



Pressure Mounts on Young Hero After
Anupama's Breakup Talk

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Development Possible Only by Improving Education Standards: CM



From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 17: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu addressed the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on the Mega DSC recruitment issue. He said the government believes that

providing quality education and skills will help students develop into highly capable human resources. He said that by promoting IT, Andhra Pradesh had produced some of the world's best human resources in the technology

sector. The Telugu Desam Party has always encouraged the education sector, he said, recalling that N.T. Rama Rao introduced reforms through residential schools. He also said it was NTR who established a women's university to pro-

vide higher education opportunities to women. Chandrababu said that when he first became Chief Minister, immediate steps were taken to address the lack of schools. The Chief Minister said the government established a primary school for every kilometre, an upper-primary school every three kilometres, a junior college and engineering college in every mandal, and a medical college in every district. He stressed that development is possible only when education standards are improved. Chandrababu criticised the previous government, saying it claimed to have introduced reforms between 2019 and 2024 without filling even a single teacher post. Of the 14 DSCs conducted so far, 11 teacher recruitment drives were held during TDP gov-

ernments, he said. He added that no one had so far filed a complaint alleging corruption in these recruitments. The Chief Minister said dry ration was also provided to encourage students to attend schools. He said the TDP government had introduced the midday meal scheme in the state and later extended it up to Intermediate education. He said a decision was also taken to provide 33% reservation for women in education. A separate law was brought in to ensure transparency in teacher transfers, he said. Chandrababu said the education sector had undergone innovative reforms over the past 30 years. Students in SC and ST residential schools are being prepared for competitive examinations, including entrance tests for institutions such as IITs and IIMs, he said.

AP Assembly Gives Green Signal to Municipal Amendment Bill



From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 17: The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly has approved the Third Amendment Bill to the Andhra Pradesh Municipal Laws. Minister P. Narayana introduced the Bill in the House, which was passed after a brief discussion.

The government has brought in these amendments to simplify the property registration process

and speed up the process of changing the owner's name in municipal records. At present, after completing property registration, owners have to undergo a separate mutation process with the respective municipality to have their names entered in municipal records. Under the new system, the registration process will be integrated with municipal records so that the owner's name is auto-

matically updated at the time of registration itself. The amendments also provide for payment of the mutation fee at the time of registration. In addition, uniform mutation fees will be implemented across municipal corporations and municipalities of different grades. The government expects these changes to make the property transfer process simpler and faster for citizens.

Fun Exchange Among Ministers in Assembly; Lokesh Jokes About Minister Satyakumar

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 17: A light-hearted exchange among ministers at the beginning of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly session drew attention. AP Health Minister and BJP national secretary Satyakumar Yadav entered the Assembly wearing a BJP scarf. Responding humorously, AP Education Minister Nara Lokesh said, "Satyagaru, why do you need a party scarf separately? Everyone in the world already knows that you are from the BJP!" Senior minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu also joined in the banter, saying, "Yes, sir.



Satyagaru is also one of the prominent leaders at the national level," while praising Satyakumar. The exchange made the atmosphere even more cheerful. Lokesh then joked with Satyakumar again, saying, "Please teach even our party people about discipline." At

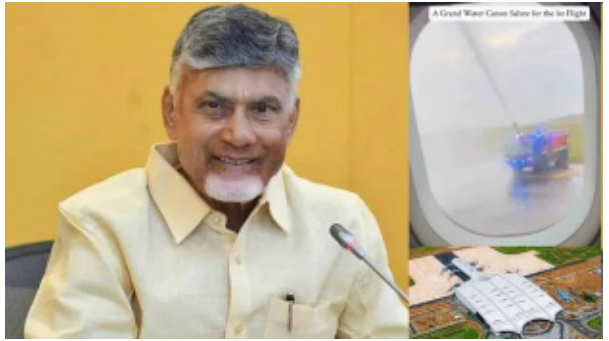
that point, a TDP MLA sitting nearby responded, "Party first, sir!" Satyakumar Yadav smiled and replied, "Nation first.. Party next.. Self last!" His remark drew appreciation from the ministers and MLAs present and brought smiles across the Assembly premises. The light-hearted

conversation reflected the friendly atmosphere between leaders of different political parties and the camaraderie among them. Atchannaidu highlighted Satyakumar's political importance as BJP national secretary, while Lokesh's characteristic humour added a special touch to the exchange. Satyakumar's remark, "Nation first.. Party next.. Self last!", became particularly noteworthy. While Assembly sessions generally revolve around political debates and policy matters, the humorous interaction provided a lighter moment and brought smiles to the faces of ministers and MLAs.

First Flight Lands at Bhogapuram Airport; Beginning of a New Chapter: CM

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 17: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu responded on social media platform X to the commencement of flight services at Bhogapuram Airport. He said Bhogapuram had become the venue for a historic moment. He said operations at the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport commenced today, with the first IndiGo flight from Hyderabad arriving at Bhogapuram Airport. With the arrival of the first flight,

Andhra Pradesh has embarked on a new chapter, he said, adding that improved air connectivity is now available to North Andhra. Chief Minister Chandrababu said Bhogapuram Airport is opening the way for new opportunities in the state. He said the airport would give wings to the hopes and aspirations of the youth and provide a major boost to opportunities in education, employment and business. He stated that Bhogapuram Airport would play a crucial role in the de-



velopment of North Andhra. Describing it as a historic new beginning for the people of Andhra Pradesh, he said the airport would emerge as a new gateway to North

Andhra. With the launch of the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, Andhra Pradesh has ushered in a new era, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said.

Minister Sandhyarani Slams YSRCP Over 'False Campaign' to Scare Tribals



Congress Party (YSRCP) of provoking tribal communities. She said it was ridiculous for the opposition to claim that it would return only if it was granted the status of the principal opposition party, comparing it to children throwing tantrums when they are not given chocolates. She said reports that the 1/70 Act, which provides protection for tribal lands, would be repealed are completely false. Protecting the lands and rights of tribal people is the government's responsibility, she said, urging tribals not to be afraid in any way. Minister Sandhyarani expressed anger at what she described as a campaign aimed at misleading and frightening tribal communities. She alleged that the previous government had shut down the ITDA and stopped 18 welfare

schemes. Criticising YSRCP leaders, she said their behaviour was like that of a "Gurivinda"—a seed that cannot see its own black spot while pointing out the flaws of others. She questioned what Jagan had done

when GO No. 3 was cancelled during his tenure as Chief Minister. Minister Gummadi Sandhyarani also remarked that nobody knows whether Y.S. Jagan is staying in Tadepalli or Bengaluru.

Key Announcement by CM Chandrababu on El Niño Impact in Assembly

From Our Staff Reporter

Amaravati, August, 17 : Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said that the state is experiencing a severe impact of El Niño, resulting in drought-like conditions. He said there is a significant rainfall deficit compared to the normal average. Speaking during a discussion on El Niño in the Assembly on Monday, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said there was a need to create public awareness about El Niño through the Assembly. He also said that the Supreme Court had intervened in the dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka over Cauvery water. Continuing his speech, the Chief Minister said, "Water-related disputes are arising between villages, between states and even between countries. From June to December 2026, the state is expected to receive 867 mm of rainfall, but estimates indicate that only 557 mm may be recorded. This year, all districts are likely to receive below-normal rainfall. Some districts recorded a 68% rainfall deficit in July. A 35% deficit is expected in August, 35% in September, 25% in October and 20% in November."

Bhogapuram Airport Will Be a Permanent Milestone in North Andhra's Development: Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 17: Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan said he was delighted that services commenced today at the Bhogapuram Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, giving new wings to Andhra Pradesh's development journey. Responding through a post on X, Pawan Kalyan said the successful landing of an IndiGo flight from Hyderabad marked a remarkable milestone in the

state's development history. He said the international airport, named after legendary tribal freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju, is not merely an expansion of transportation infrastructure but a tangible fulfilment of the decades-old aspirations of the people of North Andhra. Pawan Kalyan expressed hope that the airport would attract new investments, strengthen industrial opportunities and expand em-

ployment and job opportunities for the youth. He said it would remain a permanent milestone in the development of North Andhra. The Deputy Chief Minister also wished that the Bhogapuram Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport would emerge as one of the best airports in the country, provide international-standard services to passengers and continue to grow and develop with each passing day.



Nagababu Appointed Chairman of AP Green Executive Committee; Government Issues Orders

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 17: The Andhra Pradesh government has taken a key decision regarding the implementation of greening and reforestation programmes across the state. The government has appointed MLC Konidela Nagendra Babu (Nagababu) as Chairman of the AP-GREEN Executive

Committee. The Environment and Forest Department issued orders to this effect through G.O. RT No. 93. The state government said that measures are being undertaken through AP-GREEN to increase green cover and expand forests across Andhra Pradesh. At the district level, the programmes will be implemented through

District Green Development Agencies. The government has set a target of increasing forest and tree cover to 50% of Andhra Pradesh's geographical area by 2047. The state government has constituted an AP Green Governing Board, Executive Committee and governing bodies of District Green Development Agencies.



PGRS applications should be resolved in a quality manner to increase the level of satisfaction among the people

Madanapalle, August 17(Skyline correspondent): In-charge District Collector along with Sub-Collector Challa



charge District Collector Shiv Narayana Sarma has instructed the officials to resolve PGRS applications in a quality manner and quickly to increase the level of satisfaction among the people. On Monday, a Public Grievance Redressal system (PGRS) program was held at the PGRS hall in the Collectorate. In this program, the in-

charge District Collector along with Sub-Collector Challa Kalyani, DRO Venkatesh, KRRC SDC Chandrasekhar Reddy, HNSS SDC Madhav Reddy, and Survey Department AD Shantaraj together received complaints from the people. Speaking on the occasion, the in-charge District Collector said that the concerned officials should thoroughly examine the petitions of the complainants at the field level and conduct a transparent investigation. The petitions must be resolved within the stipulated time to the satisfaction of the petitioner. The petitions should be resolved to the satisfaction of the petitioner without pending applications, beyond SLA and re-opening. Later, they received the petitions from the petitioners. A total of 347 petitions were received in this program, appropriate action was taken on them and the in-charge collector and sub-collector endorsed them to the officials of the relevant departments for resolution. District officers and staff of various departments participated in this program.

Kareerishthi Yagam from August 30 to September 03

Tirumala, 16 August 2026(skyline daily) : Seeking the divine intervention for a good amount of rain in State as well across the country, TTD will conduct Karishthi Yagam, Varuna Japam and Parjanya Shanti Homam from August 30 to September 03, in Tirumala. The rituals will be performed at the Dharmagiri Veda Vignana Peetham and the arrangements for the ritual are being made under the supervision of the Principal Sri Kuppa Siva Subrahmanya Avadhani. As many as 32 Vedic, Shrouta and Smartha scholars will participate in the Yagam and related rituals. The Maha Purnahuti will be performed on September 03.



Police Raid Illegal Gambling Den in Mannemuthheri, 6 Arrested



Sullurupeta: august 17 Skyline Daily SuActing on the orders of Tirupati District SP L. Subbarayudu, a police team led by Sullurupeta Sub Inspector Ajay Kumar conducted a raid on an illegal gambling den in Mannemuthheri village. The operation was carried out under the supervision of Sullurupeta Circle Inspector M. Muralikrishna and guidance of Nayudupeta DSP G. Chenchubabu.

Based on specific information, police caught 6 persons indulging in gambling and seized Rs 19,000 in cash along with 3 two-wheelers from them.

Head Constables Sriram Satyanarayana and Madhu,

Constable Kupparao, and Home Guards Kiran and Veerayya also participated in the swift raid along with SI Ajay Kumar.

Speaking on the occasion, SI Ajay Kumar warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone involved in illegal activities such as gambling, card games, gutka and liquor sales in the mandal, regardless of who they are. He said information provided by the public about such illegal activities will be kept confidential.

Senior officials appreciated the police staff for conducting the raid efficiently.

Lawyers Boycott Duties and Protest in Nayudupeta Court



Nayudupeta august 17 Skyline

Daily Nayudupeta: Lawyers boycotted duties and staged a protest in the Nayudupeta court on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Nayudupeta Bar Association President Pasala Chengayya condemned the recent incident in Anantapur where police allegedly misbehaved with a lawyer and used abusive language. He demanded action against the police personnel who misbehaved with the lawyer. He also urged the government to implement the Advocate Protection Act.

Several lawyers participated in the program.

Fishermen Fail to Return from Fishing Trip; Konaseema District Administration on Alert

Konaseema, August 17: The Konaseema district administration has gone on high alert after a fishing boat carrying fishermen failed to return from a fishing trip.

District Collector Dr. R. Mahesh Kumar said that boat IND-AP-E8-MO-135, belonging to the Odalarevu Fish Landing Centre in

Allavaram mandal, had ventured into the sea for fishing on August 3. The boat was expected to return to Odalarevu on August 13 but has not returned so far. Officials have identified eight fishermen on board. Preliminary information indicates that the boat was carrying provisions suffi-

cient for 15 days and around 1,000 litres of diesel. Officials suspect that the boat may have moved towards the coastal areas of Visakhapatnam or Paradip. Authorities attempted to contact the fishermen over the phone, but received no response, prompting the district administration

to take immediate action. The Collector directed officials to immediately inform the Indian Coast Guard and initiate search and rescue operations. He also instructed them to coordinate with District SP Rahul Meena and take all necessary steps to trace the fishermen.

Education Revolution in Amaravati: Modern School to Be Built at a Cost of Rs.25 Crore



Amaravati, August 17: The foundation stone was laid for the construction of the Amaravati Educational & Cultural Academy at Abbarajupalem in Andhra Pradesh's capital Amaravati. The educational institution will be constructed on three acres near the E3-N14 junction under the aegis of D.A.V. Amaravati Rythu Vidyalaya Vedanta Group. Currently, classes are being conducted from Nursery to Class 5. From the next academic year, the academy plans to increase student strength by introducing two sections. In the future, the institution will be expanded to offer education up to Class 12.

With the objective of providing quality education to around 2,500 students, the school building will be constructed around approximately 1 lakh square feet. The estimated cost of construction is around 25 crore. The construction expenses will be raised through contributions from farmers and donors.

School Secretary Anumula Bala Murali Krishna said that complete accounts would be maintained for every rupee spent. He said the primary objective is to provide quality and high-standard education at affordable fees, adding that the academy aims to become one of the top 10 educational institutions in the state within two years. He said the AP CRDA and the Chief Minister are extending their support and cooperation. He added that an agreement has been reached with the Vedanta Group through Chennai to provide services to the institution.

OBC Federation Objects to Caste Census Category, Warns of Protest

Thane: The omission of a separate category for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Central government's recently published Census Gazette has triggered strong reactions from members of the OBC community, with the National OBC Federation accusing the government of sidelining the community's long-standing demand for a comprehensive caste-based enumeration. Eknath Taramale President of the Konkan Division of the National OBC Federation, has alleged that the Centre has once again failed to address the concerns of the OBC community despite announcing its decision to conduct a caste census.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the contents of the Gazette notification issued in connection with the upcoming census exercise, Taramale demanded that the government introduce a separate and clearly defined category for OBC communities to ensure an accurate caste-wise enumeration. According to Taramale, the OBC community has not been included in an independent caste-based census since 1931. Although the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was conducted in 2011, OBC leaders have repeatedly alleged that the complete

caste-wise data collected during the exercise has never been made public.

As a result, the community continues to lack reliable and officially verified data regarding its actual population, socio-economic status, educational progress and representation in employment and public institutions, he said. The Central government had announced its decision to conduct a caste census on April 30, 2025, following which expectations within the OBC community increased significantly. However, concerns resurfaced after the Gazette notification related to the census, issued on August 14, 2026, listed 40 questions to be included in the enumeration process. The tenth point in the questionnaire specifically referred to Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and "caste."

While the inclusion of the term "caste" suggests that the caste identity of every individual may be recorded during the census, the notification does not clearly explain how OBC communities will be identified or whether they will be enumerated under a distinct category. Taramale argued that the absence of a transparent and well-defined framework for recording OBC communities could

undermine the objective of conducting a meaningful caste census. Highlighting the importance of comprehensive caste-based data, Taramale said policymakers continue to face significant challenges because official statistics related to the OBC population, educational attainment, employment patterns, economic conditions and political representation remain unavailable. He stressed that a census is not merely an exercise to determine population figures but an important mechanism for understanding the social, educational and economic realities of different sections of society.

Accurate caste-wise data, he said, is essential for ensuring equitable representation and implementing reservation policies in proportion to population demographics. Issuing a strong warning to the Centre, Taramale said the government still has sufficient time to amend the Gazette notification and incorporate provisions that would allow for the clear identification and enumeration of OBC communities. He urged the government to revise the notification in accordance with the broader objective of conducting a comprehensive caste census that includes all communities. If

the demand remains undressed, the OBC community will organise a large-scale protest at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan during the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament, he said. Taramale further warned that if the government fails to take the community's concerns seriously, the agitation could expand into a nationwide movement. He also indicated that the organisation may consider adopting a political strategy that includes appealing to voters to oppose candidates representing the ruling party if the demand for a separate OBC category in the census is ignored. There is still time for the government to make the necessary amendments. Since the Centre has already announced its decision to conduct a caste census, the Gazette notification should be revised to ensure the clear and separate enumeration of OBC communities. Otherwise, the OBC community will be compelled to launch a nationwide Agitation Taramale said. The controversy has once again brought the debate over caste-based data collection to the forefront, with OBC organisations insisting that a transparent and inclusive census is essential for evidence-based policymaking and social justice.

Meerut Woman Cop Suspended Over 'Objectionable' Social Media Video With QR Code; Probe Ordered

Meerut: A woman sub-inspector posted at the Police Lines in Meerut has been suspended after an "objectionable" video allegedly featuring her circulated on social media, prompting the Uttar Pradesh Police to launch a departmental inquiry. According to reports by PTI, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Avinash Pandey suspended Sub-Inspector Anu Rani on Sunday following the circulation of the video. Anu Rani, who has been associated with the Uttar Pradesh Police, regularly shared videos

on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram. Her posts largely featured gym workouts, fitness routines, tips and glimpses of her personal life. However, an allegedly objectionable video circulating online reportedly included a QR code linked to requests for money. Some reports also claimed that the woman appeared in casual clothing, including a night suit, in portions of the video. The circulation of the video raised questions over whether the content violated departmental guidelines governing the social

media activity of police personnel.

Police officials have clarified that no video showing Anu Rani in police uniform has surfaced so far. The Cyber Cell has been tasked with examining the authenticity of the circulating video and determining its source and manner of creation and dissemination. Officials are also looking into the technical aspects surrounding the clip and its online circulation. A departmental inquiry has also been ordered into the matter. According to re-

ports, the inquiry has been assigned to Circle Officer Saumya Singh. SP (Crime) Avnish Kumar confirmed the suspension and said it was linked to an alleged violation of the department's social media policy. Officials have maintained that further action will depend on the findings of the departmental inquiry.

The Cyber Cell's investigation is expected to establish whether the video is genuine, whether it has been altered or manipulated, and how it came to be circulated online.

TRUHOME FINANCE LIMITED (Formerly Known As Shriram Housing Finance Limited)	
	Reg.Off.: Srinivasa Tower, 1st Floor, Door No. 5, Old No.11, 2nd Lane, Cenatopha Road, Alwarpet, Teynampet, Chennai-600018 Head Office: Level 3, Wockhardt Towers, East Wing C-2, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400051 Website: www.truhomefinance.in
SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE	
Whereas, The undersigned being the authorised officer of Truhome Finance Limited (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited) under the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (said Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (said Rules) issued demand notices to the Borrowers details of which are mentioned in the table below to repay the amount mentioned in the said demand notices.	
The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned being the Authorised officer Truhome Finance Limited (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited) has taken SYMBOLIC POSSESSION of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules on 13/08/2026.	
The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Truhome Finance Limited (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited) for an amount as mentioned herein below with interest thereon.	
The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.	
Borrower's Name and Address	
MR.VEMURU MEENAKSHI W/O MR.VEMURU BHANU KIRAN MR.VEMURU BHANU KIRAN /O MR.VEMURI SUBRAMANAYAM DOOR NO H NO 3-15/1 ANDHRA BANK COLONY AVILALALTIRUPATI RURAL SATHVA SCHOOL, AVILALAL CHITTOOR ANDHRA PRADESH INDIA 517507	
Amount due as per Demand Notice	
Demand Notice Date -13.05.2026 Demand notice Amount of Rs.1170744.24/-(Eleven Lakh Seventy Thousand Seven Hundred Forty Four and Twenty Four Paisa Only) as on 30-06-2026 under reference of Loan Account No. SMLHTRPT0001102	
Description of Mortgaged Property	
All That Piece And Parcel Of Land, And Building Bearing, D.No.5-6/1 Situated at Keintrapakroon Village., Accounts, Kunttrapakam Panchayathi, Diguva Nethagiripalli Village Assessment No.513, Tirupathi Mandalam, Tirupathi District, Andhra Pradesh, Comprised In S.No.429, Land Measuring of 252.16 Sq. Yards, and Boundaries: North By: Site Of K.Ramamma and House of Jaakamma South By: Road, East By: Road, West By: Site and house of V.Jyothi Prakash, Measurement: East to West Both Side: 53.6 feet North to South Both Side: 37.6 feet Admeasuring: 2006.25 Sq. feet of 252.16 Sq.yards A/C Sheet Roofed House Measurements Door No. 5-6/1 East to west: 14.2 feet North to South 18.7 feet Total Admeasuring: 240 Sq. feet	
Borrower's Name and Address	
MR.SRINIVASULU K S/O K VENKATAIAH MRS.SUBHASHINI K W/O MR.SRINIVASULU K R/O D NO.5-101A, THIMMAIAH GUNTA, VENKATAPURAM NEAR WATER TANK RENGUNTA CHITTOOR ANDHRA PRADESH INDIA 517520	
Amount due as per Demand Notice	
Demand Notice Date -13.05.2026 Demand notice Amount of Rs.188619/- (One Lakh Eighty Eight Thousand Six Hundred and Nineteen Only) & Rs.591593/- (Five Lakhs Ninety One Thousand Five Hundred and Ninety Three Only) & Rs.954800/- (Nine Lakhs Fifty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Only) as on 31-05-2026 under reference of Loan Account No. SBTHTRPT0000599 & SILHTRPT0000793 & STUHTRPT0000600	
Description of Mortgaged Property	
Chittoor D., Sri Balaji R.D., Tirupathi, Rengunta Sub D., Rengunta Mandal, R.Agraharam Village Census, Government Survey No. 380/12, total area A.O-20 cents, I will settle the area A.O-06 cents per hectare 0-024 or equivalent land of 290.4 sq.m. Only. The boundaries of this land are detailed. East: The land I hold, West: Chinnu Nagayya's land, North: Road, South : Pidatha Ramachandraiah's land, Within these boundaries, 0-06 Cents the above mentioned acreage is 0-024 acres or equivalent to 290.4 sq.	
Place: Tirupathi Date : 13-08-2026	Sd/- Authorised Officer- Truhome Finance Limited (Earlier Known as Shriram Housing Finance Limited)

EDITORIAL

Tribunal reforms are welcome

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

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

DRDO Is Being Restructured. But The Real Problem Remains Unsolved

India stands at a defining moment in its technological and strategic journey. The ongoing reforms within the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) are not merely another bureaucratic restructuring. They represent perhaps the most consequential institutional reform in India's defence innovation ecosystem - R&D. If executed with conviction, they could determine whether India becomes a genuine technology power or continues to remain dependent on others for critical military capabilities. According to government sources, the Prime Minister's Office has directed that the restructuring of DRDO be completed by 2026. The objective is ambitious: transform DRDO into a leaner, more efficient, and globally competitive research organisation, capable of delivering next-generation military technologies. The urgency is welcome. But structural reforms alone will not solve India's defence innovation challenge. The deeper questions concern talent, resources, institutional culture, and national priorities. R&D in national security must never be viewed as a cost centre. It is a strategic investment that safeguards sovereignty. Every breakthrough in propulsion, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, semiconductors, or autonomous systems translates directly into military capability and geopolitical leverage. For a rising power aspiring to become a developed nation by 2047, under-investing in defence R&D is not merely poor budgeting, but a strategic mistake.

The DRDO's achievements deserve recognition before criticism. Its record in missiles and strategic systems is remarkable by any global standard. The organisation has delivered the Agni to Akash and Nag, cruise missile BrahMos in partnership with Russia, and is now at work on complex air defence systems like Project Kusha. Its contributions to radar systems, electronic warfare, secure communications, sensors, and naval technologies have substantially strengthened India's armed forces. Working alongside defence public sector undertakings, the DRDO has enabled indigenous warship construction and advanced combat systems that were once considered beyond India's technological reach. These successes dem-

onstrate that India can build world-class defence technologies when policy, scientific leadership, and political commitment converge. Yet, modern warfare is evolving much faster than traditional research institutions. The battlefields of today have fundamentally altered military thinking. Autonomous systems, unmanned platforms, AI, drones, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities, and advanced propulsion are becoming the decisive technologies of future conflicts.

What To Do In Military R&D

It is precisely in several of these areas where India continues to lag. The Kaveri jet engine programme remains unfinished after decades. Indigenous propulsion technologies still trail global leaders. Autonomous and unmanned systems require much deeper investments than India currently makes. The country also lacks commercial-scale semiconductor fabrication facilities, forcing dependence on imported chips that power radars, avionics, communication systems, and electronic warfare equipment. These technological vulnerabilities cannot simply be addressed by reorganising laboratories. Managing DRDO, therefore, is not merely about restructuring departments. It is about rethinking how India conducts strategic research itself.

Three fundamental questions deserve honest answers.

1. Is DRDO Attracting Country's Finest Talent?

The answer is uncomfortable: not consistently.

Every year, India's best engineering graduates leave for universities, laboratories, and technology companies across the United States, Europe, and other global institutions. Thousands of Indian-origin scientists today contribute to cutting-edge research at organisations such as DARPA, NASA, leading semiconductor companies, AI laboratories, and global tech firms. Their work defines tomorrow's technologies - but rarely under the Indian flag.

If India can produce world-class scientists, why cannot its premier defence laboratory attract and retain them?

2. Does DRDO Possess Adequate Resources?

Again, only partially.

DRDO operates 52 laboratories across multiple technology domains. Yet the existence of laboratories does not automati-

cally translate into cutting-edge innovation. Scientific excellence depends upon concentration of talent, sustained funding, modern infrastructure, international collaboration, but with ownership.

Its budget tells the story. For FY 2026-27, the DRDO has been allocated approximately Rs 29,100 crore, or roughly USD 3.5 billion. While this represents a significant national commitment, it remains modest when compared with global competitors.

The United States Department of Defence spends well over USD 100 billion annually on research, development, testing, and evaluation. China's defence R&D expenditure is estimated at around USD 44 billion every year. Both countries allocate roughly 12-15% of their defence expenditure to R&D and technological development. India's allocation remains closer to 5-6 per cent, leaving a substantial capability gap.

Recognising these limitations, the government has wisely opened nearly one-fourth of the defence R&D budget to private industry, startups, and academia. This is an important beginning.

However, genuine innovation ecosystems cannot be built through outsourcing alone. They require seamless integration between government laboratories, universities, industry, and venture capital - something that countries like the United States and Israel have perfected over decades. For example, more than 430 multinational R&D centres operate in Israel, and we all buy their technologies.

3. Remuneration

Scientific talent today competes in a global marketplace. Compensation is not the sole motivation for researchers, but it certainly matters. Policymakers must ask an uncomfortable question: has India seriously debated what globally competitive remuneration looks like for scientists working on critical technologies?

International laboratories offer vastly superior research facilities, greater autonomy, stronger peer networks, and significantly better compensation.

If India wants the best minds to remain - or even persuade Indian-origin scientists abroad to return - it must compete globally rather than administratively.

DRDO should be empowered



to recruit globally, collaborate internationally where national interests permit, offer flexible compensation for exceptional researchers, and create mission-oriented teams.

Kalam's Mould Model

Pride is still worth millions, and to build that, the organisation must offer mission, autonomy, recognition, and accountable leadership. What DRDO needs is a cadre of leaders in the Kalam mould, scientifically credible, institution-building, turning individuals into high-performance teams. The objective should not merely be to reform DRDO but to transform it into India's equivalent of a strategic innovation ecosystem - combining the agility of DARPA, the scientific excellence of leading research universities, and the industrial depth of advanced defence economies. Equally important is India's university ecosystem. Defence innovation must go beyond government laboratories. Sadly, universities have failed in applied research. Unfortunately, barring a handful of institutions, much of Indian higher education remains disconnected from frontier technological development.

This must change. Every major DRDO mission should be institutionally linked with universities, IITs, IISc, startups, and private laboratories. Long-term grants, doctoral fellowships, defence innovation clusters, and tech incubators should become part of DRDO's core mandate rather than peripheral initiatives. A nation of India's scale cannot depend on one organisation alone to produce every strategic technology.

A Big Or Smaller DRDO? A Pointless Question

The ongoing reforms thus present a historic opportunity. The question is not whether DRDO should become smaller or larger. The real question is whether India is prepared to build an entirely new model of defence innovation - one that rewards excellence, embraces global standards, attracts the best minds, and concentrates resources on technologies that will define future wars. For too long, India has measured self-reliance by counting platforms produced. The next phase of Atmanirbhar Bharat must instead be measured by the technologies invented. The reforms must, therefore, move beyond organisational charts and laboratory consolidation. They must invest in people, ideas, and institutions. Missiles alone will not secure India's technological future. Leadership in propulsion, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, autonomous systems, and advanced materials will.

What DRDO Must Do Within

DRDO's reform agenda must go beyond structure and manpower; it must embed world-class project management as a daily operating norm. The organisation already has procedural documents, but unless these are enforced uniformly across projects, they remain paperwork rather than capability. For strategic R&D, process discipline is not administrative overhead; it is what turns scientific ambition into deliverable systems. Building such an ecosystem will demand political courage, investment, and institutional flexibility. It will also require abandoning outdated bureaucratic practices in favour of scientific excellence and merit.

The Coast Pays, Delhi Collects: What The Centre's Mineral Bill Takes From States

On August 12, the Lok Sabha passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026. There was no debate. What the House voted upon was the reversal of a judgment nine judges of the Supreme Court had spent thirteen years arriving at, and the extinction of a taxing power that belongs, under our Constitution, to the states.

Let me be fair to the Government, for its case is not frivolous. In July 2024, in Mineral Area Development Authority v. Steel Authority of India, a nine-judge Bench held by eight to one that royalty is not a tax but a contractual payment, and that the states retain their own power to tax mineral rights and mineral-bearing land. Correcting an error of 1989, it allowed demands back to 2005, payable from this April, leaving mineral states with claims worth thousands of crores and industry with matching liabilities. That deserved an answer.

But this Bill raises more questions than it has tried to answer.

Let's begin with where the

matter was first settled: the Constituent Assembly itself. In December 1948, Professor KT Shah asked the Constituent Assembly to declare all natural wealth - our land, our minerals, the seas around our coasts - to be public property, held privately by no one and worked by public enterprise alone. The Assembly declined. Our Constitution vests the ownership of minerals in nobody but the owner of the land, and land is Entry 18 of the State List. Where the framers wanted the Union to own a resource, as with the seabed in Article 297, they said so. What they wrote instead was a division of powers, chosen with care. On taxation, they placed two entries side by side. Entry 50, taxes on mineral rights, is subject to any limitations Parliament may impose by a law relating to mineral development. Entry 49, taxes on lands and buildings, is subject to nothing at all. Men who had just written an override clause did not forget how to write a second. The omission was a decision, and it is the decision on which the Court turned in 2024.

This Bill restricts both. On mineral rights, the Government is within its rights. On mineral-bearing land, it does what the framers declined to permit, by declaring land a subject of mineral regulation. That provision will very probably fall in court, handing the industry the very uncertainty the Bill was meant to end. Two further defects: any state levy uncollected before commencement is deemed invalid at all material times, while whatever has been collected need not be refunded. So the company that paid has lost its money, the company that did not owes nothing. And the Bill fixes no limit itself, leaving the Central Government to decide by rules what a state may levy. A constitutional entitlement has become a licence issued from New Delhi. Who pays? Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh had all either legislated such levies or stood to gain from the judgment. Arrears since 2005 are cancelled by a single clause. Nor is this a quar-

rel between Union and Opposition: Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are governed by the party that governs at the Centre, and lose as much as Jharkhand or Karnataka. Which is why the Bill went to no committee, where members from those states would have had to say aloud what it costs them.

Now coming to my home state, Kerala (soon to become Keralam) has not, so far as I am aware, levied a tax of this kind, and I make no claim of any arrears due to it. What Keralam loses, though, is the only fiscal instrument it ever had over the vital resources under its soil. Heavy mineral sand and china clay are more than ninety per cent of the value of our mineral production. Our mineral economy is not a mine in a forest. It is our coastline. At Chavara in Kollam lies one of the world's finest ilmenite deposits. What does Keralam earn from it? A royalty rate fixed in Delhi that it may not revise, half of the mineral blocks worked by a central undertaking, and Union control under the Atomic Energy Act over monazite, the

most valuable constituent of all. Set that beside what is happening in the water. On March 4, 2025, our Assembly unanimously asked the Centre to withdraw the 2023 amendment to the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, alarmed at the auction of blocks off the Kollam coast. The auction proceeded, and the royalty accrues to the Union. So: seaward of the shoreline and the seabed is the Union's, and the revenue flows to Delhi; landward, mineral-bearing land is now taken out of the State's fiscal reach. In my own constituency, the Department of Mining and Geology has delineated heavy mineral areas along the Veli-Kazhakuttom and Vizhinjam-Kovalam stretches. Nothing is mined there today, but the Union Budget proposes rare earth corridors in Keralam. Who lives there? Poor fisherfolk. Pallithura, Valiyathura, Poonthura, Beemapally, Vizhinjam, and Adimalathura are among the most densely settled fishing coasts in India, losing land to erosion every monsoon, already living with the repercussions of a major port development.



Bharat Taxi Expansion: Ride-hailing platform eyes nationwide presence by 2029; check out features, financial model & other details



New Delhi:Bharat Taxi, which was established under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002, has around eight lakh registered drivers and nearly 41 lakh customers by July 25, 2026, according to an official statement today, August 17. Bharat Taxi is India's first cooperative-led ride-hailing platform, started on June 6, 2025 by eight national cooperative institutions, including NABARD, IFFCO, Amul, NAFED and the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

The platform operates on a zero-commission model, allowing drivers, referred to as Sarathis to retain their fare earnings while participating as member-owners of the cooperative. According to the government, Bharat Taxi is currently operational in Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Mumbai, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kanpur and Pune. In addition, the platform plans to expand operations to Ranchi, Patna, Guwahati, Bhopal, Kolkata, Indore and Nagpur in the coming months as part of its phased national rollout. Bharat Taxi has been structured to give drivers a stake

in ownership and governance which means Sarathis can become member-owners by purchasing shares in the cooperative and are represented in its leadership structure through reserved seats on the board. It offers multiple ride categories, including bike taxis, autos, economy cabs, premium sedans, SUVs, rentals, out-station travel and scheduled rides.

Zero commission financial model

Bharat Taxi operates on a zero-commission, surge-free pricing model. It has been designed as a cooperative al-

ternative to conventional ride-hailing platforms. The cooperative follows a subscription-based model, enabling drivers to retain full fare earnings. Riders pay only the applicable trip fare based on distance, time, and market conditions. No additional convenience fees, platform fees, or surge pricing are charged through the application. Under the Bharat Taxi scheme, 20 per cent of the cooperative's earnings are credited to Bharat Taxi as Sarathis' capital. The remaining 80 percent is distributed among Sarathis based on the kilometres travelled by their taxis. A 7 per cent service charge is levied only at Bharat Taxi-operated airport prepaid booths to cover operational expenses. The platform also entered into partnerships with institutions including the Delhi Traffic Police, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, State Bank of India, Paytm and IFFCO Tokio Insurance to strengthen service delivery, digital payments and insurance coverage. Bharat Taxi said drivers associated with the platform are facilitated to register on the e-Shram portal, enabling access to social security benefits, while addi-

tional accident and health insurance support is available through partner institutions. The platform is supported by the Ministry of Cooperation's broader push to promote cooperative-based business models and seeks to combine digital mobility services with democratic ownership and economic participation.

Ride Options for Every Journey

The Bharat Taxi application provides several ride categories designed to cater to different travel requirements. Passengers can select from a range of vehicle types depending on distance, comfort, and passenger capacity. Available ride categories include:

- 2-Wheeler (Bike Taxi)
- Auto
- Economy Cab
- Premium Sedan
- XL Cab (SUV)
- Rentals
- Out-Station travel
- Scheduled Rides

These options allow users to access transport services for short urban trips, daily commuting, and longer intercity journeys.

Elevated crude oil prices among key factors behind market decline

The Sensex declined 281.09 points, or 0.36 percent to settle at 77,728.16. During the day, it dropped 555.5 points, or 0.71 percent to 77,453.75. "The Nifty was down 78.35 points, or 0.32 percent to end at 24,287.65, taking the losses to the fifth day. Iran called on the US to accept defeat on Saturday, while President Donald Trump called Tehran "very evil" and told Americans to prepare for continued high fuel prices as a result of the war." Dr VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said, "The market is likely to continue in the range of 24000 - 24600 in the near-term till some triggers emerge to break the range. Crude trading at \$89, without any prospects for an immediate resolution to the crisis, is likely to cap

USD vs INR: Rupee slips despite RBI's FCNR boost: What should currency traders do now?



New Delhi:USD vs INR: The rupee declined 19 paise to close at 95.61 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, pressured by weakness in domestic equity markets and a rise in crude oil prices. The rupee opened at 95.50 against the US dollar and traded in a narrow range of 95.49-95.62 during the session. It eventually settled at 95.61, down 19 paise from its previous close of 95.42 on Friday. The rupee had gained 3 paise in the previous session. The decline in the domestic currency came as Indian equities remained under pressure and higher crude oil prices raised concerns over the country's import bill. India is a major importer of crude oil, making the rupee sensitive to movements in global oil prices.

Indians. The RBI introduced the concessional swap facility to encourage foreign currency inflows into the country. The central bank said on Friday that the facility had attracted \$56.84 billion in foreign currency deposits as of 13 August. The change in the cut-off date has added to caution among market participants as the window for mobilising deposits under the concessional swap facility has been brought forward.

prices and geopolitical tensions. He sees the index trading in a range of 98.55-100.35.

Rupee outlook

For the rupee, Jain said weakness in the dollar index has provided some support, but higher crude oil prices and weakness in domestic equities have limited the currency's gains. "We expect the rupee to remain volatile this week amid volatility in the dollar index, domestic equity markets and geopolitical tensions," Jain said. He expects the USD-INR pair to trade in the range of 94.55-96.55 this week.

RBI's FCNR(B) move adds to caution

Investor sentiment also turned cautious after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 14 August said its concessional swap facility for Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank), or FCNR(B), deposits will be available only for deposits mobilised until 31 August. The earlier cut-off date for the facility was 30 September. Under the FCNR(B) scheme, banks offer attractive interest rates to mobilise foreign currency deposits from non-resident

Dollar index remains volatile

Manoj Kumar Jain, director and head of commodity and currency research at Prithvi Fimmart Pvt Ltd, said the dollar index remained highly volatile last week and failed to sustain its earlier gains. The dollar index settled at 99.54 on Friday, down 0.32%. Jain said easing concerns over a US Federal Reserve rate hike following mixed US economic data had pushed the dollar index lower. Gains in the euro and other major currencies also weighed on the greenback. However, a rebound in crude oil prices and uncertainty over a potential US-Iran peace deal could support the dollar at lower levels, he said. Jain expects the dollar index to remain volatile this week amid movements in global financial markets, crude oil

India unemployment rate falls to 5.1% in July: What the latest jobs data signals

New Delhi:India's unemployment rate for people aged 15 years and above fell to 5.1 per cent in July, matching its lowest level in four months, according to data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Monday. The unemployment rate stood at 5.5 per cent in June. A Reuters poll of economists had estimated the July unemployment rate at 5.4 per cent. The latest reading matches the rate recorded in March, when unemployment was also at 5.1 per cent.

Labour force participation improves

Alongside the decline in unemployment, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) also increased in July. The LFPR, which measures the proportion of people aged 15 years and above who are either working or actively seeking employment, rose to 55.4 per cent from 54.4 per cent in June.



Rural unemployment falls, urban rate edges higher

The decline in the overall unemployment rate was supported by an improvement in rural areas. The rural unemployment rate fell to 4.5 per cent in July from 5.0 per cent in June. In contrast, the urban unemployment rate edged higher to 6.7 per cent from 6.6 per cent during the month. The

Female labour force participation rises

Female participation in the labour market recorded a notable increase during July. The female LFPR rose to 34.4 per cent from 32.7 per cent in June. The increase was driven largely by rural areas, where fe-

male labour force participation rose to 38.8 per cent from 36.6 per cent. The improvement in female participation came alongside a decline in the unemployment rate for women, which fell by 50 basis points during the month.

PLFS data covers over 3.7 lakh people

The July figures are based on the Current Weekly Sta-

tus (CWS) measure under the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). The survey covered 371,021 people nationwide, including 211,411 respondents in rural areas and 159,610 in urban areas. The CWS measure considers a person unemployed if they did not work even for one hour during the reference week but were seeking or available for work.

Air India Group Drug Screening: 2 pilots record 'non-negative' results, confirmatory tests awaited



New Delhi:Air India Group has started drug screening of its pilots as part of an expanded safety programme. Two pilots have been de-rostered after their preliminary drug

test results came back as 'non-negative', according to sources. They said around 300 to 400 pilots have undergone the initial screening so far. The preliminary results of two pi-

lots were found to be non-negative. However, the two pilots have not been declared to have failed the drug test. Their confirmatory test results are still awaited.

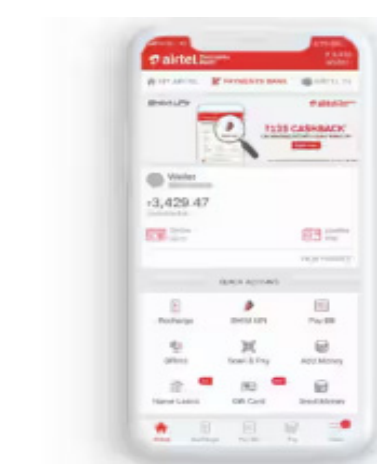
Screening began on August 13 as part of a new safety SOP

The airline started screening all its pilots for psychoactive substances from August 13. The move is part of a new standard operating procedure (SOP) aimed at strengthening safety standards. Sources also said no Air India Airbus A320neo operating a Phuket-Delhi flight. The aircraft reportedly experienced a sudden loss of control over some flight control surfaces and descended by around 300 feet.

Two pilots de-rostered

According to an IANS report, the two pilots have been removed from their flying duties temporarily. They will remain de-rostered until the confirma-

Airtel Payments Bank announces leadership change: Shabnam Sinha to succeed Sunil Bharti Mittal as chairperson



New Delhi:Airtel Payments Bank Limited announced on Monday a key change in the leadership of the Board. Sunil Bharti Mittal will vacate the position of Non-Executive Chairman and leave the Board at the end of September 2026.

Shabnam Sinha to be new Chairperson

Shabnam Sinha has been nominated as the Chairperson of Airtel Payments Bank by the Board effective October 2026, subject to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approval. Sinha, an Independent Director, has been serving on the

Board and has been leading the Special Committee for Monitoring Frauds and also been a part of Risk Management Committee and IT Committee. Sinha has had an extensive career with wide-ranging experience in development finance, financial services, public policy, and institutional development. She has served at the World Bank, providing strategic advice on public sector reforms, financial sector restructuring, governance, and risk management to governments and public institutions in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

With this vast experience, along with her deep knowledge in risk management and financial inclusion, Sinha is expected to lead the bank to newer heights.

Mittal to Retire as Non-Executive Chairman after 10 Years in Office

Mittal, Founder and Chairman Bharti Enterprises will vacate the office of the Non-Executive Chairman in April 2016 and also retire as a Non-Executive Director in September 2026. He has led the bank to emerge as India's largest payments bank in terms of revenue from operations, with a strong presence in the consumer and enterprise segments.

Qatar-India Postal Remittance Service based on PosTransfer powered by UPI now available through Qatar Post Outlets

- New digital postal remittance service enables fast, secure and convenient transfer of funds from Qatar to India



New Delhi, August, 17 (PIB): The Qatar-India remittance service based on PosTransfer powered by UPI is now available, enabling customers in Qatar to send funds directly to UPI-enabled bank accounts in India through Qatar Post outlets. The service has been developed through the collaboration of Qatar Post, India Post, the Universal Postal Union’s Intercon-

nection Platform (UPU-IP), and NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL). The initiative combines the extensive reach of postal networks with India’s digital public infrastructure to provide an efficient and convenient channel for cross-border remittances. The service was made available in Qatar on 15 August 2026, coinciding with India’s Independence Day.

H.E. Sandeep Kumar, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of India in Qatar, visited the Qatar Post outlet at LuLu Mall, Doha, and interacted with the stakeholders on the occasion. The engagement underscored the importance of the initiative in strengthening digital financial connectivity and bilateral cooperation between India and Qatar. Under the service, customers can initiate a remittance at a Qatar Post outlet by providing the UPI ID of the recipient in India, along with the required customer identification details. The recipient is required to activate the facility for receiving foreign inward remittances through the UPI app being used. Once activated, the remitted amount is credited to the beneficiary’s UPI-enabled bank account instantly.

Transactions can be initiated for amounts ranging from QAR 10 to QAR 4,000, subject to a maximum equivalent of ₹1,00,000 per transaction. A flat service charge of QAR 15 per transaction is applicable. The service is particularly significant for the large Indian community in Qatar, providing a trusted, accessible and affordable channel for sending money to families in India. By combining the

accessibility of postal networks with the capabilities of UPI, the initiative contributes to greater financial inclusion and seamless digital financial connectivity between the two countries. The Qatar-India corridor represents an important milestone in the modernisation of international postal financial services and digital financial cooperation between India and Qatar. The integration

of UPU-IP with UPI demonstrates the potential of postal networks and Digital Public Infrastructure to facilitate inclusive, interoperable and efficient cross-border financial services. PosTransfer powered by UPI is an international inward remittance service enabled through the integration of the Universal Postal Union’s Interconnection Platform (UPU-IP) with India’s UPI ecosystem.

It enables participating postal operators to provide customers with a simple and secure mechanism for sending remittances to UPI-enabled bank accounts in India. India Post is also working with postal operators in other countries to operationalise additional PosTransfer powered by UPI corridors, further strengthening international financial connectivity for the Indian diaspora.

LOKAYAN 2026 – INDIAN NAVAL SHIP SUDARSHINI CONCLUDES PORT CALL AT PONTA DELGADA

New Delhi, August, 17 (PIB): Indian Navy’s sail training ship, INS Sudarshini, concluded her port call at Ponta Delgada, Azores, on 16 Aug 2026, as part of Lokayan 2026. The port call witnessed professional and cultural engagements with the Portuguese Navy, strengthening maritime cooperation and camaraderie between the two navies. A formal deck reception was hosted onboard the Portuguese Navy’s sail training vessel, NRP Sagres. This was followed by a reciprocal evening deck reception onboard INS Sudarshini for local military leadership, diplomats and members of the Indian diaspora. The ship also celebrated India’s 80th



Independence Day at Ponta Delgada on 15 Aug 2026. The ship was dressed overall, and a Colours ceremony was held to mark the occasion with pride and patriotism. INS Sudarshini has now set sail for Lisbon. On 21 Aug 2026, INS Sudarshini and NRP

Sagres are scheduled to undertake a joint Passing Exercise (PASSEX) at sea, featuring coordinated sail manoeuvres and communication drills, further strengthening interoperability and maritime cooperation between the two navies.

Indian Defence Estates Service officer trainees call on Raksha Mantri



New Delhi, August, 17 (PIB): The Officer Trainees of the Indian Defence Estates Service (2025 Batch), undergoing training at the National Institute of Defence Estates Management (NIDEM), called on Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh in New Delhi on August 17, 2026. Raksha Mantri appreciated the role of the Defence Estates Department in the management of defence land and municipal administration of the Cantonment Boards across the country. Rajnath Singh emphasised the role of public servants in meeting the evolving aspirations of the citizens. He said civil servants must play a major role with utmost ‘Seva Bhav’, delivering the services in a people-friendly manner. He added that the officers should meet people regularly and listen to their grievances to understand their concerns and instill a sense of assurance. Raksha Mantri emphasised that public servants and budding officers should pay equal attention to their physical and mental well-being, urging them to follow a spiritual path and practice meditation. Director General Defence Estates Smt Shobha Gupta was present during the interaction.

BRICS Environment Group Discusses Key Climate Priorities



New Delhi, August, 17 (PIB): Under India’s BRICS Chairship 2026, Senior Officers’ Meeting of the Environment Working Group and Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development was held in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 17th August 2026. The meeting was chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India, Shri Tanmay Kumar. The proceedings witnessed participation from BRICS member countries including Federative Republic of Brazil, People’s Republic of China, Arab Republic of Egypt, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Republic of Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation, Republic of South Africa and United Arab Emirates. In his keynote address, the Chair stated that over the past two decades, the BRICS alliance has expanded from an economic dialogue into an increasingly influential platform for defining its approach to the critical challenges facing the environment, including pressing global issues of increasing pollution, biodiversity loss as well as global warming. He said, "Our partnership has broadened in terms of relevance to sustainable development, climate resilience and adaptation, resource efficiency and circular economy, as well as environmental governance." The Chair informed that BRICS 2026 has been guided by the vision of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, that global cooperation must remain people-centric by advancing a humanity-first approach. This vision finds expression in the Chairship theme - 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability'. India has sought to advance environmental action through approaches that integrate ecological sustainability with development objectives, it was stated.

Over the course of India’s Chairship, the Environment Working Group and the Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development have together advanced cooperation across four interconnected priority areas: Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles; Afforestation, Forest Fire Management and Disaster Resilience; Circular Economy and Adaptation.

The Chair stated that these priorities reflect both the shared environmental challenges confronting the BRICS countries and the collective wisdom and strength to address them. They reflect the unanimous recognition that climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, resource efficiency and sustainable development are deeply interconnected challenges that require integrated and holistic responses rather than isolated interventions in silos.

It was informed that since the commencement of India’s Chairship, Member Countries have engaged through 21 virtual thematic and negotiation meetings, 10 bilateral consultations, 2 thematic dialogues and 2 technical webinars, reflecting an extraordinary level of commitment to advancing the shared agenda. The marathon deliberations would culminate in building a consensus on the key priorities during the Senior Officers’ meeting being held today. Concluding the address, the chair expressed confidence that the spirit of co-operation and mutual respect which has guided the collective dialogues and discussions so far would continue to guide the deliberations today. The 12th BRICS Environment Ministers’ Meeting is scheduled to be held in New Delhi tomorrow. The participating delegations from the BRICS member countries congratulated India for its successful leadership as the BRICS Chair and bringing together each side through productive deliberations on the priority areas, under an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and consensus-based decision making.

Today’s Horoscope



Aries

Your tremendous intellectual potential will help you to fight the disability. Only by keeping positive thoughts you can fight this problem. Today you can easily raise capital- collect outstanding debts- or ask for funds to work on new projects. You would be the center of attraction at a social gathering that you attend today. Your gloomy life may give tension to your spouse. Plan out things nicely to get satisfactory results-Tension clouds your mind as you attempt to sort office problems. Today, you will have ample time to spend with your spouse. Your lover will feel overwhelmed at the attention and love s/he will get. The behavior of your spouse might disturb your professional relations today.

Remedy :- Wear a copper or gold bangle to experience better love life.



Taurus

Don't take your life for granted realize that the care for life is the real vow. Profits in business can bring joy to the faces of many traders and businessmen today. You could be upset because of the prevailing conditions at home. You must convey your message to your sweetheart as it may be very late tomorrow. Someone at work might try to disrupt your plans- therefore keep a watchful eye to what is happening around you. Traveling will make you see new places and meet important people. Your spouse is really in a good mood today. You might get a surprise.

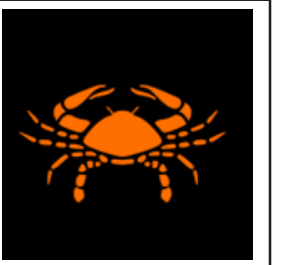
Remedy :- Feed Barley to Cows to achieve happy moments in the family life.



Gemini

Your impulsive nature may cause you serious health problems. Today, there is a possibility of gaining monetary benefits, but due to your aggressive nature, you may not be able to earn as expected. Domestic life will be peaceful and adorable. Plant a sapling today. Slow progress of work brings minor tensions. Rituals/hawans/auspicious ceremonies will be performed at home. You might feel annoyed by your spouse due to off mood.

Remedy :- For great health benefits, eat and distribute saffron-based sweets to poor and needy people.



Cancer

You would get relief from the tensions and strains of life which you have been experiencing for long. It is right time to change your life style to permanently keep them a bay. Together with your spouse, you can discuss finances and plan your wealth for your future. Safeguard your interest when dealing with friends- business associates and relatives- as they might not be considerate to your needs. Love is synonymous to worshipping God; it is very spiritual as well as religious. You will know this today. Attending a trade show and seminars will help improve your business contacts.

Remedy :- Avoid alcohol and enhance family feelings and happiness.



Leo

Evening with friends will be pleasant but take care of excessive eating and hard drinks. Finances improve later in the day. Domestic life will be peaceful and adorable. Exciting day of romance-Plan something special for the evening and try to make it as romantic as possible. Your internal strength will equally support you in making the day awesome at work. You may bear the brunt of your senior over numerous incomplete tasks left unattended by you in the past. Today, your free time will also be spent on completing your office work. Your spouse will push the rewind button of those early stage love and romance today.

Remedy :- Worship Lord Bhairava for excellent health.



Virgo

You would get relief from the tensions and strains of life which you have been experiencing for long. It is right time to change your life style to permanently keep them a bay. Although money is an important element for you, but don't become so sensitive towards it that it spoils your relationships. Express your ambitions to elderly persons who will try their best to help you. Do not be vulgar to your girlfriend. You will make progress in your career if you deal with the right individuals. A distant relative can visit your house without any prior notice, which can consume most of your time. Your spouse might burst out on you over a not-so-happening conjugal life that you have.

Remedy :- For a memorable love life, present your lover with red or orange coloured gifts.



Libra

Don't exert yourself beyond a point and remember to take proper rest. Today, you can take your family members out for a get-together and spend a lot of money on them. Great day when you would receive all the attention you want- you would have many things lined up and you would have problems in deciding which ones to follow. Your smiles have no meaning-laughter have no sound-heart forgets to beat as you miss the company A day of careful moves- so don't present your ideas until you are sure it won't fail. Those who were very busy for the last few days will finally get to enjoy their own time. Your spouse might fight with you because you might forget to share something with him/her today.

Remedy :- Never collect and accumulate junk. De-clutter, and throw away broken shoes, faded clothes etc., and increase auspiciousness in your work-life.



Scorpio

Don't exert yourself beyond a point and remember to take proper rest. You will possess a desire to earn quick money. Everyone wants to be your friend today- and you would be too happy to oblige. You must convey your message to your sweetheart as it may be very late tomorrow. Do not be outspoken and emotional during business meetings-You can easily damage your reputation if you do not control your speech. Unexpected travel for some proves to be hectic and stressful. An old friend of yours might come along with the old beautiful memories you have with your life partner.

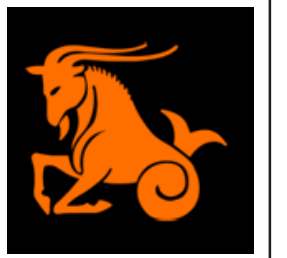
Remedy :- Immerse revadi, a sesame seeds and sugar combination, in running water for benefits in business.



Sagittarius

It is right time for the heart patients to quit coffee. Any further use would put unnecessary pressure on your heart. Businessmen who are stepping out of their homes for work should store their money at a safe place today, as there are chances of theft. You would forget your problems and spend good time with family members. Romantic moves will not pay. Your confidence is growing and advancement is apparent. Those who were very busy for the last few days will finally get to enjoy their own time. A relative might give you a surprise today, but it might disturb your plan.

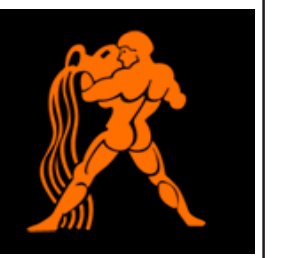
Remedy :- Mix wheat, whole red lentils and red vermillion in water while bathing, for good health.



Capricorn

A very good day from health point of view. Your cheerful state of mind will give you the desired tonic and keep you confident. You will make substantial gains if you invest on long-term basis. Evening at the movie-theatre or dinner with your spouse seems to keep you in a relaxed and wonderful mood. Wedding bells for some while others will find romance to keep them in high spirits. Natives of this zodiac sign must refrain from speaking more than required at the workplace, as their image can get negatively affected. Businessmen of this sign are likely to incur losses today due to any old investment. You will want to devote your free time tending your mother's needs, but won't be able to do so due to something urgent coming up.

Remedy :- Clean teeth daily with bay twig for bringing auspiciousness into your professional life.



Aquarius

Health will be perfect today. If you were about to take a loan and had been engaged in this work for a long time, then today is your lucky day. Domestic work keeps you busy most of the time. Love will show positive vibes Good day for businessmen. A sudden trip undertaken for business purpose will yield positive results. Today, you can think of spending your free time carrying out religious work. During this time, do not get into unnecessary conflicts. Today, you will forget all the hardships of your life with the love of your spouse.

Remedy :- For enhancing positive experiences in the family, offer 28 drops of mustard oil near Peepal or banyan tree or in a pot filled with mud at home.



Pisces

Health should be given priority to social life. Today, you can get into a fight with someone close, and things can escalate to the court. Because of this, your hard-earned money will be spent. Work hard for the welfare of your family. Your actions should be dictated by love and positive vision and not by greed. Your sweetheart will turn out to be an angel for you today, if you shared some love. Your determination and confidence will be high and you will perform better than expected. Natives who get accused of not giving ample time to their families can think of spending some quality moments with them. However, due to some important work popping up, your plan will fail. Today, you will realize that your life partner is sweeter than the saccharin.

Remedy :- Add Gangajal in your bathing water, and increase income.

Irumudi Trailer Brings Fresh Energy To Ravi Teja!

It is common for a big-ticket movie to receive a mix of positive and negative feedback whenever promotional material arrives. While hardcore fans shower their favorite stars with praise, audiences are often quick to point out flaws as well. It is only on rare occasions that a film's promotional content receives outright positive responses with little to complain about.

However, that seems to be the case with Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja and director Shiva Nirvana's Irumudi. The combination itself generated considerable curiosity, with Ravi Teja known for his mass appeal and Shiva Nirvana for his class-oriented, emotional family entertainers. Irumudi appears to bring together the strengths of both, blending strong family emotions with action and adding a crime element as an intriguing surprise package.

The trailer has received an enthusiastic response, with social media users particularly appreciating the content and Shiva Nirvana's distinctive approach to the story. More importantly, Ravi Teja has is winning praise for what appears to be a first-of-its-kind portrayal in his career. He plays a family man with multiple shades to his character, offering something considerably different from his usual mass-centric roles.



Ravi Teja himself sounded extremely confident about the film's outcome and openly expressed his desire to celebrate Irumudi's success. Known for being straightforward and generally reserved when it comes to speaking extensively about his films before release, the actor's genuine affection for

Irumudi was clearly visible in his words at the trailer launch.

Many viewers felt that Ravi Teja looks perfectly suited to the role and has completely immersed himself in the character. He appears vulnerable and emotionally grounded in family situations but transforms into an intense and de-

termined man when it comes to protecting his loved ones and the villagers. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers, Irumudi trailer has managed to create the right kind of excitement by presenting Ravi Teja in a new avatar without taking away the mass elements his audience expects.

Fans Unconvinced by Fauzi Designers' AI Explanation?

The first-look poster for Prabhas' Fauzi, directed by Hanu Raghavapudi, has continued to spark debate over the use of Artificial Intelligence. Now, popular publicity designers Anil and Bhanu clarified in an interview with Gulte that they have used AI, but it was limited. They stated that AI was used only for the background elements and not for Prabhas' face or his body. They also clarified that the entire scene is in the film and is not just for the sake of it. They removed a few areas in the background of the poster through AI after feeling it was looking a bit messy.

Their statement came after several movie lovers questioned the authenticity of the poster and pointed out AI-like visuals. However, fans feel that even if AI was used only for the background, its effect is visible across the poster, and the overall design gives an AI-generated look. Social media discus-



sions show that many users are unhappy with the growing dependence on AI in film posters and promotional material. Going back in time, Prabhas' previous film The Raja Saab also faced criticism for its use of digitally altered images. Because of that, Prabhas fans are now more sensitive whenever they spot AI elements in promotional content.



In all this, even experienced designers are increasingly adopting such tools. While AI can save time and enhance creativity, designers should carefully study audience reactions and then design these first looks. At the end of the day, fans still value originality, which is missing these days in such looks. At the same time, the designers' clarification deserves to be taken into



consideration. AI is increasingly becoming part of modern poster designing, and using it for limited background corrections does not necessarily take away from the overall creative effort. Ultimately, the final poster is a collaborative process, and the designers' intent appears to have been to enhance the visual rather than replace genuine creativity.

Netflix CEO's Prediction About Theatres Goes Wrong

Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos once said that going to movie theaters had become an "out-moded idea" for most people. His comments came during the TIME100 Summit in New York in April 2025, when he argued that many people now prefer watching movies at home. He also said the theater experience was still important for some people. But the worldwide box office has given a strong answer since then.

At least eight films released after Sarandos made those comments have crossed the huge \$1 billion mark at the global box office. The success shows that audiences are still ready to leave their homes and spend money on big screen entertainment when a film gives them a reason to go to theaters. The first major example was Lilo & Stitch, which crossed \$1 billion worldwide in 2025. Disney's live action remake finished with more than \$1.03 billion globally.

Then came Zootopia 2, which became one of the biggest global hits of the year. The ani-



mated film earned around \$1.87 billion worldwide, showing the huge demand for family movies on the big screen. James Cameron's Avatar: Fire and Ash also delivered a massive result. The film collected around \$1.49 billion worldwide, becoming another billion dollar theatrical success. The success continued into 2026. The Super Mario Galaxy Movie became the first movie of the year to cross \$1 billion worldwide. It reached the milestone in its 10th week-

end and took the Mario franchise beyond \$2 billion in total global ticket sales. Michael Jackson's biopic Michael also surprised the industry by crossing \$1 billion worldwide. It became the highest grossing music biopic and the first biopic to reach the billion dollar mark. Pixar's Toy Story 5 followed the same path. The film has crossed \$1 billion worldwide, proving that established animated franchises can still bring huge crowds to cinemas.

Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey has also passed \$1 billion worldwide. The film has become Nolan's biggest movie ever at the global box office and has been a major boost for premium formats such as IMAX.

The latest blockbuster is Spider Man: Brand New Day. The film crossed \$1 billion at a remarkable speed and reached around \$1.67 billion worldwide in just 10 days, becoming the biggest movie of 2026 so far.

These numbers do not mean streaming is losing its importance. Netflix has changed how people watch movies, and audiences clearly enjoy the convenience of watching films at home. But the latest box office results show that the theatrical experience is far from finished. When a movie offers scale, spectacle, popular characters or a major event feeling, millions of people are still willing to buy a ticket and watch it with a crowd. The worldwide box office is sending a simple message. Theaters may be changing, but they are certainly not outdated yet.

Pressure Mounts on Young Hero After Anupama's Breakup Talk



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

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

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

However, another section

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

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

Ameer Log Trailer: Hyderabad Basti Vibes



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

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

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

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

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

Rajinikanth To Deliver Double Dhamaka With Just 3 Month Gap!

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

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

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

Dharman officially locks the festive season.

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

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



Messi visit row: Kerala BJP demands
CBI probe into alleged irregularities

Thiruvananthapuram: The BJP in Kerala demanded a CBI probe into alleged procedural and financial irregularities in the previous LDF government’s plan to bring star player Lionel Messi and the Argentina national football team to the state. Addressing a press conference here, senior BJP leader S Suresh demanded that Chief Minister V D Satheesan hand over the investigation into the allegations to the central agency. “This is a fraud connected with an international agreement involving Argentina and other countries. It has links with embassies and international connections. Crores of rupees have allegedly been swindled by misusing the name of the state government,” Suresh alleged. He alleged that former Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the CPI(M) were involved in the alleged “loot” and urged the Satheesan government to hand over the case to the CBI.

India teams ready for Hockey World
Cup 2026 challenge in Europe

Hyderabad: The FIH Hockey World Cup 2026, starting on August 15 in Belgium and the Netherlands, will be broadcast live on JioHotstar and the Star Sports Network from 4:30 pm onwards. India’s men’s team will begin its campaign against Wales on Saturday, followed by the women’s team taking on China. For the Indian men’s hockey team, the FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 presents an opportunity to end a wait of more than five decades. India’s last World Cup triumph came in 1975, but the team heads into this edition with renewed confidence after winning the 2025 Asia Cup. Belgium and the Netherlands, the co-hosts, will also be among the teams to watch, with strong squads and the advantage of playing on home turf. Australia, Germany and Argentina bring proven quality and tournament experience and could pose a strong challenge to India’s title ambitions.

For the Indian women’s team,



the opportunity is equally significant, but for a different reason. India have never won the FIH Women’s Hockey World Cup, making this a golden opportunity for the team to create a legacy of its own. After three matches in the opening pool stage, the top two teams will advance to a second stage, where they will play two more games. Their head-to-head

points from the first stage will be carried forward, making every result, point and goal potentially decisive in the race to the semifinals.

Key Detail:

For Indian hockey fans, all 100 matches will be streamed live on JioHotstar, while India’s matches will be available with English and Hindi commentary on Star Sports channels.

Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva defends
Dickwella recall ahead of India Test



Galle: Sri Lanka skipper Dhananjaya de Silva has strongly defended giving wicketkeeper-batter Niroshan Dickwella a recall for the upcoming first Test against India by stating that superior glovework is the primary prerequisite for selection due to the tricky nature of the pitch at the Galle International Cricket Stadium. The selection of

Dickwella, who averages 31 with the bat after 96 Test innings, has triggered considerable outrage in the island nation, with critics questioning why in-form domestic performers like Sadeera Samara wickrama and uncapped Anjala Bandara were overlooked for selection in place of injured Kusal Mendis. “The only thing I have to tell Niroshan

Dickwella is to keep well. That’s why he’s in the team. Dickwella had to leave the Test squad over the last few years because Kusal Mendis went to No. 7, and Kusal has played well there in the last few years, so Dickwella didn’t get a chance to come back. But when you play at Galle, the most important thing is that the player with the best glovework plays,” the Sri Lanka skipper said in the pre-match press conference.

He also revealed that the team management and selection panel were on the same page regarding giving the call-up to Dickwella. “The decision to recall Dickwella is one we had with the coach and selectors, and they all agreed. We did have the chance to give an opportunity to another player, but as the keeper with the best glovework, Dickwella came through.” Apart from Dickwella, de Silva also addressed concerns surrounding fast bowler Lahiru Kumara, whose career has been repeatedly stymied by fitness breakdowns – most recently walking off with a hamstring injury during the tour of West Indies in June. “As a country and as a team, we don’t have a huge pool of players that we can experiment with.

Explained: How the new format will
work at the 2026 Hockey World Cup

New Delhi: The men’s and women’s hockey World Cups are right on the horizon as the top teams around the world gear up for the ultimate showpiece in Belgium and the Netherlands. 16 heavyweights each in the men’s and women’s circuits will step onto the field, giving it their all for the coveted trophies in the World Cups that run simultaneously from August 15 to 30. While the guile and fight for the showpiece remain the same, teams will have to contend with a new format implemented in both the men’s and women’s World Cups this time around. Unlike in the previous editions, the tournament won’t be having the conventional route to the medal matches through quarterfinals; instead, a second group stage phase has been introduced to test the best of the sides.

What is the new Hockey
World Cup format?

To start with, 16 teams are traditionally placed in four pools of four each. In the men’s World Cup, Pool A features the Netherlands, Argentina, New



Zealand and Japan; Pool B has Belgium, France, Germany and Malaysia; Pool C includes Australia, Spain, Ireland and South Africa, while Pool D goes with England, India, Pakistan and Wales. In the women’s tournament, Pool A comprises of the Netherlands, Australia, Chile and Japan; Pool B has Argentina, Germany, USA and Scotland; Pool C includes Belgium, Spain, New Zealand and Ire-

land; and Pool D features China, England, India and South Africa. In the previous editions, the top two teams from each pool qualified for the quarterfinals, followed by semifinals, the bronze medal match and the gold medal showdown. However, there won’t be a quarterfinal this time around. Instead, the teams that finish in the top two of their initial pool phase qualify for the second round

pool phase.

What is the second round
pool stage?

The second round pool stage will see the top two sides from the previous pool stage (Pool A, B, C and D) qualify two pools, namely Pool E and F. The third and fourth-ranked teams from the first pool stage will be pitted in Pool G and H and will play for classification. Pool E will feature top two teams from Pool A and D.

Gill backs Prasidh, Gurnoor to step
up ahead of Sri Lanka Test series

Galle: India captain Shubman Gill has indicated that Prasidh Krishna will share the new ball with the seasoned Mohammed Siraj in the first Test against Sri Lanka starting Saturday even though rookie Gurnoor Brar has also made a strong case with his ability to strike with the old cherry. While India will be going with three left-arm slow bowlers — two orthodox in Ravindra Jadeja and Manav Suthar and a wrist spinner in Kuldeep Yadav, Siraj is the only certainty among the four Indian pacers on this tour. While Auqib Nabi is not even in contention, the choice is between the 6-foot-5-inch tall Brar and an inch shorter Prasidh, who has already played seven Tests and taken 25 wickets.

“They both are very skilled bowlers and they bowled really well in the practice match. We have seen how good Gurnoor is with the old ball when nothing is happening,” Gill said on the eve of the opening Test. “He is excellent with the old ball. You need that extra pace, extra bounce. He’s obviously

very tall as well. But I think Prasidh recently has been bowling the best that I have ever seen him bowl. In the red ball and also in white ball. So it would be a very tough decision for us to be able to just pick one,” he added.

For him, this series is an opportunity for the likes of Prasidh and Brar to raise their game in the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, who is out with a knee injury. “Bumrah is not here. But I think it is a really good opportunity for some of the other bowlers to really step up and leave a mark on the series,” he said. But Gill also made it clear that the tourists need to be creative to sustain pressure on the Lankans, a strong outfit at home. “The Test itself is a little bit slow. So, you have to keep trying different things to be able to take wickets, especially in the subcontinent. You have to create opportunities, especially on day 1 and day 2. “If there is not much happening from the wicket, how can you create pressure? How can you not let the game slip away too much from you? So yes, hav-



ing those kinds of creative fields helps our bowlers,” he noted. Southpaw Devdutt Padikkal is expected to start at No.3 in the absence of another left-hander Sai Sudharsan while the under-pressure Dhruv Jurel is expected to bat in the

middle-order despite his poor returns in the last few Tests.

Gill said the management believes in giving time for each player to grow into their assigned roles. “We have players who have immense potential and skill.

Gill eyes WTC final berth as India
begin Sri Lanka Test challenge

Galle: When India will take on Sri Lanka in the opening Test at the picturesque Galle International Cricket Stadium on Saturday, it will also mark India’s landmark 600th Test match and the 50th game at the historic venue. While the historical numbers add considerable interest to the fixture starting on India’s Independence Day, skipper Shubman Gill made it clear that his primary focus remains firmly fixed on securing a berth in the upcoming World Test Championship (WTC) final. India are in fifth spot and need to win almost all of their remaining games to enter the final at The Oval in June 2027. “Very comfortable with the role, and I think the way we have been progressing in the past year has been very pleasing to see from my perspective, and I think we are taking all the right steps in the right direction.

“Obviously, the main goal is to play the World Test Championship final, which is next year. We have got about nine



Tests, and I think we have to win around six or seven to have a good chance of qualifying. So in terms of that, I think this is a very important series for us, and we have had the right kind of preparation leading up to the series,” Gill told reporters on the eve of the match. Unlike past tours often marred by rushed itineraries, India arrived early in Sri Lanka and had a productive warm-up fixture against Sri Lanka Cricket XI in Colombo. “It’s never easy for the players to be able to adapt, and most of the players in this team, I think, require a bit of time to

be able to adjust to the conditions. It is not like a lot of the players have a lot of matches or a lot of experience under their belt, so the extra time in preparation definitely helps,” added Gill. He also had immense confidence in the squad’s fast bowling department despite the absence of Jasprit Bumrah, and had special praise for pacer Prasidh Krishna. “Gurnoor Brar is excellent as he can extract bounce with an old ball at a good pace, but Prasidh Krishna is bowling well of late, as we have seen in the warm-up match.

Ben Shelton beats Nakashima to
defend Canadian Open title



Montreal: Ben Shelton became the first man since fellow lefty Rafael Nadal in 2019 to win back-to-back Canadian Open

titles when he beat Brandon Nakashima 6-3, 7-6 (4) in the final. He dovetailed with another member of the Big Three, Novak

Djokovic, becoming the first man to win the tournament without dropping a set since the Serb 10 years ago. With his

victory, Shelton became the fourth man this century to successfully defend the Canada title after Andy Murray (2009-10), Novak Djokovic (2011-12) and Nadal (2018-19).

By defeating fellow American Nakashima in Montreal, Shelton improved to 6-0 in the pair’s ATP Head2Head series. The lefty has now won four titles this season, having also triumphed in Dallas, Munich and Stuttgart, taking his overall tally of ATP Tour titles to seven, according to ATP stats. Nakashima, who was competing in his first Masters 1000 final, was seeking his second ATP Tour title, almost four years after winning his first in 2022, when he triumphed on home soil in San Diego. Although the 25-year-old fell short in the Montreal final, Nakashima will leave Canada with plenty of good memories.

CRPF Services Vital to India’s Internal Security, Says MoS Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar

Modi government committed to jawans’ welfare, modernisation of Central Armed Police Forces



(By Skyline Staff Reporter)
KALIKIRI, August 17: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Sunday said the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was playing a crucial role in safeguarding the country’s internal security and protecting its sovereignty. He said the dedication of CRPF personnel, who remain on duty round the clock and face risks to their lives in the line of duty, had strengthened public confidence in the country’s security. Speaking after inaugurating newly constructed infrastructure at the CRPF centre in Kalikiri, Mr. Sanjay said the welfare of the force personnel remained a top priority for the Narendra Modi government. The Union Minister arrived at Tirupati airport, where he was received by TTD member Bhanu Prakash and other officials. He later travelled to the CRPF centre at Kalikiri, where he paid tributes at the Martyrs’ Memorial before being accorded a ceremonial welcome by senior CRPF officers.

Rs.26-crore infrastructure dedicated to CRPF
Mr. Sanjay inaugurated and dedicated to the nation a set of newly constructed facilities at the Kalikiri CRPF centre, built at a total cost of Rs.26 crore. The facilities include an Officers’ Mess, Subordinate Officers’ Mess, Recreation Club, Store Block and Tradesmen Block. The Officers’ Mess was constructed at a cost of 79.47 crore, while the Subordinate Officers’ Mess cost Rs.7.90 crore. The Recreation Club was built at Rs.4.90 crore and the Store Block at Rs.4.55 crore. The new infrastructure is expected to provide improved amenities to CRPF officers and personnel and enhance their overall operational efficiency. During his visit, the Minister inspected the newly constructed facilities and interacted with officials on their utilisation, maintenance and the amenities being provided to the personnel.

Welfare of personnel a key priority
Addressing CRPF personnel, Mr. Sanjay said the newly inaugurated facilities were more than just physical infrastructure and reflected the government’s commitment to

the welfare, well-being and professional efficiency of the force. “It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that personnel who are entrusted with protecting the nation’s internal security and sovereignty are provided with the best possible facilities,” he said. He added that the government was committed to providing world-class infrastructure and improving the quality of life of both personnel and their families.

Recreation facilities to help personnel unwind

The newly constructed Recreation Club, he said, would provide personnel an opportunity to relax and unwind after demanding duties. The facility would support sports, games and recreational activities aimed at promoting the physical and mental well-being of the jawans, he said. The Store and Tradesmen Blocks, meanwhile, would facilitate the secure and systematic management of essential materials and resources, contributing to the operational preparedness of the force.

Focus on modernisation of CAPFs

Mr. Sanjay said the Centre, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, had undertaken several initiatives to modernise the CRPF and other Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). He said the government was committed not only to strengthening the operational capabilities of the forces but also to improving the living standards of personnel and their families. “While our jawans remain deployed to protect the nation, citizens can live with a sense of security. It is therefore the government’s responsibility to ensure that their needs are adequately addressed,” he said. The Minister also appreciated the engineers, workers, officials and other personnel involved in completing the construction of the facilities in record time. He said the new infrastructure would boost the morale and confidence of the personnel and encourage them to continue their service to the nation with renewed commitment.

CRPF centre established at Kalikiri in 2017

The CRPF centre at Kalikiri was established on May 11, 2017, with the objective of providing specialised training in anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations to personnel deployed in Left-Wing Extremism-affected areas.

Infrastructure development at the centre began in 2018, while training programmes commenced in 2019.

CRPF Additional Director General, South Zone, Ravideep Singh Sahi, Inspector General Dinesh Pratap Upadhyay, Brigadier Anupam Sharma, DIG Subhash Chandra Sharma, Chief Engineer C.N. Suresh and other senior officials participated in the programme.

Voters' problems should be resolved immediately after SIR

Madanapalle, August 17(Skyline correspondent): YSR Congress Party Constituency Coordinator S Nisar Ahmed has expressed deep concern over the changes in the voters’ lists in polling stations after the completion of the



Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in Madanapalle Assembly constituency. To this end, he submitted a memorandum to the District Collector on behalf of the party on Monday. On this occasion he said that after the SIR, voters from several polling stations have been shifted to other polling stations, and in some cases, even members of the same family have been shifted to different polling stations, causing serious problems for voters. For example, it has come to their notice that several voters from New Polling Station No 183 in Madanapalle

town have been shifted to Polling Station No. 184, and the memorandum submitted by the affected voters in this regard has also been submitted to the District Collector, he said. Similarly, the absence of a specific option in Form-8 to transfer a voter from one polling station to another has also been brought to the notice of the authorities, he appealed to them to find a suitable solution to this problem without causing any inconvenience to genuine voters and to provide convenience to voters living in remote areas. The petition stated that the booth level officials are asking about 20,000 voters who have received notices after the SIR process to be physically present, but in many cases it may not be possible for voters living in remote areas to attend in person, therefore, in cases permissible under the rules, they should be given an opportunity to present their case through blood relatives or authorized representatives, alternatively, an opportunity should be given for investigation/verification in a virtual manner, cases where members of the same family are transferred to different polling stations should be specially examined, and appropriate action

should be taken after examining the complaints received from the affected voters. Also, he appealed to the BLOs and the concerned authorities to issue appropriate orders so that the voters who have received the notices do not face unnecessary difficulties.

Party Intellectuals Forum State Secretary VS Reddy, Booth Committee President N Nawaz Ali Khan, Chippili Mallikharjuna Reddy, leaders Kothapalli Nagarjuna Naidu, Bayya Reddy, Chennakrishna, Malepadu Chalapathy and others participated in this program.

Tribal unemployed youth can avail training with free training, food facility and accommodation.

Madanapalle, August 17(Skyline correspondent): The tribal unemployed youth and youth of Annamayya district should avail training with free training, food facility and accommodation, Annamayya District Tribal Welfare Officer Tejaswini said in a statement. Speaking on this occasion, she said that free training, food facility and accommodation training is being provided. This training is being provided for retail sales executives and domestic biometric operators, she said. In this, for retail sales ex-

ecutive training, those with at least 10th class or above education qualification will be given 420 hours of training, and 30 youth will be recruited in this category. Similarly, for domestic biometric operator training, those with at least 10th class or above education qualification will be given 360 hours of training, she said. She said that 30 youth will also be recruited in this category. Therefore, eligible candidates are advised to register their applications by August 20th. For more details, contact No. 99669 42491..

B Tech, BCA, BBA first year classes begin at MITS



Madanapalle, August 17(Skyline correspondent): The inaugural ceremony of classes for first year students of B Tech, BCA and BBA was held at MITS Deemed to be University near Madanapalle. MITS Founder and Chancellor Dr N Vijaya Bhaskar Chowdhary, former Director General of DRDO from Bangalore and renowned scientist Suma Varghese, Pro Chancellor N Dwarkanath, Vice Chancellor Dr C Yuvaraj, Registrar Dr D Pradeep Kumar, Principal Dr P Ramanathan and others lit the lamp and inaugurated the program. Speaking on the occasion, Suma Varghese said that engineering is a unique profession where one experiments without fear of mistakes and finds solutions to problems. She said that the world is currently changing rapidly with technologies like generative artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, and advanced robotics. She said that India needs to achieve self-reliance in areas like semiconductors, silicon chip design, electric vehicles, computer systems, and autonomous robotics. She suggested that students should not be job seekers but should grow to the point of creating jobs, technological solutions, and new organizations. She said that along with book knowledge, they should gain real-world experience through practical knowledge, industry visits, and mentorship. She advised students to develop knowledge, technical skills, personality development, leadership qualities, and communication abilities. Dr N Vijaya Bhaskar Chowdhary, Founder and Chancellor of MITS, said that the four-year period of education is crucial in shaping the lives of students. He advised students to take advantage of the opportunities available and develop skills according to their interests and future goals. He said that every student needs laptops, and that the university

should make effective use of the internet Wi-Fi facility, state-of-the-art laboratories, technical resources, minor degrees, additional credits, and industry-based training. In the current job market, in the face of increasing competition, it is advisable to develop additional technical skills instead of relying on a single skill. He suggested that students should take advantage of the newly established state-of-the-art labs in the university and achieve professional certifications related to leading companies like Apple, Microsoft, Adobe, and Amazon. He said that students should aim to achieve at least one professional certification in each semester. He also said that they should utilize the certification opportunities of organizations like NISM. He said that by learning foreign languages ??like German, Japanese, Spanish, and Chinese in addition to English, one can get international job opportunities. He called upon the students to take advantage of the labs in modern technology fields like Cyber ??Security, CCNA, Drones, Robotics, etc., and the more than 50 student clubs in the university, to develop creativity, leadership, and communication skills. With the view that the world is their workplace, the students should achieve their goals with courage, discipline, and perseverance. He said that road safety rules should be followed and that they should avoid risky activities like riding two-wheelers without a helmet and using mobile phones while driving. He advised every student to co-operate in maintaining MITS as a drug-free campus and to stay away from bad habits. Director Admissions Dr. Dipankar Rai, Heads of Departments, Deans, Faculty, First Year Students and their Parents participated in the program in large numbers.

Dr Sethu's services in the fields of education and politics are priceless



Madanapalle, August 17(Skyline correspondent): APUWJF representatives said that Dr N Sethu’s services in the fields of education and politics are inspiring and priceless. On the auspicious occasion of his appointment as the BJP state executive member, they along with senior BJP leader Challapalli Narasimha Reddy felicitated Dr N Sethu with shawls, turbans and gajamalas on Monday at the Vijaya Bharathi school premises. Speaking on the occasion, several journalists said that Dr N Sethu has earned special recognition by providing long services in the field of education. They praised him for providing quality education through Vijaya Bharathi educational institution, not only providing free education to the children of journalists, but also contributing to the welfare of journalists. They said that he has been pro-

viding special services to the development of the Bharatiya Janata Party, and it is a good development that the Bharatiya Janata Party high command has recognized his services and given him a place in the state committee. He always greeted everyone with a smile and was known as an unsung hero in politics. They wished that he would play an active role in the BJP in future politics and hold more high positions. APUWJF District President TV5 Ramesh Royal, APBJA District President NTV Prasad, reporters Narasimhulu, Madhusudhan, Srinivasulu Reddy, Surendra, Mysore Srinivasulu Yadav, Eswar Reddy, Srinivasulu, Vijay, Reddy Sekhar Naidu, Kurabalakota Srinivasulu, Vattikonda Reddy Sekhar, Gopal, Vijay Kumar, Hariprasad, Naveen, Venkatesh and others participated in this program.

With the special initiative of the police, another ganja smuggler was arrested under the PIT NDPS Act



Madanapalle August 17 (Skyline correspondent): In Madanapalle, the second person in the district to be charged under the PIT NDPS Act against ganja smuggler Syed Sultan has been shifted to Kadapa Central Jail, said Annamayya district SP Dheeraj Kunubilli. Speaking at a press conference organized at the SP office on Monday, the SP explained that the accused had 18 criminal cases in the past

and that the police had seized a total of 51.915 kg of ganja from him. Warning that drug sales would not be tolerated under any circumstances, he sought the cooperation of the public in building a drug-free society. Later, cash rewards were given to the police officers and personnel who showed merit in this case. Additional SP (Admin) M Venkatadri, Cls Raja Reddy, Kala Venkataramana, SIs Rama Krishna Reddy, Rahimullah and staff participated in this meeting.