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21 RABI AL-AWWAL 1448H

NAMAZ TIME

FAJAR	05:20 AM
ZOHAR	01:30 PM
ASAR	05:15 PM
MAGHRIB	06:59 PM
ISHA	08:15 PM

SUNRISE/SUNSET

13 HRS 10 MINS
RISE 05:42 AM
SET 06:52 PM

MOONRISE/MOONSET

13 HRS 52 MINS
RISE 05:31 AM
SET 07:23 PM

ARAB WORLD ►P9



**WEST BANK FOOD
INSECURITY SOARS,
WFP TO SLASH
BENEFICIARIES**

Telangana CM Revanth says nobody can cow him down

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3**

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Thursday that nobody can cow him down and that he is not a slave to anyone.

Asserting that nobody can intimidate him, the CM said he can be won only with friendship. "Nobody can cow me down. You can win me only with friendship. I am ready to do anything in friendship," he said while addressing a public meeting in the old city of Hyderabad after inaugurating a flyover along with Hyderabad MP and AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi.

"I am not a slave to anybody. I am a slave



only to friendship," said the Chief Minister.

His remarks came hours after Konda Surekha accused him of blackmailing the Congress high command to remove her from the Cabinet.

After the high command's nod, the Chief Minister on Thursday decided to drop her from the Council of Ministers and sent a letter to the Governor.

India and Belgium back all efforts for early resolution of conflicts: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that India and Belgium believe in the rule of law, dialogue and diplomacy, asserting that both nations support efforts towards early resolutions of ongoing conflicts.

Addressing a joint press meet with Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever following their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi, PM Modi described people-to-people ties as the "greatest strength" of India-Belgium relationship. He said that India and Belgium are strengthening connection between the start-ups and have reached an agreement to build capacity in the maritime sector. PM Modi mentioned that both nations



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with Belgium PM Bart De Wever at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi.

will soon also conclude a Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement.

"Today, we also discussed regional and global developments in detail. Both India and Belgium believe in the rule of law, dialogue, and diplomacy. Whether it is Ukraine or West

Asia, we support all efforts for an early resolution of conflicts and peace. Eradicating terrorism in all its forms remains our shared commitment."

PM Modi emphasised that the partnership between India and Belgium has made remark-

able progress over the past decade and the scope of bilateral cooperation has expanded beyond traditional sectors to strategic areas like defence and clean energy.

He said that India and Belgium are collaborating on modern defence

equipment, such as the Zorawar tank and developing one of the world's largest green ammonia projects in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada.

"The ties between India and Belgium are deeply rooted in history. The courage and sacrifice of thousands of Indian soldiers in Belgium during the First World War remain a vital part of our shared memory. Today, democratic values, a market economy, and strong people-to-people ties make us natural partners," PM Modi stated.

He termed defence and security cooperation as a "key pillar" of India-Belgium ties and announced that both nations have agreed to enhance military exchanges and training cooperation. (IANS/UNI)

ED raids 14 locations in toll plaza scam

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Directorate of Enforcement's (ED) Allahabad Sub-Zonal Office on Tuesday conducted search operations at 14 premises spread across Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, and Delhi-NCR under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The action forms part of an ongoing investigation into the "Toll Plaza Scam" involving large-scale fraudulent toll collection.

The ED probe was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by Uttar Pradesh Police concerning fraudulent practices at Atraila Toll Plaza in Mirzapur and several other toll plazas across the country. In January 2025, the state police had exposed a major fraud at Atraila Shiv Gulam Toll Plaza. (IANS)

TG Governor drops Konda Surekha from Council of Ministers

**FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3**

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla has dropped Minister Konda Surekha from the State Council of Ministers with immediate effect.

According to a communiqué issued by Lok Bhavan on Thursday night, the Governor took the decision on the advice of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy.

The decision to remove Surekha was reportedly taken in the light of her daughter's inappropriate remarks regarding the Chief Minister recently.

The Chief Minister has also approved the appointment of Nerella Sharada as Chairperson, Telangana State Commission for Women. He also approved the appointment of former Rajya Sabha member G. Sudha Rani as



Konda Surekha

Chairperson, Kakatiya Urban Development Authority (KUDA).

Government Orders relating to rescinding of Chinna Reddy as Vice-Chairman of Telangana Planning Board and the new appointments have been issued.

The Chief Minister decided to drop Surekha from the Cabinet after the Congress Party high command cracked the whip over indiscipline.

Chinna Reddy has also been removed as Vice Chairman of the

Planning Board over indiscipline.

The Disciplinary Committee of state Congress recommended strong action against both Konda Surekha and Chinna Reddy.

Surekha had been in the eye of a storm following her daughter Sushmitha's outbursts against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

She had also found fault with the show-cause notice issued to her, saying she can't be held responsible for the personal views of her daughter.

The high command took the decision at the crucial meeting Congress General Secretary K.C. Venugopal had with top leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on Thursday following a series of meetings with the state leadership over the last three days.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Surekha, and state Congress president Mahesh Kumar Goud had separate meetings with party President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday. Revanth Reddy and Goud also had meetings with Venugopal.

Surekha had also met AICC in-charge Meenakshi Natrajan on Wednesday. Later, the minister told media persons that she conveyed to party leaders whatever she wanted to convey.

Asserting that she belongs to a backward class, Surekha had remarked that there can't be one justice for her and another for others. She said that Cabinet ministers from other social groups have serious allegations against them. "What action will be taken against them," she asked.

JPC formed to examine FCRA Amendment Bill

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

A 31-member Joint Committee of Parliament (JPC) has been formed to examine the proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, and the move is the next stage of legislative scrutiny of the contentious legislation, said officials.

According to a Lok Sabha bulletin issued on Thursday, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Bihar's Bettiah, Sanjay Jaiswal, has been appointed Chairperson of the joint parliamentary panel. The committee, constituted by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, comprises 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha.

The panel has been tasked with examining the provisions of the proposed FCRA



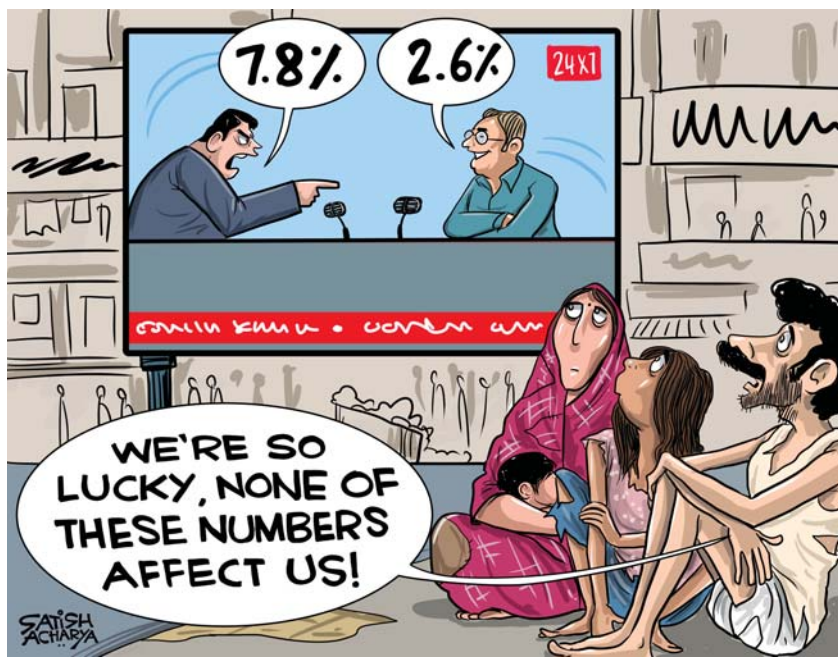
amendment and considering changes before the Bill proceeds further through Parliament.

The committee includes 14 BJP members and five Congress members. The representation also includes two members each from the Janata Dal-United, the Trinamool Congress, and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The Samajwadi Party, the Indian Union Muslim League, the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar, the Nationalist Congress Party, and the Telugu Desam

Party have one member each.

Among the BJP members from the Lok Sabha are Bhartruhari Mahtab, Tejasvi Surya, Kamlesh Jangde, Mukeshkumar Chandrakaant Dalal, Nishikant Dubey, Vishnu Dayal Ram, Ananta Nayak, and Arvind Dharmapuri. The Congress is represented by Anto Antony, Captain Viriarto Fernandes, Muhammed Hamdullah Sayeed, and Kali Charan Munda. The Bill was referred to a joint committee on August 12 amid strong opposition protests. (IANS)

CARTOON CAROUSEL



US warns EB-1 green cards may shut for India

WASHINGTON, SEP 3

The United States has warned that employment-based first-preference green cards for Indians could become unavailable within weeks because of heavy demand, adding fresh pressure to an already severe backlog that has left another major category closed to Indian applicants.

The State Department, in its September Visa Bulletin, said high demand and use of EB-1 immigrant



visa numbers by applicants chargeable to India could exhaust the country's allocation before the US fiscal year ends on September 30.

"High demand and number use by aliens chargeable to India in the EB-1 visa category may necessitate mak-

ing the category unavailable in the coming weeks if India's pro-rated limit in the EB-1 category is reached before the fiscal year ends," the State Department said.

EB-1 is the employment-based first-preference category, covering priority workers including people with extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers and certain multinational executives and managers. (IANS/UNI)

Housing prices rise 59% in 4 Years

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Housing prices across India's top seven cities surged 59 per cent between 2021 and 2025, significantly outpacing the 34 per cent increase in residential construction costs during the same period, according to property consultancy Anarock.

The widening gap between the cost of building a home and its selling price has been driven by factors including rising land values, location premiums, developer

margins and changing demand-supply dynamics, Anarock said.

The 25-percentage-point divergence could intensify affordability pressures for homebuyers while creating margin challenges for developers. The average construction cost of a standard-plus residential project increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.9 pc, rising from Rs 2,681 per square foot in 2021 to Rs 3,604 per square foot in 2025. (IANS)

Kisan Mela focuses on technology, crop diversification & farmer welfare in Adilabad

TFP | SHAIK RIAZUDDIN
ADILABAD, SEP 3

Adilabad MP Godam Nagesh said modern technology, scientific farming methods and crop diversification were essential to increase farmers' income and make agriculture more profitable.

He was speaking at a district-level Kisan Mela organised by ATMA at Chilukuri Lakshmi Garden in Mavala mandal on Thursday. District Collector Rajarshi Shah, MP Godam Nagesh and MLA Payal Shankar inaugurated the event by lighting the lamp.

Nagesh advised farmers to adopt crops based on local soil, water availability, climate and market demand, while promoting alternative crops



Adilabad MP Godam Nagesh inaugurates district-level Kisan Mela organised by ATMA at Chilukuri Lakshmi Garden in Mavala mandal, Adilabad district.

such as oil palm. He also stressed the need to expand export opportunities for agricultural produce.

Collector Rajarshi Shah said the Kisan Mela brought farmers, scientists and agriculture officials together to create awareness about government schemes and modern

farming technologies. He said organic farming, oil palm cultivation and drone technology were being promoted in the district and that tribal youth were being trained in drone operations.

MLA Payal Shankar called for free crop insurance without a premium burden on

farmers, better road connectivity to agricultural fields and construction of godowns in villages. He also sought allocation of 50 per cent of NREGS funds to the agriculture sector.

Market Committee Chairman Srikanth Reddy urged farmers to make use of mar-

ket yards and services without depending on middlemen, while Municipal Chairperson Bandari Anusha advised them to adopt scientific farming methods and improve productivity.

The chief guests later visited stalls showcasing agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and modern farm machinery. Adilabad and Ichchoda ATMA chairmen Santosh Rao, Raju and Narayana, District Agriculture Officer Ravinder Singh, Animal Husbandry Officer Rama Rao, Horticulture Officer Sandeep Kumar, RDO Rathod Ravinder, agriculture officials, scientists, public representatives and farmers attended the programme.

Krishnaiah demands immediate release of Rs 8,000 cr fee dues

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

National BC Welfare Association President and Rajya Sabha Member R Krishnaiah on Thursday demanded the immediate release of Rs 8,000 crore in pending fee reimbursement and scholarship dues, alleging that the delay was severely affecting lakhs of BC, SC, ST and minority students.

Addressing a protest by students in Dilsukhnagar, Krishnaiah alleged that certificates of around 4 lakh students who completed their courses were being withheld by colleges over unpaid fees.

He said nearly 30,000 students skipped engineering counselling, while 50 per cent of PG seats and 70,000 degree seats remained vacant.



Rajya Sabha Member R Krishnaiah addresses media in Dilsukhnagar, Hyderabad.

He also claimed that around 300 colleges had shut down due to the financial crisis caused by pending reimbursements. Krishnaiah accused Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of adopting an "anti-BC" approach and alleged that the government was attempting to weaken existing welfare schemes.

He urged opposition parties to raise the issue in the Assembly and demanded that fee reimbursement con-

tinue under the earlier system, with students not required to pay fees at admission.

He also demanded full fee reimbursement as promised in the Congress election manifesto and an increase in college scholarships to Rs 5,000-Rs 20,000 per student. Krishnaiah warned that if the government failed to clear the dues and address students' concerns, further protests would be intensified.

Congress govt failed farmers in 1,000 days: Zaheerabad MLA



TFP | HIMAYATH ULLAH
ZAHEERABAD, SEP 3

Zaheerabad MLA Koninti Manik Rao accused the Congress government of failing farmers during its 1,000 days in office and alleged that the agriculture, irrigation and farmer insurance sectors had been neglected.

As part of the BRS seven-day protest programme, Manik Rao, former DCMS chair-

man Shivakumar and BRS leaders led a farmers' rally in Zaheerabad on Thursday. A farmers' meeting was later held near the Lifestyle Complex (More Supermarket) to highlight the alleged shortage of urea, problems in irrigation and agriculture and the implementation of Rythu Bima.

Manik Rao said the previous BRS government had supported farmers through

schemes including Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima, irrigation projects and 24-hour free power. "Is urea available in apps when it is not available in shops?" he asked, demanding that the government immediately address the shortage and ensure adequate fertiliser supplies to farmers. He said BRS would continue to raise farmers' issues with the government.

Khanapur MLA inaugurates free mega health camp in Utnoor

TFP | AMJAD KHAN
ADILABAD, SEP 3

Khanapur MLA Vedma Bojju Patel said providing quality medical services free of cost to poor and tribal people should be the main objective of mega health camps. He inaugurated a free mega health camp at H.K.G.N. Function Hall in Utnoor on Thursday. The camp was organised by HEAD Society, Utnoor, with support from Prathima Foundation, Karimnagar.

Bojju Patel appreciated the efforts of HEAD Society and Prathima Foundation



in providing healthcare and other community services in the tribal region and urged people to make use of the free medical facilities.

HEAD Society President Srikanth Jadhav said the organisation had been undertaking activities in education, healthcare and social welfare and that the health camp was organised for the benefit of local people.

Medicines were also distributed free of cost.

HEAD Society Director Dr. Srinath Narayan, ITDA Project Officer Manda Makarand, IAS, Utnoor Sarpanch Anitha Srinivas Jadhav, former ZP Chairperson Janardhan Rathod, medical professionals and representatives of HEAD Society and Prathima Foundation attended the programme.

Forest officer, associate held in ACB trap

B. KOTHAGUEDEM, SEP 3

A Forest Beat Officer and his associate were arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) after being caught allegedly accepting a Rs.30,000 bribe in Bhadradri Kothagudem district on Thursday.

According to the ACB, Banoth Ravi Kumar (A1), Forest Beat Officer of Kachanapally Beat and in-charge of Ramanujagudem Beat in Allapally mandal, allegedly demanded the bribe from a complainant

in return for allowing podu cultivation and refraining from digging trenches or taking other action.

Ravi Kumar reportedly instructed the complainant to hand over the money to his associate, Patan Sadiq Khan (A2). Acting on the complaint, ACB officials laid a trap and caught Sadiq Khan accepting the cash at his residence in Ramanujagudem village. The tainted money was recovered, and a chemical test on his hands returned positive. (NSS)

Siddipet Collector denies reports of govt land being converted into patta land

TFP | GANESH
SIDDIPET, SEP 3

Siddipet District Collector Haimavathi, IAS has rejected reports published in Eenadu and Namasthe Telangana alleging that 52 acres of assigned government land in Survey No. 49 at Hawaiguda village in Gajwel mandal were converted into patta land and distributed to others.

The Collector said the reports titled "52 Acres Distributed" and "Assigned Land Converted into Patta Overnight" were factually incor-



Haimavathi

rect and baseless. She said official records showed that Survey No. 49, measuring 83.04 guntas, comprised 31.27 guntas of government land and 51.17 guntas of patta land.

According to the Collector, the 31.27 guntas of government land was subsequently assigned to 37 beneficiaries, while the 51.17 guntas of patta land continued to remain in the names of Raghu- pathi Rao and Narsaiah or their legal heirs. The same ownership details were maintained in revenue records from 1959-60 onwards.

Haimavathi said an error occurred while entering the records on the Dharani and later Bhu Bharati portals, where the classifica-

tion or nature of the patta land was incorrectly shown as assigned land. Following applications from the pattadars, the revenue records were examined and the classification alone was corrected based on recommendations from the Gajwel Tahsildar and Revenue Divisional Officer.

She clarified that no names of assigned land beneficiaries or pattadars were changed and that only the erroneous land classification in the Bhu Bharati portal was corrected.

Suryapet Collector warns hospital staff against duty negligence



TFP | VENKAT REDDY
SURYAPET, SEP 3

Suryapet District Collector Tejas Nand Lal Pawar, IAS directed doctors and medical staff at the Government General Hospital to maintain discipline, discharge their duties responsibly and provide quality medical services to patients.

During a surprise inspection of the hospital on Thursday, the Collector checked the male and female OP departments, patient registers, AMC ward, PMJAY, Aarogyasri and Ayushman Bharat counters, drug store, diagnostic room and blood sample collection centre. He reviewed patient treatment, diagnostic services and

medicine stocks and instructed officials to maintain adequate buffer stocks.

Pawar directed the Resident Medical Officer (RMO) and doctors to closely monitor seasonal diseases such as dengue, malaria and typhoid during the rainy season and update details of fever cases, admissions and discharges daily. He also instructed officials to prepare proposals for improving hospital infrastructure and procuring medicines and equipment required for advanced surgeries.

Doctors Vani, Janardhan, Anita, Sripatha, Upender, Yashwanth and Vinay, along with hospital staff, were present.

Asifabad Collector directs faster development

TFP | IRFAN HUSSAIN
K.B. ASIFABAD, SEP 3

Kumram Bheem Asifabad District Collector K. Haritha, IAS has directed officials to speed up development works being undertaken under various government schemes and complete them at the earliest.

At a review meeting at the Integrated District Collectorate, Haritha, along with ITDA-Utnoor Project Officer Manda Makarandu, District Forest Officer Balamani and



Forest Divisional Officers Bhargav and Appayya of Kagaznagar and Asifabad, reviewed ongoing works and the progress of forest clearances.

She directed the Revenue and Forest departments to conduct joint surveys to

resolve disputes over land as part of the government's resurvey programme. Officials were also asked to expedite the construction of Indiramma houses and houses sanctioned under the PM-JANMAN scheme in coordina-

tion with the Forest Department.

Haritha directed officials to complete the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya compound wall in Lingapur mandal and obtain forest clearances quickly for BT roads, bridges and culverts sanctioned under the Tribal Welfare Department. She also asked Panchayat Raj officials to accelerate road, gram panchayat building, mandal federation building and CC road works.

Narayanpet Collector inspects EVM, VVPAT strong room

TFP | G. RAGHU
NARAYANPET, SEP 3

Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) units are being kept under tight security at the EVM warehouse opposite the RTC bus stand in Narayanpet, District Collector Priyanka said.

As part of the quarterly inspection, Priyanka inspected the warehouse and strong room on Thursday in the presence of representatives of various political parties. She reviewed EVM



and VVPAT records, seal conditions, CCTV surveillance and police security arrangements. The Collector noticed an expired fire-safety equipment item and directed officials to replace it immediately.

The equipment was replaced on the spot. She instructed officials to strictly follow Election Commission guidelines, maintain records properly and ensure continuous monitoring of the strong room and machines. Ad-

ditional Collector Srinu, RDO Ramesh, Election Section Officer Jayasudha, Municipal Commissioner Shankar, Revenue and Police officials and representatives of various political parties attended the inspection.

CM Revanth inaugurates Chanchalguda-Santoshnagar steel flyover

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday said the Congress government had completed the Chanchalguda-Santoshnagar steel flyover by providing the required funds, alleging that the previous government had only laid the foundation stone for the project without spending money on its construction.

Addressing a public meeting after inaugurating the flyover, Revanth Reddy said his government was committed to developing Hyderabad and described the city's Old City as the "original city". He said he was familiar with every locality in the area and directed officials to

Announces Rs. 25 Crore for govt college in Malakpet, promises metro rail expansion



The four-lane Chanchalguda-Santoshnagar steel flyover, constructed at a cost of Rs. 620 crore, spans 3.2 km and is 16.6 metres wide.



sanction development works sought by Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi.

The Chief Minister said Asad Owaisi had sought Rs. 20 crore for the development of a government College and announced Rs. 25 crore for the project. He said the government would provide the funds, while

the MLA would be responsible for ensuring that the development works were completed within one-and-a-half years. Revanth Reddy said the government was prepared to spend as much as required for education.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, Revanth Reddy said Asaduddin

Owaisi had supported India during the operation and demonstrated his patriotism. "Political ideologies may differ, but on the issue of patriotism, we are all one," he said.

The Chief Minister announced plans to construct a three-kilometre cable bridge over Mir Alam Tank, saying resi-

dents would otherwise have to travel to Durgam Cheruvu to see a cable bridge. He also promised to complete the metro rail extension from Gowliguda to Chandrayangutta before the next elections and said he would return to seek votes by travelling on the metro.

Revanth Reddy said

the government planned to construct one lakh Indiramma houses in Hyderabad and stressed that the development of Telangana was possible only when Hindus and Muslims worked together. He also highlighted the Congress government's role in providing four per cent reservation to Muslims.

On the Musi Riverfront project, the Chief Minister alleged that BJP and BRS leaders were trying to obstruct the development initiative. He said the government would develop the Musi riverfront, promote the night economy and create employment opportunities for poor Muslims living

in the area. He further announced plans to expand the metro network from Nagole to LB Nagar, Vundrayangutta, Rajendranagar and Shamshabad. Revanth Reddy alleged that the BJP and BRS were obstructing the government's efforts to develop Hyderabad.

The Chief Minister also reiterated that the government was providing 200 units of free electricity to eligible poor families and LPG cylinders for Rs. 500. He said political activity should be confined to election periods and that after elections, the focus should be on development.

"Let us all work together for the development of the city," Revanth Reddy said.

T-BJP chief detained during protest at Secretariat



RATNA CHOTRANI
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Telangana BJP president Ramchander Rao and several senior party leaders were detained by Hyderabad Police on Thursday while attempting to stage a protest at the Telangana State Secretariat over pending student fee reimbursement dues.

The BJP leaders had sought permission to enter the Secretariat and submit a representation to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, demanding the release of pending fee reimbursement funds for students.

However, police stopped the protesters, including activists of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), at the Secretariat's main gate. The leaders insisted on meeting the Chief Minister and entering the premises, but security personnel denied permission.

As the protesters re-

fused to disperse, some allegedly attempted to scale the closed gate, leading to a brief scuffle with security personnel. Police subsequently detained Ramchander Rao, BJP Legislature Party leader Aleti Maheshwar Reddy, MP D.K. Aruna and several others.

While Ramchander Rao was shifted to Chikkadpally Police Station, D.K. Aruna was taken to Gandhi Nagar Police Station.

Reacting to his detention, Ramchander Rao said the BJP would continue its agitation until all pending dues are released. In a post on X, he alleged that the Congress government had "arrested the voice of 40 lakh students" awaiting fee reimbursement and vowed to continue the fight for their rights.

In another post, the Telangana BJP chief claimed that around 40 lakh students had been adversely affected.

Make report on Ram temple donation theft public, demands Asad Owaisi

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday questioned why the SIT report on the Ayodhya Ram temple donation theft was not made public, noting that people were angry as their faith had been mocked.

On the appointment of Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra (ret'd) as the first CEO of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, Asad Owaisi asked: "The appointments that were made earlier- who made them? The government made them, right? You brought it to Parliament and made



Asaduddin Owaisi

appointments to the trust. Even after that, theft worth crores of rupees took place. The people are angry today because their faith has been mocked. You can appoint whoever you want; you are the government," he said.

The MP, however, said people want to

know who committed the theft. "An FIR has been filed, and you also have a report. So why isn't that report being made public? You mocked the public's devotion, and in the name of faith, you garnered votes and power, while all these people looted everything there," he said. On the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Telangana, Asad Owaisi said SIR notices are being issued to voters over mapping anomalies, including cases involving more than six progeny mappings.

He urged those receiving notices to attend hearings with Aadhaar

and other documents. The MP also flagged complaints of voters being wrongly marked as 'dead' or 'shifted' despite being alive and present at their registered addresses.

"Notices are being issued to voters whose names have appeared in the list of anomalies and whose mapping has not been completed. We are appealing to the public that individuals, women, and young men and women who are receiving notices should immediately appear for the hearing and bring their Aadhaar cards and other relevant documents with them," he said.

Ajman eyes doubling Indian tourist arrivals, launches USD 20 Incentive

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Ajman is targeting a significant increase in Indian tourist arrivals, with officials aiming to double the number of visitors from the country following a 12 per cent growth between 2023 and 2025.

Speaking at a tourism roadshow in Hyderabad, Ajman Department of Tourism, Culture & Media Director General Mahmood Khaleel Al-hashmi said India has emerged as one of Ajman's most important tourism markets.



Officials said around 75,000 Indian tourists stayed in Ajman hotels last year, while the actual number is higher as many visitors stay with relatives or in other Emirates.

The department has also announced an incentive of USD 20 per person for travel part-

ners bringing groups or visitors to Ajman, as part of efforts to strengthen the Indian market. Officials said the incentive is expected to help double Indian tourist arrivals. Officials highlighted Ajman's 16-km sandy coastline, heritage and cultural attractions, adventure activities.

ED searches premises linked to 'Ganja Queen' Neetu Bai

TFP I MANVER SINGH
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

The Enforcement Directorate ED on Thursday conducted searches at multiple premises linked to alleged ganja racket kingpin Neetu Bai in Hyderabad.

Officials of the ED were conducting searches at various premises at nine locations allegedly linked to Neetu Bai, notorious as 'Ganja Queen'. The searches are reported to be part of a money-laundering probe arising from cases registered by Telangana's Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE) and the Prohibition and Excise Department against her and her associates.

The ED searches are a part of enforcement action being carried out by the Central agency across the country in narcotics cases under the Nasha Mukta Bharat campaign.

In Hyderabad, the ED focused on Neetu Bai, who is shown as absconding in multiple cases registered by Cyberabad Narcotics Police Station of EAGLE and the Excise Department.

According to sources, the ED registered its case under the Prevention of Money



Laundering Act on the basis of EAGLE FIRs and is examining the alleged proceeds generated through ganja sales and their handling.

The Central agency is examining the source of funds and properties allegedly acquired through illegal ganja sales.

The ED is likely to provide details of the investigation after the searches.

Neetu Bai and her network are suspected to have made crores of rupees through the illegal trade and allegedly routed a substantial portion of the proceeds through hawala channels.

The ED officials are looking into financial transactions, property documents, bank accounts and other records to trace the flow of the suspected proceeds of crime.

They are also trying to ascertain if the money generated from the alleged drug trade was invested in

immovable properties and other assets in the names of family members or associates.

Neetu Bai's residence at Lodha Basti in Nanakramguda is suspected to be the den for an allegedly family-run ganja retail sale. Her husband, Munna Singh, sons Gautam and Govind and daughter allegedly assist her in packaging and selling the ganja.

EAGLE officials in the past found several addicts, including software engineers, purchasing ganja from her residence. She was named as an accused in several FIRs registered in this regard.

However, she remained elusive and is shown as absconding in the FIRs.

In 2024, the Cyberabad Special Operation Team (SOT) had conducted a raid at her residence and seized 20 kilograms of ganja and Rs.20 lakh cash.

160 detonators found in Secunderabad; police say no link with Army armoury heist

TFP I RAOOF KHAN
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

As many as 160 electric detonators were found at Bollaram in Secunderabad on Thursday but police have clarified that this was not related to the Army or the recent theft of firearms from the Army establishment.

The detonators were reportedly found behind the wall of the firing range of the 20 Madras Regiment Army Camp under the limits of Bollaram Police Station of Malkajgiri Commissionerate.

Police teams along with bomb disposal

squad and sniffer dog reached the spot and found a plastic bucket, containing eight bundles of 20 detonators each. Their value was estimated to be Rs 32,000.

Police seized the detonators and took up an investigation.

However, Malkajgiri Police clarified that the detonators were found in a private venture and not in the Army area. They suspect that land or plot developers were using them at least before one year or above.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Ch. Sridhar

said a case has been registered and further investigation was on.

He clarified that this was not at all related to the Army or the present case. Any developments in the Army case will be informed officially, he said.

The DCP was referring to the theft of weapons and ammunition from the 20 Madras Regiment premises at Bollaram.

Twelve firearms, including four AK-203 assault rifles, an INSAS rifle, six 9 mm pistols and a civilian 6.35-bore pistol, were reported missing from the 20

Madras Regiment premises at Bollaram. A passive night-vision binocular, 21 magazines and more than 1,800 rounds of ammunition were also reportedly missing from the Army establishment.

The theft came to light on the morning of August 31, when Army personnel opened the Kote and Battalion Magazine, where weapons and ammunition were stored. They found that the locks of the premises and the boxes containing the weapons, control stores and ammunition had been broken.

A First Information Report (FIR) registered with Bollaram Police Station stated that the weapons and ammunition had last been physically accounted for at about 6 p.m. on August 30, before the Kote and Battalion Magazine were closed.

A case has been registered case under Sections 331(4) and 305 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Army officials have ordered an internal enquiry and questioned guard-duty personnel who were on duty when the weapons went missing.

No FIR even after 24 days: Kharge writes to Nadda

Seeks action over 'shuddhikaran' row

TFP | PRASHANT SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday urged Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha and Union Minister J.P. Nadda to ensure that swift action is taken over the "Shuddhikaran" (purification) ritual, carried out at the Ram Leela Maidan in Haldwani following a public meeting addressed by him.

In a letter addressed to Nadda, Kharge recalled the assurance given by Nadda and urged him to direct the Uttarakhand government to take appropriate action against the organisations and individuals involved in the incident. Kharge expressed concern over the fact that no FIR had been registered against those responsible for the alleged ritual even several days after the incident.

"I am astonished that even 24 days after the incident, not even an FIR has been registered against the organisations and individuals responsible for carrying out this despicable act in Haldwani. The most objectionable aspect of this episode was that at the very spot in Ramlila Maidan where I had addressed the rally, a 'purification' ritual was performed



-- an act contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of India and to human values," Kharge said in the letter.

The Congress chief also reiterated the position expressed by Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi that the practice of 'Shuddhikaran' is directly associated with untouchability.

"There are numerous such examples; during the Mahad Satyagraha, when Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar drank water from the tank, individuals driven by caste arrogance performed a purification ritual involving the pouring of 108 pots of cow urine and cow dung amidst the chanting of mantras. Merely chanting mantras or performing a 'havan' does not sanctify a casteist purification ritual," Kharge said.

He further argued that the matter should not be viewed merely as an issue involving him personally or his position as the Con-

gress president, but as a larger question concerning people who continue to face caste-based discrimination.

"This issue goes beyond me personally or my position as the President of the Indian National Congress; it is connected on a broader level to the sentiments of crores of people who continue to face this cruel reality every day. It is necessary to teach a lesson to such wrongdoers," Kharge wrote.

The Congress chief subsequently urged Nadda to ask Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami to ensure the registration of an FIR against those allegedly involved in conducting the purification ritual at the Ram Leela Maidan after his public meeting in Haldwani.

The controversy erupted after a group of people conducted a "purification" ritual at the Ramlila Ground in Haldwani following Kharge's rally on August 8.

HP fiscal deficit breaches prescribed limits

86% revenue spent on salaries and subsidies

SHIMLA, SEP 3

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on Thursday painted a worrying picture of Himachal Pradesh's financial health, flagging the rapidly rising debt burden, breach of fiscal deficit limits and shrinking availability of funds for developmental and capital expenditure.

The CAG report for the financial year 2024-25, tabled in the state Assembly by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, said the state's fiscal deficit had crossed the prescribed limits under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management



(FRBM) framework.

The state's revenue deficit stood at Rs 6,804.61 crore, equivalent to 2.94 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), while the fiscal deficit touched Rs 12,611.05

crore, or 5.44 per cent of the GSDP.

According to the report, the state government failed to keep these deficits within the targets prescribed under the FRBM Act. The state's outstand-

ing liabilities were also significantly higher than the targets recommended by the 15th Finance Commission and the state's own budget estimates.

The audit report highlighted that as much as 86 per cent of the state's total revenue receipts were being consumed by committed expenditure and subsidies, leaving only a small portion available for infrastructure development and capital investment.

Salaries, pensions and gratuity alone accounted for around 70 per cent of the revenue expenditure, it said.

The CAG also raised concerns over the increasing expenditure on power subsidies and debt relief measures, saying that such commitments were putting additional pressure on the state's finances.

With only about 14 per cent of revenue resources left for developmental activities and capital expenditure, the state faces constraints in creating infrastructure and making long-term investments, the report noted.

The CAG said that Himachal Pradesh's economy registered a growth of 9.20 per cent during 2024-25. (IANS/UNI)

Maharashtra CM Fadnavis rules out move to national politics

Says he will remain in Maharashtra until 2029

MUMBAI, SEP 3

Amid ongoing speculation regarding his potential shift to national politics in New Delhi, Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday firmly put an end to the rumours, clarifying that he will continue to serve in the state until at least 2029. Speaking at the infra conclave organised by a Marathi TV channel, CM Fadnavis addressed the recurring reports about his move to the national Capital, noting that his future remains in the hands of his party leadership.

"My party and my leaders will decide my role. The day they decide, I will certainly go to Delhi. But as of today,



Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis

it is my view that I am not going to Delhi until 2029," he stated.

Dismissing the frequent media chatter, he added with a touch of humour: "Some of my well-wishers believe that going to Delhi would

be a promotion for me, while others think that if I leave, a burden will be lifted off their heads. Whether people like it or not, my leaders will keep me in Maharashtra until 2029. Every two to three months, whenever

someone lacks news or wants to create hype, they send me to Delhi. I actually enjoy it."

The CM's clarification comes after Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Raut, on Thursday made a dramatic claim, stating that despite Devendra Fadnavis ruling out a shift to national politics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants him in New Delhi to entrust him with a major responsibility. Speaking to the media, Raut claimed that discussions regarding Fadnavis' elevation are actively underway within the inner circles of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"Prime Minister Modi wants to bring Devendra Fadnavis to Delhi and assign him a significant responsibility. This much I know for a fact," he said. Elaborating further on the internal deliberations of the RSS, Raut claimed that the Sangh wants a key leader who is not currently part of the Union Cabinet to be appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister.

"Many states dream of reaching a \$1 trillion economy, but Maharashtra is closest to achieving it because we have already reached \$660 billion," Fadnavis said, adding that, "If we maintain a sustained growth rate, we will undoubtedly become a \$1 trillion economy by 2030." (IANS/UNI)

Congress ends alliance with Raijor Dal

GUWAHATI, SEP 3

The Assam Congress on Thursday formally ended its political alliance with the Akhil Gogoi-led Raijor Dal, accusing the regional party of repeatedly violating the norms and principles governing the opposition alliance. The decision takes immediate effect and was taken on the direction of Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president and Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi.

An organisational circular announcing the decision was issued by APCC General Sec-

retary (Organisation) Ramanna Baruah.

The Congress said the alliance had been formed ahead of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections to bring together regional and Left parties, including the Raijor Dal, with the objective of presenting a united opposition against what it described as communal forces. However, the party alleged that Raijor Dal leaders repeatedly targeted the Congress during the alliance period through what it termed malicious propaganda and personal attacks. (IANS)

'Conspiracy with objective of denying J&K statehood': Farooq Abdullah

SRINAGAR, SEP 3

Former Chief Minister and ruling National Conference (NC) president, Dr Farooq Abdullah, on Thursday accused the Lt. Governor-led administration of 'orchestrating' threats to Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) to continue depriving Jammu and Kashmir of statehood. Talking to reporters in Anantnag, Dr Abdullah squarely blamed the administration for what he called 'orchestrating threats to Kashmiri Pandits to deprive J&K of statehood'.

Countering a question by reporters about statehood with his own question, Dr Abdullah said, "Who is issuing the threats? Kashmiri



National Conference president, Dr Farooq Abdullah

Pandits hardly reside here now. All the top officers posted here are Hindus from outside. The DG, DIGs, SSPs are all Hindus, right?"

"The deputy commissioners are also Hindus. Why aren't they receiving threats? The question is: if Hindus

are being threatened, why aren't they (senior officers) facing threats?" Dr Abdullah maintained that threats 'are a conspiracy to deny statehood to J&K'.

"This is a conspiracy with the sole objective of denying statehood to

J&K. An atmosphere of fear is being created. The Central government leaders travel all over the world saying 'peace has returned here', 'we have wiped out militancy'. So, where is this threat coming from?" he asked.

Dr Abdullah said Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who controls security in J&K, must answer these questions while he blamed the administration for orchestrating the "threats".

"Why is he not answering? Ask him where these threats are coming from. I am accusing the administration of issuing these threats. They are re-

sponsible..." he said. To a question on the National Conference protest in Srinagar earlier in the day, Abdullah said, "J&K is going through a difficult phase.

The Centre is not fulfilling the promises it made to us. It said that delimitation would take place, followed by elections and then statehood would be restored. But that didn't happen. Our MPs met Home Minister Amit Shah, who promised them that Business Rules would be approved within days. That was in January. It is September now. What happened to that promise?" he asked. (IANS/UNI)

BJP urges ECI to defer SIR in Tripura

AGARTALA, SEP 3

The ruling BJP in Tripura has urged the Election Commission of India (ECI) to defer the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in view of the September 28 Village Committee elections in the state's tribal areas.

A BJP delegation, led by Rajya Sabha member Rajib Bhattacharjee, submitted a letter addressed to the ECI to state election officials, requesting the deferment of the SIR exercise.

Tripura currently has 28.97 lakh electors, of whom 14.52 lakh are male and 14.45 lakh are female. (IANS)

ELCs will empower youth to uphold truth, strengthen democracy: CEC

PANAJI, SEP 3

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Thursday said Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELCs) would empower young citizens to uphold truth and contribute to strengthening India's democratic framework.

Addressing the Election Commission of India's (ECI) fourth regional conference on "Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELC 2.0) and ECINet" in Goa, the CEC said students are the future of the country and that ELCs would play a vital role in deepening democratic awareness and participation among the youth.

Interacting with

students and teachers from schools, colleges and universities across Goa, Kumar described ELCs as important platforms for helping young people understand electoral processes and democratic values.

He emphasised that elections in India are conducted strictly in accordance with the Constitution, relevant laws and directions issued by the Election Commission, and are carried out transparently under the current scrutiny of recognised political parties, candidates and their authorised representatives at every stage.

Highlighting ECINet, Kumar said the



platform would serve as a key instrument of transparency for electors, offering a unified digital interface for election-related services and information across the country.

ELC 2.0, launched with the tagline

"Learn Democracy. Lead Democracy.", seeks to transform Electoral Literacy Clubs into structured, visible and digitally enabled platforms across schools, colleges and universities. The initiative aims to

encourage young and first-time voters to understand better and actively participate in the democratic process.

Leveraging the ECINet digital platform, which integrates election-related services

from electoral rolls to polling, ELC 2.0 will support year-round electoral literacy activities through a dedicated portal and help build a nationwide network of Electoral Literacy Clubs.

The initiative as-

sumes significance given India's vast educational ecosystem, which includes around 15 lakh schools with nearly 25 crore students and more than one crore teachers. The higher education sector comprises nearly 1,500 universities and around 70,000 institutions, with an estimated enrolment of 4.33 crore students.

Through this extensive institutional network, ELC 2.0 aims to promote factual and experiential electoral education, enhance awareness of the country's electoral system and encourage young citizens to become ambassadors of informed democratic participation. The clubs will

also disseminate information related to voter registration, polling, counting, the ECINet App and other key ECI initiatives.

The CEC was on a two-day visit to Goa to interact with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and ELC members from across the state. On Wednesday, he addressed more than 1,000 BLOs and lauded their contribution to the smooth conduct of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Goa.

The programme also featured an interactive question-and-answer session during which students engaged directly with the CEC on various aspects of India's electoral process. (IANS/UNI)

Defence Minister unveils ‘RAKSHA’ defence diplomacy document

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday released the ‘Raksha’ document on defence diplomacy that provides an actionable vision for the next decade and ensures India remains an anchor of peace, stability, and rule-based order in an evolving global landscape.

The document focuses on Strategic Partnerships, Capacity Building, Indigenous Defence Manufacturing and Exports and Maritime Security, an official statement said.



The ‘Raksha’ document outlines India’s strategic roadmap and vision for global defence partnerships over the next 10 years, the statement said.

As defence diplomacy is a core pillar of India’s foreign policy, the document provides a clear, actionable vision for the next decade, ensur-

ing that India remains an anchor of peace, stability, and rule-based order in an evolving global landscape, the statement said.

The document marks a shift in India’s strategic engagement, aligning national security objectives with proactive global cooperation, fostering long-

term stability and mutual growth.

Key pillars highlighted in the strategic blueprint include strategic partnerships that provide for deepening bilateral and multilateral security cooperation.

It also stresses capacity building by enhancing joint military exercises, training programmes, and sharing best practices with friendly nations, apart from promoting Make in India defence platforms to establish the nation as a reliable global defence manufacturing hub and exporter, the statement added. (IANS)

36,000 ethnic violence-hit IDPs resettled in Manipur: Chief Minister

IMPHAL, SEP 3

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Thursday informed the state Assembly that around 36,000 of the 60,000 people displaced by the ethnic violence that erupted on May 3, 2023, have already been resettled.

Replying to a short-duration discussion moved by Congress MLA Lokeshwar Singh, the Chief Minister told the House that 24,000 ethnic violence affected Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are still living in various relief camps across the state. He also attributed the collective support and efforts of the MLAs to the progress made in the resettlement of IDPs. Despite the resettlement of 36,000 IDPs already, the government is still providing financial assistance to around 59,000 of the total 60,000 IDPs, Khemchand Singh said.

The Chief Minister explained that even those who have returned home continue to face difficulties due to the lack of livelihood and earning opportunities. Therefore, the government continues to extend monthly financial support to them, he added.

The Chief Minister informed that the need and desire to return



home among IDPs from both the hills and valley region is the same. Referring to his visits to the relief camps and conflict-affected areas, Khemchand Singh said that he had interacted with people from different communities and found that their common desire was to live in peace and return to their respective homes.

Taking serious concern over the IDPs issue, the Chief Minister said that last month, he had called representatives of six to seven joint associations of IDPs for discussions on the issue to explore ways to provide assistance and facilitate their resettlement.

The Chief Minister further emphasised that financial assistance alone cannot address the impact of a conflict that has continued for three years. The prolonged ethnic crisis has also caused mental trauma among the affected people, he noted and said that in this regard, the Health

Department is taking steps to help lessen the trauma being faced by them.

The CM informed that he is also discussing the matter with the Planning Department to explore further steps and initiatives for the rehabilitation and livelihood support of the affected people. Khemchand Singh cited measures such as the Labour Department’s labour card as one possible avenue for extending support and creating opportunities. The Chief Minister stressed that the government welcomes suggestions from all quarters and that the issue should be viewed without any political considerations.

On the restoration of connectivity and economic activities, he said that following the successful resumption of the Imphal-Dimapur (Nagaland)-Guwahati inter-state bus service, the government is also working towards reopening the Moreh trade route with Myanmar. (IANS)

MHA to meet Ladakh leaders

NEW DELHI, SEPT 3

The Union Home Ministry will hold a sub-committee meeting with Ladakh representatives in New Delhi on September 9 as part of ongoing discussions on strengthening democratic processes in the Union Territory. Ladakh Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra said the meeting comes amid talks between the Centre, Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) on constitutional safeguards, greater political representation and enhanced local decision-making. (IANS/UNI)

U'khand Waqf Board to introduce new 'Nikahnama' in line with UCC

DEHRADUN, SEP 3

Following the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand, the state Waqf Board is preparing a new and detailed Nikahnama for the Muslim community, aimed at ensuring that marriages are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the new law.

Speaking to IANS, Uttarakhand Waqf Board Chairman Shadab Shams said the primary objective of the initiative is to create awareness within the community and protect people from legal complications and offences that could arise from practices such as polygamy, triple talaq, halala and forced religious conversions.

Uttarakhand became the first state in the country to implement the UCC.

According to Shadab Shams, the implementation of the UCC has prohibited practices such as polygamy and triple talaq, while certain other practices have also been brought under the ambit of offences.

Speaking to IANS, Shams said, "Uttarakhand became the first state to implement the UCC under the leadership of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama. After the implementa-



tion of the UCC, polygamy has been banned, triple talaq has been prohibited, and practices like halala have been made offences. Keeping this in mind, the Uttarakhand Waqf Board decided in its previous board meeting to bring a new Nikahnama for the Muslim community, ensuring strict compliance with the UCC. This is aimed at protecting the Muslim community from the difficulties and offences they may face."

The proposed Nikahnama will also contain an affidavit requiring the parties to provide complete and truthful information. Shams said legal action would be initiated if anyone provides false information or violates the provisions mentioned in the document.

"We have prepared this Nikahnama with this in mind," Shams said, explaining the reasoning behind the inclusion of the affidavit and other safeguards.

He further said that practices such as triple talaq would not be permitted under the new provisions and that strict action would be taken against those found violating the law.

"The new Nikahnama will bring awareness in the society, and people will be able to avoid these problems. No person will be able to marry more than once now. In developed countries like America, England, Germany and France, a person lives with only one wife, and it should be the same here. All these things will be written in the Nikahnama, so that no one can cheat anyone," Shams told IANS.

The Waqf Board chairman also said the new framework was intended to prevent situations involving religious conversion and marriage that could potentially lead to disputes or legal complications.

"We all know that many times the at-

mosphere in the state has deteriorated when someone has changed religion and got married. Since all mosques and madrasas come under the Waqf Board, and some Waqf properties are also under the jurisdiction of the Board, it is the responsibility of the Waqf Board to ensure that there are no irregularities and to hold accountable those who violate the rules," he said.

Shams further explained that the Board would regulate the appointment of Qazis and Imams who conduct marriages and would ensure that Nikahs are solemnised according to the prescribed procedure.

"Only those Qazis and Imams who will be appointed by the Waqf Board will be able to conduct the Nikah. The Nikah will be conducted on this Nikahnama. There will be no Nikah on any separate document. It is a very big Nikahnama, in which detailed and correct information will have to be given."

The Waqf Board chairman also said that people would be made aware of the legal consequences of religious conversion in connection with marriage at the time of Nikah. (IANS/UNI)

Bengal police bust fake call centre racket; 67 held

KOLKATA, SEP 3

West Bengal police have busted two fake call centres operating from south Kolkata and arrested 67 people, including 41 women, for their alleged involvement in a nationwide fraud racket, officials said on Thursday. The arrests followed successive raids conducted on Rajdanga Main Road in the Kasba area.

Acting on a tip-off, police on Wednesday (September 2) raided a premises on Rajdanga Main Road where several individuals were found operating from an office-like setup and making calls to people across the country.



During the search, officers seized 39 mobile phones, nine chargers, nine diaries, two ATM debit cards, and cash worth Rs 16,000.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the accused allegedly posed as representatives of telecom companies, banks and insurance firms to lure

victims with promises of 5G mobile tower installations, high-return insurance schemes, health insurance policies and low-interest loans. Victims were reportedly persuaded to transfer money into designated bank accounts under the guise of processing fees and other charges. (IANS)

Dayalbagh to observe Soami Ji Maharaj's Bhandara

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
DAYALBAGH, SEPT 3

The Holy Bhandara marking the birth anniversary of Param Purush Puran Dhani Huzur Soami Ji Maharaj, founder and first Sant Satguru of the Radhasoami Faith, will be observed at Dayalbagh, Agra, on Friday, September 4, coinciding with Janmashtami. Huzur Soami Ji Maharaj was born as Seth Shiv Dayal Singh Ji on the holy night of Janmashtami, between August 24 and 25, 1818, at Panni Gali in Agra. He is credited with revealing Surat-Shabda-Yoga as a direct path to Nij Ghar. He opened the doors

of public Radhasoami Satsang on Basant Panchami, February 15, 1861. The birth anniversary is observed by followers at Dayalbagh and various Radhasoami centres in India and abroad.

The Bhandara Week is being observed from September 2 to 6, with the main observance scheduled for September 4. Satsangi brothers and sisters and registered Jigyasu participants from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, the eastern States and Europe are expected to attend the programme at Dayalbagh.

Old Naxal weapons unearthed in Narayanpur forest

NARAYANPUR, SEP 3

Security forces achieved a significant breakthrough on Wednesday when a joint team of Narayanpur (Chhattisgarh) Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) recovered a cache of old Naxalite weapons, ammunition and explosives from the dense Hachekoti forest area of the district.

The recovery was made during an intensive search operation conducted on September 2 under the supervision of Superintendent of Police Sandeep Patel and Battalion Commandant of BSF, Mukesh Kumar. Additional Superintendent of Police (Operations) Akshay Sabdra provided operational assistance in supervision.

The team thoroughly combed the suspected location in the inaccessible forest terrain and discovered materials previously hidden by Naxalites. Among the items recovered were one rusted and buttless .315 rifle, 16 .315 cartridges, two .303 cartridges, four 7.62 mm cartridges, one 5.56 mm cartridge and 18 twelve-bore cartridges.

The forces also seized six electric detonators, two bundles of commercial cordtex, Naxalite literature, flexible wire, LED lights and two pouch strips.

Officials said the discovery showed the persistent presence of remnants of Naxalite activity even in areas that have been freed from active Maoist influence. (IANS)

Why not monitor highways through toll plaza cameras, SC asks NHAI

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to explore the possibility of installing cameras at toll plazas and setting up dedicated monitoring rooms to keep a check on encroachments and vehicles parked illegally along national highways.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing the suo motu proceedings in the matter titled "In Re: Phalodi Accident", concerning fatal road accidents and safety lapses on national highways.

The apex court questioned the NHAI as to why surveillance through cameras installed at toll plazas could not be used to



monitor highways and prevent unauthorised parking and encroachments.

"Why can't you think of a system of monitoring through cameras? A separate arrangement can be made for monitoring at all toll plazas," the Justice Nath-led Bench said.

Appearing before the

top court, the NHAI submitted that directions had been issued for regular patrolling to prevent unauthorised parking on highways.

Amicus curiae, senior Advocate A.N.S. Nadkarni, submitted that illegal parking of vehicles along highways was one of the major problems and often resulted in

road accidents.

In its order, the Justice Nath-led Bench recorded that the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Tamil Nadu government had not yet filed their respective affidavits in the matter.

The Supreme Court directed the two Union

Ministries and the Tamil Nadu government to file their affidavits before the next date of hearing.

The matter has been listed for further hearing on October 6.

The proceedings stem from the apex court's suo motu cognisance of fatal highway accidents, including the November 2025 Phalodi accident in Rajasthan and a separate accident on the Telangana-Bijapur highway.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had issued a comprehensive set of interim directions aimed at curbing illegal parking, removing encroachments and strengthening highway safety mechanisms, saying that the "right to safe passage" is an integral facet of the right to life

under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The top court had directed a complete prohibition on parking of heavy and commercial vehicles on national highway carriageways and paved shoulders, except at designated bays or wayside amenities, and ordered enforcement through Advanced Traffic Management Systems (ATMS), including real-time alerts, GPS-tagged photographic evidence and e-challan mechanisms.

It had also directed nationwide inspection and surveys of highways to identify encroachments and compliance with safety measures, besides ordering removal of unauthorised roadside structures within the Right of Way of national highways. (IANS)

Turning growth into upward mobility

India's development story is entering a new phase. After making substantial progress in reducing extreme poverty, the country's next challenge is to ensure that more households can steadily move up the income ladder. The focus is increasingly shifting from reducing deprivation to creating sustained opportunities for higher earnings, productive employment and improved living standards.

The progress on poverty reduction has been significant. Extreme poverty at the \$2.15-a-day threshold, measured at 2017 purchasing-power parity, has fallen from more than 16 per cent to 2.3 per cent, while poverty at the \$3-a-day threshold has declined from 27.1 per cent to 5.3 per cent. At the same time, wealth remains concentrated, with the top 1 per cent accounting for around 40.1 per cent of wealth in 2022-23. The contrasting trends underline the need to make growth increasingly broad-based.

Consumption inequality, however, has also shown improvement. The consumption Gini index declined by about 11 per cent between 2011-12 and 2022-23, indicating narrowing disparities in consumption. The challenge now is to translate these gains into sustained income growth, particularly for households that remain economically vulnerable despite moving above extreme-poverty levels.

The state-level dimension is critical to this next stage. Income mobility differs considerably across states, reflecting variations in economic structures, governance, infrastructure, human capital and labour markets. This makes competitive and cooperative federalism increasingly important, as state governments have a central role in converting national economic growth into opportunities for households and workers.

Economic size alone does not guarantee stronger household income growth. Evidence from PLFS data for 2021-22 and 2023-24 indicates a positive, though relatively loose, relationship between state GDP and wage growth. Haryana and Goa, for instance, recorded among the strongest wage growth rates despite their relatively smaller economic bases. This suggests that sectoral composition, labour-market conditions, policy choices and development trajectories can significantly influence outcomes. State-led structural transformation can be an important engine of upward mobility. Investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure and skills can improve productivity and attract private investment. Tamil Nadu's experience illustrates how sustained investments in human capital, manufacturing and services can support the movement of workers from agriculture into higher-productivity activities, thereby strengthening long-term income prospects. Urban economic centres can provide another powerful growth multiplier. Large, specialised hubs such as Gurugram and Bengaluru concentrate businesses, skilled workers and capital, generating productivity gains that can spread to surrounding areas. Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttarakhand demonstrate how strong state-level fundamentals and dynamic economic centres can reinforce each other. Such agglomeration effects can help states accelerate investment and employment.

WATER SECURITY From augmenting supply to retaining rain

India's water-management challenge is evolving from simply creating additional sources to making better use of the water it already receives. Rapid urbanisation, groundwater stress, shrinking permeable surfaces and the simultaneous occurrence of floods and seasonal shortages highlight the need for greater emphasis on infiltration, storage, recharge and regulated release. India's policy approach has increasingly recognised this broader requirement.

Several government initiatives already address different aspects of water conservation and management. NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index assessed states on groundwater, irrigation efficiency, source augmentation and governance, while programmes such as Atal Bhujal Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, AMRUT 2.0, watershed development and wetland restoration contribute to conservation, recharge and improved water management. Together, these initiatives provide an important foundation for a more integrated approach.

The principal challenge is that these interventions operate across different institutional mandates. Wetlands, watersheds, groundwater, irrigation and urban stormwater are handled by different agencies, while Jal Jeevan Mission focuses primarily on rural piped-water supply and AMRUT 2.0 addresses urban water supply, sewerage, water-body rejuvenation and aquifer management. Greater coordination and data-sharing could help connect these efforts and measure their combined impact on water security.

International experience also points towards managing rainfall within the landscape. China's Sponge City programme emphasises infiltration, detention, storage and reuse; Australia promotes water-sensitive urban design; and the Netherlands' Room for the River programme creates additional space for high river flows. These examples reinforce the principle that water security can depend not only on expanding supply, but also on retaining and regulating water more effectively.

Maharashtra illustrates why such an approach is particularly relevant to India. Annual rainfall ranges from around 400 mm in the driest areas to nearly 6,000 mm along the Konkan coast and Western Ghats. Around 40 per cent of the state is classified as drought-prone, while about 7 per cent is flood-prone. Water availability is also highly uneven: west-flowing basins occupy only about 10.7 per cent of the state's geographical area but account for 44.5 per cent of dependable water yield.

The contrast becomes sharper because much of the western water flows towards the Arabian Sea, while the Western Ghats make large-scale transfers inland difficult and costly. Meanwhile, east-flowing basins contain about 92 per cent of Maharashtra's cultivable land and more than 60 per cent of its rural population, many parts of which face recurring water stress. This raises an important policy question: how much of the state's water challenge is determined by rainfall, and how much by the ability of landscapes to absorb, store, recharge and regulate that rainfall?

A proposed Retention Security Framework (RSF), supported by a Retention Security Index (RSI), could complement existing government assessments by focusing specifically on outcomes. The framework could examine four dimensions: climate and hydrogeological conditions; the capacity of natural and built systems such as wetlands, tanks, forests and recharge structures; actual hydrological performance; and governance and demand pressures including extraction, maintenance, land-use change and irrigation requirements.

Aligarh and the unfinished mission of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan



S. MASOOD HUSAIN

AMU's greatest challenge is not to preserve its past, but to renew the intellectual revolution that Sir Syed began

The Aligarh Muslim University occupies a unique place in the history of modern India. Few educational institutions have had such a profound influence on the intellectual, social and political evolution of a community. Its origins lie in the vision of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who recognised, in the aftermath of 1857, that the greatest challenge before Indian Muslims was not merely political decline but educational and intellectual backwardness.

Sir Syed's response was revolutionary. He wanted Muslims to acquire proficiency in English, modern sciences and contemporary knowledge while retaining their ethical and cultural heritage. The Scientific Society, the journal Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq and the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College were all parts of this larger programme. His objective was to cre-



ate a bridge between tradition and modernity, faith and reason, and the East and the West. AMU itself describes his purpose as combining Western education with Islamic values and developing a scientific temperament.

after nearly 150 years of the Aligarh movement, an uncomfortable question deserves to be asked: Has the institution remained sufficiently faithful to the transformative spirit of Sir Syed's vision?

The answer cannot be an outright yes or no.

An extraordinary success—but an incomplete mission

There is no denying AMU's extraordinary achievements. It has produced generations of scientists, doctors, engineers, administrators,

academics, writers, politicians and public intellectuals. It has opened its doors to students from different parts of India and the world and today offers hundreds of courses in modern as well as traditional disciplines.

Yet the success of a university cannot be measured only by the number of degrees awarded or distinguished alumni produced. Sir Syed's objective was much larger. He wanted to transform the Muslim mind.

He wanted Muslims not merely to become educated but to become intellectually confident, rational, scientifically minded, socially progressive and capable of engaging constructively with the rapidly changing world.

This is where the

unfinished part of the Aligarh mission lies.

From transforming minds to preserving identity

Over the decades, a gradual change in emphasis appears to have taken place. Sir Syed's central concern was modernisation of the Muslim community. In later periods, the preservation of Muslim identity and institutional interests sometimes came to occupy greater attention.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with preserving cultural identity. Sir Syed himself valued Muslim history, language and traditions. His genius was precisely that he did not regard cultural identity and modern education as contradictory.

The danger arises when identity becomes

defensive.

A modern Muslim university should give its students the confidence to engage with modern science, other religions, different philosophies and competing political and social ideas without feeling threatened. Sir Syed wanted Muslims to enter the modern world with confidence, not retreat from it in the name of preserving identity.

The weakening of the reformist spirit

Sir Syed was not simply an educationist; he was a social reformer. Through Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq, he challenged social customs, superstition and intellectual stagnation. His Scientific Society sought to make modern knowledge accessible and cultivate scientific thinking.

The question today is whether this spirit of internal reform and critical self-examination remains sufficiently strong.

A university inspired by Sir Syed should be among the first places where difficult questions concerning Muslim society are discussed openly.

(Writer is an Aligarh resident and former Chairman, Central Water Commission, Gol who writes occasionally on technical, social and community issues.)

This is part 1 of the Article, Part -II to be continued.

The road to Viksit Bharat lies through state capitals. BJP top brass should let go

BANUCHANDAR NAGARAJAN

There seems to be a major funk in the commentary of top Indian economists in the recent past. Nothing catchy, nothing big, but a lot of quibbling over minutiae of trade deals, quarterly GDP numbers and so on.

Perhaps, the majority of second-generation economic reforms thought about in the 2000s have either been carried out or seriously attempted by the Modi government over the past 12 years. Except for land and agricultural reforms, most structural changes have been addressed, at least intellectually. The new labour codes, for example, are now in force.

In this setting, the national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 is slowly taking shape in the public square. At the same time, the wave of AI and technological change and unpredictable geopolitical tensions are reshaping the world economy. India now needs a new consciousness in drafting a policy roadmap for the next 25 years.

The same group that pushed the second-generation reforms perhaps is unlikely to offer this forward-looking leadership, as many remain stuck in older ways of thinking. It is time to move beyond hand-waving and talk about details about layers that have to be put



in place.

Reaching developed-country status by 2047 (per capita income of about \$14,000) will need a new set of bold reforms. As economist Neelkanth Mishra has argued recently, even small differences in key factors can change the timeline for achieving high-income status by several years. Mishra points to law and order, urbanisation, women's labour force participation, and capacity building as vital drivers.

If we notice keenly, most of these areas come under the State List or Concurrent List of the Constitution. States are, therefore, best placed to deliver the dream. Recent public unhappiness about urbanisation shows this clearly. India's unplanned urban sprawl has badly hurt the quality of life for millions of people.

Perhaps, the next set of reforms and the path to Viksit Bharat will originate in the Chennai and Lucknows rather than from Delhi. Some states of India will reach the goal earlier. A comparison of Indian states with similar populations underlines the point. Currently, Vietnam's per-capita GDP stands at about \$5100 dollars per person, while Tamil Nadu is at about \$6300.

The Centre should focus on sharing best practices and smooth coordination across states. The PRAGATI meetings is a good model. Centre's main duties should be keeping peace at the borders, managing stable and friendly external relations, ensuring fiscal care, and maintaining internal security.

Organisational spectrum are a decentralised right-of-centre party (BJP) and nation-

alist regional parties, (such as JDU, TRS) in every state. This mix can best deliver Viksit Bharat. A sample of it is evident in the development of Andhra Pradesh now.

Purists on the right wing will scoff at the allusions to Vajpayee Que BJP, which they feel was less forceful in espousing the Hindu cause than Modi sarkar, but the next 20 years might warrant such an arrangement.

But some major work still left undone at the centre -the most important is the overhaul of the judiciary and the criminal justice system. Using technology and thoroughly reforming judicial structure must become a top priority. It is now widely accepted that the pendency of cases, lethargy and inconsistency have become a major block to India's progress.

This raises the question of where the BJP stands. If the right wing ecosystem wants to avoid a return to Congress rule and the old establishment, it must take a hard look now. The organisation is increasingly filled with a bureaucratic mindset and appears captured, making real reform hard. Remember that only a flexible party system could nurture the brilliant political talent of someone like PM Modi in the 80s and 90s. Can anyone in the current

BJP run an equivalent of his famed Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election of 1989 now? The RSS was meant to act as a moral check, but is grappling through its own challenges in adjusting to extended proximity with power in its centennial year.

As the saying goes, the fish rots from the head. This is a lesson from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Real classical liberals and right-wingers should rediscover themselves and strongly push for deregulation, decentralisation, and liberty. Some compromises made sense when a rare leader appeared in the fray along with technological tools such as Aadhaar. Yet just as the politicians can be ruthless, the people can also be harsh. We saw that in a limited way in the results of 2024.

For Viksit Bharat 2047 to succeed, the BJP and the wider system must shift toward genuine decentralisation, stronger state capacity, and a new generation of ideas. Without these changes achieving the goal will be delayed. But, people of India, who are in no mood to give up on their destiny, will look for political options that will deliver it to them.

(Banuchandar Nagarajan was the advisor to Minister of Human Resources Development)

India ready to help with Russia-Ukraine conflict: EAM

KYIV, SEP 3
Spotlighting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent call that endless war must now give way to the end of war, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Thursday stated that India stands ready to help in any way to find an end to the longstanding conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

The EAM cited India's readiness to help during his meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha in Kyiv. "Just two days ago in Bishkek, Prime Minister Modi declared that endless war must now



External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar meets Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv.

give way to the end of war. Every passing day of conflict only means more deaths and more destruction. Understandably, it is for the parties involved to find a way.

But if India can be of any help, in any manner, we are ready. And this was the core of my discussion today so far with Foreign Minister Sybiha," EAM Jaishankar highlighted.

He mentioned that his Kyiv visit has a bilateral purpose, but is taking place in the larger context of the war which has been underway since 2022.

"Only two days ago, an Indian national was also killed in an attack in Kyiv. We join in mourning every life lost and convey our deepest sympathy to every affected family," he stated.

He noted that the Russia-Ukraine war is in its fifth year and that India has consistently maintained that this is not an era of war and that solutions will not emerge from the battlefield. (IANS)

Trump to have his portrait on US currency

WASHINGTON, SEPT 3
US President Donald Trump's face is now an iconic highlight of American currency as his portrait now features on the new \$1 coins, making Trump the first ever living president in US history to have his likeness minted on real money.

The coin was launched on Wednesday with Trump's portrait alongside the words "LIBERTY" and "IN GOD WE TRUST", reports BBC.

According to the US Mint, the coins were not being put into circulation, but they may be used as legal tender. Despite their official \$1 face value, they are being marketed primarily as collectors' items.



The coins were priced at \$61 for a roll of 25 and \$154.50 for a bag of 100. Within hours of going on sale, the Mint's website listed them as "not currently in stock". They were also available from vending machines at the US Mint store in Washington DC. According to the Mint, the coin was "created to celebrate this historic national milestone" and as

a "once-in-a-generation anniversary design destined to become a stand-out addition to modern collections", as despite its golden appearance, they contain no actual gold. The Mint said they are made of 88.5% copper, with the remainder consisting of zinc, manganese and nickel.

Nonetheless, the introduction of Trump's portrait on currency has raised questions as under US federal law, the depiction of living people on US coins is generally prohibited.

The last time a living US president was previously featured on a commemorative currency was the half-dollar issued in 1926 to mark the coun-

try's 150th anniversary that featured then-President Calvin Coolidge alongside George Washington. The legislation authorising that coin stated that it would be legal tender at its face value. Although the coins were sold for \$1, their face value was 50 cents.

The Trump administration has relied in part on the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020, enacted during Trump's first term. While the law prohibits portraits of living people on the reverse, or tails side, of coins, it does not explicitly extend that restriction to the obverse, or heads side, where Trump appears on the new \$1 coin. (IANS)

US judge blocks Trump's bid to limit birthright citizenship



WASHINGTON, SEPT 3
A US federal judge on Wednesday (local time) blocked the Trump administration from enforcing a renewed executive order seeking to restrict birthright citizenship, dealing another setback to President Donald Trump's effort to narrow the constitutional guarantee.

The judge observed that the policy was likely unconstitutional and violated the 14th Amendment. U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman granted a preliminary injunction in a case brought by two immigration advocacy groups that had also challenged the Trump administration's initial attempt last year to limit who is eligible for automatic citizenship at birth, The Hill reported. Boardman wrote in a 35-page opinion that the new directive was "almost certainly unconstitutional as applied to the certified class," pointing to the Supreme Court decision in June that struck down Trump's Day 1 executive order.

"This Court must, once again, preliminarily enjoin enforcement of the President's most recent attempt to strip the right

to citizenship from them," Boardman, a Biden appointee, wrote. Her order prohibits the administration from enforcing the new restriction against any child born after February 19, 2025, to one or both parents who were not lawfully in the country at the time. Boardman said the Supreme Court had already established that children born in the United States are citizens at birth, including when their parents are unlawfully or temporarily in the country.

"The Supreme Court has spoken: Children in the certified class are 'citizens at birth,'" Boardman wrote in her 35-page opinion. The ruling marks the latest setback to Trump's efforts to narrow the constitutional guarantee of citizenship for people born in the United States. Judge Deborah Boardman ruling has barred the administration from enforcing the more limited policy issued after the Supreme Court rejected Trump's broader attempt to end birthright citizenship, while allowing federal agencies to continue preparing guidance on how the order would be implemented. (IANS/UNI)

As death toll nears 1300, Nepal seeks international assistance for recovery and reconstruction

KATHMANDU, SEP 3
The Nepali government on Thursday informed the foreign diplomatic community in Nepal that the Himalayan nation would seek further international assistance for the recovery and reconstruction of infrastructure damaged by the recent Bhote Koshi floods.

The death toll from the Rasuwa flood disaster had reached 1,252 by Thursday noon, with 4,216 people remaining out of contact, according to the latest data released by the National Disaster Risk



Residents pull a newly installed zipline to help people commute across the Trishuli river in the aftermath of flash floods at Bidur in Nuwakot district.

management Authority (NDRRMA).

North Korea drops unification goal, cements Kim as sole leader

SEOUL, SEP 3
North Korea has stripped references to "peaceful unification" with South Korea from the charter of its ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), the full text of the document showed Thursday, in line with Pyongyang's redefinition of inter-Korean ties as those between "two hostile" states.

The text, released by Seoul's Institute for National Security Strategy (INSS), is the first public disclosure of the charter in full, Yonhap News Agency reported.

South Korea's intelligence authorities have previously said the charter was revised in June 2024 to reflect the North's new stance, but the actual language had not been made public until now.



The released text also includes updates adopted at the WPK's ninth congress in February.

The revised WPK rules strengthen the authority of leader Kim Jong-un, while removing references to the achievements of his predecessors, the late state founder Kim Il-sung and his father Kim Jong-il.

The change is widely interpreted as an effort to cement the third-generation leader's standing as the party's sole and unchallenged leader.

Beyond unification, the charter also removed mentions of the US military presence in South Korea and of "outside forces," in a move seen as reinforcing Pyongyang's position that the two Koreas are

entirely separate states and no longer bound by a shared national identity.

At the Supreme People's Assembly session in January 2024, Kim ordered the constitution to be revised, saying "peaceful unification" with the South was no longer possible and that the concept of the Korean nation as one state should be removed. In October that year, Pyongyang confirmed its constitutional revisions.

The charter also spells out the authority of the WPK's general secretary in greater detail, including the power to convene meetings and to appoint and dismiss officials or dissolve party departments. (IANS)

AI cuts three months of work to 17 minutes: Altman



CHAPEL HILL (NORTH CAROLINA), SEP 2

Artificial intelligence (AI) can now complete in minutes the work that start-ups were once expected to perform over three months, OpenAI Chief Executive Sam Altman has said, predicting an unprecedented surge in entrepreneurship and small-business creation.

"The work that we expected a startup to accomplish in three months is now probably doable in, like, 17 minutes with Codex," Altman added during a fireside chat with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick.

"This is just amazing. The world is not caught up with what this is going to mean," he said. Before establishing OpenAI, Altman ran a start-up accelerator. That experience, he said, convinced him that entrepreneurship was among the most important forces within capitalism and that many of the technology industry's significant ideas emerged from start-ups rather than large companies. He added that AI had dramatically reduced the time and resources needed to turn an idea into a product, test it and collect feedback

from customers.

"I think this, for example, will be the greatest boom in entrepreneurship and the creation and development of small businesses the world's ever seen," Altman said.

"People with promising ideas had often been held back because they could not raise enough capital, hire experts, develop new science or manage complicated supply chains," he added.

AI could now help them overcome many of those barriers.

"If you had a great idea, but you didn't have the resources or the ability to get enough capital together or hire experts to work on it or to figure out what it's gonna take to invent new science or manage a complex supply chain, you can do that with AI," Altman said. He cited the example of a laundromat operator whose business was struggling.

The owner used ChatGPT to prepare marketing material, seek advice on legal contracts and manage relationships with vendors.

"He was really the first person I met that had figured out how to use AI to effectively run a business," Altman said. (IANS)

El Niño intensifies, raising risk of extreme heat and disruptive weather through 2027

GENEVA, SEP 3
The El Niño climate pattern is rapidly intensifying and could become one of the strongest events on record, raising the risk of extreme heat, floods, drought and other disruptive weather across the world through early 2027, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Thursday.

The UN weather agency said El Niño is expected to reach "very strong" levels and peak around the end of the year. The likelihood that the phenomenon will persist through February 2027 is now close to 100 per cent, marking



the most unequivocal forecast for El Niño or its cooler counterpart La Niña ever issued by the WMO.

The intensification is being fuelled by excep-

tionally warm waters in the tropical Pacific. An unusually large reservoir of warm water has also accumulated beneath the ocean surface, with temperatures in

parts of the Pacific more than 8 degrees Celsius above normal in July and early August.

The latest readings show the speed at which the event is strengthen-

ing. The Niño 3.4 index, a key measure of sea-surface temperatures in the central tropical Pacific, averaged 1.5 degrees Celsius above normal between May and July. It reached 2 degrees Celsius in July, while weekly readings from late July to mid-August climbed as high as 2.6 degrees.

"El Niño is being supersized before our eyes," UN Secretary-General António Guterres said. "The science leaves no room for doubt: the planet is in uncharted waters, and those waters are heating up."

Forecasters expect above-normal tempera-

tures across nearly the entire Earth's surface from September through November, while rainfall patterns are also likely to shift sharply, increasing the risk of heavy rain and flooding in some regions and drought in others.

The impacts could be amplified by already unusually warm global oceans and an atmosphere that has been heated by greenhouse gas emissions. Scientists have not established that climate change is making El Niño itself stronger, but a warmer atmosphere and ocean can increase the heat and moisture available to fuel extreme weather. (IANS/UNI)

Iran war escalation raises concern over civilian death toll

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
TEHRAN, SEP 3

The sudden recent escalation of the Iran war has cast renewed attention on its civilian toll after Iran reported 18 dead in the last US assault, including four killed and dozens wounded at a wedding.

Iran's health minister said 18 people were killed and 108 wounded in Tuesday night's US strikes across Iran.

The Iranian Red Crescent said four people were killed and 67 wounded at a wedding ceremony near the coast of the Strait



Rubble lies around a damaged house following a reported attack near a wedding gathering in Kuhistik, Sirik, Iran.

of Hormuz.

The return of combat operations has alarmed countries throughout the region, as Iran launched missile and drone attacks against what it said were US assets in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait

supports the idea of declaring an end to the war with Iran.

Kuwait's army reported further missile and drone attacks early Thursday, saying they were intercepted by air defense systems.

The guns had largely gone silent since the previous exchange in July, although peace talks failed to advance in the interim.

US President Donald Trump threatened to unleash yet more military force, even though the war is unpopular at home and has driven up the cost of gasoline.

Arab states push power integration

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
KUWAIT CITY, SEP 3

Kuwait participated in the 17th meeting of the Committee of Electricity Experts in Arab Countries, which is examining ways to accelerate the establishment of the Arab Common Electricity Market and strengthen electrical integration among Arab states.

According to a statement by the Arab League, the meeting is reviewing progress toward signing and ratifying two agreements underpinning the proposed market, the General Agreement and the Market Agreement.

The discussions also cover ways to encourage public and private investment in major electricity generation and transmission projects of regional importance. Such projects are expected to support job creation and sustainable development efforts across the Arab region.

The committee is also reviewing developments in a pilot energy-exchange project involving Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The initiative is intended to serve as a nucleus for expanding electricity trade among Arab countries on commercial and economic grounds.

The agenda further includes consideration of participation in a workshop to be held in cooperation with the Association of Mediterranean Electricity Transmission Network Operators.

Jordan's King leads international effort to support Lebanon's stability

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
AMMAN, SEP 3

Amid regional developments, Amman has stepped up a diplomatic effort led by King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi to mobilize international backing for Lebanese state institutions, foremost among them the Lebanese Army.

The initiative aims to forge a joint Arab, European and US position that would help preserve Lebanon's territorial integrity, uphold its sovereignty across all its territory,



halt Israeli attacks and enable the country's political institutions to carry out their responsibilities.

Senior Jordanian sources said King Abdullah had instructed the relevant institutions years ago, particularly the Jordan Armed Forces, to assist Lebanon by providing military, humanitarian and medical aid and to stand by the country in safeguarding its security and sovereignty.

The Jordanian monarch maintains close

West Bank food insecurity soars, WFP to slash beneficiaries

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
WEST BANK, SEP 3

As of September, 200,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank will lose critical food aid after severe funding shortfalls forced the World Food Programme to halve its relief list.



"Families who were once thriving and earning a living from their land are now unable to afford enough food," said Shaun Hughes, WFP Country Director for Palestine.

The number of food aid recipients in the West Bank will fall from 400,000 to 200,000 in September, the WFP told Arab News following their announcement that they will slash in half the number of aid recipients on Tuesday.

The dramatic rollout of aid cuts comes as escalating settler violence, military operations, and widespread job losses double the region's food insecurity, leaving 900,000 residents struggling to meet basic daily needs.

Around 3 million Palestinians live across the West Bank and most are living in dire conditions and rely on food aid from humanitarian aid agencies such as WFP.

"Today an estimated 900,000 people are food insecure in the West Bank - with increased

settler violence and displacement disrupting livelihoods, deepening hunger and pushing families further into crisis," the WFP said.

The WFP's most recent food security analysis found 76 percent of households in the West Bank have experienced a significant decline in income, and food and fuel prices are on the rise forcing families to sell assets to survive.

"This is happening as the food needs in the West Bank are more than double what they were two years ago," he warned.

"At a time when WFP should be scaling up assistance to reach more people, we are being forced to make difficult decisions, prioritizing the most vulnerable while cutting assistance to others despite widespread needs. We urge the international community to act immediately and step up support for Palestinians," added Hughes.

Funding shortfalls are also affecting the WFP's operations in

Gaza, where the agency supports 1.5 million people, including one million who receive monthly food assistance.

In July, the WFP reduced by 40 percent the cash value of its assistance for 375,000 people.

Israel has occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem since 1967. The Israeli military has established many settlements which are regarded as illegal by the international community. Over the past few months, the West Bank has seen a surge in militant Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians as well as military raids into Palestinian towns.

"Intensified settler violence, prolonged and escalating Israeli military operations, severe movement restrictions, demolitions and widespread displacement in the West Bank have eroded Palestinian livelihoods and contributed to increased food insecurity," added Hughes.

UAE launches AI Cabinet adviser

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
ABU DHABI, SEP 3

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, on Wednesday chaired the first Cabinet meeting of the new government season, unveiling an artificial intelligence system designed to help ministers make faster and more accurate decisions.

The meeting, held at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi, approved the launch and use of the Cabinet AI Adviser System, which will deploy 32 specialised AI assistants to analyse policies, legislation, strategies and govern-

ment systems.

The system will assess their potential impact, review international best practices and provide recommendations, while working with ministers around the clock to follow up on decisions and their implementation.

Sheikh Mohammed described the initiative as a new step in developing government decision-making, accelerating the assessment of policies, projects and initiatives and improving the quality of government outcomes. "Our goal is a more efficient government, with faster and more accurate decisions," he said.

Oman and Qatar discuss expanding economic and investment cooperation

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MUSCAT, SEP 3

Anwar bin Hilal Al Jabri, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, discussed today at "Invest Oman" lounge with Sheikh Faisal bin Thani Al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry in the State of Qatar, ways to enhance economic, commercial, industrial, and investment cooperation between the two countries.

They also explored new horizons for partnership in a number of sectors of mutual interest.

During the meeting,



economic and commercial relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar were reviewed, alongside discussing available opportunities to expand areas of cooperation, particularly in commercial, industrial, and investment sectors, as well as sectors related to transport, logistics, and modern technologies, in a manner that contributes to enhancing

economic integration and benefiting from the potential and opportunities in the two countries.

The meeting also covered ways to enhance mutual investments, encourage private sector institutions in both countries to establish qualitative partnerships and projects, and benefit from available investment opportunities, thereby contributing to supporting economic

diversification, maximizing added value, and enhancing the competitiveness of the Omani and Qatari economies.

The two sides discussed the importance of enhancing communication between businesspeople in the two countries and continuing coordination and integration between concerned entities, contributing to developing trade and investment move-

ment, creating more opportunities for investors, and opening broader horizons for partnerships and joint projects in promising sectors.

The visit comes within the framework of the firm fraternal relations connecting the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar and the continuous development they undergo across various fields. It reflects the keenness of both countries to build upon the achieved economic cooperation and transition it toward broader horizons by enhancing qualitative investments, developing commercial, industrial, and investment partnerships, and exploring new areas of cooperation.

Bahrain chairs 39th GCC Youth and Sports Ministers' Meeting

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
MANAMA, SEP. 3

Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), Chairman of the General Sports Authority (GSA) and President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC), chaired the 39th GCC Youth and Sports Ministers' Meeting, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

He conveyed the greetings of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and wishes of success to GCC ministers of youth and sports.

Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad said the long-standing ties among GCC countries and



their shared goals and destiny provide a foundation for further advancing joint GCC action, particularly in the youth and sports sectors, given their importance in shaping the future of GCC countries.

For his part, Jasem

Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), commended Bahrain for hosting the 39th GCC Youth and Sports Ministers' Meeting and highlighted the Kingdom's support for joint GCC action across

various domains, particularly the youth and sports sectors.

Albudaiwi said youth are a key driver of development across GCC countries, noting GCC leaders' firm belief in the importance of investing in youth,

enhancing their competitiveness and empowering them to play an active role across various sectors and areas of development.

The Secretary General commended the initiatives and programmes implemented by GCC

countries to train and prepare youth and develop their capabilities. He also highlighted the sporting competitions and events hosted by GCC countries and their contribution to strengthening connections and bringing GCC youth closer together, while fostering a spirit of competition.

The meeting discussed and approved items on its agenda, as well as joint youth and sports programmes and events. It also reviewed means to enhance cooperation and coordination among GCC countries in the youth and sports sectors, supporting joint GCC action and the aspirations of GCC youth.

Saudi, Indonesia to boost student exchange

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
JAKARTA, SEP 3

Saudi Minister of Education Yousef Al-Benyan affirmed the Kingdom's commitment to enabling Indonesian students to benefit from opportunities to study at Saudi universities and to learn more about these opportunities through the Study in Saudi platform.

During the meeting in Jakarta on Wednesday, Al-Benyan and Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs Pratikno discussed student and lecturer exchanges, joint degrees

and research, and scholarships to bolster bilateral education cooperation. Indonesian cabinet ministers, and university rectors attended the meeting held at the residence of Saudi Ambassador to Indonesia Faisal Abdullah Al-Amoudi in Jakarta on Wednesday.

Al-Benyan held an extensive meeting with rectors of several Indonesian universities, during which they discussed ways to expand opportunities for knowledge and student exchange between higher education institutions in both countries.

FM Sitharaman pitches for India's reform-led growth story to investors in US

NEW YORK, SEP 3

Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman has pitched for India's reform-led growth story to investors at a high-level business roundtable here, highlighting the country's 7.8 per cent economic growth in the first quarter of 2026-27 and improved investment climate, it was announced on Thursday.

Addressing the roundtable organised by the Consulate General of India in association with Bank of America, FM Sitharaman said India contin-



ues to be the world's fastest-growing major economy despite global disruptions and challenges, the Ministry of Finance said on X.

Moreover, she highlighted a range of

reforms, including the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, saying these measures have provided greater regulatory certainty, eased compliance and reduced paperwork under the guidance of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

FM Sitharaman said the government has focused on creating capital assets and supporting industry through infrastructure development, particularly

in aviation, while also fostering a conducive investment climate, the ministry said.

Other focus areas include promoting artificial intelligence and data centres, supporting global capabil-

ity centres, ensuring credit availability to micro, small and medium enterprises and reducing non-performing assets of banks, she said.

These measures have helped create a more enabling business environment for banks and industry to grow and emerge stronger, according to the Finance Minister.

FM Sitharaman also reiterated India's commitment to fiscal prudence and discipline despite continuing challenges facing the global economy since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. (IANS)

India eyes 75% global trade access



NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said that combined with upcoming free trade agreements (FTAs) and efforts to deepen market access, India could gain access to 75 per cent of global trade at rates lower than competitors.

India's nine FTAs spanning economies with about \$60 trillion GDP will provide preferential access to nearly two-thirds of global trade, Goyal said at an event here, calling for a focused, inclusive and nationwide effort to maximise the utilisation of FTAs to expand India's trade across the world and ensure that the benefits of enhanced market access reach businesses across the country.

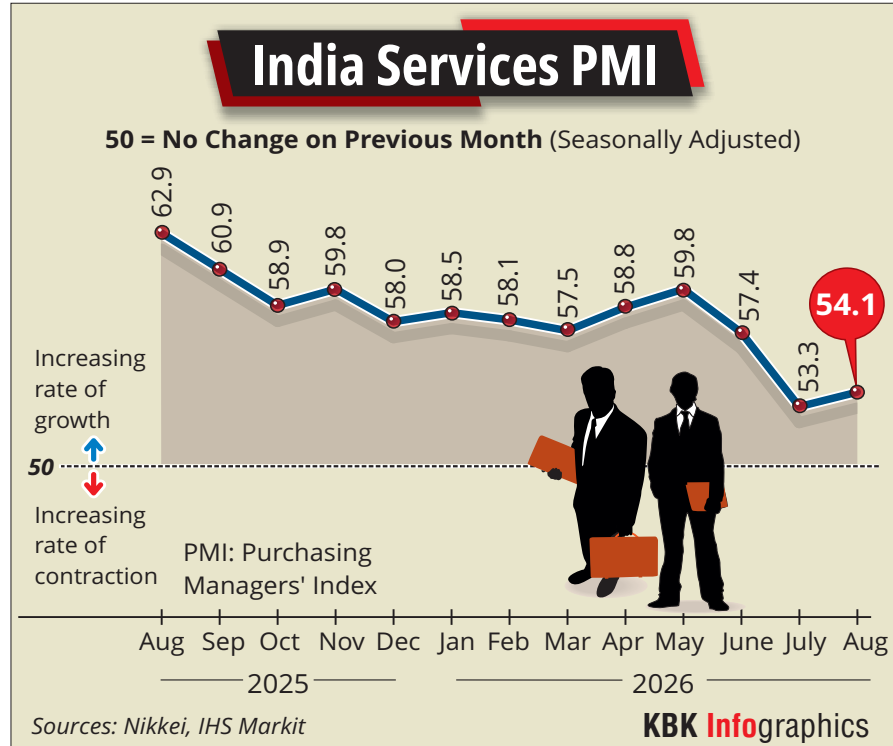
Addressing the National Workshop on "Leveraging FTAs an Outreach Programme" the minister emphasised the need for a concerted effort to translate India's

expanding network of FTAs into greater export opportunities for businesses across the country.

The initiative should rapidly take roots across the country and reach the last person, smallest businessperson, trader, entrepreneur, startup and woman entrepreneur across all 780 districts, big and small, said Goyal.

Every contribution, big or small, would be invaluable in achieving the larger objective of transforming India from a largely inward-looking domestic economy into an international player of significance, he added.

The other FTAs that India would conclude over the next few months and couple of years include with Canada, Mexico, Chile, Mercosur, SACU, GCC and Israel, together with efforts to review ASEAN, Korea and Japan or take other steps to secure greater market access. (IANS)



RBI's swap facility fuels forex reserves to defend rupee

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Reserve Bank of India's special swap windows raised a cumulative \$136.3 billion by end-August exceeding market estimates by a wide margin, likely pushing foreign reserves past \$750 billion and giving the central bank firepower to defend the rupee, a report said on Thursday.

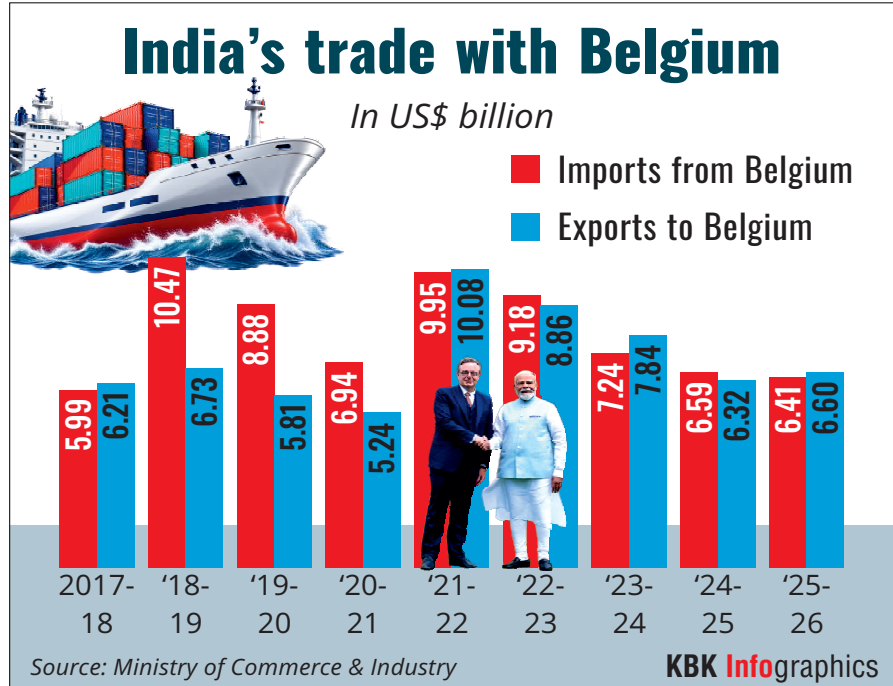
Further, the surge has already been reflected in a shift in intervention bias as USDINR corrected sharply, testing below 95 handle to mid-94 due to strong



intervention dollar sales and broader dollar swings, the report from DBS Bank said.

Nearly 92 per cent of the inflows came via FCNR(B) deposits at \$126 billion, with the remainder through offshore borrowing

facilities. "Given the swap arrangement, these inflows will add to an already abundant INR liquidity backdrop, which was at a four year high this month, depressing overnight rates," said Radhika. (IANS)



WhatsApp launches bill payments

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Meta-backed messaging platform WhatsApp on Thursday announced the rollout of bill payments in India which allow users to find, manage and pay household and utility bills directly.

The feature is being rolled out gradually and will be available to all Android and iOS users in the coming weeks, the company said.

Powered by the Bharat Connect (BBPS) network, the service will provide access to about 22,722 billers across 30 categories, including electricity, gas, water, FASTag, insurance, credit card and loan repayments.

In addition, users can access the bill payments feature by tapping the rupee icon at the top of the WhatsApp home screen.

They can also view past and upcoming payments, manage multiple accounts under a single provider and pay using UPI as well as credit and debit cards.

"For millions of Indians, WhatsApp is already the simplest way to stay close to family and friends, talk to businesses, access citizen services, and buy everything from metro tickets to insurance — all without leaving the app," said Arun Srivas, managing director and country head, Meta India. (IANS/UNI)

Airbus, Indamer Technics to set up radome repair facility

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Airbus on Saturday said it selected Indamer Technics to set up South Asia's first comprehensive radome repair facility in Maharashtra's Nagpur strengthening the aircraft manufacturer's regional aftermarket support and expanding India's aviation maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) capabilities.

Under a service agreement, Airbus has designated Indamer Technics as an authorised facility for the repair, storage and exchange of radomes for its A320, A330, A350 and A380 aircraft families.

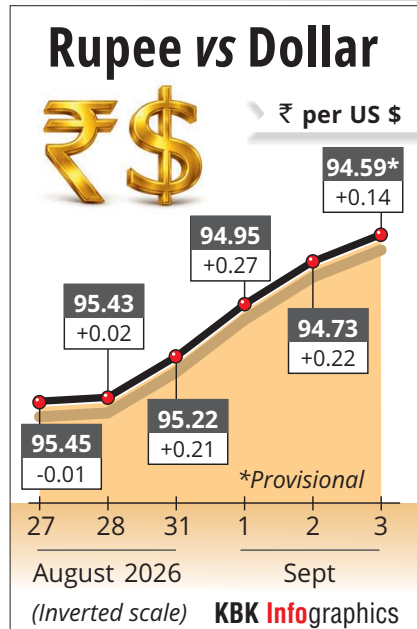
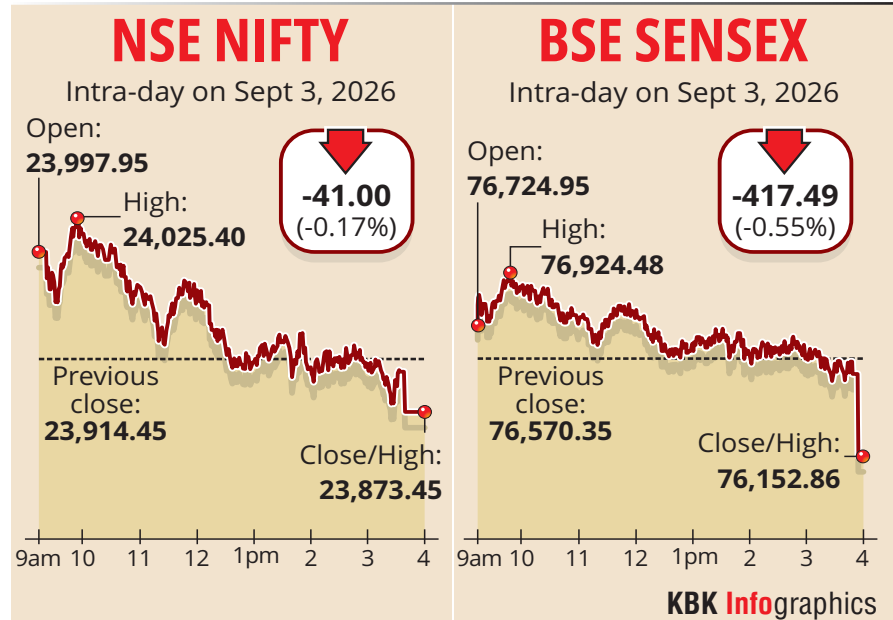


In addition, the facility will support Airbus customers in India and across South Asia and is expected to help reduce turnaround times for aircraft maintenance.

The agreement also marks a step towards developing a localised Airbus avionics repair network in South Asia, with the facility expected

to support upcoming widebody aircraft inductions and single-aisle maintenance in the region.

Located at the nose of an aircraft, a radome is a structural enclosure that protects radar and antenna systems from environmental and aerodynamic stresses while allowing electromagnetic signals to pass through. (IANS)



Govt launches 'BIO-NIVESH'

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The government on Thursday launched 'BIO-NIVESH', a strategic platform aimed at strengthening engagement between biotechnology innovators and the investment community and catalysing the flow of private capital into promising biotechnology innovations for scale-up and commercialisation.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said innovation is incomplete without investment, while investment will not sustain itself without innovation, making closer engagement between innovators, investors, industry and Government essential for India's biotechnology-led growth. (IANS)

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The country's total foodgrain production is estimated at 376.563 million tonnes, according to the Third Advance Estimates (2025-26), which is nearly 18.8 million tonnes (5.3 per cent) higher than last year's production of 357.732 million tonnes, an official factsheet said on Thursday.

India also operates one of the world's largest food security programmes under the National Food Security Act, 2013, that covers about 80 crore people.

"India's expanding agricultural production and food security efforts have increased the



importance of decentralised grain storage infrastructure across the country. The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector, launched in 2023, is designed to improve storage, processing, procurement, and distribution sys-

tems through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)," the factsheet noted.

The plan is supported through institutional coordination and financial support mechanisms.

Beginning with pilot projects across 11

states/PACS with 9,750 MT of storage capacity, the initiative has expanded steadily.

As of July 2026, go-down construction had been completed in 313 PACS across the country, creating more than 1.80 LMT of storage capacity. The framework

also emphasises quality standards, transparency and operational viability, according to the factsheet.

The Decentralised Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector seeks to reduce foodgrain wastage and strengthen food security; provide farmers with greater flexibility to avoid distress sales and secure better price realization; reduce transportation costs between procurement centres, warehouses, and Fair Price Shops; and expand the role of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) through diversification of agricultural activities. (IANS/UNI)

VVS Laxman to be India's coach for Asian Games

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

Head of the Centre of Excellence (CoE) VVS Laxman will serve as the head coach of the Indian men's cricket team for the upcoming Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya.

The development was confirmed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as it confirmed the 768-member Indian contingent for the Asian Games, which will be comprised of 503 athletes, 246 team officials/ supporting staff, and 19 contingent staff.

Laxman will oversee the men's team as regular head coach Gautam Gambhir gets a rest ahead of the West Indies white-ball series, which will get



VVS Laxman

underway on September 27. As per the Ministry's release, Sunil Joshi, Hrishikesh Kanitkar, and Subhadeep Ghosh will join Laxman, while Amol Muzumdar will spearhead the women's team for the Asiad.

Laxman recently oversaw the Indian team during the T20I series against

Zimbabwe in July. This followed Gambhir being rested after the white-ball series against England.

The Indian men's and women's teams enter the Asian Games as defending champions, having won the title at the 2022 Hangzhou Games. Ruturaj Gaikwad led the largely second-string Indian side to gold at the Asiad, while Harmanpreet Kaur guided the Women in Blue to gold in the women's competition. Meanwhile, accommodation for the upcoming Asian Games has been in the news. According to Naoki Alex Miyaji, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Japan Cricket Association (JCA), partici-

pating teams in the Asian Games cricket event are being offered hotel accommodation despite limited room shortages across the host region.

"I can also assure you that the ACC have been discussing accommodation options with AINA-GOC for a long time. The participating teams in Cricket are being offered hotel accommodation. Many other sports are being accommodated in much more limited facilities such as cruise ships or container hotels. The teams are free to arrange their own accommodation if they choose to do so," Miyaji said in a conversation with IANS on Wednesday. (IANS/UNI)

Sports Ministry adds athletes to expand India's Asian Games contingent

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on Thursday added another 11 athletes to the 492-athlete list for the Asian Games as the Indian contingent for the Aichi-Nagoya Games was expanded to 768 members. The Ministry added athletes across athletics, mixed martial arts and surfing for the Games. Surfing is also making its debut at the Asian Games as four athletes - Kishore, Siv-araj, Kamali and Sugar Shanti - will represent India in the sport. MMA is also marking its debut at the Games.



Meanwhile, six in athletics - Praveen Kumar, Harita Bhadra, Kiran Pahal, Asha Ilango, Sindhu Shree Ganesha, and Sanya Yadav have been added, while Varun Sanyal will represent India in mixed martial arts as per the updated list from the

Ministry. The expanded list now sees India's Asiad contingent extend to 768 members, with 503 athletes (269 male and 234 female). 246 team officials/supporting staff and 19 contingent staff are also part of the Indian roster set to compete across 36

disciplines in the continental showpiece.

The Ministry has also confirmed the head of the Centre of Excellence and former player V.V.S. Laxman to be the head coach of the Indian men's side for the cricket event. Sunil Joshi, Hrishikesh Kanitkar and Subhadeep Ghosh will join Laxman, while Amol Muzumdar will spearhead the women's team for the Asiad. Muzumdar will have Aavishkar Salvi as the bowling coach and Munish Bali as the fielding coach in his coaching staff. (IANS/UNI)

What is heat hazard in F1, the caution FIA issued for Italian GP

NEW DELHI, SEP 3

The Formula 1 governing body, FIA, has declared a 'heat hazard' for the upcoming Italian Grand Prix at Monza, taking note of the expected rise in the mercury in the city over the race weekend.

"In accordance with Article B1.5.10 of the FIA F1 Regulations, having received a forecast from the Official Weather Service predicting that the Heat Index will be greater than 31.0 °C at some time during the Race at this Competition, a Heat



Hazard is declared," FIA said in a statement on Thursday.

"In addition, the difference in mass between the driver's personal equipment normally used and any items of a driver's personal equipment that form part of the system

must be compensated by the fitting of 0.5kg of ballast in the cockpit."

Meanwhile, Italian GP will be the fourth F1 race to be declared a 'heat hazard' after the Singapore GP and the United States GP in 2025 and the Austrian GP earlier this year. (IANS)

US Open: Sabalenka eases into third round

NEW YORK, SEP 3

No. 1 seed Aryna Sabalenka defeated Polina Iatcenko, 6-1, 6-1 inside Arthur Ashe Stadium to ease in to the US Open's third round.

Sabalenka, who is aiming to win her third straight US Open singles title, had little trouble eliminating Iatcenko, who's advanced to the main draw as a qualifier. The Belarusian struck 24 winners and converted six of her eight break-point opportunities in the 54-minute match.

With a win Sabalenka

runs her US Open winning streak to 15 matches, and she has won 22 straight second-round matches in Grand Slam events. Moreover, Sabalenka is now 30-2 at the US Open in matches where she wins the first set. The last time she lost a match in New York after winning the first set was the 2023 final against Coco Gauff.

Notably, a title here will halt the hopes of Elena Rybakina, Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula in overtaking Sabalenka for the No. 1 ranking. (IANS/UNI)

Hyderabad Public School concludes inter-school sports meet

TFP | CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, SEP 3

The Hyderabad Public School, Warangal, concluded a grand inter-school sporting celebration on Wednesday as part of its 10th anniversary festivities, bringing together young athletes from 32 schools across Warangal, Kazipet, and Hanamkonda. The event also marked the culmination of the Academic Inter-House Sports Competitions for 2026-27, featuring disciplines ranging from football, kho-kho, and handball to chess, Tae-



kwondo, hockey, and throwball.

Prof. P. Ravi Kumar of NIT Warangal, the chief guest, emphasised sport's role in teaching honesty, discipline, and resilience, urging students to handle defeat with grace. Guest of Honour Prof. Dr Jay Chandra Tannet high-

lighted that learning extends beyond classrooms to nature and everyday experiences, advising students to "Never Give Up."

The Hyderabad Public School emerged as Overall Champion, with Skill Starke International School finishing as Runner-up.

ENTERTAINMENT



Sonam Bajwa reflects on unfulfilled wish

Punjabi actress Sonam Bajwa shared a thought-provoking note about unfulfilled wishes and faith.

Taking to Instagram, the 'Ek Deewane ki Deewaniyat' actress expressed how the absence of something one deeply desires can often bring them closer to their faith. Sharing the reflective thought, Sonam wrote, "Khwahish adhuri ho toh rab kitna yaad aata hai." Her words, which translate to "When a wish remains unfulfilled, how much one remembers God."

In the images, Sonam can be seen dressed in a traditional white suit, which she paired with green bangles and matching earrings. She is seen



striking different poses for the camera while showcasing her elegant traditional look. She opted for subtle makeup, completing her look with nude lipstick

while keeping her hair open.

Sonam Bajwa has established herself as a prominent name in the Punjabi film industry. She made her acting debut with "Best of Luck" in 2013, alongside Gippy Grewal and Jazzy B. The following year, she appeared in "Punjab 1984" opposite Diljit Dosanjh. She also ventured into Tamil cinema in 2014 with "Kappal," in which she starred alongside Vaibhav Reddy.

She has several popular Punjabi films to her credit, including "Guddiyan Patole," "Carry On Jatta 3," "Nikka Zaildar," "Honsla Rakh" and "Ardab Mutiyaran." Sonam has also ventured into Hindi cinema and expanded her presence beyond the Punjabi film industry. Bajwa appeared in Hindi films such as "Housefull 5" and "Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat."

'Kalki 2898 AD' makers caution public about fake casting calls

The makers of director Nag Ashwin's magnum opus 'Kalki 2898 AD', on Thursday issued a statement, cautioning the public to be aware of fake casting calls and individuals who were falsely claiming to represent them. Well known production house Vyjayanthi Movies, which is producing the immensely popular franchise featuring a number of top starts including Prabhas, Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan, took to its social media timelines to share a statement in this regard.

It shared the statement, saying, "Important Clarification: Please beware of fake casting calls and individuals falsely claiming to represent #VyjayanthiMovies. #Kalki2898AD."

In its statement, the production house said, "Vyjayanthi movies would like to clarify that we are not associated with, nor have we authorised, any third-party agency, com-



pany, individual, or casting representative to conduct auditions or casting on our behalf." The production house urged people not to share their details with any such persons or agencies. It wrote, "Please do not share personal information, audition material, or make any payments to anyone claiming to represent us."

Vyjayanthi Movies pointed out that it reserved all rights to take appropriate legal action against any unauthorised use or misrepresentation of its name.

Gajraj Rao calls Irrfan, Manoj Bajpayee his mentors

Actor Gajraj Rao has spoken up about his fellow actors in the industry, who inspire him and make him chase excellence. The actor called legendary thespians Irrfan, Manoj Bajpayee his mentors.

The actor recently appeared on the latest episode of 'Pehla Pehla' podcast with Gopal Datt, and looked back at the experiences, people and unexpected turns that shaped his journey from growing up in a modest railway quarter in Delhi to becoming one of the most recognisable faces in Indian cinema.

Gajraj winded the clock backwards, and spoke about discovering his love for cinema through the iconic theatres of Connaught Place, finding his way into theatre and unexpectedly landing his first major stage role. The actor also recollected his early years in Mumbai and the challenges that came his way.



Talking about the same, Gajraj Rao said, "You look for your mentors. I have many mentors. Irrfan, Manoj Bajpayee, they are my mentors. You look at them from a distance and see how they handle themselves. Anil Kapoor maintained himself in the 80s and 90s, and he is still trying to do that kind of work with that energy. Akshay Kumar, people have different opinions. I have worked with him in Jolly LLLB 3, and I have changed my opinion about him".

Kangana Ranaut weighs in on Gen Z vs Millennials

Actress Kangana Ranaut has shared a video featuring a discussion on social media, technology and the generational impact of political and digital experiences. Reacting to the conversation, she highlighted a remark about millennials and their intelligence while adding her own take on the comparison with Gen Z. The video features social psychologist Jonathan Haidt and Oli Dugmore discussing the social media ban on the latest episode of "The Exchange."

Sharing the video on her Instagram stories, Kangana added her own humorous take on the discussion. She wrote, "Even though Gen Z is the flavour of the season, but according to surveys, millennials remain the most intelligent generation ever. A h e m a h e m, the host was like 'keep going'." Through her post, she

'Queen' actress appeared to agree with the observation about millennials while playfully drawing attention to the comparison between the two generations.

During the conversation, Haidt spoke about how political experiences during a person's formative years can influence their outlook for life.

Last month, actress and politician Kangana Ranaut had issued a clarification regarding her earlier remark on Gen Z during the student protest at Jantar Mantar in the national capital. Sharing a video featuring a Congress leader, she said that her statement was misconstrued.

She said, "A Congress leader said that I have called the youth of the whole country as gutter cchaaps. The youth of the whole country, if you only talk about Gen Z then their population is going to be around 30-35 crores, and the Jantar Mantar, there were only about 10,000 people gathered there, out of which more than half were people like Shabana Azmi, you saw all types of age groups were roaming."



CM blackmailed Congress high command, says Surekha after ouster from Cabinet

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Telangana Minister for Forest, Environment and Endowment, Konda Surekha, on Thursday strongly condemned her removal from the Cabinet and accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of blackmailing the Congress high command.

Reacting to the decision by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to drop her from the Council of Ministers with immediate effect, she termed it as 'vindictive action'.

She said the action was taken without seeking a clarification from her. According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, a recommendation to this effect has already been sent to the Governor. She said a letter was sent to the Governor without letterhead and signature. Surekha said she was removed from Cabinet without assigning any reason.

Claiming that the high command had no intention to drop her from Cabinet, Surekha alleged that Revanth Reddy blackmailed the high command by warning that if she was not sacked, he would leave the party.

She claimed that Revanth Reddy's broth-



Konda Surekha addresses media in Hyderabad.

ers, minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, MP Vem Narender Reddy and former TDP leaders together targeted her and her former OSD Sumanth.

Surekha said she was deliberately targeted, though many leaders who were involved in indiscipline faced no action. Surekha said senior leaders like Mallu Ravi and Jaipal Reddy abused Indira Gandhi, but they enjoyed all the posts.

Claiming that other ministers and MLAs are not happy, she remarked that if today it's my turn, it may be your turn tomorrow. She asked them to come out and open up and talk about it.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi advised women and young girls to talk fearlessly, and my daughter did this only, she said, while referring to the remarks made by her daughter Sushmitha

against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, which finally led to her removal from the Cabinet. She reiterated that she can be held accountable for the remarks made by her daughter, who is married and independent. She said there was no need for her to condemn remarks made by her daughter.

Stating that she has no right to question her daughter over the remarks, Surekha released to the media copies of the letter she sent to the top party leaders, including AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others.

The Congress leader from Warangal district said she will not ask the high command to take back its decision but advised the party to do the course correction ahead of elections to municipal corpora-

Indiramma Houses: 80 officials verify lottery-selected applicants

HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Authorities have begun field-level verification of applicants selected through lottery under the Indiramma Indlu Towers scheme, with 80 officials conducting inspections across 16 constituencies in the Hyderabad region.

A specially developed mobile application is being used to verify the details furnished by applicants, including their current housing status, duration of residence, occupation and other eligibility criteria. Photographs of their existing houses and supporting documents are also being uploaded through the app.

Housing Board Vice-Chairman V.P. Gautam personally inspected the verification process in Khairatabad consti-



FILE PHOTO

tuency on Thursday. He visited the residence of a lottery-selected applicant near Share Gate in Basheerbagh and also uploaded the verified details through the mobile application.

Officials said the field verification was necessary as documents

were not collected at the time of application. The exercise is aimed at ensuring that houses are allotted only to eligible beneficiaries. Applicants have also been given an opportunity to raise objections regarding the selected candidates.

Meanwhile, the Housing Board has extended by one week the deadline for applications under the demand survey in Musheerabad, Goshamahall, LB Nagar and Chandrayangutta constituencies. The deadline, which was to end on September 3, has

been extended to September 10, V.P. Gautam said. The Telangana government has introduced the 'Indiramma Houses' scheme to promote home ownership among the poor. The initiative offers financial assistance of up to 5 lakhs to eligible beneficiaries who own land and wish to construct a house.

Applicants who applied for houses can check their application status online via <https://indirammaindlu.telangana.gov.in/> portal. By visiting the website and selecting the 'Application Status' option, they can track progress using Aadhaar number, mobile number, ration card details, or application number. For assistance, a toll-free helpline is operational at 040-29390057.

Pressure IED blast kills tribal labourer in forest

TFP | MOHAMMAD RAFI
MULUGU, SEP 3

A 50-year-old tribal labourer was killed after a pressure IED exploded in the Karregutta hills near Bedam Gutta in Mulugu district on Wednesday evening, police said today.

The deceased, Madakam Nageshwar Rao, a resident of Edulla Cheruvu Colony in Nu-

guru village, had gone into the forest along with five other villagers for bamboo cutting. While returning around 1600 hours, the IED exploded causing severe injuries to his left leg.

His fellow villagers carried him on foot through the forest while attempting to take him back to the village.

SIR: Telangana CEO directs strict verification of voter records

Inspects SIR hearing centres in Medchal-Malkajigiri

TFP | RAVI KUMAR
MEDCHAL-MALKAJIGIRI, SEP 3

Telangana Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C. Sudarshan Reddy on Thursday inspected the SIR-2026 voter list hearing and verification process at Narsapally in Keesara, Muni-rabad in Medchal and Dommara Pochampally in Dundigal.

Accompanied by District Collector Manu Chaudhary and Additional Electoral Officer Vasam Venkateswarlu, Sudarshan Reddy reviewed the verification of applications and scrutiny of documents submitted by voters. He directed Electoral Registration Officers, Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, Supervisors and Booth Level Officers to en-



sure transparency and strict compliance with Election Commission guidelines.

The CEO ordered thorough verification of unmapped voters and applications with errors in voter card details, including cross-checking identity and residence documents before taking final decisions. He also directed officials to set daily targets, deploy additional staff where

required and complete the revision process within the stipulated timeframe.

Before the inspection, the EVM and VVPAT warehouse was formally handed over to the CEO in the presence of political party representatives and election officials. RDOs Venkata Reddy and Shyam Sundar, along with AEROs and district election personnel, were present.

ACB registers disproportionate assets case against Suryapet Town Planning Officer

TFP | VENKAT REDDY
SURYAPET, SEP 3

The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a disproportionate assets (DA) case against Vuyyala Somaiah, Town Planning Officer, Suryapet Municipality and in-charge Town Planning Officer, Kodad Municipality.

According to an ACB press note issued on Thursday, the case was registered under Section 13(1)(b) read with 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act following allegations that Somaiah acquired assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

ACB officials con-

ducted searches at his residence, office and seven other locations linked to his relatives and associates.

The searches reportedly uncovered three acres and three guntas of agricultural land, five residential properties, eight open plots, Rs 4.63 lakh cash, Rs 13 lakh in bank balances, 709 grams of gold and 1,750 grams of silver ornaments, five vehicles and household and electronic items.

The total assets identified so far are estimated at Rs 3.54 crore, while the market value of the properties is expected to be higher than their official value.

KTR assures Polytechnic students of raising their issues in assembly

TFP | ANIL YADAV
NALGONDA, SEP 3

Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Thursday assured polytechnic students that he would raise their concerns in the Assembly with top priority during the upcoming session.

Polytechnic students met KTR near MG University while he was on his way to a meeting in Miryalaguda and submitted a representation highlighting issues related to college lands, the future of polytechnic institutions and technical education. KTR said he would strongly raise the issues during the Assem-



bly session beginning September 7 and would continue to press the government until it provided clarity.

He also expressed concern over the government's alleged interest in valuable lands occupied by polytechnic colleges and stressed the need to strengthen technical education.

KTR suggested

adopting models such as Germany's dual education system, apprenticeships and practice-based programmes to provide students with better technical skills and practical experience.

He assured the students that the BRS would stand by them and fight for their interests in the Assembly.

Chief Secretary directs departments to prepare for assembly sessions

Officials asked to keep ready answers to members' questions

FREEDOM PRESS BUREAU
HYDERABAD, SEP 3

Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju, IAS has directed all government departments to make advance preparations for the State Assembly sessions beginning September 7 and ensure that answers to questions raised by members are furnished promptly.

Reviewing arrangements for the Assembly sessions with senior officials at the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat here on Thursday, Jaju said all departments should be fully prepared with relevant information on issues likely to be raised by



members. He instructed every department to appoint a nodal officer to coordinate the collection of information, preparation of replies and other matters related to Assembly questions. The Chief Secretary asked senior

officials and heads of departments to keep the required information ready in advance. He stressed the need for an effective coordination mechanism to obtain additional information from concerned departments immediately

whenever required and furnish replies within the stipulated time.

Jaju also directed officials to ensure that information relating to pending questions is submitted to Assembly authorities without delay.

Special Chief Secretaries Vikas Raj, Naveen Mittal, B.M.D. Ekka and Vani Prasad, Chief Secretaries Sandeep Kumar Sultanania and Yogita Rana, along with other senior officials, attended the meeting.

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