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Speeding Aston Martin Rams, Kills Woman In Hyderabad, MP's Son Charged



Hyderabad / New Delhi: After a 26-year-old woman was killed after being struck by an Aston Martin in Hyderabad, Rajya Sabha member Lingamaneni Ramesh's son, Lingamaneni Sanjush, 21, has been charged as he was driving the car allegedly at a high speed and in a rash manner. Victim Bharathi Mukhi, who worked at the Lifestyle clothing store at Inorbit Mall, died after she was hit by the car while crossing the road near her workplace in Madhapur area on August 16. The Cyberabad area police identified Sanjush, 21, whose father is a businessman and MP from Andhra Pradesh deputy CM Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena Party, as the person driving the car. He has not been arrested yet.

Madhapur Assistant Commissioner of Police Ch Sridhar asserted that a notice has been served on the accused. He has not been arrested as the offence is bailable and carries a maximum punishment of less than seven years, the officer said. How Crash Occurred, What Happened After According to the FIR, Bharathi and her colleague, Pooja Ashok Alone, 26, had gone towards the nearby ITC Kohenur area around 3 pm on Sunday to get lunch. When they were returning to their workplace, as Bharathi attempted to cross the road in front of the mall, she was allegedly hit by the Aston Martin (TG-09-G-0666). It left Bharathi with severe head injuries, and she bled heavily.

Supreme Court Sets Up Panel To Probe Cop Action Violence During NEET Protests

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday constituted a five-member High-Powered Expert Committee (HPEC) to examine allegations of excessive and disproportionate use of force by the police, paramilitary forces, and other security personnel against peaceful protesters assembled at Jantar Mantar in Delhi and other states against the NEET paper leak. The committee is headed by former top court judge Justice R Subhash Reddy. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said the committee would also comprise former Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Ravi Shankar Jha, former Delhi High Court Judge Justice Shalinder Kaur, former CBI Director Rishi Kumar Shukla and retired Meghalaya DGP L R Bishnoi. "This HPEC (High-Powered Enquiry Committee) has been constituted bearing in mind a wide variety of considerations, including the individual expertise and experience of each of its

members, as well as the diversity of the Committee, among other factors. "We are confident that the recommendations of the HPEC will be of invaluable assistance to this Court, and the Committee will be able to undertake a comprehensive assessment of all such issues as merit due contemplation," the bench said. The top court clarified that as a matter of abundant caution, the enquiry undertaken by the committee shall not be a one-time exercise. It asked the Committee to undertake a continuous and periodic assessment of the issues and

shall submit its interim findings periodically. The top court has directed that allegations of harassment and molestation - particularly those involving female protesters - be treated as a priority. Additionally, an inquiry will be conducted into the serious and severe injuries sustained by protesters during police action. Thousands of protesters, led by the Cockroach Janta Party, gave a call for march on Parliament on July 20, the first day of the Monsoon Session demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak.



Jharkhand Government's Order Cancelling JPSC, JSSC Exams Stayed By High Court

Ranchi: The Jharkhand High Court has stayed the state government's order cancelling the 11th and 13th Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) examinations and appointments, providing relief to newly appointed officers who had challenged the decision. The court passed the order while hearing various petitions filed by the newly appointed officers against the government's decision. This

development follows after the Chief Minister Hemant Soren-led Jharkhand government released a list of 44 recruitment examinations conducted by the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC) that were cancelled following irregularities, amid student protests over the issue. The government's orders came after a 25-day students' agita-

tion over alleged irregularities in the recruitment exams. It also announced the formation of a committee to examine reforms in the JPSC and JSSC examination system. The cancelled examinations include recruitment tests for drug inspectors, assistant professors, deputy collectors, dental doctors, assistant engineers, civil judges, additional public prosecutors and forest range officers, among others. The list



Protesters during Jharkhand government order cancellation. Lecturers in government polytechnics, senior scientific officers, assistant conservators of forests and various administrative and technical posts.

CM Chandrababu Providing Exemplary Governance: MP Sri Bharat

From Our Staff Reporter VISAKHAPATNAM, August 20: MP Sri Bharat welcomed the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet's decision to conduct Zilla Parishad (ZP) elections through a direct election system in the upcoming local body polls. On Thursday, the MP visited a photo exhibition organised by the Visakhapatnam Photojournalists Association at the museum. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed confidence that the alliance would emerge victorious in the local body elections. He said people in the state have been living peacefully since the alliance government came to power and praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for providing exemplary governance. The MP said the state has still not fully recovered from the alleged excesses of the previous government. He remarked that there is no strong opposition in the state and that those in the



opposition do not understand their role. He said the El Niño phenomenon is causing a water shortage. He alleged that some forces are using the situation to spread claims that data centres would lead to water scarcity. He said it would take another two years for the data centres to become op-

erational. Sri Bharat said the government is making alternative arrangements instead of depending solely on rainfall. He stated that Polavaram water is being brought to Visakhapatnam and added that water-related problems in South India would reduce once the rivers are interlinked.

From Our Staff Reporter AMARAVATI, August 20: Jana Sena is gearing up for the local body elections in Andhra Pradesh. A key discussion on the election strategy was held at the legislature party meeting chaired by Pawan Kalyan in Amaravati. The party reportedly decided to contest the local elections in a manner that respects the alliance principles followed during the Assembly elections and protects the self-respect of Jana Sena workers who stood by the party. Leaders felt that preparations should be made while

respecting the opinions and sentiments of party workers. Pawan Kalyan enquired about the party's position in the constituencies represented by all 21 Jana Sena MLAs in the state. Leaders also decided to identify other areas where the party has a strong presence and formulate a strategy for the local elections.

The MLAs expressed the view that conducting direct elections to municipalities and corporations would be beneficial. Pawan Kalyan instructed them to focus particularly on the party's strengths and



weaknesses in their respective constituencies. The meeting also discussed public requests regarding new ration cards and pensions in the constituencies. Pawan directed the MLAs to personally listen to the problems raised by

party workers and work towards resolving them. Calling upon the Jana Sena machinery to prepare for the local elections, Pawan made it clear that he would handle the issue of alliances. He instructed leaders and party workers not

to make statements contrary to the party line. Jana Sena intends to demonstrate its strength in the local elections while adhering to alliance principles and giving due importance to the sentiments of its workers.

More Roads to Amaravati to Become Operational Soon; Minister Reviews Progress

From Our Staff Reporter AMARAVATI, August 20: The government is preparing plans to make more roads available for entry into the capital city of Amaravati at the earliest. As part of this initiative, Municipal Administration Minister Narayana has focused on improving connectivity with other roads following the inauguration of the Seed Access Road. On Thursday, he reviewed the progress of construction works on the E-13, E-15, E-1 and E-3 roads with senior officials.

Officials informed Minister Narayana that the works on the E-15 road, which provides entry into Amaravati from Mangalagiri, are progressing rapidly. The E-13 road will provide access to Amaravati from National Highway-16 through AIMS. The minister directed officials to expedite the commencement of

works on the elevated corridor (Steel Bridge-Manipal Hospital) to be constructed as part of the third phase of the Seed Access Road (E-3). The E-1 road is being constructed up to Prakasam Barrage by widening the Karakatta parallel to the Seed Access Road. Officials informed the minister that most of the railway and other permissions required for the construction of these

roads are nearing completion. Minister Narayana directed the Guntur District Collector to take necessary measures to ensure that there are no obstacles to the road works. CRDA Commissioner Vijayaramaraju, Additional Commissioner Karthik, Guntur District Collector Saikanth Varma, and engineers from various departments attended the review meeting.



Ravishankar Elected as Senior Executive Member of SCBA

NEW DELHI, August 20: Jandhyala Ravishankar has secured a significant victory in the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) executive elections. He has been elected as a Senior Executive Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association. Jandhyala Ravishankar, who hails from Tenali in Guntur district, completed his law education at Acharya Nagarjuna University and began practising as an advocate in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh High Court. In the past, he served as a legal

adviser to Speakers of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly and Governors. He also argued before the Andhra



Pradesh High Court against the three-capital bill intro-

duced by the previous YSRCP government. Ravishankar has been practising as an advocate in the Supreme Court since 2023 and has appeared in several important cases. He represented former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah before the Supreme Court. In Telangana, Jandhyala Ravishankar is also representing the Assembly Speaker in petitions related to MLAs switching political parties.

Tragedy in Visakhapatnam: Six-Year-Old Boy Collapses in Classroom

VISAKHAPATNAM, August 20: A tragic incident occurred in Visakhapatnam where a six-year-old boy, Pranay Tej, reportedly collapsed in his classroom after being allegedly beaten by a teacher. The incident took place at Little Garden School in the One Town area of Visakhapatnam. The boy, who fell unconscious, was immediately shifted to a hospital. However, doctors declared him dead on arrival. His body was subsequently shifted to King George Hospital (KGH) for post-mortem examination. After learning about the incident, the boy's parents and relatives reached the school and staged a protest. The relatives alleged that Pranay died after the teacher reprimanded and assaulted him for not completing his homework. The parents were inconsolable after seeing the boy's body at KGH. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident. The relatives demanded action against the teacher who allegedly assaulted the child as well as the school management.



EDITORIAL

When Will the CPS Be Abolished?

A person with a disability overcame his physical limitations, cleared competitive examinations and was selected as a government teacher. He rendered dedicated service for more than 14 years in the noble teaching profession of enlightening society. At the time of his retirement on July 31, 2025, his basic salary was Rs.58,850 and his gross salary was Rs.89,720. But do you know how much monthly pension he received after retirement? Just Rs.4,013! This is where the absurdity and social injustice in the system become evident. Had he not taken up any job and simply stayed at home, he would have been eligible for the government's Cheyutha disability pension of Rs.4,016 per month. In other words, after contributing 10 per cent of his salary every month to the pension fund for more than 14 years of government service, this is the return he received. It is shocking that the service pension of a retired government employee is lower than the pension given to a person who has never been employed. This humiliating situation faced by Secondary Grade Teacher Donikala Veerabhadrayya, who retired from Kothuru School in Kesamudram mandal, is not an isolated case. It is a direct indication of the future awaiting nearly 2.60 lakh CPS employees and teachers across Telangana. Pension given to retired employees is not charity; it is their rightful entitlement for their lifetime of service. How can a family survive on a pension of just Rs.4,000 a month amid rising prices and increasing medical expenses associated with old age? During the campaign for the previous Assembly elections, one of the major promises made by the Congress party to employees was the abolition of the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS).

The promise was clearly included in the party manifesto. Moreover, the assurances given by the then leaders, who are today's rulers, at election rallies and meetings created confidence among employees and teachers. However, nearly three years after the Congress government came to power in Telangana, not even a single step has been taken on this issue, causing serious disappointment. Whenever representatives of employee and teacher unions meet ministers, Congress MPs and MLAs, they are assured that the government remains committed to abolishing CPS. If everyone is of the same view and there is a clear promise in the manifesto, then what is preventing its implementation? The role of employees is crucial in providing effective governance and taking government welfare schemes to the people. It is the minimum responsibility of governments to ensure financial security for employees who have dedicated their entire working lives to public service after retirement. The CPS system, which depends on market fluctuations, is pushing the lives of retired employees into uncertainty. Thousands of retirees are suffering mental distress because the pension they receive after retirement is insufficient for their livelihood. In a democracy, the strength and public acceptance of governments depend largely on the implementation of the promises they make. Lakhs of employees and teachers who voted hoping for a better future than the past continue to place their trust in Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's government. They hope that Revanth Reddy will honour the promise he made during the elections and bring an end to this prolonged wait. The government should stop delaying the matter and immediately pass a resolution in the Cabinet to abolish CPS and bring all employees and teachers under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). Employees and teachers unanimously demand that the government abandon its delaying tactics and fulfil its promise, thereby upholding its moral commitment and ending the anxiety and distress that have accumulated among the employee community. It is clear that the abolition of CPS depends primarily on the political initiative of the state government, which can take the necessary legal and financial decisions. Placing the issue before the Cabinet, passing a clear resolution on its abolition and formulating an action plan to restore the Old Pension Scheme are possible only through the vision and determination of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The fact that states such as Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Punjab have implemented OPS shows that there are no insurmountable legal obstacles for a state government to abolish CPS. Among the nearly 2.60 lakh CPS employees and teachers in Telangana, there is deep anguish that the CPS system has made their future completely uncertain and that they have no adequate financial security after retirement. They believe that the market-linked pension system fails to provide financial security to employees' families and that genuine protection can be ensured only by restoring the old pension system. To strongly draw the state government's attention to this crucial CPS issue, employee and teacher organisations have been conducting joint and separate protests for the past two years, demanding the immediate implementation of the promise made by the then TPCC president and now Chief Minister Revanth Reddy during the 2023 Assembly election campaign. Even now, the Chief Minister should take the initiative. CPS must be abolished immediately and the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) should be implemented.

An India-Pakistan War Test: How Far Would Saudi Arabia And Turkey Go?

The trilateral Mecca security pact between Saudi Arabia (KSA), Turkey, and Pakistan wasn't really a bolt from the blue. For months, there had been confabulations between these three countries and Egypt, and the air was abuzz with a new regional security arrangement that was being worked out. This new arrangement is in addition to the bilateral Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) between the Saudis and Pakistan. The reaction in India to this new strategic realignment in West Asia has swung between two extremes. While some analysts see it as a very negative development with serious strategic implications for India's security, others have expressed deep scepticism about this arrangement working effectively, if at all. Both sides of the argument have made valid observations in support of their assessment of the Mecca Pact. But regardless of which assessment proves accurate, India cannot afford to ignore, much less dismiss, this realignment of two enemy countries (Pakistan and Turkey) with a third friendly country (Saudi Arabia); But nor does India need to get flustered over it. What India needs is a strategy that will not only counter the negative aspects of the Mecca alliance if it works on the ground but also improve its strategic space if the sceptics of the Mecca Pact prove correct.

Unsteady Ground
While the pact is an outcome of a breakdown of the security architecture that has prevailed in the region over the last 100 years, it is rather premature to imagine whether this alliance is laying the foundation on which a new regional security framework will be built. To call the Mecca Pact an "Islamic NATO" or equate it with the Baghdad Pact (CENTO) is quite a stretch. Both those alliances were led by a dominant power, the US.

There is no such power that provides the necessary ballast to the Mecca Pact. If anything, traditional rivalries between Turkey and Saudi Arabia haven't entirely been resolved. Just a few years ago, Erdogan was viciously twisting the knife into the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MbS) over the Khashoggi killing. That they subsequently pappered over their differences means very little, because in this region, all alliances are temporary and can change virtually overnight. The third leg of the stool, Pakistan, is in it for the money, naturally. Hardly a new NATO - which, by the way, is in total disarray itself.

A lot is being made about "collective deterrence against any act of aggression, and...any armed attack against any one of the three States shall be regarded as an attack against them all". But there is no clarity about what this really means. While Article 5 of the NATO agreement defines how the collective defense will kick in, the Mecca Pact has kept the agreement secret. Is this to keep some wiggle room for the signatory countries to opt out of this collective defense clause? Or is the secrecy being kept because the obligations enjoined on each country in the event collective defense is invoked are different and could thus evoke sharp opposition and criticism? In other words, the Saudis, who were unable to defend themselves against Iranian or Houthi attacks, cannot realistically be expected to send in their forces for the defence of Pakistan. Speaking of Houthis, within a few hours of the Mecca Pact, the Houthis fired missiles on Saudi Arabia, and there wasn't even a squeak from the new and much-vaunted security partners of the Saudis. Perhaps Saudi obligation under the pact will be limited to giving money, diplomatic and political support to



Pakistan to fight its own war. But what is expected of the Pakistanis? So far, at least, they haven't really delivered on their commitments to Saudi Arabia. Also, why would Turkey, which is a member of NATO, need Pakistan and the Saudis to come to its aid in the event of an attack?

A Reality Check
While it can be argued that these three countries have militaries with different offensive and defensive capabilities, none of them has the capacity and capability required for out-of-area operations of the kind that the US possesses. Even a significant power like China would be hamstrung in conducting and sustaining operations outside its immediate neighbourhood. Given their current capabilities, for any of these countries to marshal troops to go to another country's aid and fight its wars is a bit far-fetched. It is also not clear if the Mecca Pact is a return to the kind of alliances that existed in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when a bunch of countries, mostly in Europe, would enter into wars on behalf of their alliance partners. In this day and age, it is difficult to imagine that a country will jump into a full-blown war on behalf of another country and get its

soldiers killed and its territory targeted. It is no longer about going to faraway lands to fight wars while the homeland remains secure and untouched. With missiles and drones, no place is beyond reach. One thing that Iran has demonstrated is that widening the war and possessing the ability to target allies of its enemy hundreds and thousands of miles away is quite an effective deterrence. This was one reason why, despite having entered into the SMDA with Saudi Arabia, Pakistan did not come to the latter's defence and preferred to assist through diplomacy, and some posturing. In the event of a conflict between India and Pakistan, what are the chances that either Saudi Arabia or Turkey will send troops or even other equipment to Pakistan? Also, if they participate in the conflict, can they expect not to be targeted by India? In any case, given the quite robust and mutually beneficial economic relationship between Saudi Arabia and India, will the former risk it all for the sake of Pakistan, or is this only a one-way security pact where Pakistan is expected to provide 'guard duty' in return for some money thrown its way?

The Limitations Of Each
Finally, while it is all very well

to have pretensions of becoming a net security provider in the region, the kind of military and economic strength required to play this role simply doesn't exist in all three countries, individually and collectively. Countries can play the role of a net security provider only if they have both the military muscle and economic strength to discharge this role. They do it not to earn revenue by providing security services, but to protect their vital strategic and economic interests in the region. Both Pakistan and Turkey are trying to turn the definition of a 'net security provider' on its head. In any case, if a hyperpower like the US suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Iran, what are the chances that this trilateral alliance will be able to take on the Islamic Republic? Be that as it may, the pact appears to be more of a hedging strategy by the three countries, each of which is trying to extract from it what it wants, which isn't necessarily compatible with what the others want. For instance, Pakistan hopes to monetise this alliance and dig itself out of the hole it finds its economy in, and also get Saudi and Turkish support at the diplomatic and political level to solve its enduring poly-crisis.

India's UPI Miracle Has Created A Difficult, Rs 20,000-Crore Question

Parliament has reopened a question that the country thought was settled: should UPI ever charge? On August 6, the Lok Sabha passed the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, by a voice vote, and on August 10, the Rajya Sabha, since this is a Money Bill, returned it after discussion, completing the process. It now goes to the President for assent. The change reads small on paper and large in effect. It amends Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which until now shielded UPI and RuPay debit from any charge because they were prescribed under the Income-Tax Act. That automatic shield is gone. From here, whether a payment mode stays free depends on what the government chooses to notify.

The case for charging begins, reasonably enough, with a bill nobody disputes. Running the world's largest real-time payment network is not free. Every tap that looks instant sets off authorisation, settlement, reconciliation, fraud screening, dispute handling, cloud capacity, and round-the-clock monitoring, and all of it costs money. One estimate puts the yearly cost of running UPI and RuPay debit infrastructure as high as ₹20,000 crore. As volumes keep climbing - July 2026 alone saw 2,366 crore transactions worth ₹29.9 lakh crore - that bill only grows. So the question the new law opens is fair: if security and a coming wave of AI need real investment, must UPI finally charge?

Right Problems, Wrong Solutions

The costs behind all this are not imaginary. The National Payments Corporation

of India (NPCI) chief has said AI will define UPI's next chapter, taking it from about 750 million daily transactions towards a billion, onboarding half a billion more users, and hunting the mule accounts that already run into lakhs of cases a year. Voice onboarding in many languages, models trained on financial data, and real-time fraud engines are not cheap, and all of it needs steady funding. The RBI Governor has put the question plainly: who, in the end, pays for the plumbing?

It helps to recall how that plumbing was paid for, because "free" never meant "unfunded". UPI was built and run by NPCI as public infrastructure, not a profit centre, and its scaling and security were financed the way a public good is: from the exchequer. The government reimbursed banks through an incentive scheme, Rs.1,389 crore in 2021-22 and a peak of Rs.3,631 crore in 2023-24, paying 0.15% on low-value merchant payments. That model carried UPI from a standing start in 2016 to accounting for nearly half of all real-time payments on the planet.

The strain is that this public funding has thinned even as the network has swelled. The Standing Committee on Finance found that incentive payouts of ₹8,730 crore over four years to 2024-25 covered barely 11% of the industry's cost. The 2026-27 budget set aside ₹2,000 crore, less than before, even as daily volumes touch record highs. So banks and processors now carry a rising share of a growing bill, and want durable revenue, not a subsidy that shrinks each year.

Where It Hurts The Most



And yet, the leap from "the costs are real" to "therefore charge each transaction" skips the harder question of design. Most of what UPI spends on is fixed, infrastructural cost, not something that rises neatly with each ₹40 payment to a vegetable seller. A per-transaction fee is a blunt tool for a largely fixed bill. Worse, it lands where it does the most damage: at the point of acceptance, on the smallest sellers, whose whole reason to accept digital money was that it cost nothing.

The sums show why. Transactions above ₹2,000 make up barely 4% of UPI's volume but nearly two-thirds of its value. The vast bulk of UPI is tiny, like the auto fare, the chai, the ₹30 vada pav. Put even a small charge on that layer, and the rickshaw puller and the roadside vendor do the rational thing and ask for cash. A fee at the bottom of the pyramid is a nudge back to notes, and cash is untrace-

able, informal, and off the books, the very thing UPI was built to shrink.

To her credit, the Finance Minister seems to grasp this, and has said the amendment is only an enabling provision that imposes no charge on users, that no MDR (merchant discount rate) framework has yet been finalised, and that ordinary low-value payments will stay free. She also reiterated that any future MDR would fall only on a limited category of merchant transactions above a prescribed threshold. That is, almost word for word, the tiered design this column would argue for. But there is a catch. All of that is a promise, not a provision. The Bill itself writes none of it down; it simply moves the decision into executive notification, to be shaped by a steering committee under NPCI. A protection that lives in a minister's assurance can be revised by the next notification, without returning to Parliament. Opposition members made exactly this point,

calling the reply reassuring in tone but thin on paper.

Working Smarter

Better funding routes exist, and they deserve open debate rather than a quiet notification. The RBI transferred a record surplus of about Rs.2.69 lakh crore to the government in 2024-25; earmarking even a sliver of it would dwarf today's incentive and cost the ordinary user nothing. Credit on UPI, RuPay cards and pay-later products already earns interchange that can help fund the free rails beneath them.

So, do security and AI need more money? Almost certainly. Must UPI charge the ₹30 payment that is its whole miracle? No. The Bill has passed, and the promises made alongside it are the right ones. The task now is to write those promises into the notification as a statutory floor for small merchants and consumers, and to fund the machine without sending the rickshaw puller back to cash.

Strict Enforcement of PCPNDT Act Ordered

Kakinada, August 20 (Pen Power): District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad directed officials to strictly enforce the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, stating that sex determination and disclosure of the sex of an unborn child are illegal. At a district-level committee meeting, the Collector reviewed the registration and inspections of ultrasound centres and action taken against violations. He said ultrasound technology should be used only for detecting foetal genetic and chromosomal abnormalities. The Collector said 20 decoy operations had been conducted in the district so far and called for strict action against doctors, staff, scan-centre operators, in-



termediaries and others involved in illegal sex determination. He directed officials to conduct regular inspections, maintain proper records and undertake

awareness programmes to promote gender equality and prevent female foeticide. Revenue, police and health officials were asked to work in coordination and

take immediate action on complaints. The committee approved two new ultrasound centres, renewal of nine centres and modifications in 11 centres.

Tribal Gram Sabha Resolutions Mandatory for Sand Reaches, Metal Quarries



Rampachodavaram, August 20 (Pen Power): Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar directed officials to ensure that sand reaches and metal quarries in tribal areas are sanctioned only after obtaining

resolutions from the respective tribal Gram Sabhas under PESA. At a meeting with mining, pollution control and quarry officials at the ITDA office, the Collector said eight sand reaches had been identified in the district—three at

Gommukoyagudem, two each at Gundala and Kannaigudem, and one at Rayannapeta. Mining, police and revenue officials were instructed to conduct a joint inspection and submit a report before granting permis-

sions. He directed officials to prevent illegal sand mining and transportation, follow environmental norms, maintain vehicle records and ensure transparent supply of sand to the public. He also proposed supplying around 10,000 metric tonnes of sand required by APGENCO from local reaches. Regarding metal quarries, the Collector stressed compliance with distance and blasting regulations and ordered joint inspections of problematic quarry areas. He also instructed transport officials to take strict action against overloaded and heavy vehicles. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, OSD Javali, District Mining Officer Krishnamurthy and other officials attended the meeting.

Elaborate Arrangements for BRICS Sports Ministers' Meetings

Visakhapatnam, August 20 (Pen Power): District Collector M. Abhishekt Kishore directed officials to make foolproof arrangements for the BRICS Sports Ministers' meetings scheduled in Visakhapatnam on August 22 and 23. At a review meeting, he instructed departments to coordinate on transport, accommodation, security and protocol arrangements for foreign delegates. Reception desks will be set up at the airport and hotels. On August 22, BRICS Sports Ministers will participate in a tree planta-



tion programme at Thotlakonda at 8 a.m. Bilateral meetings and a youth affairs meeting will follow at

Radisson Blu, while the Chief Minister will host a bilateral meeting and gala dinner with foreign sports

ministers at Novotel.

On August 23, a friendly cycling event will be held along Beach Road. Traffic restrictions will be imposed between Novotel and YMCA during the event. A dinner for foreign delegates will be organised at Rushikonda Beach, featuring local cultural programmes, including Thimsa tribal dance. The Collector directed officials to ensure cleanliness, beautification, security and smooth coordination for the successful conduct of the international event.

Strengthen 'Net Zero Health Campus' Project: Collector



Kakinada, August 20 (Pen Power): District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad directed officials to effectively implement the 'Net Zero Health Campus' project in welfare hostels and schools to ensure a clean, healthy and eco-friendly environment for

students. The project is being implemented in 19 welfare hostels and schools in the first phase. The Collector reviewed plantation, sanitation, soap kits, solid waste management, drinking water, mid-day meals and hostel maintenance. He stressed increasing greenery,

reducing electricity, water and maintenance costs, and providing students with nutritious food, clean drinking water and hygienic facilities. Officials were directed to create awareness among parents about hostel facilities and improve their satisfaction. The Collector

warned of strict action against officials who neglect hostel maintenance. District Education Officer P. Ramesh, BC Welfare Officer A. Shyamala Kumari, DWMA PD S. Madhusudhan, DPO V. Ravikumar and other officials attended the meeting.

Pollavaram District Steps Up Election Preparations

Rampachodavaram, August 20 (Pen Power): Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav directed officials to make comprehensive arrangements for the upcoming elections in Polavaram district. During a video conference from the Secretariat, District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said special attention was being given to polling station identification, basic facilities, security arrangements and progress in the electoral roll revision process. The Collector urged all 18-year-old youth to apply for voter registration. Officials were instructed to process Forms 6,



7 and 8, correct errors in electoral rolls and ensure eligible voters are enrolled.

Regarding Gutti Koya people who migrated from

other states, he said their eligibility would be verified through field-level enquiries, village resolutions and panchanamas before taking

appropriate action on voter registration. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar and OSD D. Javali participated in the video conference.

Complete Electoral Roll Revision Within Deadline: Collector



Kakinada, August 20 (Pen Power): District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad directed EROs of all seven constituencies to complete the Special Inter-

sive Revision (SIR)-2026 of electoral rolls within the prescribed deadlines with utmost transparency. During a video conference with the State Chief Electoral

Officer Vivek Yadav, the Collector said that out of 31,695 notices, only 1,305 were pending and would be cleared shortly. Of the 2,973 enquiries conducted so far,

around 90% have been completed. He said 8,396 Form-6 and 5,386 Form-8 applications were pending and would be disposed of on priority. Officials were instructed to ensure quality and transparency in hearings and field verification.

The Collector directed officials to successfully conduct special campaign days on August 22, 23, 29 and 30 at all polling stations and ensure every eligible citizen gets voting rights. Pending grievances received through the National Grievance Service Portal and "Book a Call with BLO" should also be resolved within the stipulated time. DRO Dr. D. Tippe Naik, EROs and election officials attended the meeting.

Strict Action Against Irregularities in NTR Vaidya Seva

Vijayawada, Pen Power, August 20: District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeshwar warned that strict action would be taken against network hospitals found indulging in irregularities, negligence or illegal collection of money under the NTR Vaidya Seva scheme. During a review meeting held at the Collectorate, 90 complaints against private network hospitals were examined. Five hospitals were found guilty of violations and were imposed penalties. The hospitals include Nimra Hospi-



tal, Ibrahim patnam; Sri Bhavani Hospital and Sri Vaishnavi Hospital, Tiruvuru; and M.V.S. Accident Hospital and Smile

Hospital, Vijayawada. The Collector directed network hospitals to provide free, quality and transparent treatment to poor patients as

per scheme guidelines. He said complaints would be continuously reviewed and strict action would follow if violations were established.

Strict Implementation of Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme Ordered

Rampachodavaram, August 20 (Pen Power): Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar directed officials to strictly implement the Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme as per government guidelines in all government ashram schools, Kasturba schools and Ekalavya Model Residential Schools. At a review meeting with headmasters, wardens, tribal welfare, education, civil supplies officials and vendors, the Collector stressed the quality and timely supply of food. Stu-



dents must be provided milk, eggs, bananas and chikkis daily, along with skinless chicken as per the weekly menu. He warned

that vendors supplying poor-quality food items would be issued notices and may be blacklisted. Officials were asked to moni-

tor supplies regularly. The Collector also directed officials to enroll out-of-school children, bring dropouts back to schools and ensure teacher attendance through the LEAP app. Details of the mid-day meal scheme, educational kits and Thalliki Vandanam should also be updated regularly. Joint Collector and ITDA Project Officer Surapati Prashanth Kumar stressed fresh food, 100% student attendance and regular monitoring of classrooms, toilets, drinking water and digital classrooms.

Child from Sishu Gruha Legally Adopted

Vijayawada, August 20 (Pen Power): A child under the care of the Sishu Gruha Specialised Adoption Agency run by the NTR District Women Development and Child Welfare Department was legally adopted on Thursday under the supervision of District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeshwar.

The Collector reviewed the child's identification records, Aadhaar details of the adoptive parents, required certificates and other legal documents. He also enquired about the child's health condition and medical records. Speaking to the adoptive parents, the Collector advised

them to raise the child with love and responsibility and ensure proper health, nutrition, education, safety and overall development.

Officials said the adoption was completed as per legal guidelines and that the child would receive equal rights, care and family benefits. They

reiterated the government's commitment to child protection, welfare and safety. ICDS Project Director Shaik Ruksana Sultana Begum, Adoption Officer Johnson, Legal Officer Kiran, Sishu Gruha Manager Deepika and Social Worker Aruna attended.

They'll pull out small fish, but no one will lay hand on Tau': Pawan Khera takes dig at NTA over team revamp



New Delhi : Congress leader Pawan Khera took a swipe at the National Testing Agency (NTA) over the revamp of its examination team, alleging that only lower-level individuals were being targeted while those responsible at higher levels were being spared. Taking a jibe at the action, Khera, in a post on X, said, "They'll take it to the tailor, they'll take it to the driver, they'll take it to the cook—they'll all pull out the small fish. But no one will lay a hand on Tau." The remarks came after the NTA revamped its examination

revamp of its examination team as part of efforts to strengthen its examination-related processes. The new premises of the NTA will be located at Minto Road, the sources said. Earlier on Tuesday, in a post on X, the Ministry of Education said Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi had directed that all necessary security and related infrastructural facilities be put in place for the smooth conduct of examinations. "Following directions from the Minister, DG, NTA apprised the Ministry of the action taken by NTA: A revamp of the examination team was undertaken, with 600 experts being removed and new experts being onboarded," the Ministry said in a post on X. The Ministry said a four-tier question paper checking system would be introduced to strengthen the scrutiny of examination papers. "A four-tier question paper checking system will be put in place to strengthen the scrutiny of examination papers. 20-25 officials to be inducted in the next two to three weeks. A further induction plan was also reviewed," it said. The Ministry said the measures were reviewed as part of a follow-up meeting on

the NTA, with the focus on strengthening security and infrastructure for the conduct of examinations. The NTA offices will be shifted to the new premises at Minto Road, while security arrangements will also be strengthened. "NTA offices will be shifted to the new premises on a war footing where security will be reinforced with CISF teams," the Ministry said. Meanwhile, on Monday, Education Minister Pralhad Joshi held a meeting with the Secretary, Department of Higher Education, NTA Director General, and other senior officials to review steps taken by the National Testing Agency (NTA) following recent issues and discuss reforms in the examination system. During the meeting, the Minister was apprised that more than 50 NTA staff members had been removed as part of the steps being taken to reform the agency. The NTA was directed to conduct a thorough audit of all examination processes and submit a report on the corrective action taken. Joshi directed officials to ensure strict compliance with established examination protocols.

Collective Efforts Needed to Make Polavaram District Mosquito-Free

Rampachodavaram, August 20 (Pen Power): Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar called for collective efforts to control mosquitoes and prevent malaria and other vector-borne diseases in every village. On the occasion of World Mosquito Day, the Collector, Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar, DM&HO Dr. P. Saritha and DMO Bhaskar unveiled awareness posters at the ITDA meeting hall in Rampachodavaram. The Collector said malaria spraying, fogging and sanitation measures were being undertaken across villages. He urged people to prevent stagnant water and maintain cleanliness to control malaria, dengue and



chikungunya during the monsoon. He also stressed the need to make Polavaram an HIV/AIDS-free district,

particularly by creating awareness among youth and eliminating discrimination against people living

with HIV. Medical officers, sub-unit officials and ANMs participated in the programme.

Officials Must Work in Coordination to Serve Voters



Vijayawada, August 20 (Pen Power): District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmeesh directed officials and BLOs to work in coordination for the smooth implementation of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He said the draft electoral roll was published on July 31 and claims and objections will be accepted until August 30. Special campaign days will be held on August 22, 23, 29 and 30. During these days, BLOs should be

available at polling stations from 10 am to 5 pm to receive applications and clarify voters' doubts. The Collector instructed officials to focus on notices, document verification, hearings and disposal of Forms 6, 7 and 8. He directed officials to complete all activities as per schedule ahead of the final electoral roll publication on October 3. DROM. Lakshmi Nara simham, election officials and staff attended the meeting.

One-Stop Portal for Industries and Commercial Establishments

Kakinada, August 20 (Pen Power): District Collector M.N. Harendhir Prasad said the Andhra Pradesh government has introduced a One-Stop Portal to provide a single platform for resolving issues faced by industrial and commercial establishments. He said establishments can register on the portal in less than five minutes and submit their grievances, requests and employ-



ment-related requirements to the government. They can also provide details of current and future manpower requirements. The Collector urged all industries and commercial establishments in the district to register on the portal and make use of the facility. For assistance with registration, establishments can contact the District Industries Centre or call 9394540044.

'Immediately stopped': Press Club issues clarification after 'Modi Chalisa' event sparks row



New Delhi: As the visuals of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's cutout being worshiped at an event at the Press Club of India in Delhi went viral on social media, the journalists' body on Thursday clarified that it had not organised the event. Images and videos online showed a 'Modi Chalisa' event being held, with a cutout image of Modi, depicting him in a god-like manner. People at the event were seen performing an "aarti" in front

of the poster. Participants were also heard chanting, "Jai Jai Modi, Har Har Modi." Amid mounting criticism, the Press Club of India denied organising the event. "The Press Club of India has noticed that a photo/video of an event held at its premises earlier today, is circulating on social media. It is hereby clarified that the Club had not organised the event," it said in a post on X. "The hall was hired for the purpose of holding a press confer-

ence by an organisation, but when terms for renting out the place were violated by it, the Club authorities immediately intervened and it was stopped," it said. The organiser of the event was Rajan Singh, the vice-president of Bihar State Transgender Welfare Board. He had earlier said that they plan to construct a temple for Prime Minister Modi in Bihar. Asked about the criticism against the deification of the prime minister, he told PTI, "Nobody

should criticise it... This government, for the first time, provided rights to transgender people; they are getting employment..." Regarding the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, which has been criticised for stripping away the right to gender self-determination, he claimed the community is not the one opposing it. "Transgender people are not against the Act, it was the Oppositen that was criticising it," he claimed.

Mumbai model who stopped police van amid Gen Z protests now seeks FIR withdrawal, action over threats

Mumbai / New Delhi: Model Riya Ahir, who shot to prominence after stopping a police van during a Gen Z-led protest in Mumbai, approached the police seeking withdrawal of the FIR registered against her. She also sought strict action against people allegedly sending her threatening and abusive messages on social media.

A delegation of the Mumbai Youth Congress accompanied Ahir to the Mumbai Police Commissioner's Office and met Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Manoj Sharma.

The delegation raised concerns about the FIR and the online harassment that Ahir says she has faced since the protest.

According to Youth Congress leaders, Sharma assured the delegation that the process to withdraw the FIR would be initiated soon. The police would also investigate the individuals allegedly responsible for sending threatening messages to Ahir.

Riya Ahir Alleges Online Harassment

Speaking after the meeting, Ahir said she had been subjected to abusive comments and threats on social media following the protest.

She alleged that she had already filed a complaint with the police but claimed that no concrete action had been taken so far.

The issue of online harassment had also been raised by Ahir with the Maharashtra Police cyber cell earlier.

On July 27, she said she had filed an online complaint and was subse-



quently contacted by the cyber cell, following which she visited the Maharashtra Police cyber cell.

At the time, Ahir said that while many people had appreciated and supported her actions, others had chosen to target her online.

She stressed that people could disagree with her views but did not have the right to degrade her, malign her reputation, or publicly attack her dignity.

She also maintained that the protest was not associated with any political party, religion or individual, saying it was a movement for everyone.

Youth Congress Questions Delay In FIR Withdrawal

Youth Congress national secretary Hargun Singh and Mumbai Youth Con-

gress president Zeenat Shabreen were among those who accompanied Ahir to the police headquarters. Singh questioned why the FIRs against students involved in the protest had not yet been withdrawn, saying that a notification for the withdrawal of cases against students had already been issued.

Shabreen, meanwhile, demanded immediate police action against the social media accounts allegedly involved in harassing and intimidating the young women who participated in the protests. She said young women were being targeted for expressing their views. Ahir also highlighted the case of 19-year-old Muskan, another participant in the protest, who she said was facing a simi-

lar stream of abusive comments and threats on social media.

Viral Police Van Image Put Ahir In Spotlight

Ahir became one of the most recognisable faces of the Mumbai protest after a photograph from the rain-soaked demonstration at Shivaji Park in Dadar on July 22 went viral. The image showed Ahir, dressed in a grey hoodie, standing in front of a police van carrying detained young protesters. Her act of blocking the vehicle turned the photograph into one of the defining images associated with the Mumbai protests. The incident also led to widespread attention online. In her earlier interaction with ANI, Ahir said she wanted to stand up for herself in the same way she had stood up during the protest.

Sangam Dairy Files Defamation Case Against Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy

AMARAVATI: Sangam Dairy has filed a defamation case against YSRCP leader Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy. The dairy strongly denied Sajjala's allegations that it was supplying ghee to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) without procuring milk from farmers. In its petition, Sangam Dairy stated that false allegations were made with the intention of concealing facts and damaging the reputation of the

organisation. It said that the dairy procures cow milk from farmers in Chittoor, Kadapa and Anantapur districts, and alleged that the accusations were made without taking these facts into consideration. Sangam Dairy also alleged that comments regarding the supply of ghee to TTD were made in a manner that hurt the sentiments of devotees. Sangam Dairy MD Gopalakrishnan filed the



defamation case in the Guntur court. He sought registration of a case against Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy as well as MLC Thoomati Madhava Rao,

who also made allegations. He also said that cases were filed against Sakshi TV, which broadcast Sajjala's remarks, as well as social media platforms.

Sacrifice Or Strategy? Why Dharmendra Pradhan's Resignation Is A Calculated Masterstroke

New Delhi: In high-stakes political strategy, timing is rarely accidental and a fall from grace is seldom unscripted. When Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan tendered his resignation on July 25, 2026, releasing a carefully calibrated two-page letter addressed to his "young friends," public attention immediately focused on administrative accountability. To the casual observer, it appeared to be a standard political exit, a cabinet minister stepping down over the chaos surrounding the NEET-UG examination leaks.

Beneath the surface, however, the timing can also be interpreted as a classic political strategy. A calculated tactical retreat, an executive firewall to protect

central leadership and the foundational opening move of a larger role.

Political power dynamics often dictate that when an adversary's siege centres on a single focal point, the most effective defence is not to reinforce the position indefinitely, but to remove the target altogether. That leaves the opposition's momentum with nothing to strike.

For weeks, street demonstrations and sustained political pressure from groups at Jantar Mantar had condensed their demands into a singular, unyielding ultimatum calling for the education minister's removal. By holding out through the re-examination process and the subsequent result declarations on July 16, Pradhan ensured that the

state apparatus completed its immediate administrative obligations before executing his departure. The timing of the exit was precise, both academically and politically. Academically, the government realised that the immediate necessity was to conduct the exam again without any further missteps, as it directly involved the lives and futures of lakhs of students. Beyond the obvious anger, rising depression including tragic cases of suicide made conducting a free and fair exam a crucial litmus test for the government. It was akin to a natural disaster response, where rescue is prioritised over rehabilitation. The government expected political opposition over the paper leak, but the sudden emergence of the

Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), hitting the ground running like a newborn zebra, took them off guard. In an ironic twist on nature, this newborn turned out to be a predator rather than prey, zeroing in on Pradhan immediately. Without the CJP, Pradhan might have weathered the Opposition's storm, but they completely shifted the game. When RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat signalled that student demands must be met on Friday, Pradhan's fate was perhaps sealed. Refusing to leave the battlefield like a defeated general, he chose instead to frame himself as a martyr for a larger cause, a narrative carefully crafted across his two-page letter.

By stepping aside, Pradhan may have reduced the immediate focus of the

protest movement, whose principal demand had centred on his resignation. Without its primary lightning rod, the immediate momentum of the agitation dissolves granting the ruling establishment crucial breathing room to reset the narrative. When institutional breakdowns occur within massive bureaucratic frameworks like the National Testing Agency, the political apparatus must establish a clear boundary to contain the fallout. Pradhan's resignation letter operates as precisely this type of circuit breaker.

In his public statement, Pradhan systematically isolated the crisis by attributing the breakdown to external factors like exam mafias and political exploitation while highlighting swift

state interventions such as the CBI probe and the transition to computer-based testing. By taking moral responsibility to prevent further legal entanglements and public confusion, he absorbed the political shock of the controversy. The resignation also had the effect of limiting direct political pressure on the broader Cabinet and the Prime Minister's Office. On July 22, when the protest Cockroach Janata Party protest was going towards a crescendo, a particular photo shared by Pradhan on his X account was interpreted in a different way. Officially, during the adjournment of the Parliament session, the BJP MPs from Odisha discussed various developmental issues of the state. However, some political observers viewed the



meeting as a demonstration of Pradhan's continuing influence within Odisha's BJP unit. Even in his letter to the youth today where he announced his resignation, it was obvious that his concluding references to Lord Jagannath and Odisha have also fuelled speculation about his future political role in the

state. To understand the weight of this phrasing, one must evaluate the political turf in Odisha following the June 2024 elections. The central pillar of the campaign that ended Naveen Patnaik's 24-year tenure was built on Odia pride and the assertion of a native leader against non-Odia administrative influence.

'Thanks For Calling Us Cockroaches': How A CJI Remark Snowballed Into A Movement That Forced Dharmendra Pradhan's Resignation

New Delhi: A remark made by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant during a Supreme Court hearing in May has come full circle after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on Saturday amid sustained protests over the NEET-UG paper leak. Addressing supporters at Jantar Mantar shortly after Pradhan stepped down, Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke thanked the Chief Justice for what he described as the spark behind the movement. "I would like to thank CJI Surya Kant. If he hadn't called us cockroaches, I wouldn't have come to India. This movement would not have started," Dipke said from



the protest stage. The movement traces its roots to a Supreme Court hearing on May 15 regarding Senior Advocate designation. During the proceedings, CJI Surya Kant remarked that "there are youngsters like cockroaches, who don't get any employment and don't have any place in the profession". The Chief Justice

later clarified that his comments were aimed only at people holding fake law degrees and not unemployed youth in general.

Kant has since maintained that sections of the media misquoted his remarks. However, the clarification did little to stop the comment from going viral, with many young people continuing to debate and criticise it online. Dipke, then a Boston-based student and former communications strategist with the Aam Aadmi Party, responded to the remark on X the very next day. On May 16, he announced the formation of the Cockroach Janta Party, describing it as a platform for "all the 'cockroaches' out there". In a satirical post, he listed the eligibility criteria as being unemployed, lazy, chronically online and able to rant professionally. What began as an online satire gradually turned into a full-fledged protest movement as public anger over the NEET-UG paper leak intensified. Dipke returned to India in early June and began leading demonstrations near Jantar Mantar.

The movement's main demand was the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged examination irregularities. The campaign gathered further momentum when educator and activist Sonam Wangchuk joined the protests with an indefinite hunger strike on June 28. Wangchuk ended his 26-day

fast earlier this week after the Centre gave written assurances that no cases would be registered against peaceful protesters. Parliament would take up examination reforms and accountability, and compensation for the families of students who died by suicide following the alleged paper leak would be considered. Even after Wangchuk ended his fast, the Cockroach Janta Party continued to press for Pradhan's resignation. The group stood by its demand despite a lathicharge on protesters on July 20 and the government's firm public stance, which eventually softened. In his resignation letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pradhan said he was stepping down "keeping the future of students in mind".

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'You Have Proved...': Prakash Raj Reacts To Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's Resignation; Congratulates CJP, Sonam Wangchuk

Bengaluru: Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday took to social media to announce that he has submitted his resignation. Many celebrities have reacted to it, including Prakash Raj, who had joined the protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar. The actor was supporting the protest from the beginning. After Pradhan posted on social media about his resignation, the actor tweeted, "Congratulations, my dear Cockroaches. Dear Sonam Wangchuk sir and every single one who stood by the youth. You have proved that you can bring a regime down to its knees (sic)." Check out the tweet below... Reacting to the actor's tweet, one user wrote, "Congratulations to every Gen Z, youth, and every single citizen who joined Cockroach



Janta Party in this movement. Hum Rukne Vaale Nahi.... (sic)." Another X user wrote, "Thank you for being a real hero and fighting on the ground. When the police attacked your vehicle, I thought they were going to beat you, but you didn't flinch or run away. You stood your ground. Bravo, sir. Congratulations to you, too (sic)." One more netizen tweeted, "Sir, you too played a major role in this war... Entire South India is proud of this Gen Z's achievement. And you stood

as one of the mentors (sic)." Check out the tweets below... Many celebrities like Sonakshi Sinha, Vaani Kapoor, Priyanka Chopra, Alia Bhatt, Ayesha Khan, Varun Dhawan, Vicky Kaushal, and others have reacted to Pradhan's resignation. In the past few days, many celebs like Salman Khan, Alia, Kareena Kapoor Khan, and others had posted about the student protest. Now, everyone is eagerly waiting for Salman's post on Pradhan's resignation.

'Not Cockroach, He's Chameleon' Sonam Wangchuk's Heated Exchange At Safdarjung Hospital During Hunger Strike Goes Viral; Internet Divided

New Delhi: A video showing activist and engineer Sonam Wangchuk in a heated exchange with staff at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital has gone viral, triggering intense discussion across social media. The footage captures Wangchuk questioning why he was allegedly being prevented from leaving the hospital and demanding that authorities either allow him to walk out or formally arrest him. The incident reportedly took place on July 21, the day the Delhi High Court directed that Wangchuk be shifted to a hospital of his choice. At the time, he had been admitted to Safdarjung Hospital after being moved from the Jantar Mantar protest site, where he had been on an indefinite hunger strike over the issue of paper leaks in recruitment examinations.

"Arrest me if you want"

In the viral clip, Wangchuk appears visibly frustrated as he addresses hospital officials and police personnel stationed outside his room. Repeatedly questioning why he was being stopped, he can be heard saying, "Ask them to arrest me. Why keeping me here... you all are harassing me. If I die of stress, it'll be your responsibility. Please open; I'm going. Arrest me if you want. Shameless people."

He also criticised the hospital administration during the confrontation, stating: "You're a doctor or a butcher. Ask your doctor. I wanted to go out with gratitude, but now I'm sorry to say that I'm having to leave with this comment. Worst institution; you have sold your souls." As he prepared to leave, Wangchuk continued, "Arrest me if you want.



You can stop wherever you want. Let the nation know." The video also shows his wife, Gitanjali Angmo, questioning the conduct of the police officers present outside the hospital room.

"You are being rude... Do you have orders to behave so arrogantly?" Shortly afterwards, Wangchuk is seen walking out of the ward. Wangchuk has been leading a campaign highlighting concerns over alleged paper leaks in competitive examinations. He began an indefinite hunger strike at Delhi's Jantar Mantar before being shifted to Safdarjung Hospital after his health reportedly deteriorated. The matter later reached the Delhi High Court, which allowed him to be transferred to a private medical facility of his choice for further treatment.

Following the circulation of the video, Safdarjung Hospital released an official statement clarifying the sequence of events. According to the hospital administration, the footage was allegedly recorded inside the hospital by Wangchuk's associates on July 21 in an area where videography is prohibited. The hospital further stated that the confrontation

occurred before it had officially received the Delhi High Court's written order permitting Wangchuk's transfer. Officials said Wangchuk wanted to leave after learning about the court's decision through media reports, even though the formal communication had not yet reached the hospital.

As per the hospital's clarification, once the written order was received, Wangchuk was transferred without delay. The administration said he was handed over to a team of doctors from Medanta Gurugram at approximately 6:40 pm on July 21. The video has generated strong reactions online, with users offering sharply contrasting opinions about Wangchuk's health, the hospital's conduct, and the events shown in the footage. Some social media users questioned how Wangchuk appeared energetic despite being on a prolonged hunger strike. One user wrote, "He is gone crazy since yesterday, that his fake polished career is in danger by not being in limelight again, and eating from the hands of JP Nadda rather than the protestors and students. He is not a cockroach, he is a chameleon."

Another commented, "Exactly, to urinate he needed 10 people to hold him and his but to fight and argument his weakness is all gone?" A third user remarked, "Right narrative. You cannot move like this after not eating for 20 days." Several others defended Wangchuk, arguing that the video represented only a brief moment and should not be treated as evidence of his overall medical condition. One supporter wrote, "This is the video from Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi where Sonam Wangchuk was under medical observation. After the High Court order, he was leaving for Medanta when Safdarjung Hospital staff tried to stop him on July 21. Right wing narrative: Look he is so fit." Meanwhile, some remained sceptical, with one commenting, "Definitely doesn't look like someone who's been fasting for 25 days." Another viral post read, "Itni energy after 21 days of hunger strike.....bhai sahab Me bhi esa hunger strike deserve karta hu. Isko bed se uthane ke liye 10 log chahiye hite the, isko toilet le jane ke liye 20 bandha chahiye hite the....aur yahn hath jeb me dal ke style pel raha hai."

'Salute Your Courage': Dimple Yadav's Heartfelt Message For Gen Z After Dharmendra Pradhan Resigns

Patna: Samajwadi Party Lok Sabha MP Dimple Yadav has welcomed the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, crediting students and young protesters for what she described as a significant victory following days of agitation.

Dear children, This win belongs to you. We salute your courage, determination and persistence that has led to the resignation of the Education Minister. At the same time, I am deeply sorry that you had to go through so much pain, assault, trauma and humiliation."

In a message addressed to students, Yadav said the resignation was a result of their courage, determination and persistence, while expressing regret over the difficulties they allegedly faced during the protests. "Dear children, this win be-

longs to you. We salute your courage, determination and persistence that has led to the resignation of the Education Minister," Yadav said. After holding the third round of talks with the government, Cockroach Janta Party withdrew its agitation and appealed to the protestors to. She also apologised to students for the pain and trauma they had to endure during the agitation. "At the same time, I am deeply sorry that you had to go through so much pain, assault, trauma and humiliation," she said.

Calls for education reforms

Yadav said the country needs change to address corruption and ensure that young people's aspirations and ambitions are not held back. "The country needs change. Change, so that the corruption that has been purposely allowed to sink into the system can be



snuffed out," she said. She added that such changes were necessary for the country to progress and for the dreams of India's youth to be fulfilled. Her remarks came after Pradhan announced his resignation as Union Education Minister amid mounting student protests and demands for accountability over issues surrounding the NEET examination. Meanwhile, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) has announced that it is withdrawing its protest with immediate effect fol-

lowing its third round of talks with the Centre. The organisation asked supporters gathered at Delhi's Jantar Mantar to return home after claiming that the government had agreed to all of its demands. The announcement was made at a joint press conference attended by CJP spokespersons Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, along with Union ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh. The talks took place after Pradhan's resignation, which had been one of the CJP's key demands during the agitation.

'I'm Very Happy That Students Are Free Today' Abhijeet Dipke's Mother Reacts After Dharmendra Pradhan Resigns Amid Ongoing NEET Protests

Mumbai: Following the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan after mounting pressure from the NEET protesters, Abhijeet Dipke's mother on Saturday said "Students are free today". Recalling the battle students were fighting in the past few days, Dipke's mother, speaking to the media, said, "I am very happy that the students are free today. I feel proud. People have been telling me that Abhijeet did a great job. I was very scared after he was attacked and slapped. It felt terrible, and I couldn't sleep because of it." Meanwhile, Dharmendra Pradhan, who has held the post of Education Minister for the second consecutive term, submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi amid the ongoing NEET paper leak protests across the nation. Posting on X (formerly Twitter), Pradhan stated, "For over four decades, I have dedicated myself to students, teachers, and education reform. It has always been my firm belief that a strong, inclusive, and forward-looking education system forms the



bedrock of a strong nation." Pradhan further expressed his gratitude to the prime minister for the opportunity. He acknowledged that his resignation came following irregularities in the NEET examination, which had been scheduled for May 3, 2026. However, after the paper was leaked, the examination was called off, and a new date was announced for the re-examination. Moreover, the Government of India handed over the investigation to the CBI, to continue the probe.

Government assurances issued

According to the CJP spokespersons, the government has assured the organisation that police cases registered against students during the protests will be withdrawn. They also claimed that no further action would be taken against the students in connection with those cases. The CJP further said the government had agreed to provide maximum compensation, as per applicable rules and regulations, to the families of students who died by suicide over the NEET paper leak issue. The latest developments followed the third round of discussions between Union ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh and CJP representatives Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka.

Nepal Chief Justice's Current Visit To India Assumes Big Significance

On May 20, 2026, in the Singha Durbar complex in Kathmandu, Dr. Manoj Sharma, Nepal's current Chief Justice, currently on a visit to India through an invitation from Chief Justice of India ("CJI") Surya Kant, was seated before a fifteen member Parliamentary Hearing Committee. The Committee, which is constitutionally required to cross question new recommendees to constitutional posts and is now dominated by prime minister Balendra Shah's Rastriya Swatantra Party ("RSP").

Earlier that month, Nepal's Constitutional Council, the constitutional body established under Article 284 of the Constitution of Nepal that appoints all the key constitutional posts in the country, had taken an unprecedented decision. Headed by Shah, the former Kathmandu mayor, whose party the RSP had won a sliding majority in the first general election after youth protests toppled the previous government in September last year, the Council recommended the appointment of Dr. Sharma, the fourth ranked judge in order of seniority in the Supreme Court of Nepal, as the Chief Justice. Similar to India, where the constitutional convention of seniority has historically determined elevation

to the head of the judiciary (barring three exceptions, most infamously in 1973 and 1977 during Indira Gandhi's regime), appointments to Nepal's Chief Justiceship have, without exception, occurred through the seniority rule.

Through the month, sixteen complaints had poured in challenging Dr Sharma's recommendation. MP Padma Aryal of the opposition CPN-UML party spoke into the microphone, "After being appointed Chief Justice, can you fearlessly put a check on the wrong decisions of the executive?" Sharma evaded without giving an answer.

Dr. Sharma's recommendation had come at the cost of superseding three senior judges within the Supreme Court—the acting Chief Justice Sapana Pradhan Malla, previously a key figure in Nepal's constituent assembly, and Justices Kumar Regmi and Hari Prasad Phuyal. In the history of Nepal's young constitution, which came into force in 2015—the realisation of a 65 year old foundational promise by King Tribhuvan for a constitution written directly by the people's representatives—this was the first such supersession, and the most brazen instance of the undermining of judicial independence in the neighbouring country. It was also one of the most

recent, visible instances of executive interference across the South Asian judiciary.

Almost immediately following Sharma's cherry-picked appointment, wide debate sparked across political forums and the Nepalese bar. "He is not widely known for public legal commentary or academic writing, and has not been prominently associated with landmark constitutional debates," the Kathmandu Post noted. Experts who analysed the Nepal Kanoon Patrika, the Supreme Court's official monthly law journal, found that of 1,263 precedent-setting rulings published during his Supreme Court tenure, Sharma had only authored 48 verdicts, a 34 percent authorship rate on the benches he sat on, placing him ninth out of eleven judges. In comparison, the bypassed senior judges authored more than double his output. On three-member Full Benches, Sharma authored only 20 percent of decisions; on Grand Full Benches (PurnaJlaas), that figure dropped to 17 percent.

Key to the supersession was a bundle of amendments introduced by Balen Shah's government into the Constitutional Council Act, 2066 (2010 in the Gregorian calendar)—the governing statute for the body, which

among other things, allowed the Council to select officials using only a majority vote (compared to requiring every member to agree), and lowered the number of members needed to hold a meeting and make a final decision. Sharma's appointment was the first to come after these key amendments.

That day, on May 20 before the Hearing Committee, Nara Bahadur Bista, another opposition MP from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) asked Sharma about the allegations that he tried to "capture" the Supreme Court.

In late April, three separate petitions were filed in the Supreme Court by several senior advocates challenging the Council's decision to appoint Sharma. However, the Supreme Court administration, led by the then Junior Registrar Man Bahadur Karki refused to register the darpeet, the petitions. An appeal was filed against the refusal even as on May 13, several lawyers met acting Chief Justice Malla raising concerns over how the petitions were being handled.

A week passed as the writ petition remained stalled with the registry. On May 18, Chief Justice Malla, invoking Article 136 of the Constitution, which gives ultimate responsibility and administrative authority to

make effective administration of justice across the court system, issued a bold three page order. The order directed to register the petitions that same day by 1 PM in the afternoon, and schedule a hearing for Tuesday.

When the petitioner, a lawyer named Prem Raj Silwal reportedly reached the registry office to meet officials and complete the registration process, the desks were empty. As informed by a noted source to The Leaflet, the Registrar and key staff physically vacated their offices and went out of contact "running out the clock." The writs remained suppressed until May 20, the day of the Hearing Committee's meeting.

On that day, responding to Bista's question through the mic attached to his table, Sharma said, "The chief registrar and registrar have authority to use discretion on the matter of whether to register a writ or not. Others formed an opinion on this matter and levelled allegations."

By all accounts, it was an unusual hearing, mired in irregularities. The Committee chairperson, an RSP MP, had made a ruling early on to conclude the process "quickly". According to Nepal News, while earlier hearing committees called complainants and for-

warded the approval process only after a few days of discussion, the RSP Committee breached the tradition and limited the hearing to a formality.

That same day, Dr. Sharma was hurriedly cleared by the Parliamentary Hearing Committee, sworn in at Shital Niwas, the President's office, and placed in office. Once in office, on June 24, over a month after the registry kept the writs hostage, a constitutional bench led by Sharma upheld the administration's decision to reject the writ petition challenging his appointment as the Chief Justice, noting that the challenge was now "moot".

In a continuation of the same saga, earlier this month, Man Bahadur Karki, the junior registrar who was key to stalling of the writs, was recommended by the Constitutional Council to serve as Nepal's Chief Election Commissioner.

Last night, the Embassy of Nepal welcomed Chief Justice Sharma at the Indira Gandhi International airport in New Delhi. On CJI Surya Kant's invitation, Dr. Sharma will be attending an international conference marking 60 years of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

Narendra Modi Has A Golden Opportunity To Lead Global South At BRICS Summit

India is hosting the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12 and 13 this year which carries unusual significance in the present changing landscape of the geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific as also in other parts of the world. Most importantly, Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Russian President Vladimir Putin are expected to atte3nd apart from the heads of the other member nations.

BRICS originally started with Brazil, Russia, India and China, then South Africa joined. Now BRICS have eleven members. Apart from the big five, other countries include Indonesia, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and UAE. Among the members right now, Iran is involved in a war with the USA and Israel while Russia has been in war with Ukraine for more than five years. Though India has put the official theme as Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability, the global affairs including the war in West Asia is certainly going to dominate. On this Gulf war issue, the victim Iran has differences with UAE and Saudi Arabia. India's efforts will be contain the outburst of the differences on West Asian war and focus more on the developmental issues including strengthening of local currency trade, AI governance and possibilities of furthering economic collaboration between the member nations. India as a leading economically strong developing nation is playing a major role in reorienting the nature of financial and technical collaboration between the BRICS members. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is leading technical coordination for the implementation of BRICS Pay and the interoperability of central bank digital currencies like the e-rupee and digital yuan.. Further, India is championing the cause of digital infrastructure by using platforms like UPI as a model. Indian officials are expected to take important part in discussions on ethical AI governance and knowledge sharing. India are championing Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) by using platforms like India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as a model. The bloc is also prioritizing the development of ethical AI governance and knowledge sharing..Energy transition is one key area which India will focus. Many members of BRICS are big oil producers. So the discussions will have relevance in the context of the current problems being faced by the oil importing nations including India.

While, the economic and energy issues will form the part of the developmental agenda at the BRICS Summit, the members will closely follow the political message which the BRICS Summit hosted by India gives to the other members. Most of the members have misgivings about pro-US tilt of the Indian Prime Minister after coming to power in 2014. But this was more evident in Trump years, especially after he took over power for the second time on January 20, 2025. For the first six months, of 2025, PM was under the spell of Trump. After the tariff war and Trump's continuous threat to India on oil purchases from Russia, Narendra Modi got some mojo and joined the Brazil summit of BRICS in July 2025 where he took a strong position on the issues of global South. But basically, India's foreign policy was still stuck with the US strategy without any strategic autonomy for India. India tried to woo Trump in many ways but the Trump administration has been continuing with new tariffs including the latest 200 per cent on generics affecting India. But a new development concerning the US strategy on Indo-Pacific in the wake of Trump-Xi Jinping summit in May this year has given a wake up call to Indian foreign policy officials. The US has devalued India's role in Indo-Pacific and in US strategy, India has lost its earlier relevance as an important ally in its containment policy against China. This may be a temporary phase as it depends on the nature of US-China relations. But the Indian foreign ministry has been compelled to give a look at the possibility of reshaping its maritime security policy also. Indian PM's recent visit to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand is a positive development from this aspect. PM Narendra Modi earlier gave more emphasis on US sponsored QUAD as against BRICS. But since Trump himself is not interested in holding the QUAD summit which was scheduled to be held in India in 2026, Indian foreign office has to focus more on BRICS, though the option of QUAD still remains but in a weaker form. Foreign Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar has recently attended the QUAD foreign ministers meeting and discussed issues with the U.S. secretary of state Marco Rubio as usual, but the earlier warmth was missing. The U.S. seeks to make use of India only when it suits the Trump administration.

Experts in Washington have noted that Trump administration is more interested in cultivating Pakistan these days even at the cost of friendship with India. Pakistan has been gaining more diplomatic ground with both USA and China and that is strengthening Pakistan economically and politically. All these have been taking place in a geopolitical environment where India have been left with very few real friends. At the BRICS meet, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has to take a firm stand in favour of the issues that help Global South. India, presently the World's largest populated country with the possibility of emerging as the third largest economy by the end of the decade, should stick to a firm independent foreign policy. PM Modi's tilt towards Trump at the cost of Global South has been annoying most of the BRICS members. Now, in the new situation, India can reshape its policy on the basis of strategic autonomy in its relations with all three countries, USA, China and Russia. Narendra Modi has a golden opportunity in September to emerge as a real leader of Global South. Will he do it, that is the big question.

Water conservation infrastructure and storage capacity has been strengthened in Nandyal district under the Catch the Rain campaign

The "Catch the Rain Campaign" is being implemented in Nandyal district, Andhra Pradesh, with the aim of conserving every drop of rainwater through the restoration of traditional water bodies, desilting of tributary canals, revival of pond systems, and creation of additional water storage. The campaign is being implemented in coordination with various departments, following the principle of "collecting rain where it falls, when it falls." Through scientific planning, community participation, and coordinated implementation, the district is strengthening its water conservation infrastructure and increasing its capacity to collect and store monsoon runoff.

Scientific planning and participatory implementation :

Scientific planning is carried out in all 489 Gram Panchayats through field surveys, mapping of prioritized water bodies, tributary canals, and watershed areas, and technical assessments conducted by the relevant departments. Consultations with local communities and village elders help identify measures based on local needs and traditional knowledge. To ensure transparency and community participation, proposed actions are presented to the Gram Sabha.

Based on this scientific and participatory planning process, the district identified, approved, and initiated 2,103 water conservation

works, ensuring 100% completion. These works are strategically planned to maximize rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and water storage, strengthening the objectives of the "Catch the Rain Campaign."

Large-scale water conservation measures :

Under this campaign, 2,691 kilometers of tributary and supply canals have been desilted and restored, improving the flow of rainwater into reservoirs and tanks. Restoration work is underway on 251 minor irrigation tanks, of which 225 have been completed, while work on the remaining is ongoing.

The district has also strengthened its network of 22,221 farm ponds, 2,221

check dams, and 202 percolation tanks, significantly increasing rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and water availability across the district. These measures improve the overall efficiency of the water conservation system and strengthen the district's ability to harvest every drop of rain.

Additional water storage capacity created :

The district estimates the additional water storage created through these measures using technical estimates prepared by the relevant engineering departments. Renovation of feeder channels and water conservation structures will restore an estimated 3.27 TMC of tank storage capacity, while newly constructed

water conservation structures will provide an additional 0.03 TMC of storage capacity.

By increasing the capacity of tanks and other water bodies to store and retain monsoon runoff, these scientifically planned works significantly strengthen the Catch the Rain Campaign, improve groundwater recharge and ensure greater water availability for agriculture, livelihoods and local communities.

Towards sustainable water security :

The Catch the Rain campaign continues to strengthen water conservation efforts in Nandyal district through large-scale desilting of 2,691 km of tributary and supply canals, renovation of 251 mi-

nor irrigation tanks, implementation of 2,103 water conservation works and revival of thousands of rainwater harvesting structures.

Driven by scientific planning, technical assessment, and active community participation, these initiatives enhance the district's ability to collect, store, and recharge rainwater, while also improving long-term water security and resilience to climate change. The district's integrated approach demonstrates how coordinated action under the Catch the Rain campaign is producing lasting water conservation results and advancing the vision of "collecting rain where it falls, when it falls."

The Government is committed to engaging with the employees' organisations through regular dialogue and constructive consultation: Dr. Jitendra Singh



Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office for Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that the Government is committed to engaging with the employees' organisations through regular dialogue and constructive consultation. The Minister said that the Government's unwavering focus on transparency, accountability, and employee welfare has led to the resolution of many long-standing service-related matters that were pending for approxi-

mately 25 to 30 years. He said that responsive governance, timely decision-making, and continuous administrative reforms have made grievance redressal a key pillar of public administration, ensuring that long-pending issues of government employees are resolved in a fair, rule-based, and timely manner.

Dr. Jitendra Singh made these remarks at his official residence in New Delhi during an interaction with a 12-member delegation of the Bharatiya Postal Employees Federation (BPEF), affiliated to the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), led by Shri Anant Kumar Pal,

General Secretary. The delegation included representatives of postal employees from Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and several other states, reflecting the union's pan-India representation.

The delegation discussed a number of issues concerning postal employees, including service matters, employee welfare, recognition issues, and the need for expeditious resolution of pending administrative and legal matters. The delegation also discussed issues requiring coordination between various departments and sought continued support for resolving genuine employee concerns



within the established legal and administrative framework.

Dr. Jitendra Singh stated that the Government is committed to engaging with employee organizations through regular dialogue and constructive consultation. He emphasized that every genuine representation is examined on its merits and in accordance with applicable rules and procedures, while matters involving multiple ministries and departments require extensive institutional consultation to ensure legally sound, transparent, and sustainable outcomes. He encouraged employee representatives to continue sharing written

suggestions and feedback to further strengthen governance and public service delivery. The delegation members appreciated the government's continued emphasis on administrative reforms and acknowledged that many pending service-related matters and employee grievances, which had remained unresolved for decades, have received special attention in recent years. They noted that improvements in grievance redressal mechanisms, transparency, and administrative promptness have significantly strengthened employee confidence in the system.

The delegation appre-

ciated the role of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) in promoting transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance through administrative reforms and institutional capacity building. The delegation thanked Dr. Jitendra Singh for maintaining an open and consultative approach with employee organizations and expressed confidence that the Government will continue to address legitimate service-related concerns while further strengthening employee welfare, administrative efficiency, and good governance across the country.

BYD India launches Sealion 7 Dynamic at Rs 41.90 lakh; new entry variant expands premium EV lineup

New Delhi: BYD Sealion 7 Dynamic Launched: BYD India has introduced the new BYD Sealion 7 Dynamic variant at an introductory price of Rs 41.90 lakh (ex-showroom). The new variant expands the company's premium electric

SUV lineup in India and offers customers a new entry point into the Sealion 7 range, BYD said in the release. The Sealion 7 Dynamic is powered by a 71.8 kWh Blade Battery. It offers a claimed range of 520 km (NEDC) and can accelerate

from 0 to 100 kmph in 7.3 seconds. The new Dynamic variant is available in four colours — Atlantis Grey, Cosmos Black, Aurora White and Shark Grey. With the launch of the Dynamic variant, Sealion 7 portfolio now includes Dynamic,

Premium and Performance variants. The lineup offers customers more choices based on their driving needs and preferences. The Dynamic variant combines performance, technology and everyday usability. It retains key features associ-

ated with the SEALION 7, including the Blade Battery, Cell-to-Body technology and Intelligent Torque Adaptation Control. The SUV also gets a panoramic glass roof and a rotating touchscreen infotainment system. It comes with sev-

eral safety and driver assistance features. The Sealion 7 range is available with a choice of 71.8 kWh and 82.56 kWh Blade Batteries. The SUV is based on BYD's dedicated e-Platform 3.0. Its design follows BYD's Ocean Aesthetics theme.



India GCC leasing set to hit 40 million sq ft by 2027; centres to drive half of office demand: Report



Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India are expected to expand beyond the technology sector, with annual leasing projected to rise to 35-40 million square feet over the next two years, according to a latest report by Colliers India. The report, titled 'GCCs in India: Global Leadership Through Scale, Competitiveness, Talent & Innovation', said GCCs are expected to account for nearly half of India's Grade A office space demand in 2026 and 2027. GCCs have emerged as strategic hubs for high-value functions such as artificial intelligence, engineering, analytics, research and development and digital excellence, moving beyond their traditional back-office role.

GCCs account for 37% of office demand since 2021

Since 2021, GCCs have leased approximately 118 million square feet of Grade A office space across India's top seven cities. This

accounts for 37 per cent of the overall Grade A office space demand during the period. In the first half of 2026, GCCs leased 16.6 million square feet, accounting for 46 per cent of the overall Grade A office space uptake. According to Colliers, annual GCC leasing is expected to reach around 35-40 million square feet over the next two years. GCCs are projected to drive 45-50 per cent of India's office space demand in 2026 and around 50 per cent in 2027. "India has firmly established itself at the epicenter of GCC-led innovation, combining talent superiority, cost arbitrage and technological prowess with policy push and a supportive business environment," said Arpit Mehrotra, Managing Director, Office Services, Colliers India.

BFSI and engineering & manufacturing gain traction

While the technology sector remains the largest

contributor to GCC leasing, its share of cumulative demand has declined from 55 per cent in 2021 to 40 per cent in 2025. The BFSI sector has emerged as a major growth driver, with its share increasing from 15 per cent in 2021 to 20 per cent in 2025. Leasing volumes in the sector grew nearly three-fold between 2021 and 2025. Engineering and Manufacturing firms accounted for 14 per cent of GCC leasing in 2025, compared with 11 per cent in 2021. Leasing volumes in the segment grew 2.8 times during the period. Together, BFSI and Engineering & Manufacturing firms accounted for more than one-third of GCC demand in 2025. Healthcare and Consulting also recorded significant growth. Healthcare GCC leasing increased six-fold between 2021 and 2025, while Consulting leasing grew seven-fold. "While the Technology sector is likely to remain dominant and account

for 40-50 per cent of the GCC leasing in 2026, other demand sectors are expected to witness significant traction in coming years," said Vimal Nadar, National Director & Head of Research, Colliers India. Bengaluru, Hyderabad continue to lead GCC demand. Bengaluru remained the largest GCC market, accounting for 37 per cent of GCC leasing in 2025 and 37 per cent in H1 2026. Hyderabad accounted for 20 per cent of leasing in 2025 and 26 per cent in the first half of 2026. Chennai has emerged as one of the fastest-growing GCC markets. GCC leasing in the city increased from 0.9 million square feet in 2021 to 4.3 million square feet in 2025, representing nearly five-fold growth. Pune also recorded strong growth, with leasing rising from 1.1 million square feet in 2021 to 3.4 million square feet in 2025. While Bengaluru and Hyderabad are expected to continue attracting technology-focused GCCs, Mumbai and Pune are likely to remain key hubs for BFSI operations. Chennai, meanwhile, is expected to see increasing demand from Engineering and Manufacturing GCCs.

Bengaluru's ORR, Hyderabad's SBD emerge as key GCC hubs

GCC demand remains concentrated in a few established business districts. The top 10 micro-markets accounted for more than 70 per cent of GCC space up-

take between 2021 and H1 2026. Nine of the top 10 micro-markets are located in southern cities. Bengaluru's Outer Ring Road (ORR) and Hyderabad's Secondary Business District (SBD) emerged as the two leading GCC hubs, together accounting for 37 per cent of GCC leasing since 2021. Other prominent GCC locations include Whitefield, SBD 1 and North Bengaluru, Off SBD in Hyderabad, OMR Zone 1, MPR and PTR in Chennai, and Kharadi in Pune.

Emerging locations such as Noida Expressway, Navi Mumbai and Hinjewadi could also benefit from relatively lower rentals and increasing demand for office space.

AI-native GCCs and Tier II cities to drive next phase

Colliers said the next phase of GCC expansion is likely to be driven by emerging models such as AI-native and intelligent GCCs, nano and mid-sized centres, and the "Hub-plus-one" strategy. Under this model, companies are expected to expand beyond established Tier I locations and explore Tier II and Tier III cities. With GCCs increasingly focusing on innovation, knowledge-led operations and strategic business functions, they are expected to remain a key driver of India's office market growth over the coming years.

SIP 10-10-10 Rule Explained: How much can Rs 10,000 monthly SIP grow in 10 years? See examples



SIP 10-10-10 Rule: The 10-10-10 SIP rule is emerging as a simple framework for investors looking to begin their mutual fund investment journey. The 10-10-10 rule broadly involves staying invested for 10 years, assuming a 10 per cent annual return, and increasing the SIP by 10 per cent every year.

The broader idea also encourages investors to start by investing a portion of their income, with 10 per cent cited as a possible starting point. However, financial experts caution that the 10-10-10 rule is not a guaranteed formula or a strategy that can be applied uniformly to every investor. Instead, it can serve as a starting point for investors, particularly those who are new to systematic investment plans (SIPs).

Kirttan Shah, CEO of Truvanta Wealth Pvt Ltd, said that a thumb rule can be a useful starting point for investors who may not have extensive technical knowledge.

"Thumb rules generally give the investor community a little motivation that perhaps if this is easy to follow and if I follow it, I can definitely reach a milestone," Shah told Zee Business.

What is the 10-10-10 SIP rule?

According to Shah, the first 10 refers to a 10-year investment horizon, while the second 10 represents an assumed 10 per cent return. The third 10 refers to a 10 per cent annual step-up in the SIP amount.

The rule broadly suggests that investors should aim to invest around 10 per cent of their income, remain invested for 10 years and increase their SIP contribution by 10 per cent annually, assuming a long-term return expectation of around 10 per cent.

Shah said that the 10-year time horizon and the annual SIP step-up are largely within an investor's control, while market returns are not. "The return is not in your control. That is why this rule has represented it in a slightly conservative or moderate manner at 10 per cent," he said.

Shah added that a 10 per cent return assumption is not overly aggressive for long-term equity investing, although returns are not guaranteed. Is a 10% annual SIP step-up mandatory?

Experts said that the 10 per cent annual step-up should not be treated as a fixed or mandatory number.

According to Vikas Puri, Senior Partner at Complete Circle Capital Pvt Ltd, the annual SIP increase can be adjusted depending on an investor's income growth and cash flow. "Five per cent can also be used, 10

per cent can be used and 15 per cent can also be used, depending on how your income or inflows are increasing year after year," Puri said while speaking on Zee Business.

Therefore, investors who are unable to increase their SIP by 10 per cent every year should not necessarily stop investing. The step-up should ideally be aligned with the investor's ability to save and their changing income.

Rs 10,000 monthly SIP: How much can the corpus grow?

Puri said that a Rs 10,000 monthly SIP could grow to around Rs 20.65 lakh in 10 years, assuming a 10 per cent annual return and no step-up in the SIP.

However, if the investor increases the SIP by 10 per cent every year, the corpus could rise to around Rs 30.4 lakh, according to the example stated by Puri.

While the SIP contribution increases gradually every year, the final corpus rises by nearly 50 per cent in this example, highlighting the impact of higher contributions and compounding.

Puri added that the difference may not be visible in the initial years, but the impact of compounding becomes more significant as the investment base grows.

How does a 10% annual SIP step-up work?

A SIP step-up can be structured either as a fixed amount increase every year or as a percentage-based increase, depending on the investor's preference and the facility offered by the mutual fund platform.

For example, if an investor starts with a monthly SIP of Rs 10,000 and increases the contribution by 10 per cent every year, the SIP amount would rise approximately as follows:

- Year 1: Rs 10,000 per month
- Year 2: Rs 11,000 per month
- Year 3: Rs 12,100 per month
- Year 4: Rs 13,310 per month
- Year 5: around Rs 14,641 per month
- Year 10: around Rs 23,579 per month

Puri explained that under a percentage-based step-up, the increase is calculated on the previous year's SIP amount. "The multiplier effect starts coming into your input value itself," Puri said, adding that the impact on the final corpus can be considerably higher over a longer investment horizon.

Is a 10% return guaranteed?

Experts stressed that the 10 per cent return assumption is not a guarantee.

"Market returns are not guaranteed. You cannot be sure that you will get exactly 10 per cent returns,"

Shah said. He added that investors should focus on factors they can control, such as the amount invested and the time for which they remain invested, rather than chasing a specific return.

Why does a 10-year investment horizon matter?

According to Shah, a long investment horizon is important because SIP investors can benefit from market volatility. "If the market keeps going up continuously, your Rs 10,000 monthly SIP will accumulate fewer units," Shah said. He explained that market volatility can allow investors to accumulate more units when prices fall, which can potentially benefit long-term SIP investors. Shah referred to historical data discussed during the programme and said that the probability of negative returns was higher over shorter periods and declined significantly as the investment horizon increased. According to the data cited, the probability of a loss was around 23 per cent for a one-year SIP, fell to below 2 per cent for a six-year SIP and was zero for a 10-year SIP over the period studied. The same data showed that the probability of earning more than 10 per cent returns rose with the investment period. It was around 80 per cent after more than four years and increased to 99 per cent over a 10-year investment period, Shah said. He described 10 years as a potential "sweet spot" based on the historical data discussed, as the probability of losses had fallen to zero while the likelihood of earning more than 10 per cent returns had risen significantly.

Shah also said that the worst return over a 10-year period in the historical data was around 7 per cent.

However, historical performance does not guarantee future returns.

Who should follow the 10-10-10 SIP rule?

Puri said the rule can be used by Gen Z investors, millennials and those who are new to mutual fund investing.

However, he stressed that the 10 per cent figure should not be viewed as a fixed limit. "Every individual has their own income, risk appetite and goals," Puri said. He added that investors should ideally invest as much as they can afford after accounting for their expenses and financial obligations. For someone earning Rs 50,000 per month, a Rs 5,000-Rs 10,000 SIP may be a reasonable starting point. However, a person earning Rs 2 lakh per month should not necessarily restrict their investment to Rs 10,000 merely because that was their initial SIP amount.

EPFO EPS rules explained: Eligibility, pension calculation and withdrawal



New Delhi: The Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), introduced in 1995, is the pension component of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) administered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). While many salaried employees regularly check their EPF balance, fewer understand how EPS works. Knowing the scheme's key rules can help members plan for retirement and avoid issues while changing jobs or claiming pension benefits.

EPS eligibility: Who can receive pension?

Employees covered under the EPF scheme are generally covered by EPS in accordance with the scheme's provisions. To receive a monthly pension under EPS, a member generally must: Be covered under the EPF and EPS schemes. Complete at least 10

years of contributory service under EPS.

Attain the age of 58 years to receive a regular pension.

Members who have completed the qualifying service may also opt for an early pension from the age of 50 years. However, the pension amount is reduced in accordance with the provisions of the scheme.

EPFO EPS contribution: How much goes into your pension account?

Under the EPF scheme, both the employer and employee contribute 12% of the employee's basic salary and dearness allowance.

The employee's entire contribution is credited to the EPF account. From the employer's contribution:

8.33%, subject to the statutory wage ceiling of Rs 15,000, is allocated to the EPS account. The remaining em-

ployer contribution is credited to the EPF account.

For employees covered under the statutory wage ceiling, the employer's maximum monthly contribution to EPS is Rs 1,250. Members covered under the higher pension provisions may have different contribution calculations under the applicable EPFO rules.

EPS pension calculation: How is your monthly pension calculated?

The monthly pension is calculated using the following formula:

Monthly Pension = Pensionable Salary x Pensionable Service + 70

Pensionable salary is generally the average monthly salary during the last 60 months of contributory service before becoming eligible for pension or exiting the scheme, as applicable under EPS rules.

Pensionable service refers to the total period during which eligible EPS contributions have been made. Members who complete 20 years or more of eligible service receive an additional two-year weightage while calculating their pension under the scheme.

EPS withdrawal rules: When can you withdraw your money?

The withdrawal rules depend on the length of contributory service.

Members with less than 10 years of contributory service may apply for withdrawal benefits in accordance with EPFO rules or obtain a Scheme Certificate to preserve their pensionable service for future use.

Members with 10 years or more of contributory service generally become eligible for a monthly pension on attaining the prescribed age instead of a lump-sum withdrawal. What happens to your EPS account when you change jobs?

Your EPS account remains linked to your Universal Account Number (UAN). If you move to another EPFO-covered employer and complete the applicable transfer formalities, your pensionable service generally continues under the same UAN, helping preserve your eligibility for pension benefits. If you leave EPFO-

covered employment before completing 10 years of contributory service, you may claim withdrawal benefits, if eligible, or obtain a Scheme Certificate in accordance with the applicable EPFO rules.

EPS pension benefits: Retirement, disability and family pension

Besides the regular retirement pension, EPS also provides pension benefits in specified circumstances, including: Early pension

Disability pension Widow pension Child pension Orphan pension

The eligibility conditions and amount payable depend on the provisions of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995.

Important EPS rules every EPF subscriber should know

Before planning retirement or changing jobs, keep these points in mind:

Keep your KYC details updated with EPFO.

Ensure your UAN remains active and correctly linked to your EPF account.

Preserve continuity of contributory service whenever possible.

Opting for an early pension permanently reduces the monthly pension amount under the scheme. Regularly verify that employer contributions are being deposited correctly.

Buzz in Nizam, A Confidence Booster For Ameer Log



Awwal Number Productions is introducing its maiden production venture, Ameer Log. The film, produced by Madhavi Reddy Soma, has Ramana Reddy Soma at the

helm as director. Manohar Reddy Manchuri serves as co-producer. The movie stars MC Hari, Manoj, Sashidhar & Vedha Jalandhar in the lead. Spirit Media, the banner asso-

ciated with Rana Daggubati, is bringing the film to theatres across Telugu markets. Director Ramana Reddy Soma says the entire team was certain that they had made a successful

film. He described Ameer Log as an unprecedented attempt and said he had invested considerable effort in creating something fresh. The director also pointed to the response generated by the premieres as a major confidence booster. He felt that the reactions from viewers indicated that the film had achieved the objective with which it was made.

Ramana Reddy Soma believes the Telugu film industry is entering a new phase where Hyderabad can become a centre for distinctive and unconventional storytelling. Referring to the popularity of Malayalam cinema for its unique narratives, he said the time has come for Hyderabad to produce films that generate a similar conversation. He confidently stated that the buzz created by Ameer Log in Nizam on August 21 would not remain confined to one region and would eventually resonate across the other Telugu territories. Ameer Log is now ready to put that promise to the test as it reaches theatres on August 21.

Is Venky Atluri's Project With Megastar Still On?

Director Venky Atluri has earned a strong reputation as one of the promising filmmakers in Telugu cinema. With back-to-back blockbusters and family dramas packed with entertainment and meaningful dialogues, Venky has carved a unique space for himself among the new generation of directors. Humbled by these complements and comparison with Trivikram, Venky responds, "These are very big compliments. Trivikram Srinivas garu is a legend. I always looked up to him and his films even before I entered the film industry. I watched Nuvvu Naaku Nachav in 2001, and that film inspired me. It made me admire him and his work. He has a great mark on me." Talking about the terrific response to Vishwanath And Sons in theatres, Venky shared that he is overwhelmed by the massive success, which he admits is a first in his career. He said he is enjoying the success of VAS.



Has Trivikram suggested any changes during the film's editing? Venky shared, "Director Trivikram garu is officially part of the film's production through Fortune Four Cinemas. So, he gets to watch all my movies well before their release. For my past films, he had suggested some changes on the editing table, but for Vishwanath And Sons,

Trivikram sir didn't suggest any changes. This shows how much he had liked the film beforehand." Responding to Trivikram's first reaction after the film's release, Venky said, "Trivikram garu watched it after the release. He said he loved it completely." What is Venky's next film? He shared, "For a few more days, I'll be promoting

Vishwanath And Sons. After that, I'll work on my next." When asked about his proposed film with Megastar Chiranjeevi, Venky admitted, "Yes, a film with Chiranjeevi garu is on. I'm yet to narrate a story to Megastar garu." On whether his next film will also be with Sithara Entertainments, he quipped, "Yes."

Can Yash's Toxic Win Over English Audiences?

Rocking Star Yash's Toxic is gearing up for release, but one interesting question is whether the film can make a strong impact among English-speaking audiences. Going by the visuals and promos, Toxic has plenty of violence, mature content and grand visuals. These elements could appeal to English audiences. However, the buzz for the English version is currently only moderate. The trailer created some interest, but it may not be enough, especially since Toxic has been shot in both Kannada and English. The English version is very important for the film to reach a wider international audience. With its grand visuals and stylish presentation, strong word-of-mouth will be crucial. If the film gets a positive response after release, Toxic could slowly pick up and connect with English audiences. The response in the English market will be an important factor in deciding how far Toxic can travel internationally.



Nora Fatehi Sails Through Morocco In Florals

Nora Fatehi is leaving no stone unturned when it comes to flaunting her love for Morocco. The actress-dancer, who has been globally in the spotlight for her music contributions to football's biggest stage, recently performed the official anthem "Siir Siir" alongside Sanjoy and Vegeedream at the opening events of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Toronto. Riding high on that global moment, Nora is now back exploring her home country, and her latest pictures capture her in flowy printed dresses against palm-lined pathways, the coastline, and even the deck of a ship, radiating pure joy and pride. Her candid, sun-soaked snapshots show her twirling through gardens and soaking in the Moroccan coastline, proving her connection to her roots runs deep beyond just her global fame. On the work front, Nora continues to stay busy with back-to-back music videos, while fans are eagerly awaiting her next big screen appearance in Kanchana 4, expected to mark another exciting chapter in her career.



Nidhhi Agerwal Is Hyderabad's Own Pearl Queen



Nidhhi Agerwal is currently embodying the very essence of Hyderabad, pearls, and she's doing it with sheer grace. The actress was recently clicked in a stunning pearl-embellished ivory saree paired with a sleeveless blouse, the kind of look usually reserved for Cannes red carpets, yet she pulled it off effortlessly right here in the City of Pearls. When a pearl wears pearls, it's only fitting. She completed the look with matching pearl earrings and a simple, side-swept hairdo, posing gracefully on the floor amid scattered pearl strings. The whole aesthetic instantly brought back memories of her regal look from Hari Hara Veera Mallu, and it seems Nidhhi isn't quite ready to let go of that princess-like charm just yet. On the work front, though Hari Hara Veera Mallu didn't perform as expected at the box office, Nidhhi currently has no major announcements lined up in either Tollywood or Bollywood. But given that she patiently waited three years for both Hari Hara Veera Mallu and Raja Saab, waiting a little longer for the right project clearly isn't going to faze her.