



BUZZ POINTS



India Launches Hydrogen Train

PAGE 07



Train Hits School Van in Bengal

PAGE 07



BJP, Mehbooba Spar Over Wangchuk

PAGE 07



Murmu Begins Europe Visit

PAGE 07

Narayana's School Revolution Brings New Hope to Students

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development Dr. Ponguru Narayana is spearheading a major transformation of government schools in Nellore city, with a focus on providing modern infrastructure, quality education and facilities on par with corporate institutions. The initiative, launched during his two-year tenure, has brought significant changes to municipal and Zilla Parishad (ZP) high schools through large-scale development works.

Development works worth around 200 crore are being undertaken across 15 Municipal and ZP high schools within Nellore Corporation limits through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, without any financial burden on the State Government or Nellore Corporation.

The historic 150-year-old V.R. High School has been restored with modern facilities and transformed into an institution comparable with leading private schools. The school has witnessed a rise in demand, with admissions becoming highly competitive. Similar development works are underway at DS and RRSR High Schools in Moolapeta, along



with RSR School, Moolapeta Girls' School, Santapeta Guntubadi School, BVS School, YVM School and MSM School.

The initiative has also resulted in increased student enrolment across municipal high schools in Nellore. Beautification and infrastructure development works have been carried out in schools with a minimum expenditure of 3 crore per institution through CSR support.

Speaking with True Point, B. Vengala Rao, President, Municipal Teachers' Federation (MTF), Nellore City, appreciated the initiatives and said the transformation of government

schools has created a positive atmosphere among students, parents and teachers. He said improved infrastructure and modern learning facilities are encouraging more students to choose government schools.

S. Ramakrishna, State President, Municipal Teachers' Federation of Andhra Pradesh, told True Point, "If every MLA takes inspiration from Minister Narayana and develops their constituency with the same care one would show towards their own home, education across the State will flourish."

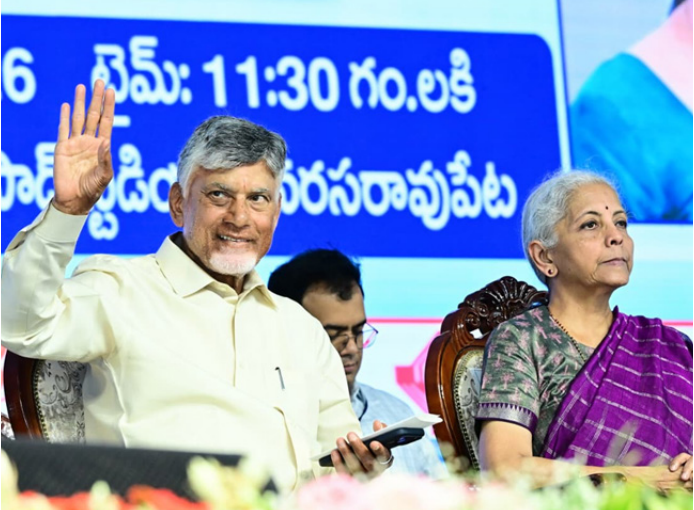
As part of his commitment to improving access to educa-

tion, Minister Narayana has also initiated the distribution of bicycles to 7,000 Class 10 students studying in 23 government high schools, including 15 schools in Nellore city and eight in rural areas. The bicycles, specially designed for boys and girls in coordination with Hero Cycles, are valued at around ₹6,000 each, with the total cost exceeding 5 crore. The initiative is being funded by Minister Narayana.

A mega bicycle distribution programme will be organised at the V.R. High School grounds, where all 7,000 bicycles will be distributed in a single-day event.

Another key project is the Abdul Kalam International School, being constructed at a cost of 20 crore to provide international-standard educational facilities for underprivileged students. The school has gained recognition for introducing advanced educational facilities and an IIT-oriented syllabus.

Recalling his own childhood struggles, Minister Narayana said students should not face the hardships he experienced while pursuing education. He said his experiences motivated him to improve government schools



Credit Access Will Turn Palnadu into Entrepreneur Hub, Says CM

Narasaraopet, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman participated in a Mega Credit Outreach Programme at Narasaraopet in Palnadu district on Friday, distributing loans worth 3,216 crore to 1,03,246 beneficiaries.

The programme, jointly organised by the Union Ministry of Finance and Public Sector Banks, covered a wide range of beneficiaries, including 15,000 DWCRA women and 13,355 entrepreneurs. Loan sanction letters and cheques were handed over during the event.

Addressing the gathering, Chandrababu Naidu

AP Forms Committee To Implement AER Plan

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The state government has issued orders for the formation of the Amaravati Economic Region (AER) Implementation Committee to drive the development of the strategic economic zone under the Swarna Andhra 2047 vision.

Through G.O. Rt. No. 945 issued by Principal Secretary (Municipal Administration & Urban Development) S. Suresh

Kumar, the government recognised NTR, Krishna, Eluru, West Godavari, Guntur, Palnadu, Bapatla, Prakasam and Markapuram districts as part of the Amaravati Economic Region. The committee will function under the Regional Planning Board and focus on balanced regional development, industrial growth, infrastructure expansion, urbanisation, logistics development, investment promotion and



PM Modi Dedicates Rayanapadu Railway Station Under Amrit Bharat

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday virtually inaugurated the redeveloped Rayanapadu Railway Station under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme and dedicated the modernised facility to the nation. The inauguration was part of the nationwide launch of 75 redeveloped railway stations under the scheme through video conferencing from Jalandhar.

The programme at Rayanapadu Railway Station was attended by Andhra Pradesh Minister for Health, Family Welfare and Medical Education and District In-charge Minister A. Satya Kumar Yadav, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath, Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Venkata Krishna Prasad, NTR District Collector and District Magistrate Dr.



Lakshmeshah, Vijayawada Divisional Railway Manager Mohit Sonakiya, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure) P E Edwin, senior railway officials, public representatives and railway employees.

Redeveloped at an estimated cost of 35.67 crore, Rayanapadu Railway Station has been transformed into a modern, passenger-friendly transport hub with improved facilities and enhanced accessibility. The station's new façade re-



flects the famous Kondapalli art tradition, showcasing the cultural heritage of Andhra Pradesh.

The upgraded station includes an air-conditioned waiting hall, modular toilets, passenger lifts connected to the Foot Over Bridge, covered platforms, resurfaced high-level platforms, improved circulating areas, landscaped approach roads, parking facilities, energy-efficient lighting and better passenger information systems.

Speaking on the occasion, Divisional Railway Manager Mohit Sonakiya said, "The redevelopment of Rayanapadu Railway Station, the first Amrit Station to be inaugurated in Vijayawada Division, represents our commitment to providing safe, modern and accessible railway infrastructure while reflecting the cultural identity of the region."

A. Satya Kumar Yadav said the inauguration marked another important step towards strengthening transport infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh. He said the modern station reflects the transformation of railway facilities under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath said the redevelopment represents the government's focus on improving railway infrastructure and passenger

services. He added that Rayanapadu, along with two other stations in his constituency, is being developed under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Venkata Krishna Prasad said the new amenities would significantly improve passenger convenience and accessibility while preserving the region's cultural identity through its architectural design.

Rayanapadu Railway Station, an NSG-5 category station under South Coast Railway's Vijayawada Division, serves around 286 passengers daily and provides stoppage facilities for four daily and 10 non-daily trains. The redevelopment is aimed at offering inclusive and dignified travel facilities for all passengers, including Divyangjan, senior citizens and persons with reduced mobility.

Robust Arrangements Ordered for 80th Independence Day Celebrations

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Chief Secretary G. Sai Prasad has directed officials across departments to make robust arrangements for the 80th Independence Day celebrations scheduled on August 15 under the theme 'Swarnandhra 2047'. He reviewed preparedness with officials at the Secretariat



on Friday.

Sai Prasad instructed that the celebrations be conducted smoothly at

No Need To Panic Over COVID-19 Cases: Minister Satya Kumar

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav on Friday said the COVID-19 situation in the state is under control and assured the public that there is no need for concern.

Speaking to the media at Rayanapadu in NTR district, the Minister said the government is closely monitoring the situation as cases are being reported in several states. He noted that Kerala reported 115 cases, Karnataka 64 and Tamil Nadu 39, while Andhra Pradesh recorded only 13 cases. Satya Kumar Yadav said samples have been collected and sent to a laboratory in



Pune for analysis. He added that all necessary precautions are in place, including availability of sanitizers, medicines and COVID-related supplies, along with isolation wards in hospitals. He clarified that the variants currently being detected are not severe and urged people to remain cautious but not panic.

Naidu Guides TDP MPs Ahead of Parliament Session

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister and TDP President N. Chandrababu Naidu chaired the TDP Parliamentary Party meeting at his Camp Office in Amaravati and guided MPs on key issues to be raised during the upcoming Parliament sessions. Discussions focused on national policy matters, State concerns and coordination with alliance partners.



During the meeting, MPs and party leaders discussed issues including the Delimitation Bill, Women's Reservation, the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, economic and

Naidu Seeks Centre's Support for Aqua Sector

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu urged the Union Government to take policy measures to reduce the rising cost of shrimp feed and protect the interests of aqua farmers during a meeting with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the Chief Minister's Camp Office on Friday. Chandrababu Naidu said the aquaculture sector supports lakhs of farmers, workers, exporters, hatcheries, processing units and allied industries. He highlighted that shrimp feed prices had increased significantly between January and



April, raising production costs by over 20%. He requested the Centre to stabilise raw material prices and strengthen domestic markets, branding, processing and export opportunities. The Chief Minister also sought financial assistance through the National Fisheries Development Board for establishing the Andhra

agricultural policies, ethanol-blended petrol and the implementation of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for various projects.

Chandrababu Naidu sought details from MPs regarding the parties supporting the Delimitation Bill and stressed the need for effective coordination with the BJP and the Central Government. He directed Minister Nara Lokesh to study the Viksit Bharat

Mangalagiri Railway Station Gets Modern Makeover Under Amrit Bharat

Mangalagiri, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the modernised Mangalagiri Railway Station, developed at a cost of 12.56 crore under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, on Friday. HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh attended the inauguration along with Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communication P.ema Sani Chandrasekhar.

Speaking on the occasion, Nara Lokesh said railways play a vital role in India's economic growth and national integration. He said the country



had witnessed a transformation in railway infrastructure under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, with initiatives such as Vande Bharat trains, 100% electrification, freight corridors, modern railway stations and hydrogen-powered trains. He described the ongoing

Lokesh Calls for Transparent Teacher Recruitment

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

HRD, IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh directed universities to conduct recruitment for Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers transparently, warning that strict action would be taken against anyone involved in irregularities. He reviewed higher education and skill development initiatives with senior officials at his residence on Friday. Officials informed the Minister that 1,90,509 applications were received for university teaching posts, of which 1,51,836 were found eligible. Grievances will be accepted until July 21, and the final eligibility list will be released on July 27. Nara Lokesh also instructed officials to ensure transparent interviews and strict adherence to UGC norms



while granting permissions to private universities. Reviewing the Skill Development Department, the Minister said job fairs had provided employment opportunities to 1.37 lakh youth across the state. He directed officials to link every ITI with industries to bridge the skill gap and prepare a skilled workforce for emerging industries. He also ordered the development of a Skill Portal, establishment of placement cells in 169 government degree colleges, and timely implementation of training programmes to improve employability among students.



‘Thalliki Vandanam’ Extended to Anganwadi Staff

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to extend the Thalliki Vandanam scheme to Anganwadi teachers, mini Anganwadi teachers and Anganwadi helpers across the state. Welcoming the decision, Gummidi Sandhya Rani said Anganwadi staff had been waiting for this announcement for a long time. She noted that several Anganwadi teachers and helpers from different parts of the state had personally submitted representations seeking inclusion under the scheme. She said the government had responded positively and decided to extend the benefit to

all eligible Anganwadi staff working in both urban and rural areas. According to her, the decision would provide encouragement and confidence to thousands of Anganwadi employees who play a key role in the welfare of women and children. Gummidi Sandhya Rani expressed gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh for approving the proposal. She said the decision reflects the government's commitment to recognising the services of Anganwadi workers and strengthening welfare measures for them. She added that the move would boost the morale of Anganwadi staff across Andhra Pradesh.



Minister Narayana Reviews Amaravati Development Works

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government on Friday reviewed key infrastructure, connectivity and tourism projects aimed at accelerating the development of Amaravati. Minister P. Narayana inspected the progress of the Seed Axis Road project, held discussions with farmers on land pooling for major infrastructure works and reviewed tourism development plans. Inspecting the Seed Axis Road project, Narayana directed officials to expedite the remaining works connecting Amaravati with the old Guntur Highway. Officials informed him that the construction of two steel bridges across the Buckingham Canal and Kondaveeti Vagu was nearing completion. The minister said the road would provide direct connectivity from Vijayawada and Mangalagiri to Amaravati, significantly reducing travel time.

At the Guntur Collectorate, Narayana met farmers to discuss land required for the proposed railway line and Inner Ring Road. Farmers from Mothadaka, Kantheru and Tadikonda requested that land be acquired through the land pooling system rather than compulsory acquisition. Narayana assured them that the process would move forward only with the consent of farmers and that remaining concerns would be addressed through Gram Sabhas. Later, the minister reviewed tourism projects with Amaravati Development Corporation Limited (ADCL) officials. He directed them to speed up riverfront tourism, amusement park and eco-tourism park projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model and ensure they are completed alongside ongoing road and building works. He also instructed agencies already allotted land to commence construction without delay.

Pragada Kotayya Jayanti Declared State Festival

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The state government has declared the birth anniversary of handloom leader Pragada Kotayya as a State festival and issued orders to celebrate it every year on July 26 across government institutions. The government said the decision recognises Kotayya's outstanding contribution to the development of the handloom sector and the welfare of weavers. Born on July 26, 1915, at Nidubrolu in Guntur district, Kotayya led several movements for the rights of handloom workers. He organised a 75-day satyagraha in 1950, which resulted in the acceptance of key demands concerning the handloom sector. He also played a major role in establishing more than 200 handloom cooperative societies and cooperative spinning mills at Chirala, Nellore and Rajahmundry. The orders state that Pragada Kotayya Jayanti will be observed at the State Secretariat, district



collectorates and other government offices every year. Savita welcomed the government's decision and thanked Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh for recognising Kotayya's contribution to the handloom community. Handloom weavers also welcomed the announcement, saying it gives long-overdue recognition to a leader who dedicated his life to the welfare and advancement of the weaving community in Andhra Pradesh.

Lepakshi Emporium Reopens in Delhi to Showcase AP's Craft Heritage

New Delhi, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Minister for Handlooms & Textiles, BC Welfare and EWS Welfare S. Savitha said Andhra Pradesh is committed to preserving its rich handloom and handicraft traditions while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for artisans. She said the renovated Lepakshi Handicrafts Emporium in New Delhi would serve as a major platform to showcase the State's traditional craftsmanship to national and international buyers, tourists and art enthusiasts. Savitha inaugurated the renovated Lepakshi Handicrafts Emporium at the State Emporia Complex, Baba Khark Singh Marg, New Delhi, on Friday. The revamped showroom has been redesigned to provide a modern retail experience while highlighting Andhra Pradesh's heritage crafts. Honorary Advisor (Handloom & Handicrafts Development) Suchitra Ella said Andhra Pradesh has a rich legacy of traditional arts and crafts and that Lepakshi has played a key role in connecting artisans with wider markets. She said the reno-



vated showroom represents the State's vision of combining tradition with contemporary presentation. Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation Chairman Pasupuleti Hari Prasad said the New Delhi outlet would strengthen the marketing network for artisans and increase the reach of GI-tagged and traditional products. Managing Director Viswa Manoharan said the emporium showcases a wide range of products, including wood carvings, Kalamkari paintings, stone carvings, brass crafts, Bobbili Veena, Etikoppaka and Kondapalli toys, tribal art, crochet lace products and handloom sarees from Mangalagiri, Uppada, Gadwal, Chirala, Narayanavanam and Pedana Kalamkari traditions. Earlier, during her visit to the Andhra Pradesh Pavilion at Bharat Tex 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, Savitha interacted with artisans and appreciated live demonstrations of Crochet Lace, Pedana Kalamkari, Carpet Weaving and Kalamkari Block Printing. Pasupuleti Hari Prasad said the Lepakshi Pavilion received more than 3,000 visitors and generated over 120 business enquiries from domestic and international buyers, along with proposals for sourcing, design collaborations and export partnerships. The programme was attended by Andhra Pradesh Bhavan Resident Commissioner Praveen Kumar, Commissioner of Handlooms & Textiles Rekha Rani, senior officials, artisans and guests.

Decade-Long Waqf Records Dispute Resolved, AP Secures Key Documents

K Kalyan Krishna Kumar

Amaravati : In a significant breakthrough, the long-pending issue of Andhra Pradesh State Waqf Board records—stalled since the bifurcation of the state—has been resolved, marking what officials describe as a historic milestone. After nearly a decade, the Telangana State Waqf Board has handed over crucial records belonging to Andhra Pradesh. The transfer includes 3,503 files in 79 bundles, 4,050 Survey Commissioner reports, two official gazette volumes, and other valuable archival material. These records are critical for safeguarding Waqf properties and ensuring legal clarity. Shaik Abdul Azeez, Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Waqf Board, termed the development a “golden chapter” in the Board's history. “This is not merely a transfer of records but a historic milestone where Andhra Pradesh has regained crucial evidence to protect Waqf property rights,” he said. He noted that the absence of these records had severely impacted efforts to prevent encroachments, establish ownership, and handle legal disputes. Azeez added that since assuming office, he pursued the matter through contin-



uous engagement with counterparts in Telangana, leading to the resolution. He also revealed that outstanding dues of 55 crore owed to Andhra Pradesh are expected to be released soon. Sources indicated that Syed Azmatullah Hussaini and officials extended cooperation in facilitating the handover process. The Chairman expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, Minister Nara Lokesh, and Minister N. M. D. Farooq for their support. He also thanked the Telangana government and Waqf Board officials. Officials believe the retrieved records will significantly strengthen legal protection, streamline administration, and ensure better management of Waqf assets in Andhra Pradesh.



Service Rules Cleared for Grade-II Hostel Wardens

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh government has issued service rules enabling promotion opportunities for more than 300 Grade-II BC hostel wardens, bringing long-awaited relief to employees who had been seeking career advancement for nearly two decades. With the new rules, eligible Grade-II wardens will now be considered for promotion to Grade-I Hostel Warden based

on seniority from the date of their appointment. Until now, the absence of service rules had prevented promotions despite repeated representations since 2008. According to the government, the decision was taken after the issue was brought to its attention, paving the way for a structured promotion process for BC hostel wardens appointed through the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC). The wardens welcomed the

decision, stating that it would benefit many employees who were concerned about retiring without receiving a promotion. They said the move addresses a long-pending demand and provides clarity on future career progression. The employees expressed gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Savita for facilitating the formulation of the service rules, describing the decision as a major relief for hundreds of Grade-II hostel wardens across the state.

Centre Backs AP's Cultural Projects, Investors Invited

New Delhi/Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Centre has responded positively to Andhra Pradesh's proposals for strengthening the cultural sector and assured that an official circular on key proposals will be issued within a month, Kandula Durgesh said after meeting Union Culture Secretary Vivek Agarwal in New Delhi on Friday. During the meeting, Kandula Durgesh submitted five major proposals, including the establishment of a National School of Drama regional centre in Rajamahendravaram, an Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) centre in Andhra Pradesh, a Lalit Kala



Akademi regional centre, a modern Kalakshetra auditorium at the GVR Government College of Music and Dance in Vijayawada, and a Sahitya Akademi regional centre in Kadapa. He said the Centre had given a positive response and assured early action on the proposals, expressing confidence that they would significantly

strengthen the state's cultural infrastructure. Earlier, Kandula Durgesh participated in the Faith Tourism Conclave-2026, where he highlighted Andhra Pradesh's tourism potential before national and international delegates. He also visited the AP Tourism pavilion and invited investors to explore opportunities in the state's tourism sector. Tourism Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain joined the meetings and made a detailed presentation on tourism investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh, highlighting the state's infrastructure, heritage and policy support for investors.

Tribal Day Events to Showcase Indigenous Culture

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Gummidi Sandhya Rani directed officials to ensure that the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples celebrations, scheduled to be held at the State Secretariat on August 9, reflect the rich culture and traditions of tribal communities. She instructed officials to organise a special exhibition showcasing tribal heritage, customs and traditional lifestyles. She said the programmes should highlight the unique identity of tribal communities and introduce their culture and way of life to a wider audience. Gummidi Sandhya Rani also directed officials to create awareness about International Tribal Day in tribal constituencies, tandas, gudems, Ashram schools, Gurukul institutions and hostels, while educating students about the courage and contributions of tribal leaders. She said the coalition government had strengthened infrastructure in tribal areas over the past two years by improving roads, buildings and hostel facilities. She reiterated that tribal lands are being protected under the provisions of the 1/70 Regulation and said the government is making all efforts to implement G.O. No. 3 in accordance with the court's directions. She appealed to tribal youth not to believe misinformation and reaffirmed that protecting tribal rights, welfare and development remains the government's priority.

Minister Seeks Faster FCV Tobacco Procurement

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Kinjarapu Atchannaidu has urged the Tobacco Board to speed up procurement of Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco and take steps to ensure better prices for farmers. During a teleconference on Friday to review the progress of tobacco procurement, he asked the Board to coordinate with tobacco companies to improve market prices. The meeting was attended by Gottipati Ravi Kumar, Dola Sri Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy, Tobacco Board Chairman Chidipothu Yashwanth Kumar, Executive Director B. Vishwasri and Agriculture Director Manjeera Jilani Samoon, among other officials. Kinjarapu Atchannaidu said procurement had gained momentum over the past four days, with around 8.5 lakh kilograms of FCV tobacco being purchased daily. He noted that



the highest price currently being offered is 250 per kilogram and directed the Tobacco Board to negotiate with buyers to secure even better prices for farmers. He also instructed officials to ensure that farmers producing lower-grade tobacco receive remunerative prices. Looking ahead to the 2026-27 season, he said the Agriculture Department and Tobacco Board would create awareness among farmers to limit FCV tobacco production to around 81 million kilograms. He said regulating production in line with market demand would help ensure stable and profitable prices for farmers.

APCRDA Offers Free Skill Training for Amaravati Youth

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA), in collaboration with SRM University, is conducting a 60-day free skill development programme to improve employment opportunities for youth and unemployed persons in the Amaravati capital region. Organised with the support of Narayana, the training programme began on June 15 and is being implemented by APCRDA's Social Development wing at the SRM University campus in Amaravati. Participants are provided free transportation and meals throughout the training period. The programme offers training in a wide range of job-ori-



ducted by experienced professors and industry experts, with emphasis on practical learning to improve employability. According to APCRDA, a total of 233 candidates are currently undergoing training in batches that commenced on June 15. The initiative aims to equip young people in the capital region with industry-relevant skills and enhance their chances of securing employment and self-employment opportunities.

AP Targets Cut in Caesarean Deliveries

Amaravati, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The state government has set a target of reducing Caesarean (C-section) deliveries in the state from around 54 per cent to 35 per cent over the next three years. Reviewing maternal healthcare and diagnostic services on Friday, Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav directed officials to prepare a comprehensive action plan to achieve the target by 2028-29. Expressing concern over the high rate of Caesarean deliveries, the minister said every C-section should be medically justified and subjected to regular audits. He noted that while the national Caesarean rate stands at 30.13 per cent, Andhra Pradesh recorded 53.85 per cent in 2025-26, placing it fourth in the country. He instructed officials to reduce C-section rates in government hospitals from 43 per cent to 24 per cent and in private hospitals from 64 per cent to 47 per cent. The minister also called for strengthening awareness on the benefits of normal deliveries and exploring incentives for mothers opting for natural childbirth.



Reviewing diagnostic services, Satya Kumar Yadav directed officials to reduce waiting times for CT scans, MRI and other tests by introducing a token-based appointment system. Pilot projects will be launched at King George Hospital in Visakhapatnam, Government General Hospital in Vijayawada and selected secondary hospitals before expanding the system statewide. The minister further instructed officials to improve the utilisation of government-owned diagnostic equipment after noting significant differences in the usage of government-operated and PPP-managed machines. He asked officials to submit detailed proposals within a week to improve efficiency and ensure timely diagnostic services for patients.

Industrial Foundations and Water Security: Is North Andhra's Development Story Finally Taking Shape?



One of the most common mistakes in discussing North Andhra's development is to judge the region by a single flagship project. A major industry, a port, or an airport may become a symbol of progress, but no single project can determine the future of an entire region. Sustainable regional development is built on multiple pillars—industrialisation, agriculture, water resources, transport infrastructure, investment, and improvements in people's quality of life. Together, these elements create the broader picture of economic transformation.

Viewed from that perspective, the story of North Andhra must begin with the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Built on nearly 21,592 acres of acquired land, the steel plant transformed the industrial landscape of North Andhra. It laid the foundation for Vi-

sakhapatnam's emergence as one of eastern India's leading industrial centres. At the same time, however, it also raised difficult questions about land acquisition, rehabilitation, and employment for thousands of displaced families—questions that have remained part of the public discourse for decades. According to information placed before Parliament by the Central Government, 7,473 displaced persons were employed in connection with the project. Yet organisations representing displaced families continue to argue that many affected households have not received the rehabilitation and employment originally promised. The debate, therefore, has never been entirely about numbers; it has been about whether development has been inclusive and whether the sacrifices made by local communities have been adequately recognised.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant: More Than an Industry

The slogan "Visakha Ukku – Andhrula Hakku" (Visakhapatnam Steel is the Right of the



People of Andhra) represents far more than a campaign for an industrial project. It symbolises a historic public movement, the aspirations of an entire region, and the sacrifices made by thousands of people. Above all, it reflects the determination to establish Visakhapatnam as a major industrial city. In many ways, the steel plant became the gateway to North Andhra's industrialisation. Over the decades, numerous ancillary industries have developed around the plant, generating both direct and indirect employment. Its contribution extends well beyond steel production. The plant has played a significant role in the expansion of Visakhapatnam, the growth of its service sector, the emergence of a stronger middle class, and the city's overall economic development. Its impact is visible not only in industrial

output but also in the transformation of the region's urban economy.

The Other Side of the Story

Yet every major development project has another dimension. Of the 21,592 acres acquired for the steel plant in different phases, approximately 11,794 acres were privately owned. The acquisition displaced thousands of families whose lives were fundamentally altered by the project. Issues relating to compensation, employment guarantees, and rehabilitation have repeatedly resurfaced over the years. Official records, decisions taken by successive governments, and the claims made by displaced people's organisations often present different perspectives. A complete understanding of the project requires examining all of these together. Development cannot be measured solely by the successful construction of a factory. It must also be assessed by how effectively governments fulfilled their commitments to the families who gave up their land for that development.

A Structural Challenge That Continues

The Visakhapatnam Steel Plant has also faced a longstanding structural disadvantage. Unlike several integrated steel plants elsewhere in India, it does not have captive iron ore mines. As a result, the plant has had to depend on external sources for its primary raw material, increasing production costs and reducing its competitiveness over time. This structural limitation has influenced the plant's financial performance and has remained a central issue in discussions about its long-term sustainability. Any assessment of the future of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant would therefore be incomplete without recognising this challenge. In many respects, the discussion on North Andhra's development begins where the story of the steel plant ends. The steel plant established the region's industrial foundation. The next question is whether other sectors have built upon that foundation to create balanced and sustainable regional growth.

Credit Access Will Turn Palnadu into Entrepreneur Hub, Says CM

continued

said Palnadu is poised to emerge as a major hub for entrepreneurs. He stressed that access to credit must reach every eligible individual, including farmers, students, self-help group women and small business owners. He described banks as key partners in the State's development rather than mere lending institutions.

The Chief Minister alleged that Andhra Pradesh was in financial distress two years ago under the previous YSRCP government but said the situation is improving with support from the Centre. He noted that projects such as Amaravati, Polavaram and the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant are progressing. He added that the State would receive 7,707 crore under the VBG RamG programme and 40,000 crore support to develop Rayalaseema as a horticulture hub.

Praising Nirmala Sitharaman, he said she has been an inspiration to women and highlighted that nearly 10 lakh DWCRA groups in the State have accumulated savings of 29,000 crore with a repayment rate of 99.5%. He credited her with banking reforms, digital financial expansion, GST simplification and strengthening transparency in taxation aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. He also an-

nounced that similar credit programmes would be conducted in six more districts and later every quarter.

Speaking on the occasion, Nirmala Sitharaman said Prime Minister Narendra Modi envisions banking services reaching every village. She noted that earlier, high NPAs had weakened banks and limited access to credit for small entrepreneurs. With government-backed guarantee schemes, banks are now proactively extending loans to businesses at their doorstep.

As part of CSR initiatives, Union Bank of India donated an ambulance worth 42.16 lakh to the Government Hospital at Piduguralla. NABARD provided two mobile demonstration vans worth 25 lakh to the District Cooperative Central Bank. Additionally, 301 bicycles worth 17.80 lakh were distributed to girl students.

A regional rural bank also donated two battery-operated vehicles worth 14 lakh to the Tourism Department, which were flagged off by the Chief Minister. He later distributed tricycles to persons with disabilities.

Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, MPs Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu and Bhashyam Ramakrishna, MLAs, bank officials and a large number of beneficiaries attended the programme.

Robust Arrangements Ordered for 80th Independence Day Celebrations

continued

the existing parade grounds in the capital region, emphasizing that there should be no lapses in arrangements. He called for stringent measures and meticulous planning to ensure the event is conducted successfully.

He directed departments to organize special tableaux showcasing development and welfare programmes, highlighting achievements so far and plans. Director of Information Department K.S. Viswanathan was asked to coordinate with all departments to ensure effective presentation of these tableaux.

The Chief Secretary made it clear that all officials and employees, including All India Service officers, must attend the celebrations without fail. He also instructed CRDA officials and Guntur District Collector Sai Kanth Varma to

make comprehensive arrangements at the venue.

Sai Prasad further directed the Information Department to handle preparations related to the Chief Guest's address, public address systems, commentators, and hoardings.

During the review, GAD Principal Secretary J. Shyamala Rao gave a PowerPoint presentation on departmental responsibilities. Police were tasked with ensuring security and parking arrangements, while the Guntur District Collector was designated overall in-charge.

MAUD Principal Secretary S Suresh Kumar, IG Raja Kumari, Amaravati Development Corporation Chairperson Lakshmi Parthasarathi, SP Vakul Jindal, CRDA Additional Commissioner Bhargav Teja, and Health Secretary Veerapandian, among others, participated in the meeting.

Narayana's School Revolution Brings New Hope to Students

continued

and ensure better opportunities for every student. "After taking responsibility, I worked with the belief that development should reach every section of

society. The roads, drainage systems, greenery and schools developed in Nellore during my tenure are visible to everyone. Nobody had to ask me for these works; I took the initiative myself.

My commitment is clear — no matter how many obstacles come, I will not stop development because I have no intention of doing anything wrong," Minister Narayana said.

Narayana's Wheels of Education for Nellore Students

Nellore: Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development Dr. Ponguru Narayana distributed 7,000 bicycles to government school students in Nellore city to ensure that distance does not become a barrier to education. The programme at VRC Grounds benefited students of Classes 8, 9 and 10 from 23 government high schools under Nellore Municipal Corporation limits. Funded by Minister Narayana's family, the initiative involved bicycles worth around 6 crore to support students from economically weaker sections with

better transportation facilities. Recalling his childhood struggles of walking long distances to school, Minister Narayana said, "No child should drop out of school because they cannot afford transport. Education must be accessible to every student, irrespective of their financial background." He announced plans to distribute another 3,000 bicycles to students moving from Class 7 to Class 8, taking the total number to 10,000. Narayana's daughter Sharini said, "This is not just about bicycles; it is about giving students confidence, inde-

pendence and a reason to continue their education." The initiative aims to encourage regular attendance and strengthen access to education for students across Nellore City. Speaking to True Point, E. Jasminamma, Headmistress, YV MCHS, Stone House Pet, Nellore City, appreciated the initiative and said it would greatly benefit underprivileged students. She thanked Minister Narayana for developing municipal schools in Nellore City constituency. P. Venkateswara Rao, Headmaster, MCHS, CB Nagar, Nellore City, also welcomed the bicycle distribution and thanked Minister Narayana for supporting government schools.

Naidu Seeks Centre's Support for Aqua Sector

continued

Chandrababu Naidu said high GST and excise duties had affected procurement. He urged the Centre to take immediate steps to protect tobacco growers, agricultural labourers and related sectors.

The Chief Minister sought full Central support for the Rayalaseema Integrated Horticulture Development Plan, stating that the region accounts for 55% of Andhra Pradesh's horticulture production. The plan aims to develop 201 horticulture clusters with

an investment of 14,906 crore, benefiting around nine lakh farmers.

He said the initiative targets increasing horticulture cultivation to 14.41 lakh hectares and production to 435 lakh metric tonnes by 2030. Proposed irrigation projects worth 20,884 crore and rural road development works worth 4,562 crore would strengthen agriculture infrastructure.

Chandrababu Naidu said the plan could attract 40,000 crore from the public sector and 60,000 crore from private investments, generating employ-

ment for nearly 19.7 lakh people. He invited Nirmala Sitharaman to attend the launch of the Rayalaseema Horticulture Hub on August 6 and 7.

He also informed the Union Minister about the proposed Indian School of Agriculture, to be established in partnership with Reliance Industries as a Centre of Excellence focusing on artificial intelligence, digital agriculture and climate-resilient farming. An MoU with Reliance Group is expected to be signed on August 3.

Naidu Guides TDP MPs Ahead of Parliament Session

continued

Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, which proposes replacing existing regulatory bodies such as UGC, AICTE and NCTE with a unified regulatory framework. The Chief Minister said promoting ethanol-blended petrol could benefit farmers but added that concerns regarding possible engine damage due to such fuel should also be addressed. He advised MPs to present strong counter-arguments if opposition parties attempt to target the Central Government on sensitive issues. Naidu explained various State schemes being implemented in coordination with the Centre and highlighted his efforts regarding river inter-

linking, the Purvodaya project and other development initiatives. He said he had requested the Centre to take steps to control the increase in aqua feed prices and regulate fish oil exports. The Chief Minister suggested that more MPs organise Credit Outreach programmes similar to the one conducted in Palnadu and asked them to take government initiatives to the people. During the meeting, issues related to social media misconduct and the incident involving former minister Seediri Appala Raju's son were also discussed. Several MPs alleged that the accused had attempted to shield himself after a fatal accident by involving another person. Chandrababu Naidu criticised the YSRCP

leadership over the issue.

The Chief Minister also announced that local body elections would be held soon and directed party leaders to work with alliance partners to achieve success in all seats. He warned against negligence and announced that a two-day workshop would be conducted for public representatives and party machinery. Minister Nara Lokesh said party workers gain confidence when elected representatives maintain regular interaction with cadre and provide collective leadership. He stressed that leaders who treat the party as a family and work together for progress would achieve greater success.

Leaders Call on Pawan Kalyan After Shoulder Surgery

continued

Nimmaka Jayakrishna, Giddi Satyanarayana and Arava Sridhar, and Kadapa Urban Development Authority Chairman Mukka Rupananda Reddy.

Janasena leaders Tatamshetti Nagendra and Ganji Chiranjeevi, film producer Naveen

agencies and central government organisations for implementing the AER plan. It will prepare and update a comprehensive roadmap, monitor projects, address policy and land-related issues and submit monthly progress reports.

The government directed that the implementation should prioritise environmental protection, climate-resilient development, efficient resource utilisation and inclusive growth. The APCRDA Commissioner's office will function as the secretariat for providing administrative and technical support to the committee.

Mangalagiri Railway Station Gets Modern Makeover Under Amrit Bharat

continued

railway modernisation as a "railway revolution" and urged authorities to improve rail connectivity to Mangalagiri.

Nara Lokesh said Andhra Pradesh was progressing towards becoming South India's No.1 state through infrastructure development and industrial growth. He said the state government, led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, was working to develop Amaravati as a global city with strong road, rail and air connectivity. He added that the Centre's support had helped establish the South Coast Railway Zone in Vi-

sakhapatnam and accelerate projects such as Polavaram.

Highlighting development in Mangalagiri, Nara Lokesh said several infrastructure projects, including hospital facilities, community buildings, temple development and railway station modernisation, had been taken up. He thanked the people of Mangalagiri for their support and said more development programmes and industries, including investments by Royal Enfield, Google, Arcelor-Mittal and the AMCA project, would create employment opportunities for the youth and strengthen the state's economy.

Jana Sena to Contest Where It Is Strong

Tenali, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Nadendla Manohar said the formula adopted during the 2024 General Elections would not automatically apply to the upcoming local body elections and asserted that Jana Sena would contest in areas where it has a strong organisational base while continuing to work for the NDA alliance's victory.

Speaking to the media at Chenchupeta in Tenali on Friday, Nadendla Manohar said Jana Sena had stepped back during the 2024 General Elections to prevent the anti-government vote from splitting and to strengthen the NDA's chances. However, he clarified that those decisions should not be linked to the local body elections. He said the party leadership had understood the aspirations and concerns of its leaders, cadre and women members and would further strengthen the organisation



ahead of the elections. He added that opportunities would be provided to party workers while maintaining coordination with alliance partners.

Nadendla Manohar also said coordination committees would be formed at the district and Parliament levels to strengthen cooperation among NDA partners. He stated that seat sharing and candidate selection would be finalised through discussions among the alliance parties after assessing the political strength of each party at the grassroots level.

CPI Seeks PM's Response On NEET Issue, Wangchuk Protest

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Communist Party of India (CPI) Andhra Pradesh State Secretary Gujjula Eswaraiah on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to respond to environmentalist and Ramon Magsaysay Award winner Sonam Wangchuk's protest and demanded accountability over alleged NEET examination irregularities.

Addressing a press conference at Dasari Bhavan in Vijayawada, Eswaraiah expressed support for Wangchuk's hunger strike and demanded the resignation of

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, alleging moral responsibility for question paper leaks. He sought a transparent inquiry and strict action against those responsible.

He also demanded resolution of issues concerning nearly five lakh Home Guards, including job security, Group-C or Group-D status and service rule amendments. Eswaraiah urged relief for drought-hit farmers and called for halting the second phase of land acquisition in the Amaravati capital region until farmers' concerns are addressed.



₹14-Crore Road Works Launched in East

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Chinni and Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammohan on Thursday laid the foundation stones for road development works worth 14 crore in Divisions 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Vijayawada East Assembly constituency, reaffirming the Alliance government's commitment to infrastructure development.

Addressing the gathering, MP Kesineni Chinni said the sanctioned works reflect the government's focus on improving civic infrastructure. He stated that major development projects, including road laying and drainage construction, have gained momentum under the Alliance government. He added that he and MLA Gadde Rammohan have been working in close coordination with the Chief Minister's Office to secure funds for various public works in the constituency.

The MP also announced that residents of hill-slope areas would soon receive regularised housing pattas, describing it as a long-pending demand that the

government is committed to fulfilling.

Highlighting railway infrastructure, Chinni said the newly developed Rayanapadu Railway Station was being inaugurated and expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would inaugurate the upgraded Gundala Railway Station in March or April. He further stated that two Road Over Bridges (ROBs) in the region would also be opened shortly.

Emphasising the coordinated efforts of the Central and State governments, the MP said both administrations were committed to transforming Vijayawada into a well-developed urban centre. He remarked that despite several leaders representing the constituency in the past, the region had not witnessed the present scale of development.

Chinni thanked Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for sanctioning funds and extending support for infrastructure projects across the Vijayawada region.

Former corporator Jasti Sambasiva Rao, legal cell leaders, local party representatives and several residents participated in the programme.

Nalanda Railway Gate Closed for Repairs

Gudivada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Gudivada Traffic Police have announced the temporary closure of the Nalanda Railway Gate from July 17 to July 19 to facilitate repair works, while urging motorists to use alternative routes to avoid traffic congestion.

The police said the diversion has become necessary as flyover construction is also underway in Gudivada town. Heavy vehicles travelling from Machilipatnam and Pamarru towards Bhimavaram and Hanuman Junction have been advised not to pass through Gudivada and instead take the

Godlavalleru route or other alternative roads.

Light vehicles, including cars, vans and auto-rickshaws travelling from Gudivada towards Machilipatnam and Pamarru, have been asked to follow the diversion via the Bus Stand, Kothi Bomma Center, Mubarak Center, Fish Market, Panchavati Colony, Bapinidu Petrol Bunk and Bhimavaram Gate.

The Gudivada Sub-Divisional Police appealed to commuters and transport operators to co-operate with the temporary traffic restrictions and follow the diversions to ensure smooth traffic flow and facilitate the completion of the repair works.

Aster Ramesh Study Wins Global Recognition

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Aster Ramesh Hospitals has earned international recognition after its pioneering cardiovascular research was presented at the Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography (SCCT-2026) Annual Scientific Sessions held in San Diego, USA, from July 9 to 12.

The research poster was presented by Chief Interventional Cardiologist Dr. Pothineni Ramesh Babu and Interventional Cardiologist Dr. Ram Manohar. The study is the first from India to compare Artificial Intelligence-based CT Fractional Flow Reserve (CT-FFR) with invasive Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) for evaluating coronary artery disease.

The research is based on an extensive database of more than 30,000 CT coronary angiograms collected over 15 years across the Coastal Health Corridor covering Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari and Prakasam districts. Led by Dr. Pothineni Ramesh Babu, the project involves 30 cardiologists and 20 research assistants.

The study demonstrated that



AI-powered CT coronary angiography can accurately identify high-risk arterial plaques and closely matches OCT findings, offering a reliable non-invasive method for early detection of heart disease.

During the conference, the team met World Heart Federation President Prof. Dr. Jagat Narula, who praised the hospital's extensive clinical database and assured international scientific collaboration for future research. Project leaders said the AI-driven technology has the potential to reduce the need for conventional catheter angiography while enabling more precise decisions on medical treatment, stenting and bypass surgery.

Buddha Prasad Pays Obeisance at Sacred Bodhi Tree

Avanigadda, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Avanigadda MLA Mandali Buddha Prasad, who is currently on a visit to Sri Lanka at the invitation of the Sri Lanka Telugu Congress, offered prayers at the historic Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Temple in Anuradhapura, one of the holiest Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world.

The Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi is revered as a sapling of the original Mahabodhi tree at Bodhi Gaya in India, under which Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. The sacred tree, protected by golden railings, was brought to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century BCE by Sanghamitta Theri, daughter of Emperor Ashoka, and planted in Anuradhapura during the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa. It is widely regarded as the world's oldest historically documented tree that has been continuously worshipped.

During the visit, Buddha Prasad and his delegation met senior Buddhist monks Ven. Pallegama Hemarathana Naya-



ka Thero and Ven. Kahatagolave Medhankara Thero and received their blessings. The MLA presented them with a traditional Pedana Kalamkari textile depicting Amaravati sculptures and highlighted the historical and cultural significance of the Amaravati and Ghantasala Buddhist stupas.

Retired State Department of Language and Culture Director Dr. D. Vijayabhaskar briefed the monks on the historical links between present-day Andhra Pradesh and Sri Lanka. He said that Vijayabahudu, believed to have migrated from Singupuram in Srikakulam district, established the Sinhala kingdom, with subsequent rulers from the same lineage

governing the island for nearly two centuries. He also recalled that Buddhism spread across the kingdom during the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa through the efforts of Emperor Ashoka's son Mahinda, while Ashoka's daughter Sanghamitta played a key role in strengthening the Buddhist faith after arriving with the sacred Bodhi sapling.

Later, Buddha Prasad offered prayers beneath the revered Bodhi tree. Among those accompanying him were Suravaram Pratap Reddy Telugu University Vice-Chancellor Veludanda Nityananda Rao, Registrar Kotla Hanumantha Rao, Senior Journalist D.P. Anuradha and Chamarthi Murali.

PGRS Camps Bring Governance to Doorstep

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The state government's special Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) programme is bringing government services closer to citizens, District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha said while participating in a special grievance redressal camp at Krishnanka in Vijayawada East constituency on Friday.

The programme, held at Amara-jevi Potti Sriramulu Municipal Corporation High School, was attended by Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammohan Rao, Joint Collector S. Ilakkiya and officials from various departments. The initiative is being conducted under the "One Month-One Constituency-Four Visits" programme to resolve public grievances at the local level.

Collector Lakshmisha said two earlier PGRS camps in the constituency had received 94 and 66 petitions respectively, while 86 fresh applications were submitted at Friday's camp, taking the total to 246. Of these, 57 grievances have already been resolved, with the remaining under various stages of processing. He directed officials to thoroughly examine every petition and ensure quality solutions so that people need not submit repeated applications for the same issue.

MLA Gadde Rammohan Rao described the constituency-level PGRS as a major governance reform aimed at reducing the burden on citizens who otherwise travel to the Collectorate to submit petitions. He said more than 90 per cent of the applications



relate to pensions and house sites. Of the 86 petitions received on Friday, 47 sought pensions and 30 requested house sites, while the remaining concerned other issues. He added that the government plans to sanction 2.5 lakh pensions in the coming months and provide two-cent house sites to eligible beneficiaries.

Earlier, the Collector inspected petition registration counters and instructed officials to provide priority services to senior citizens and persons with disabilities while ensuring a citizen-friendly registration process.

Vijayawada Student Secures AIR 423 in NEET

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

Master Javvaji Siva Nishanth of Vijayawada has secured All India Rank (AIR) 423 in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), earning appreciation for his outstanding performance in one of the country's most competitive medical entrance examinations.

Nishanth attributed his success to disciplined preparation, consistent hard work, the constant encouragement of his parents and the guidance of his teachers. His achievement has brought pride to his family, mentors and the state.



His father, Dr. Javvaji Satish, is a noted gastroenterologist and heads the Satish Gastro and Liver Center in Vijayawada. His mother, Dr. Sajja Hemantha

Lakshmi, has also been a source of constant support and motivation throughout his academic journey.

Congratulating the young achiever, several doctors, educationists, family members, friends and well-wishers lauded his dedication and perseverance. They expressed confidence that Nishanth would continue to excel in his medical career and wished him success in pursuing higher studies in medicine.

His achievement is expected to inspire many aspiring medical students preparing for competitive entrance examinations across the state.

VMC Urges Weekly 'Dry Day' to Fight Mosquitoes

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has appealed to citizens to observe a weekly 'Dry Day' every Friday to help prevent mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria and chikungunya.

Acting on the directions of VMC Commissioner Dhyanachandra, a special awareness campaign was conducted in Giripuram on Friday. VMC Biologist Suryakumar and health officials visited households to educate residents on eliminating mosquito breeding sources.

Suryakumar said the corporation is implementing scientific measures, including desilting canals, removing water hyacinth and waste using special machinery and boats, drone-based spraying of ML oil in inaccessible areas, regular fog-



ging and anti-larval operations, and releasing Gambusia fish into water bodies to control mosquito larvae.

He stressed that public participation is vital in controlling mosquito breeding. Residents were advised to inspect their homes every Friday and remove stagnant water from buckets, drums, flower pots, coolers, refrigerator trays, tyres, coconut

shells and other containers, as mosquito larvae can develop within five to seven days.

Chief Medical Health Officer (In-charge) Gopal Naik, Zonal Commissioner K. Prabhudas, Assistant Medical Health Officer B. Koteswara Rao and officials from the health, sanitation and malaria wings participated in the awareness programme.

Veteran Publisher Bellapu Babji Passes Away at 78

Vijayawada, July 17 | Sreeja Rachabathuni



Veteran publisher, bookseller and former president of the Vijayawada Book Festival Society (VBFS), Bellapu Babji, passed away on Thursday following a prolonged liver-related illness. He was 78. Widely regarded as one of the key figures behind Vijayawada's emergence as a major centre for books and publishing, his demise has left the literary, cultural and publishing fraternity in deep mourning.

Babji played a pivotal role in shaping the Vijayawada Book Festival into one of the country's most prominent annual literary events. He served as President of the Vijayawada Book Festival Society during 2015-16 and 2016-17 and later as its Honorary President from 2018 to 2024. During his tenure, he successfully guided the festival through major venue changes—from Swarajya Maidan to the Government Polytechnic Grounds and later to the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium—ensuring the event retained its popularity and scale.

He was also the driving force behind the iconic New Students Book Centre on Eluru Road, a bookstore established by his father, Bellapu Gopal Rao. Under Babji's leadership, the decades-old establishment became a trusted destination for students, academicians and book lovers, particularly for medical and

educational publications. The store was also known for its distinctive book labels and exclusive greeting cards designed by legendary artist Bapu. Beyond publishing, Babji was actively involved in social service as a senior member of the Rotary Club of Vijayawada. Friends and associates remembered him as a humble and generous individual who carried forward his father's legacy of selfless service to society.

In a final act of philanthropy, Babji had pledged to donate his body for medical education and research. In accordance with his wish, his mortal remains will be handed over to Ashram Medical College in Eluru for academic purposes.

He is survived by his wife and three daughters. His mortal remains will be kept at his residence near Ramavarappadu for people to pay their last respects. With his passing, Vijayawada has lost one of the architects of its rich literary and book culture.



Praja Darbar, Medical Camp for Public Welfare

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The NDA alliance organised a Praja Darbar at the Bhavanipuram NDA office in Vijayawada West constituency to receive and address public grievances, while also announcing a free two-day medical camp under the Sujana Foundation.

Acting on the instructions of Vijayawada West MLA Sujana Chowdary, office secretary Prathipati Sridhar, along with alliance leaders, received representations from residents on civic and welfare-related issues. TDP 40th Division President P.V. China Subbayya and BJP 40th Division President Nakkitla Raja said the Praja Darbar aims to understand people's problems directly and ensure their early resolution.

They said petitions were being examined on the spot and officials from the concerned departments were contacted to expedite solutions, adding that the programme was being conducted beyond party lines with the sole objective of public service. Former corporator Paidimala Subhashini and alliance leaders Kama Devaraj, Koppula Gangadhar, Pothina Bhesu Kantheshwarudu, Bollepalli Koteswara Rao, Boddupalli Srinivasa Rao and Patnala Haribabu participated.

Meanwhile, the Sujana Foundation announced a free medical camp on July 18 and 19 at Gandhiji Women's College, One Town, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The camp will offer dental, eye and general physician consultations, ECG, X-ray and 2D Echo tests, besides providing free medicines to needy patients.

VMC Conducts Fire Safety Awareness Drive

Vijayawada, July 17 | TPN Bureau

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) conducted a fire safety awareness programme at Gandhiji Women's College on Friday to educate students and staff on fire prevention and emergency preparedness.

The programme was organised on the instructions of VMC Commissioner Dhyanachandra and led by VMC Range Fire Officer (RFO) Ratnababu. Officials explained fire prevention measures, the proper use and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment, and safety protocols to be followed during emergencies.

As part of the programme, fire personnel gave practical demonstrations on operating fire extinguishers to control fires at the initial stage. They also highlighted the importance of installing and maintaining fire sprinklers, smoke



detectors and alarm systems. Guidelines were issued on emergency exit routes, fire safety signage, electrical wiring maintenance and ensuring easy access to fire-fighting equipment.

Officials stressed the need for educational institutions to strictly implement fire safety norms and conduct regular mock drills to enable students and staff to evacuate safely during emergencies.

District Fire Officer Malyadri, Station Fire Officer Naresh, VMC fire department personnel, college management and faculty members attended the programme.

Editorial

Which Should Be The Priority?

The launch of India's first Hydrogen Train is undoubtedly a proud milestone. It reflects the country's technological ambition and its commitment to cleaner, greener transportation. Such achievements enhance India's global image and demonstrate its capability to embrace futuristic innovations. However, every milestone also raises an important question: what should be the government's priority?

Prestigious projects certainly have their place in nation-building. But development cannot be measured only by record-breaking technology or international recognition. The real measure of progress lies in how effectively the basic needs of ordinary citizens are addressed. Even today, several rural and tribal regions continue to struggle without proper railway connectivity, quality roads, and essential infrastructure. Many backward districts still await the minimum facilities required for economic and social development despite repeated promises and budgetary allocations.

Governments often justify high-profile projects by highlighting their long-term economic benefits and their potential to attract global investment. There is merit in this argument. Modern infrastructure is necessary to make India globally competitive. Yet, development loses its meaning if it remains concentrated in a few urban and industrial corridors while vast sections of the population continue to live with inadequate public services.

The recent construction of roads in tribal areas by the Andhra Pradesh Government demonstrates that focused investment in neglected regions can transform lives. Similar attention is required across the country, where basic connectivity itself remains a distant dream. A villager waiting for a railway line or an all-weather road may benefit far more from such projects than from a technologically advanced train that never reaches their region.

Budget priorities must therefore strike a balance between ambition and necessity. India should continue investing in cutting-edge innovations like hydrogen-powered trains, but not at the cost of fundamental infrastructure. A truly developed nation is one where technological excellence and inclusive development move together. Prestige brings global recognition, but providing basic amenities to every citizen brings lasting national progress. That is the priority that deserves the highest place in every government's agenda.

Editor

Adoption of CNCP Children: Challenges and Needed Initiatives

BVS Kumar



Former Chairman, Child Welfare Committee, Krishna District.

Every child deserves the love, security, and belonging that only a family can provide. While India has thousands of children in need of care and protection, the number of successful adoptions remains relatively low. Strengthening the adoption ecosystem requires not only efficient legal procedures but also greater public awareness and institutional support. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 amended in 2021, together with the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), provides a comprehensive legal framework for adoption. However, several practical challenges continue to limit the adoption of Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP).

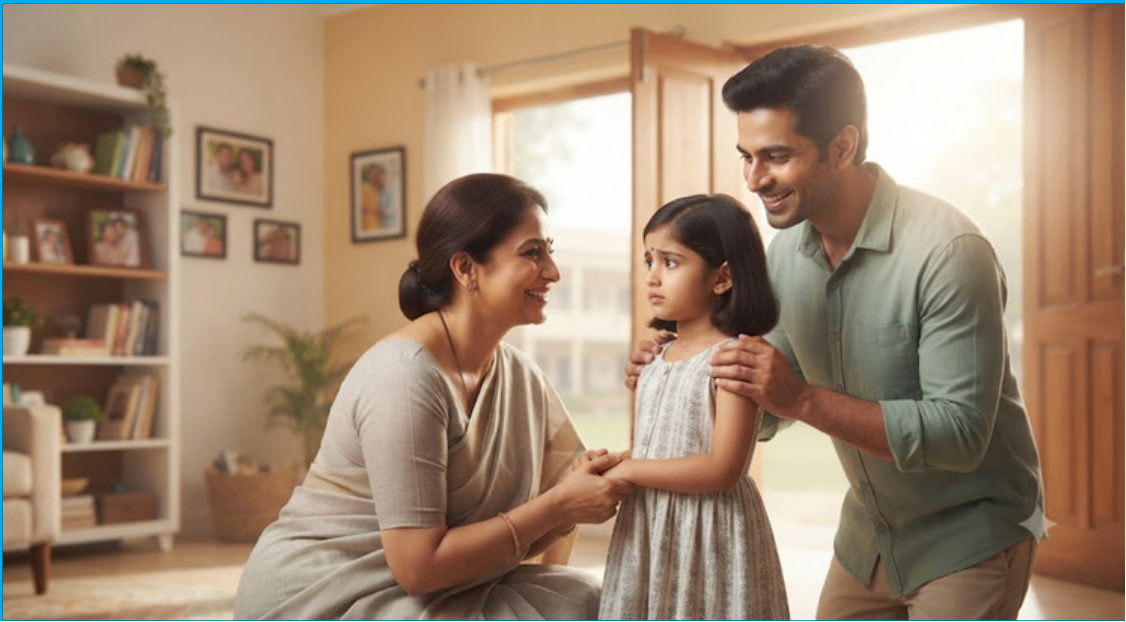
According to government estimates and Census-based analyses, India has millions of children who have lost one or both parents, although only a small proportion are legally free for adoption. Estimates indicate that there are over 30 million CNCP children in the country, including children who have lost one parent, both parents, surrendered or have been abandoned. However, only a few thousand children are declared legally free for adoption by Child Welfare Committees each year after completing the statutory inquiry under the Juvenile Justice Act. This significant gap explains why, despite a large number of vulnerable children, the pool of children available for legal adoption remains limited.

The Juvenile Justice Act classifies children broadly into two categories: Children in Conflict with Law (CCL) and Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP). The latter category includes orphaned, abandoned, surrendered, neglected, abused, trafficked, homeless, missing, or otherwise vulnerable children who require the protection of the State. Within the adoption frame-

work, children may further be identified as orphans, abandoned children, or surrendered children. An orphan is a child who has no surviving parents or whose parents cannot be traced. An abandoned child is one deserted by parents or guardians and declared abandoned after due inquiry. A surrendered child is one voluntarily relinquished by biological parents or guardians before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) due to circumstances that prevent them from caring for the child.

Not every orphan or CNCP child is immediately available for adoption. Before a child is placed for adoption, the Child Welfare Committee must conduct a detailed inquiry to establish the child's legal status. Efforts are first made to trace biological parents or relatives, particularly in cases of abandoned children. If no claimant is found within the prescribed period and the Committee is satisfied that restoration is not possible, it issues an order declaring the child legally free for adoption. Only after this declaration can the child be registered on the CARA portal and matched with prospective adoptive parents through the prescribed legal process.

Despite this structured framework, several factors continue to hinder the adoption of CNCP children. One of the primary reasons is the lengthy legal process involved in tracing biological parents and completing statutory inquiries. In addition, there is a mismatch between the preferences of prospective adoptive parents and the profile of children awaiting adoption. Most families prefer healthy infants below two years of age, whereas many children legally available for adoption are older, part of sibling groups, or have special needs. Social stigma surrounding adoption, limited awareness about le-



gal procedures, and concerns regarding documentation further discourage prospective parents. These factors collectively contribute to long waiting periods and reduced adoption rates.

The Juvenile Justice Act prescribes a transparent and child-centric adoption procedure. Prospective adoptive parents must register through the CARA online portal and submit the required documents. After registration, a home study is conducted by an authorized social worker to assess the family's suitability. Once approved, eligible families are referred children based on seniority and preference. After accepting a referral, the family may foster the child before obtaining the final adoption order from the competent authority. The adoption order legally establishes the child as the son or daughter of the adoptive family with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities equivalent to those of a biological child.

To make adoption more accessible and efficient, several reforms can be considered. The Government can strengthen Child Welfare Committees and Specialized Adoption Agencies by ensuring adequate manpower and regular training. Timelines prescribed under the Juvenile Justice Act should be strictly monitored to minimize unneces-

sary delays. Greater digital integration between hospitals, police, Child Welfare Committees, and CARA can improve case tracking and documentation. Public awareness campaigns should encourage the adoption of older children, sibling groups, and children with special needs, helping reduce societal misconceptions. Counselling services and post-adoption support for adoptive families can further promote successful placements. Periodic review of pending cases and stronger coordination among all stakeholders will also help ensure that eligible children are declared legally free for adoption without undue delay.

Ultimately, adoption is far more than a legal process—it is the creation of a lifelong family. For a child who has experienced abandonment, neglect, or loss, adoption offers permanence, emotional security, education, healthcare, and opportunities for holistic development. It restores a child's right to grow up in a nurturing family environment rather than institutional care. For adoptive parents, it provides the joy of parenthood while transforming the life of a child in need. Research consistently demonstrates that children raised in stable family environments achieve better emotional, social, and developmental outcomes

than those who spend prolonged periods in institutions.

India's adoption laws are founded on the principle that every child has the right to family-based care. By reducing procedural delays, strengthening institutions, promoting awareness, and encouraging inclusive adoption practices, the country can ensure that more Children in Need of Care and Protection find loving, permanent homes.

Poster care, another adoptive tool, should also be actively promoted for children above the age of five who are residing in Child Care Institutions. The Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) can facilitate this process by approving applications from eligible and interested foster families and placing these children in a safe and nurturing family environment.

Further, where both the child and the foster parents express a mutual willingness to establish a permanent family relationship, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, as amended in 2021, provides for the child's placement under the legal adoption process, subject to the applicable provisions of the Act and prescribed procedures.

Adoption is not merely an act of charity; it is the fulfilment of a child's fundamental right to belong to a family and to grow with dignity, love, and hope.

The Character Advantage

Why Nations Rise on Character, Not Convenience

Dr Vangeepuram Sreenathachary

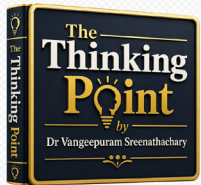


Consultant Psychologist 9848023090

Every civilization leaves behind monuments of stone, but its greatest monument is invisible—the character of its people. Long after buildings crumble and governments change, a nation's true legacy is measured by the honesty it inspires, the trust it builds, and the example it leaves behind.

Every society eventually becomes a mirror of its leadership. Children imitate parents before they understand values, students observe teachers before they remember lessons, and employees absorb the work culture created by their managers. Character, like light, shines from above and illuminates everything below.

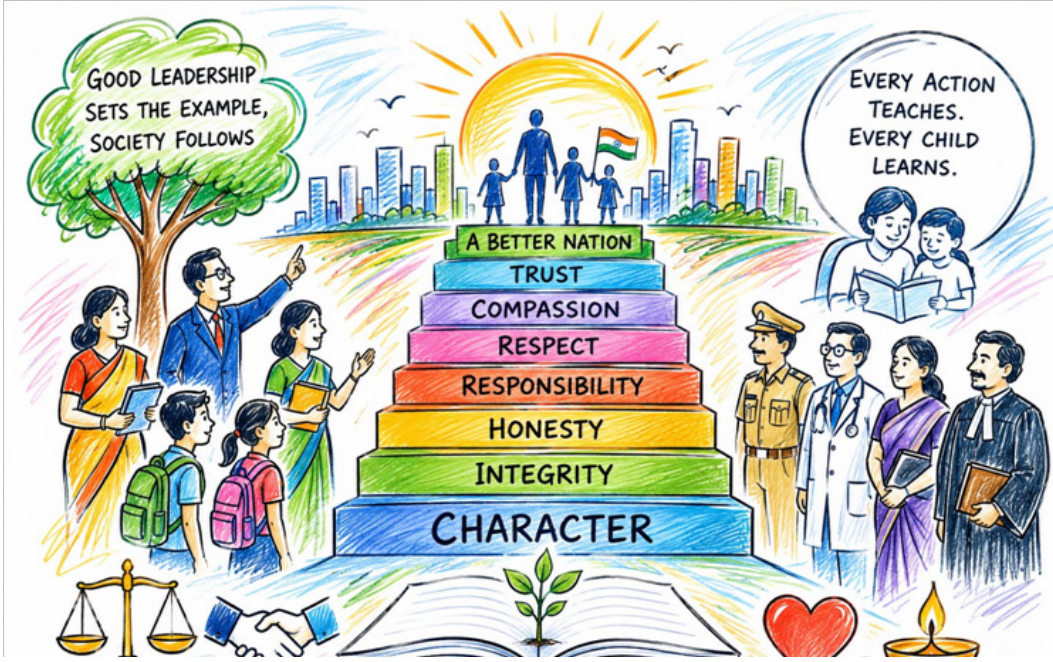
Why do some nations inspire trust while others struggle with corruption, indiscipline and declining confidence? Why do some institutions command lasting respect while others lose credibility? The answer lies beyond laws and policies. Nations rise not when rules multiply, but when character becomes stronger than convenience and integrity more influential than authority.



integrity becomes exploitation, and power without values becomes oppression. Education prepares us for a profession; character prepares us for life.

Psychologist Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory shows that people learn not only through instruction but also by observing others. Children imitate behaviour before they understand values, students watch teachers more carefully than they remember lectures, and leadership is therefore one of humanity's most powerful teachers. Every action silently teaches someone.

This truth is visible everywhere. When a Principal arrives before everyone else, punctuality becomes part of the institution's culture. When teachers prepare sincerely, students value commitment. When leaders refuse shortcuts and demonstrate integrity,



public confidence grows. Character spreads quietly, but its influence reaches every level of society.

Leadership experts call this the "tone at the top." Harvard Business Review highlights that ethical cultures grow when leaders model honesty, accountability and fairness. Policies set standards, but leaders set culture.

The opposite is equally true. When leaders ignore rules, others question why they should obey them. Corruption tolerated at the top quietly filters into everyday life. Institutions rarely collapse overnight; they

decline through small compromises that gradually become normal. Countries with greater public trust generally enjoy stronger institutions, better governance and higher quality of life. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index reminds us that integrity is not merely a moral ideal—it is a measurable national strength. History confirms the same truth. Lal Bahadur Shastri inspired India through simplicity and integrity. Nelson Mandela chose reconciliation over revenge. Abraham Lincoln preserved a divided nation with humility

and justice. Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam inspired millions through honesty, humility and service. History remembers them not for their positions, but for their character.

The same lesson unfolds daily in our homes and institutions. Across India, children watch adults making ordinary choices. They notice whether parents obey traffic rules, teachers treat students fairly, public servants serve with respect, and leaders speak with dignity. Values are rarely inherited through lectures; they are inherited through living examples.

Imagine a child standing beside a parent at a deserted traffic signal late at night. The parent chooses either to wait or to cross. In that silent moment, the child discovers what integrity looks like when no one is watching.

No constitution, however brilliant, can create an ethical nation unless its values are first written in the lives of its people. Character is the invisible foundation of every institution. When that foundation weakens, corruption grows, trust fades and prosperity loses meaning. Nations decline not from lack of resources, but from the loss of honesty, responsibility and character.

The encouraging truth is that character spreads just as quietly. One honest public servant can transform an office, one dedicated teacher can inspire generations of students, one responsible parent can shape a family. Great societies are built by ordinary people choosing integrity every day. The irony of our age is striking. Humanity has achieved extraordinary technological progress, yet no breakthrough can replace honesty, trust or moral responsibility. Prosperity may create wealth, but only character creates public confidence.

Rebuilding character does not require extraordinary people or circumstances. It begins with ordinary choices. A parent who keeps a promise, a teacher who prepares sincere-

ly, a police officer who acts fairly, a judge who remains impartial, and every honest citizen quietly strengthens the nation's moral fabric.

Real leadership begins not with power or position, but with personal example. Every parent leads a child, every teacher a classroom, every manager a team, every public servant a community, and every elected representative a nation. Before questioning others, each of us must ask: What example does my own life set for someone who is watching me? Character is what we choose when nobody is watching, but somebody is always learning from our choices. Every child grows in the shadow of someone's example. Every institution reflects someone's values. Every nation becomes the sum of millions of ordinary choices made each day.

When history remembers our generation, it may ask not how wealthy we became, but whether we left behind a society where honesty was admired, integrity expected and character valued above convenience. People may obey rules because of fear, but they embrace values because of example. Our greatest inheritance is the example of a life lived with character.

(The Author is a Consultant Psychologist, Academic & Research Mentor, and Guinness, Asia, Limca, and India Book Records Holder)

E20 Fuel Faces Public Backlash

By Ravi Podili

New Delhi:Public concerns over the Centre's push for E20 ethanol-blended petrol appear to be increasing, with a nationwide C-Voter survey indicating that a majority of respondents remain hesitant about adopting the fuel. The findings suggest that issues related to vehicle performance, mileage, pricing and lack of consumer choice are shaping public opinion

despite the government's claims about the economic and environmental advantages of ethanol blending. According to the survey, 55.1 per cent of respondents said they do not accept E20 petrol. Among those opposing the fuel, 51.2 per cent identified themselves as NDA supporters, while 55.4 per cent were supporters of opposition parties. Only 18.1 per cent said they had no objection to using E20, while

29.5 per cent remained undecided. The Centre has promoted ethanol blending as a way to reduce dependence on imported crude oil, support farmers and encourage cleaner energy alternatives. However, many motorists have raised concerns over the transition, arguing that consumers should have the option to choose between conventional petrol and ethanol-blended fuel.

The survey highlighted major worries about vehicle performance. Around 52.8 per cent of respondents believe E20 petrol affects mileage, while 54.2 per cent expressed concerns that it could damage engine components. Another 56.3 per cent questioned the suitability of E20 for older vehicles already running on Indian roads. The issue has gained attention on social media, with several vehicle owners sharing

claims of reduced mileage and mechanical problems after using E20 fuel. The government, however, has maintained that there is no conclusive evidence linking ethanol blending to engine damage. It has acknowledged that mileage may reduce by up to five per cent but stated that automobile manufacturers have not confirmed widespread engine failures due to E20. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin

Gadkari has defended the ethanol blending programme, stating that mileage concerns should be assessed scientifically through authorised service centres rather than individual experiences. The C-Voter survey, conducted on July 8 and 9 through computer-assisted telephone interviews with 1,641 respondents, also found that 75.9 per cent of people want both conventional petrol and E20 fuel to remain

available at fuel stations. Meanwhile, 74.5 per cent questioned why E20 petrol is sold at the same price as regular petrol despite containing ethanol. With India aiming for higher ethanol blending targets, the government faces the challenge of balancing environmental goals with consumer confidence and addressing concerns over affordability, vehicle compatibility and fuel choice.

Murmu Begins Europe Visit

President Droupadi Murmu will undertake a state visit to Moldova, North Macedonia and Romania from July 19 to July 25, marking a significant step in India's diplomatic engagement with Eastern Europe. The visit aims to strengthen bilateral ties and expand cooperation in trade, investment, technology, education, culture and other key sectors. The first leg of the tour will be in Moldova, where President Murmu will meet President Maia Sandu. This will be the first-ever visit by an Indian President to Moldova, making it a historic occasion in the relationship between the two countries. Discussions are expected to focus on enhancing cooperation in agriculture, healthcare, renewable energy, information technology and capacity building. The President will then travel



to North Macedonia, becoming the first Indian Head of State to visit the country. During the visit, she is scheduled to hold talks with the country's leadership and participate in meetings aimed at strengthening political, economic and cultural ties. She is also expected to interact with business leaders to promote trade and investment opportunities.

The final destination of the tour will be Romania, where President Murmu will hold high-level discussions with Romanian leaders. The two countries are expected to explore ways to deepen cooperation in defence, technology, energy, education and commerce. The visit is also expected to boost strategic and economic partnerships between India and

Romania. Throughout the tour, President Murmu will engage with members of the Indian diaspora and attend events highlighting India's growing partnership with the three European nations. The Ministry of External Affairs has described the visit as an important diplomatic initiative that reflects India's commitment to strengthening its ties with Europe. Officials believe the tour will open new avenues for collaboration across multiple sectors while reinforcing political and economic relations. The three-nation visit is expected to further India's global outreach and enhance partnerships with emerging European economies, paving the way for stronger cooperation and closer people-to-people ties in the years ahead.

Wangchuk Enters Day 20 of Fast



Climate activist and education reformer Sonam Wangchuk has entered the 20th day of his indefinite hunger strike, saying he remains mentally strong despite his deteriorating physical condition. As concerns over his health continue to grow, Wangchuk reaffirmed that he would continue his protest until July 20, insisting that he would not end the fast without a meaningful response to his demands. Speaking briefly from the protest site at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, the 59-year-old activist said, "I am weak from outside but strong inside," expressing confidence that his determination remains intact even as his body weakens. He appealed to supporters to ensure the success of the planned march to Parliament on July 20. Doctors monitoring Wangchuk's health have warned that his condition has entered a critical phase after nearly three weeks without food. Medical experts have cautioned that continuing the fast could lead to serious health complications and have urged him to end the protest immediately. Despite repeated appeals from doctors, political leaders, lawyers and members of civil society, Wangchuk has re-

mained firm, stating that ending the hunger strike without any concrete action would weaken the purpose of the movement. He has maintained that his protest is aimed at seeking accountability and meaningful action on the issues he has raised. The protest has drawn support from several public figures and political leaders, who have visited Jantar Mantar to express solidarity while also urging Wangchuk to safeguard his health. At the same time, many have appealed to him to continue his campaign through dialogue and democratic means instead of risking his health. With the proposed Parliament march approaching, attention remains focused on whether the government will respond to Wangchuk's demands. Meanwhile, his health continues to be closely monitored as supporters gather in increasing numbers to back his movement. Wangchuk's hunger strike has once again brought attention to the issues he has been highlighting and sparked a wider discussion on public participation, environmental concerns and the need for dialogue between citizens and authorities.

BJP, Mehbooba Spar Over Wangchuk



Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has criticized the central government over its handling of activist Sonam Wangchuk's protest, accusing the Centre of ignoring his concerns and failing to engage in dialogue. The remarks triggered a sharp response from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which defended the government's position and questioned the political motives behind the criticism. Mehbooba Mufti said the government's approach towards Wangchuk's protest reflected a lack of sensitivity. She argued that peaceful democratic protests should be addressed through discussions rather than confrontation. She also highlighted Wangchuk's contributions to education and environmental issues while demanding that the government listen to the concerns raised by him and his supporters. Wangchuk's protest has attracted attention from political leaders, civil society groups and public figures, with supporters calling for dialogue and action on the issues highlighted by him. His continued hunger strike and declining health have increased pressure on authorities to respond. Reacting to Mehbooba Mufti's comments, BJP leaders

accused opposition parties of attempting to politicize the issue. They defended the government's approach and said that allegations against the Centre were being made without considering the steps already taken to address public concerns. The BJP also questioned whether some political groups were using Wangchuk's protest as a platform to target the government. Party leaders maintained that dialogue remains the preferred method of resolving issues but rejected what they described as attempts to create a negative narrative against the administration. The controversy has once again brought focus to the larger debate over protests, government response and the role of civil society movements in a democracy. Supporters of Wangchuk believe his demands deserve immediate attention, while critics argue that political involvement could shift attention away from the core issues. As the protest continues, the exchange between Mehbooba Mufti and the BJP has added a political dimension to the ongoing debate. The situation remains closely watched as calls for dialogue between the government and protesters continue to grow.

Calcutta HC on Citizenship Proof

The Calcutta High Court has observed that ownership of land or possession of property documents cannot be treated as conclusive proof of Indian citizenship. The court made the remarks while hearing a case involving a man from Murshidabad who is facing allegations of being a foreign national.



The case relates to a man whose name was removed from the electoral roll following a verification process. His family approached the court, arguing that he was an Indian citizen and produced land documents registered in his name as evidence. However, the court stated that land records only establish ownership of property

and do not determine a person's citizenship status. The bench observed that even a foreign national can legally purchase property in India, and therefore, merely owning land cannot automatically establish Indian citizenship. The court emphasized that citizenship must be proved through legally recog-

nized documents and evidence. During the hearing, the family claimed that the man had other identity documents and had previously participated in elections. They argued that he was being wrongly treated as a foreigner. However, the court maintained that such claims must be supported by proper proof of citizenship. The court has given the family another opportunity to submit documents that can conclusively establish his citizenship status. The matter will be considered further based on the evidence presented before the court. The ruling has once again highlighted the legal distinction between identity documents, prop-

erty ownership records and citizenship proof. Courts have previously maintained that documents related to residence, property or other personal details may not automatically establish citizenship unless they meet the required legal standards. The case has also brought renewed attention to citizenship verification procedures and the legal challenges faced by individuals whose nationality status comes under dispute. The court's observations underline that citizenship matters require clear documentary evidence rather than relying solely on residence, property ownership or other indirect records.

India Launches Hydrogen Train

India has entered a new era of sustainable transportation with the launch of its first indigenous hydrogen-powered passenger train, becoming one of the few countries in the world to adopt hydrogen fuel cell technology for rail transport. The train was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will operate on the 89-km Jind-Sonapat route in Haryana.



The train has been designed to carry around 2,600 passengers across 10 coaches and has a design speed of 110 kmph, although its operational speed has initially been fixed at 75 kmph. It is among the world's largest hydrogen-powered passenger trains in terms of capacity. Unlike conventional diesel trains, the new train uses hydrogen fuel cells to generate electricity, which powers its electric motors. The only by-products of this process are water and heat, making it a zero-emission and environmentally friendly mode of transport. The initiative is expected to significantly reduce

carbon emissions and support India's transition toward cleaner energy. The project has been developed using indigenous technology under the 'Make in India' initiative. It includes dedicated hydrogen storage and refuelling infrastructure, along with advanced safety systems to detect hydrogen leaks and ensure safe operations. The hydrogen-powered train is part of Indian Railways' broader strategy to modernise its network and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Officials believe the project will serve as a pilot for introducing hydrogen-powered trains on other non-electrified routes across the

country in the future. Hydrogen fuel cell technology offers several advantages over conventional diesel engines. It produces clean energy, reduces air pollution, lowers greenhouse gas emissions and operates with significantly less noise. The adoption of this technology is expected to contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable railway system. With this launch, India joins a select group of nations exploring hydrogen-powered rail technology. The initiative also aligns with the country's long-term vision of expanding the use of green hydrogen and achieving its net-zero carbon emissions target by 2070. The successful rollout of the country's first hydrogen-powered train marks a significant milestone in India's railway modernization journey and highlights its commitment to adopting innovative, environmentally friendly technologies for the future of public transportation.

Train Hits School Van in Bengal

A tragic accident in West Bengal's Murshidabad district has raised serious concerns over railway crossing safety after a passenger train collided with a school van carrying students near Karnasubarna railway station. The accident occurred on the railway route in the district, leaving several children injured and triggering an investigation into possible safety lapses.



The incident took place in the morning when the school van was crossing the railway tracks at the level crossing. According to preliminary reports, the vehicle was hit by a local passenger train, causing severe damage to the van. Rescue teams and local residents immediately rushed to the spot and helped evacuate the injured students. Several students travelling in the van sustained injuries and were shifted to nearby hospitals for treatment. The accident created panic in the area as locals gathered at the railway crossing after hearing about the collision. Initial reports raised concerns

over the functioning of the railway crossing, with questions being asked about whether proper safety procedures were followed before the train approached. Railway authorities and police have launched investigations to determine the exact cause of the accident and identify any lapses. The incident has once again highlighted the importance of ensuring strict safety measures at railway crossings, especially in areas where school vehicles frequently pass. Experts have stressed the need for improved monitoring systems, better infrastructure and stronger safety protocols to prevent such

tragedies. Railway officials have started collecting details about the sequence of events, while authorities are examining whether negligence, technical issues or human error contributed to the collision. Further action will be taken after the investigation report is completed. The accident has left families and local residents deeply shocked. The tragedy has renewed calls for better railway safety measures and increased vigilance at unmanned and vulnerable railway crossings to protect passengers, pedestrians and school-going children.

Skyroot Set for Historic Launch

India's private space sector is set to enter a historic phase with Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket preparing for its maiden orbital launch. Developed by a young team of engineers from Hyderabad, the rocket represents a major milestone in India's journey towards expanding private participation in space exploration.



Named Mission Aagaman, the launch will mark the first attempt by an Indian private company to place an indigenously developed orbital rocket into space. The mission is expected to demonstrate India's growing capabilities in commercial space technology and strengthen the role of private companies in the country's space ecosystem. The Vikram-1 rocket stands around 23 metres tall and has been built using advanced carbon composite technology. Designed to carry payloads of up to 350 kilograms, the rocket is aimed at placing satellites into low Earth orbit. The rocket has been developed with a focus on making satellite launches more accessible and cost-effective. The mission will test important systems including propulsion, stage sep-

aration, navigation and overall flight performance, providing valuable data for future commercial space missions. Skyroot Aerospace, founded by former ISRO engineers, has emerged as one of India's leading private space startups. The company's earlier suborbital mission, Vikram-S, demonstrated its ability to develop indigenous rocket technology. Vikram-1 now takes that effort further by targeting orbital launch capabilities. The launch is scheduled from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, India's primary spaceport. The mission has attracted widespread attention as it represents a new chapter in India's commercial space ambitions, where private com-

panies are playing an increasingly important role alongside government agencies. Experts believe the success of Vikram-1 could create new opportunities for India's growing space-tech industry, encouraging innovation, investment and global partnerships. The mission is being seen as a symbol of India's transition from a government-led space programme to a wider ecosystem involving startups and private players. If successful, Vikram-1 will not just be a rocket launch but a defining moment for India's private space revolution, showcasing the country's ability to develop advanced space technology and compete in the global commercial launch market.

Trump Raps ABC, NBC Over Speech

US President Donald Trump has strongly criticized major American television networks ABC and NBC after they declined to broadcast his prime-time address on election security on their main television channels. Trump accused the networks of deliberately censoring his message and warned that they could face action, including the loss of their broadcast licenses.

Trump's address focused on election security, alleged for-

eign interference in US elections and voting system reforms. While Fox News carried the speech live, ABC and NBC chose not to air it on their primary broadcast networks, instead making it available through their digital and streaming platforms. CBS aired part of the speech before switching to live fact-checking and analysis.

Reacting to the decision, Trump accused the networks of acting in coordination to sup-

press information and claimed their refusal to broadcast the speech amounted to censorship. He argued that major television networks have a responsibility to air presidential addresses and suggested that broadcasters failing to do so should face regulatory consequences.

The networks defended their editorial decisions, saying they were balancing the public's right to hear the President with concerns about airing unverified or disputed claims live. In-

stead of uninterrupted broadcasts, some outlets opted for streaming coverage, delayed broadcasts or real-time fact-checking to provide additional context for viewers.

The episode has reignited debate in the United States over press freedom, editorial independence and the responsibilities of news organizations when covering political speeches. Supporters of Trump argued that the networks were unfairly limiting access to the Presi-

dent's remarks, while critics maintained that media organizations have the right to decide how best to present potentially disputed claims to their audiences.

Legal experts noted that revoking the broadcast licenses of television stations would be a complex process governed by US communications law and independent regulatory procedures, making such action difficult to implement.

The controversy comes amid



continuing tensions between the Trump administration and several major media organizations over coverage of elections, government policies and political issues. As the debate unfolds, the incident has once

again highlighted the growing friction between political leaders and the American news media over the balance between free speech, editorial judgment and the public's right to information.

Iran Claims Strike on US Bases

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has claimed that it destroyed several US fighter jets, HIMARS rocket systems, and military equipment during a series of missile and drone strikes targeting American military facilities in Jordan and Kuwait.

According to the IRGC, the attacks were carried out in retaliation for recent US military actions in the region. Iranian officials said multiple precision-guided missiles and armed drones were launched at bases hosting American forces, claiming the strikes caused significant damage to military infrastructure and equipment.

The IRGC also alleged that several US fighter aircraft stationed at the targeted bases were destroyed, along with High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) and other strategic military assets. However, the organization did not



provide independent evidence to support these claims.

The United States has not confirmed Iran's assertions. US officials acknowledged that military installations in the region came under attack but disputed the extent of the damage described by Tehran. They stated that assessments of the strikes are ongoing and that official information will be released after verification.

The reported attacks have

further heightened tensions in the Middle East, where relations between Washington and Tehran have deteriorated following recent military confrontations. Regional governments have urged both sides to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could trigger a wider conflict.

Security analysts note that both Iran and the United States have often released conflicting accounts following military in-

cidents, making it difficult to independently verify battlefield claims in the immediate aftermath of such attacks.

The latest developments have also raised concerns about the security of US military personnel stationed across the Middle East. American forces maintain bases in several countries, including Jordan and Kuwait, as part of regional security and counterterrorism operations.

International observers are closely monitoring the situation, fearing that continued military escalation could destabilize the region further and disrupt global energy markets.

As of now, there has been no independent confirmation of Iran's claims regarding the destruction of US fighter jets or HIMARS systems. The situation remains fluid, with more official information expected as damage assessments continue.

Trump-Netanyahu Rift Widens

US President Donald Trump is reportedly frustrated with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over a series of developments that have strained relations between the two allies. The disagreements range from military operations and intelligence sharing to diplomatic strategy in the Middle East.

One major source of tension is Trump's reported dissatisfaction with Israel's criticism of the F-35 fighter jet programme. The advanced stealth aircraft has become a key element of US military exports and strategic partnerships, and Washington is said to be unhappy with public comments questioning its performance and effectiveness.

Another issue involves intelligence reports regarding an alleged plot to assassinate a senior Iranian leader. According to reports, US intelligence agencies shared information with Israel, but Trump is believed to be unhappy with how the matter was handled and



communicated. The differing assessments have reportedly created friction between the two governments.

Trump is also said to be concerned about Israel's recent military actions in the region, fearing that they could complicate broader US diplomatic efforts. His administration has been pursuing negotiations aimed at reducing tensions in the Middle East, and officials reportedly believe that unilateral military operations could undermine those objectives.

Differences have also

emerged over the handling of the conflict in Gaza and regional security policies. While the United States remains one of Israel's closest allies, there have been growing discussions within the administration about balancing military support with diplomatic engagement.

Despite the reported disagreements, both countries continue to maintain close strategic and defence ties. The United States remains Israel's largest military partner, and cooperation on intelligence,

defence technology and regional security continues across multiple fronts.

Political analysts note that differences between American and Israeli leaders are not uncommon, even during periods of strong bilateral relations. Disagreements over military strategy, regional diplomacy and security priorities have surfaced under previous administrations as well.

Neither the White House nor the Israeli Prime Minister's Office has officially confirmed the details of the reported tensions. However, the reports have fueled speculation about possible policy differences as both governments navigate a rapidly evolving security situation in the Middle East.

While the partnership between Washington and Jerusalem remains strong, the latest reports suggest that differences in approach over regional security and diplomatic strategy have created a temporary strain in relations between Trump and Netanyahu.

US Networks Split Over Trump's Speech

Major American television networks were divided over whether to broadcast US President Donald Trump's prime-time speech on election security, highlighting the growing tensions between the White House and the country's leading media organizations.

The speech focused on election integrity, alleged foreign interference and voting system reforms. While some broadcasters chose to air the address live, others decided not to carry it on their main television channels, opting instead to stream it online or provide delayed coverage with fact-checking.

Fox News broadcast the speech in full, while CBS initially aired the address before interrupting the telecast to provide analysis and fact-checking. In contrast, ABC, NBC and some other networks declined to air the speech live on their primary broadcast channels, citing editorial concerns and the need to verify claims made during the address. Trump reacted strongly to the decision, accusing the networks of deliberately suppressing his message and claiming they were acting to-



gether to censor information. During his speech, he argued that broadcasters refusing to air presidential addresses were failing in their public responsibilities and suggested they should face regulatory action, including the possible loss of their broadcast licenses.

The networks defended their decisions, saying they were balancing the public's right to hear the President with their responsibility to prevent the spread of unverified or disputed claims. Several outlets said providing context and real-

time fact-checking was necessary to ensure viewers received accurate information.

The controversy has reignited debate over press freedom, editorial independence and the role of television networks in covering political speeches. Supporters of Trump argue that major broadcasters should carry presidential addresses regardless of their content, while critics maintain that news organizations have the right to decide how such events are presented to audiences.

Legal experts have also noted that revoking broadcast li-

censes is a complicated process governed by US communications laws and independent regulatory procedures, making such action difficult to implement.

The latest dispute underscores the increasingly strained relationship between the Trump administration and sections of the American media. As political divisions deepen ahead of future elections, disagreements over media coverage and free speech are expected to remain a major point of contention in the United States.



US President Donald Trump's ambitious plan to rebuild the Gaza Strip has reportedly been significantly scaled back, with the original proposal for large-scale reconstruction now reduced to a limited pilot project near Rafah in southern Gaza.

The revised plan focuses on establishing a temporary settlement for only a small number of displaced Palestinians instead of rebuilding the entire war-ravaged enclave. The project is also expected to face delays and is unlikely to begin before the end of the year due to ongoing conflict and political uncertainty.

The initial proposal had envisioned a comprehensive recovery effort that included rebuilding hospitals, restoring water and electricity networks, reopening aid corridors, repairing essential infrastructure and reviving daily life across Gaza within a relatively short timeframe.

However, the deteriorating security situation has forced planners to substantially reduce the project's scope.

Under the revised framework, the Rafah pilot project would include temporary housing units, a Palestinian civil administration, a locally vetted police force and a small international stabilization force to help maintain security. The initiative is intended to serve as a test model for future reconstruction if conditions improve.

The biggest challenge remains the continuing instability in Gaza. Despite previous ceasefire efforts, periodic military operations and restrictions on humanitarian access have complicated reconstruction planning. Diplomatic sources believe meaningful rebuilding is unlikely until there is greater political stability and sustained security in the region.

Funding has also emerged as a major obstacle. Al-

though substantial financial commitments were discussed when the reconstruction proposal was first unveiled, much of the promised support has yet to materialize, slowing implementation and raising doubts about the project's long-term viability.

The revised proposal has drawn mixed reactions. Supporters argue that even a limited pilot project could provide relief to displaced civilians and lay the foundation for broader reconstruction in the future. Critics, however, say the scaled-back initiative falls far short of Gaza's enormous humanitarian and infrastructure needs.

With the conflict continuing and political uncertainties persisting, the future of Gaza's reconstruction remains unclear. For now, the Rafah pilot project represents a much more modest approach than the sweeping redevelopment plan that was originally proposed.

Burnham Named Labour Leader

Andy Burnham has officially been confirmed as the new leader of the UK Labour Party, paving the way for him to become the United Kingdom's next Prime Minister. The former Mayor of Greater Manchester will formally assume office on Monday, succeeding Keir Starmer, who stepped down after leading the party through a turbulent political period.

Burnham was elected unopposed after securing overwhelming support from Labour Members of Parliament, making it impossible for any rival candidate to challenge him for the leadership. His confirmation marks a significant political transition for Britain's governing party.

In his first speech as Labour leader, Burnham pledged to usher in a "new politics" focused on solving people's everyday problems rather than engaging in political point-scoring. He promised to prioritize economic renewal, stronger public services, social care reform and measures aimed at reducing regional inequalities across the country.

Burnham, who previously served as a Cabinet minister under former Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, later became Mayor of Greater



Manchester, where he earned recognition for his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and his advocacy for greater regional powers.

Addressing party members, Burnham said Britain needs bold reforms to restore public confidence in politics and improve living standards. He emphasized rebuilding public services, strengthening local communities and promoting industrial growth while ensuring economic opportunities are spread more evenly across the country.

His leadership comes at a challenging time for the Labour government, with the country facing sluggish economic growth, rising cost-of-living pressures and increasing demands on public

services. Burnham has indicated that tackling these issues will be among his top priorities once he takes office.

Political analysts believe Burnham's experience in both national and regional government could help Labour reconnect with voters and strengthen the party's position ahead of the next general election, which is scheduled for 2029.

As Burnham prepares to enter 10 Downing Street, attention will now shift to the composition of his Cabinet and the policy agenda he plans to implement. His appointment marks the beginning of a new chapter in British politics, with expectations high that he will deliver on his promises of reform, economic growth and national renewal.

Sensex Soars 965 Points

Indian equity markets ended the week on a strong note, with benchmark indices posting sharp gains on the back of robust buying in information technology, banking and auto stocks. Positive investor sentiment ahead of key corporate earnings and renewed interest in blue-chip stocks helped markets shrug off weak global cues.

The BSE Sensex rallied 965 points to close at 78,152.63, while the NSE Nifty 50 climbed 278 points to settle above the 24,300

mark. The rally marked one of the strongest single-day gains in recent weeks, reflecting improved confidence among investors.

Information technology stocks emerged as the biggest gainers after encouraging quarterly earnings from leading companies. Banking shares also witnessed strong buying interest, supported by optimism over healthy loan growth and expectations of solid financial results. Auto stocks added to the momen-

tum as investors accumulated quality large-cap counters.

Heavyweight stocks such as Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, and TCS contributed significantly to the market's upward move. Buying in these index heavyweights helped offset weakness in a few other sectors.

While IT, banking and auto sectors led the rally, metal and pharma stocks remained under pressure, limiting broader

gains. Analysts attributed the weakness in metal stocks to global demand concerns, while profit-booking weighed on select pharmaceutical counters.

The broader market delivered a mixed performance. Several mid-cap and small-cap stocks remained volatile even as frontline indices posted impressive gains, indicating that investors continued to prefer fundamentally strong large-cap companies during the ongoing earnings season.

Market experts said optimism surrounding first-quarter corporate earnings, value buying after recent corrections and improving technical indicators helped fuel Friday's rally. A stronger rupee and expectations of healthy earnings from major companies also boosted investor confidence.

Technical analysts believe the Nifty reclaiming the 24,300 level is a positive sign for the market. Sustaining above this zone could pave the way for further upside



in the coming sessions, while investors are expected to closely monitor upcoming corporate earnings, global market trends and crude oil prices for fresh direction.

With earnings season now gathering pace, market partici-

pants expect stock-specific action to remain high. Analysts advise investors to focus on fundamentally strong companies while remaining cautious about global developments that could influence market sentiment in the near term.

JSW Steel Profit More Than Doubles

JSW Steel reported a strong performance for the first quarter of FY27, with its consolidated net profit more than doubling year-on-year to 4,696 crore, comfortably surpassing market expectations. The robust earnings were driven by higher steel prices, improved realizations and healthy sales volumes.

The company's revenue from operations rose 9.8% to 47,364 crore during the April-June quarter, compared to 43,147 crore in the same period last year. Strong domestic demand and better pricing helped boost the company's top line.

JSW Steel's performance exceeded analysts' estimates, which had projected a quarterly profit of around 3,111 crore. The better-than-expected results reflected the company's ability to offset rising raw material costs through stronger steel prices and efficient operations.

During the quarter, steel



sales volumes increased 4% year-on-year to 6.25 million tonnes, while production rose 3% to 6.59 million tonnes. The increase in volumes was supported by healthy demand across key sectors and the company's expanding production capacity.

The company also reported a significant improvement in operational profitability. Adjusted EBITDA climbed 32% year-on-year to 9,373 crore, while EBITDA per tonne increased to 14,990, indicating improved margins despite higher input

costs.

Although prices of key raw materials such as coking coal remained elevated during the quarter, JSW Steel managed to contain overall expenses through operational efficiencies and better price realizations. The company benefited from stronger domestic steel prices, which helped offset the impact of rising production costs.

Following the announcement of the results, JSW Steel shares gained over 1% during Friday's trading session as investors

welcomed the company's strong earnings performance.

Looking ahead, the company remains focused on expanding its production capacity and strengthening its market position. It has maintained its capital expenditure guidance for the current financial year, signalling confidence in long-term demand for steel.

Analysts believe that sustained infrastructure spending, healthy domestic demand and continued capacity expansion could support the company's growth in the coming quarters. However, fluctuations in global steel prices, raw material costs and international market conditions will remain key factors to watch.

With earnings comfortably beating expectations, JSW Steel has delivered a strong start to FY27, reinforcing its position as one of India's leading steel producers and boosting investor confidence in the company's growth prospects.

Zepto IPO Gets Institutional Boost



Quick commerce unicorn Zepto is set to receive strong backing from leading institutional investors as it prepares for one of India's most anticipated initial public offerings (IPO). The company is aiming to raise around \$800 million through its public issue, which is expected to value the startup at approximately \$5.1 billion after listing.

According to reports, global sovereign wealth fund Norges and domestic financial services firm Motilal Oswal are among the key investors expected to participate in the IPO. Together, they are likely to account for nearly 40-45% of the anchor investor portion, reflecting strong institutional confidence in the company's growth prospects.

The IPO values Zepto at around \$4.3 billion on a pre-money basis, while the post-money valuation is expected to reach \$5.1 billion after the fresh capital is infused. The funds raised through the public issue are likely to be used

for expanding operations, strengthening infrastructure, investing in technology and supporting future business growth.

Founded in 2021, Zepto has emerged as one of India's leading quick commerce platforms by promising grocery and essential deliveries within minutes. The company has rapidly expanded its network of dark stores and delivery operations across several major cities, competing with players such as Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart and BigBasket.

The proposed IPO comes at a time when investor interest in India's technology and consumer internet companies is witnessing renewed momentum. Strong participation from marquee institutional investors is expected to boost confidence among retail and other institutional investors ahead of the public issue.

Market experts believe the anchor investments from reputed global and domestic institutions could enhance the

credibility of the offering and improve overall demand during the subscription period. A successful listing would also mark another significant milestone for India's startup ecosystem.

Zepto has experienced rapid growth over the past few years, driven by increasing consumer demand for ultra-fast deliveries and the expansion of quick commerce across urban markets. The company has also diversified its offerings beyond groceries by adding categories such as electronics, personal care products and household essentials.

With the IPO process gaining momentum, investors will closely watch the company's financial performance, profitability roadmap and future expansion strategy. If the issue receives strong market response, Zepto could become one of the biggest technology listings in India and further strengthen investor confidence in the country's fast-growing startup ecosystem.

Weak Forecast Hits Netflix Shares

Netflix shares fell nearly 9% in pre-market trading after the streaming giant issued a weaker-than-expected revenue forecast for the third quarter, overshadowing an otherwise solid set of second-quarter financial results.

The company reported second-quarter revenue of \$12.56 billion, up 13% from the same period last year. Net income and operating profit also improved, reflecting continued growth driven by subscription revenue, price increases and expanding advertising business.

Despite the strong quarterly performance, investors focused on Netflix's outlook for the upcoming quarter. The company projected third-quarter revenue of \$12.86 billion, which came in below analysts' expectations of around \$13 billion. The cautious guidance raised concerns that Netflix's rapid growth may be slowing.

The disappointing forecast triggered a sharp sell-off in pre-market trading, with inves-



tors worried about future revenue momentum. Market analysts noted that expectations for Netflix have remained exceptionally high, making even a slight miss in guidance enough to weigh heavily on the stock.

Netflix said it expects revenue growth in the third quarter to be supported by continued membership growth, subscription price increases and higher advertising income. However, the projected growth rate is lower than what many on Wall Street had anticipated.

The company also narrowed its full-year revenue forecast while maintaining its operating margin guidance, signalling confidence in profitability despite moderating top-line growth.

Netflix continues to invest aggressively in its advertising business, live events, sports programming and gaming to diversify its revenue streams. The company expects its advertising business to generate around \$3 billion in revenue this year as it expands ad-supported plans and improves advertising technology.

Management highlighted that viewer engagement remains healthy, with total viewing hours increasing during the first half of the year. Netflix is also increasingly using artificial intelligence in content production and post-production to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Competition in the streaming industry continues to intensify, with rivals such as Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, YouTube and other digital platforms competing for viewers' attention. Investors are closely monitoring whether Netflix can sustain subscriber growth while expanding newer revenue sources like advertising.

Although the latest earnings reflected a financially healthy business, the weaker-than-expected guidance overshadowed the results. The market reaction underscores how closely investors are watching Netflix's future growth trajectory, particularly as the global streaming market becomes increasingly competitive.

Moonshot AI Sparks Market Jitters

A new artificial intelligence model unveiled by Chinese startup Moonshot AI has rattled global technology markets, triggering a fresh wave of selling in AI-related stocks. Investors reacted sharply after the company introduced what it claims is one of the world's most advanced open-source AI models, raising concerns about intensifying competition in the global AI race.

Moonshot AI launched its latest large language model, Kimi K3, positioning it as one of the biggest open-weight AI models ever developed. The company claims the model delivers top-tier performance in complex reasoning, coding and knowledge-based tasks while operating at significantly lower costs than many competing AI systems.

The announcement came as China continues to accelerate its push to become a global leader in artificial intelligence. The launch also coincided with the country's premier AI conference, highlighting Beijing's growing focus on strengthening its do-



mestic AI ecosystem.

The surprise unveiling unsettled investors, leading to declines in shares of several AI and semiconductor companies. Market participants fear that increasing competition from Chinese AI firms could put pressure on pricing, profitability and future growth prospects for established technology companies.

Several Chinese AI companies also witnessed sharp declines as investors reassessed valuations across the sector.

The market reaction reflected concerns that rapid technological advancements could intensify competition and force companies to spend even more on research and development.

Moonshot AI is backed by major investors, including Alibaba and Tencent, and has quickly emerged as one of China's leading AI startups. The company is reportedly exploring fresh fundraising efforts to support its ambitious expansion plans and strengthen its position in the

global AI industry.

Industry experts believe the launch demonstrates how rapidly Chinese AI companies are narrowing the technological gap with their American counterparts. The availability of powerful, lower-cost open-source AI models could accelerate AI adoption worldwide while increasing competitive pressure on premium AI providers.

Despite the short-term market volatility, analysts say the development is likely to benefit the broader AI ecosystem by driving faster innovation, improving accessibility and reducing costs for businesses adopting artificial intelligence technologies.

Investors are now expected to closely monitor how major global AI companies respond to the growing challenge from Chinese developers. As competition intensifies, the AI industry could witness faster technological breakthroughs, increased investment and a reshaping of the competitive landscape in the months ahead.

SBI Funds Set for Market Debut

India's largest asset management company, SBI Funds Management, is set to make its stock market debut on July 21, following the successful completion of its highly subscribed initial public offering (IPO). The listing marks a significant milestone for India's mutual fund industry and is expected to be one of the biggest market events of the year.

The 9,813-crore IPO was entirely an Offer for Sale (OFS), with State Bank of India (SBI) selling 8.43 crore shares. Since the issue did not include a fresh share sale, the proceeds from the IPO will go to the selling shareholders rather than the company.

The IPO was priced in the range of 545 to 574 per share and received an overwhelming response from investors across all categories. Strong participation from institutional investors, retail investors and non-institutional investors reflected high confidence in the company's business model and growth prospects.

According to market data, the IPO was subscribed nearly 42 times, making it one of the most successful public issues of the year. Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) led the demand, while retail investors and SBI shareholders also showed strong participation.

SBI Funds Management is the country's largest asset



management company, managing assets worth approximately 12.5 lakh crore. It operates as a joint venture between State Bank of India and European asset management giant Amundi, serving millions of investors through a wide range of mutual fund products.

The company's strong market position, extensive distribution network and consistent growth in assets under management have made it a preferred choice among investors. Analysts believe India's expanding mutual fund industry and increasing retail participation in equity markets provide significant long-term growth opportunities for the company.

Market experts expect the stock to witness a positive listing, supported by the strong subscription numbers and

healthy investor sentiment. The robust demand also signals renewed momentum in India's IPO market after a relatively subdued first half of the year.

The listing is expected to provide investors with an opportunity to participate in one of India's fastest-growing financial services segments. With rising awareness about mutual funds and increasing inflows into equity schemes, the asset management business is expected to remain a key beneficiary of India's growing investment culture.

As SBI Funds Management begins trading on July 21, investors will closely watch its market performance and valuation. A successful debut could further boost confidence in upcoming IPOs and reinforce the positive outlook for India's capital markets.

American Woman Praises India's Healthcare

An American woman has gone viral on social media after expressing her admiration for India's affordable and convenient healthcare services, calling the experience "unbelievable" compared to what she is accustomed to in the United States. Her video has sparked widespread discussion online, with many praising India's accessibility to medical care.

The woman, who frequently shares her travel experiences in India, revealed that she needed a routine blood test while staying in Mumbai. Ex-

pecting to visit a diagnostic centre, she was pleasantly surprised when she was informed that a healthcare professional would visit her residence to collect the blood sample.

The convenience left her astonished. She explained that in the United States, home sample collection is either uncommon or comes at a significant additional cost, with most people having to travel to hospitals or laboratories for such tests. In India, however, the service was provided at little to no extra charge, making it both affordable and

hassle-free.

In her viral video, she described the experience as something she had "never seen anywhere else." She praised the efficiency of the healthcare service, highlighting how quickly appointments could be arranged and completed. According to her, India's combination of affordability, speed and convenience makes it stand out from healthcare systems in many developed countries.

The video quickly gained traction across social media platforms, attracting thou-

sands of views, likes and comments. Many Indian users expressed pride that a foreign visitor appreciated a service they often take for granted. Several commenters noted that India's diagnostic and home healthcare services have become increasingly accessible in major cities, making routine medical care easier for patients.

Others compared the experience with healthcare systems in countries like the United States, where medical treatment and diagnostic tests can be significantly more ex-

pensive. Many users agreed that India's private healthcare sector offers good value for money, especially for routine consultations, diagnostic services and medicines.

However, the discussion also prompted balanced opinions. Some users pointed out that while affordability is a major advantage, healthcare quality and accessibility still vary across different parts of the country. They noted that metropolitan cities generally offer better infrastructure and services than many rural areas, where medical facilities



continue to face challenges.

Despite these differing views, the American woman's experience has once again drawn global attention to one of India's key strengths—its relatively affordable healthcare system. Her positive re-

view has resonated with many online users and reignited conversations about how India's healthcare model compares with those of developed nations, particularly in terms of cost, convenience and accessibility.

Founder Credits 'Naivety' for Success

An IIT Kanpur and Harvard Business School alumnus has captured widespread attention after revealing the simple yet unconventional principle that helped him build a company worth nearly Rs 2,890 crore. Palash Soni, co-founder of B2B video platform Goldcast, believes that a certain degree of "naivety" can be one of an entrepreneur's greatest strengths.

Soni's startup, Goldcast, was acquired by Blackstone-backed event technology company Cvent in December 2025 for \$300 million (approximately Rs 2,890 crore). Before launching his own venture, he worked for nearly four years at InMobi in Bengaluru, gaining valuable experience in the technology sector.

In a recent interview with content creator Viraj Ala, Soni was asked what schools fail to teach students about achieving success. Instead of talking about business strategies or financial planning, he pointed to "naivety" as the quality that often enables people to take bold



risks.

Explaining his perspective, Soni recalled his college days when he used to play the popular multiplayer game Counter-Strike. He described himself as a beginner who frequently made mistakes, often running into the open and getting eliminated quickly. However, those early failures became valuable learning experiences that helped him improve.

According to Soni, entrepreneurs who are too aware of every challenge and obstacle may hesitate to pursue ambitious ideas. On the other hand,

people with a certain level of innocence or naivety often move ahead without overthinking the risks, giving them the confidence to attempt what others might consider impossible.

He also reflected on Goldcast's early days, saying the company never had abundant financial resources. Operating with limited funding forced the team to stay focused on solving core customer problems rather than chasing multiple opportunities. That intense focus, he believes, ultimately became one of the company's biggest

competitive advantages.

Soni emphasised that constraints can often fuel innovation. Instead of viewing a lack of resources as a disadvantage, entrepreneurs can use it to sharpen their priorities, make smarter decisions and build products that truly address customer needs.

His comments have resonated widely with aspiring founders and professionals on social media. Many users appreciated his honest take on entrepreneurship, noting that success is not always driven by perfect planning or abundant capital. Instead, curiosity, resilience, focus and the willingness to embrace uncertainty can often play a much bigger role.

Palash Soni's journey from IIT Kanpur and Harvard to building and selling a successful global startup serves as an inspiring example for young entrepreneurs, reinforcing the idea that determination, adaptability and focused execution can turn bold ideas into remarkable achievements.



A shopping mall in Gujarat witnessed extraordinary scenes as hundreds of gaming enthusiasts gathered in large numbers to purchase Sony's PlayStation 5 (PS5), creating long queues and packed stores amid an ongoing shortage of the popular gaming console.

Videos from the event quickly went viral on social media, showing excited customers waiting patiently for hours before the store opened. The overwhelming response highlighted the growing popularity of console gaming in India and the strong demand for the PS5, which continues to remain one of the most sought-after gaming devices in the country.

According to reports, the mall hosted a special sale where a limited number of PlayStation 5 consoles were made available. As word spread among gaming communities, buyers began arriving early in the morning to secure their chance of purchasing the console before stocks ran out. The viral footage showed shoppers filling the corridors of

the mall, with many holding tokens and standing in orderly queues. Security personnel were deployed to manage the crowd and ensure smooth movement inside the premises. Despite the massive turnout, the event was conducted without any major incidents.

Many buyers expressed excitement after finally getting their hands on the console. Some revealed that they had been trying to purchase a PS5 for several months but were unable to do so because of limited availability. Others travelled from nearby cities after learning about the special sale.

The PlayStation 5 has witnessed repeated supply shortages since its global launch due to high demand and production constraints. Although availability has improved in recent months, stocks often sell out quickly whenever retailers announce fresh sales or exclusive offers.

Gaming enthusiasts on social media reacted enthusiastically to the viral videos. While many

celebrated the passion of Indian gamers, others joked that the scenes resembled crowds gathering for the launch of a blockbuster smartphone or movie tickets. Several users also pointed out how rapidly India's gaming industry has grown in recent years.

Industry experts believe the increasing popularity of high-speed internet, online multiplayer gaming, esports and digital entertainment has significantly boosted demand for premium gaming consoles in India. The PlayStation 5 remains one of the top choices among gamers because of its powerful hardware, exclusive game titles and immersive gaming experience.

The Gujarat mall event has once again demonstrated the immense enthusiasm surrounding gaming in India. With every new restock attracting huge crowds, the PS5 continues to enjoy unmatched popularity among gaming fans, reflecting the country's expanding gaming culture and the growing appetite for premium entertainment devices.

Viral Video Sparks Civic Debate

A viral video showing an elderly man casually throwing banana peels onto the tracks at a railway station has triggered a heated debate on civic sense and public responsibility. The incident, captured by a fellow passenger, has drawn widespread criticism on social media, with many urging people to treat public spaces with greater respect.

The video shows the man standing beside a stationary train while eating bananas. After finishing one, he throws the peel directly onto the railway tracks despite a dustbin being available nearby. A passenger filming the incident immediately requests him not to litter and asks him to use the trash bin instead.

Despite the warning, the man prepares to throw another banana peel onto the tracks. The person recording the video intervenes once again, repeatedly urging him to dispose of the waste properly. After a brief exchange, the elderly



man finally agrees and drops the second peel into the nearby dustbin instead of littering.

The clip, which has garnered millions of views across social media platforms, has reignited discussions about civic responsibility in India. Many users praised the passenger for speaking up and preventing the littering instead of simply ignoring the act.

Several social media users remarked that while India has made significant progress in developing modern public in-

frastructure, people's civic habits have not improved at the same pace. They argued that maintaining cleanliness in public places is a shared responsibility and that individual behaviour plays a crucial role in keeping railway stations, roads and other public spaces clean.

Others expressed disappointment that even after repeated awareness campaigns, some people continue to litter despite the easy availability of dustbins. Many commenters

said such behaviour undermines efforts to improve public infrastructure and cleanliness across the country.

Some users also pointed out that civic values should be taught from an early age, both at home and in schools. They stressed that children often imitate adults, making it important for elders to set the right example in public spaces.

The incident has once again highlighted the importance of individual responsibility in maintaining cleanliness. While government initiatives and improved infrastructure can provide the necessary facilities, their success ultimately depends on citizens using them responsibly.

The viral video has become more than just an isolated incident—it has sparked a broader conversation on public etiquette, civic awareness and the collective effort needed to create cleaner and more responsible public space

VC Calls Out Founder Over Spending

A Mumbai-based venture capitalist has sparked a lively debate in the startup ecosystem after revealing that he had to confront a founder who allegedly spent a significant portion of his company's seed funding on personal luxuries, including a new car and a larger apartment.

The investor, Mrunal Jhaveri, founding partner at Ice VC, shared the incident in a LinkedIn post while discussing how startup founders should determine their salaries during different stages of fundraising. His comments quickly went viral, prompting conversations about financial discipline and responsible use of investor capital.

According to Jhaveri, the startup had raised 5 crore in seed funding. Instead of directing the fresh capital towards business growth, the founder's first major decisions were to purchase a new car and move into a more expensive home. Jhaveri said he had to hold a "very uncomfortable conversation" with the entrepreneur about the spending.



He clarified that founders deserve a comfortable lifestyle and should not have to worry about basic expenses such as rent or their children's education. However, he stressed that there is a clear distinction between ensuring financial stability and treating venture capital funding as a personal salary increase.

To explain his viewpoint, Jhaveri shared what he believes is an appropriate salary structure for startup founders at various funding stages. For companies at the seed stage,

typically raising between 4 crore and 12 crore, he suggested founders should draw a monthly salary ranging from 60,000 to 1.2 lakh. At this stage, he argued, the business is still proving its model and every rupee should be used carefully to build the company.

As startups progress to Series A funding, founders can reasonably increase their salaries to around 3 lakh to 5 lakh per month, allowing for modest lifestyle improvements. During the Series B stage, he

recommends a base salary of 5 lakh to 7 lakh per month, supplemented with performance-linked incentives tied to achieving business milestones. By the time a company reaches Series C and beyond, founders can earn substantially higher compensation as the business matures and demonstrates sustained success.

Jhaveri also emphasised that the real financial reward for startup founders comes from the long-term value of their equity rather than high salaries in the early years. Building a successful company, he said, should remain the primary focus.

His post has generated mixed reactions online. While many investors and entrepreneurs agreed that startup funds should be used primarily for business growth, others argued that founders also deserve financial security after taking significant personal risks. The discussion has reignited a broader conversation about balancing personal needs with fiscal responsibility in the startup ecosystem.

Korean Creator Praises Indian Theatres

A South Korean content creator has won the hearts of Indian movie lovers after praising India's cinema experience and declaring that Indian theatres are better than those in her home country. Her video, shared on social media, has gone viral, sparking conversations about the unique features of Indian cinemas that audiences often take for granted.

In the video, the woman explained that when she first visited a movie theatre in India, she expected the experience to be similar to what she was used to in South Korea. She noted that the entrance, ticket counters, popcorn stalls and overall ambience looked quite familiar, with only a few minor differences such as security checks.

However, what truly surprised her was the concept of an intermission. While watching a film, she was shocked when the screen suddenly went blank, the lights came on and people began leaving their seats. At first, she thought there was an emergency or a technical issue.

She soon realised that it was simply the interval break—a long-standing tradition in Indian cinema. According to her, this was something completely new, as South Korean theatres generally screen movies with-



out any break, regardless of how long the film is.

The content creator admitted that the intermission initially felt like a cultural shock, but she gradually came to appreciate its benefits. She said the break gives moviegoers enough time to visit the restroom, buy snacks, stretch their legs or simply relax before returning for the second half of the film.

She even remarked that this feature makes the overall movie-watching experience more comfortable than in South Korea, where viewers often have to quietly leave the auditorium during the film if they need a break, risking missing important scenes.

Her honest review quickly went viral, attracting thousands of reactions from Indian social media users. Many appreciated her observations

and agreed that the interval is an integral part of Indian cinema culture. Some users pointed out that Indian filmmakers often design their stories around the interval, ending the first half with a major twist or cliffhanger to keep audiences excited for the second half. Others highlighted additional conveniences offered by Indian multiplexes, including in-seat food delivery and a wide variety of snack options, making the cinema experience even more enjoyable.

The viral video has once again highlighted how everyday aspects of Indian life can leave foreign visitors pleasantly surprised. For many Indians, the interval break is a routine part of watching a film, but for international visitors, it is a unique feature that adds comfort and excitement to the cinematic experience.

Broadcast Sparks Buzz Over Kohli, Shastri And Rohit Sharma During India-England ODI

A brief exchange during the live broadcast of the India-England ODI has sparked widespread discussion among cricket fans after commentators hinted that Virat Kohli and former India head coach Ravi Shastri may have been aware of developments involving Rohit Sharma before they became public.

The conversation took place during the second ODI when the commentary panel made remarks suggesting that Shastri had prior knowledge of Rohit Sharma's plans. The comments quickly caught the attention of viewers, with clips from the broadcast spreading rapidly

across social media platforms.

Although no direct confirmation was provided during the telecast, the remarks fueled speculation among fans about whether Kohli and Shastri had been informed in advance about Rohit's situation. The broadcast stopped short of revealing any specific details, leaving room for multiple interpretations.

The discussion has reignited interest in the relationship between India's senior cricketers and the communication surrounding key decisions within the team. Fans have been actively debating whether the comments indicated insider knowl-



edge or were simply casual observations made during the match.

Neither Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma nor Ravi Shastri has publicly responded to the speculation generated by the broadcast. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has also not issued any statement regarding the matter.

Meanwhile, the focus remains on India's performance in the ODI series against England, with both teams battling for crucial momentum. Despite the off-field buzz, players have continued to concentrate on the on-field contest.

Cricket experts have urged fans not to draw conclusions based solely on commentary snippets, noting that live broadcasts often include informal discussions that may not necessarily indicate confirmed information.

As social media continues to amplify every on-air remark involving India's biggest cricket stars, the latest episode has once again highlighted how quickly speculation can spread during high-profile international matches. Until any official clarification emerges, the comments are likely to remain a topic of debate among cricket followers.

Report Claims Rohit Sharma Left Unhappy After Meeting BCCI Officials

Fresh speculation has emerged around Rohit Sharma's future in One-Day Internationals after reports claimed the Indian captain was unhappy following a recent meeting with senior BCCI officials. The development comes amid growing buzz that the ongoing series against England could be Rohit's final appearance in the 50-over format.

According to the report, Rohit met BCCI officials to discuss his future plans and the team's roadmap ahead of major international tournaments. While the exact details of the meeting have not been made public, sources claimed the discussions did not end on a positive note, leaving the veteran batter disappointed.

The report suggests that there were differences over



the direction of India's ODI plans and Rohit's long-term role in the squad. However, neither Rohit Sharma nor the BCCI has officially confirmed the contents of the meeting or the claims made in the report. Speculation surrounding Rohit's future has intensified in recent weeks, with several reports indicating that the selec-

tors are preparing for a gradual transition by giving more opportunities to younger players ahead of upcoming ICC events.

Despite the off-field discussions, Rohit has remained focused on the ongoing ODI series against England. The experienced opener continues to be one of India's most influ-

ential players and is expected to play a key role in the team's campaign.

Former cricketers and analysts have advised fans to wait for an official announcement instead of relying solely on media speculation. They believe any decision regarding Rohit's ODI future will ultimately be communicated by either the player or the BCCI.

For now, there has been no official confirmation that Rohit Sharma is set to retire from ODI cricket or that the England series will be his last. Until such an announcement is made, the reports remain speculative.

As discussions continue, cricket fans will be closely watching for any statement from Rohit Sharma or the BCCI regarding his future with the Indian ODI team.

Team India Denies Pressuring Rohit Sharma Amid Retirement Speculation

The Indian cricket team has reportedly dismissed speculation that Rohit Sharma is being pressured to retire from One-Day Internationals, amid growing rumours surrounding the veteran opener's future.

Reports had suggested that Rohit's ODI career could be nearing its end and that discussions were taking place about his long-term role in the team. However, sources within the Indian camp have rejected claims that the management or selectors are forcing the former captain to step away from the format.

According to the report, the team management maintains that any decision regarding Rohit's future will be entirely his own. There has been no directive from the coaching staff, selectors or the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)



asking him to announce his retirement.

The clarification comes after a wave of speculation triggered by reports claiming Rohit had recently met senior BCCI officials to discuss his future. Those reports also alleged that the meeting did not end on a positive note, but no official confirmation has been

provided by either Rohit or the BCCI. Despite the off-field chatter, Rohit remains part of India's plans for the ongoing ODI series against England and continues to be one of the team's most experienced players. His leadership and batting experience are considered valuable as India balances the transition to a younger squad.

Team sources have emphasized that the dressing room remains focused on the series and that retirement rumours have not affected the players' preparations. The management is reportedly keen to avoid distractions during an important phase of the tour.

Former cricketers have also urged fans to avoid jumping to conclusions based on unverified reports, noting that decisions on retirement are personal and are usually announced directly by the player.

As of now, Rohit Sharma has not made any official announcement regarding his ODI future, and the BCCI has not indicated any plans to move on from the senior batter. Until an official statement is issued, the retirement speculation remains unconfirmed.

Who Is FIFA World Cup 2026 Final Referee Slavko Vinčić? His History With Argentina

Slovenian referee Slavko Vin i has been appointed to officiate the 2026 FIFA World Cup final, making him one of the most closely watched figures ahead of football's biggest match. Widely regarded as one of Europe's most experienced referees, Vin i has handled several high-profile international and club fixtures over the past decade.

The 46-year-old official has officiated matches in the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Euro, and previous FIFA tournaments, earning a reputation for maintaining control in high-pressure encounters. His consistent performances have made him one of FIFA's trusted referees for major competitions.

Vin i has previously taken charge of several matches involving Argentina, with the South American giants enjoying a positive record under his supervision. Argentina has remained unbeaten in matches officiated by the Slovenian referee, a statistic that has drawn



attention ahead of the World Cup final.

One of his most notable assignments involving Argentina came during the 2022 FIFA World Cup, where he officiated the group-stage match against Poland. Argentina won the contest comfortably and went on to lift the World Cup trophy later in the tournament.

Beyond international football, Vin i has also refereed

numerous knockout matches in the UEFA Champions League, where he has been praised for his calm decision-making and ability to manage games featuring some of the world's biggest stars.

Known for allowing the game to flow while maintaining discipline, Vin i generally avoids unnecessary interruptions but does not hesitate to issue cards when required. His

balanced approach has earned respect from players, coaches and football administrators.

The appointment reflects FIFA's confidence in his experience and ability to handle the pressure of a World Cup final, where every decision can have a significant impact on the outcome of the match.

Although Argentina's positive record under Vin i has sparked discussion among fans, football experts believe such statistics are largely coincidental. Referees are selected based on merit, experience and performance rather than previous results involving participating teams.

As millions of fans prepare to watch the World Cup final, Slavko Vin i will carry the responsibility of ensuring the match is officiated fairly and professionally. His decisions will be under intense scrutiny, but his extensive experience at the highest level is expected to help him handle one of the biggest assignments in world football.

Players' Body Questions ICC's New 2027 ODI World Cup Format, Seeks Greater Transparency

The World Cricketers' Association (WCA) has expressed strong concerns over the International Cricket Council's (ICC) recently approved format changes for the 2027 Men's ODI World Cup, urging the governing body to adopt a more transparent and consultative decision-making process.

The revamped tournament will still feature 14 teams, but the ICC has introduced a new "Super Series" stage. Under the revised structure, the three lowest-ranked qualified teams will first compete in the Super Series, with only one team advancing to the main group stage. The remaining 12 teams will then compete in the primary phase of the tournament before progressing to the knockout rounds.



The WCA argued that such a significant structural change should have involved broader consultation with players and other stakeholders before being approved. The organisation said greater transparency is essential when making decisions that impact the sport's premier global events.

According to the players' body, the revised format could reduce opportunities for emerging and Associate nations to compete against top international teams on the biggest stage. The WCA believes expanding global participation should remain a key objective for international cricket rather

than creating additional barriers for smaller cricketing nations.

The association also questioned the timing and communication surrounding the decision, stating that players, boards and stakeholders deserve greater certainty when tournament formats are altered after long-term planning has already begun.

Several players from Associate nations have also voiced concerns, arguing that the revised structure makes qualification and progression more difficult for developing cricket countries. They believe exposure against leading teams is vital for the growth of the sport across the world.

The ICC has defended the new format, stating that the additional stage is designed to create more competitive matches and maintain high stakes throughout the tourna-

ment. Officials believe the revised structure will enhance the overall quality of the competition while keeping every game meaningful.

The 2027 ICC Men's ODI World Cup will be jointly hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia. With the tournament still more than a year away, discussions over the revised format are expected to continue as players, administrators and cricket boards debate its long-term impact on the global game.

The WCA has reiterated that it is not opposed to innovation but wants future changes to be introduced through a transparent process that includes meaningful consultation with players and other stakeholders. As the debate gathers momentum, the ICC may face increasing calls to explain the rationale behind the new structure in greater detail.

Bhaichung Bhutia Picks Maradona Over Messi In World Cup Debate



The debate over whether Lionel Messi has surpassed Diego Maradona in FIFA World Cup history has taken a fresh turn, with Indian football legend Bhaichung Bhutia sharing his perspective ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup final between Argentina and Spain.

Bhutia said that while Messi has enjoyed an extraordinary World Cup career, he still places Diego Maradona ahead of the current Argentine captain based on his performances on football's biggest stage. However, he believes Messi could finally match Maradona's legendary status if Argentina lifts the 2026 FIFA World Cup trophy.

Maradona famously inspired Argentina to World Cup glory in 1986, producing one of the greatest individual campaigns in football history. His iconic performances, including the memorable quarter-final against England, remain etched in World Cup folklore and continue to define his legacy.

Messi, meanwhile, has already cemented his place among football's all-time greats after leading Argentina to the 2022 FIFA World Cup title in Qatar. He has also broken several World Cup records, including becoming Argentina's most-capped player in the tournament and one of its highest scorers.

According to Bhutia, winning another World Cup would elevate Messi into an even more exclusive category and strengthen his claim to being the greatest player in World Cup history. He believes back-to-back World Cup triumphs would make Messi's achievements comparable to Maradona's iconic legacy.

The comments come as Argentina prepares for another historic final, with fans around the world eagerly waiting to see whether Messi can guide his country to consecutive World Cup titles. A victory would further enhance his remarkable international career and add another chapter

to his already glittering legacy.

The comparison between Messi and Maradona has long divided football fans. While Maradona is celebrated for his inspirational leadership and unforgettable 1986 campaign, Messi's supporters point to his longevity, consistency, individual records and international success over nearly two decades.

Bhutia acknowledged that both players belong among the greatest footballers the sport has ever produced, but maintained that Maradona still holds a slight edge in terms of World Cup impact. However, he suggested that another title for Messi could change that perception.

With Argentina just one victory away from another World Cup crown, the debate is likely to intensify. Whether Messi can surpass Maradona in the eyes of fans and experts may ultimately depend on the outcome of the 2026 World Cup final.



Daksha Joins Varun for 'Raasa Gummadi'

The makers of Varun Tej's upcoming horror-comedy Korean Kanakaraju have intensified the film's promotions by announcing a high-energy special dance number titled "Raasa Gummadi." Actress Daksha Nagarkar will be seen sharing the screen with Varun Tej in what is being promoted as one of the film's biggest musical attractions.

The announcement has already created a buzz among fans after the makers released a colourful poster featuring Varun Tej and Daksha Nagarkar in vibrant traditional outfits. The festive look of the poster hints at an energetic mass number set against the backdrop of a Rayalaseema village fair.

The song "Raasa Gummadi" is scheduled to be released on July 19 as the film's second single. After the positive response to the first track, "Kamsahamnida," the makers are hoping this folk-based dance number will further raise excitement ahead of the movie's theatrical release.

Composed by S. Thaman, the song promises a blend of peppy beats and authentic Rayalaseema flavour. Known for delivering chartbuster mass songs, Thaman is expected to bring his trademark energy to the

special number, making it one of the highlights of the album.

Directed by Merlapaka Gandhi, Korean Kanakaraju is a horror-comedy that has already generated considerable interest with its title glimpse, teaser and first song. The promotional content released so far has received a positive response, raising expectations for the film.

Apart from Varun Tej, the movie stars Ritika Nayak as the female lead, while popular comedian Satya plays a pivotal role expected to provide ample comic relief. The film is being jointly produced by UV Creations and First Frame Entertainment.

The movie has completed its shooting and is currently in the final stages of post-production. With promotions now in full swing, the makers are steadily unveiling fresh content to keep the momentum going before the film's release.

Korean Kanakaraju is slated to hit theatres on August 7, and the addition of Daksha Nagarkar's special dance number is expected to add extra glamour and entertainment value. Fans are now eagerly waiting for the release of "Raasa Gummadi" to see the on-screen chemistry between Varun Tej and Daksha, along with Thaman's energetic composition.

Suriya 47 Enters Post-Production

Kollywood star Suriya has officially completed the shooting of his much-awaited film with acclaimed Malayalam filmmaker Jithu Madhavan. Tentatively titled Suriya 47, the film has now entered the post-production phase, bringing fans one step closer to its theatrical release.

The makers announced the completion of filming by releasing a special behind-the-scenes (BTS) video featuring memorable moments from the shoot. The video has generated excitement among fans, offering a glimpse of the team's journey and hinting at the scale of the project.

Adding to the buzz, the production house confirmed that the film's official title, first-look

poster and release date will be announced soon. Fans are eagerly waiting for the grand reveal, which is expected to coincide with Suriya's birthday on July 23, making the occasion even more special.

Directed by Jithu Madhavan, who earned widespread acclaim with Malayalam blockbusters Romancham and Aavesham, the film marks his first collaboration with Suriya as well as his Tamil directorial debut. The combination has already created huge expectations among movie lovers across South India.

The movie stars Nazriya Fakhani as the female lead, while Premalu fame Naslen plays a key role. The supporting cast is also

Varanasi Faces Hollywood Clash

SS Rajamouli's much-awaited action-adventure film Varanasi, starring Mahesh Babu in the lead role, is gearing up for a worldwide theatrical release on April 7, 2027. While anticipation for the big-budget entertainer continues to soar, the film could face stiff competition from major Hollywood releases during the same period.

According to industry reports, the biggest concern is the availability of IMAX and other Premium Large Format (PLF) screens. Hollywood studios generally reserve these premium screens well in advance for their tentpole releases, making it difficult for other films to secure a wide release across these formats.

One of the major competitors expected to remain in theatres during the release of Varanasi is Godzilla x Kong: Supernova. In addition, another Hollywood thriller, Panic Carefully, is also likely to arrive around the same time, increasing competition for premium screens across several international markets.

For Rajamouli, premium screens are expected to play a crucial role in the film's box office performance. The filmmaker is known for creating visually spectacular cinema, and Varanasi is being mounted on an international scale with cutting-edge visual effects and grand action sequences. A significant portion of the audience is expected to prefer expe-

riencing the film in IMAX and other high-end formats.

The movie is currently in production, with reports suggesting that the makers aim to wrap up filming by October this year, leaving ample time for post-production work involving extensive visual effects.

Varanasi marks the first collaboration between SS Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu, making it one of the most anticipated Indian films in recent years. The film also stars Priyanka Chopra as the female lead and Prithviraj Sukumaran in a pivotal role. The music is composed by M.M. Keeravani, while veteran producer K.L. Narayana is backing the project under the Sri



Durga Arts banner.

Despite the expected competition from Hollywood blockbusters, trade analysts believe Varanasi has the potential to attract massive audiences worldwide, thanks to Rajamouli's proven track record of delivering global blockbusters. However, the film's box office prospects may also depend on how premium screens are allocated during its release window, making the clash with Hollywood releases an interesting battle to watch.

NBK111 Faces Fauzi Clash

Nandamuri Balakrishna's upcoming film NBK111, directed by Gopichand Malineni, is reportedly facing uncertainty over its release date following the official announcement of Prabhas' highly anticipated pan-India film Fauzi.

Initially, the makers of NBK111 were aiming for a grand Dasara 2026 release. However, with production taking longer than expected, the team is believed to have shifted its focus to a December release window.

According to industry buzz, December 4, 2026, emerged as the preferred date for Balakrishna's film. But the equation changed after the makers of Fauzi officially announced that the Prabhas starrer would hit theatres on December 3, 2026.

Since Fauzi is being mounted as a massive pan-India project with a wide multilingual release, industry experts believe it will dominate screens across the country. Releasing NBK111 just a day later could impact the theatre availability, box office collections and audience attention.

As a result, the NBK111 team is now said to be evaluating alternative release plans. One of



the strongest options under consideration is the Sankranti 2027 festive season, a period that has traditionally been highly rewarding for Balakrishna's films.

Balakrishna has enjoyed several successful Sankranti releases over the years, making the festival season an attractive alternative if the makers decide to avoid a direct clash with Prabhas' film.

Directed by Gopichand Malineni, NBK111 marks the second collaboration between the actor and director after the commercial success of Veera Simha Reddy. The film features Kajal Aggarwal as the female lead and has music composed by S. Thaman. The movie is currently

progressing with its shooting schedule.

On the other hand, Fauzi, directed by Hanu Raghavapudi, is one of the most awaited Indian films in production. The period action drama stars Prabhas in the lead and is expected to release in multiple Indian languages with a massive theatrical rollout.

While speculation about NBK111's release date continues, the makers are yet to make an official announcement. Until then, fans of both Balakrishna and Prabhas will be closely watching to see whether NBK111 sticks to a December release or opts for the lucrative Sankranti festival season instead.

Mystery Message Vanishes on OTT



Samantha Ruth Prabhu's blockbuster Maa Inti Bangaram has finally made its digital debut on JioHotstar, but fans were quick to notice an unexpected change in the OTT version. A cryptic message that appeared during the theatrical run has been removed, sparking fresh discussions among movie lovers.

During its successful theatrical release, the film ended with a mysterious frame displaying the acronym "FUSN" followed by the phrase "IYKYK" (If You Know, You Know). The brief message immediately became a hot topic on social media, with audiences trying to decode its meaning.

The cryptic end-credit card led to countless theories across platforms such as Reddit, X and Instagram. Some believed it hinted at a future project, while others speculated it carried a hidden message connected to the filmmakers or cast. However, neither Samantha nor director Nandini Reddy ever clarified its significance.

Now, viewers streaming the film on OTT have discovered that the mysterious message is no longer part of the end credits. Instead, the movie concludes

without the teaser, leaving fans surprised and curious about why it was removed.

The unexpected omission has once again reignited online discussions. Many viewers are wondering whether the message was intentionally removed to avoid unnecessary speculation or if it was always meant to be an exclusive element of the theatrical version. So far, the makers have not issued any official statement regarding the change.

Maa Inti Bangaram has enjoyed a remarkable journey since its theatrical release. Directed by Nandini Reddy, the action drama emerged as a major commercial success, crossing the 100 crore mark worldwide and becoming one of the biggest female-led Telugu films at the

box office.

The film features Samantha Ruth Prabhu in the lead role, with Gulshan Devaiah, Diganth Manchale, Gautami and Sreemukhi playing key roles. The music is composed by Santhosh Narayanan, while the film is produced under Samantha's Tralala Moving Pictures banner.

Despite the removal of the cryptic end-credit message, the film continues to receive appreciation from audiences following its OTT release. However, the disappearance of the mysterious "FUSN" card has become a fresh talking point, with fans hoping the makers will eventually reveal what it actually meant and why it was omitted from the digital version.

The Odyssey Stuns on Screen



Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey is a grand cinematic adaptation of Homer's timeless Greek epic, blending breathtaking visuals, emotional storytelling and large-scale action into one of the director's most ambitious films. Starring Matt Damon as Odysseus, the film takes audiences on an unforgettable journey filled with danger, sacrifice and redemption.

The story follows Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, as he struggles to return home after the Trojan War. His decade-long voyage is filled with mythical creatures, powerful gods and countless challenges, but the emotional core of the film lies in his longing to reunite with his wife Penelope and son Telemachus.

Matt Damon delivers one of the finest performances of his career, portraying a battle-weary hero haunted by guilt and driven by hope. Anne Hathaway impresses as Penelope with a graceful and emotionally layered performance, while Tom Holland brings sincerity and strength to the role of Telemachus. The supporting cast, including Zendaya and Robert Pattinson, also leaves a lasting impact.

As expected from Christopher Nolan, the film is visually spectacular. Shot extensively in IMAX, every frame feels larger than life, from vast oceans and towering landscapes to thrilling battle sequences and mythical encounters. The practical filmmaking techniques and immersive sound design elevate the overall experience, making it a must-watch on the biggest screen possible. The screenplay

balances action with emotional depth, exploring themes of war, loss, family, redemption and the resilience of the human spirit. While the narrative occasionally shifts rapidly between different episodes of Odysseus' journey, Nolan manages to maintain emotional continuity throughout most of the film.

The background score perfectly complements the scale of the story, enhancing both the intense action scenes and the quieter emotional moments. The technical departments, including cinematography, editing and visual effects, work together seamlessly to create a truly immersive cinematic experience. However, the film isn't without flaws. Its nearly three-hour runtime and dense storytelling demand the audience's complete attention. Some viewers may find certain sections slightly overwhelming due to the sheer number of events packed into the narrative. A few supporting characters could also have been explored in greater depth.

Overall, The Odyssey is a magnificent achievement that showcases Christopher Nolan's storytelling ambition at its finest. With outstanding performances, spectacular visuals and a powerful emotional core, the film stands as one of the year's biggest cinematic events.

New Song Added to Jana Nayagan



The makers of Thalapathy Vijay's much-awaited film Jana Nayagan are adding more excitement ahead of its grand theatrical release. In a surprise move, the team has decided to include a brand-new song in the final version of the film, delighting fans who have been eagerly awaiting Vijay's farewell project.

According to the latest reports, the new track has been composed and filmed after the completion of the original shoot. The makers felt that the additional song would further enhance the film's entertainment quotient and provide audiences with an even more engaging theatrical experience.

The decision comes after the film underwent several changes before release. Apart from the new song, the final cut is also said to feature a few additional scenes aimed at strengthening the narrative and offering a more satisfying cinematic experience.

Directed by H. Vinoth, Jana Nayagan marks Vijay's final film before he shifts his complete focus to politics. As a result, every update related to the project has generated massive buzz among fans across the country.

The film stars Pooja Hegde as the female lead, while Bobby Deol, Prakash Raj, Priyamani, Gautham Vasudev Menon, and Mamitha Bapuji play pivotal roles. The music is composed by Anirudh Ravichander, whose songs from the film have already received a positive response.

The addition of a fresh song is expected to boost the film's musical appeal even further. Fans are particularly excited to see whether the new track will feature Vijay in a celebratory dance number, something that has become a trademark of his films over the years.

With promotions entering the final phase, the makers are expected to unveil more content in the coming days. Trade analysts believe the new song could play a key role in building additional momentum ahead of the film's release.

As one of the most anticipated Tamil films of the year, Jana Nayagan carries enormous expectations. The inclusion of a brand-new song is likely to make Vijay's farewell outing even more memorable for his fans, who are eagerly counting down to witness the superstar on the big screen one final time.