

# EYE SECRETS

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Spy in every blink

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## NDA defies doom predictions, stays united as Modi 3.0 turns two

New Delhi: When the 2024 Lok Sabha election results were announced in June, naysayers rubbed their hands in glee; not because the mandate returned the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as the single largest party in the Lower House of Parliament, but that it ran short of an absolute majority by a few seats. When the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners, including Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and the Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party (TDP), again extended their support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the total strength of the Treasury benches rose to 293 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. Though the alliance comprised some 44 member-parties, the naysayers still dismissed the new government as "short-lived". Two years later, the nation is celebrating the anniversary of Modi 3.0 at the Centre; the NDA remains a cohesive front, while the Opposition bloc crumbles. The 75-year-old veteran JD(U) leader has since moved to the Centre as a Rajya Sabha member, voluntarily vacating his position with blessings for his successor, Bihar's new BJP Chief



Minister Samrat Choudhary Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and another ally, former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Deve Gowda, penned paeans on Modi's leadership while celebrating an uninterrupted three-term governance, now completing 12 years. Incidentally, the nonagenarian JD(S) leader has reportedly announced retirement from electoral politics, opting out of the Rajya Sabha race and ending a seven-decade-long Parliamentary career. Politics In an article in The Times of India,

he reflected that Modi becoming the longest continuously serving democratically elected Prime Minister after surpassing the record of Jawaharlal Nehru reflects both the strength and evolution of Indian democracy, while crediting his leadership for what he described as uncompromising protection of national interest and sustained public support. Nehru's first term as the Prime Minister of Independent India was not through direct popular votes; the general election to elect the first Lok Sabha was held between 1951 and 1952.

Though he won three consecutive elections, he spent two years in office after the 1962 Parliamentary poll. Deve Gowda also observed that the Congress at that time functioned as a dominant political force with minimal opposition, while by the time Modi assumed office in 2014 and returned for a third term in 2024, India had transformed significantly in terms of diversity and economic complexity. He said it would not be exactly prudent to suggest that becoming Prime Minister in 1952 was easier than in 2014 or 2024, adding that even by 1996, when he himself became Prime Minister, India's political environment had already become more competitive, questioning, and mature. He also stressed the fact that, unlike dynastic or privileged political backgrounds, leaders such as PM Modi and himself did not have access to inherited political capital, patronage, or social advantage that could serve as a springboard into national leadership. Meanwhile, Naidu, penning his thoughts in The Indian Express, hailed Modi's tenure as having rediscovered India's cultural pride

and national self-belief. He heaped praise on the Prime Minister and asserted that this milestone reflects the enduring trust that millions of Indians have placed in a model of governance anchored in the principle of "Nation First". History, he mused, will remember this period not merely for economic growth or political stability, but for the restoration of India's confidence in itself. The TDP chief also believed that this is India's defining moment, the beginning of a golden era for India. National Politics Updates Despite the naysayers, the Modi government has completed 12 years at the helm. The administration looks secure and confident under him; strong performance has exceeded expectations, with alliance partners standing committed under the Prime Minister's leadership. That commitment is reflected in the fact that the NDA government has successfully steered several major bills through Parliament, ranging from economic reforms and social legislation to constitutional amendments.

## Pawan Kalyan stresses on detailed investigation into VSP accident

Deputy CM K. Pawan Kalyan orders a high-level probe into the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant ladle blast. Learn about the safety investigation, recurring industrial accident concerns, and the government's stance on VSP's future. Visakhapatnam: For over 35 years, an incident of this magnitude has not happened anywhere, and a comprehensive report will be submitted by a three-man committee from Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL), said Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan. After interacting with acci-

dent victims of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant undergoing treatment at KIMS Icon Hospital in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday, Pawan Kalyan said the committee will probe every detail of the incident, including safety audits conducted so far and protocols followed at the workplace. "Experts will consider all angles of the incident before submitting the final report," he mentioned. Plant employees brought to Pawan Kalyan's notice that a similar incident occurred in the adjacent department of the plant the day before.



However, since it happened at night, no one was injured and no casualty was reported. "After examining the incident spot, I felt the plant needs upgrading," opined Pawan Kalyan.

## Minister Satya Kumar receives 132 petitions, warns against laxity



Dharmavaram: Health Minister and local MLA Satya Kumar Yadav on Monday directed officials to break through departmental silos and accelerate public welfare and infrastructure projects across the Dharmavaram Assembly constituency. Chairing a high-level review meeting at the Dharmavaram Court Hall alongside Sri Sathya Sai District Collector A Shyam Prasad and Joint Collector M Mourya Bharadwaj, the Minister evaluated crucial irrigation, power, and healthcare lifelines. To reinforce agrarian security, Minister Yadav ordered the immediate clearance of bottlenecks hindering the Molakavemula power substation in Mudigubba mandal and the 33/11 KV substation at Pinnadari. Addressing seasonal water challenges, he instructed engineers to coordinate the advance release of water via the PABR canal and outlined a strategic plan to link the HNSS main canal with the PABR Right Canal, securing drinking and irrigation needs for Tadimarri, Bathalapalli, and Dharmavaram mandals. Reviewing the health sector, Yadav mandated immediate staff recruitment for the newly built Mother and Child Health (MCH) Block in Dharmavaram and ordered the swift completion of pending Ayushman Health Centres. He further directed revenue teams to instantly resolve lingering land acquisition disputes delaying the critical Kadiri Gate Railway Over Bridge (ROB).

## Revanth referred to filmy 'Hitler', not 'Nazi Dictator', says Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad: IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Monday defended Chief Minister A Revanthy's recent Hitler remarks, accusing BRS leaders KT Rama Rao and T Harish Rao of indulging in baseless political criticism whilst touring abroad and across Telangana. Addressing the media at the CLP Media Centre, Sridhar Babu stated that the Chief Minister's comments had been taken completely out of context by the opposition. He explained that the term Hitler is often used in popular parlance to describe a person with strong determination who ensures that difficult tasks are completed efficiently. There was a popular film titled Hitler starring Chiranjeevi, the Minister noted. The Chief Minister used the term exclusively to stress the discipline, determination, and iron will



needed to protect local lakes and government lands from illegal encroachers. It is entirely wrong to equate his remarks with Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler or suggest that he supports fascistic ideology. The Minister alleged that KTR was deliberately misrepresenting the Chief Minister's statement because some people are unable to tolerate the government's decisive action against encroachments and

are therefore creating unnecessary public controversy. Targeting the previous BRS government, Sridhar Babu alleged that former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao did not visit the Secretariat for ten years and restricted access to Pragathi Bhavan. Pragathi Bhavan was like Hitler's bunker, and the current administration removed those physical barriers, he said, questioning the BRS leadership's commitment to democratic values. The Minister also accused the previous regime of phone tapping, irregularities in recruitment, and serious mishandling of the Telangana Public Service Commission, which allegedly affected lakhs of job aspirants. He said the Congress government has since initiated robust reforms. Defending HYDRAA's demolition drives, Sridhar

# 'Remarkable progress under Revanth leadership'

● Azharuddin inaugurates mega job mela for minorities

As part of the Telangana Government's flagship Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika, a Mega Job Mela was inaugurated at Red Rose Palace, Nampally, Hyderabad, on Tuesday, under the aegis of the Minorities Welfare Department and Telangana Minorities Finance Corporation (TGMFC). The mega job mela was inaugurated by Minister of Transport Ponnamp Prabhakar and Mohammed Azharuddin, Minister for Minorities



Welfare. Speaking on the occasion, Azharuddin expressed his appreciation to TGMFC Chairman Obedullah Kotwal and all stakeholders who contributed to the suc-

cessful organisation of the job mela. Remarkable progress has been achieved in the last two years through the initiatives of the Telangana Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, he said. The recruitment drive will connect 20,000 targeted job seekers across 10 districts with employment opportunities. Eligible candidates from all academic streams can participate, with options ranging from entry-level positions to specialised corporate roles.

# Two dead due to electrocution following widespread rain

Two persons died allegedly due to electrocution following widespread rain here on Tuesday evening which also led to water logging and traffic snarls.

The deceased were an auto-rickshaw driver (30) and a 15-year-old boy, a class nine student, an official at Bandlaguda Police Station said.

They came in contact with an electric wire which fell on the road and were electrocuted, police said.

State Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar, incharge minister for Hyderabad,



expressed sadness over the death of the two persons due to electrocution, an official release said.

Meanwhile, Vinayak Nagar Ward Office locality received 129.8 mm of rain, followed by 87.5 mm of rainfall at Bansilalpet. The rainfall led

to waterlogging and incidents of trees being uprooted at a number of places in the city and consequent traffic jams.

The Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) said in a post on 'X' that its

personnel were involved in removing fallen trees at 76 places.

HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath supervised operations to clear waterlogging at the state Secretariat and removal of fallen tree on the Tank Bund at Hussain Sagar lake which caused a major traffic jam.

Prabhakar, who spoke to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner RV Karnan, city Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar and other officials on the situation following the rains, directed that uprooted trees and electric wires be removed without delay.

# Telangana Guv hails PM Modi on historic milestone

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Tuesday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on becoming the country's longest-serving elected PM.

The Governor said the historic achievement reflects the immense trust and confidence reposed by the people of the country in Prime Minister Modi's leadership, a release from Lok Bhavan said.

He noted that under Modi's leadership, the country has made remarkable progress in economic growth, digital transformation, infrastructure development and global stature, while steadfastly safeguarding national interests.

The Governor further said that transformative initiatives and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 are guiding India



towards becoming a developed nation.

He expressed confidence that the country will continue to scale new heights of progress and prosperity under PM Modi's leadership.

"On behalf of the people of Telangana, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on this historic achievement. May his

leadership continue to guide India towards greater progress, prosperity and global leadership," the Governor said.

On May 26, 2014, Modi took charge as India's Prime Minister with landslide victory. He got re-elected with a bigger mandate in 2019 and again became the prime minister for the third time in 2024.



# 21-year-old habitual burglar arrested

A 21-year-old habitual offender was arrested in Attapur and various gold and silver objects were recovered from his possession, police said on Tuesday. The accused has been identified as Rishab Shukla 21 years, a resident of Afzal Sagar, Sitaram Bagh, Hyderabad.

During the investigation, police recovered stolen property including a gold chain weighing 20.510 gram, two gold bracelets weighing 7.99 gram and 9.24 gram respectively and a gold locket weighing 1.187 gram. A stone-

studded finger ring weighing 5.410 gram, two silver biscuits weighing 50 gram and 10 gram, silver utensils including a glass, plates and bowls weighing approximately 400 gram, and another finger ring were also recovered.

According to police, the accused confessed to his involvement in multiple theft cases, including a house-breaking and theft case reported in New Friends Colony, Hyderguda, another theft at Tejaswi Nagar, Attapur and an attempted theft at Nandanavanam Apartments, Hyderguda.

# ACB books DA case against official, finds around Rs 18 cr assets in searches

The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau on Tuesday said it registered a disproportionate assets case against the Engineer in Chief of the Roads and Buildings department and found assets worth Rs 17.94 crore during searches conducted at his residence and places belonging to his relatives and associates.

The official allegedly acquired assets by indulging in "corrupt practices and dubious means" during his service, a release from ACB said. The preliminary searches were conducted on Tuesday at his office, residence and 15 other places belonging to his relatives, associates and "benamidars", according to the release.

During the searches, several property documents were found pertaining to agricultural land parcels measuring 19.38 acres in Nizamabad district, seven flats, one triplex villa and one



newly constructed house at different places here.

It was further identified that an advance amount of Rs 1 crore was paid towards the purchase of a newly constructed villa at Nizamabad. The market value of the properties is expected to be much higher than the official value, the ACB said.

Furthermore, net cash of Rs 55 lakh, bank balances amounting to approximately Rs 1.44 crore, gold ornaments weighing about 2,500 grams, silver ornaments

weighing about 6,000 grams, besides household articles, electronic gadgets, and two vehicles were also identified.

The total assets are estimated at over Rs 17.94 crore. Further verification regarding additional assets is underway.

The accused officer will be arrested and produced before the court at Hyderabad for judicial remand, the ACB said.

The case is under investigation.

# Mahila Cong activists protest against fuel price hike

Women activists of the ruling Congress in Telangana on Tuesday held a protest here demanding that the Centre roll back fuel price hike.

Led by Telangana Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee president Errabelli Swarna, the women activists held a rally from Gandhi Bhavan, the party's state headquarters, to Gun Park at the legislature complex.

Raising slogans against the NDA government, they demanded that the Centre reduce the prices of LPG cylinders, petrol and diesel.

Swarna alleged that the Centre opportunistically announced a fuel price hike after the Assembly elections concluded in West Bengal and other states. The hike in the prices of LPG, petrol and diesel caused enormous burden on farmers and people belonging to the poor and middle classes, she said, demanding relief for common people.



# Girl 'pushed off' building after sexual assault bid, neighbour held

A 12-year-old girl was seriously injured after a man allegedly pushed her from a residential building in Khammam district following an alleged attempt to sexually assault her, police said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred on June 6 and the accused (49), who resides in the same building, was arrested, they said.

According to police, they got information about a girl falling from the fourth floor of a residential building.

She was admitted to a hospital with serious injuries.

Upon regaining con-

sciousness on Monday, the girl said a person tried to molest her and "pushed" her from the corner of the fourth floor.

A case was registered under relevant sections of the POCSO Act and the accused was arrested, a senior police official said.

Asked about the health condition of the girl, another police official said the girl is stated to be out of danger.

Further, the police said a week before the incident, the girl's mother had informed a local resident that the accused had attempted to molest her daughter, though she had not filed any complaint. Further investigation is on.

# EAGLE busts international drug smuggling network, woman junior artist held

Telangana's anti-narcotics unit-EAGLE Force on Tuesday said it has busted an 'OG Ganja' smuggling network allegedly operating between Bangkok and India, in coordination with Customs and the NCB, leading to the arrest of a woman and seizure of 2.15 kg of the narcotic substance. The Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE Force) in a release said the operation exposed a larger syndicate involved in recruiting individuals to transport narcotics across international borders.

The investigation has revealed links to multiple carriers, interstate operatives, and foreign-based handlers engaged in organised drug trafficking, it said.

EAGLE Force said it developed intelligence on the multiple OG weed ganja smug-



glers of India, who were allegedly smuggling ganja from Thailand and came across an information that one Challil Puthanpurayil Nafsheed alias Alex of Kerala has lured a woman from Hyderabad, who is working as a junior artist, into smuggling the contraband from Thailand. After learning that Alex and the junior artist were likely to proceed to

Thailand and bring OG weed ganja to India, the EAGLE Force got LOC opened against them and also alerted the NCB officials. The NCB officials took custody of the woman and on checking her baggage they noticed 2.15 kgs of OG weed ganja, which she brought from Bangkok.

During interrogation, she revealed that she was being lured into repeated foreign

trips under the guise of carrying chocolates and biscuits. The network, allegedly masterminded by Alex, lured the woman junior artist and his associate Raju Biswas, exploited vulnerable women by offering Rs 20,000 per trip, the release said.

The junior artist was sent to Bangkok in March and April this year by Alex and she brought the OG weed ganja packets to India, which were placed in her luggage and handed over to persons in Chennai and Hyderabad as per instructions of Alex, it said.

She was once again sent to Bangkok from Bengaluru in June and upon reaching there, unknown handlers placed OG weed ganja packets in her luggage and after she landed at Hyderabad airport, she was intercepted with the contraband. Authorities stated that the syndicate operated

through Bangkok-India routes, using unsuspecting women as carriers.

During March-April, two women, who were also sent to Bangkok were arrested at Bengaluru and Chennai airports with the contraband, the release said adding the arrests of two women earlier followed by the junior artist's arrest has exposed the deeper nexus of international drug trafficking rings exploiting junior artists and domestic workers.

Law enforcement agencies are intensifying investigations to trace Alex, Raju Biswas, and other foreign handlers, it said. The case highlights the growing trend of organised crime networks targeting economically vulnerable women, promising quick money while pushing them into high-risk smuggling operations, the EAGLE Force added.

# Funeral of youth who died in US after saving friends from drowning held in native village

The funeral of a 23-year-old Telangana man who died last month after saving three friends who were drowning in a river in the US was conducted at his native village in neighbouring Ranga Reddy on Tuesday.

State Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy praised the deceased Anuroop Reddy for his extraordinary and heroic act in saving the lives of his friends.

In a post on 'X', the CM consoled the death of the man and said the government would stand by the bereaved family.

A "Letter of Commendation" sent by the chief minister was handed over to the man's



family members at Kavadiipalli village in Ranga Reddy district by Congress Lok Sabha member Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy. Congress sources said

Anuroop Reddy, who completed his Masters in the US, died on May 29 at Toro Bayou Park in Louisiana after saving his friends who were drowning in Sabine river.

# Nizampet dumping yard will be cleared within a month: Minister

The government ensured the removal of the Nizampet dumping yard within a month, which has threatened the health and safety of locals. The assurance was given by the SC, ST Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar, who visited the dumpyard on Tuesday.

The stench was so bad that the minister and officials accompanying him could not stand.

He expressed concern that this could pose a serious health threat to students of a gurukul located in the vicinity. Locals informed that the dumping ground had become a hub for anti-social elements, and a child had been injured in a dog attack



some time ago. The minister assured that the government

will take locals' complaints seriously and suggested

arranging a special patrolling vehicle for residents' safety.

District Collector M Manu Chowdari informed that an alternative site has been identified for the dumping yard, and it will be relocated expeditiously in coordination with corporation officials. Locals informed that the dumping ground had become a hub for anti-social elements, and a child had been injured in a dog attack some time ago. The minister assured that the government will take locals' complaints seriously and suggested arranging a special patrolling vehicle for residents' safety. District Collector M Manu Chowdari informed that an alternative site has been identified for the dumping yard, and it will be relocated expeditiously in coordination with corporation officials.

## FOCUS ON YOUR STUDIES

# Will conduct re-NEET smoothly & without errors: Pradhan

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday said that measures have been put in place to ensure the smooth and error-free conduct of the NEET-UG re-test on June 21, and appealed to the candidates to focus on their studies.

He also asserted that the government is taking extra precautions this time, from question paper setting to delivery at the examination centres.

After reviewing the preparations at the headquarters of the National Testing Agency (NTA), Pradhan said meetings have been held under the Cabinet secretary, and all the states have been asked



to cooperate. "The NTA is going to conduct the re-NEET on June 21. We have reviewed its preparations several times. I visited the NTA headquarters today to review the preparations," Pradhan told reporters. "From the preparation of question papers to ensur-

ing that they reach the examination centres on time, we have taken additional precautions this time," the minister said.

On May 12, the NTA cancelled the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), or NEET, held on May 3 for

medical admissions amid allegations of paper leak.

A re-examination has been scheduled for June 21.

"I have written to the chief ministers of all the states requesting their cooperation. Their support was there earlier as well, and I have requested them to pay even more attention this time," Pradhan said.

Several states have already held review meetings involving chief secretaries, DGs, district collectors and SPs, with the NTA DG participating in the discussions, the minister said.

Pradhan cited meetings in Bihar and Maharashtra, including one chaired by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, and said he also discussed the matter with Rajasthan

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma. Pradhan said the Union home secretary is also expected to hold a review meeting in the coming days and that all concerned agencies are performing their assigned responsibilities. The Centre last month strengthened the NTA by inducting new officials at the levels of joint secretary, director and deputy director, he said.

"Both experienced and newly inducted officials have been assigned specific responsibilities. Some are handling logistics, some are supervising printing, some are coordinating with the Air Force, some with banks, some with states, while others are verifying software security," Pradhan said.

## Mamata meets Sonia amid rebellion in Trinamool



A day after an opposition INDIA bloc meeting stressed unity and better coordination among its partners, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at her 10, Janpath residence and discussed ways to further strengthen the alliance. Sources said the two leaders are learnt to have discussed the strategy between the two parties going forward after the opposition bloc meeting, and following an exodus of Trinamool MPs after the party's defeat to the BJP in the recent West Bengal polls.

While both the parties did not disclose details of the meeting, the sources said Banerjee is learnt to have stressed on opposition unity, and asserted that the INDIA bloc should work together in taking on the BJP on various

issues, including those concerning the public.

At the opposition alliance meeting on Monday, Banerjee had urged all the constituents to forget the past and stand united.

Monday's meeting focused on setting aside mutual bitterness, aligning with civil society movements, and acknowledging the Congress as the anchor of the opposition alliance, provided it shows a "large heart".

The sources said Banerjee was emphatic in asserting that the leaders of

the opposition alliance should avoid criticising each other, a marked departure from her previous efforts to carve out a bloc independent of the Congress.

After the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Banerjee had questioned the Congress' ability to lead the opposition bloc.

Tuesday's meeting came after Banerjee and Gandhi, the chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, met each other warmly with a hug during the opposition meeting held at the Constitution Club.

### TN CM launches special police unit "Singappen" for safety to women

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Tuesday inaugurated a special police unit, 'Singappen', to provide enhanced safety to women.

Vijay unveiled the insignia for the special force tasked to prevent crimes against women and children, and to provide better safety to them. Also, the chief minister flagged off special patrol vehicles for the special force, and he himself drove a vehicle for a short distance.



In his address, Vijay said that for the first time in the country, drone-based 'patrol' will be undertaken by the special unit for women's safety. Asserting that there will be zero tolerance for crimes against women, he assured swift action and tough punishment.

Stating that crimes against women caused deep distress, he said such crimes and the prevalence of drugs-intoxicants were interlinked and underscored that the drug menace must be eradicated. Without naming any party, he said that the drug menace was not something new. "As it was neglected for so long, its roots have spread so deeply, I believe I don't need to explicitly tell you who is responsible for ignoring it all these years," he said. For the special unit, the chief minister said that over Rs 354 crore is to be allocated in the first phase and in the second phase, 2,500 new posts will be created for the new unit.

### TMC leader Sabyasachi arrested for extortion; people throw eggs, cow dung at him

Trinamool Congress leader Sabyasachi Dutta was arrested early on Tuesday from West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on charges of extortion and criminal intimidation, and was remanded to police custody for eight days. The former Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) mayor was nabbed from his residence at Raigachi based on a businessman's complaint that Dutta had demanded more than Rs 1 crore from him in 2018, a police officer said. Even though Dutta denied the charges against him and said he was "ready to be hanged if they can prove I took even one rupee", people shouted "thief" at him and threw eggs, tomatoes and cow dung when he was being taken to court, as well as when he was leaving. The



Bidhannagar subdivisional court remanded Dutta to police custody for eight days. Dutta had unsuccessfully contested the recent Assembly polls from the Barasat seat on a TMC ticket. He had joined the BJP in 2019 and returned to the Mamata Banerjee-led party a couple of years later.

His arrest came after former Bidhannagar MLA and a minister in the TMC government, Sujit Bose, was arrest-

ed by the Enforcement Directorate in a civic body job scam case.

Reacting to Dutta's arrest, state minister and Bidhannagar MLA Sharadwat Mukherjee said, "The pillars of corruption and arrogance are being arrested one by one." Appreciating the Bidhannagar Police's prompt action in the matter, he said "extortionists" of the TMC era were being apprehended on a war footing.

### Assam moving to centre of India's economy: EU envoy

Ambassador of the European Union to India Herve Delphin on Tuesday asserted that Assam is not at the periphery of India's geography, but the northeastern state is moving to the centre of its economy.

Addressing a press conference here on the second day of the European Union delegation's high-level visit to the state, Delphin said that the EU has been engaging with and supporting the development of the north east region, particularly Assam.

"Assam is not at the periphery of India's geography, but is moving to the centre of its economy," he said. Delphin said what is distinct in Assam is the "resources that nature offers. The quality of the people... their talent, hospitality and the incredible leadership to develop the state, and it is



this that makes Assam the go-to destination for European business." "At the core, we want to bring the EU-India ecosystem and economies closer, and the launch of 'Blue Valley Cluster-Flavours, Fragrance and Ayush' is a step towards this materialising at the state level," he said. The delegation is on a two-day visit to Assam from Monday, and on the final day of its visit, Assam's first 'Blue Valley Cluster' - a new industrial hub focused on fragrances, flavours, AYUSH and food processing,

was launched. The Blue Valley Cluster pilot project in Assam is expected to demonstrate a new model of sustainable industrial cooperation by connecting local biodiversity, innovation and enterprise with international value chains and market opportunities, officials said. "Assam has incredible biodiversity, medicinal and aromatic plants that can create value. This is the reason why European companies are coming here, and are ready to invest and develop this cluster," the EU envoy

said. Delphin said it is not that "we just come, invest and package... there is an integrated approach. We want to pull together research, innovation, skilling, investment, marketing and production". European companies and investors look around the world "in different geographies where there are opportunities, and it is evident that there are certain distinct advantages that Assam has", he said. The 'Blue Valley Cluster-Flavours, Fragrance and Ayush' is a USD 19 billion market in Europe, which is a "leading geography for this sector and Assam is well-positioned to tap into this", the ambassador said.

The 4P (public-private-partnership) cluster will seek to connect Europe, Northeast India and Bhutan, promoting innovation, research, sustainable manufacturing and business collaborations.

### Cong slams Modi govt for Ujjwala subsidy cylinder cut Claims Rs 900 cr burden on K'taka women

AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka, Randeep Singh Surjewala, on Tuesday hit out at the Modi government at the Centre over the reduction in the number of subsidised cooking gas cylinders under the Ujjwala scheme, alleging that the move would impose an additional annual burden of about Rs 900 crore on women in Karnataka alone.

The government has reduced the number of subsidised cooking gas cylinders available annually to beneficiaries of its flagship Ujjwala scheme to four, aligning support with average household consumption levels. "With this decision, the Central Government has effectively taken away eight subsidised cylinders every



year from poor women. As a result, each beneficiary family stands to lose Rs 2,400 annually," Surjewala said in a video statement. Terming this an "anti-people" decision, the senior Congress leader claimed that it will impose an additional burden of Rs 24,792 crore every year on women across the country. "How are poor and middle-class women expect-

ed to bear this burden?" he asked. Surjewala alleged that this decision will inevitably push many women back towards using firewood and traditional stoves. "In Karnataka alone, there are 37.5 lakh Ujjwala beneficiaries, and this move will impose an additional Rs 900 crore annual burden on women in the state," he said. He sought to know whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP government would explain why this attack was carried out on Ujjwala beneficiaries. Surjewala recalled that in 2014, during the Congress-led UPA government, a domestic LPG cylinder cost around Rs 400. Today, the price of a household LPG cylinder is nearing Rs 1,000, he said. "The Central Government increased domestic LPG cylin-

der prices by Rs 60 on March 7 and by another Rs 29 on June 7. In less than three months, prices have risen by nearly Rs 90. How are ordinary families expected to cope with such relentless inflation?" he asked. Claiming that the steep rise in commercial LPG cylinder prices has also severely impacted livelihoods, placing an enormous burden on small businesses, eateries, restaurants, and traders, Surjewala demanded answers from Prime Minister Modi, Karnataka BJP leaders R Ashoka and B Y Vijayendra.

Accusing the BJP government of imposing a direct financial burden on Ujjwala beneficiaries and ordinary citizens alike, the Congress leader sought justification for these "continuous" price hikes.

### Four burnt alive after fire at godown in Jaipur

Four persons were burnt alive and as many others suffered severe injuries after a fire broke out following a blast at an alleged illegal fireworks godown in Jaipur's Khoh Nagorian area on Tuesday morning, officials said. The fire erupted in a small house in Ayesha Nagar Talai colony in Khoh Nagorian, where firecrackers were allegedly being stored, they said. Several political leaders from the state, including Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot, expressed condolences over the incident. Jaipur Collector Sandesh Nayak said that according to preliminary information, combustible material stored inside the premises may have caused



the fire. "There was some inflammable material in the house, while the exact cause will be established after a detailed investigation," Nayak said. Police Commissioner Sachin Mittal said the house was a godown, operating illegally in a residential area, with a manufacturing unit located nearby. "Four deaths have been confirmed so far and four persons are injured. Prima facie, it appears to be a storage facility," Mittal said, adding that forensic examination will confirm whether the materials

stored in the godown were firecrackers. Action will be taken against the owner and all those responsible, he said.

One of the deceased was identified as Abdul Wahid, 50, while the identities of three other victims were yet to be established, police said. According to hospital sources, Wahid suffered nearly 100 per cent burn injuries. The injured were identified as Samir (30), sustaining 95 per cent burns; Nasir (23) with 95 per cent burns; Aadib (25), with 65 per cent burns and Bilal (30) with 75 per cent burns.

Describing the horrific scenes following the fire, eyewitnesses said that as flames rapidly engulfed the house, some of the workers managed to come out while still engulfed in flames.

### Centre hands approval letters to 3 foreign universities for India campuses

Two universities from the UK and one from Australia were granted Letters of Approval (LoAs) to establish campuses in India, the Ministry of Education announced on Tuesday.

The move is aimed at strengthening the country's bid to becoming a global education hub under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it said. "In the presence of Hon'ble Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan, Letters of Approval were handed over to three globally reputed foreign universities from the UK and Australia to establish campuses in India," the ministry said on X. The varsities granted letters were the University of Bristol and the

University of York from the United Kingdom, both of which will set up campuses in Mumbai, and the University of New South Wales from Australia, which will establish its campus in Bengaluru.

"Under #NEP2020, India is advancing 'internationalisation at home' by welcoming leading global universities while also enabling Indian institutions to expand globally," the ministry said. "With campuses in Mumbai and Bengaluru, these institutions will connect global education with India's leading knowledge, technology and innovation hotspots," it added.

The ministry said the campuses will offer courses in AI, cybersecurity, data science, finance, entrepreneurship, creative industries, immersive arts, renewable energy,

health, transport, and education technology.

"This milestone reflects growing global trust in India's higher education ecosystem and strengthens the vision of making India a global knowledge hub, powering youth aspirations and the goal of Viksit Bharat," it said.

The University of Liverpool received a letter of approval earlier this month from the Education Ministry to establish its campus in Bengaluru.

The letter was handed over by higher education secretary and University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairperson Vineet Joshi to Professor Richard Grose, Provost of the University of Liverpool, Bengaluru, in the presence of Pradhan, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.

### Trains carrying election troops delayed by 10-25 hrs Breakfast served at 5 pm: CRPF to Railways

Troops deployed for assembly election duty in five states were left without timely meals -- receiving breakfast as late as 5 pm -- after special trains running for their movement were delayed by up to 10-25 hours, the CRPF has informed the Railway Board.

In a detailed letter written by the Inspector General (Operations) of the Central Reserve Police Force towards the end of the election process, several operational difficulties faced by personnel deployed for assembly polls in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal were highlighted. The communication, sent before the second and final phase of polling in West Bengal concluded on April 29, also sought improved arrangements for the return movement of forces.



Responding to the letter, the Railway Board officials said adequate measures were taken to address the issues once they were brought to their notice.

According to the letter, out of 230 election special trains operated to ferry troops, around 200 experienced significant delays.

"Over 150 Election Special Trains experienced extreme delays and reached their terminating stations late by 10-

15 hours, whereas 50 Election Special Trains reached their destinations late by 20-25 hours," the letter said.

The cascading effect of these delays severely disrupted the planned on-board catering schedule.

"Inordinate delay in the running of trains had a cascading effect on the supply of scheduled on-board meals to the troops," the letter noted, adding that on several occasions personnel received

their first meal i.e. breakfast only by 1700 hours (5 pm)," the letter stated.

The CRPF also said efforts by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to adjust meal timings proved ineffective due to the unpredictability of train delays. The communication further flagged wastage of crucial man-hours due to delays. The CRPF further stated that operational concerns

extended beyond delays as insufficient number of coaches were provided on several trains. "Despite placing the demand of 24 Coaches in each Election Special Trains, several trains with only 19-20 coaches were provided, which were extremely inadequate to smoothly accommodate 10-11 Coys and associated luggage/store items," the letter stated. "Reports were received wherein troops were crammed and forced to settle in the overcrowded trains, resulting in extreme hardship during their long and arduous journey," it stated. Raising concerns about watering and cleaning of coaches, the Inspector General (Operations) said that, on several occasions, these services were not carried out at designated railway stations as per the train itinerary.

# Deputy CM Bhatti Vikrama inaugurations and foundations in station ghanpur constituency grand success

In Jangaon District Station Ghanpur Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Slams BRS and BJP

During their ten-year rule, they pushed the state into debt worth ₹8 lakh crore. After sinking the DISCOMs financially, it is shameful for them to now claim they will stand with farmers.

Why is the Centre not procuring the paddy purchased by the state through the Food Corporation of India (FCI)?

Harish Rao is trying to remain in the news by creating a new false narrative every day.

The Congress government is an "Indiramma Rajyam" that works continuously for the welfare of the people.

Soon, 1.15 crore families will receive free insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh each.

The government implemented a one-time farm loan waiver of ₹22,000 crore.

4.5 lakh Indiramma houses have been sanctioned with an outlay of ₹22,500 crore.

Electricity infrastructure works worth ₹60 crore are being undertaken for the development of Station Ghanpur constituency.

Speaking at a massive public meeting in Pallagutta village of Station Ghanpur constituency, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka accused the BJP at the Centre and the BRS in the state of colluding to deceive farmers and the public. He said opposition parties were unable to tolerate the Congress government's record paddy procurement and welfare initiatives and were therefore spreading misinformation. He asserted that BRS and BJP leaders had no moral right to speak about farmers' welfare.

"They Left Telangana Buried Under ₹8 Lakh Crore Debt"

Bhatti Vikramarka alleged that the previous BRS government had recklessly misused the state's wealth and resources during its ten-year tenure.

"They transformed a financially strong Telangana into a state burdened with ₹8 lakh crore debt. Because of that, our Congress government now has to pay ₹76,000 crore annually towards loan repayments and interest. Had these debts not existed, we could have used those funds for public welfare and transformed the state's future."

He further remarked that public wealth had been diverted for the benefit of a few, which was why the previous government failed to provide fine rice or Indiramma houses to the poor.

"Wasn't It You Who Sank the DISCOMs?"



Bhatti criticized BRS leaders for claiming credit for free electricity while failing to pay subsidies to power distribution companies on time.

"Due to your negligence, DISCOMs suffered severe financial stress and could not provide quality power. Our government is now directly paying ₹14,000 crore towards farmers' free power and ₹5,000 crore for Gruha Jyothi electricity subsidies, totaling ₹19,000 crore, ensuring quality electricity supply. Yet BRS continues to spread false allegations."

"Harish Rao Creates a New Lie Every Day"

Bhatti Vikramarka accused BRS leader Harish Rao of spreading misinformation merely to stay in the media spotlight.

"While our Cabinet under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy works up to 18 hours a day for public welfare, Harish Rao, who served as a minister for ten years, is busy

fabricating false stories and baseless allegations because he cannot accept the loss of power."

BJP Accused of Handing Farmers Over to Corporate Interests

The Deputy CM also strongly criticized the BJP-led central government.

"If the Centre announces Minimum Support Prices (MSP), why does it not procure paddy through FCI? During Congress governments, FCI procured grains directly. Why has that system been weakened now?"

He stated that Telangana would continue to purchase every grain produced by farmers, regardless of the Centre's actions. He also pointed out that Telangana was among the few states procuring maize from farmers at support prices.

"Now They Want to Visit Procurement

Centres?"

Bhatti questioned the credibility of BJP and BRS leaders who were now visiting procurement centres.

"Where were they all this time? Our Congress government even purchased rain-damaged paddy at MSP. We have procured a record 72.30 lakh metric tonnes of paddy during the Rabi season and implemented a ₹22,000 crore farm loan waiver in a single phase."

He challenged opposition parties to pressure the Centre into procuring Telangana's paddy instead of criticizing the state government.

Major Push for Housing

Bhatti accused the previous government of misleading the poor in the name of double-bedroom housing schemes.

He said the Congress government had sanctioned 4.5 lakh Indiramma houses across the state with an allocation of ₹22,500 crore, providing ₹5 lakh assistance per house. He also announced that an additional 2,000 Indiramma houses would be allocated to every constituency this year.

"Our goal is to ensure that no poor family in Telangana remains without a house."

Support for Women's Empowerment

Bhatti revealed that women's self-help groups had received ₹67,000 crore in bank-linked loans within two and a half years. The government aims to increase this figure to ₹1.25 lakh crore within five years.

He also highlighted an innovative initiative under which women's groups purchase buses and operate them through the state transport corporation, creating a stable source of income.

Positive Response to Local Development Demands

Responding to requests made by MLA Kadiyam Srihari, Bhatti assured support for several development projects.

A feasibility study will be conducted immediately for the upgradation of the 232 KV substation at Raghunathpally.

Special funds will be sanctioned for shifting hazardous power lines passing over houses in villages.

The Congress government is strictly implementing the SC/ST Sub-Plan Act, ensuring substantial development funds for the constituency.

Bhatti Vikramarka reiterated that the Congress government remains committed to welfare, infrastructure development, farmer support, and social justice across Telangana.

## Immediate Response to Public Grievance – Drinking Water Supply Restored



Residents of City Homes, Hairbus Apartments, and surrounding colonies in the Vitalwadi area had been facing severe difficulties due to irregular drinking water supply over the past few days. Many families were forced to spend between ₹2,000 and ₹3,000 to procure private water tankers to meet their needs. When the matter was brought to the attention of former local Corporator Smt. Mahalakshmi Raman Goud, she immediately spoke with Water Works officials and directed them to resolve the issue urgently. Prompted by the Corporator's initiative, offi-

cialists inspected the site and carried out the necessary repairs.

Consequently, the drinking water supply has now been fully restored. Residents of the apartments and the neighborhood expressed their happiness, as they no longer needed to spend thousands of rupees on water. Locals appreciated the former Corporator's spirit of service in responding immediately to the public's hardship as it were her own.

On this occasion, the Water Works officials and Munnavar, who assisted in resolving the issue...

## Melie Kerr becomes No.1 all-rounder; Harmanpreet returns to top 10 in ICC rankings

Dubai: New Zealand star Melie Kerr dethroned West Indies skipper Healy Matthews to regain the top spot in the T20I all-rounders chart as the International Cricket Council (ICC) released the updated women's rankings on Tuesday. Kerr returns to the top position just days before the start of the T20 World Cup, with West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews dropping back to the No.2 slot after she sat out her side's final fixture of the recent tri-series in Ireland. Despite New Zealand's skipper claiming the throne, the race at the top of the all-rounders chart remains tight, with Kerr's lead sitting at just five rating points as the two influential skippers jostle for positions at the upcoming T20 World Cup in England and Wales that commences on June 12. While the Australian duo of Georgia Voll and Beth Mooney has continued to remain at top two positions in the batters ranking and will head to the tournament as number one and two batters. Indian skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has improved her position by one spot and is back in the top 10 list following her unbeaten half-century in the recent series decider against England in Taunton. National Politics Updates There are also gains for the England players who performed well in the series, as Alice Capsey, who was the Player of the Match in the series decider with a superb innings of 82 runs has moved up 13 places to improve to 30th on the list for T20I batters. Bangladesh Skipper Nigar Sultana has moved up two slots to come in at 18th position in the batters ranking. While England veteran Heather Knight moves to 21st position after moving up four spots. England spinner Linsey Smith will enter as the Number 1 T20I bowler as she has maintained her narrow advantage in the No.1 position ahead of Pakistan counterpart Sadia Iqbal. There are gains inside the top 10 for England duo Lauren Bell, who moves up one place to equal second and Charlie Dean, who has reached the fourth spot, while South Africa spinner Nonkululek Mlaba is up to fifth after she improved two rungs.

## Pawan Kalyan, Lokesh meet injured in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant accident; assure all assistance

Visakhapatnam: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and state Minister Lokesh on Tuesday called on the workers who were injured in an accident at Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. He visited KIMS Icon Hospital and called on the injured. He also interacted with their family members. The Deputy CM spoke to doctors and inquired about the condition of the injured. He assured the families of the victims that the government will bear the medical expenses and will support them in all ways. Later, talking to the media, Pawan Kalyan termed the accident, which claimed the lives of eight employees and left six others injured, as painful. He said that ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh each will be paid by the steel plant to the next of kin of the deceased, while Rs 10 lakh assistance will be provided to every injured.

The Deputy CM promised that measures will be taken to prevent such accidents in future. He said the government will find out if the man-



agement had taken all the safety measures. He said there would be follow-up action on the report to be submitted by a committee constituted by the Union Steel Ministry to conduct the probe. He underlined the need to go into all aspects during the investigation. Pawan Kalyan noted that everyone wants the steel plant to remain in public sector and gave an assurance that it will remain a public sector company. He said a meeting will be conducted with the employees of the steel plant to know

their problems. He termed the frequent industrial accidents in and around Visakhapatnam as alarming and stressed the need for management of the industries to do a safety audit and also for the officials concerned to ensure compliance with all safety regulations. State Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar and Visakhapatnam South MLA Vamsikrishna Srinivas Yadav accompanied Pawan Kalyan. Eight persons were killed and six others injured after a ladle carrying molten

steel exploded at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant on Monday. The accident occurred when a large quantity of molten steel leaked after the explosion of the ladle, which was carrying steel at a very high temperature. According to officials, molten iron was extremely hot at about 1,500 degrees Celsius. Earlier, Minister for Human Resources Development and Information Technology Nara Lokesh consoled the families of the deceased at King George Hospital (KGH) and called on the injured undergoing treatment at KMS Hospital and Seven Hills Hospital. Accompanied by Union Minister of State for Steel Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, state Home Minister Anitha, and others, Lokesh inquired about the health condition of the injured and directed the doctors to provide better medical care. He assured that the government will stand by the affected families in every possible way.

## Large turnout marks Yogandhra-2026 event in Madanapalle

Madanapalle: Annamaya district Collector Nishant Kumar said that everyone should make yoga a part of their daily routine and described it as an effective tool for building a healthy society. He took part in a mass yoga programme held on Monday in Madanapalle as part of 'Yogandhra-2026', being organised ahead of International Yoga Day 2026. Addressing the gathering, the Collector said that the district is moving forward towards building a healthier society through Yogandhra-2026. He expressed happiness over the growing awareness of yoga among the public and said the large turnout in the early morning reflected people's interest and commit-

ment towards yoga. The State government launched the Yogandhra programme with the aim of making yoga a part of people's lifestyle. The Collector said that programmes are being organised in line with the special theme assigned to the district. As part of the initiative, yoga events will also be conducted at Horsley Hills on June 11 and at Boyakonda on June 14. He urged people to practise yoga every day rather than limiting it to Yoga Day celebrations. Anganwadi workers in rural areas have to spread awareness about the importance of yoga and promote healthy living among the public. Yoga instructor Paul Brahma Kumar guided participants



through various yoga postures and explained their benefits. Among those present were Joint Collector Shiv Narayan Sharma, Madanapalle Sub Collector

Challa Kalyani, DRO Chandrasekhar Reddy, ICDS PD Haimavathi, DWMA PD Venkataratnam, DPO Radhama and other officials.

## KTR demands Congress rename itself 'All India Nazi Party'

Hyderabad: BRS Working President KT Rama Rao launched a scorching attack on the Congress top brass demanding that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) shed its ideological facade and officially rename itself the "All India Nazi Party" following controversial remarks by Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. Taking to social media platform X, KTR targeted Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, fiercely pointing out the hypocrisy between Gandhi's national slogan of "Mohabbat Ki Dukaan" (shop of love) and his handpicked Chief Minister's open embrace of a brutal dictator's legacy, calling it a transformation into "Hitler's Makaan" (Hitler's house). The political row erupted after Chief Minister Revanth Reddy openly cited German dictator Adolf Hitler and his "assassination squads" as a source of operational inspiration for his administration's functioning and local civic demolitions.



Seizing upon the development, KTR asserted that the Chief Minister's public admissions were a chilling confession of an inherently fascist governance mind-set and an unforgivable assault on India's foundational values. The BRS leader directly challenged Rahul Gandhi to break his tactical silence, warning that failing to re-

mand the Chief Minister amounts to a direct endorsement of totalitarian methods. "Dear @RahulGandhi Ji, Did your.. 'Mohabbat Ki Dukaan' officially become 'HITLER'S MAKAN..??' You cannot parade as the self-appointed guardian of the Constitution in Delhi while remaining silent as your nominated Chief Minister of Telangana, Revanth Reddy, openly glorifies blood-thirsty Adolf Hitler and cites his 'assassination squads' as a source of operational inspiration," KTR fired back in his post," said KTR. Andhra Pradesh News The BRS leader said that a democratic leader draws inspiration from actual statesmen, whereas only a "paranoid, power-drunk ruler" searches for administrative lessons in brutal dictators. KTR suggested that if celebrating totalitarian methods and destroying local neighborhoods like a war zone is the party's true blueprint for governance, they should drop their ideological facade entirely.

## Govt e-marketplace helps micro, small firms get orders worth Rs 8.69 lakh crore



New Delhi: The government e-marketplace (GeM) has given a major boost to inclusivity with the registration of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) on the platform surging from 2,396 in 2016-17 to over 11.9 lakh at present, according to a statement issued by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Tuesday. Procurement from MSEs has grown from Rs 69 crore to more than Rs 8.69 lakh crore at present, while the number of orders has increased from 2,994 to over 2.17 crore during the same period. The platform has also enabled participation of traditionally under-represented groups. Women-owned MSEs on GeM have increased from 268 in 2016-17 to over 2.16 lakh, with procurement value rising from Rs 8 crore to more than Rs 93,327 crore. Besides, the participation of startups has grown from 88 to over 40,000 entities, with procurement increasing from Rs 2 crore to over Rs 61,400 crore. Similarly, registered SC/ST MSEs have increased from 38 to over 66,000, with procurement value exceeding Rs 21,800 crore. These developments reflect the widening participation in public procurement facilitated through the platform, the statement said.

Beyond procurement, GeM has also supported public service delivery requirements, particularly in the health sector. The platform has facilitated procurement of over 324 crore vaccine doses and 199 crore syringes. It has also enabled procurement of medical kits for Vande Bharat trains, diagnostic equipment and a range of healthcare-related supplies and services, the statement said. National Politics Updates Technology continues to play an important role in the evolution of GeM. The platform is leveraging artificial intelligence-based tools, advanced analytics, digital monitoring systems and transparent auction mechanisms to improve efficiency, accountability and user experience across procurement processes. As India progresses towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, GeM remains focused on strengthening digital procurement systems through innovation, improved user experience and adoption of best practices. The platform continues to function as a digital marketplace supporting government institutions, businesses and entrepreneurs, the statement added.

Conceived as a major governance reform, GeM has transitioned public procurement from a largely manual and fragmented process to a digital and data-driven system. By reducing human interface, improving transparency and simplifying access to government procurement opportunities, the platform has enabled wider participation across enterprises and geographies. It continues to serve as a significant initiative in the area of digital procurement. GeM has also contributed to improving the ease of doing business by opening government procurement markets to enterprises of all sizes. Through online onboarding, transparent bidding mechanisms, digital contract management and end-to-end procurement processes, the platform has reduced entry barriers and facilitated participation of businesses in government supply chains, the statement added.

### Investor confidence soaring in Kurnool; youth can utilise job fairs: Min Bharath



Kurnool: Andhra Pradesh Industries, Commerce and Food Processing Minister TG Bharath on Monday said that Kurnool district has witnessed significant development over the past two years under the coalition government. Addressing the Kapu Balija Seva Sangham Merit Awards function in Kurnool, the Minister highlighted the government's efforts to attract large-scale investments and create employment opportunities for the youth. The Minister stated that Orvakal Industrial Hub has emerged as a major investment destination, with projects worth thousands of crores being brought to the region. He noted that a proposed Reliance project, initially estimated at Rs 2,500 crore, has now expanded beyond Rs 6,000 crore. In addition, Reliance has come forward with another project worth Rs 3,000 crore, reflecting growing investor confidence in the State's industrial policies. Criticising the previous government, Bharath said that despite being in power for five years, it failed to provide a water pipeline to Orvakal Industrial Park. The present government, he said, has taken up the project and is ensuring the required infrastructure for industries. He also alleged that Jai Raj Ispat Steel Company faced several hurdles during the previous regime, whereas the company is now expanding its operations with an investment of about Rs 6,000 crore due to renewed confidence in the present administration. Emphasising employment generation, the Minister said the State Government is working towards creating 20 lakh jobs. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh are continuously reviewing initiatives aimed at enhancing employment opportunities, he said. Bharath urged youth to make use of job fairs and informed that the government is coordinating with engineering colleges to impart industry-relevant skills. He further asserted that his family has remained in public life without any corruption allegations and said people can clearly distinguish between leaders who deliver results and those who merely make promises. The Minister added that he has been visiting every ward in Kurnool city to identify and resolve public grievances.

### Massive turnout at Srisaillam as 2,100 partake in 'Yoga Andhra' initiative



Srisaillam: Emphasizing the significance of ancient wellness in achieving a balanced life, Nandyal Joint Collector Suraj Dhanunjay stated that India has gifted the world the invaluable treasure of yoga. National Politics Updates Participating as the chief guest at the special "Yoga Andhra-2026" mega-event organized at Srisaillam on Monday, he asserted that yoga strengthens physical health while fostering deep mental peace. The large-scale event, executed under the direct guidance of the State Government, witnessed a turnout of nearly 2,100 practitioners. Elaborate arrangements were made across the temple premises, stretching from the Gangadhara Mandapam to the Nandi Mandapam. Addressing the gathering, Srisaillam Devasthanam Executive Officer M Srinivasa Rao expressed happiness over hosting the flagship program in the sacred presence of Sri Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy. He noted that the initiative is being smoothly implemented in coordination with the district administration and Endowments Department. The session commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by intricate demonstrations led by renowned yoga guru Gandhavalli Balasubrahmanyam. Participants performed diverse pranayama techniques—including Kapalabhati and Anulom-Vilom—alongside specialized asanas like Trikonasana and Shalabhasana. Dr Deevi Hayagreevacharyulu served as the commentator, elaborating on the spiritual benefits of the postures in the context of modern medical science.

## Pinarayi Vijayan accuses UDF govt of enabling 'RSS push in MG University

Thiruvananthapuram: Former Chief Minister and CPI(M) leader Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday accused the Congress-led UDF government of facilitating attempts to "saffronise" Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) in Kottayam, alleging the involvement of the Governor's office. In a social media post on Tuesday, Vijayan said secular and democratic forces must come forward against what he described as efforts by the Sangh Parivar to gain control over the state's higher education sector. He alleged that ever since the UDF government came to power, there have been attempts by the Governor, who is also the Chancellor of universities, to interfere in the functioning of MG University. Accusing the government of remaining silent, Vijayan said the UDF's reluctance to confront the Governor

was a betrayal of Kerala's secular values.

Vijayan alleged that the appointment of a temporary Vice-Chancellor at MG University from among a BJP-linked teachers' organisation was the beginning of an attempt to bring the university under Sangh Parivar influence. He claimed the government failed to provide a panel for the temporary VC appointment, limiting the possibility of challenging the decision legally. He further alleged that Sangh Parivar nominees had been inducted into the university Senate by ignoring established norms, claiming that 19 out of the 30 members were RSS supporters. The former Chief Minister said the previous LDF government had resisted similar attempts during its decade-long rule and had fought such moves both politically and legally. He accused the present



government of becoming a silent spectator while attempts were being made to influence universities. Vijayan also referred to earlier legal positions on the limited role of Governors in university administration and questioned the UDF government's stand. "The Chief Minister must clarify whether the government's allegiance is to the Constitution or to the RSS," he questioned. He added that taking control of universities has been a long-standing objective of the Sangh Parivar and alleged that, unlike the LDF government, the UDF was now facilitating such moves.

## Minister sets monthly progress targets for Nandyal officials

Nandyal: Emphasizing that the ultimate objective of governance is to bring qualitative change to citizens' lives, District In-Charge and State Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav directed officials to work with enhanced accountability.

Chairing a comprehensive review meeting at the Collectorate on Monday, Keshav evaluated key sectors alongside State Ministers NMD Farooq and BC Janardhan Reddy, and District Collector G Raja Kumari.

Keshav stated that under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, global investors are flocking to Andhra Pradesh. He stressed that this macroeconomic growth must translate into visible



improvements for farmers, labourers, auto drivers, and small traders.

Warning that negligence would invite strict action, the Minister announced that future bureaucratic transfers and postings will be strictly linked to monthly performance metrics. Reviewing public services, the Minister expressed displeasure over complaints regarding ration distribution

and declining satisfaction with APSRTC services, ordering immediate upgrades to toilets, seating, and drinking water at bus depots. He also directed the prompt restoration of power during rain-induced disruptions and timely execution of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS). During the session, Minister BC Janardhan Reddy pushed to clear 9,340

pending agricultural power connections. Collector G Raja Kumari reported that with the district receiving up to 9 cm of rainfall, Kharif crop preparations are underway. She added that a house-to-house voter verification drive for the district's 14.05 lakh voters will be conducted from June 15 to July 14, backed by the 1950 helpline.

## Telangana fertiliser app becomes national model: Tummala

Hyderabad: The Telangana government's fertiliser app, designed to ensure transparent and efficient distribution of fertilisers to farmers, has gained national recognition, Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao said on Monday. He stated that the app has become a model for the entire country, with neighbouring states now preparing to develop similar platforms after studying Telangana's success. The minister said the app has significantly improved accountability, stock visibility and timely access to fertilisers. It has also received appreciation from the Union Agriculture Ministry for curbing irregularities, preventing diversion of stocks and providing real-time information to farmers. Following Telangana's example, the Centre has decided to implement the Fertilisers



Scales Application System (FSAS) on a pilot basis in two districts across select states starting this Kharif season.

Tummala Nageswara Rao said the state has upgraded the app based on farmer feedback. New features include district-wise dealer stock scheduling, mandal-level mapping, booking through MeeSeva centres and telephone, and a dedicated helpline for clarifications. These improvements, he said, ensure farmers no

longer need to visit multiple shops or stand in long queues. The minister highlighted that farmers can now check dealer-wise fertiliser availability directly on their mobile phones, making the system more transparent and convenient. He added that earlier issues of fertiliser diversion and exploitation by middlemen have drastically reduced due to digital monitoring. On the urea supply, the minister said the state has been consistently coordi-

nating with the Centre. Against the allocation request of six lakh metric tonnes for April-June, Telangana has already received 3.89 lakh metric tonnes. A special nodal officer has been appointed in Delhi to expedite remaining supplies, while another officer is overseeing the rapid movement of stocks from ports to districts. Tummala criticised opposition parties for politicising a system that even the Centre has praised. He said the fertiliser app will bring long-term benefits to farmers nationwide by ensuring timely availability, transparency and efficient distribution. The minister reaffirmed that Telangana will continue to expand technology-driven services to strengthen the agriculture sector and safeguard farmer interests.

## Int'l bus terminal to come up at Gajularamaram; CM lines up impressive projects for Hyd, Cyb'bad

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has announced that work on a new international bus terminal sprawling across 100 acres at Gajularamaram will commence within the next three months. The Chief Minister affirmed that the state government will focus solely on development in Hyderabad and across the state over the next 24 months by rising entirely above political agendas. Addressing a massive public meeting after laying the foundation stones for the new Cyberabad Municipal Corporation building and other development works valued at Rs 1,674.74 crore on Monday, the Chief Minister noted that Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai, and Hyderabad are driving the nation's economy. He observed that while Delhi faces pollution, Mumbai struggles with floods, and Bengaluru, Chennai, and Kolkata experience severe traffic woes. To ensure systematic development for a rapidly expanding Hyderabad, the city has been divided into three corporations. These bodies will



cater to future urban needs and establish defined boundaries to ensure seamless coordination between the police and municipal departments.

The Chief Minister emphasised that merely boasting about a Global City is insufficient, and development must align with that vision. Under the master plan, the administration is executing the second phase of the Metro Rail project and constructing one

lakh houses for lower income group and middle income group sections within city limits. Modelled on the Rajiv Gruhakalpa scheme, housing will be provided to people in their existing localities. The government is formulating plans to reclaim encroached public land. The Deputy Chief Minister noted that such industrial accidents happen in France and China. "But ladle blast incident is something happening for the first time in the

steel industry. Machinery-wise, Bhilai Steel Plant and Visakhapatnam Steel Plant appear to be similar, while the rest of the steel plants have new and upgraded machineries," he observed. Twice a year, Visakhapatnam and Anakapalli districts register an industrial accident. There is a need to look beyond the incidents and probe into the recurring causes of industrial accidents in detail so that they can be prevented from happening, Pawan Kalyan stressed, underlining that monitoring what kind of measures are in place to prevent industrial accidents from repeating plays a critical role. "Whether safety audits are happening at prescribed intervals, whether experts are offering valid suggestions to overcome system failures, whether the management is considering measures to address the lapses and how the government is supervising them have to be examined," the Deputy Chief Minister underlined, informing that soon he would be meeting the workers

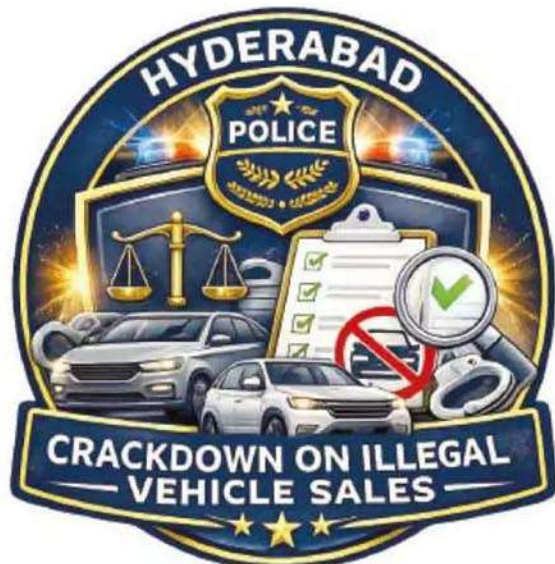
and union leaders of the plant to find out the ground realities of the VSP. Reiterating that he is one among those who does not want VSP to get privatised, Pawan Kalyan said, "Efforts will be taken to resolve the plant issues by discussing with the workers and challenges faced by them."

lands to construct these homes for the poor. He highlighted the critical need for advanced infrastructure in an area where local land prices have reached Rs 200 crore per acre, clarifying that the new corporation office will match strict corporate standards. The Chief Minister stated that Cyberabad is competing directly with America's Silicon Valley, as the region currently contributes 16.77 per cent of the nation's total IT exports. He concluded that his administration created the three corporations to develop infrastructure for the 1.34 crore people living within the Outer Ring Road and to ensure better overall coordination in governance. Politics

## Pre-owned vehicle transactions under Hyderabad police radar

Following 'Operation Kavach', Hyderabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar has issued a strict advisory for second-hand vehicle dealers. The new measures target stolen vehicle circulation, odometer tampering, and fraudulent sales. Learn the mandatory legal requirements for buyers and dealers to ensure compliance under the Motor Vehicles Act and BNS 2023.

Hyderabad: With the recent surprise inspections under 'Operation Kavach' revealed that several second-hand vehicle dealers are operating in blatant violation of mandatory regulations, to strictly comply with legal norms governing vehicle transactions, the Hyderabad police have stepped up scrutiny of such vehicles and issued an advisory warning dealers and buyers. According to police, to curb the circulation of stolen vehicles in the city and protect pre-owned automobile buyers from fraudulent practices, the Hyderabad City Police has initiated stringent



measures. Hyderabad City Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar issued a comprehensive advisory on Monday outlining crucial legal guidelines. The advisory explicitly cites the statutory provisions governing the purchase and sale of pre-owned vehicles under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, and the BNS, 2023. The Police Commissioner warned that severe legal action will be initiated against entities purchasing

vehicles without proper verification of ownership or tampering with odometers to misrepresent mileage. He further urged citizens to exercise utmost caution while purchasing second-hand vehicles. As per the advisory, the key directives and legal mandates - stringent verification of identity and ownership, legal status and financial clearance checks, prohibitions on odometer and identification tampering, mandatory RTO authorisation and record maintenance, custodial lia-

bility and electronic trip registers, and enforcement and penalties. Sajjanar emphasised that publishing misleading advertisements, utilising deceptive images, or providing false information on social media to lure consumers constitutes a punishable offense. The Commissioner said, "Dealers found violating these guidelines will face immediate revocation of their business licences. Furthermore, criminal cases will be registered under the relevant Sections of the BNS, 2023, including - Section 303: Theft, Section 317: Receiving/Retaining Stolen Property, Section 318: Cheating and Sections 221/222: Obstructing Public Servants from Discharging Duty," said Sajjanar. The city police said that they will continue to conduct rigorous surprise checks to ensure absolute compliance and maintain public safety. All dealers and stakeholders are expected to cooperate fully with law enforcement authorities.

## Civic chief tests drinking water quality



Nellore: Municipal Commissioner YO Nandan, along with municipal officials, inspected the Head Water Works (HWW) located within the premises of old Municipal Office on Monday. During inspection, officials collected drinking water samples from the overhead water tank and conducted quality tests using PPM kits in the presence of the Commissioner. Following the tests, the Commissioner personally examined colour and odour of the water and expressed satisfaction after tasting it. Nandan assured the citizens that they need not worry over the quality of drinking water being supplied by the Municipal Corporation. He welcomed the public to personally witness water quality tests that are conducted regularly at overhead water tanks across the city. SE Rahamthu Jani, Amenities Secretaries, and other municipal staff participated in the inspection.

## Shilpa Shetty shares a glimpse of her perfect birthday celebration with family

Mumbai: Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra shared a heartwarming glimpse of her perfect birthday celebration, which she enjoyed with her family by her side. On Tuesday, she posted a video from the special day on Instagram. The clip shows Shilpa cutting the cake with her husband Raj Kundra, while her kids sing the birthday song for her. The doting mom also eats the cake and receives a special gift that leaves her surprised. Alongside the sweet video, the 'Dhadkan' actress wrote, "Just the perfect Birthday, with my loved ones. Thankyouuuuuuu for all your good wishes and bless-

ings. Heart is filled with soooo much love Heartfelt gratitude." Yesterday, Shilpa had posted a funny, quirky video of herself in which she was seen sitting on her lap and smiling. The 'Hungama 2' actress captioned the post, "Birthday or no, growing up was never part of the plan."

On her 51st birthday, Shilpa Shetty was showered with heartfelt wishes from her husband Raj Kundra, her sister Shamita Shetty, and other close friends and family on social media. Raj Kundra marked the occasion by sharing a special video montage



where he expressed his admiration for the actress and highlighted the qualities she brings into

his life. He captioned the post, "A different Birthday post this year ... Not about celebrations or moments. But about what you truly mean and stand for in my life. Strength when life gets difficult. Grace when emotions overflow. Faith when everything feels uncertain. And light

even in the darkest phases. You have always carried the energy of a Devi nurturing, protecting, forgiving and fiercely strong all at once Happy Birthday my love. May Maa bless you with everything your heart deserves @theshilpashetty." Extending her greetings, Shamita Shetty wrote, "Happy Birthday my darling Munki. My forever blessing. For me you've always been the blueprint for strength and grace, inspiring me in so many ways. Thank you for being my sister, my guiding light. Can't imagine my life without you. Love you to infinity."

## Winning has become second nature for India, says head coach Muzumdar ahead of Women's T20 WC

New Delhi: India head coach Amol Muzumdar believes the team's sustained success over the last few years has helped create a winning culture within the squad, as the reigning ICC Women's Cricket World Cup champions prepare for another shot at global silverware at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. India enter the tournament carrying the tag of world champions after ending their long wait for a senior women's ICC title by lifting the 50-over World Cup last year. The achievement has elevated expectations around the side, but Muzumdar insists his players are well-equipped to handle the pressures that come with competing on cricket's biggest stage. "There's pressure in every tournament, and the players are used to it. They've been playing international cricket for some time now. But in a tournament like the World Cup, we'll be going in as ODI World Cup champions for the first time," Muzumdar told JioStar.

The coach believes India's recent success has not been



built solely on major tournament performances but on a mindset developed through consistently treating every series as an important assignment. "Winning is a habit. Over the last three years, we've tried to win every series and to treat each one as extremely important, regardless of who we're playing against. Once you get into the habit of winning series, it becomes second nature," he said. Under Harmanpreet Kaur and

Muzumdar, India have established themselves as one of the most consistent teams in women's cricket, with the World Cup triumph serving as the culmination of years of progress. The focus now is on maintaining those standards and ensuring the team approaches the T20 World Cup with the same intensity that fueled their success in the 50-over format.

Muzumdar also highlighted the

commitment shown by the squad during its build-up to the tournament, praising the players' dedication during the preparation phase. "The team has been working very hard on this for the past month. I've never seen a team, irrespective of gender, work so hard and be so dedicated towards one goal," he mentioned. While India will rely heavily on experienced campaigners such as Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma and Jemimah Rodrigues, the squad also includes players who were not part of the World Cup-winning group. Integrating those players into the team's culture has been a key focus for the coaching staff. Discussing the message delivered to squad members who missed out on last year's historic triumph, Muzumdar emphasised the importance of unity and knowledge-sharing within the dressing room.

"It's about bringing the youngsters together. This team has seniors who are always ready to share whatever experiences

they have gained," Muzumdar stated. The coach pointed to wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia as an example of a player capable of making an impact despite spending significant time away from the international arena because of injury setbacks. "There are a few new faces in this team. Yastika has been playing for many years, but she was sidelined due to injury. She knows what international cricket is all about," he added. For Muzumdar, the message to every player in the squad remains straightforward as India chase another ICC title, as he said, "So, there's only one message: go out there, give your best, and try to win games for India. It's as simple as that." National Politics Updates With the confidence of world champions and a squad blending experience with emerging talent, India will head into the Women's T20 World Cup aiming to prove that last year's triumph was not the end of a journey, but the beginning of a sustained era of success.

## 'Met Virat but couldn't speak, felt nervous': Pooja Vastrakar recalls star-struck moment

New Delhi: Even as one of India's most experienced all-rounders and a regular presence in the national setup, Pooja Vastrakar isn't immune to feeling starstruck. The Indian woman cricketer, currently captaining Chambal Ghariyals in the Women's MPL T20, recalled a chance meeting with Virat Kohli in South Africa and admitted that nerves got the better of her, preventing her from striking up a conversation with one of Indian cricket's biggest icons. National Politics Updates "I met Virat in South Africa. But I didn't talk to him. Because we were at the airport, and I thought he was occupied. I was nervous, maybe, so I didn't speak to him because he's someone with a busy schedule. And I never felt the need for it. Because if you go to the NCA (BCCI CoE), you meet all the players there. There are coaches. We have so many senior players in our team. So, they help us with small things. So, I didn't talk to him at that level," Pooja, who also represents RCB, told IANS during an exclusive interaction.

The candid admission offered a rare glimpse into the human side of one of India's most experienced all-rounders, who has represented the country across formats and featured in the Women's Premier League for both the Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Away from franchise cricket, Pooja is currently focused on leading the Chambal Ghariyals in



the Women's MPL T20, a tournament she believes is an important stepping stone for aspiring cricketers. "This platform is very big for girls. And when they get a platform, they get a chance to show their skills. And when there's a tournament like this, all the scout members are involved, and they have an eye on the players. And I think even they know that this is a big platform for the players and that they're working hard. So, any good innings or a good moment, even if it's a ball, it's good for them to go to the camps, whenever there are any," she said.

Asked what separates future India players from the rest, Pooja pointed to discipline as the defining quality. "I think discipline is very important. Because a lot of people work hard, a lot of people have talent. But the discipline, if you're bowling an over, can you deliver all the 6 balls exactly the way the captain wants you to? If you're bat-

ting, if the score is 120, can you stay till the end and chase it down? That is where discipline is crucial in making a player a star," Pooja expressed. As captain, Pooja said her responsibilities extend far beyond her individual performances. "When we play for India, we have our own responsibilities, and that sense builds in. But when you're a captain for a franchise in MPL or even the state team, for that matter, you have to act responsibly, not just for yourself but also for the 15 members plus supporting staff.

"And there are a lot of responsibilities. Thinking about the team, taking it to the finals, all the ups and downs. The atmosphere should be very good. So, things are very different when it comes to responsibility. But as a player, I've liked taking responsibility since childhood. So, I'm enjoying my captaincy," she noted. One of the most dependable all-rounders,

Pooja said she has never felt that any part of her contribution to the national team has gone unnoticed. "No, I've never felt that way. Whenever they needed me to bat, I have scored for them. Even in bowling, in all phases, in all formats. And I have always reaped rewards from it," she stated. Looking back on her own journey, the 25-year-old said the belief shown in her abilities from an early stage helped her become the player she is today.

"Even then, everyone believed in Pooja. They knew that she was very talented and would play for India one day. And not only will she play, but she'll also become an impactful player. And touchwood, that's what happened. So, I'm grateful, yeah. I've seen a lot of difference at a smaller level in myself from that time to now. Because when you make your debut, there are ups and downs. It's a little difficult to handle. But as you gain experience, your attitude changes and you become cool, calm, and composed," she mentioned. Though she couldn't find herself a spot in the squad, Pooja backed the Indian women's team to continue their impressive run and bring home another ICC trophy as they gear up for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, starting from Friday. "My message is that they are doing a good job, and they should continue playing the same way. And bring the T20 World Cup home just like they brought home the ODI World Cup," Pooja said.

**'Life has completely changed after ODI WC, we'll continue this run of winning trophies': Harmanpreet Kaur**



New Delhi: India captain Harmanpreet Kaur believes the team's historic ICC Women's Cricket World Cup triumph last year has transformed the outlook of the side, as the players prepare for another shot at global glory at the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026. National Politics Updates After years of near misses and heartbreak on the biggest stages, India finally broke through by securing their maiden senior women's ICC title with a 50-over World Cup win. As India gear up for the T20 World Cup, skipper Harmanpreet said the breakthrough success has had a profound impact on the squad's confidence and belief. "Yeah, 100 per cent. I think everybody will agree with me that life has completely changed after winning our first ODI World Cup. Hopefully, we'll continue this run of winning trophies. This is what I want as a captain, and I think it's what everyone in our team has been dreaming of. Hopefully, we'll continue moving in this direction," Harmanpreet told JioStar. The experienced skipper has been one of the central figures in India's rise over the past decade. Having featured in multiple ICC events and witnessed several campaigns end in disappointment, Harmanpreet now leads a side carrying the confidence that comes from knowing it can win on the biggest stage. That confidence has been evident in India's preparations for the T20 World Cup. The team recently began its warm-up campaign with a victory over the West Indies in Cardiff, with several squad members delivering encouraging performances. The result added to the growing optimism surrounding a team that now enters major tournaments with heightened expectations rather than lingering doubts. India's squad blends experienced campaigners such as Harmanpreet, Smriti Mandhana and Deepti Sharma with emerging talents who have impressed in recent international assignments. The management will hope that the combination can help sustain the momentum generated by last year's World Cup success. With the T20 World Cup fast approaching, India will be aiming to build on the most successful chapter in their history and add another ICC trophy to their collection.