

Revanth Reddy Offers Prayers at Ujjaini Mahankali Temple as Bonalu Begins

HYDERABAD: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy offered silk garments to Goddess Sri Mahankali and prayed at the Secunderabad Ujjaini Mahakali Temple on Sunday during the Ashada Bonalu celebrations.

Revanth Reddy arrived at the temple along with ministers Konda Surekha, Ponnam Prabhakar, and Danasari 'Seethakka' Anasuya. Surekha offered the auspicious Bangaru Bonam to the deity along with the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister also met and interacted with devotees at the temple. Sanathnagar BRS MLA Talasani Srinivas Yadav welcomed the Chief Minister and felicitated him.



BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao visited the temple, offered prayers and conducted special rituals.

Haryana's former governor Bandaru Dattatreya, MP Vaddiraju Ravi Chandra, MLAs Danam Nagender, Kaleru Venkatesh, Muta Gopal, Anil Jadhav, TPCC president Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud and others also offered special prayers to the deity.



US Consul General of Hyderabad Laura Williams participated in the Bonalu celebrations and offered a Bonam to the deity. Earlier in the day, minister Prabhakar and his wife offered the first Bangaru Bonam to the deity, along with Congress Rajya Sabha member Pawan Khara and TPCC vice-president Kota Neelima.

Later in the day, the Chief Minister participated in a traditional Bonalu festival feast and celebrations at Prabhakar's camp office. BJP MPs Etala Rajender, M. Raghunandan Rao, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, MLA Padi Rakesh Reddy and BRS MLA Marri Rajasekhara Reddy were among those who attended the feast.

Ministers D. Sridhar Babu, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Konda Surekha, Vivek Venkataswamy, Vakiti Srihari, Md Azharuddin, Seethakka and Adluri Laxman Kumar, alongside various MPs, MLAs, MLCs, senior officials and other public representatives were also present. Congress leaders aspiring for nominated posts were also seen, some of whom placed requests with Revanth Reddy.

Stay High On Life, Not Drugs: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the country's youth to take a pledge against substance abuse, saying drugs may provide a temporary "high" but ultimately destroy careers and personal lives. Launching the 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' virtually, Modi said a developed India requires physically and mentally fit, confident young people who stay away from destructive habits.

"Today, as the nation has set the goal of a Viksit Bharat, it is imperative that the country's youth remain physically and mentally fit, brimming with self-confidence, and permanently steer clear of destructive habits like drugs," he said. Describing drug abuse as a threat to national development, the Prime Minister alleged that hostile countries use drug trafficking as part of their strategy to weaken India. "Drugs can give you a high for some time, but they make your entire career and personal life low," he said.

Modi said people who overcome addiction should not face social stigma but be respected and given a second chance. "Society should respect them, embrace them and give them a second chance," he said. The campaign was launched in the virtual presence of a large number of young participants, including representatives of Gen-Z. Referring to India's youth as the country's "Amrit generation", Modi said their energy, imagination and talent would play a crucial role in achieving the goal of a developed India by 2047.



He said the campaign represented a collective resolve involving individuals, families, society and the nation. From Sunday, a 100-week nationwide public participation drive will be held, with activities every Sunday focusing on art, culture, sports, meditation, spirituality and community service to spread awareness against substance abuse. "The coming 100 Sundays will mark 100 strong steps towards a drug-free India," he said.

Hurt Modi said addiction not only harms an individual but also devastates families by shattering the hopes and dreams of parents and siblings. He urged families not to hide addiction out of fear of social stigma, but to communicate openly with affected members and seek medical and professional help.

Highlighting the government's anti-drug measures, the Prime Minister said strict action was being taken against drug traffickers, with arrests increasing significantly and narcotics worth thousands of crores of rupees seized across the country. The 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' aims to inspire young people to remain drug-free and become ambassadors of positive social change in their communities through a 100-week nationwide awareness campaign.

AP 'Preferred Destination' For Global Investments And Innovation-driven Partnerships: Naidu

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday highlighted Andhra Pradesh's rapid economic transformation, investor-friendly policies and the state's immense potential for investment, innovation and international collaboration as he met an Australian delegation.

The delegation was led by assistant minister for international education and assistant minister for citizenship, customs and multicultural affairs Julian Hill at his camp office in Amaravati.

The meeting marked a significant milestone in the AP-Australia relations, with the two sides signing four pacts on clean energy, advanced manufacturing, inclusive education, student mental health and skill development. These, the government said, would pave the way for long-term collaboration in education, research, technology and workforce development.

Naidu said AP is emerging as a preferred destination for global investments and innovation-driven partnerships. He outlined the state's vision of becoming a hub for advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and knowledge-based industries.

He felicitated Julian Hill with a traditional shawl and presented him with a pack of Araku Coffee and a commemorative memento.

The MoUs were signed in the presence of education minister Nara Lokesh and Julian Hill. Lokesh said, "Andhra Pradesh is pursuing one of India's most ambitious renewable energy programmes. Our vision goes beyond creating renewable energy capacity—we are building a complete ecosystem that combines advanced manufacturing, world-class research, innovation and highly skilled talent."



"Our partnership with IIT Tirupati and UNSW, one of the world's leading universities, will help establish Andhra Pradesh as a centre for clean energy innovation while preparing the next generation of engineers, researchers and entrepreneurs who will power India's energy transition," he said.

The first agreement brings together the state government's Centre of Excellence for Energy Transition (CoEET), Visakhapatnam, IIT Tirupati and University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, to establish a centre of excellence for solar manufacturing at IIT Tirupati.

The initiative aims to position AP as India's leading centre for solar manufacturing research, innovation, skill development and technology.

The second MoU, signed by UNSW, Sri Padmavati Mahila Visva Vidyalaya (SPMVV) and Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh, focuses on strengthening inclusive education by equipping teachers with the skills needed to effectively support children with autism and other neurodiverse learning needs.

The third agreement enables the State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) and Australia's Rebound to jointly implement a technology-enabled pilot project promoting student mental health and well-being across selected higher education institutions.

The programme will be offered free of cost to participating institutions.

The fourth MoU was signed between the State Skill Development Corporation and Australia's Dynamic Learning Services to collaborate on vocational education, workforce development, industry-aligned training and international employment pathways aimed at enhancing the global employability of Andhra Pradesh's youth.

Education secretary Kona Sasidhar, school education commissioner Tameem Ansaria, higher education commissioner Narayana Bharat Gupta, APSSDC managing director Ganesh Kumar, IIT Tirupati director Prof S a t y a n a r a y a n Gannavarapu, SPMVV vice-chancellor Prof V Uma, Australian consul-general in Chennai Silai Zaki and others.

FIR Filed in Jharkhand Over Death Threats to PM Modi, Amit Shah



The Jharkhand Police have lodged an FIR against a man for "threatening to kill" Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, an officer said on Sunday. The FIR was lodged at Nagri police station in Ranchi district on Saturday on the basis of a complaint filed by BJP's Nagri mandal president Ritesh Raj Mahto. According to the complaint, Alim Ansari, a resident of

Saher village in the same police station area, had posted an objectionable video on social media in which he used abusive language against Modi, Shah and Adityanath and threatened to kill them, Nagri police station officer-in-charge Abhishek Rai. "We have lodged an FIR against the accused and initiated a thorough investigation into the matter. The complainant stated that the accused attempted to disrupt social harmony by posting the objectionable video, and openly insulted the sacred constitutional posts," he added. The accused has been booked under sections of the BNS. He will be arrested once the investigation into the matter is completed, the officer added.

TD's Door-to-Door Campaign Gets Strong Public Response, Says Lokesh



VIJAYAWADA: Telugu Desam national working president and education minister Nara Lokesh on Sunday said the "enthusiastic" public response to the party's statewide Intintiki TDP campaign reflected the people's confidence in the government's governance and welfare initiatives. Leaders of the three alliance parties visited 3,01,197 households on the seventh day alone, taking the cumulative number of homes covered in the first seven days to 17,61,197 across AP, he said. Reviewing the programme's progress through technology-driven monitoring, Lokesh said the campaign was being closely tracked constituency-wise to ensure its effective implementation. He urged party leaders and cadre to continue reaching every household and explain

the government's achievements, including its development works and welfare schemes. The Telugu Desam's flagship outreach programme completed a week on Sunday, drawing large-scale participation across the state despite it being a holiday. Ministers, MLAs, constituency in-charges, public representatives, party leaders and workers visited houses to interact with residents and highlight the government's initiatives. During the campaign, party leaders explained the government's initiatives for farmers' welfare, women empowerment, employment opportunities for youth, infrastructure development, transparent governance and the benefits extended to people through various welfare schemes. Earlier in the day, TD state president and MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao conducted a teleconference with district presidents, parliamentary presidents, constituency in-charges and senior leaders to review the campaign's progress. He asked party leaders to ensure that the messages of the government's development and welfare achievements reached every household. Lokesh said new technology was being effectively used to monitor the campaign in real time and improve its execution, while encouraging party workers to maintain the same spirit and expand the outreach across the state.

Grand Oora Panduga Procession Draws Thousands



NIZAMABAD: Thousands of devotees participated in the annual Oora Panduga celebrations in Nizamabad on Sunday as the city witnessed a grand procession marked by devotion and traditional fervour. The village deity idols were taken out in a colourful procession from the Quilla Sharadamba Gadde. Devotees chanted "Puloriya" as the procession passed through the city's main thoroughfares. The district administration made elaborate arrangements for the festival. The idols were carved and consecrated at Vadladhati on Saturday evening before being taken to Sirnapalli Gadi for rituals. They were later brought to the Quilla Sharadamba Gadde near the fort's main entrance on Sunday. After special prayers at the Quilla, the procession commenced, followed by the traditional 'Sari' distribution programme at Gajulpet. The Bandaru Posina ritual marked the formal commencement of the celebrations across the city. Members of the Sarva Samaj Committee and various community organisations participated in the arrangements over the weekend. Nizamabad Urban MLA Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta, Mayor K. Uma Rani, Sarva Samaj president, former MLA Endala Laxminarayana and leaders of the Congress, BJP and BRS offered special prayers at the Quilla Sharadamba Gadde. Police made elaborate security arrangements along the procession route. A brief commotion occurred during the distribution of 'Sari' at Vivekananda Chowrasta, but police brought the situation under control. Sarva Samaj Committee convener Ramarathi Gangadhar, co-convener Ade Praveen Kumar, committee member Gandla Lingam, TPCC leader Narala Ratnakar, BJP corporators Malkai Mahender and Nyalam Raju, City Congress president Bobbili Ramakrishna, Janasena leader Meesala Srinivasa Rao and other leaders participated in the celebrations.

Bandi Sanjay Blasts Govt Over Bonalu Fund Allocation

Hyderabad: Union minister of state Bandi Sanjay Kumar has sharply criticised the government over what he termed "discriminatory" funding for Bonalu festivals, questioning whether Hindus must "beg for funds" to celebrate their festivals while the state allocated more money for Ramzan. After offering prayers at Secunderabad's Ujjaini Mahankali temple on Sunday to witness the Lashkar Bonalu celebrations, Sanjay expressed anger over the lack of basic facilities for lakhs of devotees standing in long queues under the scorching sun.



"The government has declared Bonalu a state festival but shows no intention to provide adequate funds," he told reporters after darshan. He said the government gave ₹33 crore for Ramzan and ₹20 crore for Bonalu which is celebrated in over 3,000 temples across the twin cities. "Is this the treatment Hindu festivals receive under Congress rule," Sanjay asked and mentioned Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's purported statement, "Congress means Muslim, Muslim means Congress". Sanjay urged the state government to allocate festival funds based on population proportion. "Hindus constitute 80 per cent of Telangana. Festival funds should reflect this reality," he said.

Bonalu Gets AI-Powered Crowd Management: Sajjanar

Hyderabad: Hyderabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar along with his family offering Bonam to the Goddess Sri Ujjaini Mahankali in Secunderabad on Sunday as part of Ashadama Bonam celebrations. Speaking on the occasion, Sajjanar stated that the Ashadam Bonalu festival holds a rich historical significance in the city. He noted that the celebrations are currently underway across the city in a peaceful, devotional, and joyous atmosphere. He highlighted that after the peaceful conclusion of the Golconda and Balkampet Bonalu festivities, the celebrations at the Sri Ujjaini Mahankali and Lal Darwaza temples are now being conducted on a grand scale. He emphasized that the Hyderabad City Police Department has put in place robust security measures



with the safety and protection of devotees as the utmost priority. Around 2,500 police personnel have been deployed to oversee bandobast for the Ujjaini Mahankali Bonalu celebrations. Taking into account the annually increasing turnout of devotees, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based crowd management and surveillance system has been introduced at the Mahankali Temple for the first time. Through this advanced AI system, CCTV cameras installed around the temple premises are integrated with Facial Recognition Technology. This enables the immediate identification and tracking of habitual offenders, chain-snatchers, and pickpockets, allowing operational teams to respond swiftly. Furthermore, the system accurately monitors incoming and outgoing footfall through queue management. The density of crowds in different sections and queue lines inside the temple is continuously analyzed via threshold mapping. In the event of overcrowding beyond permissible limits, proactive measures will be triggered to prevent stampedes or any untoward incidents. The Police department is working in close coordination with the Endowments Department, GHMC, and other government agencies to ensure smooth conduct. The Commissioner appealed to all devotees to seek the blessings of the Goddess in a peaceful manner and extend their complete cooperation to the police force for the successful completion of the festival.

Minister Ponnampallam Offers First Bonam as Lashkar Bonalu Begins

Hyderabad: The Lashkar Bonalu celebrations, one of Telangana's most significant religious festivals, began on a grand note in Secunderabad on Sunday, with thousands of devotees thronging the historic Ujjaini Mahankali Temple to offer Bonam to the presiding deity. Devotees started arriving at the temple in the early hours of the morning. On behalf of the Telangana government, Minister Ponnampallam Prabhakar offered the first Bonam to Goddess Ujjaini Mahankali, formally marking the commencement of this year's celebrations.



EVs Key to Energy Security, Import Cut and Tech Self-Reliance, Says Kishan Reddy



Hyderabad: Union minister G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday said electric mobility is not just an alternative to petrol and diesel vehicles but a strategic pathway to energy security, pollution control, import reduction and technological self-reliance. He said the Centre was extending support across the EV ecosystem, covering manufacturing, batteries, charging infrastructure, research and skill development.

Flagging off the first commercial electric bus of a domestic manufacturer, Reddy stressed that public sector units such as Coal India and NLC are expanding into solar, floating solar and pumped storage to ensure that the electricity powering EVs is green.

He pointed to the National Critical Mineral Mission, approved with an outlay of Rs34,300 crore, as vital for securing lithium, cobalt, nickel and copper needed for EVs, solar panels, semiconductors and defence technologies.

The bus was handed over to an operating partner in the presence of the manufacturer's director Venkatesh Challa. Kishan Reddy said the launch marked another step forward in clean transport, indigenous technology and green energy.

He noted that Telangana is emerging as a hub for electric mobility, electronics and semiconductor design, with Hyderabad attracting international chip design centres and nurturing homegrown engineering talent under the Semicon India Programme.

India now manufactures 99.2 per cent of its smartphones domestically and ranks second globally in mobile phone production. Electronics manufacturing has grown sevenfold and exports eleven-fold, generating around 25 lakh jobs.

Trump Holds Off Iran Strikes on Pledge a Hormuz Deal Is Close



Washington: US President Donald Trump said he has held off on launching new strikes against Iran after being informed that Tehran and regional powers are working towards an agreement that could reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump said he had agreed to cancel the planned attack, "subject to being able to rapidly make a DEAL," according to a post on Truth Social. "Get to work, everybody, and get it DONE."

He said the US was asked "to hold off any attack in that the perimeters of a deal has been agreed to," adding that the understanding would include the "Immediate, Complete, and Total OPENING OF THE HORMUZ STRAIT, and an end to Iran's nuclear threat."

The development follows days of escalating tensions during which Trump had warned of striking the Islamic Republic "very hard" as the conflict entered its sixth month. There was no indication from Iranian officials or state media that an agreement was imminent.

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency described Trump's statement as a "repeated retreat from threats."

Regional diplomatic efforts intensified, with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman urging restraint, according to reports. The Saudi state news agency said he emphasised the need for dialogue to de-escalate tensions during talks with Trump.

Israel, which joined the US in launching the war but was not part of the June truce arrangement with Iran, is monitoring the situation. Israeli cabinet member Zev Elkin said there was "some kind of vector toward an agreement between Iran and Oman," referring to talks held last month on reopening the Strait.

Elkin, however, expressed caution: "We'll all wait to see if this vector really does become a full agreement, and whether it will be implemented and where it's all leading."

Trump met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House last week, where they discussed options for continuing the campaign.

The Strait of Hormuz has remained effectively closed by Iran amid the conflict, disrupting global oil flows and causing volatility in energy markets. Brent crude settled above \$90 a barrel last week, up from below \$72 at the start of July.

In parallel, OPEC+ countries agreed in principle to a marginal increase in output quotas for September, potentially restoring supply curtailed in 2023.

Security concerns persist across the region. The US has warned its citizens of possible flight disruptions and airspace closures. Iranian attacks have previously targeted US allies, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait.

A US-Iran truce brokered in June collapsed last month. Hostilities briefly paused again in late July before resuming after Iran launched ballistic missiles at a US base in Jordan earlier this week, in what Trump described as a surprise attack.

Iran has maintained a defensive posture. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi warned against any "adventurous actions by the US military," stating the country was "fully prepared" to respond "decisively." He also cautioned that regional cooperation with the US would draw a response from Iran's armed forces.

The conflict has widened, with Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen threatening shipping in the Red Sea near the Bab el-Mandeb, adding pressure on another key maritime route. © 2026 Bloomberg L.P.

Revanth To Embark On Foreign Trip To Attract Investments

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is set to embark on a visit to the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada to attract investments to Telangana, especially in the upcoming Bharat Future City, official sources said. He is scheduled to meet global corporate leaders during the visit.

The Chief Minister is likely to undertake the nearly two-week tour between August 20 and September 8; the itinerary is expected to be confirmed within a week after appointments with corporate leaders and investors are finalised, sources added.

Sources said the tour was part of the government's aggressive investment promotion strategy and would focus on secur-



ing fresh investments from leading multinational corporations, global financial institutions and the Indian diaspora. The Chief Minister will showcase Telangana as a preferred investment destination. He will also invite global companies and CEOs to attend the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2026 to be held at the Future City in December.

The state government is targeting investments in high-growth sectors including information technology, artificial intelligence, data centres, semiconductor manufacturing, electronics, life sciences, pharmaceuticals, green energy, aerospace and defence manufacturing.

During the US leg of the visit, Revanth Reddy is expected to meet executives of leading semiconductor, cloud computing and artificial intelligence companies, while in London he is likely to interact with global financial investors and representatives of prominent educational institutions.

He is also expected to review the progress of MoUs signed during his previous overseas visits and hold follow-up discussions with international companies that had expressed interest in investing in Telangana.

Meanwhile, Revanth Reddy is considering convening a one-day special session of the Legislature prior to his foreign trip to pass a resolution urging the Centre to reduce the minimum age for contesting elections to Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly from 25 to 21 years.

Revanth Reddy had recently announced the government's intention to adopt such a resolution and forward it to the Centre aimed at ensuring adequate representation to Gen Z in legislative bodies. The Monsoon Session is likely to be held for about a week during the third week of September after he returns from his visit.

PM Talks Of Forgiving Students; Govt Owes Them Justice: Rahul

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks of "forgiving" students, but it is the government that owes the students truth, justice and an apology. Gandhi made the remarks in an Instagram post as he shared a video of his interaction with the families of Gopika, Roshini and Vetri Anandan, who committed suicide following the NEET paper leak and cancellation, during his visit to Tamil Nadu on Saturday.

The leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said, "During my visit to Tamil Nadu, I met the families of Gopika, Roshini and Vetri Anandan, three young medical aspirants whose lives were lost following the NEET paper leak and the cancellation of the examination. Each family was left with the same painful question: why should honest, hardworking students pay the price for a dis-



honest system?"

A leaked paper led to a cancelled examination, a forced NEET re-exam and unbearable pressure on young minds, Gandhi said.

Behind every statistic is a child with a dream and a family now living with an irreplaceable loss, he said.

"I listened to their pain. Our fight is for an education system where hard work is respected, examinations are fair and no student is pushed to the edge because institutions failed them," the former Congress chief said.

"The Prime Minister speaks of 'forgiving' students. After listening to these parents, my conviction is even stronger: India's students need no forgiveness. The government owes them truth, justice and an apology," Gandhi asserted.

In the video, Gandhi is seen interacting with the families of the students who committed suicide.

In Mamallapuram, interacting with the relatives of those who took the extreme step vis-a-vis NEET, Gandhi said, "Nothing is more painful than seeing a parent grieve their child."

"Behind every young life lost is a family carrying pain that will never leave them and serious questions about a broken education system. Leaked papers. Cancelled exams. Years of preparation destroyed overnight. Our students are told to work honestly in a system that is not honest with them."

"The tears of parents who have lost their children, their wailing; there is no greater sorrow than this. This grief will live with them forever and along with it remain many ques-

tions about this broken and corrupt education system," he had said in a post on X.

Referring to paper leaks and cancelled exams, he said, "Prime Minister has the audacity to talk about forgiving the students."

"Has he even met a single grieving family who has lost their child, or those whose entire savings, life, time and dreams have been snatched away by paper leaks? The answer is no! India's students do not need the Prime Minister's forgiveness; Modi ji should apologise to them," the Congress leader said.

In a video message on Friday, Modi said he and his late mother were subjected to abusive language at Jantar Mantar during the protests over alleged NEET irregularities. He asserted that dragging such "misguided children" to court would not solve the problem and hence, he wanted to forgive them.

BJP MP DK Aruna Slams Revanth Reddy Over 'Criminal Waste' Remark on Engineering Students

Hyderabad: BJP MP D.K. Aruna called Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's recent description of engineering students as a "criminal waste" as insensitive and insulting to lakhs of students and their families. Aruna said the Chief Minister had forgotten the dignity of his office while speaking.

She said parents from poor backgrounds faced immense hardships to send their children to colleges. "When such students are called a criminal waste, it is unacceptable," she said and demanded an unconditional apology from Revanth Reddy.

The MP pointed out that the education portfolio was with the Chief Minister and asked why quality education was not being delivered. She alleged that the government had failed to strengthen the system and was now blaming students.

She also criticized the police action against students who staged peaceful protests over fee reimbursement and other demands in Mahbubnagar, saying baton charges and filing cases against them was "painful" and unwarranted. "Police should not act as if they owe loyalty only to this government and remember what happened to the previous regime," she warned, urging authorities not to register any cases against the students. Aruna took aim at Revanth Reddy's references to attending short courses at Harvard University, saying not every student gets such opportunities and challenging him to create similar avenues for all. "If you have the capability, provide such opportunities to students instead of humiliating them," she said, adding that the Chief Minister has no moral right to continue as education minister and should resign from the portfolio.





Monday 03, August, 2026

VOICE OF THE YOUTH GETS HEARD

The resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, bowing to mounting pressure from the student protests, is a welcome development as it signals the government's acknowledgement of the growing anger of the country's youth over an issue that is key to their future. It is a victory for the democratic voices that rose in unison against a system that has become indifferent to the concerns of the student community. What began as a satirical social media account grew within weeks into a genuine mass movement, giving vent to the youth's frustration over the botched 2026 NEET medical entrance examination following paper leak. The exit of the Minister, whose resignation was the key demand of the protesters led by the Cockroach Janata Party, and subsequent withdrawal of the five-week-long agitation should now pave the way for sincere effort to tackle the larger issue of education reforms. No lessons have been learned from the past instances of paper leaks. Also, no follow-up action has been taken on the recommendations of the high-powered committee constituted in 2024 under former ISRO chairperson K Radhakrishnan to secure the fairness of the public exam system. While Pradhan's resignation opens a window for wider talks, the real battle lies ahead. The larger issue here is about the institutional flaws and how to fix them. It is not about individual ministers but about reforming the examination system that failed the students. Apart from bringing examination reforms, there is a need for broader structural transformations in the education and skilling system.

The widespread spontaneous protests have exposed one of the deepest fault lines in the country's education system—the erosion of trust in public examinations. From the cancellation of the NEET-UG examination controversy to repeated paper leaks in recruitment tests conducted by State governments, millions of students have found themselves trapped in a cycle of uncertainty. In a belated response, the Centre came up with a draft legislation, amending the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, envisaging fairly stringent provisions—a jail term up to 10 years, a penalty up to Rs 10 crore, and statutory backing for fast-track courts. Speedy justice is welcome, but deeper systemic reforms are a must to restore public confidence. India requires a comprehensive overhaul that combines technology, institutional reforms, transparency, accountability and educational transformation. Strengthening the NTA, improving digital security and creating an independent auditing mechanism are essential. Stronger laws and fast-track courts may serve to punish or deter offenders, but only long-term reforms can eradicate the deep-rooted malaise. Gangs that exploit examinees for financial gain must be dealt with under a zero-tolerance policy. Coordinated investigations involving Central and State agencies and a robust legal framework can help dismantle these networks. The real objective should not simply be to prevent the next paper leak, but to build an examination system in which integrity is institutionalised.

Rahul Gandhi Meets Families of NEET Victims Who Ended Their Lives

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday on Saturday met the families that have lost their loved ones to NEET-related suicides in Tamil Nadu. He asserted that students are told to work honestly in a system that is not honest with them. "Students Need PM's Apology, Not His Forgiveness" Interacting at Mamallapuram with the relatives of those who took the extreme step vis-a-vis NEET, Gandhi said: "Nothing is more painful than seeing a parent grieve their child. Rahul Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should apologise to the country's students for giving them a "corrupt" exam system and that they don't want his "forgiveness". Gandhi said he (Modi) has not met a single grieving parent. "He has not sat with a single student whose



future was stolen by a leaked paper." LoP Rahul said. "India's students do not need his forgiveness. They all owed his apology," the Congress leader said. "Gandhi's Audacity to Forgive" In a post on X, Gandhi said the prime minister has the audacity to speak of "forgiving"

students even when he did not visit a single parent whose children committed suicide after they felt their career was destroyed due to leaked papers and cancelled exams. "Nothing is more painful than seeing a parent grieve for their child. "Behind every young life lost is a family carrying pain that will never leave them - and serious questions about a broken education system," he said in his post after meeting the families of those who lost their children during his day-long visit to Tamil Nadu. "Leaked papers. Cancelled exams. Years of preparation were destroyed overnight. Our students are told to work honestly in a system that is not honest with them. "And the Prime Minister has the audacity to speak of 'forgiving' students," the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha said.

Relief for Businesses as Commercial LPG Prices Drop

New Delhi: The price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder has been slashed by Rs 202 in Delhi and Rs 209 in Kolkata, effective Saturday, sources said. A 19 Kg cylinder will cost Rs 2872.50 in Kolkata from today. No change in domestic cylinder prices. Earlier last month, oil marketing companies reduced the price of 19-kg commercial LPG cylinders, slashing the retail price in Delhi to Rs 2,930 per cylinder. Prices have been reduced by Rs 183.50, effective July 1. In addition to the cut in commercial LPG rates, oil marketing companies have also lowered the price of the 5-kg Free Trade LPG (FTL) cylinder by Rs 13. Following the revision, the retail price of a 5-kg FTL cylinder in Delhi now stands at Rs 808.50, sources said. The latest reduction in commercial LPG prices comes after a series of price changes in recent



months. Earlier, in June, domestic LPG prices were increased by Rs 29 per cylinder while the price of a 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi rose to Rs 942 from Rs 913. Oil companies had also raised LPG prices by Rs 60 per cylinder on March 7, following disruptions in global energy markets linked to the conflict in West Asia. In April, oil marketing companies increased

the prices of commercial LPG gas cylinders by Rs 195.50 across metropolitan cities amid tensions in West Asia. With that revision, commercial LPG prices were raised to Rs 2,208 in Kolkata, Rs 2,031 in Mumbai, and Rs 2,246.50 in Chennai. Oil marketing companies raised the price of the 19-kg commercial LPG gas cylinder by Rs 111 in January. Following the revision, the retail price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder in Delhi stood at Rs 1,691.50. Alongside the increase in commercial LPG rates, the price of the 5-kg Free Trade LPG (FTL) cylinder was also raised by Rs 27, effective January 1. The revision in commercial LPG prices is significant for sectors that depend heavily on such cylinders, including eateries, catering services and small businesses, as fuel accounts for a major share of their operating costs.

Metro Rail expansion: Hyderabad loses steam, other city Metros gain pace

Hyderabad: As uncertainty looms over the approval of Metro Phase II and the takeover of Phase I by the State government, Hyderabad is lagging behind in the expansion of its Metro rail network while several other cities are adding significant stretches. This comes amid the BJP-led Central government's indifference towards Telangana. At present, Hyderabad Metro Rail covers a 69.2-km network across three corridors. In 2021, the previous BRS government submitted a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Metro Phase II covering 26 km from BHEL to Lakdikapul and a 5-km extension from LB Nagar to Nagole. Besides this, it also proposed a Mass Rapid Transit System for the Kokapet area and the Warangal Neo Metro. The DPRs for these routes were prepared by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and the Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation, the same agencies that prepared DPRs for Metro projects in other cities. Former Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao met the then Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Hardeep Singh Puri several times, urging them to expedite the approvals. However, the Central government rejected Telangana's proposal for Hyderabad Metro Phase II in 2023, citing reasons such as lower Peak Hour Peak Direction Traffic (PHPDT) and insufficient projected ridership. After the Congress government came to power in December 2023, it proposed seven routes covering 122 km under Phase II-A and three additional routes under Phase II-B. However, none of these proposals has seen the light of day over



the last six years. In addition to the delay in approving the Hyderabad Metro Phase II expansion plans, there has been no progress on the takeover of Phase I by the State government. It has been a month since the Central government agreed to entrust SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBICAPS) with the valuation and financial assessment of Metro Phase I. Besides this, the same agency may also examine the financing structure for Phase II. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, on July 4, wrote to Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar, urging him to assign the task to SBICAPS and finalise the Terms of Reference at the earliest. In contrast, the Central government has approved Metro rail projects covering over 380 km in several cities, including Bengaluru, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Pune and Delhi, since January 2024. Among the major approvals are Bengaluru Metro Rail Phase III covering 44.65 km, Chennai Metro Phase II covering 118.9 km, Lucknow Phase IB covering 11.16 km, Ahmedabad Metro Phase IIA covering 6.03 km and Phase IIB covering 3.33 km.

Raut Slams PM Modi: "If You Were a Patriot, You Had to Be in Parliament"



Mumbai: Shiv Sena (UBT) senior leader and MP Sanjay Raut on Saturday launched a sharp attack on the Centre over the passage of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "insulted Vande Mataram" by remaining absent from Parliament during discussions on the legislation. Speaking to ANI in Mumbai, Raut questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's absence from Parliament during discussions on the bill. "It has been 150 years since Vande Mataram was composed. The PM claims to be such a patriot—even though he had no role in the freedom struggle—yet he convened a special two-day parliamentary session specifically to discuss Vande Mataram. If you are such a patriot and if you have introduced a bill against the disrespect of the National Anthem and Vande Mataram, then it was your duty to be present in the House... The government, the Prime Minister, and the Home Minister have insulted Vande Mataram; they ought to face legal action for this." Turning his focus to security issues following the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam, the Shiv Sena (UBT) leader demanded accountability from Union Home Minister Amit Shah over recurring security lapses in the region. "What would I say about it? It is Amit Shah who should speak... We have seen Pulwama and Pahalgam; now, two more people have been killed... Yet, they refuse to utter a single word about it," Raut said, taking a sharp dig at the Centre. "They are no longer fit to remain in government. Meanwhile, the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, was passed by voice vote in the Lok Sabha on Friday, a day after it was cleared by the Rajya Sabha. The Bill seeks to make any obstruction or insult to the National Song, Vande Mataram, a criminal offence and provides the national song with statutory protection similar to that accorded to the National Anthem. The legislation faced opposition from the DMK in the Lok Sabha, with party MP Kanimozhi accusing the government of using the Bill to advance a "Hindutva agenda" under the guise of nationalism. "We oppose this Bill. This is a Hindutva agenda being brought in under the guise of nationalism. You cannot impose nationalism by bringing a law. This song goes against the secularism of this country," Kanimozhi said. Replying to the debate, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said the Bill was "for Indian pride, not against any state or ideology" and asserted that the government respects state songs and linguistic pride. With the Bill passed by both Houses, it will now be sent to the President for assent before it can come into effect.

Telangana NEET -UG 2026 Qualified Candidates List Released

Hyderabad: The Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS) on Saturday released the rank-wise list of candidates from Telangana who cleared the NEET UG exam for MBBS/BDS admissions. The total number of candidates who qualified are 38,021 and 85% is for the state quota & private college management quota. The category-wise cut-off marks for eligibility to apply for admission into UG medical/Dental courses for the Academic Year 2026-27 are as follows: UR/EWS - 50th Percentile - 715-213 (cut-off Score) OBC - 40th Percentile - 212-177 (cut-off score) SC - 40th Percentile - 212-177 (cut-off score) ST - 40th Percentile - 212-177 (cut-off score) UR/EWS & PWD - 45th Percentile- 212-194 (cut-off score) OBC & PWD - 40th Percentile - 193-177 (cut-off score) SC & PWD - 40th Percentile - 193-177 (cut-off score) ST & PWD - 40th Percentile - 191-177 (cut-off score)



NDA Alliance Driving Andhra Pradesh's Growth: Pawan Kalyan

VISAKHAPATNAM: Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Saturday said the NDA alliance had accelerated Andhra Pradesh's development, attributing the state's progress to the combined efforts of its coalition partners. Addressing a public meeting after the inauguration of the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram, he said the alliance had created a conducive environment for investments, infrastructure development and industrial growth.

Pawan Kalyan said he was proud that the airport had been named after freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju, whom he described as a symbol of courage and patriotism. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit



marked a new chapter for Andhra Pradesh, with the launch and dedication of projects worth `17,900 crore aimed at strengthening road connectivity, energy infrastructure and employment generation.

The Deputy Chief Minister said sustainable development was achieved through infrastructure creation rather than publicity, and praised the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat and Atmanirbhar Bharat. Commending Modi's leadership, Pawan Kalyan said India had made significant progress in attracting foreign investment and strengthening its economy despite global and domestic challenges. He urged people to support the Prime Minister's development agenda.

Future City To Beat GIFT City: Revanth

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said that the state government's Future City would be far superior to Gujarat's GIFT City. He said the state's ambition was to attract all Fortune 500 companies to the mega project.

He said while GIFT City has been developed over about 700 acres, Future City would spread across nearly 30,000 acres and was being planned as a global destination for investment, innovation and employment.

Addressing a delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Northern Regional Council here, the Chief Minister invited industrialists to invest in Telangana, particularly in Future City, and assured them of support from the state government. He said a Singapore-based firm is preparing the master plan for Future City, which is envisioned as one of the

world's leading business destinations.

Revanth Reddy assured industrialists that the government would provide complete protection to their investments and extend support beyond their expectations. He said investors would have direct access to the government, with the Chief Secretary always available to resolve issues.

He announced that the industries minister would hold review meetings with industry representatives once every two months, while he himself would personally interact with investors every three months to address their concerns and ensure speedy implementation of projects.

Revanth Reddy said Telangana was not competing with neighbouring states for investments but was benchmarking itself against global cities such as Tokyo and New York.



He said the state has the ecosystem to compete with international business centres and urged industrialists to consider Telangana as their own state.

He said the government had retained several good policies introduced by previous administrations while simultaneously implementing reforms to accelerate industrial growth. Stressing that there was no policy pa-

ralysis in Telangana, the Chief Minister said good policies would continue irrespective of which party or leader introduced them. He said the government was offering speedy approvals, attractive incentives and proactive governance to investors.

Referring to the state's growing technology ecosystem, Revanth Reddy said the promoters of Skyroot Aerospace belong to Telangana and the

government would ensure a steady supply of skilled manpower to such high-technology industries through the Young India Skills University. He also revealed that nearly 200 companies have already come forward to establish Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in Telangana.

Highlighting major investments already being made in the state, the Chief Minister said Ama-

zon is investing nearly `1 lakh crore in data centres, while the Adani Group is establishing a data centre with an investment of 35,000 crore.

He briefed them on the Global Summit at Future City in December last and the Telangana Rising-2047 vision document and pointed out Telangana was contributing around five per cent to the country's gross domestic product.

Highlighting Hyderabad's infrastructure advantages, Revanth Reddy noted that metropolitan cities faced serious challenges —air pollution in Delhi, flooding in Mumbai caused by heavy rains, and worsening traffic congestion in Bengaluru. Telangana was addressing these issues through planned urban development and progressive policies, making it easier to attract investments.

The Chief Minister said

the government is placing special emphasis on manufacturing and intends to compete globally with countries such as China, Japan and Germany in the sector. He reiterated the government's ambitious target of transforming Telangana into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2034.

He also highlighted the state's rapidly improving infrastructure, stating that the Centre has approved airports at Warangal and Adilabad and three bullet train corridors.

Inviting investments across the services, manufacturing and agriculture sectors, the Chief Minister said Telangana's cultural heritage and social harmony are among its greatest strengths. He noted that people from diverse communities live together peacefully, creating a conducive environment for business and economic growth.

Maheshwar Reddy Hails New Rail Line for North Telangana Connectivity



Hyderabad: Telangana BJP floor leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said Adilabad-Nirmal-Armoor new railway line would bring much-needed rail connectivity to North Telangana. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw explained about the new railway line when Reddy along with the BJP MLAs and MPs met him in New Delhi.

"Delighted to meet Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in Delhi. He explained Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to transform Telangana's railway infrastructure and develop Hyderabad as a major hub of India's high-speed rail revolution," he said.

"The Union Minister also reassured that the proposed Adilabad-Nirmal-Armoor new railway line would bring much-needed rail connectivity to North Telangana. My sincere gratitude to Ashwini Vaishnaw for taking time to meet us and discuss these crucial projects," he added.

Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha Adjourned Till Monday - Rajya Sabha adjourned for the day

- Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned till Friday noon as Opposition members raised slogans against police crackdown on students agitating against NEET paper leak and other matters. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the Opposition members disrupted the House proceedings in a "pre-planned manner."

"Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is standing to ask a question, but Opposition members are not allowing Question Hour to proceed," he said.

In an apparent reference to suspended TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee, he said some members were roaming in the Parliament House complex in different getups.

Birla said such actions lower the dignity of the house. He then adjourned the proceedings till noon.

Banerjee has been protesting against his suspension over use of undignified language against women MPs. He has been hanging photographs of 20 rebel TMC MPs who have joined a lesser-known Nationalist Citizens Party of India.

- Samajwadi Party MPs have been protesting the alleged theft of donations at Ram Temple in Ayodhya. They have been carrying donation boxes and placards at the entrance of the Parliament House.

- Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday hit out at the Centre over police action against protesting students during the July 20 'Sansad Chalo' march, alleging



that the government used force against protesting youth and later filed FIRs and detained them despite an assurance that no action would be taken against them.

Kharge urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ask for Union Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation, saying, "If there's even a shred of shame left, get Amit Shah's resignation." In a post on X, Kharge said, "@narendramodiji, ten days ago, your government suppressed the youth with batons-Pellet Guns." He alleged that action was initiated against the students after they called off their protest. "When the students withdrew their movement, now you're filing FIRs against them out of a sense of revenge, forcibly detaining them. The youth withdrew the movement on the condition that no action would be taken against them, and now your governments have gone back on their own word," Kharge, who is the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Rajya Sabha, said.

Modi Urges Calm, Forgives 'Misguided' Student Protesters

NEW DELHI: Reeling under mounting pressure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a late night attempt on Friday to reach out to the agitating students, saying that although some had used "filthy language" against him and even his late mother, it was time to "embrace them."



Describing the students' outbursts as the "mistake" of a few "misguided children," Prime Minister again took to Instagram to appeal for calm and strike a conciliatory note amid simmering unrest. The Prime Minister's late night address was also being viewed as an attempt to steal the thunder from the Opposition, which has been relentlessly targeting him for the "police brutality" against the protesting students on July 20.

Modi said that some children used very abuses and it directed at him and his late mother as well.

The Prime Minister said that while society's anger was understandable, particularly over the language allegedly used by young women, the focus should be on showing them the right path rather than pushing them into legal battles.

"They are misguided children, and showing them the way is our duty and we will not be able to change circumstances by punishing them, making them run around the courts, or harassing them in society," he said, adding that he wish to forgive these students and urged society to do the same.

He stated that just as people do not break their teeth after accidentally biting their tongue, society should not abandon its own children for their mistakes.

"Sometimes our tongue comes under our teeth and blood comes out, but we do not break our teeth—because the teeth are ours, and the tongue is ours too. The children are also ours," the Prime Minister said, called on the students to move on from the episode.

He invited students to contribute to nation-building. "Children, come, let us move forward together for the country. Let us learn something new, let us learn even from mistakes. I live for you, I toil for your bright future, so come, let us together take the country forward."

India's Dual-Use Exports Fully Comply with Global Obligations: MEA

New Delhi: All Indian exports of dual-use items comply with national laws and international obligations, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday, virtually rejecting Amnesty International's allegations that New Delhi continues supplying arms to Israel despite risks of their use in war crimes in Gaza. "India has a robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade controls and carries out its export of dual-use items and technologies to various countries in accordance with our national laws and consistent with our international obligations," MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

His remarks came in response to a question



on Amnesty International's allegations. The human rights watchdog has long called for a comprehensive arms embargo on Israel that covers the direct or indirect supply, sale or

transfer of arms and military material. In a report released on Wednesday, Amnesty International alleged that corporations in India continued to export weapons or dual-use items to Israel, notwithstanding public warnings about their possible use in "crimes against humanity" in Gaza by Israel's armed forces. India and Indian companies supplying weapons, ammunition, parts or components must immediately cease all transfers of arms and ammunition, including parts and components, to Israel, it said.

Parliament passes Bill making insult to Vande Mataram a punishable offence

New Delhi: Parliament on Thursday passed a bill that makes any insult to the national song Vande Mataram a punishable offence with Lok Sabha clearing the legislation amid din. The government asserted that The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 will grant status to Vande Mataram on par with national anthem Jana Gana Mana. It seeks to make any insult to Vande Mataram a criminal offence.

Responding to a brief debate in the lower house in which only two members participated, Minister of State for Home Nityananda Rai said the Congress should have given Vande Mataram its due respect during its 76 years of rule, but instead it resorted to appeasement politics.

The Narendra Modi government is now giving the national song its due respect which it deserves. "For Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat, we need complete (all six stanzas) Vande Mataram song," Rai said, as he concluded his brief reply to the bill with a chant of Vande Mataram. The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act currently prohibits intentionally preventing the singing of the national anthem (Jana Gana Mana), or causing disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing.

These offences are punishable with imprisonment up to three years, a fine or both. A second and every subsequent conviction is punishable with imprisonment of a minimum of one year.

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, extends these provisions to the national song (Vande Mataram). The bill was passed by voice vote after the two members spoke. The amendments moved by the Opposition were rejected by the House. A Raja of DMK later tore some document and threw it towards the Well.

Earlier, DMK member K Kanimozhi opposed the bill, saying it is a "Hindutva agenda" masquerading as nationalism. "It is against federalism. You cannot impose nationalism by bringing a law, the song goes against the secularism of the country. The founding fathers had the wisdom to stop only with 2 stanzas, but today you are trying to polarise the country by making it compulsory and making it a criminal offence if we do not sing all the 6 stanzas," she said.

Sambit Patra of the BJP said the Congress in its 76 years of rule did not give Vande Mataram the respect it deserved as a national song.

Telangana Among Top Economic Performers

Hyderabad: Telangana has emerged as one of India's best-performing state economies, according to latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) 'Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy 2025-26', showing sustained growth in the economy and a sharp rise of more than 10 per cent in per capita income.

Welcoming the RBI findings, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said they reflected Telangana's emergence as one of India's top-performing states after the Congress assumed office in December 2023. In a post on X on Saturday, the Chief Minister said Telangana had reached "new horizons and newer heights", with the state's per capita income increasing by nearly ₹38,900 in one year.

He attributed the achievement to his government's emphasis on economic growth, attracting investments, generating employment, balanced development across sectors, policy-based governance instead of ad hoc decision-making, regular reviews, attention to detail and continuous engagement with stakeholders.

The Chief Minister said the government had reversed a decade of failed governance of previous BRS regime and restored optimism. He asserted that women, farmers and youth were the biggest beneficiaries of Telangana's economic progress and expressed confidence that the state would witness even greater economic success in the coming years.

RBI data showed that Telangana's net state domestic product (NSDP) at current prices increased to ₹16,14,771 crore in 2025-26 from ₹14,57,913 crore in 2024-25. The state's economy maintained a steady upward trajectory over the last five years, rising from ₹10,17,251 crore in 2021-22 to ₹16,14,771 crore in 2025-26

The report highlighted Telangana's impressive growth in per capita NSDP. Per capita income at current prices rose from ₹3,80,031 a year prior to ₹4,18,931 — up over 10 per cent. The state had recorded ₹2,69,000 NSDP per capita in 2021-22 and the increase placed Telangana among the country's leading states in terms of income levels.

Telangana in per capita income was second only to Karnataka, which recorded ₹4,33,326. The state outperformed Tamil Nadu (₹4,08,027), Gujarat (₹3,57,531), Maharashtra (₹3,47,903) and Andhra Pradesh (2,94,507), reflecting the state's strong economic performance and higher income levels.

In terms of the size of the economy, Telangana ranked seventh among the country's major states with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of ₹16,14,771 crore, with Maharashtra leading the pack at ₹44,84,537 crore.

The other states ahead of Telangana were Tamil Nadu (₹31,60,206 crore), Karnataka (₹29,80,634 crore), Gujarat (₹26,36,003 crore), West Bengal (₹17,99,664 crore) and Rajasthan (₹16,85,118 crore).

The RBI handbook indicated that Telangana has continued to outperform several larger states on income indicators, reflecting sustained industrial growth, expansion in the services sector and higher economic productivity.

Welcoming the RBI findings, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said the RBI figures reflected Telangana's emergence as one of India's top-performing states after the Congress assumed office in December 2023. In a post on X on Saturday, the Chief Minister said Telangana had reached "new horizons and newer heights", with the state's per capita income increasing by nearly ₹38,900 in one year.

He attributed the achievement to his government's emphasis on economic growth, attracting investments, generating employment, balanced development across sectors, policy-based governance instead of ad hoc decision-making, regular reviews, attention to detail and continuous engagement with stakeholders.

The Chief Minister said the government had reversed a decade of failed governance of previous BRS regime and restored optimism across the state. He asserted that women, farmers and youth were the biggest beneficiaries of Telangana's economic progress and expressed confidence that the state would witness even greater economic success in the coming years.

Shah Hails Doval's Role In India's Security

Mumbai: National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval was conferred the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 in Pune on Saturday, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah hailing his contribution to strengthening India's national security and foreign policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Presenting the award, Mr. Shah said Mr. Doval had played a pivotal role in every major national security decision taken by the Prime Minister since 2014. Accepting the honour, Mr. Doval urged the country's youth to place national interest above personal gain and contribute selflessly to nation-building.

The award ceremony, held on the 106th death anniversary of freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak, was attended by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Rajya Sabha MP Sunetra Pawar, Union Minister of State for Cooperation Murlidhar Mohol and several other dignitaries. Shah had arrived in Pune on Friday night to attend the event.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Shah recalled Tilak's iconic slogan, "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it," saying it gave a new direction to India's freedom struggle. "Complete Swaraj can be achieved only when our system of governance, language, culture and religion are firmly established," he said.

Highlighting Mr. Doval's career, Mr. Shah said he had made outstanding contributions as an Intelligence Bureau officer, serving in the Northeast, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Pakistan before becoming IB Director. He said Mr. Doval's six-year tenure in Pakistan came during a crucial period and significantly strengthened India's security apparatus.

Mr. Shah also recalled that after a series of bomb blasts in Gujarat during Narendra Modi's tenure as Chief Minister, Mr. Modi had asked Gujarat Police to investigate not only the Ahmedabad serial blasts but also related bomb blast cases across the country, and had sought Mr. Doval's assistance. According to Mr. Shah, the coordinated investigation helped solve the Ahmedabad blasts as well as 13 other bomb blast cases nationwide.

He said Mr. Doval's contribution would occupy a "golden chapter" whenever the history of the Modi government's approach to internal and external security is written. Mr. Shah also credited Mr. Doval with helping strengthen India's foreign policy and enhancing the country's global standing under Modi's leadership.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Doval said freedom should not be mistaken for the unrestricted right to do as one pleases. He urged young Indians to draw inspiration from Tilak's vision of nation-building. "Bal Gangadhar Tilak is still relevant today. All Indians, especially youths will reflect on Bal Gangadhar Tilak's idea of nation building," he said.



Naidu Credits Modi for AP's Growth

Visakhapatnam: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu showered praises on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the recent large-scale developments in Andhra Pradesh while participating in inauguration of the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district on Saturday.

The Chief Minister underlined that PM Modi opening the international airport is the beginning of a new chapter in the region's development. He emphasised that support of the central government over the past two years has led to an investment of ₹6.13 lakh crore for 189 projects in North Andhra, which is expected to create 5.57 lakh jobs.

Naidu credited Narendra Modi for facilitating the establishment of the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone and for providing financial assistance to revive the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. He asserted that eight irrigation projects worth ₹2,784 crore would be completed within three years, while the long-pending permissions for the Neradi Barrage have finally been secured.

The Chief Minister confirmed that Polavaram project would be completed by 2027 and dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister, while the first phase of Amaravati City is set to be completed by 2028. He asserted that under Modi's leadership, the promises made two years ago to rebuild the state are being realised. "Once they mocked that Airbuses would not come, now world-class Airbuses are landing," he remarked.

Naidu said the airport, built between the sea and the hills, would transform North Andhra just as Shamshabad Airport reshaped Telangana. Praising the farmers for providing land for the project, he said naming the airport after freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju is a matter of pride.

The Chief Minister pointed out that built by GMR, a company based in North Andhra, the airport showcases the region's potential to the world. In this context, he acknowledged the contributions of former civil aviation minister Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju and current Union aviation minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, both from North Andhra, in advancing the project.

The Chief Minister praised Narendra Modi's leadership when the world is transitioning from IT to AI, citing initiatives such as Digital India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Ayushman Bharat, and the Jal Jeevan Mission. He stated that the Prime Minister has elevated India to the fourth position in the global economy and protected the country from the impacts of international conflicts.

"Even those who criticise Modi recognise the good he has accomplished," Chandrababu Naidu maintained, calling the Prime Minister "the right person at the right time in the right place." He asked people to support Narendra Modi, asserting that only the Prime Minister can fulfil the hopes and aspirations of 1.44 billion Indians.

The Chief Minister revealed that Godavari water would reach Anakapalli on August 14, while the Vamsadhara-Godavari linkage would also be pursued. Expressing optimism, he expressed confidence that North Andhra would emerge as a hub for tourism, pharmaceuticals, rare earth minerals, national highways, and spiritual tourism, thereby reducing the need for people to migrate from the region in search of employment.



"Non-Biological PM Plays Victim":
Jairam Ramesh's Swipe at Modi

New Delhi: Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "playing the victim card" and using "vile vitriol against his predecessors and political opponents". He demanded an apology from the Prime Minister for various issues, ranging from the recent NEET-UG paper leak and Ram Mandir donation row to the 2016 demonetisation. "The self-declared non-biological PM enjoys playing the victim card. He uses vile vitriol against his predecessors and political opponents. He very frequently peddles lies to defame them, not just in his public speeches but in Parliament itself. He unleashes an army of foul-mouthed abusers both in Parliament and outside and gives them full protection," Ramesh posted on X. The Congress MP further targeted the government over the controversies surrounding the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the "brutality" against students during the recent protests. "The entire nation is wanting the PM to apologise for the trauma inflicted on lakhs of youth through his paper leak-ridden NTA and his Home Ministry-sanctioned brutality on student protestors," the post read. Ramesh also asked PM Modi to apologise for the "Chanda Chori" by the Ram Mandir Trust. "The entire nation is waiting for the PM to apologise for the 'Chanda Chori Astha Dhoka' by the Ram Mandir Trust, the establishment of which he had himself grandly announced in the Lok Sabha on Feb 5, 2020," Ramesh alleged.



TG Govt Exploring Alternate Funding Options to Complete Metro Phase-1 Takeover From L&T



Hyderabad: The government is seriously exploring alternative funding options to complete the takeover of Hyderabad Metro Rail (HMR) Phase-I from L&T after the Centre reportedly did not grant the required approval for the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) to release a loan of `13,600 crore for the acquisition process.

With the takeover now becoming critical for securing approvals for HMR Phase-II, the state government is understood to have decided to approach public and private sector banks, including the State Bank of India (SBI) and ICICI Bank, for loans at competitive interest rates. It is also exploring the possibility of securing financial assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Official sources said the issue figured prominently during the Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) board of directors meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju at the Secretariat on Friday. The official statement issued after the meeting made no reference to the government's efforts to mobilise loans for the Phase-I takeover. The CS also instructed officials to expedite the procurement of additional Metro Rail coaches to meet the growing passenger demand.

The official release stated that the Chief Secretary directed officials to take measures to ensure Metro Rail passengers reached their destinations safely, conveniently and comfortably. He suggested introducing a common mobility ticketing system across public transport services, including Hyderabad Metro and TGSRTC, enabling commuters to travel using a single ticket. He instructed officials to hold discussions with TGSRTC for developing a common mobile application and also asked them to examine the feasibility of introducing daily, weekly and monthly Metro Rail passes to improve commuter convenience.

The Board meeting reviewed the latest progress on the Phase-I takeover, the status of land acquisition and utility shifting works for Metro Phase-II, and the progress of approvals required for the second phase.

The meeting was attended by board directors, including special chief secretaries Jayesh Ranjan and Vikas Raj, DGP (law and order) Mahesh M. Bhagwat, finance special secretary Sikta Patnaik, managing directors K. Ashok Reddy (HMWS&SB) and Sarfaraz Ahmed (HMRL), additional managing director B. Ajith Reddy and joint managing director Shivendra Pratap.

Meanwhile, official sources revealed that the Centre has reportedly asked the Telangana government to complete the HMR-I takeover within the next two months to facilitate approvals for the proposed Phase-II project. According to the sources, the Centre has indicated that it would not be associated with the Phase-I acquisition process but was willing to support Phase-II as a joint venture project with the state government.

The Telangana is understood to have urged the Centre not to link the Phase-I takeover with approvals for Phase-II. However, the Centre is said to have maintained that completion of the Phase-I acquisition within two months is a prerequisite for granting approvals to the second phase. Faced with this timeline, the state government has reportedly decided to approach public and private sector banks to secure the required loans at the earliest.

The first phase of the Metro acquisition process was originally scheduled to be completed by May-end but was stalled after the proposed IRFC loan failed to materialise. Although the IRFC had signed an agreement to provide a loan of `13,527 crore to Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited, the funds could not be released due to the absence of a mandatory No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Centre.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had personally taken up the matter with Union Ministers and also addressed letters seeking clearance for the loan. During those discussions, it was jointly decided to appoint SBI Caps as a consultant to re-evaluate the Phase-I takeover and facilitate raising the necessary funds for both the acquisition and the proposed Metro Phase-II. However, there has reportedly been no significant progress on the exercise for nearly one and a half months.

With indications that IRFC may no longer be in a position to extend the loan, the Telangana government is also planning to entrust the responsibility of selecting an appropriate lending institution to a specialised agency to expedite loan sanction and disbursement, ensuring that the Metro acquisition process is completed without further delay.

Nation sought apology, he ‘forgave country’: Congress jibe at PM Modi

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his video message, saying he wanted to forgive children who abused him during the Jantar Mantar students' protest and remarked that while the country was asking the PM to apologise, he had instead “forgiven the country”.

Modi on Friday said he and even his late mother were subjected to abusive language at Jantar Mantar during the protests over alleged NEET irregularities, but asserted that dragging such “misguided children” into



court would not resolve the problem and hence, he wanted to forgive them.

Tagging the PM's video and post, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said in a post on X in Hindi, “Listen to this. The country is asking him to apologise, yet he has forgiven the country.”

In another late-

night video message released on Instagram, the prime minister said he could understand the anguish prevailing in society, but stressed that this was the time to embrace the youth and guide them on the right path.

“Not only was I subjected to abusive language at Jantar Mantar, but even my late mother was

abused there. But abuses never solve anything; let's guide the misguided,” he said.

Modi described the students as “misguided children” and said punishing them or making them go through court proceedings will not solve the problem.

“I want to forgive them. People make mistakes, but this is a cultural shock that our daughters are using such abusive language. We must forgive our youth who were misguided; after all, they are our children. It's our duty to show them the right path,” he said.

Heavy rains swell Telangana reservoirs, Godavari surges past danger mark in Mulugu

Hyderabad: The Godavari River surged to 48 feet at Bhadrachalam by Friday evening from 37.60 feet in the morning. Authorities were releasing 11.44 lakh cusecs downstream as the river continued to rise, prompting the officials to raise a second warning signal to alert people in the river's catchment and low-lying areas.

In Mulugu district, the Godavari crossed the danger level at Peruru in Wazeedu mandal, where the water level reached 19.36 metres. Several streams overflowed, cutting off road links to



villages. Floodwater also inundated NH-163, snapping connectivity to about 25 villages, while the Eturunagaram-Rampur road was cut off after floodwater flowed over a culvert.

At Medigadda (Lakshmi) Barrage in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, the Godavari was in free-flow condition,

with inflows and outflows at 9,89,620 cusecs and all 85 gates open.

In Nirmal district, Kadem Project was receiving 10,282 cusecs, while Eellampalli in Peddapalli district was receiving and releasing 1,32,785 cusecs. SRSP in Nizamabad was receiving 70,000 cusecs.

The Jurala Project in Mahabubnagar district also witnessed a major surge, with inflows reaching 1.36 lakh cusecs. Officials opened 24 gates and released about 1.33 lakh cusecs downstream. Hydropower generation continued through 11 units.

The rising flows have also pushed up inflows into Srisailem, which was receiving 1,05,709 cusecs from Jurala. Its water level stood at 830.70 feet, with storage at 50.26 TMCft. Officials expect the strong inflows to continue for another three days.

Bhatti Explains Family Certificate Benefits for Citizens

Hyderabad: Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has clarified that the Indiramma People's Government is providing this 'Family Certificate' so that the citizens in the State can furnish the details of themselves and their family members whenever any institution or any system asks for them.

He was speaking at the SIR Awareness Programme organised on Friday at Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan here. Transport Minister Ponnampallabharathi, Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society Vice Chairman Faheem Qureshi, and others participated in the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the people of the State are receiving the commodities supplied by the State Government through ration cards, Aarogyasri, fine rice, and other schemes.

While availing these government schemes, the State Government has



made available, at the Tahsildar Office, the information relating to the details of the members of those families in the State.

He said that any family in the State that requires information relating to itself or the details of its family members can visit the Tahsildar Office or a MeeSeva Centre and obtain this Family Certificate.

Bhatti Vikramarka said that, through this, if any system or any institution in the State asks for your family details, this information will be useful for furnishing the same to those systems and government institutions.

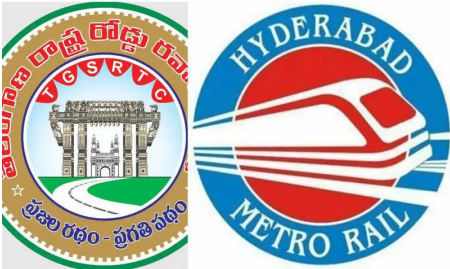
Unified Ticketing System proposed for Hyderabad metro and TGSRTC

Hyderabad: Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju on Friday suggested a common mobility ticketing system be introduced across all public transport services such as Metro and RTC, enabling passengers to travel on a single ticket.

The Chief Secretary instructed officials concerned that discussions be held with TGSRTC to develop a common mobile application. He also directed officials to explore options for introducing daily, weekly and monthly passes for Metro passengers.

For the first time, Jaju, as Chairman of the HMRL Board of Directors, reviewed the development of Metro Rail here. The meeting discussed the latest progress on Phase I takeover and Land acquisition and utility shifting status for Phase II of the Metro project.

He also reviewed the status of approvals for Metro phase-2. The Chief Secretary instructed officials to take necessary steps to procure additional coaches at the earliest.



Floods Disrupt Telangana-Maharashtra Road Link; Pranahita Inundates Crops

ADILABAD: Road connectivity between Telangana and Maharashtra was disrupted on Friday after floodwaters from the Penganga River overflowed the Anandpur bridge in Jainad mandal. The bridge connects Jainad in Telangana with Digra in Maharashtra.

However, traffic on National Highway 44 remained unaffected, although the Penganga continued to flow above danger levels due to heavy inflows from upstream. All irrigation projects in the erstwhile Adilabad district received substantial inflows. Educational institutions in Adilabad district remained closed after officials declared a holiday on Friday in view of the flood situation.

Meanwhile, the Pranahita River was in high flood, and its backwaters inundated standing crops spread over hundreds of acres in Talai, Papanpet, Somini and Mogavelli villages located along its banks.

Floodwater was being released downstream from the Sripada Yellampalli Project after five of its 62 gates were lifted following heavy inflows from the catchment area. By 7 p.m., the project had received an inflow of 50,570 cusecs, while the outflow stood at 42,848 cusecs.

The Kadam Project received an inflow of 10,128 cusecs, while the outflow was limited to 88 cusecs. Irriga-



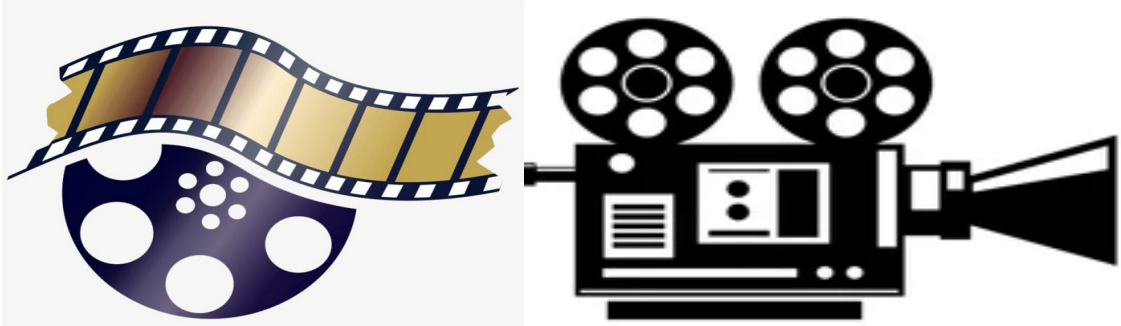
tion officials are storing water in the reservoir by keeping the remaining gates closed.

In Nirmal, State Government Advisor P. Sudarshan Reddy reviewed the flood situation in Nirmal and Adilabad districts and directed officials to immediately repair any roads and bridges damaged by the floods and restore connectivity. Collectors Rajarshi Shah and Bhavesh Mishra participated in the review meeting.

Sudarshan Reddy instructed irrigation officials to regulate water storage in irrigation projects based on inflows. He also stressed the need to promote crop diversification and rainwater harvesting in view of the possible impact of the El Niño effect.

Superintendent of Police Akhil Mahajan, accompanied by Adilabad DSP Jeevan Reddy, Jainad Circle Inspector G. Shravan and Sub-Inspector P. Goutham, inspected vehicles stranded on NH-353B near Tarnam village in Jainad mandal. He directed gram panchayat staff to remain deployed at bridges and culverts where floodwaters were overflowing to prevent any untoward incidents.

Minister for Irrigation Uttam Kumar Reddy is scheduled to inspect the Kadam Project and interact with irrigation officials in Nirmal on August 1.



CINEMA

Ramayana Trailer: A Magnum Opus Raises The Bar

Ranbir Kapoor's portrayal is measured, composed, and effortlessly convincing. His expressions, physical transformation, and action sequences portray Rama as both a compassionate prince and an invincible warrior.

Few trailers manage to leave audiences speechless within minutes, and Ranbir Kapoor's Ramayana is one of them. Rather than merely introducing its characters, the trailer transports viewers into a magnificent world where mythology, emotion, and cutting-edge filmmaking blend seamlessly.

The narrative revolves around Lord Vishnu descending to Earth as Rama to restore cosmic order when evil begins to dominate creation. Standing beside him is Sita, whose purity, resilience, and unwavering devotion define the soul of the epic. Her abduction by the mighty Ravana transforms a personal tragedy into a universal conflict, culminating in the legendary war that determines the destiny of the worlds.

Ranbir Kapoor's portrayal is measured, composed, and effortlessly convincing. His expressions, physical transformation, and action sequences portray Rama as both a compassionate prince and an invincible warrior.

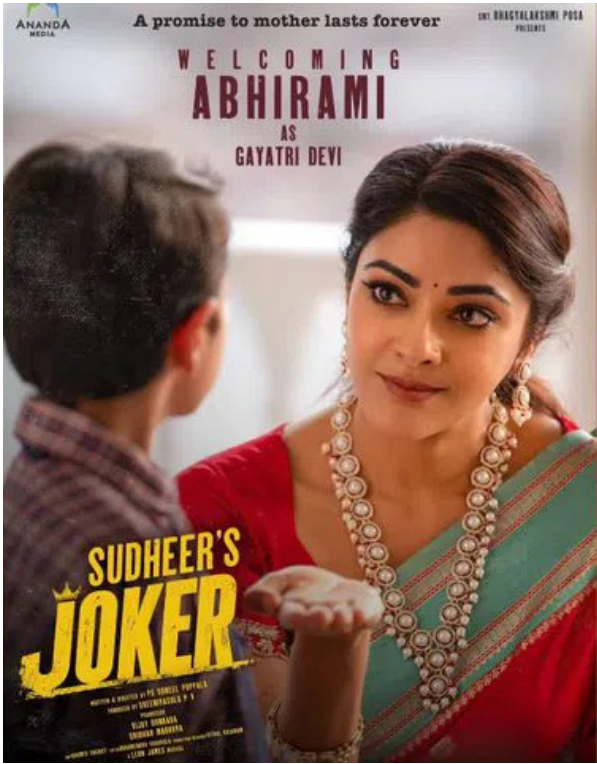
Sai Pallavi brings remarkable serenity to Sita, adding emotional gravitas through subtle yet impactful expressions. Yash commands attention from the moment he appears. His Ravana is fierce, proud, and intimidating, carrying the aura of a ruler determined to challenge the very heavens.



Technically, the trailer is nothing short of spectacular. Every frame reflects premium production quality, while the large-scale battle sequences hint at a visual extravaganza. The collaboration between Prime Focus Studios, DNEG, and Monster Mind Creations has resulted in visuals of international calibre. Hans Zimmer and AR Rahman's thunderous background score elevates every sequence, making the experience even more immersive.

The trailer promises a true magnum opus and has dramatically raised the bar.

Abhirami joins Sudigali Sudheer's 'Joker'; to play Gayatri Devi



Hyderabad:The makers of director Suneel Puppala's eagerly awaited Telugu comedy entertainer 'Joker', featuring actor Sudigali Sudheer in the lead, on Friday welcomed actress Abhirami on board the

unit of the film and disclosed that she would be playing a character called Gayatri Devi in the film.

Taking to its social media timelines, production house Ananda Media wrote, "Team #SudheersJOKER proudly welcomes the versatile actor @abhiramiact garu on board. Get ready to witness her brilliant portrayal of the beautiful character Gayatri Devi."

Actress Aysha plays the female lead in this film. It may be recalled that the makers of the film had disclosed that Aysha plays a character called Shalini in the film on the occasion of the actress's birthday in June this year.

Taking to Instagram to wish Aysha a happy birthday, Ananda Media had said, "Team #SudheerJOKER wishes their queen and the most beautiful @aysha7__official a very Happy Birthday. She is ready to mesmerize the world of #SudheerJOKER as Shalini."

Apart from Aysha, the film will also feature actor Murali Sharma in a pivotal role.

A teaser that the makers released on the occasion of Sudigali Sudheer's birthday in May this year revealed that actor Sudigali Sudheer plays a character called Rummy in the film. Murali Sharma's character in the film explains Rummy's nature in the teaser. He says, "While wealth, women and drugs give several people a high, for Rummy, the belief that he is a king gives him a high."

The teaser also shows that Rummy is a go-getter, who will take up a task only after ascertaining that he will succeed in it.

The film, which has been written and directed by Suneel Puppala, has been produced by Vijay Donkada and Sridhar Makkuvu. It boasts of an impressive technical team. Cinematography for the film is by Ahamed Sharief while music for the entertainer is by one of Tamil cinema's finest music directors, Leon James.

'Joker', which is being edited by Dharmendra Kakarla, has Vithal Kosanam serving as its production designer.

Actor Suriya's Vishwanath and Sons Audio Launch Date and Venue Announced

Actor Suriya's upcoming movie Vishwanath and Sons is one of the most awaited movies of the year. The film is all set to open in theatres on August 14. With only two weeks left before the film's release, Suriya's fans have begun the count-down and have been asking for details about the audio launch date.

Bankrolled by Sithara Entertainments, the makers have announced the date and venue details for the audio launch. The event is set to take place on August 2 at Hindusthan College of Arts and Science in Coimbatore.

Here is the tweet posted by Sithara Entertainments: The film boasts a stellar cast that includes Radikaa Sarathkumar, Nasser, Sudha, Raghu Babu, Sunil Reddy, Bhavani Sri, Viva Harsha, Kaali Venkat, George Maryan, Hyper Aadhi, Srija Ravi, Sarvadaman Banerjee, Mathew Varghese, Kalyani Natarajan, Karate Karthik, and Master Charvik. The film is produced by Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya under the banners of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, respectively.



Actresses Paying the Price for Poor Script Choices?



A string of recent releases has once again sparked debate over whether leading actresses are making the right script choices. From Pooja Hegde's reportedly trimmed role in Jana Nayagan to Anushka Shetty's Ghaati, Kajal Aggarwal's Satyabhama and Tamannaah's Odela 3, several top stars have failed to leave a lasting impression despite being part of high-profile projects. Nayanthara, however, appears to have fared better in Mana Sankara Varaprasad Garu, largely because the film revolved around a husband-wife relationship.

Industry observers say many actresses sign films based on the star cast or commercial potential rather than the strength of their characters, only to find their roles reduced to a few scenes or songs.

"Actresses often end up making poor choices because they don't always have a complete picture of how their characters will eventually shape up on screen," says a noted producer. "Many roles are diluted during production or trimmed during editing. By the time the film releases, there is very little they can do."

The trend is particularly visible in big-budget entertainers featuring multiple heroines. While The Raja Saab brought together Nidhhi Agerwal, Riddhi Kumar and Malavika Mohanan, Yash's Toxic features Nayanthara, Kiara Advani, Rukmini Vasanth and Tara Sutaria. Although such ensembles generate excitement, the real question remains whether each actress gets a meaningful part. While the actresses in The Raja Saab may have been disappointed by the limited scope of their roles, it remains to be seen how Toxic utilises its star-studded female cast.

Producer Vishnu Vardhan Induri believes it is unfair to judge films like Toxic before their release. "I don't think it's only about glamour," he says. "Every producer and director casts actors with a purpose. The filmmaker designs each character according to the story. Having leading actresses also expands a film's reach and strengthens its promotional appeal."

He adds that actresses today play a crucial role in marketing films. "Their presence at promotional events attracts audiences and media attention, adding significant value to a project," he says.

This Sankranthi too, several films are relying on multiple heroines to widen their appeal. Bharatha Mahasayulaku Vinjapthi stars Ashika Ranganath and Dimple Hayathi, while Nari Nari Naduma Murari features Samyuktha Menon and Sakshi Vaidya. Though these actresses are expected to add glamour and youthful appeal, director Teja believes such roles often fail to utilise their full potential.

"Most actresses in commercial entertainers are confined to a few songs and limited scenes, eventually ending up with a raw deal," he says. "Many of them are capable of delivering powerful performances, but the writing rarely allows them to do so. We have also seen instances where roles are reportedly trimmed during editing, as in the cases of Pooja Hegde in Jana Nayagan and Janhvi Kapoor in Peddi. Such developments will make actresses think twice before signing commercial films unless they are assured of meaningful characters that contribute to the story."

As more filmmakers opt for single or multiple heroines in mainstream entertainers, the focus is gradually shifting from glamour to script selection. For today's actresses, choosing films with well-written, substantial roles may ultimately prove far more rewarding than simply being part of a star-studded cast.

Rashmika, Pooja Hegde Were Considered for Lenin Item Song, Reveals Thaman

In his latest interview, music composer SS Thaman shared a surprising detail about a missing sequence in the movie. He revealed that the makers had initially planned a special item song featuring Rayalaseema slang. He composed the track, and the team considered casting popular actresses like Rashmika Mandanna, Pooja Hegde, or Preity Mukhundhan (Kannappa fame). Just before shooting began, the filmmakers decided to scrap the song entirely. They felt it would interrupt the flow of the narrative and draw negative feedback in reviews.

Thaman admitted that he was upset initially by the decision. He event exited the film's official WhatsApp groups in frustration. Things got sorted later. Meanwhile, Thaman has shifted his focus to Megastar Chiranjeevi's 158th film. He mentioned watching an impressive footage clip of Chiranjeevi recently.

