

## CM Chandrababu inaugurates works of JSW Rayalaseema steel plant



Chief Minister Chandrababu stated that a golden era has begun for Rayalaseema. He inaugurated the construction work for the prestigious JSW Rayalaseema Steel Plant—to be built at a massive cost of Rs 16,350 crore—at Sunnapurallapalle in Jammalamadugu Mandal, Kadapa district. Subsequently, he virtually inaugurated the Jindal Industrial Park in Vizianagaram district. Executive Branch The Chief Minister addressed the gathering organised on this occasion. "A new era in the history of Rayalaseema has begun with the establishment of the steel plant. As a son of

Rayalaseema, I will demonstrate its development. Rayalaseema is not a drought-stricken land; it is a region of abundant water and prosperity. This area has transformed into a hub for horticulture. We are breathing new life into a state

that suffered under a destructive administration. Rayalaseema is now bustling with industries, investments, and jobs. We are proving that it is not a land of barren rocks, but a land of precious gems. Sajjan Jindal is ready to make even larger investments. Good days lie ahead for the region. We had promised to set up a plant in Rayalaseema. In the past, we witnessed deceptive foundation-laying ceremonies; groundbreaking rituals were performed once in December 2019 and again in 2023, yet not even a basket of soil was moved, nor was a single small building constructed. We overcame all obstacles and allocated 1,100 acres of land. Production of two million tonnes will take place in two stages. With the JSW Rayalaseema plant, AP is becoming a steel state; not just Visakhapatnam, but Rayalaseema too is emerging as a hub for steel," the Chief Minister said. Union Minister Srinivasa Varma, local MLA Adinarayana Reddy, BJP State President Madhav, and others participated in the event.



## Atchannaidu orders immediate action on tobacco auctions to protect farmers' interests

Andhra Pradesh Minister Atchannaidu held a teleconference today (Friday) regarding Virginia tobacco purchases. He directed that all auction platforms commence operations immediately and mandated that every company participate in the auctions. He ordered a strict reduction in tobacco rejection rates and made it clear that the government would not tolerate companies forming syndicates to artificially cap prices on high-quality bales. He instructed the Tobacco Board to take stringent action against companies if collusion or syndication is confirmed. He emphasized that companies must purchase tobacco across all grades and directed the Tobacco Board to maintain strict oversight of the procurement process.

## Heavy rains predicted to Andhra Pradesh for next two days

The Meteorological Department has issued key warnings for the people of Andhra Pradesh. A low-pressure area that formed over the northwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining areas—specifically off the coasts of North Odisha and West Bengal—remains stationary in the same region. Weather officials stated that an associated cyclonic circulation extends up to approximately 7.6 km above mean sea level and is likely to intensify over the next two days. Additionally, due to the influence of a monsoon trough and a shear zone at sea level, widespread rainfall is expected across the state over the next three days. The impact of the low-pressure area will be most significant on the North Coastal districts. On Friday, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected in many places, with the possibility of heavy rain in one or two locations. Moderate rainfall is likely in some areas on Saturday and Sunday, with a chance of heavy rain at one or two places on Saturday. Throughout these three days, there is a risk of strong gusty winds blowing at speeds of 40 to 50 kmph, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning. Rainfall intensity in the South Coastal districts is expected to be moderate. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely in



some areas on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Thunderstorms and lightning may occur in one or two places. Gusty winds blowing at speeds of 40–50 kmph are likely here as well. In the districts of the Rayalaseema region, the intensity of the winds is expected to be greater than that of the rainfall. Light to moderate rain is likely at only one or two places over the next three days. However, the Meteorological Centre has warned that strong winds blowing at speeds of 40–50 kmph will prevail in this region. Officials clari-

fied that despite the forecast for rain across the state, there will be no significant change in maximum temperatures in the Coastal Andhra, Yanam, and Rayalaseema regions over the next five days; normal temperature levels will continue. However, officials advised people to avoid taking shelter under trees or near electric poles during thunderstorms and lightning. They also urged farmers to take appropriate precautions to protect their ready-to-harvest crops from the strong gusty winds.



## Employees felicitate MLA Palle Sindhura over OPS demand

(king Reporter)Anantapur: Government employee representatives from undivided Anantapur district on Thursday felicitated Puttaparthi MLA Palle Sindhura Reddy for strongly advocating their cause in the State Legislative Assembly. Campaigns & Elections The legislator had raised the demand to implement the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for teachers and police personnel appointed under pre-2003 notifications. Honoring the MLA and former Minister Dr Palle Raghunatha Reddy at their residence, the employees thanked them for bringing the issue to the government's notice. They also expressed gratitude to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and requested continued support to resolve pending grievances.

## Dr. P.C. Rayulu Felicitates CM Chandrababu Naidu and Dignitaries at Tirupati Airport

(king Reporter)Tirupati: Dr. P.C. Rayulu, Member of the Airport Authority of India, Member of the South Central Railway Zonal Railway Users' Consultative Committee (ZRUC), and associated with the Union Ministries of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Tourism & Culture, welcomed and felicitated Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu

Naidu at Tirupati Airport on Wednesday. On the occasion, Union Minister for Textiles Giriraj Singh and Odisha Governor Dr. Kambhampati Hari Babu were also honoured. Dr. Rayulu said the reception reflected the strong coordination between the Union Government, the Andhra Pradesh Government, the Airport Authority of India, and the South



Central Railway in promoting development and public service.



## NEP's quiet bid to reshape Indian schooling

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has placed cross-cultural education at the heart of school reform, weaving together multilingualism, indigenous knowledge, and global citizenship. The aim is to turn traditional classrooms into inclusive spaces that celebrate India's diverse heritage while preparing students to thrive in an interconnected world. At its core, multicultural education is a reform that respects diverse traditions and builds a constructive teaching-and-learning process through rigorous inputs and positive insights. Social and cross-cultural interaction in schools gives students the chance to learn and practise empathy, critical thinking, and communication. It fosters collaborative learning and breaks down the barriers of cultural disconnect. Without it, the classroom risks becoming a place where a student's home identity is cut off from their academic life, leaving them without a sense of belonging. When schools fail to reflect local socio-cultural practices, parents and community members may also feel excluded, weakening their involvement and trust in the education system. A culture of cross-cultural education, by contrast, improves student participation, eases stress, and strengthens academic performance. India is known for its unity in diversity. It is a land of many ethnicities living together in harmony and peace, with rich cultures, traditions, values, and beliefs. This shared social and emotional fabric, rooted in moral empowerment, motivates people to become productive citizens who pursue both their personal goals and the nation's broader aspirations. The issue matters not only from an Indian standpoint but also as a global concern. Inclusion is the only path to the integrated and inclusive development of every section of society, and equal opportunity for all students is a central goal of multicultural education. The Indian Constitution makes a clear provision for this: Article 14 and Article 21-A (the Right to Education) guarantee equal opportunity and promote the inclusive growth of society. Chapter 22 of the NEP 2020 reinforces this by promoting Indian languages, arts, and culture, particularly through points 22.1, 22.4, 22.10, and 22.11. A key part of this effort is closing the academic achievement gap between mainstream students and those from diverse backgrounds. Also Read - CBSE relaxes 3-language policy This calls for a special focus on integrating cross-cultural education from childhood. Diverse interaction promotes deeper learning and cognitive flexibility, nurtures the skills needed for modern workplaces, and encourages open-mindedness and respect for diversity, while helping young people tackle complex challenges. To achieve this, schools and universities should adopt culturally relevant pedagogy, drawing on local context and examples to make their approach more inclusive. They can also connect digitally to share traditions and collaborate on projects that deepen understanding of different cultures and their value. The NEP further urges schools to bring in local culture and values, and to ensure that parents and community members take part in school functions and cultural events. This makes schools more diverse and helps create an inclusive environment that boosts student self-esteem.

# KTR demands filling of 20,000 police vacancies in Telangana

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao demanded that the Congress government immediately fill 20,000 police constable and sub-inspector posts, honouring its election promises to unemployed youth. He accused the ruling Congress of betraying unemployed youth by limiting recruitment to just 5,000 vacancies. He also demanded an enhancement of the upper age limit to 36 years for constables and 37 years for SI aspirants, arguing that four years had elapsed since the last recruitment and many candidates were becoming ineligible. He warned that unless the government issued fresh notifications to fill all vacancies across all departments, the BRS would launch a state-wide agitation. In an open letter to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on behalf of police job aspirants, Rama Rao said the unemployed youth were struggling in Hyderabad while living in hostels to prepare for recruitment examinations. He urged the government not to shatter the aspirations of the aspirants, who largely hail from poor, middle-class and rural families.

Recalling that "Water, Funds and Jobs" was the slogan of the Telangana statehood movement, the BRS working president said the Congress government had failed to deliver on employment despite acknowledging that around 17,000 police vacancies existed. He said that while the Chief Minister had

earlier promised to fill 12,000 posts, a notification was issued only for 5,000 vacancies, disappointing nearly 15 lakh aspirants and triggering protests in Hyderabad. Drawing a comparison with the previous BRS government, Rama Rao said it had filled around 47,000 police posts through three recruitment drives, besides issuing notifications for 2.32 lakh government jobs and filling over 1.6 lakh vacancies with 95 per cent local reservation. Accusing the Congress of renegeing on its Youth Declaration, he said the promise of filling two lakh government jobs within a year, introducing an annual job calendar and providing a Rs 4,000 unemployment allowance remained unfulfilled. He reminded that the government had filled only 17,000 new jobs in the last two-and-a-half years while claiming credit for appointments initiated during the BRS regime.



## MAHSR project: India's first bullet train corridor nears completion

New Delhi: India is nearing completion of its first bullet train corridor, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project, which will provide a standardised template for upcoming bullet train corridors across the country, a statement said on Friday. MAHSR will connect Mumbai to Ahmedabad in about 1 hour 58 minutes and the corridor has a design speed of 350 kmph with an operational speed of 320 kmph supported by advanced rolling stock, signalling and train control systems. The corridor covers approximately 508 kilometres and includes 12 planned stations, and the first service is expected to run in August 2027 with the initial section opening between Surat and Vapi. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail project is creating the knowledge, capabilities and

industrial ecosystem needed for future expansion, the government said. "It is establishing a scalable approach for future high-speed rail expansion. As new corridors are developed, this foundation will help enhance connectivity. It will also help reduce travel times and contribute to long-term economic growth," the statement said. Seven high-speed rail corridors, covering nearly 4,000 kilometres, have been identified for future development. The proposed network is expected to attract investments of around Rs 16 lakh crore. Scaling upon a standardised template based on the MAHSR project, aims to implement proven engineering designs, construction methods, and operational practices. It will improve efficiency and accelerate project execution. Unified designs, components, and maintenance pro-



cedures will simplify spare-part management, training, and procurement across the network. Foundations will be designed according to the exact soil characteristics of the spot and the remaining subsystems will follow common engineering standards. "These include piers, viaducts, tracks, station structures, overhead electrification, and signalling systems. This approach will support faster construction across future corridors and will improve quality and reduce costs across future high-speed rail corridors," the statement noted.

## RS Praveen Kumar dares Congress to probe his Gurukul tenure, alleges Rs 2,000-cr tender scam

Hyderabad: BRS general secretary RS Praveen Kumar intensified his attack on the Congress government, reiterating allegations of irregularities in the Gurukul procurement tenders. Throwing an open challenge to the government, the former IPS officer said the Congress Ministers were free to investigate his nine-year tenure as Secretary of the Gurukul institutions. "Conduct an inquiry against me and prove your charges, if you have the courage," he said, asserting that despite 18 months of scrutiny under the Congress government, no wrongdoing had been found against him. He declared that any inquiry against him would instead reveal the doctors, engineers and scientists who had emerged from the Gurukul system during his tenure.

Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Friday, Praveen

Kumar accused Congress Ministers of evading a public debate on the alleged Rs 2,000-crore Gurukul tender scam by using the police to prevent BRS leaders from reaching Gun Park. He said Harish Rao and other leaders including him were arrested to block the proposed debate. The BRS leader alleged that G.O. No. 17 centralised procurement and facilitated corruption. He insisted that the procurement process, projected as transparent by the government, was marred by large-scale irregularities and vowed that the BRS would continue its campaign until the order was withdrawn.

He questioned whether Welfare Ministers Ponnampaluri Prabhakar, Adluri Laxman Kumar and Mohammed Azharuddin had approved GO No. 17. He accused Ministers Ponnampaluri Prabhakar and Adluri Laxman Kumar of shielding the Chief Min-



ister instead of addressing the allegations. Praveen Kumar said the Congress government ignored institutional procedures in the procurement process. Those responsible for the current procurement decisions would ultimately face legal consequences, he asserted.

## Basar temple renovation: Devotees can now visit Balalayam

Nirmal: The famed Gnana Saraswathi Devasthanam-Basar executive officer Anjana Devi said that devotees would have to visit the presiding deity of the shrine in a Balalayam from July 5 in the wake of the proposed renovation. She addressed media persons in Basar on Friday. Anjana stated that the renovation of the ancient temple commenced at an estimated cost of Rs 354 crore. As a result, the presiding deity was shifted to Balalayam for facilitating the renovation works. She advised the devotees to take darshan of the deity in the sub-temple from July 5 onwards. The executive officer further

said that the process of shifting the deity was carried out under the guidance of prayers from Sringeri. She said that arrangements were made for performing Aksharabhyasam or initiation into the world of alphabets at the sub-temple. Special Aksharayabhyasam, priced at Rs 1,000 would be allowed at this temple, while the ritual costing Rs 100 was going to be held at the old EO office. Endowment officials said that idols of goddess Saraswathi, Laxmi Devi and Mahankali were relocated after performing certain rituals. However, prayers continue every day at the existing

shrine considering the spiritual significance of the holy place. A report was submitted to the higher officials over shifting the idols. The officials gave their nod recently. According to the officials, the main temple is being reconstructed as per the master plan of the renovation approved by the government. Structures were going to be established for organizing mass Aksharabhyasam programmes, while new queue lines and four lane roads, counters for selling prasadam, etc., will be created under the renovation. Work is expected to be complete by two years.

## Left-wing student orgs oppose Congress govt's school cluster plan, call bandh on July 10



Kothagudem: Left-wing student organisations have opposed the Congress government's decision to consolidate as many as 27,000 government schools into 4,000 cluster schools. Demanding withdrawal of the decision the organisations have called for schools' bandh on July 10. A preparatory meeting for the July 10 bandh was held here on Friday. PDSU district president Burra Veerabhadram, AISF district secretary Varaka Ajith, SFI district president Manda Nagakrishna and PDSU district secretary Durgam Pranay addressed the media. The education sector across the State and the country has been facing a severe crisis. Both the Central and State governments are implementing policies that undermine public education and turn education into a commercial commodity. The government has failed to address issues such as fee ex-

ploitation by private and corporate educational institutions, forced sales of textbooks and uniforms. The failure to fill vacant teacher posts in government schools and colleges is weakening public sector education. Cuts imposed in the budget for the education sector have been jeopardising the future of students, the student leaders complained. They wanted the government to release Rs 7,000 crore in pending student scholarships and fee reimbursement dues and pass a resolution in the Assembly rejecting the implementation of the New Education Policy in the State. They appealed to students, parents, teachers and civil society organisations to make the statewide bandh of educational institutions aimed at addressing the issues and exert pressure on the government, a success.

## Osmania University hikes academic service fees by up to 100 pc

Hyderabad: Osmania University (OU) students seeking academic services, including equivalency/eligibility certificates and condonation, have to shell out more, with the university sharply increasing the service charges ranging between 20 per cent and 100 per cent from the academic year 2026-27. The hike did not go down well with the student community. The university, as per the letter sent out to campus, constituent and affiliated colleges informing them about revised academic services charges, has doubled condonation fee (UG and PG) from Rs 500 to Rs 1,000, which is 100 per cent. Similarly, the condonation charges for professional programmes – engineering, pharmacy, technology, MBA, MCA, Law and Education – have been raised from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000. Generally, students with attendance shortages are allowed to sit for the semester-end examination by paying a condonation fee.



the university revised the Part I exemption fee from Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000, a 66.7 per cent hike. The university has also increased charges for obtaining equivalency/eligibility certificate as well as second language exemption fees from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 each. The admission transfer charges have gone up substantially, with the fee for non-professional programmes admission transfer within the State has been hiked from Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000, a 66.7 per cent increase. Similarly, fee for transferring admission within the University and outside the State has been increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000, and from Rs 5,000 to Rs 8,000, respectively. Furthermore, professional course admission transfers within the university, within the State, and outside the State went up from Rs 5,000 to Rs 7,000, Rs 7,500 to Rs 10,000 and Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000, respectively. Speaking to 'Telangana Today', OU Registrar Prof G Naresh Reddy said the university revises academic service charges once every one or two years, and latest charge hike was made on similar lines.

ABVP state media convener and ABVP OU former president Ch Druhan criticised the new charges, stating that the university is shifting the burden of its financial crisis onto students. "Instead of seeking adequate block grants from the State government, the university chose to increase academic services fees to generate revenue and meet staff salaries. The university has also increased faculty registration fees, submission fees, and biometric charges without a system in place," he said. The attestation of UG and PG syllabi fee saw a steep hike from Rs 1,000 to Rs 3,000, a 200 per cent increase. Among exemption-related ser-

## TGSRTC generates Rs 505 crore via UPI in 11 months

Hyderabad: The TGSRTC has witnessed a sharp rise in digital ticketing, with UPI payments emerging as a preferred mode of fare collection. The corporation said it has generated Rs 505.95 crore through UPI transactions by issuing 42.75 crore digital tickets over the past 11 months. According to TGSRTC, daily UPI collections have grown from around Rs 2,000 during the initial rollout to nearly Rs 2.5 crore at present. Digital ticket issuance increased from 5.25 lakh tickets in March 2025 to 64.17 lakh tickets in June 2026, registering a growth of over 1,122 per cent. The corporation also reported that monthly UPI revenue rose from Rs 5.41 crore in March 2025 to Rs 73.90 crore by January 2026, reflecting a 1,265.99 per cent increase.



dependence on cash, eliminated change related issues for passengers and conductors and improved transparency by ensuring that fare collections are directly credited to the corporation's bank account. TGSRTC Executive Director Rajasekhar said the steady adoption of digital payments reflects passengers' trust in the system.

He added that the corporation aims to move towards a fully cashless public transport network in the coming years.

## Basar temple earns Rs 1.06 crore in 49 days offerings

Nirmal: The Gnana Saraswathi Devasthanam-Basar registered income of Rs 1.06 crore through offerings by devotees for 49 days. Counting of hundi was conducted on Thursday. The temple executive officer Anjana Devi said that the temple earned Rs 1,06,45,359, by way of offerings made by devotees from May 13 to July 1. The temple recorded income of 78 grams of mixed gold, 4 kgs of silver and 17 foreign currency notes. Endowment Inspector Ravi Kishan Goud, AEO Ganga Srinivas, supervisors Shivaraj and Sanjeev Rao, staffers of Telangana Grameena Bank, police, members of Vagdevi Society and Raja Rajeshwara Swamy Seva Samithi were present.

## El Nino may hit Kharif crops, Telangana farmers cautioned by Irrigation Minister



Nalgonda: Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy sounded a caution to farmers about possible challenges due to El Nino effect this Kharif season. He urged them to plan crops carefully and use water wisely during the season. Speaking to farmers at a series of official programmes during his tour of Suryapet here on Friday, the Minister said farmers should be wary of the fact that El Nino had impacted rainfall in many parts of the country. He said the southwest monsoon has been weakened due to El Nino. Telangana also recorded about 22 per cent less rainfall in June which delayed sowing in several areas. A large part of the Godavari river basin

lies in Maharashtra and poor rainfall there has delayed water flow into Telangana, he explained.

Uttam Kumar Reddy advised farmers to avoid crops that require a lot of water in areas where supply was uncertain. He suggested growing crops that need less water and can withstand dry conditions. He also said water from reservoirs should be used carefully and stressed that drinking water should be given top priority, followed by irrigation needs. The Minister expressed confidence that with proper planning and cooperation, Telangana can manage the challenges of El Nino and continue agricultural growth.

## Inquiry ordered into Singareni coal stocks missing allegations, says Bhatti

Hyderabad: After a relentless attack by the BRS over the missing of 40 lakh tonnes of coal in Singareni, the Congress government was compelled to order a vigilance probe into the allegations. "I have directed the Director of Vigilance of Singareni to conduct a thorough investigation. A detailed report will be submitted to the government and we will place the facts before the people" Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said. At a press conference here on Friday, he accused the opposition of attempting to tarnish Singareni's reputation through false allegations. He asserted that there was no scope for irregularities in Singareni, as the company uses an advanced geo-fencing security system to safeguard its operations. "Singareni's monitoring systems are extremely robust. Not even one kilogram of coal can leave the mines illegally," the Deputy Chief Minister claimed.

He further alleged that it was the BRS government that prevented Singareni



from acquiring coal blocks such as Koyagudem and Sattupalli-3. Instead, he alleged, those blocks were handed over to private companies. According to him, the BRS government's intention was to weaken Singareni financially, create coal shortages for thermal power plants and ultimately force the purchase of coal from private suppliers.

## Delhi BJP chief chairs meeting on SIR of electoral rolls

**New Delhi:**

Delhi BJP President Harsh Malhotra on Friday chaired the first review meeting on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls initiated by the Election Commission of India in the city. The meeting reviewed the progress made during the first two days of the exercise, which commenced on July 1. The meeting was attended by BJP National Secretary Om Prakash Dhankhar, Delhi BJP Organisation General Secretary Pawan Rana, SIR In-charge and Member of Parliament Yogender Chandolia, Delhi SIR Team members Ramesh Bidhuri and Sanket Gupta, besides district presidents, district SIR team members, and BLA-2 coordinators from all districts. Delhi BJP Gen-



eral Secretary and SIR Process In-charge Yogender Chandolia stated that, like other political parties in Delhi, the BJP also has its BLA-2 (Booth Level Agents) duly registered with the Election Commission. He said that Delhi has a total of 13,033 polling booths, of which more than 12,000 have BJP's registered BLA-2 representatives. These BLA-2 workers have been engaged for quite some time

in voter verification and mapping at their respective polling stations, he said. Consequently, they are fully prepared to extend all possible cooperation and support to the Booth Level Officers (BLOs) appointed by the Election Commission during the SIR exercise, he said. He informed that on behalf of the Delhi BJP, former MP Ramesh Bidhuri and Advocate Sanket Gupta are coordinating with the Elec-

tion Commission and overseeing the training of the party's BLA-2 representatives. In another development, a joint meeting of the Delhi BJP's media department team and the 12 newly formed district BJP media teams was held on Friday at the state office. Chaired by Delhi BJP media chief Praveen Shankar Kapoor, the meeting was addressed by Chief Spokesperson and MLA Abhay Verma. All newly appointed district media chiefs and spokespersons were introduced at the meeting, after which Verma discussed the current political context. Kapoor explained to the participants the working procedures of the media department and the rules for addressing the media.

## Online application window for 7th National Water Awards open till Aug 28

**New Delhi:**

The Jal Shakti Ministry is inviting applications till August 28 for the 7th National Water Awards on the Rashtriya Puraskar portal to honour States, Districts, Urban Local Bodies, Dam Owning Agencies and Industries which excel in water conservation and management, an official said on Friday. An official statement said that all applications received for the 7th National Water Awards would be scrutinised/shortlisted by a Screening Committee, and shortlisted applications would be placed before the Jury Committee constituted by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti. The recommendations of the Committee would be submitted to the Minister (Jal Shakti) for approval, said the statement. Each winner would be provided a trophy with a citation, it said. Subscription Service Politics In the category for states, there will be three winners in each of three sub-categories:

Water Resource Management; Jal Sanchay Jal Bhagidari and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). For the competing districts, there will be 15 awards in each of the three sub-categories: Water Resource Management; Jal Sanchay Jal Bhagidari (JSJB) and Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). The National Water Awards (NWAs) were introduced to recognise and encourage exemplary work and efforts made by States, Districts, individuals and organisations across the country in accomplishing the government's vision 'Jal Samridh Bharat'. The NWAs aim to sensitise the public about the importance of water and motivate them to adopt the best water usage practices, said the statement. The Awards encourage the stakeholders to adopt a holistic approach toward water resource management in the country as surface water and groundwater play a significant role in the water cycle. The first edition of the National Water Awards was introduced in 2018 by the Department, and six editions of the Awards have been successfully organised by the Department, said the statement.

## BJP President Nitin Nabin to visit J&K on July 6-7

**New Delhi:**

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President Nitin Nabin will embark on a two-day organisational tour of Jammu & Kashmir on July 6 and 7, aimed at strengthening the party's outreach and consolidating its presence across the Union Territory. On July 6, Nabin will be in Jammu, where he will attend a commemorative programme at the Grand Palace to mark the birth anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The event, expected to draw senior leaders and grassroots workers, will pay tribute to Mookerjee's legacy and his role in shaping the ideological foundation of the party. During his stay in Jammu, the BJP President will chair a meet-



ing of the party's core committee to review organisational matters and deliberate on the party's strategy in the region. Also Read - Oppn calls judiciary 'ray of hope' after letter to CJI seeking SIR suspension; BJP hits back Advertisement He will also interact with party workers to assess ongoing activities and strengthen coordination between different organisational units. On July 7,

Nabin will travel to Kashmir, where he is scheduled to hold meetings with BJP legislators and Members of Parliament. These discussions will focus on organisational issues and the party's future programmes in the Valley. His engagements are expected to underline the BJP's emphasis on expanding its political footprint and addressing regional concerns. A key highlight of his Kashmir

itinerary will be a "Youth Dialogue," where Nabin will interact with young participants on issues of employment, political participation, and the party's vision for youth engagement. The dialogue is seen as part of the BJP's broader effort to connect with younger demographics and encourage their involvement in political processes. The two-day visit underscores the BJP's intent to deepen its organisational roots in J&K while fostering greater coordination among leaders and workers. By combining commemorative events, strategic meetings, and youth outreach, Nabin's tour is expected to reinforce the party's commitment to strengthening its presence in the Union Territory.

## Govt's apathy has crippled healthcare services in Odisha: BJD



**Bhubaneswar:**

Amid disruptions in healthcare services caused by the indefinite strike by doctors across the state since Wednesday over a 10-point charter of demands, the opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Friday launched a scathing attack on the state government, alleging that its indifferent and negligent attitude had led to the complete col-

lapse of healthcare services across the state. The BJD further added that from post-mortem examinations to OPD, IPD, treatment of outdoor patients, and medical care for patients admitted to hospitals, every aspect of healthcare has been severely affected. Addressing a press conference, Debi Prasad Mishra, BJD Senior Vice-President and

former Health Minister, said that on January 9, 2026, discussions were held between the Health Secretary, the Health Minister and office-bearers of the Odisha Medical Services Association (OMSA) regarding the doctors' 10-point charter of demands. He added that the government had assured that a committee under the chairmanship of the Addi-

tional Chief Secretary would be constituted and that a solution would be found within two to three months. "Unfortunately, the committee could not be constituted because the Additional Chief Secretary, who was to chair it, went on leave and subsequently retired. As a result, after waiting for six months, OMSA served a strike notice effective from July 1, observed as National Doctors' Day," said Mishra. He said that despite a meeting with the government on June 2, no concrete assurance or written commitment on the doctors' demands was given. He said the government again failed to give any credible assurance during the June 30

meeting, leaving the doctors with no option but to continue the strike, which has severely disrupted healthcare services across the state. Also Read - CBI conducts searches in Odisha, Rajasthan in digital arrest scam, arrests three Discover more Geographic Reference Business News Feed Education & Careers "The state government should immediately intervene and restore normal healthcare services. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that patients are not deprived of medical treatment. If any unfortunate incident occurs, the state government will be solely responsible," stated Mishra. Meanwhile, in a

significant development, the Health and Family Welfare Department on Friday wrote to the Odisha Medical Services Association (OMSA), inviting the doctors' body for a discussion with Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling at 11.30 a.m. on Saturday. "The undersigned is directed to invite reference to the subject mentioned above and to say that the Hon'ble Minister, Health & FW has been pleased to have a discussion on different demands of Odisha Medical Service Association (OMSA) with the State Executives of OMSA on 04.07.2026 at 11.30 AM in the Office Chamber of Hon'ble Minister, Health & FW," reads the letter.

## Sameera Reddy welcomes new furry family member, shares heartwarming adoption video

Mumbai: Actress Sameera Reddy has shared a heartwarming glimpse into a new chapter of her life as she welcomed a new furry family member through adoption. On Friday, the 'Maine Dil Tujhko Diya' actress took to social media to post an emotional video from Goa, where she introduced the newest addition to her home. Calling it a moment of love, gratitude, and fresh beginnings, Sameera reflected on the journey, expressing how the pet found its way into her life on a rainy day. Sharing a video, she wrote, "Welcome baby Maya We adopted her from @pawspanjim in Goa. On a rainy day we found our girl or rather she found us. So excited and grateful for this new chapter in our life 22.06.26 the journey begins Thank you to all the doctors and volunteers at @pawspanjim for all the help and support." "Adopting a native Indian dog breed like Indie dogs from an animal shelter home can prove to be the best decision of your life. But it is important to understand the commitment and hard work that goes into this decision. Beyond just wanting a sweet puppy #adoptdontshop #dogs #love #goa," added Sameera. History

The clip shows the actress getting emotional while holding the dog. Her kids are seen playing around. The video also features her husband, Akshai Varde, pampering the new furry member of the family. Reacting to her post, actress Bhumi



Pednekar commented, "OMG." Sameera Reddy has made a permanent move from Mumbai to a spacious home in the scenic village of Bastora, North Goa. In terms of work, Sameera is gearing up for the release of her upcoming horror-thriller "Chimni," in which she plays the role of Kali. The film follows a grieving mother living in the haunted Chanderi palace, where a malevolent spirit has taken possession of her daughter.

## Ajay Bhupathi's Srinivasa Mangapuram starring Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni to release on July 30

Hyderabad: The makers of director Ajay Bhupathi's eagerly awaited upcoming film 'Srinivasa Mangapuram', featuring Mahesh Babu's nephew Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni in the lead, on Friday announced that their film would hit screens worldwide on July 30 this year. Starring opposite Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni is Rasha Thadani, the daughter of Bollywood star Raveena Tandon, who makes her Telugu cinema debut with this film. Taking to its X timeline, Chandamama Kathalu Pictures, which is one of the production houses producing this film, announced, "This monsoon season, get ready to witness the most intense love story unfold on the big screen. #SrinivasaMangapuram Grand Release Worldwide on JULY 30th, 2026. An @DirAjayBhupathi Film." As of now, the makers of the film have released three songs and a couple of teasers.

The film is set in the temple town of Tirupati and revolves around the characters of Vasu Babu and Manga- friends who turn lovers and live life with infectious joy until an unexpected conflict disrupts their paradise. Refusing to leave the town without Manga, Vasu Babu chooses to fight for his love, no matter the cost. Sources claim that Ajay Bhupathi, known for his intense and uncompromising storytelling, has presented a youthful love story enriched with impactful action and dramatic highs. It may be recalled that the unit of the film had wrapped up the important third schedule of the film in the first week of March this year. Sources had said that key scenes featuring Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni, Rasha Thadani, and other principal cast members were filmed during this period. With the completion of the third schedule, nearly 60% of the film's shoot had got completed.

The film has triggered huge interest among fans and film buffs for a number of reasons. The film is being directed by Ajay Bhupathi, who earned critical ac-



claim for his raw and immersive storytelling in the superhit films 'RX 100' and 'Mangalavaram'. The fact that Ajay Bhupathi is helming this film has got a number of fans interested in it. The film also marks the big-screen debut of Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni, who carries forward the legacy of Superstars Krishna and Mahesh Babu. That apart, well known actor and producer Mohan Babu will be seen playing a character called Venkatappaya Naidu in the film. He plays the antagonist in the film. Presented by noted producer Ashwini Dutt and produced by P. Kiran under the banner of Chandamama Kathalu, the film is being mounted with strong creative vision and high production values.

The film boasts an impressive technical team. Two-time National Award winner G. V. Prakash Kumar is composing the music for the film. The film has cinematography by Jayakrishna Gummadi and editing by Madhav Kumar Gullapalli. Production design for the film has been overseen by Sahi Suresh while the action sequences in the film have been choreographed by Real Sathish.

## Giorgio Armani biopic in works with Bille August as director



Los Angeles: Two-time Palme d'Or-winning filmmaker Bille August is set to direct a biopic on late fashion designer Giorgio Armani. Titled "Armani: The King of Fashion", the film will be produced by Italian producer Andrea Iervolino and chronicle the life and career of the celebrated Italian designer, who died in Milan in September last year at the age of 91, reported The Hollywood Reporter. Iervolino praised August, known for acclaimed films such as "Pelle the Conqueror", "The House of the Spirits", "Les Miserables", "Night Train to Lisbon" and "A Fortunate Man", saying the filmmaker's sensibility aligns with Armani's legacy.

"There are directors who make great films, and there are directors who possess the rare ability to reveal the humanity behind greatness. Bille August belongs to that extraordinary category," Iervolino said in a statement. However, the Armani Group clarified that the project is unauthorised and has no association with the fashion house. In a statement, the company said it was aware of the film

but had "never been involved in the initiative, nor has it authorized, supported, endorsed, or participated in its development or production".

"The company therefore considers itself entirely unrelated to the project and dissociates itself from both the director and the content of the project," it added. Born in Piacenza, Italy, in 1934, Armani began his career as a window dresser before working under renowned menswear designer Nino Cerruti. In 1975, he co-founded the Giorgio Armani fashion house with his partner, architect Sergio Galeotti. Over the decades, Armani became one of the world's most influential fashion designers and maintained close ties with Hollywood, designing costumes for films such as "American Gigolo", "The Untouchables" and "The Wolf of Wall Street".

asting for "Armani: The King of Fashion" has not yet been announced. Iervolino's recent production credits include Michael Mann's "Ferrari" and the upcoming "Maserati: The Brothers", directed by Bobby Moresco.

## Pavish Narayan starrer 'Love Oh Love' gets U/A tag, set to release on July 10

Chennai: The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has now cleared director Magesh Rajendran's upcoming romantic entertainer 'Love Oh Love', featuring actors Pavish Narayan and new comer Naga Durga in the lead, for release with an U/A certificate. South Asians & Diaspora

Taking to its X timeline to make the announcement, Zinema Media, one of the production houses producing the film, wrote, "Love has been approved. Emotions are certified. #LoveOhLove - Certified with U/A (13+). #LoveOhLoveFromJuly10" It may be recalled that the makers had only recently released the single 'Broke Boy' from the film. The single was a vibrant and relatable track that perfectly captured the emotions, aspirations, and struggles of today's youth. For the unaware, 'Love Oh Love' has been produced by Dinesh Raj on behalf of Zinema Media and Entertainment along with G. Dhananjeyan of Creative Entertainers & Distributors'. The film, apart from the lead actors, will also feature director Selvaraghavan, director K.S. Ravikumar, Vanitha Vijayakumar, Ramya and Adithya Kathir in pivotal roles. The makers had recently released a teaser of the film. The film's teaser, with a runtime of approximately 80 seconds, offered a lively glimpse into the film's plot that revolves around a young man's love for a girl and the taxing experiences that follow, once he becomes her boyfriend. Shot mostly across the exquisitely captivating locations of



Chennai, the film exhibits a unique urban charm and flavour. A few portions have also been filmed in Ooty. Sources close to the unit of the film claim that 'Love Oh Love' has already locked its digital streaming rights with OTT platform Amazon Prime Video. Further adding strength to the film's commercial prospects, Think Music, one of the leading names in the music industry, has been signed on as the film's official music partner. 'Love Oh Love' features Pavish Narayan (of Nilavukku Ennadi Kobam fame) alongside Naga Durga, a well-known Telugu YouTube sensation making her Tamil cinema debut. The film's technical team includes cinematographer P.G. Muthiah, National Award-winning editor N.B. Srikanth, and art director Pa. Mahendran.

## Jessica Pegula cruises past Jessica Bouzas Maneiro into Wimbledon fourth round

London: Jessica Pegula continued her impressive grass-court campaign with a commanding 6-1, 6-3 victory over Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro to reach the fourth round at Wimbledon without dropping a set. The fourth seed needed just 53 minutes to defeat the world No. 52, showing a polished performance that improved her record on grass this season to 7-1. Pegula took control from the start, jumping to a 4-0 lead before easily winning the opening set 6-1. Bouzas Maneiro had little chance to settle into the match. The American faced her only real test early in the second set. After saving a break point in the first game, she lost her serve in the third and fell behind briefly. However, the 2024 US Open runner-up responded quickly. She broke back in consecutive return games and won four straight games to regain complete control before finishing with another straight-sets victory. Aside from that brief moment of distraction, Pegula delivered an almost perfect performance, winning 79 percent of points on her first serve and hitting 12 winners.

The win continues her strong form on grass after Pegula finished as runner-up in Berlin before arriving at the All England Club. Despite her success, Pegula recently shared that she has developed a different attitude about playing on grass. In the past, she often came to Wimbledon with high expectations but faced early exits. "I've kind of taken on this new mindset that I actually don't think I like it as much as everyone tries to tell me I should," Pegula said after her opening-round win



over Darja Vidmanova. The American explained that convincing herself she should do well on grass had become unhelpful. "The last few years, I've always thought, 'Yeah, I should be good on grass,' but I don't necessarily love it." Although she acknowledged her run to the Berlin final, Pegula mentioned she is no longer putting extra pressure on herself to perform on this surface. "I made the final in Berlin, and I'm embracing that, but I'm not obsessed with it. That's all I'm trying to say." She then lightened the mood with a bit of humour. "No, that's what I'm saying. I'm just like, 'Whatever. Actually, I'm terrible on grass. I don't know what the problem is.'"

## Ben Stokes shares emotional farewell message after retiring from international cricket

London: Days after announcing his retirement from international cricket during the England vs New Zealand third test, former captain Ben Stokes has shared an emotional farewell message, thanking fans, teammates and everyone who supported him during his remarkable 15-year career. Stokes, regarded as one of England's greatest all-rounders and match-winners, reflected on the highs and lows of his journey in a heartfelt post on X, saying the decision to retire was one only he could make. "It's been a mad 15 years. It's had everything thrown in there, from the highest highs to the lowest lows (on and off the field). My time was up, and no one was going to be able to make that decision other than me. But in the meantime, I just want to say I love every single England fan and every single cricket fan who's supported me over the years," Stokes wrote. The 35-year-old also expressed gratitude to his teammates and everyone associated with his career.

"I love every single person I've walked out onto the field with representing England. I could go on and on, but I hope you get the gist of how much I loved doing what I did for 15 years. I'm looking forward to being a fan and supporting the team, and the odd day in hospitality won't go amiss. Family, friends, teammates, fans... I love yas all. Stokesy," he added. Stokes brought the curtain down on an illustrious international career after England's defeat to New Zealand in the third Test, his final appearance in England colours. He leaves the game as one of the defining cricketers of his generation and among England's greatest match-winners. His unbeaten 84 in the unforgettable 2019 ODI World Cup final against New Zealand helped England lift the trophy for the first time in history after a dramatic



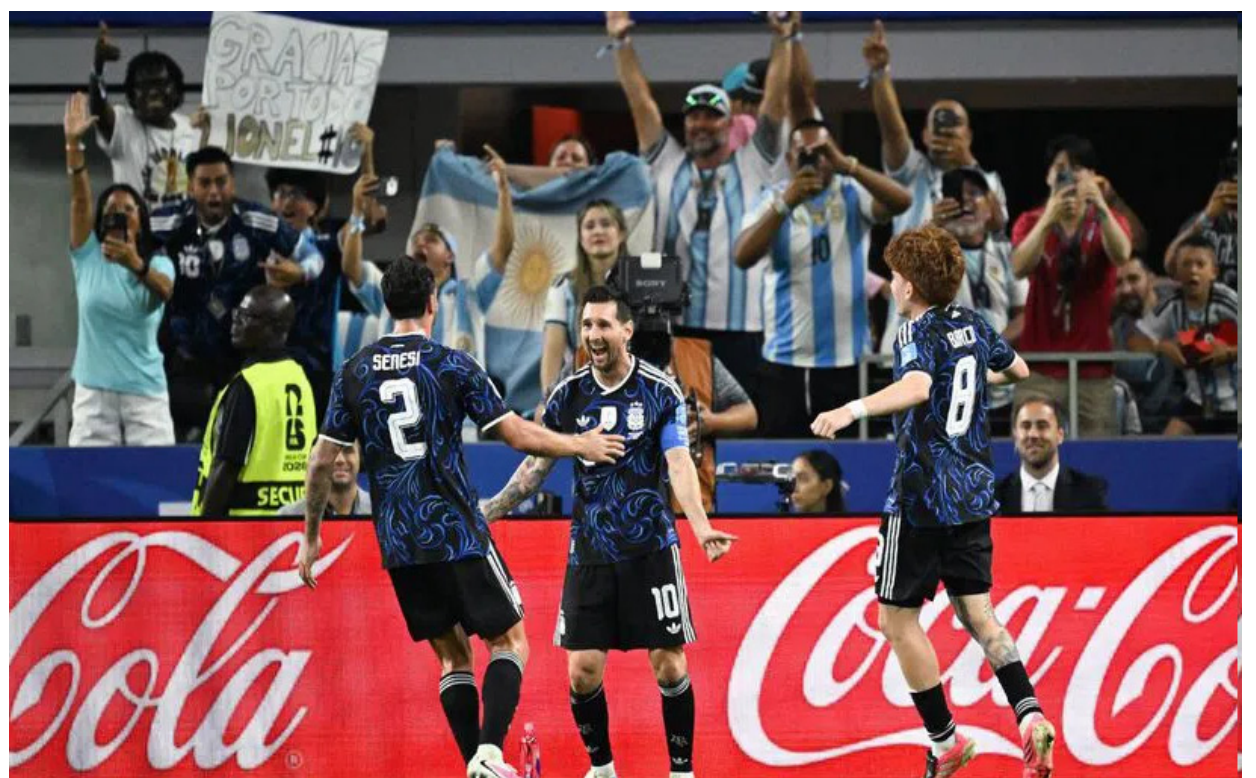
Super Over finish. Just six weeks later, Stokes produced another iconic innings, smashing an unbeaten 135 at Headingley to script one of the greatest Test victories of all time and keep England alive in the 2019 Ashes series against Australia. Beyond those defining moments, Stokes was instrumental in England's triumph at the 2022 T20 World Cup and later led the side through the transformative 'Bazball' era after taking over the Test captaincy. He retires having represented England in 122 Tests, including 44 as captain, scoring more than 7,000 runs and taking over 200 wickets in the longest format. He also featured in 114 One-Day Internationals and 43 T20 Internationals, cementing his legacy as one of England's finest all-format cricketers.

## Jacqueline Williams and Vrinda Rathi named umpires for England vs Australia Women's T20 World Cup final

Dubai: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday announced the match officials for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 final, with experienced umpires Jacqueline Williams and India's Vrinda Rathi set to take charge of the title clash between England and Australia at Lord's Cricket Ground on Sunday. The final, set to start at 8:00 PM IST, will feature unbeaten hosts England facing six-time champions Australia. This match revisits one of the greatest rivalries in women's cricket. Williams, who is officiating her fifth ICC Women's T20 World Cup, has had another strong tournament. She was on the field for the opening match on June 12, where England defeated Sri Lanka at Edgbaston. She also oversaw England's 40-run semi-final win over South Africa and Australia's important six-wicket Group A victory against India. Sunday's final will be Williams' second ICC Women's T20 World Cup final as an on-field umpire. She previously officiated Australia's 19-run win over South Africa in the 2023 final. For Rathi, this appointment marks a significant milestone as she prepares to officiate her first Women's T20 World Cup final. During the tournament, she has overseen victories for both finalists, including Australia's strong semi-final win over the West Indies and England's four-wicket

victory over Ireland. New Zealand's Kim Cotton is the third umpire, while Sri Lanka's Nimali Perera will serve as the fourth umpire. Experienced Indian official GS Lakshmi has been named the match referee for this major event. Lakshmi also officiated the tournament opener between England and Sri Lanka, as well as Sri Lanka's memorable five-wicket victory over New Zealand in Southampton. Tournament hosts England will face six-time champions Australia in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup final at Lord's Cricket Ground on Sunday. This matchup will renew one of the biggest rivalries in women's cricket. It will be the fourth time these two teams have met in a Women's T20 World Cup final, following past encounters in 2012, 2014, and 2018. The match will start at 3:30 PM local time on July 5. South Asians & Diaspora Australia reached the final with a strong eight-wicket victory over the West Indies in the first semi-final at The Oval. Meanwhile, unbeaten hosts England secured their spot with a convincing 40-run win over South Africa. England will be chasing their second Women's T20 World Cup crown, having won the first tournament at Lord's in 2009. Australia, on the other hand, aims to add a record-extending seventh title to their impressive collection, following wins in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2020, and 2023.

## Argentina vs Cape Verde: Paul Masefield backs Lionel Messi to cruise past World Cup underdogs



Mumbai: As the reigning champions Argentina face tournament debutants Cape Verde in the Round of 32 of FIFA World Cup 2026, former England international Paul Masefield believes Lionel Messi and Co. have the quality and experience to comfortably progress but insists Cape Verde deserve immense credit for their historic run to the knockout stages. Reigning champions Argentina entered the knockout clash as favourites; Cape Verde's disciplined defensive displays and spirited run have made them one of the tournament's biggest success stories.

"Argentina are the favourites, no question about that. They will stick to their shape, they will do what they need to do, and they will go about the game in a positive way. Cape Verde have to be respected, especially with players like Vozinha in goal and Kevin Pina shielding the defence, but for me this is Argentina in cruise control, winning this one comfortably," Masefield said on Zee5. Despite predicting an Argentine victory, Masefield

described Cape Verde's campaign as one of the defining stories of the World Cup. "What has really stood out for me with this Cape Verde side is their heart, passion and desire. They've been incredibly difficult to break down, and the results they've produced have been nothing short of phenomenal. It's been brilliant to see one of the minnows of world football reach this stage, and now they get the opportunity to face the reigning champions. It's an unbelievable story," he added.

Masefield also reflected on the enduring greatness of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, explaining why the debate over football's greatest player continues. "The biggest difference between Messi and Ronaldo is mentality. If you look at Ronaldo, he's worked incredibly hard to become uniquely physically fit, which is why his longevity has been so impressive. He's evolved throughout his career because he's constantly worked on his game. Lionel Messi, on the other hand, is just raw, natural talent that has been there from day one.

## Rupee gains 14 paise to close at 95.21 against US dollar

Mumbai: The rupee appreciated 14 paise to close at 95.21 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday as the dollar index retreated from its recent 15-month high levels and mirrored positive domestic equities. Forex traders said despite a weaker dollar index and lower crude oil prices, the rupee is facing pressure from robust dollar demand from importers and corporate hedgers. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.20 against the American currency and traded in a range of 95.16-95.35 during the session. The rupee finally closed at 95.21 (provisional), registering a rise of 14 paise from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee pared initial gains and settled for the day on a negative note, lower by 19 paise at 95.35 against the US dollar. According to experts, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is actively purchasing dollars to rebuild its foreign exchange reserves, which have dropped to roughly USD 672.6 billion from a February peak of USD 728.49 billion.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 100.75, lower than its recent 15-month high of 101.6. Meanwhile, Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading higher by 0.22 per cent at USD 71.96 per



barrel in futures trade. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex climbed 261.79 points to settle at 77,763.91, while the Nifty was up 95.15 points to 24,270.85. Foreign institutional investors sold equities worth Rs 311.82 crore on a net basis on Thursday, according to exchange data. Foreign investors extended their selling spree in June, withdrawing Rs 49,340 crore (USD 5.16 billion) from Indian equities, triggered by a combination of early-month global risk aversion, a preference for developed markets, soaring US bond yields, and stretched valuations in the domestic market. According to data from the Central Depository Services (India) Ltd, the total withdrawals by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) from Indian equities have surged to Rs 2.7 lakh crore so far in 2026, surpassing the Rs 1.66 lakh crore pulled out during the entire calendar year 2025.

## US remains India's top LPG supplier as import diversification gains pace

New Delhi: The United States retained its position as India's largest supplier of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in June, extending its lead over traditional Gulf exporters as the country continued to diversify energy imports in response to geopolitical uncertainties in West Asia. According to data from commodity analytics firm Kpler, India imported 773.78 thousand metric tonnes (TMT) of LPG from the US in June, marking a 19.4 per cent increase from May. Overall, India's LPG imports rose 3 per cent during the month to 1,191 TMT, compared with 1,155



TMT in May. The UAE emerged as the second-largest supplier, with shipments increasing 16.6 per cent to 157 TMT from 134.7 TMT in the previous month. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait each supplied 64 TMT of LPG during June. India's growing re-

liance on US LPG comes as part of a broader effort to diversify supplies following disruptions caused by the recent West Asia conflict. State-run refiners have already signed a long-term agreement to import 2.2 million tonnes of LPG from the US beginning in 2026, strengthening bilateral energy ties and reducing dependence on Gulf producers. Industry sources said India has secured adequate supplies of both crude oil and LPG through August, easing concerns over domestic availability after the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz restored the movement of Gulf energy cargoes.

## MeitY orders removal of Chinese BAT-BMS app over e-rickshaw safety concerns

New Delhi: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has directed Google Play Store and Apple App Store to remove the Chinese BAT-BMS mobile application after concerns emerged over its potential misuse to remotely disrupt the operation of e-rickshaws, sources said on Friday. The decision comes after a series of videos circulated on social media allegedly showed individuals using the BAT-BMS app to connect to nearby e-rickshaws via Bluetooth and remotely switch off their battery systems while the vehicles were in motion. The incidents have raised concerns over passenger safety as well as the security of battery management systems (BMS) used in low-cost electric vehicles. The ministry took cognisance of the matter after the videos went viral and has initiated action to restrict public access to the application, according to them. Moreover, the government is examining the broader cybersecurity implications of such vulnerabilities and is assessing further safeguards for connected battery systems used in electric vehicles. The BAT-BMS app — developed by Shenzhen Grenergy Technology — de-



signed as a companion application for Bluetooth-enabled lithium-ion batteries. It enables battery owners to monitor parameters such as voltage, current, temperature, charging cycles and battery health, besides allowing them to control battery discharge functions. Many e-rickshaws and electric two-wheelers sold in India use battery management systems that are shipped without password protection or continue to operate with factory-default credentials. This makes it possible for anyone within Bluetooth range, typically around 10 to 15 metres to pair with the battery without the owner's knowledge and in some cases disconnect power remotely. In addition, Delhi Transport Minister Pankaj Singh reportedly has said that while no formal written complaint had been received by the department, the issue had been brought to his notice by members of the public. He said the Transport Department has been directed to verify the authenticity of the BAT-BMS application and examine the claims surrounding its use.

## Centre rebuts misinformation on E20 fuel, defends ethanol blending programme

New Delhi: The government on Friday issued a detailed rebuttal to what it described as misinformation circulating on social media about the country's E20 ethanol blending programme, rejecting claims ranging from excessive water consumption and engine damage to insurance invalidation and environmental harm. In a 10-point clarification, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the programme, under which petrol contains up to 20 per cent ethanol, is supported by scientific studies, international experience and regulatory safeguards. Rejecting claims that producing one litre of ethanol consumes 10,000 litres of water, the ministry said only surplus rice, cleared after meeting national food security requirements, is diverted for ethanol production. It added that ethanol distilleries consume about 3-5 litres of processed water per litre of ethanol and increasingly operate Zero Liquid Discharge systems to recycle water. The ministry also said maize, which now accounts for more than 40 per cent of ethanol supplied under the programme, requires significantly lower irrigation than paddy and is being promoted through higher minimum support prices.

The government also dismissed assertions that E20 is an untested fuel, noting that ethanol-blended fuels have been used internationally for decades. It cited countries, including the United States, Brazil, Canada, Thailand, Japan and several European nations, as having adopted ethanol blending at varying levels. Addressing concerns over vehicle performance, the ministry said Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI)-led trials covering about 40,000 kilometres in passenger cars and 20,000 kilometres in two-wheelers found no significant adverse impact on drivability or fuel efficiency, with only "marginal" changes in mileage. Geographic Reference It added that vehicles calibrated for E20 could benefit from ethanol's higher octane rating. On allegations that E20 damages engines or corrodes components, the ministry cited studies conducted by ARAI in collaboration with Indian Oil Corporation, the Indian Institute of Petroleum and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. The studies found no issues relating to drivability or compatibility of metal and plastic components, although certain rubber parts in older vehicles may require earlier replacement.

The ministry also rejected claims that the use of E20 fuel could void vehicle warranties or insurance coverage, saying automobile manufacturers and insurers have clarified that vehicles designed or approved for E20 remain covered under applicable warranty and insurance terms. Responding to viral social media posts



suggesting ants and bees are attracted to E20 fuel because it contains sugar, the ministry said fuel-grade ethanol undergoes distillation that removes residual sugars and contains denaturants that repel insects. It also said petrol's hydrocarbon odour dominates the blended fuel. The government further denied claims that it had described the E20 programme as an "experiment" before the Supreme Court, saying the court proceedings related to contractual provisions governing ethanol procurement rather than the merits of the blending programme. It cited a clarification issued by the Office of the Attorney General stating that media reports suggesting otherwise were inaccurate. The ministry also dismissed claims that E20 allows water to enter vehicle fuel tanks, saying modern vehicles and fuel retail infrastructure are equipped with safeguards to prevent water ingress.

It similarly described viral videos purporting to show sugarcane juice being mixed into petrol as fabricated, saying fuel ethanol is manufactured through industrial processes and blended according to prescribed quality specifications. On environmental concerns, the government said ethanol plants require statutory environmental clearances, must comply with groundwater regulations and are required to operate Zero Liquid Discharge systems. It added that the programme has contributed to foreign exchange savings of more than Rs 1.9 lakh crore, expedited payments exceeding Rs 1.6 lakh crore to farmers, reduced carbon dioxide emissions by around 930 lakh metric tonnes and displaced over 310 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil imports since 2014-15. India achieved its target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol in December 2025, ahead of schedule, after blending levels rose from about 1.5 per cent in 2013-14, according to the ministry. It said installed ethanol production capacity has reached about 2,000 crore litres, with procurement projected to exceed 1,200 crore litres during the 2025-26 ethanol supply year.

## AP CM Chandrababu Naidu breaks ground on Rs 16,350-crore JSW green steel plant in Kadapa

Kadapa (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday launched the construction work of JSW Rayalaseema Integrated Steel Plant at Sunnapurallapalli and Peddadanluru villages in this district. The integrated steel plant will be developed by JSW Andhra Pradesh Steel Limited in two phases in 1,100 acres with a total investment of Rs 16,350 crore, said an official press release.

Phase-I will involve an investment of Rs 4,500 crore, while Phase-II will bring an additional investment of Rs 11,850 crore, taking the plant's capacity to two million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

Commercial production is targeted to commence by March 2028.

Designed as a modern Green Steel facility, the plant will adopt scrap-based Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) technology powered by renewable energy, significantly reducing carbon emissions. "The project was originally approved in 2019 and witnessed foundation ceremonies in 2019 and again in 2023," said the press release. Following the formation of the TDP-led coalition government in 2024, the project was "revived" through sustained engagement with JSW, it said. The Government has advanced critical external infrastructure required for the project, said the press release. A dedicated water supply infrastructure was being taken up for the project; connectivity to National Highway (NH-67) is under execution

while a 12-kilometre railway link connecting the plant to Muddanuru Railway Station is being pursued through RITES under the PM Gati Shakti initiative, the release added.

The project is expected to generate thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities, promote ancillary industries across Rayalaseema and strengthen Andhra Pradesh's emergence as one of India's leading steel-producing states, the release said. Addressing a public meeting following the launch of the steel plant's construction work, Naidu said the Rayalaseema region is now home to horticulture, rare minerals and green energy, including the manufacturing plants of Royal Enfield, Kia cars and others.

Naidu said Rayalaseema will see the arrival of space, aerospace, defence, drone, electronics, automobile, renewable energy and food processing industries. Lashing out at the previous YSRCP government, Naidu alleged that it did not lay even a single brick in the five years it ruled but noted that the TDP-led coalition has resolved several issues in the past two years, leading up to the beginning of the steel plant's construction. Earlier, he said some "selfish people had worked for their vested interests" and noted that 14,000 acres were allotted to Brahmani Steels in 2007 to create false hopes. Hinting at YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Naidu alleged that the person who had worked for five years as the CM did not do any-



thing worthwhile for Kadapa district or Rayalaseema. He alleged that the previous rulers did not newly irrigate even an acre of land in Rayalaseema.

Further, he accused YSRCP of indulging in "destructive politics" and called it a party lacking credibility.

Alluding to Jagan, Naidu said the former promoted MAVIGUN (Machilipatnam, Vijayawada and Guntur region) as the capital yesterday and today he is backing Vijayawada.

"Mentally unsound people are doing politics," said Naidu, alleging that the previous government had gambled under the garb of three capitals. Claiming that YSRCP is indulging in caste politics over the disappearance (Gade Sai Krishna's custodial murder) case in Vijayawada, Naidu emphasised that police discharge their duties "responsibly". Further, the resources belonging to Rayalaseema must be utilised in this place itself, and the local raw material should be used right here to manufacture iron, he said.

Likewise, Naidu said measures would be initiated to offer jobs to locals in the plants being established here. He promised to create jobs within the state to stop youth from relocating. Referring to Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), Naidu said when the industry was in a crisis, financial aid of Rs 11,440 crore was received from the Centre. According to the CM, the arrival of JSW Steel Plant will have an impact on the socio-economic conditions of this region. Asserting that JSW Steel Plant will begin production in two years, Naidu promised to return in two years to inaugurate it. Further, the CM noted that JSW has come forward to invest in the space and drone cities coming up in Tirupati district. Powered by horticulture, the CM said Lingala mandal in Rayalaseema has emerged as the place with the highest per capita in the state. Naidu said the foundation for Global Horticulture Hub in Madanapalli will be laid by August 15 and vowed to develop Gandikota to rival the Grand Canyon in the US.

## Dengue Awareness Month: DMHO urges public to curb mosquito breeding



Kurnool: As part of the National Dengue Awareness Month campaign, District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) Dr Bhaskar unveiled an awareness wall poster at the DMHO office here on Thursday. Insects & Entomology Addressing the health staff, he stressed the importance of community participation in preventing mosquito-borne diseases like dengue, malaria, and chikungunya by maintaining clean surroundings. Dr Bhaskar highlighted that stagnant water serves as a primary breeding ground for mosquitoes, significantly increasing the risk of vector-borne infections. He advised residents to clear water accumulated in discarded coconut shells, old tyres, empty containers, unused grinding stones, and non-functional air coolers. He also appealed to local civic authorities to take prompt measures to drain rainwater pooled in road potholes and low-lying areas. The DMHO emphasized that effective prevention requires coordinated efforts from both the public and government departments. "Awareness, strict sanitation, and timely preventive measures are the most effective tools to control the spread of these diseases during the monsoon," he noted.

District Malaria Control Officer Venkateswarlu, Immunization Officer Dr Uma, Programme Officers Dr Shailesh Kumar, Dr Maheshwara Prasad, and Dr Visweshwar Reddy, along with Assistant Malaria Officer Vijay Kumar, Deputy DEMO Shafi Unnisa, and other health department officials were present at the event.

## Complete voter revision drive by July 14:

Anantapur: District Collector O. Anand has directed officials to accelerate the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and complete the entire exercise by July 14, stressing that the tight deadline demands coordinated efforts from all departments. Birthdays & Name Days The Collector on Thursday conducted random inspections at Polling Station No. 10 in Narayanapuram Panchayat (Anantapur Urban limits) and the Gram Secretariat in Prasannay anapalli village (Raptadu mandal). During the visit, he reviewed the distribution and collection of voter enumeration forms and interacted with Booth Level Officers (BLOs), Booth Level Agents (BLAs), and local voters to assess the field-level progress. To speed up the drive, Anand instructed that additional personnel from departments like Municipal Administration, MEPMA, and Town Planning be deployed to support BLOs. He also ordered the immediate setup of a dedicated control room to monitor the daily attendance and progress of the



field staff, ensuring that completed forms are collected and digitised without delay. The Collector appealed to BLAs of recognised political parties to extend full cooperation in reaching every eligible voter. He further instructed officials to ensure cross-coordination between neighbouring BLOs so that no voter is left out. Inspecting the drive for Polling Stations 129 and 134 at the Prasannay anapalli Gram Secretariat, Anand warned that any negligence or laxity in executing the election revision duties would invite strict disciplinary action. Urban In-charge Tahsildar D. Raja, Raptadu Tahsildar Chennakesava, Supervisor Sai Kiran, and BLO Sai Ram Reddy accompanied the Collector.

## Students urged to stay away from drugs, focus on goals

Anantapur: An awareness seminar on the "Prevention of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking" was held at Balaji College of Pharmacy here on Thursday. Psychology District Prohibition and Excise Enforcement Superintendent B Hanumanthu, attending as chief guest, highlighted how narcotics destroy the physical, mental, and social lives of youth. Warning of stringent legal action under the NDPS Act, he advised students to stay clear of substance abuse and focus on high educational goals. College Chairman Dr Kishore Pale and Principal Dr B Pradeep Kumar urged students to cultivate social responsibility and moral values to build a healthy society.

