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HYDERABAD, SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹4

RNI No. TELENG/2018/76469 I Late City **Vol.7 Issue** 235 I *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PUBLISHED FROM: HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN VIJAYWADA



Saw people dying in front of my eyes: Miracle survivor P5

'DAD TAUGHT ME NEVER TO BE AFRAID OF A 'NO'—THAT EVERY REJECTION IS A HIDDEN REDIRECTION' P9



Laya Begins a New Chapter with THAMMUDU P11



QUOTE OF THE DAY
The Pioneer

Mr Revanth Reddy, as we both are facing an ongoing ACB investigation, why not both of us take a lie detector test in the presence of a judge, broadcast it on live television and let the whole of Telangana decide who's the culprit. Do you have the courage to take the test along with me BagMan ? Why waste crores of public money by repeated enquiries and propaganda, especially when you keep claiming everyday that the State is bankrupt



- KT Rama Rao, BRS working president



Israel attacks Iran's nuclear, missile sites

Prompts Iranian drone-strike retaliation

PNS ■ DUBAI

Israel attacked Iran early Friday in strikes that took out top military officers and hit nuclear and missile sites, raising the potential for an all-out war between the two bitter Middle East adversaries. It appeared to be the most significant attack Iran has faced since its 1980s war with Iraq.

Simmering tensions over Iran's rapidly advancing nuclear program boiled over and Iran quickly retaliated, sending a swarm of drones at Israel as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned of "severe punishment".

Countries in the region condemned Israel's attack, while leaders around the globe called for immediate deescalation from both sides.

Israel's military said about 200 aircraft were involved in the initial attack on about 100 targets. Two security officials said the country's Mossad spy agency was also able to position explosive drones inside Iran ahead of time and then activate them to target missile launchers at an Iranian base near Tehran.

They said Israel had also smuggled precision weapons into central Iran as well as strike systems on vehicles, which were activated as the attack began to hit Iranian air defences.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the highly secretive missions and it was not possible to independently confirm their claims. There was no official comment.

Continued on >> P2

Netanyahu speaks to Modi, world leaders

PNS ■ JERUSALEM

In a diplomatic push to garner international support for Israel's attacks against Iran, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, among many other world leaders on Friday.

Beginning last night, Netanyahu has held conversations with world leaders, including German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Indian Prime Minister Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron, the Prime Minister's Office said in a brief statement. He is due to speak with US President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, it added. "The leaders showed understanding for Israel's defence needs in the face of the Iranian threat of annihilation; the Prime Minister said that he would continue to be in contact with them in the coming days."

Continued on >> P2

KTR summoned in Formula E case

Challenges CM to take lie detector test on live TV

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS working president KT Rama Rao has been issued a fresh notice by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in connection with the Formula E race case, asking him to appear for questioning at 10 am on Monday.

Reacting to the summons, KTR launched a scathing attack on the Congress Government and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, accusing them of using state machinery to run a political circus.

"When you cannot run a government, keep people busy with a circus and distractions! The Congress and its clown CM's antics won't stop us," he said in a sharply worded statement.

The ACB is reportedly probing the transfer of Rs 44 crore from government accounts for the Hyderabad Formula E race event.

KTR, who was the minister overseeing municipal administration at the time, maintained that there was no misappropriation. "The money was transferred from bank to bank and is still in the account of Formula E. As a law-abiding citizen, I will attend and fully cooperate with the ACB," he said.

Meanwhile, KTR challenged the Chief Minister to join him in taking a lie detector test.

Continued on >> P2

Slams Cong for derailing agriculture, edu

HYDERABAD: BRS Working President KT Rama Rao on Saturday hit out at the Congress government, accusing it of derailing both agriculture and education in the state through negligence. Posting on X, KTR said that Telangana, which once celebrated agriculture like a festival under BRS rule, is now facing decline under the Congress admin.

"Due to the negligence of the Congress government, not just farming but even the education system is suffering," KTR said, adding that the Congress has shown no commitment to the agricultural sector and has no sense of responsibility towards schools. He said that even though the monsoon season has begun, there is no clarity on implementing the Rythu Bharosa scheme.

KCR undergoes medical tests at AIG Hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao underwent medical tests at AIG Hospital in Gachibowli on Friday. The health check-up was part of his regular medical review, according to hospital sources.

KCR was reportedly examined for gastric-related concerns under the supervision of noted gastroenterologist Dr. Nageshwar Reddy. Doctors clarified that the tests were standard in nature and there was no cause for concern.

Hospital officials confirmed that KCR spent a few hours and returned home the same day after completing the tests.

DA hiked to 30.03% for TG staff from Jan 2023

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



The Telangana government on Thursday issued orders enhancing the Dearness Allowance (DA) for its employees from 26.39 percent to 30.03 percent of basic pay, with effect from January 1, 2023. This hike benefits all government employees, including teaching and non-teaching staff of local bodies, and grant-in-aid institutions drawing pay in the 2020 Revised Pay Scales (RPS).

As per G.O.Ms.No.78 issued by the Finance Department, the revised DA will be paid with the salary for June 2025, payable in July. Arrears for the 29-month period from January 2023 to May 2025 will be disbursed in 28 monthly installments, starting from July 1, 2025.

For employees drawing pay in the 2015 Revised Pay Scales, the DA is revised from 63.912 percent to 68.628 percent. Those covered under UGC/AICTE/SNJPC 2016 scales will now receive 42 percent DA (up from 38 percent), while those under UGC/AICTE/FNJPC 2006 scales will get 221 percent DA (revised from 212 percent).

The revised DA will also apply to employees under Zilla Parishads, Mandal Praja Parishads, Gram Panchayats, municipalities, municipal corporations, agricultural market committees, and cooperative institutions drawing pay under the relevant Revised Pay Scales.

Continued on >> P2

HC posts hearing on CM's petition to June 20

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The High Court posted hearing in a case registered against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to June 20. The case was registered against the CM at the Gachibowli Police Station nine years ago.

It may be recalled that the CM had filed a petition appealing to the court to dismiss the case filed against him at the Gachibowli Police Station. A person named Peddiraju filed a complaint at the Gachibowli Police Station alleging that nine years ago, the CM, his brother, Kondal Reddy, and one Laxman demolished a society room on a piece of disputed land in Gopanpally, and the Gachibowli police filed a case regarding this.

Black box recovered from AI crash site

PM Modi meets injured in hospital

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD



Investigators on Friday recovered a Black box of the London-bound Air India plane from the rooftop of a medical college hostel here a day after it crashed and rammed into the building, as they scoured through the debris for clues to the cause of the worst air tragedy in the country in three decades.

In a major breakthrough, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), without giving details, said the Digital Flight Data Recorder(DFDR), commonly known as the Black box, was recovered from the "rooftop" at the crash site. The DFDR will help reconstruct the ill-fated flight's final moments and is crucial to determining how the disaster occurred.

All but one of the 242 passengers and crew on board the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner(AI171) and another 24 persons including five MBBS students on the ground were killed when the aircraft came down seconds after take-off before falling inside the campus of the state-run BJ Medical College campus in Meghaninagar area and going up in flames.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the scene of the crash and met the injured at the Ahmedabad civil hospital. He spent around 20 minutes at the crash site.

As aviation experts discussed the possible causes of the crash, including loss of thrust in both engines of the 11-year-old aircraft, multiple bird strikes, or a potential flap issue, Aviation watchdog DGCA ordered enhanced safety inspection of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner fleet powered by GEnx engines. There are 26 Boeing 787-8s and 7 Boeing 787-9s in the Air India fleet.

"The DFDR (Black box) has been recovered from the rooftop," an AAIB statement said, without giving details.

An official said the recovery was made from the rooftop of the medical college hostel building which is part of the residential quarters of BJ Medical College.



Rythu Nestham to connect 1,000 centres

PAGE: 2

NOTE-FOR-VOTE CASE

CM skips ED court agai-

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy once again failed to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) court in the long-pending Note-for-Vote case, drawing the ire of the judge.

Despite clear directions issued during the previous hearing for all the accused to be present on Friday (June 13), the key accused Revanth Reddy (A1), Uday Simha (A2), Sebastian (A3), and Vem Keerthan (A5) were absent at the Nampally court. Only Jerusalem Mathaiah (A4) and Sandhya Venkata Veeraiah (also listed as A5) appeared in court.

During the proceedings, Mathaiah pleaded with the judge to start the trial immediately, pointing out that even 10 years after the case began, the ED court had not commenced trial.

Raising pointed questions, Mathaiah asked whether Revanth Reddy, who has held the posts of Malkajgiri MP, TPCC President, and is now the Chief Minister, truly lacks time to attend court in the heart of Hyderabad.

Continued on >> P2

'Sincere Cong activists will be rewarded'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said that sincere party workers will be duly recognised and rewarded by the Congress government.

Mahesh was speaking while attending a Zoom meeting with District Congress Committee (DCC) Presidents and state-level organisational observers to review the party's programmes in Telangana. He said that the 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign was conducted successfully across Telangana and emphasised that Telangana led from the front while organising the campaign. Senior AICC leaders now recognise Telangana as a role model, he added. He said that the party's organisational development is progressing in the state and appreciated the sincere efforts of state observers and coordinators. Mahesh stressed the importance of completing the formation of mandal and district-level committees within the stipulated time frame and called for a well-structured party setup starting from the village level.

Continued on >> P2

PIONEER IN SHORT

Harish Rao slams ACB notice to KTR

Former minister and senior BRS leader Harish Rao has termed the latest notice issued by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao in the Formula E racing case as a clear act of political vendetta orchestrated by the Congress government. FULL REPORT ON P2

Flight attendant Roshni's wedding plans shattered

Flight attendant Roshni Songhare was about to add a new chapter in her life as she was set to tie the knot with a merchant navy officer next year, and her excited family members had started making preparations for it. But all that excitement turned into despair after ... FULL REPORT ON P5

China hints at holding talks with India

China on Thursday hinted at holding talks with India over its restrictions on export of rare earth materials, saying it is willing to enhance dialogue and cooperation with relevant countries to keep industrial supply chains stable. China's recent restrictions on the exports of key ... FULL REPORT ON P8

Gambhir rushes back home as mother gets hospitalised

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Friday returned to the country after mother Seema Gambhir had to be hospitalized due to health emergency, a BCCI source said. The source said Gambhir had to fly back to attend to his mother, who suffered a heart attack and is currently in ICU ... FULL REPORT ON P12

Citizens struggle as it is hike after hike in TG

NAVEENA GHANATE
naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

In Telangana, 2025 has been a year of unrelenting price hikes, with the government hiking rates across multiple sectors, from TGSRTC passes and Metro fares to temple tickets, dairy prices, liquor rates, and is now preparing the ground for hiking land registration values. With each hike, the burden on the common man continues to rise.

On June 9, the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) hiked monthly bus-pass fares by 20 to 30 per cent. Ordinary passes now cost Rs 1,400 (up from Rs 1,150), while Metro Express and Metro Deluxe passes rose to Rs 1,600 and Rs 1,800 respectively. Student passes, too, were hiked. The TGSRTC attributed the hike to toll charges and operational expenses.

Before that, the Hyderabad Metro Rail implemented its first fare hike. On May 17, the new Metro fares came into effect, increasing the minimum fare from Rs 10 to Rs 12, and the maximum fare from Rs 60 to Rs 75. Following public outrage, a 10 per cent discount on all fares was temporarily introduced from May 24.

In April, the Vijaya Dairy hiked buffalo milk price by Rs 3, but reduced the price of cow milk by Rs 3. Buffalo milk is consumed more in Telangana.

The Telangana State Dairy Development Co-Operative Federation Limited attributed this to the need to recover losses as the state offers the highest procurement rate to farmers.

Liquor prices also saw a hike. On February 11, the Telangana Government authorised a 15% hike in beer prices. On May 18, another circular increased the rates of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) to Rs 10 per quarter bottle, Rs 20 per half bottle, and Rs 40 per full bottle, adding up to an estimated Rs 170 crore in monthly excise revenue.



The state is now reviewing proposals to increase land registration market values in July. If implemented, this will significantly raise the cost of property transactions through higher stamp duty and registration charges.

Meanwhile, on June 13, the Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple increased its special darshan ticket price from Rs 800 to Rs 1,000. Earlier, only Puja Samagri was provided, now with the increased rate, Swamy's Shesha Vastralu and Satyanarayana Swamy idol will also be provided. Cooking gas became costlier after the Centre's announcement of a Rs 50 increase in domestic LPG cylinder rates in April. Although the hike was implemented nationwide, it contributed to greater sense financial pressure among Telangana households.

Continued on >> P2

Kavitha, Mallanna slam govt for omitting Gaddar's photo

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Revolutionary balladeer Gaddar's photo is missing from the official invitation for the Telangana Gaddar Film Awards.

In a post on X, Kavitha said, "I condemn the Congress Government for insulting people's singer Gaddar. It is unfortunate that a government which frequently invokes his name has now chosen to exclude his photo from the invitation to an event where awards are being given in his name." Describing it as painful, Kavitha urged the state to correct the lapse during the awards presentation ceremony itself. "At the very least, the government should display Gaddar's portrait at the event and honour him," she demanded. Congress MLC Teenmaar Mallanna said, "Give a 'Best Designer' award to the genius who made Gaddar's photo disappear.

571 new govt schools this year, says CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said that enhancing educational standards in government schools remains a top priority for his administration, and the government is prepared to invest as much as necessary to ensure quality education for every child in Telangana.

Chairing a review meeting with education department officials at ICCC, Revanth Reddy announced that 571 new government schools would be established this academic year in both rural and urban areas with more than 20 children, aiming to address gaps in access and infrastructure.

The Chief Minister directed officials to focus on language proficiency and skill development for students, emphasising that the curriculum must evolve to make students not only academically competent but also future-ready. "From high school level itself, students should be guided to acquire skills that will enable them to thrive in their chosen careers," he said.

Continued on >> P2

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

After BRS' loot, Revanth cares a hoot about graft

Of the many alleged scams committed by the BRS regime, one involving corruption in the execution of the Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) stands out for its scale. The Congress had demanded a CBI investigation into the Kaleswaram scam, alleging tens of thousands of crores in corruption before the BRS came to power



KISHORE POREDDY

Congress came to power in Telangana, riding a wave of voter disgust against the rampant corruption of the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) regime. Congress leaders, from Rahul Gandhi to Revanth Reddy, had promised not only to punish the guilty BRS leaders but also to recover every paisa looted by them, especially by the then Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) and his family members, and return the money to the state's coffers.

Yet, Congress's actions after coming to power leave no option for the voters but to conclude that, instead of exposing the corruption of the erstwhile BRS regime, Congress had colluded to protect them in return for a share in their loot. Eighteen months after coming to power with Revanth Reddy as the Chief Minister, the only case registered was in the Formula-E race case for procedural irregularities, without any serious charges of corruption or a quid pro quo against Rama Rao, the then Municipal Minister and son of KCR.

Of the many alleged scams committed by the BRS regime, one involving corruption in the execution of the Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) stands out for its scale. The Congress had demanded a CBI investigation into the Kaleswaram scam, alleging tens of thousands of crores in corruption before the BRS came to power. One day after Rahul Gandhi visited the Medigadda barrage, whose piers had sunk, turning the entire project into a white elephant, the Congress wrote to the President of India requesting a CBI probe. Congress even campaigned with cardboard Kaleswaram ATM models, alleging the Kaleswaram project has become an ATM for the corrupt BRS.

However, the first action of the Congress after coming to power was to do a complete U-turn and reject a CBI investigation into the scam. KCR, fearing the CBI, which had arrested his daughter Kavitha in the Delhi Liquor Scam, had banned the CBI from the state. The Congress not only rejected a CBI investigation into the Kaleswaram scam but also continued the ban on CBI imposed by KCR. A three-member panel, comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (currently Rahul Gandhi), and the Chief Justice of India, appoints the CBI chief to ensure the agency's independence. Yet, Congress brazenly floated the false narrative that the BJP would control the CBI to cover up BRS's corruption. Instead, it would utilise state agencies like the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), which works under the direct control of CM Revanth Reddy, who is also the Home Minister.

To date, the Congress government has not filed a single case against any politician in the Kaleswaram scam. The government never even tasked the Anti-Corruption Bureau with investigating the fraud. The only investigation it launched was against officials from the irrigation department by the state's Vigilance Commission. Not surprisingly, the Commission found a conspiracy to defraud the state exchequer and recommended filing criminal charges against 17 officers of the department, including the highest-level officers, such as Engineers-in-Chief. It also advised the department to initiate major penalty proceedings against 33 serving and 7 retired officers of the department.

The Vigilance Commission submitted its report in March. Three months later, the government hasn't filed a single case against any officer. It is well aware that if it books the officers, they will reveal the truth and implicate their political bosses—the then Irrigation Minister and the then Chief Minister, who controlled the execution of the Kaleswaram project. Any government intent on exposing the masterminds behind the fraud will even turn some of them into approvers, with the court's permission, and gather evidence. But no. The Congress does not want to do any of that.

Instead of probes and cases by anti-corruption agencies, Congress appointed a Commission to conduct a broad judicial inquiry into alleged design, execution, financial and procedural irregularities in the Kaleswaram project. Unlike investigative agencies, the Commission cannot search and seize evidence, nor can it arrest and interrogate accused individuals and frame charges. Once the Commission submits its report, the government must task its investigative agencies with gathering hard evidence of corruption and the flow of money and build a case to charge any accused. It provides the government with an opportunity to delay the process by many more years.

The intent of Congress to shield BRS leaders from corruption charges is evident, considering the lack of action in many other alleged scams. They include phone tapping, poultry feed and egg purchases, goat distribution, land grabbing through the misuse of the Dharani portal, and many more. It is evident that the Congress party, which was steeped in corruption at both the Centre and various states when it was in power, never had any intention of holding the BRS leadership to account. Their only aim is to share the loot and gain leverage over BRS to force its long-promised merger into the Congress.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

Rythu Nestham to connect 1,000 centres

CM to address farmers on Monday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao on Friday held a teleconference with Collectors to review preparations for the Rythu Nestham programme scheduled on June 16 at the Agricultural University.

The programme, aimed at strengthening farmer engagement, will feature an interaction with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, and will be telecast live across all Rythu Nestham centres.

The Chief Secretary directed Collectors to organise the event in a meaningful manner, ensuring the participation of at least 250 farmers from each area. Public representatives are also to be invited to reinforce the programme's significance.

The event is expected to boost farmers' connection with agriculture experts through video conferencing, which will now be available in an additional 1,000 centres, apart from the existing 500.

"These virtual sessions will enable real-time advisory to farmers on crop selection, scientific practices, and seasonal planning," Ramakrishna said, adding that this outreach will create a stronger support ecosystem for the agricultural community.

Agriculture Secretary Raghunandan Rao asked Collectors to deploy mandal-level officers and cluster-specific Agriculture Extension Officers at all Rythu Nestham centres. He emphasised that the event should be conducted in a festive environment to raise farmer morale and participation.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Secretary also reviewed arrangements for the Telangana Gaddar Film Awards scheduled for June 14 at Hitex, Hyderabad. He held a separate teleconference with DGP Jitender and senior officials to ensure the smooth conduct of the event. The Special Commissioner of Information and Public Relations, Dr Harish, said that all departments are closely coordinating and that arrangements are in place for the programme to be held on a grand scale.

DGP Jitender said that special attention is being given to parking and security, given the nature of the event and the expected turnout.

COURTESY CALL



Navin Mittal, who has been appointed as Special Chief Secretary of the Energy Department, called on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday in a courtesy meeting

Govt jailing Dalits by charging false cases, says Vishweshwar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Chevella MP, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, said that jailing Dalits by filing false cases against them is an injustice. Vishweshwar said that he will raise the false cases filed against the people of Attapur on Hyderabad's outskirts with the SC, ST Commission.

The police sent 21 youth of Attapur to Chanchalguda Jail after arresting them when they blocked animal carcasses being shifted to the Dalitwada in Vambe Colony three days ago. Vishweshwar met the Hindu Dalit activists in Chanchalguda during a visit to the jail on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP said the police are filing cases based on their community. The police did not file cases against the other group. It is shocking that the local MLA supported the other group, Vishweshwar said.

He said that this will continue as long as the Congress remains in power and said that the government should file SC, ST atrocity cases against those who dumped animal waste at the Dalitwada. The government should release them immediately, he said.

The MP said that he will meet the SC, ST Commission on this issue and raise the filing of false cases against Hindu Dalit activists.

Harish Rao slams ACB notice to KTR; Calls It political vendetta

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former minister and senior BRS leader Harish Rao has termed the latest notice issued by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao in the Formula E racing case as a clear act of political vendetta orchestrated by the Congress government.

In a sharp response issued on Friday, Harish Rao alleged that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is misusing investigative agencies to divert public attention from his government's failures. "This is nothing but an attempt to damage KTR's moral credibility. He has been relentlessly questioning the government over its unfulfilled promises—the six guarantees and 420 assurances given during the elections. These notices are the ruling party's answer to that," Harish said.

He accused the Congress of practicing "diversion politics" for the last 18 months and claimed that the notices to KTR are part of a broader conspiracy to defame the BRS. "No matter how many stunts Revanth Reddy tries, his political theatrics and drama have already been exposed to the people of Telangana," he said.

Harish Rao defended the Formula E race initiative, stating that the event enhanced Telangana's global reputation and brought significant investment into the state. "Is KTR being targeted just because he made Telangana a hub for electric vehicle manufacturing? Amar Raja and several other companies came forward to invest due to the momentum created by this global event," he added.

Taking a swipe at the Congress government, Harish Rao said, "While the BRS brought Formula E to Hyderabad with dignity and vision, the Congress organised beauty pageants that ended up disgracing the image of both Telangana and India."

He further alleged that the ACB notice is punishment for KTR's outspoken criticism of Revanth Reddy's governance. "It is now evident that the notice is politically motivated. Revanth Reddy is trying to suppress voices that highlight his failures," he said.

CM skips ...

Continued from >> P1

"Or does he not respect the court at all?" he asked, addressing the judge.

The court observed that Revanth's legal team continues to seek adjournments, citing one excuse or another, stalling the trial. Mathaiah highlighted the irony that while the Chief Minister has been appearing in minor election-related cases in other courts with confidence, he continues to evade even a basic identification appearance in this ED case.

He urged the public prosecutor to impress upon the court the need to begin the trial at the earliest, stating that his health and financial condition had worsened due to the prolonged case. Mathaiah revealed he recently underwent surgery for a tumour near a nerve in his leg and could barely walk, making repeated court visits a severe burden.

Govt clears Akkampally R&R package

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has granted revised administrative approval for the R&R (Resettlement and Rehabilitation) package works for Akkampally village under the AMRSLBC Project, earmarking Rs 20.07 crore with the latest Schedule of Rates (SSR) for 2022-23.

According to GO Rt. No: 117 issued by the Irrigation and CAD (Projects-I) Department on June 11, the government has also approved the pre-closure of the existing contract and allowed payment for the work already completed by the previous contractor.

Citizens struggle ...

Continued from >> P1

Food prices have added to the burden. Chicken prices rose steeply by Rs 20 to Rs 30 per kilogram in May and June, with broiler chicken prices hitting Rs 280 per kilogram in Hyderabad. With hikes hitting essentials like transport, milk, cooking gas, temple visits, alcohol and real estate, citizens are left recalculating their monthly expenses.

571 new govt schools this ...

Continued from >> P1

Highlighting Telangana's rapid urbanisation, Revanth Reddy asked the education department to coordinate with the municipal administration to identify land parcels in HMDA and municipal layouts where schools can be established to meet emerging urban needs. He also suggested rationalising various educational institutions run under SC, ST, BC, and Minority categories up to the intermediate level so that each school has a minimum student strength, thereby ensuring optimal utilisation of resources.

With many students now opting for residential gurukuls due to the assured quality of meals, uniforms, and textbooks, the Chief Minister said the same facilities must be considered for day scholars as well.

He asked officials to explore the feasibility of extending these benefits to non-residential students in the same institutions.

KTR summoned ...

Continued from >> P1

"Mr Revanth Reddy, as we both are facing ACB investigations, why not both of us take a lie detector test in the presence of a judge, broadcast it on live television, and let Telangana decide who's the culprit?" he asked.

Without naming him directly, KTR took a swipe at the Chief Minister's past, saying, "Can someone remind me who just completed 10 years after being caught with a bag full of cash?"

He also questioned the logic behind the repeated inquiries into the matter. "Why waste crores of public money on propaganda and investigations when the Congress government keeps claiming that the state is bankrupt?" he said.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	
Tritiya:	Jun 13 03:19 PM to Jun 14 03:47 PM
Chaturthi:	Jun 14 03:47 PM to Jun 15 03:51 PM
Nakshatram:	
Uttara Ashadha:	Jun 13 11:20 PM to Jun 15 12:21 AM
Shravana:	Jun 15 12:21 AM to Jun 16 12:59 AM
Rahukalam:	9:00 AM to 10:38 AM
Yamagandam:	1:54 PM to 3:32 PM
Varjyam:	04:28 AM to 06:06 AM
Gulika:	5:45 AM to 7:23 AM
Amritakalam:	05:41 PM to 07:21 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:50 AM to 12:42 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Heavy Thunderstorm
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 73%
Sunrise: 5:42 AM
Sunset: 6:51 PM

Updated: June 13, 2025 5:00 PM

Israel attacks Iran's nuclear...

Continued from >> P1

The Israeli attack hit several sites, including Iran's main nuclear enrichment facility at Natanz, where black smoke could be seen rising into the air. Later in the morning, Israel said it had also destroyed dozens of radar installations and surface-to-air missile launchers in western Iran.

Among those killed were three of Iran's top military leaders, one who oversaw the entire armed forces, Gen. Mohammad Bagheri, one who led the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Hossein Salami, and another who ran the Guard's ballistic missile programme, Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh.

Iran confirmed all three deaths, which were a significant blow to Tehran's governing theocracy and will complicate efforts to retaliate against Israel.

Khamenei said other top military officials and scientists were also killed.

In its first response, Iran fired more than 100 drones at Israel, with both Iraq and Jordan confirming they had flown over their airspace. Israel said the drones were being intercepted outside its airspace, and it was not immediately clear whether any got through.

In his first public comment about the attacks, US President Donald Trump again urged Iran to reach a deal with Washington on its nuclear programme, warning on his Truth Social platform that Israel's attacks "will only get worse".

Without saying whether he was privy to specific Israeli plans, Trump said "there is still time to make this slaughter, with the next already planned attacks being even more brutal, come to an end".

Netanyahu speaks...

Continued from >> P1

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar also reached out to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar.

"So far today, I have already spoken with the foreign ministers of India, Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, Paraguay, Panama, Cyprus and the European Union," a statement from the Israeli foreign ministry quoted him as saying.

"In recent hours, I have been focusing on calls with foreign ministers from around the world, in which I have detailed the Cabinet decision and its reasons and the IDF's activities," he said.

"This is in parallel with instructing Foreign Ministry officials, Israeli ambassadors and representatives around the world, on aspects related to our Hasbarah (diplomacy and public diplomacy) activities," he added. India on Friday said it is "deeply concerned" over the recent developments between Iran and Israel and "closely monitoring" the evolving situation.

New Delhi urged both countries to avoid any escalatory steps.

DA hiked to 30.03% for...

Continued from >> P1

The order covers all full-time employees, but excludes those not eligible for DA as per the rules.

Employees drawing DA as per court orders or special terms will be guided by those rulings. Heads of Departments are directed to calculate and claim the arrears in accordance with the schedule provided.

Meanwhile, the Telangana government has revised the Dearness Relief (DR) for its pensioners with effect from 1 January 2023. As per G.O.Ms.No. 79 issued by the Finance (HRM.V) Department on 13 June, pensioners across several categories will benefit from the enhanced DR rates, which will be paid from July 2025 onwards.

The government has increased the Dearness Relief from 26.39% to 30.03% of the basic pension for those who retired on or after 1 July 2018 under the Revised Pay Scales of 2020. Similarly, pensioners under the 2015 Revised Pay Scales will now get 68.628%, up from 63.912%.

Pensioners who retired under the UGC/AICTE/SNJPC Pay Scales of 2016 will see their DR revised from 38% to 42%, while those under the 2006 scales, who did not migrate to the 2016 scales, will get 221%, up from 212%.

The orders apply to a wide range of beneficiaries including service pensioners, family pensioners, pensioners from aided educational institutions, municipal and panchayat bodies, and even Jagir and Estate pensioners.

The revised DR will be paid along with the June 2025 pension, which will be disbursed in July 2025. Arrears from January 2023 to May 2025 will be cleared in 28 equal monthly instalments, starting July 2025.

Treasury officers and pension payment authorities have been authorised to make payments without awaiting further instructions from the Accountant General.

Officials clarified that financial assistance grantees who are not entitled to DR will not benefit from these orders.

'Sincere Cong ...

Continued from >> P1

Speaking on the occasion, Meenakshi affirmed the Congress's unwavering commitment to 'social justice.' She said that the party ensures fair representation and distribution of roles both within the organisation and in the government. Under th leadership of Rahul Gandhi, the party is implementing the principle of 'equal share for every group.' She reiterated that all posts allotted so far have adhered to the principles of 'social justice,' and that in future, all loyal party workers will continue to receive recognition.

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Printed and published by B Krishna Prasad for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., Phone: 040-23322341, Hyderabad Office: F-502, Diamond Block, Lumbini Rockdale, Somajiguda, Hyderabad - 500 082. Telangana. Printed at Sree Seshasai Enterprises, Plot No.19, IDA Balanagar , Hyderbad-500037, Medchal -Malkajgiri District, Telangana. Editor-in-Chief: Shobori Ganguli. Resident Editor: B Krishna Prasad, AIR SURCHARGE of Rs 2.00.



City Pioneer

The Pioneer

HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

Insulin Pump therapy at NIMS now covered under Aarogyasri

It will benefit 100 children with Type 1 diabetes

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■ HYDERABAD



The provision of free insulin pumps at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS)—an initiative launched on World Diabetes Day in 2024—has now been included under Aarogyasri health cards at the institute. The number of children with Type 1 diabetes receiving insulin pumps has reached 100, with the latest 10 cases being covered under Aarogyasri.

Previously, most middle-income families relied on the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, as insulin pumps cost over Rs 1 lakh.

Dr Beatrice Anne, Additional Professor and Head of Endocrinology at NIMS, told *The Pioneer*, "It's largely through word of mouth and WhatsApp groups for children with Type 1 diabetes that this initiative is gaining visibility. Parents in need are bringing their children. The advantage now is that insulin pumps are available through Aarogyasri."

Dr Beatrice also added, "Basal insulin provides a constant, slow release to maintain background glucose levels, while bolus insulin delivers a burst after meals. Parents must understand how to operate the pump properly for it to function effectively."

The Endocrinology Department is also conducting educational sessions, with not only children but also adults participating. These groups offer peer support, address shared concerns, and encourage practices like yoga, diet planning, and physical fitness.

Patients from various districts are also visiting NIMS to enquire about the insulin pump program.

PHONE TAPPING CASE

SIT records Praneeth Rao's statement again

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The investigation into the high-profile phone tapping case is currently underway, and fresh developments are emerging. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) has once again recorded the statement of former intelligence official Praneeth Rao.

According to sources, the SIT questioned him based on the statement previously given by another key accused, Prabhakar Rao.

Officials also focused on the alleged destruction of hard disks.

Speaking briefly after questioning, Praneeth Rao reportedly stated that he cannot disclose details of the investigation at this stage. "Nobody said we did phone tapping and as it is under investigation I cannot reveal anything," he said.





Hyd sees 37% surge in premium homes sales in May 2025

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad witnessed a sharp 37% year-on-year (YoY) rise in the registration of homes priced above Rs.1 crore in May 2025, according to Knight Frank India. This category accounted for 19% of all home sales during the month, highlighting the growing demand for premium properties in the city.

Overall, home registrations in Hyderabad, including Medchal-Malkajgiri, Rangareddy, and Sangareddy districts, rose by 2% YoY and 5% month-on-month (MoM), marking the first such increase this year. The total value of registered homes jumped 14% YoY and 4% MoM.

CMD of Knight Frank India, Shishir Baijal said "Hyderabad's residential market showed encouraging signs of revival in May 2025." The strong 37% YoY rise in high-value home sales reflects a growing appetite for premium living, supported by infrastructure growth and evolving lifestyles.

He noted that homes above Rs.1 crore contributed nearly half of the overall transaction value, even though they formed a smaller share of total units. Meanwhile, mid-range and budget homes saw a slight decline in volume.

Rangareddy district led with 48% of total registrations, followed by Medchal-Malkajgiri at 37% and Hyderabad at 15%. The weighted average price rose 10% YoY, with Sangareddy and Rangareddy seeing the highest growth at 21% and 12% respectively.

Among the top five deals in May, four were in West Hyderabad, all above Rs.6 crore, with the largest at Puppalguda worth Rs.17 crore.



OLD CITY METRO WORKS

311 properties acquired, Rs 283 crore compensation disbursed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited (HAML) said that 311 properties have been acquired and Rs 283 crore has been disbursed as compensation.

HAML has strongly refuted reports claiming that the High Court has issued stay orders on the old city Metro Rail works. Calling such reports "factually incorrect and misleading," HAML Managing Director NVS Reddy clarified on Friday that no such stay has been granted by the Hon'ble High Court.

In a media statement , Reddy explained that in an earlier counter filed in response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) by the Act Public Welfare Foundation (APWF), HAML had assured the court that no heritage structure in the old city was being touched or demolished. The Metro alignment, he reiterated, is far from iconic landmarks such as Charminar and Falaknuma.

He also appreciated the cooperation of local residents, stating that they were happy to see demolition and debris clearance gaining momentum, paving the way for the long-awaited launch of Metro Rail works in the old city. "The Additional Advocate General, Mr Imran Khan, had given a clear assurance to the court on behalf of HAML that no heritage structure would be affected," Reddy said. He added that following the filing of additional affidavits by both the petitioner and HAML, the High Court granted three weeks to file a consolidated counter. "In its order, the High Court merely stated that any interim relief already in operation shall continue till the next hearing.

DoT busts illegal international call routing Setup

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a coordinated operation with the Telangana Police, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Wednesday night busted an illegal telecom setup in Secunderabad that was facilitating the unlawful routing of international calls to Indian customers using SIP technology. Under the leadership of Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia, the DoT has intensified its crackdown on telecom fraud and cybercrime. The Hyderabad unit of DoT, acting on specific intelligence and analysis, identified the illegal operation and swiftly moved in to dismantle the setup.

We-Hub collaborates with Flipkart to empower women entrepreneurs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

WE-Hub, an initiative by the Government of Telangana, organised a special workshop in Hyderabad on Friday to support women entrepreneurs in scaling their businesses through e-commerce. The event was held in collaboration with Flipkart, one of India's online marketplaces.

Over 100 women entrepreneurs from across the state attended the session, which aimed to boost women-led micro-enterprises by giving them access to digital tools and larger markets.

Uha Sajja, Associate Director at WE-Hub, and Dr Tafeem Siddiqui, Head of Public Policy at Flipkart Group, led the session. The workshop focused on teaching key e-commerce skills like product listing, pricing strategies, and using Flipkart's platform effectively.



Women entrepreneurs from across Telangana at the WE-Hub special workshop in Hyderabad on Friday

Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Flipkart Group, Rajneesh Kumar said, "At Flipkart, we believe in inclusive entrepreneurship and the role of technology in enabling it. Through our partnership with WE-Hub, we aim to provide digital access and knowledge to women entrepreneurs." He noted that this workshop offered practical training on product listing, pricing, and using platform tools. The strong participation from the WE-Hub community shows the importance of such programmes.

Hyd Startup's AI tool to help business identify specific customer segment

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■ HYDERABAD



Varun Kashyap

Hyderabad-based startup Zithara.AI is transforming how offline retail businesses understand, connect with, and retain their customers. This country's first AI-based retail tech startup uses artificial intelligence (AI) to simplify complex online and offline data, helping businesses identify specific customer segments for high-impact, targeted marketing.

The tool works by integrating data from physical stores, websites, Meta (Facebook and Instagram) ads, Google Ads, Enterprise resource planning (ERP system), and Below the line (BTL) campaigns. This helps businesses create personalised and effective interactions at every stage of the customer journey.

When asked, Co-founder and CEO Varun Kashyap shared that Zithara.AI began in 2023 with a simple goal of solving small issues related to UPI payments. Over time, they expanded to address bigger challenges like integrating social media and Customer Relationship Management systems (CRM) for retailers. "We focused on making complex tools simple and easy for small teams to use," he said. "Retailers start seeing the value almost immediately after using our platform."

Varun added that their AI helps solve 20–30 per cent of retail issues related to customer engagement, acquisition, and monetization. "Our vision is to empower retail staff using AI, not replace them.

In retail, 97 per cent of data is not centralised, especially outside of modern retail chains. Our aim is to first centralize the data, then use AI to make it useful and actionable."

He noted that about 20 per cent of their customers are from Hyderabad, while the remaining 80 per cent are from other parts of India and abroad. Zithara.AI is supported by We-Hub and mentored by T-Hub. As a homegrown startup, Varun said they are especially focused on supporting Hyderabad's retail community.

The startup is a technology partner with Meta, Google, WhatsApp Business, and other platforms, and is exploring tie-ups with telecom operators and retail associations.

HMWSSB MD Inspects emergency repairs to damaged water pipeline at Chintal Basti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) Managing Director Ashok Reddy on Friday conducted a surprise inspection at Chintal Basti, where emergency repair works were underway on a damaged 300 mm diameter main water pipeline. The MD reviewed the progress with officials on-site and directed that restoration of water supply be completed swiftly to avoid inconvenience to residents.



HMWSSB) Managing Director Ashok Reddy inspecting repair work of damaged pipeline at Chintal Basti on Friday

The pipeline, which supplies drinking water from the Banjara Hills sump outlet to Masab Tank and A.C. Guards, was damaged on Thursday evening during encroachment removal works along the Hydra Nala. Responding immediately, HMWSSB officials took up repair works on a war footing and completed them by 2 pm on Friday, restoring full water supply to the affected areas.

Ashok Reddy also instructed that proper reinforcement arrangements be made for the newly laid pipeline to ensure durability and uninterrupted service. "Efforts must be made to strengthen the infrastructure while avoiding disruption during future operations," he said.

Water supply has since resumed normally in A.C. Guards, Chintal Basti, Masab Tank, and nearby localities.

Two Nigerians among five arrested for pedalling drugs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a major crackdown on narcotics distribution, the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TGANB), in coordination with Golconda Police, arrested five drug peddlers—two Nigerian nationals and three Indians—on June 13 in Shaikpet, Hyderabad. The joint operation led to the seizure of 20 grams of cocaine, 45 grams of MDMA, 20 grams of ecstasy pills, Rs. 40,000 in cash, and six mobile phones.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Okoro Cosmos Ramsey and Chimezie Boniface Adikea from Nigeria, and Veerapalli Lakshmipathi, Romi Bharat Kalyani, and Abdul Jafar Khan from various parts of India. All five have prior records under the NDPS Act and reportedly became acquainted while lodged in Chanchalguda jail, from where they began coordinating their drug trade after release.



Alleged peddlers

According to officials, the gang operated out of a rented house in Vinayak Nagar, Shaikpet. Cosmos and Chimezie, who were sourcing drugs from a supplier named James in Mumbai, acted as primary distributors, while Lakshmipathi coordinated procurement across Goa, Bangalore, and Hyderabad. He frequently contacted a network of peddlers—including Romi, Zafar Khan, and others—to source MDMA, cocaine, and OG weed.

On June 13, acting on a tip-off, police raided the house while the five accused were in the process of exchanging drugs. Romi had arrived from Bangalore with ecstasy pills, Zafar Khan brought MDMA, and Cosmos delivered cocaine and MDMA to Lakshmipathi. The entire group was apprehended on the spot.

The TGANB revealed that this network supplied narcotics to more than 25 individuals in Hyderabad alone, posing a serious threat to the city's youth. Investigations are ongoing to identify further links and suppliers in the interstate network.

Authorities have appealed to the public to report drug-related information to the Anti-Narcotics Bureau's toll-free number 1908 or via email at tsnabho-hyd@tspolice.gov.in. Officials assured that all tips would be treated confidentially and credible informants would be suitably rewarded.

The operation marks another milestone in Telangana's commitment to a drug-free society, officials said.

Youth in smaller cities display greater respect for elders, reveals HelpAge study

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Youth in non-metro cities demonstrate a stronger sense of respect and proximity to elders compared to their metro counterparts, reveals a new national study by HelpAge India, released ahead of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15.

According to the report titled "India Intergenerational Bonds (INBO)", youth in non-metros scored 65.18 in proximity and respect toward elders, as opposed to 62.52 in metros. HelpAge attributes this difference to the preservation of traditional values and closer community ties in non-urban settings.

"This reflects how lifestyle and value systems impact intergenerational relationships," said Anupama Datta, Policy Research and Advocacy Lead at HelpAge India. "Youth in smaller towns seem to have more meaningful emotional connections with elders, possibly due to shared spaces and stronger cultural bonds."



HelpAge India releasing report at Ravindra Bharathi in Hyderabad on Friday

The study, based on responses from nearly 5,800 individuals across 10 cities, aims to highlight evolving perceptions and emotional gaps between India's youth and ageing population. With 12 percent of India's population now over 60, bridging this divide has become a social necessity.

The analysis reveals that youth associated elders primarily as lonely (56 percent), dependent (48 per cent), but also wise (51 percent) and respected (43 per cent), revealing a blend of empathy and stereotyping.

While 88 per cent of youth-elder interactions happen face-to-face, only 41 percent of elders use smartphones and a mere 5 per cent access online services, highlighting a significant digital divide. Despite 86 per cent of elders feeling valued, many express feeling excluded with remarks like, "We are told the plan, not asked," pointing to a practice-perception gap in family decision-making. A significant 88 per cent of youth expect to live with their families in old age, while 83 per cent of elders either currently do or plan to, highlighting the enduring importance of family-based living in Indian society.

Rohit Prasad, CEO of HelpAge India, remarked, "Are we truly listening to our elders—or simply assuming we are? The real opportunity lies in unlocking intergenerational value where generations co-create a shared vision."

TGPSC chief for creatio- of ce- tralised digital repository of cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC), in collaboration with NALSAR University of Law, successfully concluded a two-day National Workshop on "Legal Issues and Mitigation at Public Service Commissions" on June 13 at the NALSAR campus at Shamirpet here. The event brought together top officials and legal experts from various Public Service Commissions (PSCs) across the country to deliberate on legal complexities and emerging solutions in the realm of recruitment and governance.

The second day of the workshop focused on three critical themes: 'Stakeholders in Litigation and Mitigation Strategies', 'Best Practices and Future Directions', and 'The Role of Technology in Handling Legal Issues'. These sessions witnessed lively and insightful discussions led by an esteemed panel including Shivashankarappa S Sahukar, Chairperson of Karnataka PSC; Santosh Gopal Ajmera, Joint Secretary, UPSC; Surya Prakash BS, Fellow and Programme Director at DAKSH, Bangalore; Dr Udaysinh S. Raorane, Chairperson, Goa PSC; Vishwam Jindal, CEO of Webnyay; Hon'ble Justice Devaraju Nagarjun, Chairperson of the Telangana Electricity Regulatory Commission; and Hasmukh Patel, Chairperson, Gujarat PSC.



TGPSC Chairman Burra Venkatesham speaking at National Workshop in Hyderabad on Friday

Speaking during the proceedings, the Chairman of TGPSC proposed the creation of a centralised digital repository of case laws and legal precedents relevant to all State PSCs. He also recommended the launch of a dedicated legal journal to regularly publish key judgments and legal updates, enabling better legal preparedness and coordination across commissions.

The discussions also addressed the growing importance of digital tools in streamlining legal workflows. Panelists explored the use of AI and blockchain in litigation management, the impact of social media on legal proceedings, and the need for swift grievance redressal systems.

A notable outcome of the workshop was the formulation of a strategic framework titled "Ten Commandments for Mitigation of Court Cases," a first-of-its-kind collaborative legal guideline aimed at helping PSCs across India minimize legal entanglements and improve governance.

The valedictory session was graced by the Governor of Telangana, Jishnu Dev Varma, who commended the TGPSC for spearheading such a meaningful dialogue. In his address, the Governor urged all commissions to uphold constitutional values, focus on merit-based selection, and incorporate empathy and fairness in recruitment.

"This workshop is a reminder that legal excellence and human-centric governance must go hand-in-hand in public service recruitment," the Governor remarked.

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HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

COMBING OPERATION

Security forces target top Maoist leaders from Telugu states

PNS ■ MULUGU / BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

Security forces are increasingly implementing new strategies to cripple the Maoist system. Especially, they are focusing on eliminating top Maoist leaders by bypassing their triple-layer security. Looking at the recent incidents, it appears that most of those killed in special operations so far are Telugu-speaking leaders. Civil rights activists in Telangana are raising serious concerns about this pattern.

There are reports that the Central forces' most-wanted list includes a significant number of Telugu Maoist leaders. In the recent attacks along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border, key leaders including party chief Nambala Keshava Rao and others—who are said to be from Telugu states—were killed. In the most recent encounter at the forests of Indravati Tiger Reserve in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh, two top leaders were eliminated. Central Committee member Tentu Lakshmi Narasimhachalam and Telangana State Committee member Mailarapu Adel alias Bhaskar, both of whom had bounties of Rs 1.25 crore.



Combing operations (file photo) Madvi Hidma

Recent operations show a clear shift in strategy, with security forces now focusing on eliminating high-ranking Maoist leaders. In earlier encounters, the majority of the casualties were lower-cadre Maoists from the Bastar region. Now, intelligence and operations are more focused, highlighting that many top leaders in Bastar are from Telugu-speaking states.

This shift has triggered psychological operations where security forces are questioning locals: "Why risk your lives to protect Telugu leaders?" This has reportedly led some to voluntarily surrender. Security around key leaders appears to be weakening, making them easier targets for security forces.

From the death of top leader Nambala Keshava Rao to the recent killing of Mailarapu Adel alias Bhaskar, it is evident that leaders from Telugu states are being systematically targeted.

Telangana civil rights organisations are raising alarm about the targeting of Maoist leaders from Telugu states and are demanding accountability. They claim that several Telugu-speaking leaders are on the security forces' hit list. They included Mallojula Venugopal Tipparti alias Tirupati, Paka Hanumanth, Kadari Satyanarayana Reddy, Takkellapalli Vasudeva Rao, Chandranna, Bandi Prakash, Ramanna, Papa Rao, Kankanala Rajireddy, Gajula Ravi and Bade Damodar.

These leaders are still active at the highest levels of the Maoist party. Telangana State Committee Secretary Damodar and other key figures like Koyyada Sambayya and Venkatesh are reportedly being closely monitored, with some already in custody.

One of the most wanted Maoist leaders, Hidma alias Akineni, is on the hit list. For the past several days, elite Central security forces have been combing the Karregutta forests to capture him. However, his whereabouts, as well as those of some central leaders, remain unknown, and the search operations continue.


Food safety task force officials showing the rotten vegetables and other food products after conducting a raid on a restaurant in Kamareddy on Friday

Food safety officials flag hygiene violations

Officials said that notice have been issued to restaurants and liquor bars and action would be taken against erring establishments

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Maida infested with insects, expired sauces, mouldy vegetables, reused cooking oil, synthetic food colours, infested goods, and stale pastes stored in outdated refrigerators—these are some of the unhygienic and dangerous items discovered during surprise inspections conducted by Task Force officials at various restaurants in Kamareddy. The issue has now become a hot topic of discussion throughout the district.

Local people are urging authorities to also focus on the rapidly growing number of sweet shops springing up like mushrooms. The current state of many hotels and restaurants reminds people of the saying: "The ripe fruit appears beautiful from outside, but when cut open, it's full of worms inside."

Regardless of whether the establishment is new or old, many are found to be using rotten meat, hazardous chemicals, and spoiled ingredients. Acting on orders from Director Dr Siva Leela, state food safety task force zonal, officers carried out these surprise raids. One such inspection was conducted at a mill on the outskirts of Pochanipet village in Sadashivanagar mandal, where chickpea, finger millet, and sorghum flour were found being processed in highly unhygienic conditions.

Goods worth Rs 28 lakh were seized, and suspicious samples were collected and sent to a laboratory in the capital for testing.

In another raid on a hotel in the outskirts of Kamareddy, officials found stockpiled meat emitting a foul odour. Expired raw materials worth Rs 45,000 were destroyed on the spot.

At a bar and restaurant in Kamareddy, meat worth Rs 17,000, along with 10 kilograms of wheat flour and prawns, were confiscated.

Notices have been issued to those who violated the regulations. Authorities stated that these inspections will be conducted regularly as part of efforts to safeguard public health.

Sand mafia operates with impunity in Suryapet dist

PNS ■ SURYAPET

In Suryapet district, the crackdown on illegal sand transportation in Kodad seems to exist only in name.

The attitude of the officials, who are supposed to prevent it — the revenue and police departments — appear indifferent. Extensive excavation is going on in the Paleru streams flowing through the Khammam and Suryapet districts. Tons of sand are being transported in tractors. It is an open secret that all this is happening right under the nose of local authorities.

Despite complaints, it is surprising that there is no action. Officials are not even visiting the excavation sites or seizing the sand dumps, according to local people.

In the Kodad constituency, the Paleru stream flows through the surrounding areas of villages like Mangal Tanda, Nallabanda Gudem in Kodad mandal, Chanupalli, Palavaram, Krishnapuram in Ananthagiri mandal, and Urlugonda in Mothey mandal.


A tractor waiting to transport sand from a stream in Suryapet district

In these areas, middlemen are allegedly using buckets to load sand onto boats in the stream and then dumping it on the banks, from where it is transported in tractors. Sand heaps can be seen in every village, and people are complaining that there is no one to take action.

It is alleged that even the officials are not bothering to inspect the streams monthly, as they used to. The sand mafia is acting with impunity, reportedly extorting thousands of rupees per tractor load from consumers.

Though authorities claim that sand excavation is not permitted, the lack of any real action raises suspicions. Rumours are rife that the revenue, police, and mining departments are passing the buck to each other and, in effect, indirectly supporting the sand dealers. Local people are demanding strict action against the sand mafia.


CPI MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao speaking at a meeting in Siddipet on Friday

CPI MLA urges Centre to hold talks with Maoists

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

The Central government is ready to hold talks with terrorists, but it is not willing to engage in discussions with Maoists, said Communist Party of India (CPI) state secretary and MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao here on Frday. He accused the Congress government of claiming farm loans waiver of up to Rs 2 lakh.

Speaking at a meeting held to commemorate Siddipet former MLA Edla Guruvareddy's 14th death anniversary, Sambasiva Rao, who was the chief guest of the event, criticised the Central government for willing to talk to terrorists but not to Maoists. He also accused former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) of turning the state into a debt-ridden one by constructing the Kaleshwaram project, rather than using it to bring prosperity.

Sambasiva Rao demanded that the state government fulfil the promises made to the people.

He suggested that the Congress government should not repeat the mistakes made by the BRS government. He also disagreed with KCR's statement regarding the role of engineers in the Kaleshwaram project, stating that it was inappropriate.

Foundation stone laid for Indiramma houses

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Syed Sadiq, former vice chairman of the Shadnagar Market Committee and senior Congress leader, announced that a wave of enthusiasm for the Indiramma Housing Scheme has swept across Telangana since the Congress government came to power.

He highlighted that, with the support of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and MLA Veerlapalli Shankar, people in every village are showing keen interest in constructing homes under this scheme.


Senior Congress leader Syed Sadiq laying foundations stone for Indiramma house at Srirangapuram village in RR district on Friday

On Friday, a foundation-laying ceremony was held for the construction of Indiramma houses in Srirangapuram village, Kondurgu mandal, for beneficiaries including Sandhya, Hazarabegum, Jangamma, Pushpamma, Krishnaiah, Ravi, Jangayya, and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Syed Sadiq emphasised that the state government is implementing housing programmes for the poor, middle-class, low-income, and weaker sections with simple regulations and streamlined procedures.

He noted that the government is ensuring full freedom for beneficiaries to build affordable homes.

Father strangles 4-year-old boy to death

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

In a horrific incident on the outskirts of Pocharam village under Nagireddypet mandal in Kamareddy district, a father brutally murdered his four-year-old son by strangling him and pressing his hand over the child's nose, suffocating him. The heinous act was a result of the father's anger towards his wife, turning him into a monster who killed his own son.

According to the police, Narva Anil, from Polkampet village under Lingampet mandal, married Akshitha, from Pocharam village, five years ago. They had two children: a four-year-old son, Shashank, and a seven-month-old daughter.

There, Shashank reportedly pushed Anil's sister's daughter down the stairs, leading to an argument between the two families. Anil took his son and went to the outskirts of the village, where he covered the child's mouth and nose, killing him. He then brought the child back home.

Khammam City will emerge as model for development: Tummala

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Khammam will be developed as a model in development works, said Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao.

On Friday, the Minister visited Raghunathapalem mandal, where he laid the foundation stones and inaugurated road and drainage construction works.

He stated that even nature is cooperating with good governance, with abundant rainfall encouraging farmers to begin paddy transplantation. He mentioned that Rythu Bharosa funds are being credited into farmers' bank accounts even before transplantation begins.


Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao performing *aksharabhyasam* to a child in Khammam on Friday

He observed that roads in villages are narrow and could cause inconvenience in the future. He urged villagers to discuss and cooperate for road expansion, promising to lay double-lane roads if people agree.

He emphasised the importance of maintaining village cleanliness to prevent diseases, saying that healthy surroundings save families from financial burdens and ensure children's education and overall well-being.

Later, the Minister distributed ration cards to beneficiaries and handed over textbooks and school uniforms to students of Koyachalka Zilla Parishad High School. He also initiated the *aksharabhyasam* (initiate child into formal education) for young children.

Minister Vakati Srihari felicitated

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Former MLA Chowlapalli Pratap Reddy felicitated Minister Vakiti Srihari at the Minister's quarters in Hyderabad on Friday. In a courteous meeting, Pratap Reddy presented a bouquet of flowers to honour the minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Pratap Reddy noted that Vakiti Srihari, the MLA from Makthal, recently took oath as a member of the State Cabinet.


Nagarkurnool Collector Badavath Santosh interacting with Indira Solar Giri Water Development scheme beneficiaries in Nagarkurnool on Friday

Horticulture farmers to be given special training

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

District Collector Badavath Santosh has announced that special training will be provided to farmers at the state-level Horticultural Research Training Centres under the Nallamalla Indira Solar Giri Water Development scheme.

The tribal farmers of Nallamalla were encouraged by the Collector to become state-level trainers under the Indira Solar Giri Water Development programme.

The Collector emphasised that after receiving complete training on horticultural crops, their services would be utilised across the state.

In May, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inaugurated the Indira Solar Giri Development pilot project in Nagarkurnool District.

The project aims to provide horticultural plant saplings to beneficiaries and tribal farmers from Nallamalla would be given special training at the state-level Horticultural Research Centres.

After the training, these farmers would be able to share their knowledge and skills with others throughout the state, the Collector said.

On Friday, the Collector interacted with beneficiaries at the District Collectorate.

He informed them that they would receive comprehensive training.

The government's main goal is to increase the income of tribal farmers, and new types of fruit orchards are being introduced on barren lands.

The Collector emphasised the importance of utilising the advice of horticultural scientists at these centres to ensure the success of various fruit crops in the region.

District Horticultural Officer Venkatesham and others were present at the event.

Officials told to take measures to prevent seasonal diseases

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Warangal District Collector Satya Sharada stated that precautionary measures must be taken in advance to prevent the spread of seasonal diseases such as dengue, malaria, and typhoid during the monsoon season in the district.

On Friday, an awareness programme was conducted through a PPT at the meeting hall at the Collectorate on the steps to be taken for the control of seasonal diseases during the rainy season.

On the occasion, the Collector said that preventive measures should be taken and preparedness ensured to curb the spread of seasonal diseases during the monsoon. She emphasised that in every village and every municipal ward across the district, areas of water stagnation should be identified, and steps should be taken to prevent waterlogging. She instructed officials to map and monitor water storage points within households and take immediate action to eliminate stagnant water.


Warangal Collector Satya Sharada holding a review meeting in Warangal on Friday

She called for the observation of "Dry Day" programmes every Tuesday and Friday to raise public awareness. Oil balls and Gambusia fish should be introduced at water logging points. She emphasised the need to pay special attention to low-lying areas in the district and to take precautions to prevent excess water accumulation. Health staff should visit households to assess the health conditions of residents, giving special attention to children and people above 60 years of age, collecting blood samples from suspected cases and sending them for testing. The Collector suggested that all Primary Health Centres in the district should be equipped with dengue rapid test kits and the necessary medicines. Additional Collector Sandhya Rani, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Sambasiva Rao, DRDO Kausalya Devi, ZP CEO Ramireddy, District Malaria Officer Rajini, DBCDO Pushpalata, district officials from the respective departments, municipal commissioners, medical officers, staff, and others participated in this meeting.

HYDERABAD DISASTER RESPONSE AND ASSET PROTECTION AGENCY

Department: MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT-TELANGANA COMMISSIONER HYDRAA.

Tender Notice No.: **08/COMM/HYDRAA/2025-26. Dt: 13-06-2025.**

Name of Work: Procurement of Rescue Equipment, Tools & PPE for Monsoon Emergency Season 2025 by the O/o Commissioner, HYDRAA.

Bid details: Bid Submission Start Date & Time: **13.06.2025 at 5:00 PM**

Bid Submission Closing Date & Time: **18-06-2025 at 4.00 PM**

Opening of Technical Evaluation: **18-06-2025 at 4.30 PM**

Opening of Price/Financial Bid: **18-06-2025 at 5:00 PM**

Details are available on **www.eprocurement.telangana.gov.in**, Contact Person: MTO, HYDRAA, TG, SEC-BAD, Mobile No.-91-8712407122

Sd/- COMMISSIONER,

DIPR R.O.No: 3895-PR/CL&EWT/1/2025-26, Date: 13-06-2025 HYDRAA SEC BAD, TELANGANA

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

EOI CUM BID NOTICE

EoI cum Bid Notice NIT.No.01/EE/Cir-03/GHMC/2025-26/69, Dt.12-06-2025, publishing of (2) works of **"Construction of SWD RCC Box drains"** The details of events is detailed below:

1) **Name of Works:** a) Construction of SWD RCC Box drain from Musi to Nagole x roads via WLP Agarwal granites in Ward No.11 Nagole of Hayath Nagar Circle-3 GHMC. **Estimate Cost: 440.00 Lakhs.**
b) Construction of SWD RCC Box drain from Nagole x roads to WLP Adarsh nagar, Road no.1 in Ward No.11 Nagole of HayathNagar Circle-3 GHMC. **Estimate Cost: 275.00 Lakhs.**

2) Submission of Proposals through Box tender: **17-06-2025 from 11.00 AM onwards**

3) Bid Due date/Bid Submission date: **19.06-2025 at 11.00 AM**

4) Address for communication & submission of Bid: O/o. the Executive Engineer, Hayathnagar Circle-3, #11-6-1, Near MRO Office, Venkateshwara Colony, Saroornagar, Hyderabad.

5) Date & Time for opening of Technical Bid (Eligibility & Qualification Criteria): **19-06-2025 at 3.00 PM**

6) Date & Time of opening of Financial Bid: **19-06-2025 at 4.00 PM**

7) Bid Security (Refundable): Rs.20,000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousand only) for Each work in the form of demand draft drawn in favor of the "Commissioner, GHMC payable at Hyderabad and drawn on any scheduled bank.

Address of concerned officer: Sri Ramesh Babu.K, Executive Engineer, Hayathnagar Circle-3, GHMC, Hyderabad.

Sd/- Executive Engineer

DIPR R.O.No: 3893-PR/CL&EWT/1/2025-26, Dt. 13-06-2025 Hayath Nagar Circle-3, GHMC

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
PUBLIC HEALTH & MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

QUOTATION TENDER NOTICE Dt: 12.06.2025

Tender N. No.EE/PH/KMM/W.S/O&M/ELSR/2025-26/ Date: 12-06-2025

Name of Work: 1) Operation & Maintenance of ELSRs (11 Nos of 12000 KL) Pumping Mains, Feeder Mains and Distribution lines including arresting of leakages in Pipe lines and Restoration of Damaged Roads in water Supply in 01 to 20 Divisions for period of 04 months (ECV Rs.42.13 Lakhs). 2) Operation & Maintenance of ELSRs (09 Nos of 7800 KL) Pumping Mains, Feeder Mains and Distribution lines including arresting of leakages in Pipe Lines and Restoration of Damaged Roads in water Supply in 21 to 40 Divisions for period of 04 months (ECV Rs.37.73 Lakhs). 3) Operation & Maintenance of ELSRs (12 Nos of 9510 KL) Pumping Mains, Feeder Mains and Distribution lines including arresting of leakages in Pipe lines and Restoration of Damaged Roads in water Supply in 41 to 60 Divisions for period of 04 months (ECV Rs.41.70 Lakhs). 4) Operation & Maintenance of Water Supply system including mechanical and electrical repair works at Damaigudem and Lakaram Filter Beds for a period of 04 Months in Khammam Municipal corporation (ECV Rs.44.16 Lakhs).

2) Date of Bid Submission Starting: **Dt: 16-06-2025 from 10.30 A.M**

3) Last date/time for receipt: **Dt: 24-06-2025 up to 11.00 A.M**

4) Date of Opening: **Dt: 24-06-2025 at 11.30 AM**

5) **Name and address of the EE Concerned:** Sri V. Ranjith, Executive Engineer, Public Health Division, Khammam, Further details can be contact Assistant Engineer, Public Health Division Khammam.

Sd/- Executive Engineer

DIPR R.O.No: 3891-PR/CL&EWT/1/2025-26, Dt. 13-06-2025 Public Health Division, Khammam.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

ACROSS THE STATES



ASSAM LOGS 7 NEW COVID CASES, NO RECOVERY SO FAR

Seven people tested positive for COVID in Assam over the last 24 hours, official data released on Friday said. According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website, there are 20 active cases in the northeastern State, of which seven were detected since Thursday. Since January, 13 people recovered from the virus in the state, it added. There are 7,131 active Covid cases in India, and one more death has been reported in the last 24 hours, the Ministry said. Official sources have maintained that most cases are mild and managed under home care.



HOME GUARD FOUND DEAD ON POLICE OUTPOST'S ROOF

A 40-year-old home guard was found dead on the roof of Pondiri Police Outpost in Uttar Pradesh's Etah district on Friday, police said. Sarvendra Pal Singh was alone on duty at the outpost under Awagarh police station in the early hours of the day, they said. His body was found lying in a pool of blood on the roof of the police outpost, the police said, adding that an illegal firearm was recovered near the body. Superintendent of Police Yogendra Kumar said that Singh was experiencing some family-related stress. However, all angles are being probed. "Call record details are being looked into to ascertain who he was in contact with at the time of the incident," he said. The body has been sent for post-mortem.



THREE HELD FOR FIRING OUTSIDE SHOP IN DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested two men and apprehended a juvenile for allegedly firing outside a shop in Mustafabad area here over an old enmity, an official on Friday said. The incident occurred at 8.30 pm on Wednesday when an unidentified person fired two rounds at a shop and fled, he said. The shop owner, identified as Shakir (27), informed the police that shots were fired by an unknown person outside his shop. "Based on his complaint, an FIR was registered at Dayalpur Police Station and a probe was launched. The police checked the CCTV footage to identify the accused," said the officer. The arrested have been identified as Anas (21), Jeeshan (21) and a 17-year-old juvenile was also apprehended, he added. The officer further said the preliminary investigation revealed that the complainant and the accused were familiar with each other and had a history of altercations. The motive for the firing was traced to an old enmity involving the complainant's younger brother Sarik and the accused, triggered by a dispute over a social media post. Further investigation is underway, he added.

DGCA orders enhanced inspection of AI Boeing fleet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation watchdog DGCA on Friday ordered enhanced safety inspection of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner fleet, a day after 241 people onboard died in the plane crash in Ahmedabad.

There are 26 Boeing 787-8s and 7 Boeing 787-9s in the fleet of Air India owned by Tata Group.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed Air India to carry out additional maintenance actions on its Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 planes that are equipped with Genx engines with immediate effect.

These actions will be carried out in coordination with the DGCA regional offices concerned.

Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft, operating a flight from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, crashed soon after take-off on Thursday afternoon. Out of the 242 people, who were on board the plane, only one person survived.



RISING FROM WRECKAGE

Saw people dying in front of my eyes: Miracle survivor

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD



Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, the sole survivor of the Air India flight which crashed into a hostel building in Ahmedabad, said on Friday he managed to come out alive because the part of the plane where he was seated was close to the ground unlike other passengers and crew.

Talking to reporters a day after the air disaster, Ramesh, originally a native of coastal town of Diu adjoining Gujarat, said his seat, 11A, was close to an emergency door on the left side of the ill-fated plane, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

"Luckily, the portion of the plane where I was seated fell on the ground floor of the hostel premises after the plane crash landed. When I saw that the door of the plane was broken, I told myself 'I can try and get out'. Eventually, I came out of the plane" Ramesh, a British citizen, maintained.

He is currently being treated at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi met him in the morning during his visit to the city.

"I believe that others could not escape because there was a wall on that side (of the hostel) while there was a small gap where I was sitting. I still can't believe how I survived the crash because I saw people dying in front of my eyes," he said.

A resident of Leicester, a city approximately 140 km north-northwest of London, Ramesh escaped with injuries for which he is undergoing treatment.

"Though I managed to escape, my left hand got burnt as the plane caught fire after the crash. I walked out of the aircraft and then an ambulance brought me to hospital. I am getting proper treatment here," he said.

In a viral video shot by a local resident immediately after the crash, Ramesh can be seen walking towards the ambulance after getting hurt in the crash.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner (AI 171), with 242 people on board, including former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, crashed into a medical college complex in Meghaninagar moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Thursday afternoon.

Couple in AI crash were off to London for summer vacation

PNS ■ AGRA

Neeraj Lavania and his wife Aparna were among the 241 souls onboard flight AI-171 from Ahmedabad to London who died when the plane crashed shortly after takeoff on June 12. The couple shared a passion for travelling and were known to take frequent sojourns during the summer. And this year, their chosen destination was London.

Neeraj (50) and Aparna (49) are survived by their 18-year-old daughter, who might have joined them on the trip, however, stayed back to accompany her 70-year-old grandmother, who lives alone.

The teenager, who is in her final year of university, has since travelled to Ahmedabad for DNA sampling.

Neeraj, who worked for a private company, moved to Vadodara, Gujarat from his ancestral home in Akola, Agra in 1995.

Known for his jovial and kind nature, Neeraj left a lasting impression on his neighbours in Akola, which is why the news of his passing devastated the entire town, even though many had not seen him in years.

Speaking to PTI, Neeraj's brother Satish recalled his last conversation with his brother before he took off on his much-awaited vacation.

"I spoke to my brother Neeraj at 1.30 pm and he told me that he was going to London," Satish said, adding how he was left rattled when he saw the news of the plane crash flashing on TV screens.

The 12-year-old Boeing 787-8 aircraft departed from Ahmedabad at 1.38 pm.

Neeraj and Aparna were scheduled to return home on June 28.

Lok Sabha MP from Fatehpur Sikri, Rajkumar Chahar, spoke to PTI after visiting Akola, Neeraj's hometown.

"Neeraj and his wife, Aparna, were on the flight. Their seats were 26A and 26B," he stated.

UNENDING SEARCH

My mother, daughter were in hostel mess at time of crash: Distraught man

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Twenty-four hours after one of aviation's worst disasters, Ravi Thakor was a picture of agony and pain as he went about trying to trace his mother and toddler daughter, who were at the BJ Medical College hostel mess into which Air India's Ahmedabad-London flight crashed minutes after take off, killing all but one on board.

At least 265 people were killed on Thursday when a London-bound Air India plane carrying 242 passengers and crew crashed after taking off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. While 241 persons who died were passengers, other fatalities were on the ground.



"My mother, wife and I work at the BJ Medical College mess. Junior doctors come here to have their lunch, while food for senior doctors is packed and taken to the civil hospital as part of a tiffin service. At 1am on Thursday, we packed food and went to the hospital, while my mother and my daughter were in the mess," a distraught Thakor told reporters.

Since he, his father and wife are out as part of the tiffin service, the toddler is left with the grandmother while she prepares food at the mess, Thakor said on Friday.

"At the time of the crash, my mother Sarla and daughter Aadya were in the mess. It has been 24 hours but I have not got any clue about what has happened to them. I have gone through the lists provided by authorities and have searched for them in civil and private hospitals all through the night," he said, his pain at "unresponsive" authorities evident.

"All the missing students have been located and bodies identified. Only my mother and daughter are untraceable. The guards in the mess are not letting anyone in. I think my mother and daughter may have gone to the ground floor using the stairs. All we want authorities to do is allow us to look around for our satisfaction," Thakor pleaded.

Among those who were killed on the ground were four MBBS students and a doctor's wife, while several students bore the impact of aircraft parts smashing into the dining hall of the multi-storey hostel building during lunch hours, police had earlier said.

A cook who identified herself as Meena Mistry said she and others were making rotis at the time of the crash.

Rlys to deploy drone in freight trains to monitor loading

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railway Ministry has asked three zones to procure drones on contractual basis for a pilot project to monitor and detect uneven loading in freight trains at various terminals.

According to experts, uneven loading has been one of the major causes of freight train derailment and the ministry wants to deploy drone technology to leverage its benefits in ensuring safety of train operations.



Flight atte- da- t Rosh- i's weddi- g pla- s shattered

PNS ■ THANE

Flight attendant Roshni Songhare was about to add a new chapter in her life as she was set to tie the knot with a merchant navy officer next year, and her excited family members had started making preparations for it.

But all that excitement turned into despair after the news of the London-bound Air India flight crashing in Ahmedabad on Thursday afternoon broke. Roshni, 26, was one of the crew members on board that flight.

This development plunged the Songhare family living on Rajaji Path in Dombivli town of Maharashtra's Thane district into numbing silence.

Roshni had left her home three days ago for duty excited, as always, to serve on international flights - this time from Ahmedabad to London. But the fatal crash of the aircraft snuffed out her dreams and left her family members - 50-year-old father Rajendra, mother Shobha and younger brother Vignesh completely shattered.

"She was the heartbeat of this home. We were getting her engaged in November and married in March," a close relative told reporters in a trembling voice.

"Time played cruelly with her," he said.

A native of Mandangad in coastal Ratnagiri district, the Songhare family had moved to Mumbai for work and shifted to Dombivli two years ago.

Roshni, a bright and determined girl, was the family's pride and pillar. Her father worked tirelessly to educate both his children, and Roshni, inspired by the skies, pursued and completed a flight attendant course. She began her career with SpiceJet and later joined Air India, where she opted for international assignments relishing every airborne mile, her family members said.

"She was so happy to be flying again. We were all looking forward to her wedding. Everything was going right," said her uncle Praveen Sukhdere, who has rushed Dombivli to be with the grieving family.

After the news about the plane crash flashed, the family members immediately tried to contact her. But when there was no response, panic gripped. Her father and brother immediately rushed to Ahmedabad, holding on to hope.

State's duty to ensure safety of prisoners in custody: Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



It is the duty of the State to ensure the safety and well-being of prisoners in its custody and "gangs" are not permitted to proliferate in jails, the Delhi High Court has said while granting compensation to the kin of a person who died in a fight between two groups of inmates in prison.

The high court said the State, owing a duty to ensure the security of the general public, including persons who are incarcerated, has a responsibility to compensate in cases of unnatural deaths in custody.

Justice Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar directed the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLSA) to pay Rs 3 lakh compensation to the kin of deceased Javed, out of which Rs 1 lakh was earlier paid to his mother (now deceased).

"This court is of the firm opinion that it is the bounden duty of the State to ensure the safety of persons who are in its custody.

While the deceased victim may have been a person with criminal antecedents, the State is not absolved of its duty to ensure the safety and well-being of the prisoners in its custody," the high court said in its judgment passed on Thursday.

The court said the fact that two 'rival gangs', according to the contention of the authorities, chose to have an altercation and that the victim participated in it, "would not absolve the authorities of their bounden responsibility" to carry out their duty of ensuring the safety and security of prisoners.

The court was of the view that part of the duties of the State is to ensure that such "gangs" are not permitted to proliferate in jails and certainly to ensure that such gang rivalries are not permitted to come to the fore.

The court said the fact that such an altercation took place and two "rival gangs" had access to weapons or tools, by which they have been able to cause injuries to each other, leading to the death of Javed, speaks highly of the manner in which the jail authorities have dispensed their duties.

The petition seeking compensation was initially filed by Javed's mother who said he had served seven-year imprisonment in a criminal case and was to come out from jail on May 5, 2013.

British Indians mourn lives lost in AI plane crash

PNS ■ LONDON



Britain's Indian community was understandably shaken by the tragic loss of lives in the London-bound Air India plane crash, with temples around the UK on Friday witnessing impromptu prayers and vigils in memory of the victims.

The Ahmedabad-Gatwick flight route is a popular one for the diaspora with families in both countries, especially Britain's estimated 600,000-strong Gujarati community.

The National Council of Gujarati Organisations UK (NCGO-UK) described it as a "dark and tragic day" for the community as it has been coordinating plans for a vigil in memory of the lives lost.

"This is a dark and tragic day for our community. Our heartfelt thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and all those affected by this heartbreaking incident. The Gujarati and wider Indian communities across the United Kingdom and around the world are united in grief over this unimaginable loss," noted the NCGO-UK.

The family of Vishwash Kumar Ramesh in Leicester expressed their relief at his miraculous escape as the sole survivor of the crash, while still in anguish at his missing brother Ajay.

"We were all in shock as soon as we heard what happened, just utter shock; speechless," Nayan Kumar Ramesh told the BBC.

"He [Vishwash] himself has no idea how he survived, how he got out of the plane.

Two days after marriage, woman dies in plane crash

PNS ■ VODADARA

Bhavik Maheshwari (26) had a simple court marriage in the city two days ago as he had to leave for London where he worked, and his parents had planned a more elaborate function when he returned next.

It was not to be, as the Air India flight carrying him and 241 other passengers and crew crashed soon after take-off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon, killing all but one. The newly-wed Bhavik was one of the victims.

Bhavik's father Arjun Maheshwari fought back his tears as he spoke to media persons a day after the tragedy.

When his son came to Vadodara two weeks ago on vacation, the family decided to get him married, he said.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

Editor's TAKE

Digital revolution: A giant leap forward

The digital wave must carry every citizen forward, empowering them with tools, access and opportunities

Over the past 11 years, India has undergone a sweeping digital transformation that has redefined governance, empowered citizens, and reimagined the nation's developmental trajectory. Spearheaded by visionary leadership and powered by a blend of political will, technological innovation, and mass participation, India's digital revolution has moved beyond urban confines to touch the remotest corners of the country, bridging the once-formidable digital divide. Union Minister and BJP President JP Nadda recently remarked that this transformation has not only connected millions of people but also ensured that technology reaches every citizen.

Today, governance is more transparent and efficient than ever before. Real-time dashboards, data integration, and digital infrastructure have brought a level of accountability and speed to welfare delivery that was previously unimaginable. Major Government schemes like DigiLocker, CoWIN, Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, U-WIN, and e-Sanjeevani have become lifelines for millions, particularly in rural and underserved areas. These platforms are not merely digital tools — they represent access, empowerment, and dignity for the common citizen.

One of the most celebrated facets of this revolution is the rise of digital payments through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). The Government is actively investing in future-ready domains like artificial intelligence (AI). Plans are underway to set up three AI Centres of Excellence in top educational institutions, and several indigenous AI models — such as BharatGen, Sarvam-1, Chitralekha, and Hanooman's Everest 1.0 — are being developed to place India at the forefront of the global AI race. The digital revolution has also brought connectivity to the grassroots. With more than 94 crore broadband connections, India is among the most connected nations on the planet. Under the BharatNet project, over 2.18 lakh Gram Panchayats have been linked with high-speed internet, and more than 6.9 lakh km of optical fibre has been laid across the country. India also offers the world's cheapest mobile data, further enabling digital inclusion at scale. However, the road to a truly digital India is not without its challenges.

Despite the vast spread of digital infrastructure, a significant portion of the population still struggles with digital literacy. Many people, especially in rural areas and among vulnerable groups, lack the skills to use digital platforms effectively. This gap in digital understanding threatens to limit the benefits of technological progress. Additionally, the rapid growth of digital activity raises serious concerns about cybersecurity and data privacy.

As digital transactions and data usage rise, there is a pressing need for strong legal frameworks, robust cyber defences, and widespread public awareness to ensure safety and trust in the digital ecosystem. Infrastructure gaps also persist in certain remote and geographically difficult regions, where inconsistent power supply and connectivity remain major hurdles. The challenge now lies in making digital pushy more inclusive, secure, and equitable. As India marches toward its vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, the digital wave must carry every citizen forward, empowering them with tools, access, and opportunities.

PIC TALK



White Tiger Bheem and Bengal Tiger Skandi play at the Nahargarh Biological Park, in Jaipur. PTI

From Nobel Laureate to National Liability

Muhammad Yunus, once hailed as a visionary economist and social reformer, now accused of steering Bangladesh into deeper division and decay through a caretaker regime defined more by personal retribution than national stewardship



This week's attack on Rabindranath Tagore's ancestral home in Sirajganj is no mere incident but a stark symptom of Bangladesh's deterioration. Once a cultural sanctuary, it now lies desecrated by mob violence over a trivial dispute — reflecting a nation fraying under extremism, institutional decay, and political chaos.

The state's feeble response exposes its waning control, while the turmoil mirrors the catastrophic misjudgements of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus's fractured stewardship. Once revered worldwide as the architect of microfinance and a Nobel laureate whose work redefined social entrepreneurship, Muhammad Yunus's trajectory into Bangladesh's political arena has proved paradoxically corrosive. His appointment as the head of the caretaker Government, intended to ensure impartiality and a smooth transition, has instead become synonymous with deepening partisan rancour and administrative shortsightedness. Yunus's virulent antipathy towards the Awami League, and particularly its leader Sheikh Hasina — scion of the revered Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — has become the defining characteristic of his Governance. It is widely known that Sheikh Hasina once sought to imprison Yunus on charges of financial irregularities, charges that Yunus has deftly manipulated to foment public dissent against her and to galvanise efforts not merely to dislodge her from power but to systematically excise her family's enduring imprint on Bangladesh's national consciousness. This vendetta is no more visible than in the excision of Bangabandhu's visage from the nation's currency notes.

Since 1971, the Father of the Nation's image has been etched onto the Taka, an emblematic tribute to the liberation struggle and a unifying symbol of identity. The Yunus administration's replacement of this enduring iconography with cultural landmarks, framed under the pretext of "depoliticising" currency, reveals itself as an act less of sober governance than of emotional retribution. To excise the very face that personifies Bangladesh's birth is to leave the country from its roots, a symbolic mutilation that threatens to fracture collective memory.

Yunus's rhetoric has further inflamed divisions. In a contentious address at London's Chatham House, he openly questioned the legitimacy of the Awami League. His inflammatory statements do not merely delegitimise a political party; they alienate millions of citizens who have invested their faith in the Awami League over decades. This polarising discourse deepens the fissures within an already fragile polity, fostering discord where unity is desperately needed. Compounding these political fissures is the dire economic reality confronting Bangladesh under Yunus's leadership. At the same Chatham House forum, Yunus lamented that the economy had not simply stalled but regressed beneath zero, burdened by "immense debt pressure" and foreign reserves "at the bottom — because they're empty." The banking sector, he revealed, has "completely collapsed," the victim of "rampant corruption, bribery and money laundering" allegedly perpetrated during the previous Government's tenure.

The revelation that billions — estimated at $234 billion — have been siphoned off via illicit channels paints a grim picture of systemic plunder, one that threatens to choke any prospects of recovery. However, the indictment of the past also illuminates the present conundrum: the interim Government itself inherited and perpetuated systemic rot. The wholesale replacement of bank boards with cronies issuing loans as "gifts" compounds institutional dysfunction. The challenge of rehabilitating a banking sector crippled by nepotism, impunity, and political interference looms large, a task made all the more formidable by ongoing factional infighting and a deteriorating governance framework.



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

Globally, Yunus's stature has suffered a perceptible decline. Despite proclamations of "enormous support" from the IMF and foreign Governments, reality paints a more sobering tableau. Notably, the UK Prime Minister reportedly declined to meet Yunus during a recent diplomatic mission, a pointed gesture of diplomatic coolness that exposes his precarious standing on the world stage. This tacit rebuff marks a sharp contrast to his previous global acclaim, highlighting how domestic political entanglements and perceived instability have diminished his credibility. The interim Government's revisionist approach to history and national symbolism has only served to alienate broad swathes of the population. The rewriting of textbooks, removal of Sheikh Mujib's statues from public spaces, and suspension of Awami League activities are widely perceived not as reforms but as punitive purges. This behaviour reeks of sectarianism disguised as statesmanship — a profound breach of the mature leadership Bangladesh urgently needs. Responses from emergent political entities, such as the National Citizen Party, articulate the widespread scepticism gripping the political milieu. While tentatively welcoming the prospect of elections in the first half of next year, the NCP conditions its support on the implementation of the July Charter and Declaration, alongside comprehensive institutional reforms.

Their insistence on restructuring the Election Commission and prioritising local elections signals a demand for foundational renewal before any credible national vote can transpire. This cautious posture encapsulates the broader anxieties of a civil society wary of being entrapped in another cycle of compromised democracy. The quest to recover stolen assets in countries riddled with entrenched patronage systems is widely acknowledged as Sisyphean. Extensive research by governance watchdogs like Transparency International and the World Bank elucidates that such endeavours demand not only domestic resolve but also robust international cooperation, forensic accounting expertise, and a judiciary capable of withstanding political pressure. Bangladesh's current fissures and institutional weaknesses severely constrain such ambitions, casting doubt on the feasibility of Yunus's promises to repatriate illicit capital without a concerted, unified national effort. Yunus's tenure illustrates the peril inherent when a fragile democracy is entrusted to a leadership that substitutes vindictiveness for statesmanship — rewriting history not to enlighten but to erase. The rise and precipitous fall of Muhammad Yunus as Bangladesh's political architect serve as a sobering admonition of the consequences wrought when personal animus supplants public duty.

His relentless pursuit of political objectives, seemingly intertwined with an abiding enmity towards the Awami League and its storied legacy, has not only imperilled his standing but threatens to thrust the nation further into fragmentation and despair. The symbolic purging of Bangabandhu from the currency and public memory is more than mere iconoclasm; it is an affront to the nation's very soul. Consequently, the future of a 'New Bangladesh' hangs precariously in the balance, burdened by economic stagnation, vindictive politics, and a rising tide of extremism. Without a fundamental shift towards inclusive governance, respect for historical legacy, and robust institutional reform, Bangladesh risks becoming a cautionary case study in the devastating aftermath of regime-change projects orchestrated by warmongering Western democracies — nations devoid of conscience in their interventions, willing to sacrifice anything for political expediency.

(The writer is a columnist based in Colombo. Views are personal)

Is Chirag Paswa- emergi- g as the BJP's CM Face i- Bihar?

SECOND Opinion

Young, dynamic, and often referred to as the "Hanuman of PM Modi," Chirag Paswan seems poised to emerge as the BJP's potential Chief Ministerial face for Bihar. The BJP currently lacks a compelling CM candidate from within its ranks to present to Bihar's electorate. After the demise of Sushil Modi, it has failed to fill the void. The Bihar Assembly elections, covering 245 constituencies with over 7.64 crore registered voters, are expected to be held by November 2025. As the political climate begins to shift, the BJP appears to be preparing to position Chirag Paswan as a serious contender to lead the state.

Nitish Kumar and BJP's Dilemma

The current Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, popularly known as "Sushasan Babu," has gained a reputation for frequent political realignments. Having shifted alliances between the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the BJP, Nitish's credibility has taken a hit. His past partnerships, especially with Lalu Prasad Yadav's RJD and his son Tejashwi Yadav as Deputy CM, followed by a return to the BJP-led NDA, have created a trust deficit both within the electorate and among his allies. Although the BJP has stuck with Nitish Kumar for pragmatic reasons, the party is known to be uncomfortable with his unpredictable political manoeuvres. With Samrat Chaudhary, a senior BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister, lacking the mass appeal to rival Nitish, the BJP is in urgent need of a charismatic, youth-driven leader who can bridge this gap and Chirag Paswan fits the bill.

Why Chirag Paswan?

Chirag Paswan brings a unique mix of youthful energy, soft-spoken charisma, and a clean image. The son of the late Ram Vilas Paswan, he leads a splinter group of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and has demonstrated unwavering loyalty to Prime Minister Modi. Despite being a Union Cabinet Minister, Chirag is reportedly discontent with his current portfolio — Food Processing Industries, a ministry often considered low in political weight. His preference is clear: to play a larger, more influential role in his home state. According to party insiders, two primary scenarios are under discussion between the BJP high command and Chirag Paswan:



VIVEK AWASTHI

Full Merger into BJP

Chirag merges his party, LJP (Ram Vilas), into the BJP and is officially declared the party's CM candidate for Bihar. This option would likely offer Chirag greater political stability and authority but requires his total integration into the BJP, which some of his party colleagues may resist.

CM face of the alliance

Chirag contests the elections as an NDA ally, projected as the CM face. However, this route is fraught with challenges-primarily the seat-sharing dilemma. As the dominant partner, the BJP would demand a major share of constituencies and ministerial portfolios, potentially limiting Chirag's influence in a future coalition Government.

A Calculated Risk or Strategic Shift?

Chirag's potential elevation to the top post could serve multiple purposes for the BJP. It would allow the party to refresh its leadership in Bihar, address the vacuum created by Nitish Kumar's waning influence, and tap into the Dalit vote bank, a demographic traditionally loyal to his father, Ram Vilas Paswan. While Chirag Paswan has not publicly committed to either path, his growing restlessness within the Union Cabinet and increasing clout in Bihar politics indicate that a shift is imminent. A merger, though complex, might offer him a long-term political future with deeper roots in Bihar's governance. In the 2020 Bihar elections, LJP managed to win just one seat and its nine candidates were placed second. In the last General elections, Chirag Paswan's LJP got five seats. To sum it up, LJP merger with the BJP could mean a win-win situation for both parties as Chirag's candidates would get a fair share of upper caste votes in the name of the BJP and the BJP could benefit from Chirag's vote bank and the legacy of his father, late Ram Vilas Paswan. As the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections draw closer, the question looms large: Will Chirag Paswan become the face of BJP's new Bihar?

(The author is a political analyst. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Air India plane crash

It is deeply shocking that Air India Flight-AI171, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner en route from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, crashed shortly after take-off on June 12, 2025, into the BJ Medical College hostel in Meghani Nagar. Of the 242 people on board, only one British national, seated near the emergency exit, miraculously survived and is now in stable condition.

Tragically, 241 passengers and crew lost their lives, along with at least 28 individuals on the ground, bringing the total fatalities to approximately 269. Among the victims were 169 Indian nationals, 53 Britons, seven Portuguese, and one Canadian. The crash also claimed the lives of several medical students and staff; five medicos were killed and over 60 others injured in the hostel. Rescue teams from NDRF, IAF, BSF, and NSG responded rapidly, and the aircraft's black boxes have been recovered.

Preliminary data indicates the plane reached just over 600 ft before descending and issuing a mayday call, with initial reports citing a possible mechanical issue, such as the landing gear not retracting. The nation mourns this rare but utterly devastating tragedy. With rescue operations completed, a thorough technical investigation is now critical to uncover the root cause and prevent future incidents. International condolences continue to pour in, underlining the global impact of this catastrophe.

DVG SANKARA RAO | VIZIANAGRAM

Mumbai local turning into death line

Apropos news item, "Mumbai's death line: four killed, nine injured", published on June 10, this is my response. The accident that took place in Thane district, Maharashtra, when passengers fell off two overcrowded running local trains, resulting in four dead and several others injured, raises a serious question over the safety standards in Mumbai's suburban railway system, well known as the "lifeline" of the city. Reportedly, several passengers, clinging to the footboards due to lack of space inside, were seen brushing against each other as the trains passed closely. With over 80-lakh daily commuters, Mumbai's suburban train system is arguably the busiest in the world. Yet, overcrowding, outdated infrastructure, and lack of real-time monitoring make it a frequent site of accidents.

Railway experts point out that lack of platform screen doors, dedicated city rail governance, and insufficient rolling stock are core issues behind such recurring tragedies. The incident serves as a grim reminder of the urgent need to modernise Mumbai's railway system, not technologically alone, but structurally and administratively also. This tragic event underscores the critical need for immediate action. Without swift and comprehensive reforms, the "lifeline" risks becoming a constant threat to those who rely on it daily. Ensuring commuter safety must be the absolute top priority.

RANGANATHAN SIVAKUMAR | CHENNAI

Wife poisons husband: Eroding Values

A 33-year-old woman poisoned her husband, kids, and in-laws' food with sleeping pills to hide an extramarital affair. Husband-killing crimes are coming into existence rapidly in India.Women are becoming beasts in domestic life. It is affecting society badly. Society is required to be reformed from such heinous moves, or else it will be a social crisis for prospective generations.It marks a lack of nurturing. Parents must nurture their children in a proper order. They must be aware of domestic responsibilities, affection, and rights to the husband and other members to overcome such dreadful crimes. Life is very limited; it shouldn't be destroyed due to extramarital affairs after tying knots. Parents must ask their children what they want; until they understand their psychology, society will deteriorate in such a way.

A woman poisoning her family to conceal an affair is not just a crime but a reflection of deep societal decay. Such incidents underline the urgent need for emotional education, responsible parenting, and moral grounding. Without reform, unchecked impulses and broken values may lead future generations into a moral and social crisis.This alarming trend necessitates a collective introspection on familial values and marital sanctity. Only through fostering empathy and commitment can society hope to curb these devastating betrayals.

NADEEEM AASIM | MUMBAI

RAFALE FUSELAGE DEAL: A BIG BOOST FOR MAKE-IN-INDIA

In a big boost to Make-in-India, Dassault Aviation of France and India's Tata Advanced Systems Limited will partner for Rafale aircraft fuselage manufacturing at a dedicated facility in Hyderabad. The key structural sections of the aircraft to be manufactured in India include the central fuselage, rear section, lateral rear shells, and the front section.

The first fuselage sections are expected to roll out by FY2028, with a production capacity of up to two complete fuselages per month. Investing in strategic and high-tech manufacture of fuselage parts for Rafale as an offset adjunct is admirable. Such foreign tech deals to build local jobs along with domestic capability need to be replicated across other sectors where advanced R&D is twinned with job creation. There are any number of emerging areas for similar initiatives. Aerospace & Defence Manufacturing, Biotech and Genomics, EVs and Battery Tech, Space Tech & Satellite Systems, AI, Robotics & Quantum Tech, Agri-Tech and Food Engineering are sectors that carry exciting possibilities. In all these, we are equipped with the needed technical and engineering make-up and eager manpower. India can turn strategic spending into a jobs and innovation engine for not only local markets, but global exports.

Outlays on R&D-intensive, job-multiplying sectors like aerospace, biotech, and energy is an investment to future-proofing India's workforce.The Rafale fuselage project in Hyderabad signals India's ascent in high-tech manufacturing. By aligning foreign partnerships with domestic capabilities, India can transform strategic spending into engines of innovation, jobs, and exports. Scaling such initiatives across emerging tech sectors will help secure India's global competitiveness and future-proof its workforce.

R NARAYANAN | MUMBAI

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

Aung San Suu Kyi at 80: Forgotten Behind Bars

Once a global icon of democracy, her plight now draws diminishing international outrage. Yet even as the West looks away, resistance forces in Myanmar are gaining ground. The junta's grip is slipping, but Suu Kyi's life remains in peril as the battle for Myanmar's future intensifies

FIRST Column



On June 19, 2025, Aung San Suu Kyi, will complete 80 years of her life and step into the 81st year. She remains in prison. The last one of her sham trials — all widely condemned the world over — which ended on December 30, 2022, sentenced her to seven years in prison. With this, the total number of years to which she was sentenced came to 33, which was subsequently reduced to 27 years. This suggests that Myanmar's ruling junta, which calls itself State Administration Council, wants her to die in prison.

What is striking in this context is the waning interest of the Western democracies in her incarceration and the struggle for democracy in Myanmar. They, doubtless, continue treat the junta as an outcast and retain the sanctions imposed on it and its leaders. Yet expressions of outrage over her continued imprisonment and the junta's savage military action against civilian populations in the areas controlled by the People's Defence Force (PDF), the armed force of the opposition National Unity Government (NUG), and the ethnic armed organisations (EAOs), which are waging war against it in cooperation with one another, are now fewer and less strident.

This, of course, is a result of the emergence of new issues like the Ukraine war and Israel's action in Gaza which now occupy centre stage in the general global discourse. Nevertheless, this diversion of global attention helps to reduce the pressure on the junta to restore democracy in the country and conduces to making sure that it will be ousted only if, and when, it is defeated in the civil war now raging in Myanmar.

The opposition forces include, besides the PDF, the Three Brotherhood Alliance (henceforth the Alliance) comprising the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), active in the Kokang Special Region of northern Shan State, the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), also active in the Shan State and the Arakan Army (AA), based in the Rakhine State in the country's western part, acting in close cooperation with the PDF and other ethnic armies. They are increasingly gaining the upper hand.



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The Sit-Tat (as Myanmar's army is called), has suffered a series of reverses since the Alliance launched its offensive, codenamed Operation 1027, on October 27, 2023. The AA had brought almost the entire Rakhine State under its control by April, 2024. The MNDAA claimed on July 31, 2024, that it had captured Sit-Tat's military base in Lashio, a city in Shan State close to the border with China, and its airport. This was a major loss for the junta. As Vivek Shankar has pointed out in a piece in The New York Times datelined August 5, 2024, the "city of Lashio and its airport lie on a crucial trade corridor to Yunnan Province in China, which is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a high-speed rail link and other infrastructure projects on both sides of the border."

The opposition forces now control large swathes of territory along Myanmar's borders and mountainous regions; the military retains control over the major cities and lowlands in the central Irrawaddy Valley.

It is losing even the cities and towns. A report (datelined August 13, 2024) by-lined The Irrawaddy, in the website The Irrawaddy, and carried under the headline "Junta Controls Fewer Than 100 of Myanmar's 350 Towns: NUG," cited the latter's defence minister, U Yee Mon, as saying that only 98 of Myanmar's 350 townships remained under the junta's control. According to the report, the NUG's Defence Ministry divided Myanmar's towns into four categories — 75 completely captured by anti-regime groups, 105 surrounded by anti-regime groups; 75 being fought over, and 98 towns remaining under the regime's control.

> THE OPPOSITION FORCES NOW CONTROL LARGE SWATHES OF TERRITORY ALONG MYANMAR'S BORDERS AND MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS; THE MILITARY RETAINS CONTROL OVER THE MAJOR CITIES AND LOWLANDS IN THE CENTRAL IRRAWADDY VALLEY. IT IS LOSING EVEN THE CITIES AND TOWNS

According to an article (datelined June 4, 2025) by Banyar Aung, carried in The Irrawaddy, the ethnic Arakan Army (AA) has notched up major gains since launching its Rakhine offensive in November 2023, seizing control of 14 out of 17 townships in the western state. Of the three townships still under junta control, battles are raging in Sittwe and Kyaukphyu, while Manaung is the only township from where clashes have not been reported.

The AA has also secured the entire stretch bordering India and Bangladesh following its capture of territory along the Naf River including Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Chin State's Paletwa Township. This has led to Bangladesh establishing direct contact with it and India maintaining ties through the Government of Mizoram.

The junta, doubtless, has sought to hit back. In an article (datelined March 19, 2025), appearing under the headline "Mapping the Myanmar Junta's Gains, Losses and Stalemates Since 1027", in The Irrawaddy, Moe Sett Nyen Chan, a military analyst, writes that in 2024, the Sit-Tat, as the junta's army is called, switched to a more dynamic strategy, employing mobile and pro-active defensive tactics and launching counter-offensives across the country, relying heavily on war planes and drones. These tactics, however, have yet to produce meaningful or decisive victories. As stated in the article, the areas reclaimed by the junta collectively account for less than one per cent of the territory, towns, and camps previously seized by resistance forces. Besides, the regained areas remain under constant threat, encircled by resistance forces.

The article further states that the opposition forces have responded by intensifying guerrilla-style operations involving ambushes, the laying of mines, and repeated attacks on the Sit-Tat's positions. They doubtless have to battle numerous odds. The junta, for example, recaptured most of Loikaw Township in 2024 after Karenni resistance forces withdrew, apparently because of ammunition shortage.

The Sit-Tat, however, is facing serious problems of its own, and is staring at almost certain defeat in the long run. Its morale is very low. Internal discord is growing. Several three-star generals have been removed. Many younger officers are unhappy as they recognise that almost the entire country is against them. According to a piece by Ye Myo Hein (datelined May 4, 2023) featured by the United States Institute of Peace, it was found that the Sit-Tat, whose "headcount," showed a "strength of a total 300,000-400,000 before the coup," currently "had a strength of about 150,000 personnel."

Roughly 70,000 are combat soldiers. At least 21,000 service members have been lost through casualties, desertion and defection since the coup. The advantage the Sit-Tat has in its possessions of tanks and armoured vehicles, is, to a great extent, neutralised by the fact that these are very difficult to deploy in the densely-forested mountainous areas, marked by deep gorges and steep climbs, which are the strongholds of the opposition.

It has artillery and air-support. These, however, do not win wars even when supported by heavily-armed trained troops. Otherwise, the United States would have romped to a victory in Vietnam.

It is a matter of time before the junta is ousted. When that happens, it will be a great vindication of the prolonged struggle Aung San Suu Kyi has waged, at great cost to herself, for freedom and democracy in Myanmar. There is, however, a very serous danger that needs to be talked about. It is of the junta getting her murdered in prison and trying to pass it of as death caused by old age-related natural causes.

If this happens, one of the causes will be the junta's belief that the West has lost interest in Myanmar and will do no more than expressing routine condemnation before passing on to subjects considered more pressing.

(The writer is a consulting editor with *The Pioneer*. Views expressed are personal)

From Ede- to Eter- ity: A Fa- 's Fifty-Year Jour- ey with I- dia- Cricket

I still vividly remember the first day of the third Test at Eden Gardens, Calcutta — the moment my lifelong romance with cricket began. It was the winter of 1974, during the India-West Indies Test series. I was just eight years old, a curious boy drawn by the electric buzz of the crowd and the anticipation of something big. The chill in the December air did nothing to dampen the excitement. That morning, unknowingly, I stepped into a world that would accompany me through the next five decades. That game, that series — it wasn't just cricket. It was the spark that lit an eternal flame.

India, under the regal leadership of Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, was down 0-2 in the five-match series. The team had lost in Bangalore and Delhi, and the third Test at Eden Gardens was a must-win. The West Indies, led by the charismatic Clive Lloyd, were a powerhouse brimming with pace and power. India won the toss and batted. What followed was a spirited fightback, and India clinched a memorable win. The stadium was packed — 80,000 fans roared with every stroke and wicket. I can still hear those cheers echoing in my ears.



RAJIV MALHOTRA

The series then moved to Chepauk, Madras — a ground that favours the artistry of spin. There, Gundappa Viswanath played an elegant 97, full of delicate wristwork and clever placements, helping India level the series 2-2. And then came the decider at Bombay's Brabourne Stadium, a historic venue that predates the Wankhede. That was my initiation into the magic of radio commentary, listening to the crackle of Sunil Gavaskar's blade as he took guard.

Though India lost the final Test, and the series 3-2, something even more lasting had been born — my love for cricket. It wasn't just about scores or wins. It became a part of who I was, something woven into the fabric of my being. From that day on, I've followed every Test match, every Indian series — first as a wide-eyed child, then a college student, a public servant, and now a senior officer nearing the end of a long career. Cricket has been my constant. Through this fifty-year journey, five cricketers have symbolised different stages of my life — five icons who inspired, moved, and accompanied me as time unfurled.

Sunil Gavaskar: The Pathbreaker

During my school and college years, Sunil Gavaskar was my north star. Calm, precise, and courageous, he stood up to the might of the West Indies pace battery with nothing but a cap and unshakable technique. No helmets, no flamboyance — just resolve. His debut series in 1971, with 774 runs, announced that India had arrived. When he retired with over 10,000 Test runs and 34 centuries, he left behind not just records, but a legacy.

Gavaskar gave Indian cricket an identity. We called him the "Little Master," but his influence was monumental. His final Test innings — a poetic 96 on a difficult pitch against Pakistan in 1987 — was a masterclass. I was in college, captivated by every stroke. He taught us that we could be world-class, that Indian batsmen could dominate with skill and patience.

Kapil Dev: The Gamechanger

As I entered Jawaharlal Nehru University for my postgraduate studies, Kapil Dev exploded onto the scene. Fast-bowling, hard-hitting, and fiercely proud, he was the antidote to all the clichés about Indian cricketers. Hailing from Haryana, Kapil broke barriers with his athleticism and charisma.

He took 434 Test wickets and scored over 5,000 runs. But what sealed his place in the hearts of millions was that magical summer of 1983 — leading India to their first World Cup win at Lord's. His unbeaten 175 against Zimbabwe remains etched in legend. He was raw courage. Kapil didn't just change matches — he changed mindsets. He told us, through every action, that India could win, anywhere, against anyone.

The God of Cricket

By the time Sachin Tendulkar made his debut in 1989, I had joined the police force. It was a demanding life, but no matter where I was — in a distant district, on night duty, or in a high-pressure post — I found a way to follow Tendulkar. At 16, he took on Pakistan's fearsome bowlers. From then on, he carried our hopes with unmatched consistency.

Tendulkar's career — 100 centuries, 34,000 runs — is astonishing. But even more inspiring was how he carried himself. His Sharjah heroics, his double century in Gwalior, his resilience after the Mumbai attacks — they were more than just cricket. They were moments of collective healing and pride. For me, Sachin was not just a cricketer. He was a life lesson. His poise, discipline, and humility were as instructive as his batting. I remember watching his farewell at Wankhede with moist eyes. It felt like the end of a personal era.

MS Dhoni: The Calm Conqueror

Then came MS Dhoni, just as I had reached the peak of my career. Hailing from Ranchi, he showed that dreams didn't require big cities. With his lightning glove work and icy nerves, he revolutionised Indian cricket.

His leadership was fearless. Under him, India won the inaugural 2007 T20 World Cup, the 2011 ODI World Cup, and the 2013 Champions Trophy — a trifecta never achieved before. That last six at Wankhede in 2011 is a memory etched in national consciousness.

Dhoni was my modern hero — understated, tactical, and unfailingly composed. Even amidst my busiest days, I made time for his matches. His helicopter shot, his late flourishes, his cool behind the stumps — they were moments of joy in an otherwise hectic life. He taught us that silence could be strength, and success could be simple.

Virat Kohli: The Modern Warrior

Virat Kohli came into my life as I took on challenging leadership roles and even represented India in UN missions. In the fast-paced, digital world, cricket became more accessible — but no less meaningful.

Kohli, with his aggression and ambition, brought a new edge to Indian cricket. He led from the front — fit, fierce, and unrelenting. His centuries overseas, especially in England and Australia, were not just personal triumphs but national milestones. Under his captaincy, India became the world's No. 1 Test side and won a historic series in Australia.

His recent retirement, alongside Rohit Sharma, marks the end of another golden chapter. But his legacy will endure — one of passion, purpose, and pride. Kohli redefined belief. He made us expect victory — not just hope for it.

A Constant Companion

As I now stand at the threshold of retirement, I find myself reflecting on this extraordinary fifty-year bond with cricket.

From transistor radios to mobile apps, from whites to coloured kits, from five-day Tests to T20 thrillers — cricket has evolved, and so have I. But the emotion remains unchanged. Every boundary still brings a smile. Every wicket still raises my heartbeat. I've seen stadiums change, formats shift, players come and go — but the love has never dimmed. Cricket has mirrored my life — full of struggle, grace, intensity, and occasional triumphs. Today, as I complete five decades of being a fan, I feel only gratitude. Cricket has been my joy, my escape, my teacher. It taught me patience, resilience, teamwork, and above all, hope.

For many, cricket may just be a sport. But for me, it is memory, meaning, and music — a rhythm that continues to play in the background of my life, beautifully uninterrupted.

(The writer is IPS DIG/ Additional Director UPSIFS LUKNOW. Views are personal)

How India's Rural Revolution Redefined Global Development

Some statistics stop you in your tracks. They don't just tell you a story — they change the very narrative of a nation. One such number is this: India's extreme poverty rate has fallen from 27.1 per cent in 2011-12 to just 5.3 per cent in 2022-23. That means 269 million Indians — nearly the population of an entire continent — have broken free from the clutches of extreme poverty in just over a decade. Behind this staggering statistic lies not just good luck or economic growth, but a quiet revolution led by Prime Minister Modi. Eleven years of determined, ground-level governance, hard-nosed reforms, and the revival of India's most ignored strength — its cooperative economic framework.

This isn't just a policy shift; it's a transformation of mindset, of machinery, and of the meaning of development itself. For too long, poverty alleviation was viewed as charity or top-down welfare. But under PM Modi's leadership, poverty reduction has become an outcome of empowerment, not entitlement. And the beating heart of this transformation?

The recent World Bank report gives global recognition to this shift, but Indians have been living it daily. It acknowledges what we on the ground already knew: that this isn't mere statistical luck. It is the result of deliberate structural reforms, institutional innovations, and a relentless push to bring prosperity to the last mile. For the first time, the World Bank is forced to rethink the way poverty is measured and tackled — not with foreign aid or fiscal sops, but through farmer-centric systems, rural institutions, and localised wealth creation.



BINOD ANAND

Let's not forget: this isn't about cities. The most significant poverty reduction has taken place in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh — states that are as rural and agrarian as they are populous. That's no coincidence. These are also the very states where cooperative movements have taken deep root over the past decade, where PACS are being digitised, where FPOs are thriving, and where rural women lead dairy and seed cooperatives with pride. Over the past eleven years, PM Modi has not just created schemes — he's reformed governance itself. Ministries have become mission-oriented. The Ministry of Cooperation was established not as an afterthought, but as a declaration that India's villages matter. Cooperative societies are no longer marginalised — they are central to our economic planning. With the creation of three new national-level multistate cooperative institutions for export, seed, and organic produce, the message is loud and clear: Bharat will rise from its grassroots.

And this is no longer an emotional or cultural belief — it is an economic reality. Procurement planning is now integrated with production. Farmers are no longer growing in the dark. They know in advance who will buy their produce, at what price, and when. This pre-season certainty has changed the game. Add to this the rural warehousing revolution, where PACS are being upgraded into service and storage hubs, and you have a system where value doesn't leak — it stays with the farmer.

This transformation is not just an Indian success story — it is a model that challenges the very foundations of global development thinking. For years, institutions like the World Bank, IBRD, and various climate finance bodies have equated development with billion-dollar urban projects, often disconnected from rural realities. However, India has shown that structural poverty reduction, economic dignity, and climate resilience can go hand in hand when rooted in cooperative — led governance.

Investment in agriculture — especially in procurement infrastructure — has reoriented India's supply chain around the farmer. This is no longer a system of distressed sales and middlemen. It is a model of forward-planned procurement, storage, and distribution anchored by local institutions. This subtle but powerful disruption in the supply chain has already begun reshaping how development is financed, measured, and delivered. Warehousing reduces post-harvest losses — that's climate action. Local procurement cuts down on emissions and transport costs — that's mitigation. Community irrigation saves water — that's adaptation. But most importantly, these are models of development that are owned, run, and sustained by the people themselves. This is why the upcoming High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations, beginning July 5, must pause and reflect. The SDG playbook can no longer ignore India's cooperative-led success. Suppose the world is serious about achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). In that case, it must look beyond outdated aid paradigms. It must look towards India. India has proven that poverty isn't defeated by dependency — it is crushed by dignity. When farmers are seen not as beneficiaries but as entrepreneurs, when supply chains revolve around producers, and when communities build their resilience, transformation becomes inevitable. The World Bank report isn't the end of the story — it's the beginning of a new chapter. A chapter where the world rethinks its assumptions, where financial institutions align with grassroots wisdom, and where rural India shows the way forward. Let us send a message from Bharat to the world: Poverty is not destiny. Prosperity is not a privilege. With the right structure, spirit, and support, any nation can rise. But for that to happen, the world must finally listen to Bharat's voice — from its villages, its cooperatives, and its people.

(The writer is Secretary General, Confederation of NGOs of Rural India. Views expressed are personal)

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

ACROSS THE STATES



Oswal Pumps' IPO gets subscribed 42% on day 1

The initial share sale of Oswal Pumps received 42 per cent subscription on the first day of bidding on Friday. The IPO received bids for 67,83,552 shares, as against 1,62,12,980 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE. The Non Institutional Investors portion fetched 79% subscription, while the Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) category got subscribed 45%. The quota for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) received 8% subscription. Oswal Pumps on Thursday mopped up Rs 416.2 cr from anchor investors. The initial public offering (IPO) will conclude on June 17. The IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of shares valued at Rs 890 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 81 lakh stocks worth Rs 497.34 cr at the upper-end of the price band, by promoter Vivek Gupta. This aggregates the issue size at Rs 1,387.34 crore. The IPO has a price range of Rs 584-614 per share. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for funding certain capital expenditures of the company, investment in wholly-owned subsidiary Oswal Solar in the form of debt or equity, setting up new manufacturing units at Karnal, Haryana, payment of debt, and general corporate purposes.



Sona BLW Precision shares end 2% lower

Shares of automotive technology firm Sona BLW Precision Forgings Ltd (Sona Comstar) declined nearly 2 per cent on Friday, a day when the company announced the untimely passing of its Chairman and Non-Executive Director Sunjay J Kapur. Sona Comstar in a statement said, "It is with profound sorrow that we announce the untimely passing of Sunjay J Kapur Chairman and Non-Executive Director of Sona Comstar, following a sudden heart attack in England, UK, on 12th June 2025, at the age of 53." The stock dropped 1.55 per cent to settle at Rs 503 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 7.70 per cent to Rs 471.55. At the NSE, shares of the firm went lower by 1.76 per cent to settle at Rs 501.85. Intra-day, it tumbled 8.39 per cent to Rs 467.95. A visionary leader, Kapur played a pivotal role in shaping Sona Comstar into a global mobility technology company built on innovation, sustainability, and purpose, the statement added.



Rupee dives against US$ on spike in oil prices

The rupee plummeted 59 paise to 86.11 against the US dollar on Friday due to a spike in global oil prices and a firm dollar amid rising tensions in the Middle East following Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear sites. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose sharply by 7.27 per cent to USD 74.40 per barrel in futures trade. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 86.25 against the greenback and traded in the range of 85.92-86.25 before closing at 86.11, up 59 paise from its previous close. The local unit had settled at 85.52 on Thursday. Weak domestic equity markets and FII outflows further contributed to the fall in the local unit, forex traders said. "The rupee fell to a low of 86.25 before recovering to 85.92 before ultimately closing at 86.07. It has taken one country's military strike on another to bring home the fragility of markets," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said.

Markets tumble on rising geopolitical tensions



"Rising tensions in the Middle East after Israel attacked key Iranian areas drove investors to safe-haven assets like gold as riskier equities continued to face battering. Along with fresh concerns of the US likely to impose unilateral tariffs over next few weeks and higher valuations of domestic equities resulted in consolidation of markets."

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled nearly 1 per cent on Friday as weak global markets and a spike in Brent crude oil prices after Israel attacked Iran's capital weighed on investor sentiment.

Falling for the second day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex dived 573.38 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 81,118.60. During the morning trade, it tanked 1,337.39 points or 1.63 per cent to 80,354.59.

As many as 2,469 stocks declined while 1,516 advanced and 137 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 169.60 points or 0.68 per cent to 24,718.60.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,070.39 points or 1.30 per cent, and the Nifty declined 284.45 points or 1.13 per cent. Investors stayed away from riskier assets amid fears of a full-blown war between Israel and Iran and foreign fund outflows.

"Rising tensions in the Middle East after Israel attacked key Iranian areas drove investors to safe-haven assets like gold as riskier equities continued to face battering. Along with fresh concerns of the US likely to impose unilateral tariffs over next few weeks and higher valuations of domestic equities resulted in consolidation of markets," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. Among the Sensex firms, Adani Ports, ITC, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank and UltraTech Cement were the major laggards.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Sun Pharma and Maruti were the gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge declined 0.32 per cent and smallcap index dipped 0.30 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, services tumbled 2.06 per cent, bankex (1.01 per cent), FMCG (0.94 per cent), financial services (0.85 per cent), metal (0.81 per cent) and power (0.75 per cent).

Healthcare index and realty were the only winners.



Oil prices leap, stocks weaken on crude market worries

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Oil prices are leaping, and stocks are weakening Friday on worries that Israel's attack on Iranian nuclear and military targets could escalate further and damage the flow of crude around the world, along with the global economy.

The S&P 500 was down 0.7% in early trading. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 508 points, or 1.2%, as of 9:35 am Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 0.8% lower.

The strongest action was in the oil market, where the price of a barrel of benchmark US crude jumped 7.1% to $72.88. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 7.2% to $74.32 for a barrel.

Iran is one of the world's major producers of oil, though sanctions by Western countries have limited its sales. If a wider war erupts, it could slow the flow of Iran's oil to its customers and keep the price of crude and gasoline higher for everyone worldwide.

But past attacks between Iran and Israel have seen prices for oil spike initially, only to fall later "once it became clear that the situation was not escalating and there was no impact on oil supply," according to Richard Joswick, head of near-term oil at S&P Global Commodity Insights.

That has Wall Street waiting to see what will come next. For now, the price of oil has jumped, but only back to where it was earlier this year. "This is an economic shock that nobody really needs, but it is one that seems more like a shock to sentiment than to the fundamentals of the economy," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management.



Maruti Suzuki signs MoU with Equitas Small Finance to offer financing options

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Leading car maker Maruti Suzuki India Ltd has partnered with private sector Equitas Small Finance Bank to offer vehicle financing options to its customers, a company official said on Friday.

A memorandum of understanding between the two entities was signed with an aim to provide retail financing options for new cars, used cars and commercial vehicles.

"The collaboration is set to enhance the accessibility and affordability of Maruti Suzuki vehicles for a broader range of customers," a company statement here said.

The Chennai-headquartered Equitas Small Finance Bank would leverage the growing customer base of the bank to benefit diverse Maruti Suzuki customer profiles and offer them a range of comprehensive financing solutions.

ONGC struggles to contain gas blowout in Assam well

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) mounted efforts to contain an uncontrollable release of natural gas from a well in Assam, saying a crisis management team is laying out equipment to bring the well under control.

"Efforts are underway to control the continuous gush of gas from the RDS#147A near Bhotiapar in the Rudrasagar field, located in the Sivasagar District," the company said in a statement. On June 13, around 11:45 AM, during servicing operations at Well No. RDS-147, gushes of gas were observed from the well. There was, however, no fire or injuries.

Upon detection, ONGC immediately activated standard safety protocols. The site was promptly secured, and an emergency response team led by the Asset Manager reached the location without delay.

ONGC had previously said it was confident that the situation would be brought back to normal "very soon".



Two days mkt slump wipes out Rs 8.35 L cr investors' wealth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity investors become poorer by Rs 8.35 lakh crore in two days of market fall, where the benchmark Sensex dropped nearly 2 per cent amid heightened Middle East tensions, which drove Brent crude oil prices to sky-high levels.

Falling for the second day in a row on Friday, the 30-share BSE Sensex dived 573.38 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 81,118.60. During the morning trade, it tanked 1,337.39 points or 1.63 per cent to 80,354.59.

In two days, the benchmark has lost 1,396.54 points or 1.69 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 8,35,799.85 crore to Rs 4,47,21,343.34 crore (USD 5.19 trillion) in two days.

"Indian equities fell sharply, reacting to weak global cues and a surge in crude oil prices after Israel launched military strikes on Iran earlier today. The sharp rise in crude prices weighed on the Indian rupee and led to selling pressure in OMCs, paints, tyres and lubricant stocks," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Research, Wealth Management at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 7.61 per cent to USD 74.64 a barrel.

"Indian equity markets endured a sharp sell-off on Friday, with the Nifty-50 and Sensex both off their intra-day lows but still closing with significant losses."

Gold rallies Rs 2,200 to Rs 1.01 lakh/10 g as tensions in Middle East escalate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Rising for the third consecutive day, gold prices on Friday surged Rs 2,200 to trade near a record high of Rs 1,01,540 per 10 grams in the national capital amid heightened tensions following Israel's military strike on Iran, which drove investors to the safe-haven asset.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity rallied by Rs 1,900 to Rs 1,00,700 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes).

On April 22, the yellow metal had climbed Rs 1,800 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,01,600 per 10 grams. In addition, silver prices jumped by Rs 1,100 to revisit the all-time high of Rs 1,08,100 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday.

The metal rose by Rs 1,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,08,100 per kg on Monday.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the most-traded August delivery contracts of the precious metal zoomed Rs 2,011 to hit a record high of Rs 1,00,403 per 10 grams in the morning trade.

"Gold prices touched a new high and scaled past the Rs 1 lakh-mark per 10 gram while in the international markets, the bullion soared past USD 3,440 per ounce as investors flocked to safe-haven assets amid mounting global instability," Rahul Kalantri, Vice President of Commodities at Mehta Equities, said.

Later, the yellow metal trimmed its early gains and was trading at Rs 99,906 per 10 grams. Globally, spot gold rose by USD 28.30 per ounce or 0.84 per cent to USD 3,415.13 per ounce. The sharp rally in gold came after Israel's military pre-emptive strike on Iran, escalating fears of a broader conflict in the Middle East. Simultaneously, renewed uncertainty over US trade policy, including threats of unilateral tariffs by President Trump-fuelled risk-off sentiment, Kalantri said.

GOOD NEWS OR GOOD PRICE?

Why it's time to move beyond debt funds to embrace equities

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The debt markets are buzzing. As inflation was steadily going down from 6% to RBI's tolerance band of around 3%-4%, the central bank made a rate cut in the month of April to boost growth. In the June policy RBI surprised the markets by cutting the policy rates by 50 basis points and reducing CRR by 100 basis points. Naturally, investors flocked to debt funds, anticipating continued returns as yields softened. But here's the reality: the best of this cycle may already be behind us.



In a market that is a future discounting machine, the real winners aren't those who chase recent gains, but the ones who look ahead.

"Don't confuse good news with good price," says Raj Shah, Founder of Soul Finspire, a leading financial advisory firm. "Yes, inflation is cooling and liquidity is high, but the RBI has clearly stated they've front-loaded all the rate cuts.The chances of another round of easing in the near term are slim. This isn't the time to chase debt funds." The Illusion of Safety: Debt Fund Euphoria May Be Short-Lived

With the RBI cutting the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) by 100 basis points, injecting ?2.5 lakh crore into the banking system, returns on debt instruments looked promising…in the near term.

B'gluru climbs to 14th place in Global Startup Ecosystem

PNS ■ BENGALURU



Bengaluru climbed seven spots to be placed as number 14 in the Global Startup Ecosystem Report 2025, prepared by Startup Genome, a global innovation ecosystem development organisation. Silicon Valley tops the list, followed by New York City, London and Tel Aviv. Boston and Beijing are tied for fifth place. "Bengaluru recorded strong growth, climbing seven spots to rank #14 in the Global Startup Ecosystem Ranking 2025, driven by four major exits exceeding USD1 billion in 2024, with Swiggy.com leading at a USD12 billion valuation," stated the report.

Priyank Kharge, Karnataka's Minister of IT & BT and Science & Technology, said in a statement issued by his office on Friday, that the 2025 edition of the report highlights a significant power shift in global innovation, with rising Asian and mid-sized hubs making strong gains. "Bengaluru's leap cements its transition from a "rising star" to a top-tier global startup hub, placing it shoulder-to-shoulder with global leaders like Paris (#12), Philadelphia (#13) and Seattle (#15)," he said.

According to him, this surge has been powered by high-value exits, a thriving Deep Tech and AI boom, sectoral consistency, progressive policy and public investment and an exceptional tech talent base.

Singapore Airlines shares drop after AI plane crash

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Shares of Singapore Airlines (SIA), which holds 25.1 per cent stake in Air India, dropped on the Singapore Exchange on Friday, a day after the Indian carrier's plane crash in Ahmedabad.

Shares of SIA closed at SGD 6.94 on Friday, down 1.28 per cent over its previous close.

Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft, operating a flight from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, crashed soon after the take-off on Thursday afternoon. Out of the 242 people on board the plane, only one person survived. Meanwhile, Aviation watchdog DGCA on Friday ordered enhanced safety inspection of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner fleet powered.

Maha, Max Aerospace sign MoU to set up copter factory

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Max Aerospace and Aviation Pvt Ltd to establish a helicopter manufacturing unit in Nagpur with an investment of around Rs 8,000 crore over the next eight years.

About 2,000 direct and indirect jobs will be created under this project, a statement from the chief minister's office said.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who said that this project will give a boost to the defence manufacturing sector in Nagpur.

As specified in the agreement, Max Aerospace will set up a helicopter factory in Nagpur and its actual work will start from 2026.

This agreement will be a milestone in India's 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' campaigns. This will be the first project in Maharashtra dedicated to the customization and full production of helicopters. The initiative will help Maharashtra emerge as an important hub for aerospace manufacturing, the statement said.

The project will incorporate world-class technology and act as a Centre of Excellence for customisation, integration and flight testing of rotary-wing platforms.



This agreement will be a milestone in India's 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' campaigns. This will be the first project in Maharashtra dedicated to the customization and full production of helicopters. The initiative will help Maharashtra emerge as an important hub for aerospace manufacturing, the statement said.

The centre will be located near the Nagpur airport, leveraging existing infrastructure and logistical support. It will also contribute to India's growing aerospace supply chain, the statement said.

Fadnavis said he is happy that Max Aerospace has chosen Maharashtra, especially Nagpur, for helicopter production.

Good facilities have been created in Nagpur for the defence manufacturing sector. Max Aerospace will be provided all necessary support for its manufacturing plant.

The company should start its production work on time, he said.

The partnership will be an important step towards the industrial development of Maharashtra and will contribute to making India self-sufficient in the defence sector, Fadnavis said.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
QUOTATION NOTICE
Tender Notice No.. Quotation Notice No. 01, Date: 13-06-2025
Name of Work: Quotation for Supply, erection, testing & Commissioning of architectural LED direct with 30W RGB flood light, Start Date & Time: **14-06-2025 @ 10.30 AM**, Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: **17-06-2025 @ 05.00 PM**, **Name & Address Officer Cell No.:** Sri. M.Indradeep Executive Engineer (Electrical), KZ, 4th, CC Complex, Tank Bund Cell No. **9154909283**, Further details can available @ **https://www.ghmc.gov.in/** Phone Number: **9154909283**.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (Electrical), KZ, GHMC.
DIPR R.O.No: 3965-PP/CL/AD(VT)1/2025-26, Dt: 13-06-2025

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. 87/DB/EE/Quthbullapur Circle/GHMC/ 2025-26, Date: 13-06-2025
Name of Work: Bonalu Festival and Development of Park and Engaging a hydraulic excavator Works. Estimate Amount: **Rs.20.87 Lakhs**, Start Date & Time: **16-06-2025 @ 2.00 PM**, Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: **24-06-2025 @ 2.00 PM**, **Tender Inviting Authority details with Mobile No.:** Executive Engineer, Cell no: 9701365503, Head Draughtsman, Cell no: 7337557259, Further details can be seen at e-procurement **www.tender.telangana.gov.in.**
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Quthbullapur Circle-25, GHMC.
DIPR R.O.No: 3972-PP/CL/AD(VT)1/2025-26, Dt: 13-06-2025

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
IRRIGATION & CAD DEPARTMENT
TENDER NOTICE
Bhadradri Kothagudem District- Irrigation Circle, Bhadrachalam Online tender are invited for O&M works for NIT No.13/2025-26, Dt. 23.05.2025 (3rd call) and NIT No.14/2025-26, Dt. 24.05.2025 (3rd call) for an estimate contract value of **Rs. 77.71 Lakhs**, Tenders are available from **Dt.13.06.2025 @ 04.00 PM** to **Dt.20.06.2025 @ 04.00 PM.** For further information visit **www.tender.telangana.gov.in.**
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Bhadrachalam
DIPR R.O.No: 3988-PP/CL/AD(VT)1/2025-26, Date: 13-06-2025

The Pioneer
Hyderabad

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SATURDAY JUNE 14, 2025

'DAD TAUGHT ME NEVER TO BE AFRAID OF A 'NO'—THAT EVERY REJECTION IS A HIDDEN REDIRECTION'

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

In a world that's often loud and fast-paced, actress Sanjana Sanghi finds her calm in the quiet, unwavering presence of her father. As she reflects on Father's Day in this soul-stirring conversation with The Pioneer, Sanjana doesn't just speak about her dad—she celebrates him. With heartfelt stories, nostalgic moments, and profound gratitude, she lets us into the intimate corners of a bond that shaped the woman she is today. "For me, Father's Day is incredibly special," she begins. "It's not just a day—it's a moment to celebrate the quiet strength and endless support my dad has always been for me. He's my anchor, the one who taught me resilience and encouraged me to chase my dreams fearlessly."

While the world may recognize Sanjana as a rising star on screen, her truest identity—the core of her being—has always been deeply rooted in her father's love and values. Growing up in Delhi, some of her most vivid memories involve learning more than just life lessons—they involved learning to kick, quite literally. "My dad is a karate black belt," she says, with a nostalgic laugh. "Since I was a little girl, he'd have me doing drills with him on our chhat(terrace)—those typical little rooftops in Delhi homes. He wanted me to be strong, to be someone who could 'kick ass' if needed. Years later, when I did my first action film OM with Aditya Roy Kapur, all of that training came in handy! I had rhythm in my body thanks to those childhood mornings."

But his influence went far beyond the physical. The Dil Bechara credits her father for grounding her in values that continue to light her path in an often unpredictable industry. "He's been the absolute backbone of my journey. From teaching me to stay authentic in a world that constantly wants you to conform, to encouraging me to pursue an unconventional career, he's been my silent strength every step of the way."

Integrity, Discipline, Resilience—These aren't just words in Sanjana's vocabulary—they are gifts passed down by a father who led by example. "He's always told me that excellence is the result of consistent effort. That principle drives me on every set. He also taught me never to be afraid of a 'no'—that every rejection is a hidden redirection."

In moments of doubt, when the glimmer of the industry fades and the hustle feels too much, her father's words are her compass. "He would always tell me, 'It's okay to be disappointed, but don't let it stop you. Learn. Grow. Move on.' That advice has been my saving grace through many difficult moments."

One of the most beautiful things about her father, the Kadak Singh fame says, is his unshakeable optimism. "He has this rare ability to find light in the darkest times," she says, her voice softening. "He lives life with gratitude and grace, even in tough situations. That has rubbed off on me more than he knows."

Although distance often keeps them apart—especially on special occasions like Father's Day—Sanjana finds meaningful ways to bridge the gap. "Many times, it's just a FaceTime call in the middle of a shooting schedule. But whenever I can, I make a quick trip or plan a weekend getaway just to spend that time with him." This year, her gift to him won't come wrapped in a box. "The most ideal gift for my dad this year would be time—undivided, heartfelt time. A few days with no schedules, just us talking, laughing, and reconnecting. That means more than anything money can buy."

Their connection is more than emotional—it's also delicious. "Whenever we're together, we head straight to the kitchen. My dad has this amazing collection of kebab recipes—his marinades are magic. Cooking together has become our special ritual. The aroma of those spices, the laughter over a sizzling pan—it's our way of bonding." When it comes to her work, her father is her most sincere critic. "He has an incredible eye. His feedback always gives me a fresh perspective. It's never sugar-coated, but it's always thoughtful, always loving." And how does he feel seeing his daughter take on bold, emotionally charged roles? Sanjana says, "He handles it with so much grace. I know it can be tough for him, watching me go through such raw emotions on screen. But he understands—it's the story, the art. He always appreciates the craft and reminds me he's proud."

Interestingly, the learning hasn't been one-sided. Over the years, the Rashtra Karachi Om actress believes her journey may have quietly taught her father something too. "He comes from a more traditional background," she says thoughtfully. "But watching me navigate this unpredictable creative world, I think he's seen how passion and purpose can take shape in ways we don't always expect. Maybe I've taught him a bit about embracing dreams that don't fit into conventional boxes."

And if all the lights were off, the cameras away, and it was just the two of them—what would she say?

"Dad, thank you," she says, her words tender and full. "Thank you for always being my unshakeable constant in a world that's constantly changing. Your quiet strength, your unwavering belief in me, and the values you've instilled in me—they are the foundation of everything I am. You taught me to dream big, but stay grounded. And just knowing that you're there, guiding me from the shadows, gives me the courage to face anything. I love you more than words could ever say."

In an exclusive chat with ***The Pioneer,*** **actress Sanjana Sanghi** opened up about the man who shaped her world—her father. From childhood karate drills on their Delhi rooftop to heartfelt life lessons that now anchor her through the chaos of fame, Sanjana reflected on the deep bond they share. Calling him her "unshakeable constant," the Dil Bechara star revealed how her father's quiet strength, resilience and unwavering belief in her dreams continue to guide her journey



My dad is a karate black belt. Since I was a little girl, he'd have me doing drills with him on our chhat(terrace)—those typical little rooftops in Delhi homes. He wanted me to be strong, to be someone who could 'kick ass' if needed. Years later, when I did my first action film OM with Aditya Roy Kapur, all of that training came in handy! I had rhythm in my body thanks to those childhood mornings

CONJUNCTIVITIS ON THE RISE

Heat, dust and allergens to blame

PNS| HYDERABAD



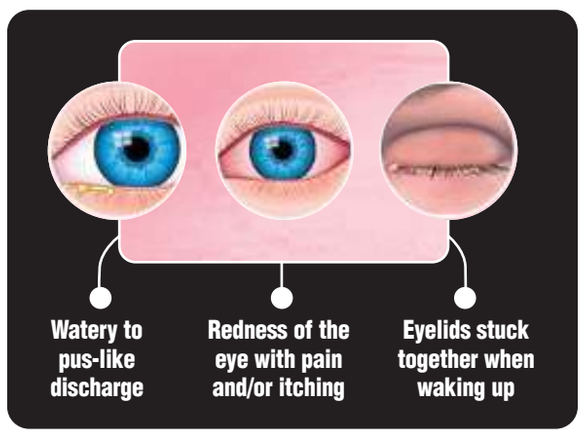
Every summer brings a sharp uptick in conjunctivitis cases, with red, swollen eyes becoming a common complaint in both clinics and homes. This seasonal surge is not coincidental. Instead, it is the result of multiple environmental and biological factors working together. The intense heat, rising pollution levels, increased allergen exposure, and more frequent human contact during summer months create ideal conditions for conjunctivitis to thrive. What seems like a harmless red eye is often a complex reaction to the seasonal pressures that affect the eye's delicate surface.

THE HEAT FACTOR

Rising temperatures during summer months create an ideal environment for bacteria and viruses to thrive. Sweat, frequent face-touching, and close physical contact especially in crowded public places like swimming pools and public transport make it easy for infections to spread. Increased heat also tends to dry out the eyes, making them more vulnerable to irritants and microbial invasion.

VIRAL AND BACTERIAL TRIGGERS

Viral and bacterial conjunctivitis are the two most contagious forms, spreading easily through hand-to-eye contact and contaminated surfaces. Viral conjunctivitis often accompanies cold-like symptoms and is common in group environments such as schools, gyms, and daycare centers. Bacterial forms, although less frequent, result in thick yellow or greenish discharge and sore eyes. Shared towels, makeup, or improperly cleaned contact lenses can quickly pass bacteria from one person to another. Children are particularly vulnerable during summer holidays when outdoor play and group activities increase, while adults may contract it through unclean hands, shared facilities, or poor contact lens hygiene. The combination of sweating, exposure to dust, and higher incidence of touch-based transmission makes these infections widespread during summer.



ALLERGIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL IRRITANTS

Summer is also a peak season for allergic conjunctivitis, which, while not contagious, can be equally debilitating. The condition results from hypersensitivity to allergens such as pollen, pet dander, dust, cigarette smoke, and pool chlorine. Eyes become red, watery, itchy, and swollen as the body releases histamines in response. Notably, allergic conjunctivitis becomes more prevalent in summer when dry winds and increased vegetation raise airborne pollen levels. While swimming offers relief from heat, the chlorine in pools can irritate already sensitive eyes. Managing these allergies often involves both avoiding triggers and using antihistamine drops or cold compresses to relieve symptoms.

POOR EYE HYGIENE

Summer vacations often mean travel and outdoor activities leading to increased exposure to dust, sand, sweat, and dirty water. Children and young adults are especially prone to rubbing their eyes with unclean hands, making them vulnerable to infection. Additionally, improper use of contact lenses, sharing of towels, or not removing makeup properly can all contribute to the rise in conjunctivitis cases.

POLLUTION AND CLIMATIC INFLUENCES

Pollution and changes in climate have a strong impact on our eye health. Air pollution, especially from vehicles and factories, releases harmful gases and particles into the air. These pollutants can make allergic eye problems worse and more common. Hot weather, high humidity, and rising ozone levels also affect the eyes, causing more irritation and inflammation. People living in cities are more likely to face these issues due to poor air quality. As the climate continues to change and pollution increases, it becomes more important to protect our eyes and take steps to reduce environmental damage.

ESSENTIAL SUMMER EYE CARE TIPS

- Wash hands regularly and avoid rubbing or touching your eyes.
- Never share towels, makeup or contact lenses with others.
- Stay indoors during peak pollution hours and use protective eyewear outdoors.
- Discard old cosmetics and avoid swimming in poorly maintained pools.

The summer surge in conjunctivitis is not merely coincidental, it's a result of the perfect storm created by heat, allergens, and an increased exposure to infectious agents. While most cases are mild and treatable, awareness and preventive care are essential to keep your eyes healthy during the hot months. After all, a little caution goes a long way in ensuring your summer remains irritation-free at least for your eyes.

(The author, Dr. Ajay Sharma, is the Founder & CMD of Eye-Q Super Speciality Hospital.)

The winning formula in the dermaceutical space!

PNS|HYDERABAD

With a brushstroke of innovation and a decade of expertise in the cosmeceutical cosmos, Shaily & Anurag Mehrotra has masterminded Fixderma's ascent to dermaceutical dominance. Their skin-deep understanding and unrelenting passion have etched its name in the skincare firmament, illuminating a path to radiant skin health for countless individuals. As CEOs and co-founders, their visionary leadership has transformed it into a trusted guardian of skin wellness, leaving an indelible mark on India's skincare landscape!

Beyond simply producing high-quality items, what were some crucial choices that enabled you to grow?

In 2010, it started up by concentrating on sales through networks of physicians and chemists. Although we started exporting to Southeast Asian countries as early as 2011, our business were mainly focused in India till 2019. For a number of years, this paradigm worked well for us, but by 2018, it was obvious that our growth was leveling out. We made the strategic decision to change course after realising that customer behaviour was changing and that India's internet and e-commerce market was expanding quickly. Digital sales significantly increased during the COVID-19 epidemic and we onboarded several online platforms. This expansion quickened after the pandemic, which allowed us to successfully enter offline retail channels as well. By expanding our reach and speeding up our scalability, this omnichannel strategy has ushered in a new era of it's growth, one in which we will continue to innovate and engage with customers in India and abroad.



How can you maintain your skincare products' scientific backing while making them relatable to regular customers?

We blend science and simplicity. Dermatologists create each product and research backs it up, but we also make sure it's easy for people to understand and utilise. Because skincare might feel overwhelming, we place a high value on straightforward communication in all of our materials, including packaging, content and expert-led videos. Our straightforward job is to create skincare products that are comfortable and effective for everyday usage. We carefully consider the needs of actual people, from busy mothers to teenagers with acne, and provide solutions that work with their everyday routines. One skin story at a time, it is how we have established trust.

Interestingly, it wasn't typical to transition from marketing to cosmeceuticals at the time. How did you handle uncertainties or difficulties in the beginning?

To be honest, it wasn't simple. I had no technical experience in cosmetics or medicines, having come from marketing, so naturally, I had doubts about myself as well as others. But rather than just selling attractive packaging, I realised I wanted to make goods that truly helped people with actual skin problems. I consulted specialists, asked plenty of questions and gained knowledge every day. I kept reminding myself why I started, even if there were times when I felt uncomfortable, particularly as a woman in a field that was mostly focused on science. I believe that having a different perspective from outside the industry allowed me to see things more from the perspective of the consumer rather than just the lab.

How do you think today's boundaries between beauty and pharmaceuticals are evolving? Is the term "dermaceutical" only a catchphrase or something more?

Dermaceuticals—also known as cosmeceuticals—occupy a special place in between cosmetics and medications. Although they don't require a prescription, they go beyond conventional cosmetics by treating particular skin issues like melasma, acne, dryness, hyperpigmentation and early aging. Dermatologists frequently like these formulations since they enhance medical therapies and hasten the appearance of results. The names "cosmeceutical" and "dermaceutical" may sound like industry jargon, but they refer to a rapidly expanding category of high-efficacy skincare products that consumers are increasingly choosing. The modern consumer is knowledgeable and appreciates safe and efficient clinical-grade products. Every composition is thoughtfully created with a specific issue in mind, grounded upon science.

How do you resolve conflicts as a couple and business partners when important choices need to be made?

Like any other couple, we certainly have our share of arguments. Knowing our individual strengths, however, has been what has worked for us. Since we've organically established our own areas inside the company, we rely on one another's strengths and make every effort to avoid ego while making important decisions. Sometimes we need to agree to sleep on it, take a break, or discuss it during a stroll. At work and at home, we remind ourselves that we are all on the same team. Finding common ground ultimately comes down to respect for one another and a common vision.

To what extent does the dermatology community in India influence your research and product ideas?

To us, the Indian dermatological community is extremely important. We view them as genuine collaborators who assist us in determining what people actually need, not just as specialists. Their daily interactions with patients provide us with insightful information that influences the way we create our goods. Their input helps us develop skincare products that are not only delicate and appropriate for Indian skin and climate, but also effective, as they have firsthand experience with the actual skin problems. To be honest, we wouldn't be where we are now if it weren't for their assistance.

How do you establish and preserve its credibility in the age of skincare influencers? Trust is something you have to win every day in the skincare industry of today, where everyone is voicing their opinions. For us, that entails being open and honest about the ingredients and processes that go into our goods. We want people to feel secure and knowledgeable about what they're putting on their skin, not just to purchase. Through direct community engagement or our team of dermatologists, we also believe in genuine connections. We are reminded of the need of trust by hearing their experiences and witnessing their changes. Being a part of people's self-care journeys is more important than merely selling skincare products.

Your goods use both cosmetic and medical use. With the shift in tendencies toward wellness and self-care, how do you maintain that balance?



For us, skincare is the intersection of science and self-care. Our approach finds equilibrium between comprehensive medical research and the increasing public demand for wellness and holistic care. We continue to focus on clinical efficacy, but we also give top priority to creating solutions that are caring and beneficial while also integrating easily into everyday life. These days, consumers look for goods that not only solve their skin problems but also advance their overall health. It aims to strike that balance by combining ingredients that are gentle, approachable and enjoyable to use with proven dermatological benefits. This combined focus keeps us ahead in an area where research and experience are equally vital.

Have you ever had an unexpected idea for a product, advertising campaign, or leadership style that came from your travels?

Gaining direct exposure to a variety of skincare markets and new trends has been made possible via foreign travel. We may see how international corporations innovate, introduce new products and interact with customers by going to major industry events like Cosmoprof. These experiences provide important insights that guide our own strategy and product development, enabling it to remain innovative and competitive in a market that is changing quickly.

Which do you believe will be the largest obstacle for skincare companies going forward: biotech, sustainability, or artificial intelligence?

I really think that sustainability is more than just large sums of money or rapid expansion. Although many new brands invest a lot of money in growing rapidly, in the end, quality, excellent customer service and operating a profitable business are what count most. It's difficult to sustain a brand over time without these three. Sometimes just paying attention yields the best ideas. Consider one of our greatest successes, Nigrifix. We wondered why no one was taking action after observing so many patients with dark spots on their knees and elbows visiting dermatologists. We therefore came up with a solution and it was the first to introduce it in India and other countries. That kind of practical understanding is what motivates us.


Poonam Sharma


Gadwal VijayaLakshmi


Soumya mishra


Dolly Jain


Prathibha


Deepti



The 5th edition of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Hyderabad's flagship fashion and lifestyle exhibition, StyleTatva 2025, was inaugurated on Friday at Hitex Hall 2 by GHMC Mayor of Gadwal Vijayalakshmi. With over 250 exhibitors and more than 10,000 visitors expected, the two-day event celebrates women entrepreneurship and India's rich craft heritage, with a special spotlight on the traditional Dokra art of Adilabad.


Sushila


Poonam,Gunjan Sindhi,Kusum agarwal,Radhika Sriram,Neha agarwal and Deepika malani


Vedika and Mahita

Photos by- SV Chary



Fernandez Hospital has inaugurated its newest facility — the Fernandez Outpatient Clinic at Bogulkunta. Strategically located near the flagship hospital's annexe, the clinic aims to provide expert and respectful care to women, infants, and children right in the city's heart. The clinic brings together specialist outpatient services under one roof, offering both convenience and high-quality treatment.





Agilisium has gifted brand-new Hyundai Creta SUVs to 25 long-serving employees in recognition of their loyalty and contributions. Marking its 10th anniversary, the company hosted a grand event at its Chennai headquarters in the World Trade Center, where over 500 employees gathered for what they believed was a routine get-together.

PARTY

In alignment with the 2025 World Blood Donor Day theme, "Give blood… give hope," Meridian School, Madhapur, hosted a heartfelt blood donation drive on June 13, 2025. The initiative brought together parents, teachers, and support staff in a powerful act of community service and compassion. Led by Principal Karanam Bhavani, the event transcended its medical purpose to become a celebration of humanity and shared responsibility. A standout moment was the participation of the school's CEO, Tejaswi Butta, who donated blood herself.



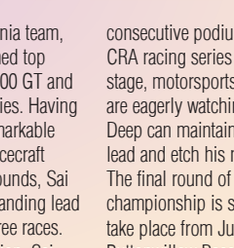
LISTINGS

Taneira announces first-ever 40% off on sarees

Taneira, a TATA product, has recorded a ~30% growth in FY25 and has had an impressive start to FY26 driven by strong wedding shopping sentiment, which continues to drive its upward growth trend. Continuing this trajectory, the brand has launched its first-ever nationwide sale, offering up to 40% off on a wide range of products across categories, including sarees, ready-to-wear ensembles, unstitched kurta sets, and festive lehengas — all crafted from pure and natural fabrics. Customers can avail the offer at Taneira Showroom at Magnetto Mall, Vaishali Nagar Pandit Deendayal Upad, Bilaspur. With a strong nationwide network of 80 stores across 41 cities, Taneira is further strengthening its position as the go-to ethnic wear destination. With the onset of the festive season, that is much earlier, the Sale is intended to announce the start of the season and give consumers an opportunity to stock up on a pure and authentic range of products, set apart by the distinctive design differentiation that Taneira offers.

Telugu Racer Makes History

The 2025 CRA Racing Championship, organized by the Championship Racing Association in North America, unfolded with intense excitement. However, it was the name of Telugu talent M. Sai Deep that resonated powerfully throughout the championship. Representing MSD Racing – North California team, this young racer clinched top positions in both the 400 GT and 400 Superbike categories. Having already showcased remarkable skill and unbeatable racecraft across the first three rounds, Sai Deep secured a commanding lead well before the final three races. Speaking on the occasion, Sai Deep said, "This season feels like a dream. The competition has been fierce, but our team has worked incredibly hard. Leading two championships at this stage is truly an honor." He expressed joy after securing his third consecutive podium finish. As the CRA racing series nears its final stage, motorsports enthusiasts are eagerly watching to see if Sai Deep can maintain his double lead and etch his name in history. The final round of the championship is scheduled to take place from June 27 to 29 at Buttonwillow Raceway, California.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

4								
9	6				8	5		
	3	7	4		6			1
3		4	8				6	
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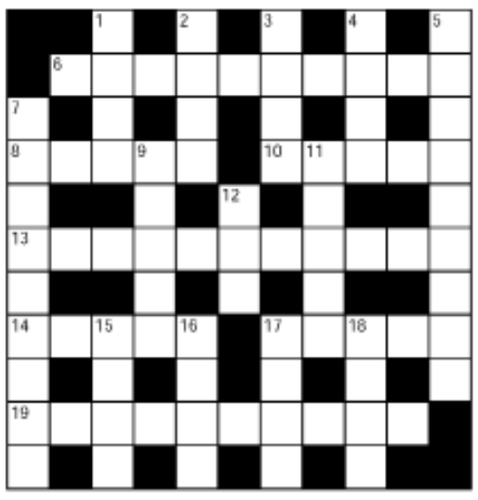
Yesterday's solution

6	5	7	2	8	1	9	4	3
9	2	1	6	3	4	8	5	7
8	4	3	5	7	9	1	6	2
2	6	8	9	4	3	7	1	5
7	3	9	1	6	5	2	8	4
5	1	4	7	2	8	3	9	6
3	9	6	8	5	2	4	7	1
1	7	2	4	9	6	5	3	8
4	8	5	3	1	7	6	2	9

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

6 Someone who writes for a newspaper or magazine
8 Rome is the capital of this country
10 Listen to music on this
13 Thinking over
14 A hairdresser works here
17 Window pane material
19 Giving reasons for

DOWN

1 A long soft seat
2 A large group of soldiers
3 Not favouring one person or another
4 Discover
5 The most powerful
7 Talked over
9 A looped rope used by a cowboy
11 A month
12 Unusual
15 These surround the mouth
16 Tidy
17 Firearms
18 A female relation

SOLUTION

S	I	L	V	E	R		G	O	L	F
A	I				B	U		U		L
V	A	S	E		N	E	A	R	L	Y
E		T		I		D		S		I
	D	E	N	M	A	R	K			N
G		N		A		O		S		G
U			I	G	N	O	R	E	D	
E		I		I	M		W			C
S	P	R	I	N	G		G	I	R	L
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The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025



File Picture of Telugu Film Fraternity with AP CM

Telugu film industry to meet CM Chandrababu Naidu over key issues

The Telugu film fraternity is scheduled to meet Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday, June 15. The Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce (TFCC) received an invitation from the AP government, and several prominent producers, directors, and actors are confirming their participation.

A few days ago, AP Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan criticized Telugu filmmakers for not engaging with the state government, despite claiming to support the development of Telugu cinema in Andhra Pradesh. Tensions further rose when Pawan Kalyan's film Hari Hara Veera Mallu, initially slated for a June 12 release, was postponed.

Another ongoing issue is the theatre bandh, which has led to cinema halls shutting down in both Telugu-speaking states due to financial troubles. Theatre owners are demanding a percentage-based revenue sharing model for film releases, instead of the current rental-based system. Referring to this situation, Pawan Kalyan accused certain filmmakers of monopolizing the industry, although he didn't name anyone. However, filmmakers like Allu Aravind and Dil Raju have come forward in support of his stance on Telugu cinema.

Now, the TFCC is planning to address these issues during their meeting with CM Chandrababu Naidu this Sunday.

LAYA BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER WITH *THAMMUDU*

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Yesteryear lead actress Laya is all set to make a comeback with the film Thammudu, starring Nithiin in the lead role. Directed by Venu Sriram and produced by Dil Raju, the film is scheduled for release on July 4. Ahead of the release, the makers launched the film's trailer, during which Laya opened up about her return to the big screen.

"In nearly twenty years, I haven't worn makeup or faced the camera. Now, I'm back with Thammudu, and I feel it is an emotional homecoming. After so many years, I am standing in front of you all again. There's a bit of fear, and also some doubt about how people will receive me in this re-launch," said Laya. Speaking highly of the team, the actress praised the director and producer for trusting her with the role. "Director Venu Sriram and producer Dil Raju believed in this character, and that gives me a lot of confidence," she shared. Laya revealed that she plays Nithiin's sister in the film.

"Venu saw a small reel of mine and approached me for this role. Then I did a two-day photoshoot — it wasn't easy due to the time difference between the USA and India, and I couldn't sleep properly. The director made some corrections and finally, I was here. The credit goes to him," she said.

Laya clarified that she does not view this as a re-launch. "I feel like this is my first film. Instead of calling it a re-launch, I believe this is a new journey in my life. It gives me a chance to fulfil my dreams and play roles I didn't get to do earlier. I'll also get to interact with a new generation of actors and audiences. I just hope people show me the same love they did when I started my career," said the actress.

She also expressed heartfelt gratitude to her family: "If my husband and children didn't support me, I couldn't be here. They've sacrificed something for me, and I give special thanks to my husband."



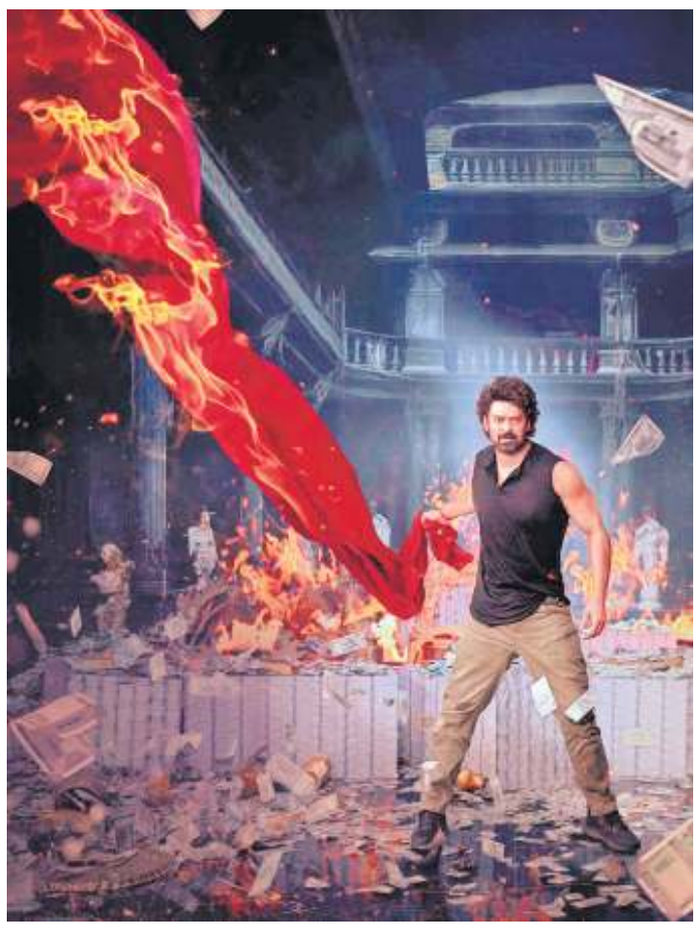


These days, some producers hurry to set a project: Dil Raju

Producer Dil Raju is introducing a new approach to film marketing with his upcoming release Thammudu. After releasing the trailer on YouTube, he instructed his PR team not to manipulate view counts. "I wanted to see the actual number of views. From now on, I will start this new trend," said Dil Raju, stressing that many online views are artificially boosted. "Everyone knows about these fake views. From now, I want to see how many real people have watched the trailer."

He also revealed that both director Venu Sriram and actor Nithiin have not taken their remunerations for the film. "This film requires heavy VFX and technical work, and therefore a high budget. When I explained the financials to them, both responded positively and asked to be paid after the film's release," Dil Raju said.

When asked if he plans to follow the same model in the future, he said, "Yes. In the past, top stars like NTR, Prabhas, Mahesh Babu, and Pawan Kalyan supported me when I discussed film economics with them. If you honestly communicate with your lead actors, they will support you. But today, many producers lack patience — they hurry to launch a project fearing that someone else might grab it."



Prabhas' *The Raja Saab* set for December release

It's been nearly a year since Kalki 2898 AD hit the screens, and Prabhas' fans are now eagerly waiting for his next big release — The Raja Saab. Directed by Maruthi and produced by TG Vishwa Prasad, the film has been in the making for several years but has yet to complete its shoot.

A few days ago, the makers announced that The Raja Saab will release on December 5, 2025. While there is still time for the release, the teaser is set to drop in just three days, on June 16, heightening anticipation.

All eyes are now on The Raja Saab, as it is considered a key film in both Prabhas' career and the producer's fortunes. There have been several reports suggesting that body doubles were used for many of Prabhas' scenes. Moreover, the producer, who has faced multiple box-office failures, is said to be financially strained and is pinning all hopes on the success of this film. With a massive budget, the film is already drawing attention, and the upcoming teaser is expected to offer a glimpse into how the project has shaped up.

Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt plays the antagonist, for which he was reportedly paid a hefty sum. Female leads Malavika Mohanan, Niddhi Agerwal, and Riddhi Kumar round out the cast.

According to a source, Prabhas was reportedly unhappy with some scenes, particularly those involving Riddhi Kumar, and has asked the director to rework them. Additionally, the film's runtime is said to be a concern for the makers. Touted as a horror comedy, the film has music composed by Thaman.

Fans' pressure has reportedly played a significant role in the makers announcing both the teaser release and the final release date.

Avika Gor engaged to longtime beau Milind Chandwani

Actress Avika Gor, who rose to fame with her role in the TV serial Balika Vadhu (dubbed in Telugu as Chinnari Pellikuthuru), is officially engaged to her longtime boyfriend, Milind Chandwani.

Avika, who made her Telugu debut with the hit film Uyyala Jampala, also starred in films like Cinema Choopista Mava, Thanu Nenu, and Ekkadiki Pothav Chinnavada.

She shared pictures of her engagement on Instagram along with an emotional caption: "He asked.. I smiled, I cried (in that order)… and screamed the easiest yes of my life! I'm full of filmy — background score, slow-mo dreams, mascara running and all. He's logical, calm, and 'let's carry a first-aid kit just in case.' I manifest drama. He manages it."

Avika added, "And somehow, we just… fit. So when he asked, the heroine in me took over — arms in the air, tears in my eyes, and zero network in my brain. Because real love? It may not always be perfect. But, It. Is. Magical."

Milind has attended several promotional events for Avika's Telugu films, and she even introduced him to veteran actors like Nagarjuna, who once attended as a chief guest.





Kiran's *K ramp* begins shoot but won't release this year

While producers in the Telugu film industry have long appealed to top actors to do at least one or two films a year to help keep cinema halls — especially single screens — running, it seems that not just the stars but even mid-range actors are slowing down.

Take Kiran Abbavaram for instance. He had two releases last year — KA and Dil Ruba — but in 2025, he hasn't yet fully begun shooting for his upcoming film K Ramp. What's more, both of his previous releases had actually gone on floors two years ago, showing just how delayed the process has become.

While it's understandable that big-budget productions can take time, actors like Kiran, too, are now seen stretching timelines, despite having multiple projects lined up.

Razesh Danda, the producer of K Ramp, previously faced a setback with the box-office failure of his film Mazaka. Now, the shoot for K Ramp has just begun, and it appears unlikely to be released in 2025. This slowdown isn't limited to Kiran Abbavaram. Nikhil, Anand Deverakonda, and Gopichand are also taking longer gaps between projects. Industry insiders believe that if these mid-range actors delivered at least two films a year, it could help revive theatres, many of which are now struggling to stay open.

In fact, due to the lack of major releases over the past two weeks, some cinema halls have temporarily shut down. Several have even put up placards at their gates stating they'll reopen from June 20, with the release of Kuberaa.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | JUNE 14, 2025

India women's hockey aim for strong start against Australia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
London



Having worked extensively to iron out the chinks in their armour, India will aim for a strong showing in the European leg of the Women's Hockey Pro League, beginning with their clash against Australia here on Saturday.

Currently ranked sixth with nine points, India will face Australia on June 14 and 15, followed by back-to-back matches against Argentina on June 17 and 18.

The team will then travel to Antwerp on June 19 for two games against Belgium, scheduled for June 21 and 22, before concluding the European leg with matches against China on June 28 and 29 in Berlin.

"We have worked in every department. But the two departments I am focussing on because it is result oriented are — goalkeeping and drag flicking," chief coach Harendra Singh told reporters on the eve of the match. Singh also revealed that drag flickers Deepika and Manisha underwent a 10-day specialised camp with renowned Dutch drag-flick expert Toon Siepman ahead of the tour. "For drag flicking, Deepika and Manisha trained under Toon Siepman, who has years of experience coaching some of the world's top players," Singh said.

"We also worked on improving our injectors and stoppers. Earlier, five girls were rotating in those roles, but now we've narrowed it down to three."

India will look to build on the momentum gained during the India leg of the Pro League in February, where they held world number one Netherlands to a 2-2 draw in Bhubaneswar and earned a bonus point via shootout.

The team experimented with new combinations during a five-match friendly tour in Perth against Australia A and the Hockeyroos last month. While results were mixed, Singh said the tour provided valuable learning for Salima Tete's side.

"Australia played full press and we learnt how to stretch them with counter-control. We also learnt that we should play stick-to-stick hockey.

"Second learning was to be more resilient on the pitch specially 1v1. I took a squad of 24 to give more players experience but this Pro League we need to be more alert, scan with peripheral vision, play fast hockey.

"I'm confident that the team will get a good result in the four (Pro League) matches."

The coach has opted for a balanced squad that blends experience with young talent.

Singh wants the team to peak during September's Asia Championship as winning the continental championship would mean automatic qualification for next year's World Cup.

"I would say the team is 70 percent fit because we want to peak at the right time which is during the Asian Championship later this year."

With Belgium and Netherlands already qualifying as co-hosts of the World Cup and Germany by virtue of winning the Pro League last year, a good showing in the Pro League could also potentially secure a World Cup berth for India.

"Two teams have automatically qualified as hosts. Germany won the last Pro League and has also qualified. So we have to manage to finish above England and Spain.

"So if we finish fifth, and presuming, for example, Australia qualifies from Oceania, Argentina qualifies (from South America), and one of us or China qualifies from the Asia Cup then there is an opportunity for us to qualify in this Pro League itself," Singh said.

England are languishing at the bottom of the points table with five points while Spain is fifth with 14 points from 12 outings.

World Team chess: Tayade shines as Team MGD1 in joint lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
London

India's Atharvaa Tayade emerged as the top performer for Team MGD1 as the side continued its strong showing by sharing the top spot with Hexamind on 13 match points on day 2 of the World Rapid and Blitz Team Championship here.

Tayade has so far won all his eight games in the tournament. With six victories, one draw and one loss each, Hexamind and Team MGD1 are leading the table. They are being closely followed on 12 points by the Viswanathan Anand-led Freedom, Uzbekistan and Germany and Friends.

With six victories, one draw and one loss each, Hexamind and Team MGD1 are leading the table

Tournament favourites WR Chess, who have some of the biggest names, including American Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura, Alireza Firouzja and Wesley So, are in sixth spot, but their title hopes suffered a setback following back-to-back losses. Following a draw with the Anand-led Freedom in round five, the Arjun Erigaisi-led Team MGD1 overcame top seeds WR Chess 4-2 in round six. In round seven, MGD1 scored a narrow 3.5-2.5 win over Germany and Friends.

However, in the eighth and final round of the day, Hexamind delivered a crushing 4-2 blow to MGD1, thus tying for first place.

The biggest upset on day 2 was Freedom's 2.5-3.5 loss to Germany and Friends.

Germany's top player Vincent Keymer led his black pieces to victory against Freedom's Rauf Mamedov on board one for the crucial win.

Bhatia, Rai struggle along with Scheffler in US Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Oakmot (USA)

World number one Scottie Scheffler, shot 3-over 73, his highest ever score in the US Open, as he trailed surprise leader, JJ Spaun (66) by seven shots while Indian-origin golfers struggled in the US Open at the Oakmont Country Club.

As Spaun, runner-up to Rory McIlroy at the Players, played bogey free, the Masters champion, McIlroy, had to hack out three times on the fourth hole to get it back to the fairway, and then he holed a 30-foot putt for a most unlikely bogey in his 4-over 74 and was T-62. Scheffler was T-49, as was Bryson DeChambeau, who called the round as "a brutal test of golf" after his first round 73.

Indian-American Sahith Theegala, who has had a very disappointing season, pulled out before the event because of a 'neck injury' that is taking more time than expected to heal. Another Indian-American, Akshay Bhatia, had a rough time with his 76 with



seven bogeys and one solitary birdie. Indo-British Aaron Rai (72) was T-33 with three birdies against five bogeys.

Brooks Koepka, who has not competed in a major since winning the PGA Championship in 2023, he missed the cut in the Masters and PGA Championship this year - looked solid as he used to. He kept mistakes to a minimum and closed with two birdies for a 68 that put him in a group with the South Korea duo of Si Woo Kim and Sungjae Im.

Another shot back at 69 was a group that included two-time major champion Jon Rahm, who went 11 holes before making a birdie, and followed that with an eagle.

McIlroy was bogey-free on his opening nine. Then he three-putted for bogey on No. 1 and wound up with a 41 on the front nine for a 74.

Consistency will be crucial in England, says Morkel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Beckenham (Kent)

Consistency will be key in English conditions, according to India bowling coach Morne Morkel, who admitted to being "a little bit nervous" about the squad's lack of red-ball time ahead of the Test series against England, starting June 20.

India kick off their new World Test Championship cycle with the five-match away series, under the leadership of newly-appointed captain Shubman Gill. "I think consistency is crucial in England and there is consistency when we practice, there's consistency off the field, finding your process, what's going to work for you as an individual," Morkel said on the sidelines of India's training session here.

"We've got a great variation, variety in our attack, guys with different skill sets so they can do that and still execute the basics well," he added.

India last played red-ball cricket in early January, during the Sydney Test against Australia. Additionally, several players in the current squad, including Yashasvi Jaiswal and Sai Sudharsan, will be featuring in their maiden Test series on English soil.

India kick off their new World Test Championship cycle with the five-match away series, under the leadership of newly-appointed captain Shubman Gill

"All in all, happy with the start so far. I was a little bit nervous in terms of the lack of red ball we've played but seeing how the guys are moving around and training in the last three days is a pleasing sight."

"We have a fantastic group. There's some quality energy and that's what you need. You need to go into a Test series confident and have that team spirit."

India will play a four-day intra-squad warm-up game against India A starting here, starting Friday.

Reflecting on the team's practice sessions, the former South African pace great noted that the conditions have largely favoured the fast bowlers so far.

"In the two-day practice so far, the conditions suited the fast bowlers. It was testing for the batters which also in a way helps them to prepare for what's to come," Morkel said.

Gambhir rushes back home after mother gets hospitalised



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Beckenham (UK)

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Friday returned to the country after mother Seema Gambhir had to be hospitalized due to health emergency, a BCCI source said.

The source said Gambhir had to fly back to attend to his mother, who suffered a heart attack and is currently in ICU in a New Delhi hospital.

The Shubman Gill-led Indian Test squad is in the UK to play a five-match series against England starting June 20 in Leeds. "Gautam's mother had a heart attack on Wednesday. He and his family left for India on Thursday and they have reached Delhi," the BCCI source informed.

In Gambhir's absence, assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate will assume the team's charge during the four-day intra-squad match between India and India A, beginning here from Friday.

He will have assistance from other coaching staff such as bowling coach Morne Morkel and batting coach Sitanshu Kotak.

Gambhir is expected to return to England in a week's time if everything goes well at his home.

"His mother is showing signs of recovery although she is still in the ICU. In all likelihood, he will be back in the UK before the start of the opening Test (starting June 20) if all goes well."

Hulencourt Women's Open: Rookie Avani placed second in Belgium

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Hulencourt (Belgium)

Indian rookie Avani Prashanth equalled her best start of the season with a 4-under 68l that gave her a solid tied second position after the first round of the Hulencourt Women's Open here.

Playing in one of the late groups in the afternoon, Avani had seven birdies against three bogeys in an action-packed round.Australia's Kelsey Bennett topped the leaderboard after day one with an opening round of 67 (-5).

Avani shared the second place with Germany's Helen Briem as they carded 68 each. Avani is one of the seven Indians in action this week on the Ladies European Tour.

The seasoned Diksha Dagar began with a modest even par 72 in the first round of the event and was T-22 when the round ended.

Amandeep Drall, who recently picked a win on her home Tour, the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, is playing her first LET event this season, and Sneha Singh is featuring in her second event. The duo shot 2-over 74 each and were T-58th.

Tvesa Malik carded 76 as did Vani Kapoor, a four-time winner at home on WPGT, and both were T-89 while Hitaashee Bakshi struggled to 79 and was T-125th.

Avani began on the first and picked two early birdies on the second and the third. Then she



had two bogeys on the fifth and the seventh with one birdie in between. A birdie on the ninth meant she turned in 2-under 34. A par on the tenth was followed by three birdies in a row from the 11th to the 13th and a bogey on the 14th. Four pars over the last four holes meant she finished at 4-under for the day. "I think it was a very good day from start to finish," said Avani.

"The putter was really hot all day. I love quick greens so this is definitely one of my favourite golf courses so far. I was reading putts perfectly and I've been working quite a bit on my putting the last two days, so I'm glad it all came together."

At just 18-years-old, Prashanth is feeling good about her opening round.

"I'm feeling pretty good about it and I'm just glad that I finally got the good first day that I wanted. Things are off to a good start and let's see how the week goes.

"I think the game plan was pretty much the same as last week, despite being very different courses. I just had to work on getting my speed in control, but besides that, it's been the same," continued the teenager.

She is enjoying spending time with some fellow Indian players on Tour. They had some home cooked food Wednesday night which she described as "a kind of home away from home."

Diksha, who has been in fine form this season and has been in the Top-10 of the Ladies European Tour's Order of Merit, had three birdies and as many bogeys in her round.

She started on the back nine and bogeyed the 14th, but turned in one-under with birdies on the 16th and the 18th. A bogey on the second followed by a birdie on the third meant she was still under par. A bogey on the seventh, which was her 16th hole, saw her finish at even par.

Australia's Kelsey Bennett shot 68 as she started on the 10th tee. Bennett had a strong run of birdies. Despite two bogeys and a double bogey, the Australian still managed an impressive five-under-par round, thanks to a remarkable nine birdies in the round.

The 25-year-old has had a solid start of the season, recording three top-10 finishes. The 2024 Rookie of the Year, Helen Briem, building on her impressive runner-up finish in Tenerife, Spain last week, was very happy with her performance. One shot back are four players on three-under par including Scotland's Kylie Henry, England's Cara Gainer, France's Nastasia Nadaud, and Wales' Lydia Hall.

Fans do not appear to be snatching up tickets to Club World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Miami

If slashed ticket prices, closed stadium sections and moved seats are any indication, fans aren't exactly clamoring to attend the Club World Cup.

The tournament opens Saturday with Lionel Messi's Inter Miami facing Al Ahly at Florida's Hard Rock Stadium.

Thirty-two teams are taking part in the newly expanded tournament that will be played across 11 US Cities. The final is set for July 13 at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

On Ticketmaster, FIFA's official ticketing partner for the Club World Cup, the least expensive tickets to the opener were $349 in December. As of Thursday, there were tickets available for just under $80.

Upper deck seats for certain games at Seattle's Lumen Field and Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field were no longer available. Links to a smattering of resale tickets in those sections did not work.

A person with knowledge of the situation confirmed to The Associated Press that some sections of Lumen Field in Seattle had been closed, but did not offer details.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not allowed to speak on the record.

In Philadelphia, some ticketholders received messages that said they were moved.

"As we continue preparations to deliver a world-class event, we are making a few enhancements inside the stadium to optimise operations and ensure the best possible matchday experience for fans, players and the global broadcast audience," the message said. "As a result of these stadium optimisations, some seats, including yours, will be relocated. We want to ensure you that your new seat will be in the same or better value zone than your original one."

Ticketmaster used dynamic pricing for ticket sales, which is based on demand and other factors. They referred all questions about sales to FIFA.



FIFA did not respond to questions about whether sections were closed due to slow ticket sales, or whether fans who originally bought tickets in those sections were moved or offered refunds. But soccer's international governing body did offer a general statement.

"We anticipate great attendances and electric atmospheres at its inaugural edition, with excitement growing with every round of matches and the tournament ultimately standing as the undisputed pinnacle of club world football," the statement said in part.

"The appetite speaks for itself: fans from over 130 countries have already purchased tickets. The top 10 markets are led by the United States, followed by Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Canada, France, Japan, Switzerland, Germany and Portugal - a clear sign of global anticipation and reach."

With 32 international teams, there are undoubtedly some clubs that are unfamiliar to American audiences. There are also 63 total matches, meaning not all can occur in prime hours for fans.

Argentine club River Plate is playing Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds at Lumen Field on Tuesday at noon local time ($24 tickets), while a noon game between Brazil's Fluminense and Germany's Borussia Dortmund had tickets available via Ticketmaster for $23. However, some matches were drawing fans, including Paris Saint-Germain's opener against Atletico Madrid on Sunday at the Rose Bowl, where the least expensive seats were $100.

The least expensive ticket for July's tournament final available through Ticketmaster was $769. FIFA President Gianni Infantino urged fans to buy tickets at a hype event in the leadup to the tournament this week."Be part of history," he said. "Football is such an important sport all over the world. We have billions of people watching this Club World Cup from home who would love to club and to attend.