that Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei, underlined that the Strait of Hormuz had remained open from the time



of Prophet Adam's creation until February 28, 2026, while slamming the "dishonourable and unjust" sanctions from West-

ern parties. As per Press TV, Baqaei further doubled down on the 'US-Israeli aggression' for the situation in the Strait of Hormuz and

said, "Let us not forget that the situation surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and what happened to it was caused by the military aggression of the United States and the Israeli regime, which is still ongoing. As for claims that Iran has imposed conditions, they should take that matter up with their own government." Tensions continue to simmer over the global energy chokepoint. The Strait of Hormuz remains a major flashpoint in the ongoing US-Iran conflict, with discussions underway between Tehran and Oman over the arrangements for transit through the strategic waterway.

US: New Jersey, New York issue proclamation declaring August 15 as India Independence Day

New York : As the Independence Day celebrations kick off with fervor and enthusiasm across the world, while celebrating the enduring bonds of friendship, the American states of New York and New Jersey have proclaimed August 15, 2026, as India Independence Day. The Consulate General of India in New York shared the proclamations in a series of posts on X. The Consulate expressed gratitude to Governor Mikie Sherrill for proclaiming August 15, 2026, as "Indian Independence Day" in New Jersey. The Proclamation recognised the significant contributions of the vibrant Indian-American community to New Jersey across education, healthcare, research, technology, business, public service and community leadership. It also celebrated the enduring India-US friendship and the growing partnership across education, commerce, technology, healthcare and cultural exchange, the post mentioned. The proclamation high-

lighted how India's Independence Day honors the courage, vision, and sacrifice of the countless individuals whose peaceful movement for freedom inspired generations around the world and affirmed the universal principles of justice, equality, and human dignity. In another post on X, the Indian Consulate said, "New York joins in celebrating India's 80th Independence Day with a special recognition of the enduring bonds between India and the United States." Expressing gratitude to Governor Kathy Hochul for proclaiming August 15, 2026 as "India Independence Day" across New York State, the Consulate said on X that the proclamation celebrates India's journey of independence and the democratic values shared by India and the United States. "It recognizes the significant contributions of the Indian-American community to the cultural, economic and civic life of the Empire State," it added. The proclamation highlighted



how India's path to independence was forged by a collective commitment to virtues such as nonviolent resistance, championing truth, self-discipline, and moral courage and noted how the annual commemoration of India's Independence Day within the United States has evolved into a magnificent

testament to cross-cultural harmony, marked by vibrant festivals where multigenerational gatherings proudly honor the rich patriotic traditions of both nations, symbolizing the deep-seated bonds that unite the two great democracies. As India prepares to mark its milestone 80th Inde-

pendence Day, this year's celebrations will have a special focus on the commemoration of 150 years of 'Vande Mataram'. The milestone celebrations will place a heavy emphasis on 'Yuva Shakti' (youth power), honouring the success and contributions of students and young citizens.

Trump appoints staff secretary Will Scharf as new White House counsel, replacing David Warrington

Washington, DC : US President Donald Trump on Sunday announced that staff secretary Will Scharf will become the new White House counsel and assistant to the president, succeeding David Warrington, who is set to move to the private sector. Trump announced the decision in a post on Truth Social, saying Scharf will take charge as Assistant to the President and White House Counsel from September 1."It is my Great Honor to announce that, effective September 1st, Will Scharf will become Assistant to the President and White House Counsel, replacing a man, David Warrington, who has



done a truly outstanding job as White House Counsel and, before that, for my Presidential Campaign. David will be going on to the Private Sector," Trump said.

Scharf is currently serving as White House staff secretary and has also served as Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission. Trump said Scharf had done an "amaz-

ing job" in his current role."Will has done an amazing job in his current role as White House Staff Secretary, and has also served as Chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission. I know Will well! He previously represented me in numerous cases, including at the Supreme Court, during the Biden Administration's corrupt and illegal campaign of Weaponization. He also previously served as a Federal Prosecutor, worked as an attorney in private practice, clerked for two Federal Appeals Court Judges, and was a top student at both Princeton University, and Harvard Law School," he

said. Trump described Scharf as "Tough, Strong, and Smart! He also loves our Country, and respects the Law. Will Scharf will do a great job as White House Counsel!" Fox News reported that Scharf, who received an undergraduate degree from Princeton University and a law degree from Harvard University, has clerked for two federal appeals court judges. Further, CNBC reported that Trump said White House Counsel David Warrington is moving to the private sector. Warrington previously served as Trump's personal attorney and legal adviser for his 2024 presidential campaign.

Taiwan detects 1 Chinese aircraft, 9 naval vessels, 11 official ships around its territory

Taipei : Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) said it detected one sortie of Chinese military aircraft, nine vessels of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and eleven official ships operating around Taiwan's territorial waters. In its daily security update shared on social media platform X, the ministry said one out of the one detected Chinese military aircraft sorties entered Taiwan's southwestern Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). In a post on X, the MND said,"1 sortie of PLA aircraft, 9

PLAN vessels and 11 official ships operating around Taiwan detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 1 out of 1 sortie entered Taiwan's southwestern part ADIZ. #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded." MND said it detected 4 sorties of PLA aircraft, 6 PLAN vessels and 9 official ships operating around Taiwan up until 6 am. The ministry said 2 out of the 4 aircraft sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern and southwestern Air Defence

Identification Zone (ADIZ). "4 sorties of PLA aircraft, 6 PLAN vessels and 9 official ships operating around Taiwan were detected up until 6 a.m. (UTC+8) today. 2 out of 4 sorties crossed the median line and entered Taiwan's northern and southwestern part ADIZ. #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded," MND wrote on X. Meanwhile, Focus Taiwan reported how earlier in June, Taiwan's first domestically built submarine departed from the Port of Kaohsiung for its



latest round of sea trials that included dive tests. Citing the Military News Agency, Focus Taiwan said that the trial marked the submarine's 15th sea trial overall and ninth submerged navigation test. The development comes amid the backdrop of China continuing to increase the intensity of its military activity around Taiwan. China's claim over Taiwan is a complex issue rooted in historical, political, and legal arguments. Beijing asserts that Taiwan is an inseparable part of China, a viewpoint embedded in national

policy and upheld by domestic laws and international statements. Taiwan, however, maintains a distinct identity, functioning independently with its government, military, and economy. Taiwan's status remains a significant point of international debate, testing the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, and non-interference in international law, as per the United Service Institution of India. China's claim to Taiwan originates from the Qing Dynasty's annexation of the island in 1683 after defeating Ming loyalist Koxinga.

Pressure Mounts on Young Hero After Anupama's Breakup Talk



Anupama Parameswaran has created a major storm with her recent comments about her past relationship. During an interview, the Tillu Square star made some startling remarks about her ex-boyfriend, calling him a narcissistic person and saying that he behaved like Aparichitudu, a man with split personality. Her comments quickly became a hot topic on social media and drew in a lot of support for Anupama. Now,

the discussion has shifted towards the young hero, who is a very young and popular Tamil actor.

Many feel that he should respond and share his side of the story so that the public can hear both perspectives. They believe it is unfair to the other person, as he has yet to reveal his side of the story and how was it like for him in the relationship.

However, another section

feels that responding now could make the situation even worse. Since the actor comes from a well-known star family, any statement from him is likely to attract massive attention and spark fresh debates online.

For now, the actor has maintained complete silence, while Anupama's comments continue to trend across social media platforms. Whether he chooses to react or stay quiet remains to be seen.

Ameer Log Trailer: Hyderabad Basti Vibes



Hyderabad's unmistakable local flavour comes alive in the theatrical trailer of Ameer Log, the maiden production venture from Awwal Number Productions. Backed by Madhavi Reddy Soma, directed by Ramana Reddy Soma, and co-produced by Manohar Reddy Manchuri, the film is presented by Spirit Media, headed by Rana Daggubati. The trailer which is out now revolves around a bunch of youngsters from a Hyderabad basti whose

lives are filled with cricket, friendship, street-side fun, family pressure, and dreams of finding a better future.

When a simple idea born out of a local feast turns into a biryani business called Kiraak Biryani, their ordinary lives take an unexpected turn.

MC Hari, Manoj, Sasidhar and Vedha Jalandharr appear perfectly in sync, bringing an easygoing chemistry to their characters. Their conversations and disagreements carry

a lived-in quality, giving the trailer a grounded feel. Ramana Reddy Soma built the film around the essence of Hyderabad, mixing youthful aspirations with local humour and emotion. SVK's cinematography gives the city a colourful presence, while Smaran Sai's energetic score enhances the mood. Ameer Log creates a promising impact through its trailer. The film arrives in theatres on August 21st.

Rajinikanth To Deliver Double Dhamaka With Just 3 Month Gap!

Superstar Rajinikanth is gearing up with two highly anticipated films arriving within a span of just three months. First in line is the highly anticipated Jailer 2, which hits the screens on October 15, 2026. Then it will be the biggie Dhamaka, which is expected to hit screens during the Pongal season in January 2027.

If these release plans materialize, Rajini fans will witness two big films in a very short period, and it will be a feast for them. Both projects have generated tremendous excitement, and trade circles believe they have the potential to emerge as major box-office successes.

Meanwhile, another interesting development is taking shape as Sivakarthikeyan's Seyon is also eyeing a Pongal 2027 release. However, there is also speculation that the film could move to another date if

Dharman officially locks the festive season.

The reason is simple. Both Dharman and Seyon are being produced by Kamal Haasan's banner. Industry observers feel the production house will surely prefer avoiding an internal box-office clash between two biggies.

As of now, the release dates have not been officially confirmed, but the discussion has already created buzz among fans. If Dharman arrives for Pongal 2027, it will be interesting to see which date Seyon takes. For now, all eyes are on the official announcements from the makers.



Dhruv Jurel at crossroads as Sri Lanka series offers Test career lifeline

Galle: Dhruv Jurel was a picture of concentration in the nets at the sweltering Galle, middling almost everything that came his way from pacers and spinners alike. Prior to that, he was an active presence in the fielding practice session, taking some tumbling catches at the cordon. Jurel's enthusiasm actually belied the career cross-road that he is standing currently. After a rather assured 100 against the West Indies at Ahmedabad in October last year, his next Test outings have produced — 44, 6, 14, 13, 0, 2, 19. More worryingly, he has been dismissed five times by spinners in those seven outings, and he will face an even more daunting task in the first Test here against the Sri Lankan tweakers, led by the irrepressible Prabath Jayasuriya. The inclusion of Sarfaraz Khan, who bats at the same slot as Jurel, is a warning for the wicketkeeper batter to tidy up his act or get replaced.

Sarfaraz has a wider range of shots against spinners — sweep, reverse sweep, shimmy down the track mixed with those late dabs and cuts past the point or gully fielders. In contrast, Jurel waits for spinners



to err to punish them, as he prefers a more risk-free approach. It may have its own advantages on rather flat pitches, but on a deck that offers variable

bounce or turn, like the one at Galle, it is fraught with danger. It's not really much about lack of skill sets but rather more about changing the modus op-

erandi to suit the conditions. So, it was not surprising to watch Jurel spending a bit of time with senior batter KL Rahul, who is the only batter to have Test experience on these shores, at nets. Rahul prepared extensively for this tour on specially prepared muddy pitches at Mumbai, and Jurel would certainly have wanted to pick his brain. India's bowling coach Mome Morkel underlined Rahul's role as a senior pro in the side. "You can explore and discuss and come up with the best combination. Experience is always handy. I think KL, the last couple of years the way he's been leading up front with batting has been exceptional. "That's a sort of communication that we expect from him, to speak to the guys here in the preparation at the nets as to what to expect here," said Morkel. But the former South African pacer knows that Jurel will have to find his own path in the middle. "I think the guys have learned a lot about their games individually over the last couple of months and that's one of the reasons why we've come out here 10 days earlier to give them the best opportunity to prepare.

PBKS spinner Harpreet Brar says respect for Virat Kohli remains despite IPL battles

New Delhi: Punjab Kings spinner Harpreet Brar has played down the talk surrounding his on-field exchanges with Virat Kohli, insisting there is no rivalry between the two and that a bowler's focus should remain firmly on the job at hand, regardless of who is batting at the other end. Brar, who has previously dismissed Kohli in the Indian Premier League (IPL), said the intensity seen between the two players is part of the competitive nature of franchise cricket and not a personal contest. For Brar, the respect for Kohli remains unchanged even when the two find themselves on opposite sides in an IPL game. "It's not like that. It's good for the team. There's nothing like a 'rivalry'. It's all a social media gimmick which starts there and dies there. I play for PBKS, he plays for RCB. I have only played



franchise cricket with him. We both want to do good for the team," Brar told IANS in an exclusive conversation on Thursday. Brar believes Kohli's enduring competitiveness is one of the qualities that has made him such a significant figure in Indian cricket. The spinner has also viewed that intensity as something younger players can learn from. "He has played

so many matches, and he plays the same way as he did when he was 18. His aggression on the ground is still the same. We have also learnt these things from him," he said. According to Brar, respect does not disappear simply because the two are competing. "But it's not like that. He is a legend of this game. He is one of the legends. Respect is the same for him on

and off the field." At the same time, Brar believes competitive cricket leaves little room for sentiment once the game begins. The objective, he said, is to perform for one's own side, irrespective of personal relationships. "But we do our job on the field. And we have learnt it from him only. He will never give an excuse saying, 'He is my friend, so I won't hit him for a four or six.' It's not like that. It's not possible. He wants to do well for his team; it's all jokes and fun. We have always learnt from him, and he is a great example for the future youngsters as to how cricket should be played," he added. Brar's own history with Kohli adds another layer to their encounters.

The PBKS spinner famously dismissed the former RCB captain in the same spell in which he also removed Glenn Maxwell and AB de Villiers.

Neeraj Chopra Foundation, Gopichand launch Indian School of Coaching Excellence

Hyderabad: Neeraj Chopra Foundation, Pullela Gopichand (Badminton Gurukul) and AISTS INDIA announced that they have come together to launch the Indian School of Coaching Excellence (ISCE), a first-of-its-kind initiative aimed at transforming coach education and strengthening India's sports ecosystem. With the vision of creating world-class coaches, ISCE will offer multidisciplinary coach development programmes that extend beyond technical training, integrating modern disciplines such as physical literacy, sports science, sports education, technology and career development to prepare coaches for the evolving demands of high-perfor-

mance sport. It will serve as a collaborative knowledge-sharing platform, working closely with government bodies, SAI, sports federations, associations, high-performance centres, academic institutions and the private sector to advance coaching excellence across India. Commenting on the ISCE, Pullela Gopichand said: "The future of Indian sport will be defined by the ecosystem we build. Coaches are at the heart of that ecosystem. ISCE is our effort to create a platform that combines global best practices with Indian experience, enabling coaches to continuously upskill, collaborate and lead with confidence. We believe this initiative can play a mean-



ingful role in shaping the next chapter of Indian sport." Neeraj Chopra, Founder of Neeraj Chopra Foundation and World and Olympic javelin Champion, said: "I firmly believe that every athlete's journey is shaped by the

guidance and nurturing of his/her coach, not only as a sports person but also as an individual. Hence, in order to create the next generation of sports heroes in India, it is extremely important that our coaches have access to world-class education, mentorship and the latest knowledge in sports science and athlete development." "Through the Indian School of Coaching Excellence, the Neeraj Chopra Foundation hopes to create an environment where coaches continue to learn, evolve and inspire generations of athletes to realise their full potential," he said. ISCE's vision is to build a robust coaching ecosystem, which is essential to fuel and sustain India's long-term success on the world stage.

After Commonwealth Games gold, Sakshi Chaudhary targets Asian Games glory

New Delhi: Commonwealth Games gold medallist Sakshi Chaudhary said that she has already shifted her attention to the Asian Games 2026, with the Indian boxer determined to build on her impressive campaign in Glasgow and challenge for another major international title. Sakshi produced a dominant performance in the women's 51kg boxing category at the Commonwealth Games, defeating England's Ruby White 5-0 in the final to



claim the gold medal. The Indian remained unbeaten throughout the competition and maintained a perfect 5-0

unanimous-decision record from the pre-quarterfinals through to the final.

Her gold medal-winning performance in Glasgow was built on sharp movement, composed defence, accurate combinations and intelligent tactical adjustments. Against White in the final, Sakshi controlled the contest from the opening bell and secured a unanimous victory, with the judges' scorecards reading 30-27,

29-28, 30-27, 30-26 and 30-27. The triumph has given Sakshi further confidence ahead of the Asian Games, which are scheduled to begin in Japan on September 19. "Winning a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games is a dream come true moment for me. And now my complete focus is on the Asian Games. These are the platforms that I have always aimed at, and I want to give the best of my abilities," Sakshi said.