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## EAM Jaishankar, US counterpart rubio discuss strategic partnership, issues of mutual interest

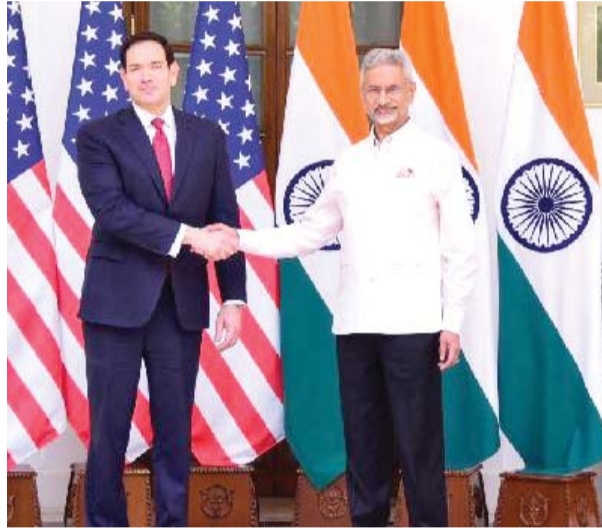
New Delhi, May 24 (GNS): External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday discussed the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and regional, global, and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

EAM Jaishankar stated that he looked forward to attending the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting along with his colleagues from Australia, Japan, and the US here on Tuesday.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, US Ambassador to India Sergio Goro, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal and other officials

attended the meeting. In a post on X, Jaishankar stated: "Good discussions with Secretary Rubio of USA in New Delhi. Reviewed the entire spectrum of our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, including trade and energy, defence and security, critical minerals and AI, nuclear & people-to-people, counter-terror and counter-narcotics cooperation.

"Regional, global and multilateral issues of mutual interest were also discussed. Have a detailed readout at the press conference thereafter. Look forward to joining Secretary Rubio and our colleagues from Australia and Japan



for the QUAD Foreign Ministers' meeting on Tuesday," he added. Jaishankar, Rubio, and their Australian and Japanese counterparts, Penny Wong and

Toshimitsu Motegi, respectively, will attend the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting scheduled to be hosted by India on March 26.

Earlier in the day, Jais-

hankar outlined India's five-point approach on key regional and global issues, stressing that New Delhi advocates dialogue and diplomacy for conflict resolution, supports uninterrupted maritime commerce, and strongly opposes the weaponisation of trade and resources. Addressing a joint press briefing with his US counterpart after delegation-level talks held at Hyderabad House, he said India and the United States continue to maintain regular engagement and strategic coordination across a broad range of sectors.

"This is the Secretary's first visit to India, but ever

since he has assumed office, we have been in regular touch. This has included occasions in Washington, D.C., and New York, and also on the sidelines of other events, the most recent one being in France. We have had a continuous engagement which has facilitated our overseeing the broad-based and growing cooperation between our two nations," Jaishankar said. Highlighting the political understanding between New Delhi and Washington, the External Affairs Minister said the India-US strategic partnership is built on converging interests in several areas of mutual importance.

## Congress will not rest till Pradhan resigns: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI, May 24: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his party will not rest until Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns and a foolproof system is put in place to prevent paper leaks like in NEET. He shared a video of students protesting in Hyderabad, highlighting the NEET paper leak and demanding Pradhan's resignation. They also raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pradhan.

"When millions of youth are on the streets, the future of 22 lakh children is at stake and the PM remains silent, then the government is not focused on responding but is busy evading," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said.



"Until Dharmendra Pradhan resigns and a foolproof system is established to prevent paper leaks like NEET, we will not stop," Gandhi said in a post in Hindi on X.

The Congress has been demanding that Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan step down or be sacked after the NEET-UG exam was cancelled due to paper leak.

## Saudi Arabia completes preparations for pilgrims' move to Mina for Hajj 2026

MINA, May 24 (GNS): The Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced on Sunday that all field and operational preparations for transporting pilgrims to the tent city of Mina have been completed, as the rituals of Hajj commence on Monday.

Pilgrims have finalized their preparations to depart for Mina from their residences in Makkah to observe the Day of Tarwiyah on Monday, marking the beginning of the annual Hajj pilgrimage. Hundreds of thousands of domestic pilgrims will join more than 1.5



million foreign pilgrims who have arrived in the Kingdom from across the globe for this year's Hajj. Following the example of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), pilgrims

are reciting the talbiyah and glorifying God as they make their way to the Tent City.

The Ministry of Hajj has implemented an integrated system dedicated to organiz-

ing the movement of pilgrims to their camps and monitoring the quality of services provided at the holy sites, in coordination with various relevant authorities. The ministry's efforts include overseeing the movement of pilgrims from their accommodations and hospitality centers to Mina, ensuring smooth access to the camps, providing guidance and awareness services, and assisting pilgrims in reaching their designated locations in accordance with the approved operational plans for the 2026 Hajj season.

## CEC Gyanesh Kumar reviews SIR preparations in Uttarakhand

DEHRADUN, May 24 (GNS): Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar reviewed the preparations for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls at a high-level meeting here on Sunday. The review meeting took place at the State Guest House in Bijapur on the second day of the CEC's visit to Uttarakhand.

Kumar said the main objective of the SIR is to refine the voters' list by identifying absent, shifted, deceased, duplicate and foreign voters. The CEC appealed to



all voters to cooperate with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and provide their latest passport-size photographs

during the upcoming revision. Chief Electoral Officer BVR C Purushottam delivered a detailed presentation

during the meeting. He informed the chief election commissioner that officials completed 89 per cent of the mapping during the pre-SIR phase in the state. The state completed preparations for printing the enumeration forms, Purushottam added.

The first phase of training for District Election Officers (DEOs), Deputy DEOs, and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) is complete. Training for BLOs and other field staff is currently underway across the state.

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## Trump says US-Iran deal largely finalized, Hormuz set to reopen

WASHINGTON, May 24 (GNS) Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman participated in a joint call on Saturday with US President Donald Trump and several regional leaders to discuss ongoing efforts aimed at reaching an agreement to end the conflict involving Iran. The call included Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Jordan's King Abdullah II, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir.

During the discussions, leaders reviewed the latest regional developments and expressed appreciation for Trump's efforts to maintain consultations and coordination with regional leaders. The participants also praised mediation efforts led by Pakistan and diplomatic initiatives undertaken by Qatar aimed at securing an agreement that would end escalation and strengthen regional secu-



city and stability.

Separately on Saturday, Trump said an agreement between the United States and Iran to end the war had been "largely negotiated," pending final details.

"An Agreement has been largely negotiated, subject to finalization between the United States of America, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the various other countries," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Trump said he discussed the prospective agreement with regional leaders during a "very good call".

"Final aspects and details of the Deal are currently being discussed, and will be announced shortly. In addition to many other elements of the Agreement, the Strait of Hormuz will be opened," Trump said.

## West Bengal orders holding centres for Illegal foreigners awaiting deportation

Kolkata, May 24 (GNS)The West Bengal Government has directed district administrations across the state to begin setting up holding centres for apprehended foreign nationals and released foreign prisoners awaiting deportation or repatriation.

In a communication issued by the Home and Hill Affairs Department to District Magistrates, authorities have been asked to initiate action for creating designated facilities in line with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) guidelines dealing with illegal foreign nationals, including suspected Bangladeshi immigrants and the Rohingya.

The letter specifically referred to procedures related to the deportation of "Bangladeshi or the Rohingya apprehended for staying illegally in this country". "It is requested to take initiative and appropriate action for setting up holding centres in the district for apprehended foreigners as well as released foreign prisoners awaiting deportation or repatriation," the com-



munication said, citing the MHA guidelines.

The move comes as state and central agencies continue monitoring undocumented migration and the status of foreign nationals who remain in custody or under administrative watch after completing prison sentences or facing immigration-related proceedings.

The MHA has, over the years, issued multiple advisories to states and union territories on identifying illegal immigrants, maintaining records of detained foreign nationals and speeding up deportation procedures through coordination with central agencies and foreign mis-

sions. The Centre had also earlier instructed states to ensure that foreign nationals are not released into the general population after completing jail terms if deportation formalities are still pending.

Several states have already established detention or holding facilities for such cases. In Assam, detention centres linked to the NRC process and Foreigners Tribunals have remained politically and legally contentious for years. Similar drives targeting undocumented foreign nationals have also been carried out in Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir under immigration and security-related regulations.

# Amit Shah says UCC will not affect tribals, urges community not to fall for conspiracies

NEW DELHI, May 24 (GNS): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday asserted that the proposed Uniform Civil Code (UCC) will not affect tribals in any way and urged the community not to fall for "conspiracies" and misinformation being spread over the issue.

Addressing a tribal conclave — Janjati Sanskritik Samagam — organised by Janjati Suraksha Manch to mark the 150th birth anniversary year of Birsa Munda at Red Fort grounds, Shah said special provisions have been made in BJP-ruled states implementing the UCC to keep tribal communities out of its ambit.

"A conspiracy has now begun claiming that the Uniform Civil Code will deprive tribal communities of their culture, traditions and their right to live according to their customs," Shah said.

"Today, from this stage, as the home minister in the Narendra Modi government, I want to make it absolutely clear that no provision of the UCC is going to be imposed upon tribal communities or Vanvasi society," he said. Wherever BJP governments (in states) have implemented the UCC, the Narendra Modi dispensation has ensured that all tribal communities remain outside its purview, Shah



said. The home minister urged tribal communities not to fear the proposed law and appealed to people to spread awareness in villages and forest regions. "I want to tell everyone spreading confusion that the UCC will not interfere with the tradi-

tions and customs of any tribal or Vanvasi brother or sister," he said.

"Take this message to every village, every region, the hills and forests, and make every tribal community aware that there is no need to fear the UCC," Shah added. Referring

to Naxalism, Shah said the country is moving towards becoming free from the problem and claimed tribal development has suffered for decades due to violence. "Today, in this Kumbh of tribal communities, I can proudly say that our country is moving towards becoming fully free from the Naxal problem," he said. "Those who stalled the development of tribal society through violence caused the deaths of thousands of tribal people. We are now moving completely out of that crisis. Now the time has come for rapid development in tribal regions, hills and forests," Shah added.

The home minister also

spoke against religious conversions in tribal areas and said no one has the right to forcibly convert another person's faith. "Our Constitution makers gave every individual the right to live with dignity according to their original faith and traditions. No greed, temptation or inducement should be used to change anyone's religion," Shah said. "Those who are trying to create divisions should understand that today's gathering of tribal communities sends a very strong message to them," he said, adding that tribal communities have remained deeply connected to nature worship and traditional beliefs.

# India trusts its youth to lead country to greater heights: LG Sinha

SRINAGAR, May 24: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said that India trusts its youth to lead the country to greater heights.

Addressing the 'Special National Integration Camp' organised by National Cadet Corps (NCC) Directorate, Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh, the LG said, "India places its hope and confidence in its youth, trusting that the young generation will lead the nation to greater heights. NCC cadets must honour that trust by living the values of the NCC and spreading across communities."

During his interaction with NCC cadets from across the country, Sinha emphasised that this special camp is a living symbol of India's spirit, where every cadet is not just witnessing history but actively shaping it.

Sinha said that for India, diversity is the greatest strength and for many centuries, our greatest strength lies in turning diversity into unity, weaving many cultures into one shared national spirit. "The values of unity in diversity and the leadership qualities you have learned at this camp must be put to use in improving society.

# Art 370 abrogation led to revival of development, change of mindset: Dr Jitendra

KATHUA, May 24 : Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, and Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that abrogation of Article 370 led to revival of development with change of mindset in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Minister was addressing a training camp under the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Mahabhiyan-2026 at Lakhanpur on Sunday. Dr Jitendra Singh highlighted the transformative changes witnessed in Jammu & Kashmir under the leader-



ship of Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the abrogation of Article 370 brought not only developmental transformation in Jammu & Kashmir but also a profound change in mindset, giving people the feeling of belonging as equal citizens of

India. This, he said, resulted in renewed self-confidence, self-esteem and aspirational resurgence among the people.

He observed that in recent years, young boys and girls from Jammu & Kashmir have overcome their fears and excelled in various fields across the coun-

try. Recalling the passage of the legislation on Article 370, he said they had considered themselves fortunate to witness a historic moment that ushered in complete transformation in the region. He described Article 370 as contradictory to democratic values and a tool that enabled exploitation by vested interests.

Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed out that although interviews for several government posts had been abolished nationally from 2016, the reform could not be implemented in Jammu & Kashmir due to Article 370. He also referred to the issue of regional discrimination in earlier years, noting that people are now wit-

nessing positive changes. Highlighting the journey of governance since 2014, the Minister said the country had moved from an atmosphere of pessimism, negativity and corruption towards optimism, development and nation-building. He remarked that the last 12 years have significantly enhanced India's value and standing.

Remembering the contribution of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Dr. Jitendra Singh said the Modi Government ensured that he received due recognition by naming the Chenani-Nashri Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir after him – the first major project in the region to bear his name.

# IAF Chief Bats For Self-Reliance In Defence Capabilities

BENGALURU, May 24 (GNS): Air Chief Marshal A P Singh, chief of IAF, has emphasised self-reliance as a strategic necessity for developing resilient indigenous defence capabilities. He was speaking during the 48th Flight Test Course graduation ceremony here on Saturday. Eleven test pilots and six flight test engineers of the 48th Flight Test Course graduated from the Air Force Test Pilots School (AFTPS) on completion of a rigorous 48-week multidisciplinary training curriculum.

According to an official statement issued on Sunday, this year the graduating course comprised a cohort of 17 officers, in-



cluding 14 officers from the Indian Air Force, one officer from the Indian Army and two officers from the Indian Navy. These graduates will join the Aviation Wing of the Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment, which is one of the premier units of the Indian Air Force. "Emphasising 'Atmanirbharta' as a strategic necessity for developing resilient indigenous defence

capabilities, Singh highlighted the onerous responsibility that the test crew needs to shoulder to proliferate the nation's indigenisation drive and strengthen the aerospace ecosystem," the statement said. The IAF chief highlighted the need to optimise 'design to delivery' time cycles while upholding the highest standards of safety and quality of equipment. He further stressed the importance of professional competence to ensure that aircraft and systems meet the operational requirements of the services, while urging the officers to uphold the virtues of honesty, integrity, precision and excellence.

# NEET Paper Leak Case: Court Sends Accused Shubham Khairnar To Judicial Custody Till Jun

NEW DELHI, May 24 (GNS): A Delhi court on Sunday sent accused Shubham Khairnar to judicial custody till June 6 in the NEET paper leak case. Special Judge Ruchi Aggarwal allowed the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) plea seeking judicial custody of the accused.

Earlier, on May 14, a court had sent Khairnar and four others to CBI custody for seven days, observing that the allegations indicated the role of an "organised gang" involved in leaking and circulating confidential examination papers for monetary gain.

Khairnar's custodial interrogation was extended by five days on May 20 after the CBI stated that the accused need-



ed to be further examined to identify and apprehend other co-accused to whom he had sold the NEET-UG 2026 papers. The agency also cited the need to recover and analyse digital devices and evidence, including communication records and financial trail connected to the "paper leak network". The CBI had further submitted that the

larger conspiracy and source of the leaked question paper had to be unearthed, and the accused had to be taken to various parts of the country, including Nasik in Maharashtra. According to the CBI, Khairnar also had to be interrogated to identify locations where questions were revealed to certain candidates.

Meanwhile, court sources

said that Pune-based physics lecturer Manisha Sanjay Havaldar, arrested on Friday, was presently in transit remand and is likely to be produced before the court concerned on Monday.

They added that five other accused will also be produced before the court after their CBI custody ends on May 25.

The CBI has so far arrested 10 accused in the case. The NEET (UG) 2026 exam for admission to undergraduate courses in medical colleges, held on May 3, was cancelled two days later amid allegations of paper leak. The government has asked the CBI to carry out a comprehensive inquiry into the "irregularities".

# No power can stop India from being biggest exporter of weapons in 25-30 years: Rajnath

SHIRDI (Maharashtra), May 23 : Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said no power can stop India, once considered an importer of weapons, from becoming the biggest exporter in 25-30 years.

After inaugurating an ammunition manufacturing unit in Shirdi, Singh said a nation that makes its weapons writes its own destiny. He said the role of private players in defence manufacturing was negligible a few years back, which now stands at 25-30 per cent, while the government aims to increase it further to 50 per cent.

"The private sector is not just a supplier of nuts and



bolts in defence, but also a producer of state-of-the-art weapons systems," he added. Singh said India was considered a weapons importer, but no power can now stop it from being the biggest exporter in 25-30 years. He said when the government's vision and the private sector's innova-

tion align, then the country reaches new heights.

During the rule of the British East India Company, potassium nitrate was used as raw material to make gunpowder, and the company strengthened its military capability, Singh said.

He said India has come a long way as far as its

defence industry is concerned. Singh said while ordnance factories existed even before Independence and the defence industry is deeply rooted in the country, after Independence, there was no balance between the country's old capabilities and modern requirements.

This was because private players did not get the opportunities as sector was restricted to PSUs and ordnance factories, Singh said.

He listed steps undertaken by the Union government to increase private participation in the defence sector, including policy-related reforms and FDI liberalisation.

# Mamata says INDIA bloc likely to meet in early June, vows opposition fight; BJP hits back

KOLKATA, May 24 (GNS): Former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said members of the INDIA bloc were likely to meet in the first week of June to discuss a joint strategy, while asserting that the opposition camp was prepared for a prolonged political battle. "We are ready to fight, and we will not give up till the end," Banerjee said in a Facebook Live address.

Using the platform to launch a fresh attack on the BJP, the TMC supreme alleged large-scale electoral manipulation and claimed the Trinamool Congress's popular mandate had been overturned in around 150 assembly constituen-

cies. "Winning seats were turned into losing seats and losing ones into winning seats," she alleged while claiming that otherwise the TMC would have secured between 220 and 230 seats.

Rejecting the allegations, senior BJP leader Keya Ghosh accused Banerjee of refusing to accept the electoral verdict and attempting to explain away the defeat through conspiracy theories. Ghosh questioned why the TMC chief was raising concerns over the electoral process now when her party accepted as legitimate the elections it won in 2011, 2016 and 2021.

"She is unable to face defeat and is not ready to ac-



cept it. If the elections of 2011, 2016 and 2021 were fair, why are you suddenly raising questions now? By floating these conspiracy theories, she is disregarding the Constitution. For her victory means, booth jamming, violence and assault on political opponents," Ghosh said.

The TMC chairperson reiterated allegations of irregularities in voter rolls and election procedures, claiming that the electoral process had been compromised. "Nearly 60 lakh names were deleted initially (through the SIR process). Though many were restored later, we have information suggesting manipulation and irregularities at different stages," she alleged. Banerjee said the TMC would pursue legal remedies in constituencies where questions remained over the conduct of elections. She also accused the BJP of using political pressure and intimidation against opponents. "The

more the BJP tortures TMC in Bengal, the more problems it will face in New Delhi," she added.

The former chief minister alleged that party workers and grassroots activists were being targeted after the regime change in the state. "Twenty days have passed since counting. Our party workers and elected representatives are being tortured and intimidated, but we are holding on," she claimed.

Banerjee alleged that TMC-run civic bodies and local institutions were facing administrative hurdles and accused the BJP government of shrinking democratic space.

# Sonowal stresses role of youth in building self-reliant India at Rozgar

GUWAHATI, May 24: Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday emphasised the role of the youth in building a self-reliant and developed India. He said the youth are the driving force behind the country's accelerated growth journey and urged them to continue contributing meaningfully.

Speaking at the Rozgar Mela here, the Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister said, "Youth are the driving force behind building a strong, self-reliant and developed India. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, the youth have emerged as the key force powering the country's growth journey." He said continuous initiatives such as Startup In-



dia, Digital India and skill development programmes have empowered the younger generation with confidence and strengthened the path towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Sonowal said with the Rozgar Melas, the Modi-led government has provided employment opportunities to lakhs of young men and women through a

transparent and merit-based recruitment system.

"The transparent recruitment process has instilled a renewed sense of trust among the youth. We firmly believe that the creativity, energy and dedication of the youth will take the nation to new heights in the journey towards Amrit Kaal, with the goal of establishing India as a developed and leading global nation by 2047," Sonowal added. The Union minister handed appointment letters to 177 candidates in various departments, including Indian Railways, Department of Posts, Oil India Limited, State Bank of India, Ministry of Defence, and Airports Authority of India at the programme.

# All-round Archer helps RR secure last playoffs spot

Mumbai, May 24 (GNS) : A fine bowling effort by Jofra Archer (3-17) as Rajasthan Royals defeated Mumbai Indians by 30 runs in a must-win match at the Wankhede Stadium and sealed a berth in the Playoffs of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 on Sunday. Archer, who played a brilliant cameo (32 off 15 balls) to lead a fine recovery and help Rajasthan Royals to 205/8 after being asked to bat first, struck a wicket each in his first two overs and then came back to claim the crucial wicket of Hardik Pandya and end Mumbai Indians' hopes of chasing the stiff target. Suryakumar Yadav anchored MI's chase with a



win at LSG last night, RR (14 points) went into this match with their back to the wall, but they fought back brilliantly to make a

brilliant 60 (42 balls) and, with help from Will Jacks (33) and Hardik Pandya (34), pulled MI back from a precarious 38/4. With Archer bagging three and Nandre Burger, Brijesh Sharma, and Yash Raj Punj claiming a double each, RR restricted Mumbai Indians to 175/9 in 20 overs, sealing victory in a must-win match. With this win, the Rajasthan Royals moved to 16 points from seven wins in 14 matches and clinched the fourth spot in the playoffs, setting up a meeting with Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Eliminator in New Chandigarh on Wednesday. With Punjab Kings moving to 15 points with a

# FIFA approves Iran's request to shift World Cup base camp to Mexico



New Delhi, May 24 (GNS) FIFA has approved Iran's request to relocate its training base for the 2026 FIFA World Cup from the United States to Mexico, a move driven by growing concerns over travel logistics, visa procedures, and wider geopolitical sensitivities surrounding the tournament. The decision was announced by Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran chief Mehdi Taj, who confirmed that Iran received clearance following discussions with FIFA and tournament officials in Istanbul, as well as a follow-up virtual meeting with senior FIFA representatives. Iran had originally planned to set up its World Cup base in Tucson, Arizona, but the team will now operate out of Tijuana, Mexico, during the tournament, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico from June 11 to July 19. "All team base camps for the countries partici-

# DC Beat KKR By 40 Runs Despite Rahul, Kuldeep, Ngidi Heroics

Kolkata, May 24 (GNS) Riding on KL Rahul's fluent half century and a clinical bowling performance led by Lungi Ngidi and Kuldeep Yadav, Delhi Capitals signed off their IPL 2026 campaign with a clinical 40 run win over Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens on Sunday. Inserted into batting first, DC posted 203/5, their highest total at the venue. Rahul smashed a 30 ball 60 at a strike rate of 200, while David Miller chipped in with a 19 ball 28. Defending 204 with ease also meant DC finished at sixth spot in the points table, as KKR folded for 163 in 18.4 overs. KKR began strongly in their chase, thanks to skipper Ajinkya Rahane hitting



63 off 39 balls, laced with four fours and as many sixes. The slide began when Kuldeep struck twice in successive deliveries, removing Rahane and Rinku Singh, and nearly completed a hat trick when Tejasvi Dahiya edged behind, only for Abishek Porel to put down a straightforward chance. That reprieve denied the wrist spinner three in a row, but the damage was already done. From 128/3, KKR lost their way completely, as they lost their last seven wickets for just 35 runs, as the three time-winners ended their season the way they had started it – on a losing note. For DC, Ngidi took 3-27 while Kuldeep, who went wicketless in three consec-

utive games, bounced back strongly to end with 3-29. Rahul and Abishek Porel gave DC a brisk start. Porel cracked successive boundaries off Anukul Roy in the opening over and added more fours off Kartik Tyagi, while Rahul lifted Cameron Green for a six and four in the third over. But Porel fell for 22 in the fourth over after edging Dubey behind to the keeper. Sahil Parakh joined Rahul and the pair kept the tempo high. The teenaged Parakh struck Narine for a six and four, while Rahul cleared him for a six

# Lucknow CAT Bench Gets Permanent Office After Decades



LUCKNOW, May 24 (GNS) The Lucknow CAT (Central Administrative Tribunal) bench was established way back in 1987, but it got its own office building only now after 38 years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This observation was made by Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, who is also the Minister Incharge DoPT (Department of Personnel & Training) which is the administrative Ministry of CAT. In a thoughtful move to mark the Ambedkar Jayanti commemorating the memory of the father of Indian constitution, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today jointly inaugurated the Lucknow CAT (Central Administrative Tribunal) building in the Gomti Nagar area of the city. The entire project at the cost of about Rs 25 crore was accomplished through Central funds by DoPT (Department of Personnel & Training) of which the Minister Incharge is Dr Jitendra Singh. The new CAT premises in the capital city of Lucknow marks a significant milestone for the administrative justice system. Speaking on

# Chouhan to hold bilateral talks with Brazilian Agri Min

New Delhi, May 24 (GNS) Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, is leading the Indian delegation to the 15th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (AMM), scheduled to be held on 17th April, 2025 in Brasilia, Brazil. The theme of 15th BRICS AMM is "Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Agriculture through Cooperation, Innovation, and Equitable Trade among BRICS Countries". Agriculture Ministers and senior officials from BRICS member countries, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Iran are expected to attend the Meeting.



During the visit, Shri Chouhan will hold bilateral meetings with key Brazilian counterparts, including Mr. Carlos Henrique Baqueta Fávoro, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, and Mr. Luiz Paulo Teixeira, Minister of Agrarian Development and Family Farming (MDA). These meetings will focus on enhancing collaboration between India and Brazil in various areas of agriculture, agri-technology, rural develop-

ment, and food security. The Minister will interact with leaders of major Brazilian agribusiness companies and representatives of the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries in São Paulo, exploring avenues for partnership and investment in the agriculture value chain. As part of his visit, the Minister will also participate in a tree plantation drive at the Embassy of India in Brasilia, under the noble initiative "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam", aimed at raising environmental consciousness and honouring motherhood. In addition, the Minister will interact with the vibrant Indian diaspora in São Paulo, acknowledging their role as cultural ambassadors and contributors to bilateral ties. This visit reaffirms India's commitment to deepen cooperation with BRICS nations and to advance South-South cooperation. During the visit, Shri Chouhan will hold bilateral meetings with key Brazilian counterparts, including Carlos Henrique Baqueta Fávoro, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, and Luiz Paulo Teixeira, Minister of Agrarian Development and Family Farming. These meetings will focus on enhancing collaboration between India and Brazil in agriculture, agri-technology, rural development and food security. The Minister will also interact with leaders of major Brazilian agribusiness companies and representatives of the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Oil Industries in São Paulo to explore avenues for partnership and investment in the agriculture value chain.

# India Reinforces Commitment to Energy Security and Exploration Growth: Puri

New Delhi, May 24 (GNS) "The Indian hydrocarbon sector is entering a new era of accelerated exploration and development," said Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, while addressing the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) Round-IX and Special Discovered Small Field (DSF) Signing Ceremony held here tonight. He highlighted that through investor-friendly reforms, swift approvals, scientific exploration, and a strong emphasis on sustainability, India is steadily building a resilient and future-ready energy ecosystem aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat. Addressing the esteemed gathering of dignitaries, in-



dustry stakeholders, and investors, Shri Puri noted that today's signing ceremony signifies much more than the completion of a procedural formality—it is a powerful testament to India's unwavering commitment to reducing its import dependence and securing its energy future. With India currently reliant on imports for 88% of its crude oil and 50% of its natural gas needs, the urgency for domestic exploration and production has never been greater. As the Minister pointed out, "In the next two decades, 25% of the world's incremental energy demand growth will come from India." Reflecting on the past, Shri Puri acknowledged the chal-

lenges the Indian upstream sector faced between 2006 and 2016—a "dull decade" marred by policy paralysis and procedural delays, leading to the exit of global energy giants like BP, ENI, and Santos. However, the tide has turned. "We were determined to unlock India's untapped energy potential, estimated at approximately 42 billion tonnes of oil and oil equivalent of gas," he said. To that end, the Government has implemented a series of transformative reforms over the past decade. A key achievement has been the expansion of exploration activity, with the explored area of India's sedimentary basins increasing from 6% in 2014 to 10% today, with a target of reaching 15%. The Minister reiterated the commitment to increasing exploration acreage to 1 million sq. km by 2030, highlighting the dramatic 99% reduction in "No-Go" areas within India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Scientific, data-driven exploration has been a cornerstone of this strategy, backed by a 7,500 crore investment into new seismic data acquisition, aerial surveys in remote terrains, and stratigraphic wells. Importantly, geo-scientific data is now available for major basins on both coasts, with the National Data Repository being upgraded to a cloud-based platform to ensure faster, transparent access to seismic, produc-

## Uttam Kumar Reddy directs officials to speed up paddy procurement across Telangana

Hyderabad, May 24 (GNS) Telangana Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday directed officials to further expedite the paddy procurement process across the state to ensure farmers do not face any inconvenience or financial loss.

During a review meeting held through video conference, attended by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, ministers and district collectors, Uttam Kumar Reddy said 141 lakh metric tonnes of paddy had been cultivated this season and the government had set a target to procure 75 lakh metric tonnes at Minimum Support Price (MSP). The minister stated that



8,575 procurement centres had been established statewide and that 51 lakh metric tonnes of paddy had already been procured. He said the government had released Rs 8,749 crore towards MSP payments to

farmers so far.

Officials were instructed to complete procurement by the end of this month and take strict action against middlemen and rice millers allegedly cheating farmers through

deductions in weight and quality. Directions were also issued to prevent the inflow of paddy, maize and sorghum from neighbouring states. Bhatti Vikramarka stressed the need to increase the number of

labourers at procurement centres and said the government was ensuring immediate payments to farmers, unlike previous years when farmers had to wait for months, according to an official statement.

## Mallu Ravi urges unity in palakurthi Congress

Hyderabad, May 24 (GNS) MP and TPCC Disciplinary Committee Chairman Mallu Ravi on Sunday called upon Congress leaders and cadre in the Palakurthi constituency to work together to strengthen the party and resolve internal differences amicably. Speaking to reporters at Gandhi Bhavan after a meeting with local leaders in Hyderabad, Mallu Ravi said that Jhansi Reddy had appeared before the TPCC Disciplinary Committee regarding recent disputes within the constituency. He noted that Palakurthi MLA Yashaswini Reddy could not attend the meeting as she is currently abroad.

Mallu Ravi stated that both Jhansi Reddy and Ya-



shaswini Reddy have been asked to appear before the committee again on May 30 after the MLA's return. He said the committee had received complaints from them alleging that local leaders Hari Prasad and Krishna Kishore were working against the Congress party in the constituency.

At the same time, the committee also received counter-complaints accus-

ing Yashaswini Reddy and Jhansi Reddy of neglecting party cadre and harassing local leaders, he added.

The TPCC leader said show-cause notices had already been issued to Hari Prasad and Krishna Kishore, who subsequently submitted their explanations along with documentary evidence. Jhansi Reddy had also provided relevant information and evidence to the committee, he said.

Mallu Ravi further stated that discussions would be held with the district-in-charge minister, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and other district leaders to resolve the issue and ensure unity within the party in Palakurthi constituency.

## Cyberabad Police Book 700 Drunk Driving Cases

Hyderabad, May 24 (GNS) Hyderabad and Cyberabad Traffic Police booked more than 700 drunk driving cases during special enforcement drives conducted over the weekend to improve road safety and curb drunken driving violations.

According to the Hyderabad Traffic Police release on Sunday, a two-day special drive conducted on May 22 and 23 resulted in 438 motorists being caught driving under the influence of alcohol. Of them, 365 were two-wheeler riders, 25 were three-wheeler drivers, 47 were four-wheeler drivers and one belonged to another vehicle category.

Police said 98 offenders recorded Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels between 30 and 50 mg/100 ml, while 191 cases were between 51 and 100 mg/100 ml. Several

others recorded higher BAC levels, including five persons whose BAC exceeded 300 mg/100 ml.

Meanwhile, Cyberabad Traffic Police booked 294 drunk driving cases during a weekend special drive. The cases included 255 two-wheelers, five three-wheelers and 34 four-wheelers.

Officials stated that all offenders would be produced before the court and warned that stringent action would be taken against those causing fatal accidents under the influence of alcohol. Police reiterated that drunken driving cases would be pursued with zero tolerance.

Cyberabad Police also said that 156 drunk driving cases were disposed of in courts between May 18 and 23, with some offenders receiving jail terms along with fines.

## 'Indiramma Bheema' scheme to be launched from June 2: Bhatti Vikramarka

Khammam, May 24 (GNS): Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Sunday announced that the state government will launch the "Indiramma Bheema" insurance scheme across Telangana from June 2 as a State Formation Day gift to the people. Addressing a public meeting, Bhatti said the scheme would provide Rs 5 lakh insurance coverage to nearly 1.15 crore families in the state in the event of the death of the head of the family due to an accident.

He stated that the Congress government was committed to fulfilling all promises made during the elections and delivering welfare benefits directly to the poor.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the government was also providing interest-free loans to women's self-help groups, with plans to extend financial assistance



up to Rs 1 lakh crore.

He announced that a new initiative to allot solar power plants to women's groups would be launched on May 27 in Rajupalem village of Madhira constituency. Bhatti highlighted several welfare measures being implemented by the government, including free fine rice distribution to 1.06 crore families, free electricity up to 200 units under the Gruhajyothi

scheme benefiting 53 lakh households, and financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh for construction of houses under the Indiramma housing scheme.

He also said the government would procure every grain of maize and paddy produced by farmers at the Minimum Support Price and accused opposition parties of spreading misinformation against the government's welfare

initiatives. Bhatti said the state government was giving top priority to social welfare and inclusive development, particularly for farmers, women, labourers and economically weaker sections. He added that several welfare programmes introduced by the government were aimed at improving living standards and ensuring financial security for poor families across Telangana.

## TG to celebrate 'women's week' from May 25 to 31

Hyderabad, May 24 (GNS) The Telangana government will celebrate "Women's Week" across the state from May 25 to 31 as part of the "Praja Palana - Pragathi Pranalika" initiative, focusing on women's empowerment, self-employment and economic development.

According to an official statement issued here today, various programmes including awareness seminars, exhibitions, health camps, cultural events and industrial showcases will be organised under the aegis of the Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and Women & Child Welfare departments, with support from SERP and MEP-MA. Minister Seethakka said the government aims to transform women from welfare beneficiaries into entrepreneurs and wealth creators. She stated that loans worth Rs 60,487

crore have already been disbursed to women's self-help groups since the Congress government assumed office, while interest subsidies amounting to Rs 1,397 crore have also been released.

As part of the celebrations, foundation stones for 8,000 Indira Mahila Shakti buildings will be laid on May 25, while 553 RTC buses purchased by women federations will be inaugurated on May 26. Solar power plants sanctioned to women's groups will also be launched during the week. Officials said the state government is implementing several initiatives, including women-run canteens, petrol bunks, agro-processing units and solar projects, aimed at strengthening women's financial independence and entrepreneurship across Telangana.

## BJP State President Ramchander Rao urges Telangana govt to expedite Godavari projects

Hyderabad, May 24 (GNS): Telangana BJP State President N Ramchander Rao has written an open letter to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, expressing concern over delays in planning and execution of irrigation projects in the Godavari basin, alleging underutilisation of Telangana's assured water share and urging time-bound completion of key projects including Kaleshwaram, Seetharama Sagar and Sammakka Sagar.

In the letter, Ramchander Rao stated that Telangana is entitled to nearly 968 TMC of assured Godavari waters but has been unable to fully utilise its rightful share due to delays and inadequate planning.

He noted that after the formation of Telangana in 2014, the Union Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared several major irrigation projects with a combined capacity of nearly 360 TMC, including Kaleshwaram, Seetharama Sagar, Sammakka Sagar, Chinna Kaleshwaram, Modikunta Vagu, Chanaka-Korata, Gudem Lift and CHLLIS.

The BJP leader pointed



out that the Medigadda, Annaram and Sundilla barrages of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project are yet to be fully restored despite recommendations from the National Dam Safety Authority. He also alleged that delays in completing the Seetharama Project were depriving the state of 67 TMC of Godavari waters, while inadequate command area planning was slowing progress on the Sammakka Sarakka Project despite hydrological clearance from the Central Water Commission.

Ramchander Rao urged the Chief Minister to ensure proper utilisation of Telangana's assured Godavari water allocation and to complete all major irrigation projects in a time-bound

manner. He also raised concerns over reports suggesting possible changes in the alignment and source location of the proposed Godavari-Cauvery river interlinking project from Inchampalli, stating that Telangana's interests should not be compromised under any circumstances.

He called upon the state government to act with urgency and commitment to ensure that the people of Telangana receive the full benefits of the Godavari waters allocated to the state. Ramchander Rao further alleged that delays in executing irrigation projects were adversely affecting farmers and agricultural productivity in several districts dependent on Godavari waters. He said timely completion of pending works would help stabilise irrigation facilities and support rural livelihoods across the state.

The BJP leader stressed the need for better coordination between the state and central agencies to expedite approvals, technical clearances and implementation of irrigation infrastructure projects.

## KTR alleges Cong Govt plot to end free power through prepaid meters



Hyderabad, May 24 (GNS) Bharat Rashtira Samiti (BRS) Working President K T Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday strongly criticised the Congress government over its reported decision to introduce prepaid electricity meters in the state, alleging that the move was aimed at scrapping free power for farmers and privatising the electricity sector.

Addressing a meeting of key party functionaries in Amberpet in the city, KTR alleged that the Congress government was planning to install prepaid meters on agricultural motors and in households across Telangana to gradually withdraw the free electricity scheme. He claimed that the decision was intended to hand over the power sector to private corporate entities.

KTR said the BRS had warned before the elections

that free power would be at risk if Congress came to power. He recalled that former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao had opposed the installation of prepaid meters despite pressure from the Centre. The BRS leader urged people to oppose the move and accused the Congress government of failing to fulfil its promises over the last two and a half years. He also criticised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over issues related to housing demolitions, the proposed "Future City" project and Musi River rejuvenation plans.

KTR further announced that the party's membership drive would be conducted digitally and said training programmes would soon be organised for party workers across constituencies ahead of the upcoming local body elections.

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