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CM Revanth Reddy, Mahesh Goud meet Mallikarjun Kharge



Hyderabad, May 31 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and state Congress president Mahesh Goud on Sunday, May 31, met AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge in Hyderabad. The Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and other senior leaders called on Kharge at the Novotel Hotel near Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad. AICC In-charge for Telangana Meenakshi Natarajan was also present during the meeting. Kharge had stopped en route from New Delhi to Gulbarga in Karnataka. Chief Minister's Office (CMO) described it as a courtesy call. According to party sources, the meeting lasted for an hour and a half. Current political developments in the state and government programmes were reportedly discussed during the meeting.

Meanwhile, CMO said in a statement on Sunday that Chief Minister Revanth

Reddy will hold a review meeting with officials regarding the implementation of the Employees' Health Scheme, which the government is introducing to ensure health security for employees and pensioners in Telangana. The review meeting is scheduled on Monday. This scheme will be implemented through the Employee Health Care Trust. The Trust will comprise eight members -- six representatives from employee associations and two from pensioners' associations, the CMO said. A state government employee will be appointed as the CEO of this Trust. The formation of this committee is likely to be announced on Monday. The process of collecting the necessary details for the implementation of this scheme has already commenced. The Finance Department has issued a circular to all government departments, directing them to collect the details of government em-

ployees, pensioners, and their family members.

The circular explicitly stated that this data must be uploaded by May 31. Based on these details, the government will take measures to issue digital health cards and provide cashless medical treatment services. The State Cabinet on February 23 approved the Employees' Health Scheme, which will cover 3.56 lakh employees, 2.88 lakh pensioners, and their dependent family members (a total of 17.07 lakh beneficiaries). It was announced that treatment will be completely cashless in all government hospitals and 652 empanelled private hospitals. This will cover 1,998 medical procedures.

Employees will contribute 1.5 per cent of basic pay while there will be a matching contribution from the government. The Trust will have an annual outlay of Rs 1,056 crore (Rs 528 crore each by employees and government).

PM Modi Highlights Traditional Summer Drinks, Urges Heatwave Precautions

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday in his 134th 'Mann ki Baat' urged citizens to take adequate precautions amid the ongoing heatwave and highlighted India's rich tradition of indigenous cooling beverages, regional foods and mango varieties.

Addressing the nation during the monthly radio programme, the Prime Minister advised citizens to stay hydrated and follow safety guidelines issued by authorities. He emphasised the importance of traditional Indian summer beverages such as 'lassi' in Punjab and Haryana, 'chaas' in Rajast-



han and Gujarat, 'sattu sharbat' in Bihar and Jharkhand, 'kokum sharbat' and 'sol kadh'i' in the Konkan region and Goa, 'paanakam' and 'neer mor' in South India and 'bel pana' in Odisha.

He said these drinks are not merely refreshments but reflect the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" and are deeply rooted in India's culinary traditions.

Notably, earlier this week,

during a Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister had directed all ministers to ensure that their respective ministries and departments take necessary measures to mitigate the impact of the ongoing heatwave across the country.

He also spoke about the cultural and economic significance of mangoes, calling those a widely cherished summer fruit across the country. He mentioned various regional varieties, including Alphonso (Hapus) from Maharashtra, Kesar from Gujarat, Dussehri and Langra from Uttar Pradesh, Zardalu from Bihar, Chausa and Malda, as well as Ban-

ganapalli, Totapuri, Neelam and Malgova from South India, Himsagar from West Bengal, and Suvarnarekha from Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

The Prime Minister also praised a unique conservation initiative involving a specially equipped Dolphin Rescue Ambulance that recently helped save a Ganges River Dolphin after a challenging 13-hour rescue operation. Designed as a mobile hospital, the ambulance is equipped with oxygen support, specialised stretchers and rescue equipment to provide immediate assistance to injured or stranded dolphins.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee 'attacked' in Bengal

Kolkata, May 31 (GNS) A day after locals allegedly attacked Trinamool Congress (TMC) national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee during his visit to the Sonarpur area, another party leader Kalyan Banerjee was reportedly attacked in Chanditala, West Bengal, on Sunday.

Alleging the involvement of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the TMC claimed that Kalyan Banerjee was on his way to submit a memorandum at the Chanditala police station when he was attacked by the "BJP-backed miscre-

ants." The party further alleged that post-poll violence had continued unabated across the state, 26 days after the election results were declared. The party also shared a photograph on X, showing Kalyan Banerjee lying on the ground. Later, TMC chief and former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee visited the residence of the Serampore Lok Sabha MP and enquired about his health and wellbeing. The former CM said, "Those who believe that violence and intimidation can silence us have learnt nothing from history."

Centre reconstitutes high-level panel for oil, gas dispute resolution

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS): The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has reconstituted the high-level Committee of External Eminent Persons for Dispute Resolution in India's petroleum and natural gas sector. The reconstituted panel has been formed to facilitate conciliation and mediation in disputes arising from contracts related to exploration blocks and hydrocarbon fields in India. It is being viewed as part of the Centre's broader effort to ensure faster settlement of disputes, reduce prolonged litiga-



tion and improve investor confidence in the energy sector at the time of a raging West Asia crisis. Three former officials and experts included in the committee are retired bureaucrat Rajiv Bansal, who was former Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation; Barnali Barua Tokhi, former Managing Director of

Bharat Petroleum Resources Ltd; and Deepak Mishra, former Director and Chief Executive Officer of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). The committee will function as an independent mediation and conciliation body for resolving disputes in the exploration and production sector. The members will have a tenure of three years from the date of notification this week. However, the Centre has retained the authority to remove any member at any time without assigning reasons.

All hail King Kohli: RCB lifts second consecutive IPL trophy



Ahmedabad, May 31 (GNS) But amid this little cavern of chaos, Kohli steadied the ship, stopping GT's advances, and the 37-year-old reached his fifth fifty of the season with a pulled four off pacer Arshad Khan.

Tim David (24, 17b) produced a mini storm that eased the pressure on Kohli, who survived a scare as Shubman Gill's catch off Arshad was found to have bumped on the grass in the umpire's review.

The champion batter

soon so befittingly fetched the winning moment for RCB with a six off Arshad.

The thundering shot also transformed the RCB dugout into a school children's party after an examination.

Patidar, who joined MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma as the only captain to have successfully defended an IPL title, shed his usual stoic face, breaking into a wide grin. Others around him rushed to the field to gather around Kohli, the beating heart of his franchise since 2008. But be-

fore Kohli put on display his undimmed abilities in white ball format, RCB bowlers exploited a slow pitch to perfection, restricting a lethargic Gujarat Titans to a sub-par 155 for eight. Shot-making was not exactly an easy proposition on the pitch No. 6 at the Narendra Modi Stadium, a mix of red and black soil, and it aptly reflected in the GT batting. Washington Sundar resisted the trend with an unbeaten 50 (37b, 5x4), but the damage around him was far too big to mitigate.

VP Warns Youth May Follow 'Cockroach' Trend

KOTTAYAM (KERALA), May 31 (GNS): Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on Sunday said youngsters would end up following the "cockroach", in a veiled reference to the BJP, if positive activities and achievements were not reported adequately. He stressed that constructive journalism is essential to guide society and strengthen public confidence.

Speaking as the chief guest at the celebrations marking the 140th anniversary of the Malayalam daily Deepika, Radhakrishnan said positive developments should receive greater attention in the media so that young people are exposed to the right information and role models.

"Positive activities should be reported well. Only then will youngsters receive the right information. Otherwise, they will lose interest and end up following the 'cockroach'," he said. The vice president said he was not against freedom of expression, but questioned the tendency to give disproport-

ionate attention to issues that may not stand the test of time. Apparently referring to the social media buzz generated by the Cockroach Janata Party (a satirical social-media account), particularly among youngsters, he questioned whether something truly deserved so much attention in a single day. "If something is genuinely good, people will continue to recognise its value after a week, 10 days, or even a month," he said.

"Nobody knows about them. All of a sudden, they are everywhere. That cannot last," Radhakrishnan added, while stressing that noble ideas and positive messages should reach every nook and corner of society and contribute to nation-building.

The satirical platform emerged last week following a controversy around remarks attributed to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant regarding "cockroaches" and "parasites" during a court hearing on the "senior" designation of lawyers.

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BUS FACILITY AVAILABLE

MY Bharat 2.0 to launch fully functional Mobile App for Android and iOS Users



New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) In a major step towards strengthening digital engagement with the country's youth, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Digital India Corporation (DIC), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for the development of MY Bharat 2.0 platform in New Delhi today. The upgraded national youth platform will leverage technology-driven solutions to empower and connect young people across the country. The MoU was signed in the presence of Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, and Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, Hon'ble Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology.

The event was also graced by Shri S Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY; Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs (DoYA); and other senior officials from DoYA, MeitY and DIC. Nitesh Kumar Mishra, Joint Secretary, DoYA and Shri Nand Kumarum, MD & CEO, Digital India Corporation signed the MoU of the MY Bharat 2.0 platform.

Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting, and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Ashwini Vaishnav said "Today, as we build public digital platforms that transform lives, the idea be-

hind MY Bharat is no different from what we have done with UPI, DigiLocker, or the Common Compute Facility. The objective is the same: scale with purpose, impact with speed."

Hon'ble Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, expressed: "65% of India's population are youth—our greatest strength and our greatest opportunity."

Following the signing of the MoU, the MY Bharat platform will now undergo a comprehensive upgrade to evolve into MY Bharat 2.0. This enhanced version will introduce new features aimed at improving user experience, accessibility, and functionality. The platform will be completely rebuilt using a modular architecture approach to ensure scalability and flexibility. In addition, a fully functional mobile application for both Android and iOS will be developed. Support functions such as a dedicated call centre, training modules, cloud services, MIS (Management Information System), and communication tools including email and SMS services will be established to strengthen the platform's backend infrastructure.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, stated "Technology must be leveraged to build secure, scalable, and inclusive platforms for the youth." Key AI-driven features will be introduced, including a Smart CV Builder, personalised Digital

Profiles, and AI-powered chatbots. Speech-to-text capabilities, WhatsApp Integration and voice-assisted navigation will further improve usability and accessibility for all users.

Dr. Pallavi Jain Govil, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, Department of Youth Affairs, stressed "Our focus must be on value, aspiration, opportunity, learning, and community connection." Integrated dashboards will allow event-organising institutions and educational bodies to analyse and monitor outcomes effectively. Location intelligence and geotagging tools will help youth discover nearby opportunities based on geography or interest. Additionally, interactive learning modules and quizzes will be included to increase engagement and foster continuous learning.

MY Bharat 2.0 will also offer seamless integration with national digital platforms such as Aadhaar, DigiLocker, Bhashini, and MyGov, ensuring interoperability and a unified user experience. The upgraded portal will comply with the latest data protection and privacy norms, ensuring a secure and trustworthy digital environment for all users. Nand Kumarum, MD & CEO, Digital India Corporation, voiced: "This partnership is a model for how digital governance can empower future generations."

Further, the enhanced version of the platform will include dedicated sections for National Career Services, a Mentorship Hub, and a Fit India section to promote

"India to work with ASEAN Nations to Develop Cruise Tourism Hub of Global South": Sarbananda Sonowal

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), Shri Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated first-ever ASEAN-India Cruise Dialogue in Chennai, today. The meet hosted by India is being attended by all the member nations of ASEAN; i.e., Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam along with Timor Leste. The Dialogue aims to strengthen maritime cooperation, enhance cruise connectivity, and promote sustainable tourism across the Indo-Pacific region.

The meet was held aboard the MV Empress (Cordelia Cruise ship) at Chennai Port, with more than 30 delegates from ASEAN countries. Along with the stakeholders and senior officials from the MoPSW, the event will continue in Mamallapuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Union Minister was accompanied by the Union



Minister of State for MoPSW, Shri Shantanu Thakur among others.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said India plans to professionalise 5,000 km of navigable waterways to enhance cruise connectivity with ASEAN nations. Speaking at the inaugural ASEAN-India Cruise Dialogue in Chennai, he noted the Sagar Mala initiative aims for one million cruise passengers by 2029, with ship calls rising

sharply from 102 in 2013-14 to over 14,000 today, driven by policy reforms, tax measures and improved port infrastructure.

Sarbananda Sonowal highlighted, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji's vision to boost coastal connectivity and modernise customs and immigration can be achieved with greater cooperation and collaboration among India and ASEAN nations. India plans to work

with ASEAN countries to develop cruise tourism and tourism circuits in the Bay of Bengal as well as the Indian Ocean region. An integrated cruise network linking Indian ports with ASEAN destinations supported by real-time tracking and modern terminals is being envisaged which will be deliberated in this meet. Our efforts are to align with the Viksit Bharat 2047 and ASEAN Community Vision 2045, aiming to

strengthen economic and cultural ties in the region. Together, we want to develop a sustainable Cruise Circuit among the culturally vibrant coastal cities and regions of India and ASEAN countries across the Indian Ocean to offer the best travel experience for any traveller and transforming it as the hub of Cruise Tourism of Global South."

At the inauguration, Union Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal said, "India is committed to work closely with ASEAN member nations to co-operate and co-promote new cruise circuits connecting our vibrant coastal cities and cultural destinations. This dialogue is likely to explore the region to become the hub of cruise tourism of the Global South. Together, we can establish an integrated cruise network linking India with ASEAN countries, through modern ports, efficient tracking systems and robust support mechanisms."

Ethanol blending boosts farmers' income, saves Rs 1.36 lakh cr in forex: Puri

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) India's ethanol blending programme has not only reduced the country's dependence on crude oil imports but also significantly boosted farmers' income, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, said on Sunday.

The Union Minister said that over the past 11 years, the government has paid more than Rs 1.18 lakh crore to farmers under the ethanol blending programme. He added that the initiative has helped India save foreign exchange worth Rs 1.36 lakh crore by cutting down on crude oil imports. "During this period, ethanol has replaced around 232 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil, resulting in a reduction of approximately 698 lakh metric tonnes in carbon emissions," the minister said in a post on social media platform X. "Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ethanol is emerging as a key driver of New India's



growth," he added.

"Every drop of ethanol carries the pride and prosperity of our farmers. We have already achieved the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending ahead of schedule," the Union Minister stated. Earlier, the minister had announced that E20 fuel -- petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol -- is now available at all retail outlets of state-run oil marketing companies, including Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, and Hindustan Petroleum. India had originally set a target to achieve 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol by 2030.

However, the goal was met in early 2025, six years ahead of schedule -- marking a major milestone in the country's shift towards cleaner fuels. Meanwhile, the Union Minister earlier this week said that India's oil and gas sector has undergone a significant transformation over the past 11 years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a post shared on social media platform X on Saturday, the minister credited the 'Digital India' initiative and tech-driven innovations for making the country's fuel infrastructure smarter and more efficient.

Gold, silver prices fall sharply this week; global trends, geopolitical easing behind dip



New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) There's good news for gold and silver buyers as prices of both precious metals saw a decline this week, bringing gold back below Rs 96,000 per 10 grams and silver under Rs 1.06 lakh per kilogram. According to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), the price of 24-carat gold is now Rs 95,784 per 10 grams, down from Rs 98,691 a week ago -- a sharp drop of Rs 2,907. Similarly, the price of 22-carat gold has come down to Rs

87,738 from Rs 90,404 per 10 grams. For 18-carat gold, the rate has dropped from Rs 74,018 to Rs 71,838 per 10 grams. Silver prices also dipped during the review period, falling by Rs 1,582 to Rs 1,05,193 per kilogram from the previous Rs 1,06,775.

Notably, silver had reached an all-time high of Rs 1,09,550 per kg on June 18. The international market has mirrored this trend, with gold on COMEX falling to \$3,300 per ounce from \$3,400 earlier. Silver has dropped to \$36 per ounce.

Experts attribute the decline in precious metal prices to recent global developments, including the easing of tensions between Israel and Iran, signs of global stability, and weakness in the US dollar. Despite this week's drop, gold and silver have seen a strong rally since the beginning of the year. Since January 1, the price of 24-carat gold has surged from Rs 76,162 to Rs 95,784 per 10 grams -- an increase of Rs 19,622 or 25.76 per cent. Similarly, silver prices have jumped Rs 19,176 or 22.29 per cent, from Rs 86,017 to Rs 1,05,193 per kilogram.

Meanwhile, in an earlier report this month, experts said that gold prices are expected to rise sharply as fresh geopolitical tensions in the Middle East increase global uncertainty. According to the report, experts believe gold could trade in the range of \$3,500 to \$3,700 in the coming weeks. Akshay Chinchalkar of Axis Securities said that as long as spot gold remains above \$3,314, it could move higher towards \$3,770.

India poised to emerge as centre of gravity in new world economic order: Anand Mahindra

Mumbai, May 31 (GNS) The USA's shift toward de-globalisation may ironically lead to a new avatar of globalisation that is multi-polar, regional, and driven by domestic imperatives for which India is well-positioned to emerge as one of the new centres of gravity, industrialist Anand Mahindra has said. In his address to shareholders in the Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Annual Report for 2024-25, Anand Mahindra, said globalisation is evolving and the US market centrality and China-centric supply chains are being replaced by multi-polar, regional collaborations. As structural and political uncertainties diminish US dominance, alternative capital destinations are emerging, he observed.

Global supply chains are diversifying away from China, creating new trade partnerships. Lower tariff barriers among regional partners may emerge, boosting free



trade and reshaping international trade centres of gravity, Mahindra pointed out. Recent US-China tariff talks and strengthened trade ties with the UK suggest a pragmatic layer to US trade policy, combining protectionism with strategic global engagement.

"However, there remains a strong likelihood of significant decoupling between the US and China," he observed. He admitted that "India, too, will face chal-

lenges" due to the ongoing global turmoil in the midst of a growing wave of protectionism. "However, whether it be, a country or a business, the winners will be the ones who can successfully navigate uncertainty and ambiguity -- the ones who are resilient," Mahindra remarked. "China's adversarial stance may create opportunities for India to position itself as a supply chain alternative -- a long-term goal for Indian business. Inno-

vation and R&D could receive renewed focus, while manufacturing could once again take centre stage.

"Restrictions on China and high tariffs for other competing countries could open new markets for Indian goods. The potential exists, but achieving it will require a concerted focus on manufacturing and a palpable increase in private investment. "Speed and agility are essential, as countries like the Philippines and Vietnam are already touting themselves as future manufacturing hubs," Mahindra opined. Companies could benefit from aligning their strategies with national objectives, as renewable energy, Defence, and digital infrastructure are becoming sunrise industries in India, he pointed out. He also highlighted that India is a stable democracy, generally regarded as a trustworthy partner, and bolstered by a strong military that is not politicised.

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Centre disburses Rs 1,162 crore under telecom PLI scheme

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) The Central government has disbursed Rs 1,162 crore under the Telecom Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme till March 31, according to data shared by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

This scheme, launched on April 1, 2021, aims to boost domestic manufacturing and self-reliance in the telecom sector. It is scheduled to conclude at the end of the current financial year. Out of 42 companies shortlisted under the scheme, only 21 manufacturers have successfully received the incentives so far. Two companies -- Coral Telecom Limited and Alphion India Pvt Limited -- had their claims rejected for failing to meet the eligibility criteria in their respective financial years.

The government had earmarked Rs 4,115 crore for the scheme with the goal of generating an estimated



Rs 2.45 lakh crore in additional sales and creating over 44,000 new jobs during its run. As of January 2025, beneficiary companies have made investments worth Rs 4,081 crore, resulting in total sales of Rs 78,672 crore.

Of this, export sales account for Rs 14,963 crore. The scheme has also helped create 26,351 jobs so far.

However, not all feedback has been positive. A beneficiary company, speaking on condition of anonymity, alleged that some firms are simply white-labelling

imported products rather than manufacturing locally.

This practice has reportedly impacted margins and goes against the intent of the scheme. Industry voices have called for stricter monitoring to ensure only genuine domestic manufacturing efforts are rewarded. Jabil Circuit emerged as the top beneficiary, receiving Rs 235.87 crore in incentives over two financial years. Other major recipients include Flextronics (Rs 165.12 crore), Nokia (Rs 157.32 crore), NeoLync Telecommunications backed.

'Work towards direct procurement from farmers and minimizing middlemen' – Shivraj Singh Chouhan



New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan, today held a meeting in New Delhi and approved the procurement of Moong and Urad in Madhya Pradesh, and Urad in Uttar Pradesh under the Price Support Scheme (PSS). He also discussed procurement logistics with the respective state agriculture ministers and issued necessary instructions to NAFED, NCCF and state officials. Following a

proposal received from the Madhya Pradesh government and subsequent deliberation by the ministry, Union minister Shivraj Singh granted approval for the procurement of summer lentils Moong and Urad under the PSS in the state. Similarly, approval has been granted for the procurement of Urad under the PSS in Uttar Pradesh. During the meeting, Shivraj Singh stated that although the decision to procure Moong and Urad would place a significant fi-

ancial burden on the central government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the government is committed to ensuring farmers receive the intended benefits. He emphasized that it is crucial for the procurement process to be carried out properly. Direct procurement from farmers will reduce the influence of middlemen and ensure that the actual benefit reaches the farmers. Issuing directions to officials, he called for the use of the latest and most effective technologies for proper registration of farmers. He advised increasing the number of procurement centers if necessary and ensuring the entire process is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. Expressing concern over complaints of irregularities in storage, Shivraj Singh Chouhan urged the ministers and officials to take concrete steps to address the issue. He assured Uttar Pradesh's agriculture minister that the central government will make every possible effort in the best interests of farmers. The meeting was attended by Madhya Pradesh Minister for Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture Development Shri Aidal Singh Kansana, Uttar Pradesh Agriculture Minister Shri Surya Pratap Shahi, Union Agriculture Secretary Shri Devesh Chaturvedi, and other senior officials.

Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, chaired a high-level re-

view meeting on the 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' at ICAR Pusa Campus, New Delhi today. The meeting focused on outcomes of the campaign conducted from May 29 to June 12, and deliberated on the strategic roadmap ahead. Over 2,170 nodal officers both in-person and virtually presented key findings, field experiences, and actionable insights from the campaign. Shivraj Chouhan described the campaign as a historic movement in independent India, inspired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's 'Lab to Land' vision, which connected scientists with over 60,000 villages. The Minister emphasized that the initiative would continue with renewed focus on income enhancement, food security, and positioning India as a global food basket. He stressed the development and integration of biofortified crops, sustainable practices, and mechanization,

Mumbai, May 31 (GNS) India's GDP is projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in FY26, with CPI inflation around an average 4.0 per cent, a report showed on Friday, adding that it does not expect any further rate cuts from the RBI "unless downside risks to growth materialise". The Current Account Deficit or CAD (as per cent of GDP) is projected at 1.0 per cent in FY25 and 0.9 per cent in FY26, while the fiscal deficit is estimated at 4.4 per cent, according to a CareEdge Ratings report. "The 10-year G-Sec yield is expected to range between 6.0 per cent-6.2 per cent by the end of FY26, and the USD-INR exchange rate is projected to trade between 85 and 87 by the end of FY26," the report mentioned. India's diversified crude oil import basket also provides some buffer. Based on quantity imported, Iran's share in India's POL (petroleum, oil and lubricants) imports fell to just 0.1 per cent in FY25 (from 5.2 per cent in FY15). While the Middle East remains a major supplier, its share has declined to 50 per cent from 60 per cent over the past decade. In contrast, imports from other countries like Russia surged to 28.5 per cent in FY25 from just 0.2 per cent in FY15.

Government is Focused on Seva, Sushasan and Navachar: Piyush Goyal



per cent from 4.0 per cent. Meanwhile, crude oil prices surged sharply in June amid heightened Middle East tensions, touching around \$79 per barrel — the highest since January 2025 — before easing by 14 per cent as tensions subsided. CareEdge Ratings expects Brent to average \$65-70 per barrel in FY26, assuming no further escalation in tensions. These levels do not warrant changes to their FY26 forecasts for India's growth, inflation, fiscal deficit, CAD or the rupee. "Nonetheless, the conflict in the Middle East remains a key monitorable, especially as the Strait of Hormuz accounts for over a quarter of global seaborne oil trade," said the report.

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States to reduce distribution losses as it increases cost of power for consumers : Manohar Lal



New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) The Regional Conference for the Eastern Region States/UTs was held on 24th June at Patna under the Chairmanship of Shri Manohar Lal, Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs.

continuous cooperation and coordination between Central and the State Governments in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Hon'ble Minister laid emphasis on ensuring Resource Adequacy and necessary power generation capacity tie-ups. While formulating their Resource Adequacy Plans, States should also ensure a balanced and diversified power generation mix. This should include the addition of nuclear generation capacity, with an aim to establish at least one nuclear power project in each State. India's peak electricity demand is projected to reach 446 GW by 2034-35 and meeting this sustainably requires proactive planning and continued coordination between the Centre, States, and other stakeholders.

Hon'ble Minister emphasized that the States should work towards resolving the issues faced in development of Intra-State transmission projects, including RoW issues. States should explore diverse options for financing, including listing of transmission utilities and from multilateral institutions. Hon'ble Minister informed that in the Union Budget 2025-26, allocation of 1.5 lakh crore in 50-year interest-free loans to support states' capital expenditures has been done, which can aid in strengthening the transmission infrastructure.

Union Minister remarked that States should promote renewable energy coupled with energy storage systems in order to ensure reliability of supply of power.

Application Portal Goes Live under Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) is pleased to announce the portal launch of the application process under the Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SPMEPCI).

The scheme was notified vide notification dated 15th March 2024, and the detailed Scheme Guidelines were subsequently issued through Notification No. S.O. 2450(E) dated 02.06.2025. Both the Notification and the Guidelines are available on the Ministry's official website: <https://heavyindustries.gov.in/scheme-promote-manufacturing-electric-passenger-cars-india-0>

In this context, Applications are invited from eligible applicants under the scheme and applicants can apply through the application module at spmepci.heavyindustries.gov.in. The application



portal would be open for applications from 24th June 2025 10.30 a.m. and will remain open until 21st October 2025 till 6:00 p.m. The Government of India, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved a forward-looking scheme to promote the domestic manufacture of passenger cars, with a special focus on electric vehicles (EVs). It is designed to firmly establish India as a premier global destination for automotive manufacturing and innovation. During the launch of the portal, Union Minister Shri H.D. Kumaraswamy said: "Guided by the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, this initiative marks a defining moment in India's journey towards clean, self-

reliant, and future-ready mobility. The launch of this portal under the SPMEPCI scheme opens new avenues for global electric vehicle manufacturers to invest in India's rapidly evolving automotive landscape. This scheme not only supports our national commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2070, but also reinforces our resolve to build a sustainable, innovation-driven economy. It strengthens the pillars of 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', and positions India as a trusted global hub for next-generation automotive manufacturing and technology leadership." The Scheme shall help to attract investments from global EV manufacturers and promote India as a manufacturing destination for e-vehicles. The Scheme will also help put India on the global map for manufacturing of EVs, generate employment and achieve the goal of "Make in India".

Minister Lauds Fast-Track Infrastructure Projects, Stakeholder Coordination

New Delhi, May 31 (GNS) Union Jal Shakti Minister Shri C.R. Patil chaired the 15th meeting of the Empowered Task Force (ETF) on Ganga conservation, reaffirming the government's commitment to making the river cleaner and more sustainable through an integrated, time-bound, and technology-driven approach. Union Minister reviewed key activities and progress made by NMCG. Shri Patil appreciated the accelerated pace of implementation of infrastructure projects and the outcomes achieved through enhanced coordination among stakeholders. Notably, 10 projects were inaugurated or had foundation stones laid in Bihar during this period. Enhanced Effectiveness of Financial Management in NMCG: Union Minister of Jal Shakti was apprised of significant improve-



ments made in the area of financial management of NMCG. Significant reduction in pendency of Utilization Certificates, resolution of long pending taxation issues and effective implementation of Treasury Single Accounts system has led to marked improvement in financial administration of NMCG. Further, adoption of insurance surety bonds as a valid alternative to traditional bank guarantees for Bid Security, Performance Security, and Mobilization Advance would help in ease financial pressure

on contractors, promote broader industry participation, and fast-track project execution. He underlined the government's commitment to reducing procedural bottlenecks and fostering an enabling environment for infrastructure delivery. Sustaining River Rejuvenation Efforts: To address challenges posed by urban expansion and the emergence of new drains, NMCG has drafted two protocols—one to sustain zero untreated sewage discharge and another for maintenance of I&D structures. The

Union Minister welcomed this forward-looking initiative and directed that District Ganga Committees be actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of these protocols. He stressed the importance of continuous vigilance to preserve the gains made under the Namami Gange Programme. Safety Audit and Evaluation of STPs: Union Minister emphasized the need for occupational and safety audit of STPs and evaluation by third party agencies for ensuring effectiveness in STP operation.

Hooghly CSL Secures Order for Landmark Luxury Cruise Vessels from Heritage River Journeys Private Limited



Kochi, May 31 (GNS) Heritage River Journeys Private Limited, operating under the Brand name Antara River Cruises, India's premier Luxury River Cruise operator, has entered into a construction contract with Hooghly Cochin Shipyard Limited (Hooghly CSL) a wholly owned subsidiary of Cochin Shipyard Limited (Hooghly CSL) for the construction of two Luxury River Cruise vessels to be operated on the Brahmaputra River. Antara River Cruises, renowned for its immersive voyages along the Ganga, Padma, and Brahmaputra river systems, currently operates a fleet of bespoke luxury cruise vessels that sail South Asia's most iconic rivers. Its flagship vessel, Ganga Vilas, offers the longest, most picturesque river cruise in the world. This epic journey, famously showcased by the Limca Book of

Records, covers over 3,200 kilometres across 27 rivers, and traverses diverse regions including the Gangetic plains, the Sundarbans, and the Brahmaputra Valley. The Agreement for construction of the first vessel and a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the second were signed by Shri Sanil Peter, CEO, Hooghly CSL, and Shri Raj Singh, Founder and Chairman, Antara River Cruises, in the presence of Madhu S. Nair, Chairman and Managing Director, Cochin Shipyard Limited, along with senior officials from CSL and Antara. Once these vessels are put into operation, India - with its large network of rivers and waterways - will secure a prominent position on the global river cruise map, opening a gateway for the country to generate significant revenue from the largely untapped river cruise market.

Seethakka participates in children's mock parliament, rights seminar during women's week

Hyderabad, May 31 (GNS): "The empowerment of adolescent girls serves as the foundation for societal development; education, health, and good values elevate life to greater heights," stated Danasari Anasuya 'Seethakka', Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and Women & Child Welfare.

As part of the '99 Days of People's Administration - Progress Plan' initiative, a 'Children's Mock Parliament' and a 'Children's Rights Seminar'—featuring adolescent girls from the 'Sneha' program—were organized on Saturday at the Collectorate conference hall under the aegis of the Society for the Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), coinciding with the Women's Week celebrations. Danasari Anasuya 'Seethakka', the State Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and Women & Child

Welfare, participated in this event as the Chief Guest.

Earlier in the day, as part of the 'Amma Maata - Anganwadi Baata' program, the Minister distributed uniforms and 'Vidyarambham' (commencement of education) certificates to Anganwadi children. The Children's Mock Parliament and Children's Rights Seminar—organized by SERP and involving adolescent girls from the 'Sneha' initiative—were conducted as a highlight of the Women's Week celebrations.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister stated that the State Government is undertaking special initiatives aimed at the empowerment, educational advancement, personality development, and the fostering of leadership qualities among adolescent girls. She emphasized that by identifying girls in rural areas at a young age and providing



them with proper guidance, their opportunities to ascend to high-ranking positions—such as MLAs, MPs, Collectors, and SPs—in the future would be significantly enhanced. Recalling Nelson

Mandela's words that education is the most powerful weapon capable of transforming lives, the speaker advised girls to cultivate not only academic knowledge but also good manners, discipline, respect for elders,

and a sense of responsibility toward society. They emphasized that qualities such as respecting parents and teachers, participating in household chores, and

valuing hard work are essential for personality development. They suggested that mobile phones should be utilized not merely for entertainment, but also for enhancing knowledge and

developing communication skills. Furthermore, they called upon the girls to set a clear goal for their lives and to strive with unwavering dedication until that goal is achieved.

Stating that "Health is Wealth," the speaker advised everyone to safeguard their health by consuming nutritious food, utilizing locally available natural produce, and staying away from fast food. They noted that good health is just as crucial as education. They highlighted that the State Government places immense priority on the economic empowerment of women through the medium of women's self-help groups. They mentioned that, across the state, the government is providing bank loans worth thousands of crores of rupees to these groups, in addition to implementing initiatives such as interest-free

loans, employment generation schemes, and business promotion programs. They explained that membership in these women's groups offers not only financial security but also a strong network of social support. Finally, they informed the audience that currently, one lakh adolescent girls across the state are participating in the "Sneha" program, through which they are receiving specialized training in areas such as cycling, leadership development, personality enhancement, health awareness, and education. He announced that the state government intends to implement additional empowerment programs in the future. He expressed his hope that young girls would recognize their own talents and excel in fields such as education, sports, arts, and leadership, thereby serving as role models for society.

Conspiracy behind move to set up farmers' DISCOM: Kavitha

Hyderabad, May 31 (GNS): Telangana Rakshana Samithi (TRS) leader K. Kavitha on Sunday alleged that there is a conspiracy behind the Congress government's move to set up farmers' DISCOM. She alleged that the government was trying to privatise the remaining two DISCOMS by creating a farmers' DISCOM.



Addressing a press conference, she reacted to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's remarks during an informal chat with media persons that the government will not scrap 24-hour free power to farmers and that meters will not be installed for agricultural connections. She demanded that the Chief Minister officially make the announcement instead of speaking during the informal chat with the media. She also challenged the Chief Minister to announce that he will not seek votes in the elections if the remaining two DISCOMS are privatised. She said her party would approach even the Supreme Court to counter the conspiracy by the government.

She said that when this Chief Minister claims he will not scrap free electricity, it only raises more suspicion. She demanded that instead of chit-chat, he should hold a press meet and tell the people the same thing. Stating that the Chief Minister has not honoured the promises made in public meetings, she expressed doubts if he would stick to the words he is saying now. She appealed that the Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) should not give permission to the farmer's DISCOM that harms farmers under any circumstances. She said that if permission is given, they will stop it even if they have to go to the Supreme Court. Kavitha said that they have already filed a case on behalf of Telangana Jagruti.

Kavitha said that Revanth Reddy, who kept the farm-

er's DISCOM secret for six months, is now speaking slyly under the guise of chit-chat. She challenged that if there is truly no intention to privatise the DISCOMS, do they have the courage to go before the people in the coming elections and say so?

She said that past bitter experiences are the reason why they cannot trust even when this Chief Minister says it so firmly. She claimed that this time, under the Rythu Bharosa scheme, the government provided financial assistance only to those with less than two acres. Farm loan waiver has not reached even 30 per cent of the people. The government is also trying to back out on the bonus for farmers.

"They promised to procure even the last grain of paddy, but have still not done the procurement properly," she said and alleged that the government conspired to turn the farmer's insurance into accidental insurance. She said that all the actions taken by this government so far have been against the farmers. That's why there is no trust in the words spoken by the Chief Minister, Kavitha said.

RTC-Government merger after union polls, employees need not worry: Minister

Hyderabad, May 31 (GNS) Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar said on Sunday that the merger of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) with the government would be undertaken after the elections for the recognised trade union.

He stated that elections for the recognised TGSRTC trade union would be conducted shortly and that the process of merging the RTC with the government would be undertaken following consultations with the elected representatives. The minister said every precaution was being taken to ensure that no disputes or hurdles arise during the merger process and urged employees not to harbour any apprehensions.



He assured that all issues concerning RTC employees would be resolved and advised them to dispel any misconceptions. The minister informed that, under the leadership of the Deputy Chief Minister, discussions were held involving five ministers, senior officials and 40 RTC representatives, resulting in the sanctioning of an

11 per cent pay revision for employees. Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar, accompanied by Minister for IT, Industries and Legislative Affairs Duddilla Sridhar Babu and Government Whip Vijaya Ramana Rao, inspected the proposed site for the bus depot at the Peddapalli district headquarters. The Transport Minister announced that

steps were being taken to expedite the construction of the RTC bus depot. He said the depot would be inaugurated soon.

Speaking on the occasion, Ponnamp Prabhakar said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had sanctioned the RTC bus depot for Peddapalli following requests from Government Whip Vijaya Ra-

mana Rao and senior Minister Sridhar Babu. He noted that although work on the bus depot had faced some delays, steps had now been initiated to accelerate the process and ensure its early inauguration.

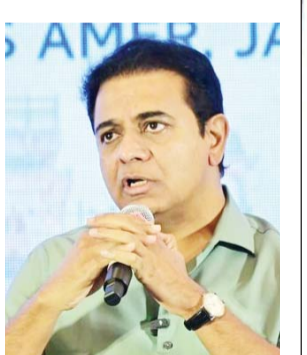
He further stated that measures were being taken to significantly improve bus connectivity in rural areas, adding that the demand for RTC bus services to villages had increased following the implementation of the free bus travel scheme for women. The Transport Minister said the process of procuring new RTC buses was underway to meet public demand and that the government was striving to further strengthen the RTC within the public transport system.

KTR Slams CM Over Farm Meters

Hyderabad, May 31 (GNS): Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) on Sunday challenged Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to declare that he would contest future elections only after implementing the 420 promises and six guarantees made by the Congress party in the 2023 elections.

KTR alleged that the Chief Minister was once again attempting to mislead the people by declaring that he would not contest elections if electricity meters were installed on agricultural pump sets.

Speaking at a meeting of key party workers from the Cantonment constituency, KTR said instead of issuing such statements, Revanth Reddy should publicly announce that he would not seek votes unless all the promises made to the people of Telangana were fulfilled. He questioned why the Congress government was avoiding accountability on key promises, including housing for the poor under



the Indiramma Housing Scheme, implementation of welfare guarantees, and various commitments made during the Assembly elections.

KTR alleged that the proposed separate "Farmers' DISCOM" was being created with the sole objective of eventually withdrawing the 24-hour free power supply being provided to farmers. He recalled that while in the opposition, Revanth Reddy had stated that three hours of electricity was sufficient for farmers and argued that the current proposal was aimed at translating that mindset into policy. "The real intention behind the Farmers' DISCOM is to dismantle the historic 24-hour free power supply introduced by KCR.

PM Modi Brought Revolutionary Changes in Governance, Infrastructure: Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad, May 31 (GNS): union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought revolutionary changes in governance and infrastructure development during his nearly 12-year tenure in office. Addressing the media at Khairatabad after participating in the Prime Minister's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme, Kishan Reddy said the monthly broadcast has become a widely awaited programme across the country, with crores of people listening to it through television, radio, and mobile phones every month.



Minister connects directly with the people and creates awareness on important social and economic issues affecting the nation. Highlighting the achievements of the Central Government under Modi's leadership, the union Minister said that India has witnessed rapid infrastructure expansion, including

the widening of national highways, the extension of railway networks, the modernisation of railway stations, and the introduction of new trains equipped with advanced technology. Kishan Reddy stated that the number of airports in the country has increased from around 70 to nearly 150, while several world-class highways and airports have been developed across India.

He also pointed to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, under which road connectivity was extended to remote villages, and various welfare initiatives aimed at tribal development, education, and healthcare improvement.

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