

CM Revanth Reddy orders officials to remain on high alert throughout monsoon season

Hyderabad, June 14 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Sunday directed all departments to remain on high alert throughout the monsoon season and warned of strict action against officials found negligent in discharging their responsibilities during emergencies. Chairing a high-level review meeting on monsoon preparedness at the MCRHRD Institute's Bodhi Pavilion, the Chief Minister stressed that all necessary measures should be taken to ensure that citizens do not face inconvenience during heavy rains. Reviewing the situation that prevailed during the heavy rainfall in the Core Urban Region (CURE) on June 9, Revanth Reddy expressed displeasure over the severe traffic conges-



tion witnessed in several parts of Hyderabad, particularly in Cyberabad. The Chief Minister criticised officials of the Municipal Administration, Police and Traffic departments for failing to adequately alert the public despite advance warnings issued by the Meteorological Department. Recalling that he had personally reviewed rain preparedness on June 1 and issued several directions, Revanth Reddy expressed dissatisfaction

over what he described as a lack of coordination among departments during the recent rains. He directed Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao and Director General of Police C. V. Anand to initiate action against officials responsible for lapses and warned that similar failures would not be tolerated in future. The Chief Minister instructed officials to take proactive measures based on weather forecasts and ensure that personnel from Municipal Adminis-

tration, HYDRAA, Traffic Police, Water Board and other agencies remain on the ground during heavy rains. He said police personnel, from Commissioners to Constables, should be deployed on roads whenever the city experiences heavy rainfall and added that he himself would be present in the field if necessary. Expressing concern over traffic management failures, Revanth Reddy directed the DGP to immediately fill vacancies in the

Traffic Department and warned that strict action would be taken if traffic jams recur due to administrative shortcomings. Officials were also instructed to prepare a comprehensive database of waterlogging points, accident-prone locations and areas vulnerable to traffic congestion during the monsoon. Reviewing the power sector, the Chief Minister expressed displeasure over power outages caused by fallen trees and directed electricity of-

ficials to ensure immediate restoration of supply and deploy mobile transformers wherever required. He instructed power utility staff to remain in the field during adverse weather conditions. On irrigation preparedness, Revanth Reddy directed that all reservoirs and irrigation projects strictly adhere to operational manuals and ordered engineers to remain stationed at project sites throughout the monsoon. He warned of action against engineers leaving project locations without permission.

The Chief Minister also instructed Principal Secretary (Finance) Sandeep Kumar Sultania to sanction funds required for the repair and maintenance of project gates. between the two countries, the statement further said. Recognising the key role of innovation and technology in the bilateral relationship, both sides adopted an "Innovation Roadmap 2030" to give the partnership a long-term direction. Both leaders discussed expanding cooperation on Artificial Intelligence and agreed to create a Joint India-France AI Working Group for the purpose.

India, France aim to double trade in 5 Yrs



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday agreed to set up a high-level mechanism to double trade between the two countries within five years, and also shared concrete ideas to strengthen and diversify bilateral ties in the fields of economic growth, technology and talent mobility, according to a joint statement issued after the summit between the two leaders at Nice in France.

"The two leaders called for early implementation of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement, which offers a unique opportunity to expand bilateral trade and investment. The leaders also discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the SME, aviation and railway sectors. They welcomed the agreement to establish a Centre of Excellence for Skillling in Aeronautics in Kanpur. Welcoming the establishment of a Dialogue on Economic Security, both leaders agreed to strengthen supply chain resilience, especially in critical minerals," the statement said. The two leaders also discussed ways to expand private sector collaboration in space and noted that India's SHANTI Act creates new opportunities for collaboration, including on small and advanced modular reactors

between the two countries, the statement further said. Recognising the key role of innovation and technology in the bilateral relationship, both sides adopted an "Innovation Roadmap 2030" to give the partnership a long-term direction. Both leaders discussed expanding cooperation on Artificial Intelligence and agreed to create a Joint India-France AI Working Group for the purpose. The joint inauguration of Bharat Innovates at Nice by the leaders, and Prime Minister's upcoming participation at Vivatech in Paris, have further strengthened the partnership between the two countries in sectors such as deep-tech, semi-conductors, agri-tech, med-tech, renewable energy, defence and space. Both leaders appreciated the continued expansion of UPI in France, as well as the signing of 19 agreements among institutions in the innovation ecosystems of both countries, the statement observed. The two leaders emphasised the importance of enhancing people-to-people ties. In this context, Prime Minister Modi thanked President Macron for the swift operationalisation of visa-free transit for Indian nationals at French airports.

B'luru-Chennai Expressway to Boost Industrial Connectivity

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said that the Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway project will significantly enhance connectivity to major industrial and logistics hubs, strengthening economic activity and infrastructure development in the region. Sharing details of her visit to the expressway corridor under the 'Pragati Path Yatre Darshan' programme in Karnataka's Devanahalli, FM Sitharaman said the greenfield project is a key infrastructure initiative being developed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I to provide high-speed and seamless connectivity between Bengaluru and Chennai, two of India's leading eco-

nomics and industrial centres. "The project enhances connectivity to major industrial and logistics hubs, including Hoskote, Malur, Bangarpet, the Narasapura Industrial Area, and the Aerospace and Defence Parks, while also improving access to the proposed Multimodal Logistics Park (MMLP) at Dobbaspet through the Bengaluru Ring Road network," the Finance Minister said in a post on social media platform X. FM Sitharaman visited the expressway site along with leaders of the Karnataka BJP and highlighted the NDA government's focus on building modern infrastructure to accelerate economic growth and improve the ease of living for citizens.

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CID tightens security at Bhawani Bhavan ahead of Abhishek Banerjee's scheduled appearance

Kolkata, June 14 (UNI) Security has been stepped up at the CID headquarters in Bhawani Bhavan as Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee is scheduled to appear before investigators on Sunday in connection with the alleged signature forgery case linked to the West Bengal Assembly. Banerjee was questioned for nearly five-and-a-half hours by the state police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Thursday night. Following the interrogation, he was summoned again and asked to appear on Sunday morning. Banerjee had earlier said that he would cooperate with the investigation and appear before the agency as directed. The fresh summons comes amid a series of developments involving



the Diamond Harbour MP.

On Friday, CID officers visited his residence and served him another notice in connection with a separate case arising out of a complaint lodged in Salt Lake over one of his remarks. He has been asked to appear in that matter on June 16. In addition, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Banerjee on June 15 in connection with its investigation into

the alleged primary school recruitment scam. He has no legal protection in either of these cases. The Calcutta High Court, while hearing the signature forgery case, directed Banerjee to cooperate with the investigation. The court also ordered that no coercive action be taken against him by the CID for two weeks, during which the matter will come up for hearing again.

In view of the court's directive and interim protection, Banerjee is expected to appear before the CID on Sunday. Despite it being a holiday, senior CID officials were seen arriving at Bhawani Bhavan from early morning. Additional police personnel and central forces have been deployed around the area to prevent any untoward incident. The heightened security follows a dramatic police operation at Banerjee's Kalighat residence early on Saturday. Officers from Salboni Police Station were searching for his close aide Sumit Roy, whose mobile phone's last known tower location was reportedly traced to the residence. According to sources, police knocked on the doors from around 3 a.m. but received no response.

India To Host Global Wind Day With Eye On 100 GW Capacity By 2030

New Delhi, June 14 (GNS): India will host the Global Wind Day 2026 Conference on Monday, in Goa, under the theme "Wind Energy: From Ambition to Acceleration" as India's vast wind resource base provides a strong foundation for achieving 100 GW wind capacity by 2030 and 156 GW by 2036, according to an official statement issued on Sunday. India ranks fourth globally in installed wind power capacity. Installed wind capacity increased from 21.04 GW in March 2014 to 56.09 GW in March 2026, a 2.66-fold increase. The conference will spotlight key priorities shaping the next phase of India's

wind energy journey, including resource adequacy, grid readiness, capacity addition, domestic manufacturing competitiveness, export opportunities, and advancements in forecasting and renewable energy firming. The industry report "Elevating India's Wind Turbine Exports for Global Markets" will also be released on the occasion, according to an official statement issued on Sunday. The conference will bring together senior representatives from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE),

Grid India, leading state governments, and industry bodies and associations.

India recorded its highest-ever annual wind capacity addition of 6.05 GW in 2025-26, surpassing the previous record of 4.15 GW in 2024-25. Nearly 45 per cent of wind generation occurs during peak demand hours, complementing solar power and strengthening grid reliability. The country's wind energy sector is expanding steadily with rising installed capacity and strong wind resource potential across key states. It is increasingly supported by domestic manufacturing and its role in meeting renewable energy targets.

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Cracking the crypto code behind terror in India

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The J&K Police's State Investigation Agency on July 11, 2025 raided three places in connection with a terror funding case involving the use of cryptocurrency. These searches were aimed at collecting critical evidence involving cross-border funding through cryptocurrency for fuelling terrorism in J&K. They recovered vital electronic devices, marking a breakthrough in exposing the clandestine financial networks that keep the pot of terrorism boiling.

Documented origins of terrorists using cryptocurrency date back to 2019 when Hamas engaged in a cryptocurrency donation campaign that led to the US seizing several websites and 150 cryptocurrency accounts linked to its armed wing. In India, this is, perhaps, the first reported incident of cryptocurrency being used to fund terrorist activities distinct from money-laundering. Money-laundering is largely a legitimisation-oriented process for dirty money while terrorist financing does not emphasise legitimisation. However, both aim to erase money trails.

This has to be viewed in the background of Pakistan, a country suspicious of digital currencies till a few months back unveiling hasty efforts in embracing crypto. It created the Pakistan Crypto Council in March 2025, appointing a Canadian-Chinese businessman, Changpeng Zhao, founder



of Binance, world's largest crypto exchange, as its adviser and signing an agreement with World Liberty Financial, a crypto company linked to the US President's family. While the official reason advanced for the change of heart was attracting investments, strategic angle to curry favour with the US President is apparent.

What India needs to be worried about is the anonymity that digital currencies and blockchain technology provide to Pakistan. Sponsoring terrorism is an expensive affair and its funding comes through both legal and illegal channels. Accordingly, a vital prong of a counter-terrorism strategy is launching a financial war to choke the flow of funds to terrorists. Combating the financing of terrorism has a long gestation period and does not show immediate results. Presently, the resources being devoted to-

wards this are inadequate, with the establishment preferring to focus on visible security measures and offensive actions to eliminate terrorists and their sanctuaries. It stems from the fact that protective measures are reassuring for the public and thus politically expedient.

Terrorist financing consists of two activities – money generation and its distribution to the terrorists. Till now, the main sources of funding for terrorist and insurgent groups in India have been clandestine contributions from the ISI of Pakistan, contributions from religious, fundamentalist and pan-Islamic terrorist organisations in Pakistan, donations from ostensibly charitable organisations from Islamic countries, contributions from transnational criminal groups, such as the mafia group led by Dawood Ibrahim, narcotics smuggling, fake Indian currency

notes (FICN), diverting overseas donations to non-profit organisations and contributions by Indian diaspora.

The distribution of money or value to terrorists has been carried out largely through three channels: the use of the financial system; physical movement of money such as through cash couriers; and the international trade system. Terrorists use both the organised financial sector and alternative remittance systems like hawala to move money.

It has been found that the movement and distribution of terrorist funds in India is mostly conducted through informal channels such as hawala, couriers and smuggling of FICN. Presently, terrorists do not rely much on the formal banking sector to generate or move their funds, however, a close watch needs to be maintained. The Pakistan High Commission has

also been known to act as a conduit of funds to terrorist groups in Kashmir.

The Indian policy for CFT is grounded in anti-money-laundering laws and predates virtual assets and virtual asset service providers. Laws scattered over a number of Acts deal with various aspects of terrorist financing. The major ones include The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 as amended, The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2003, Foreign Exchange Management Act. While the MHA is responsible for implementing the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act under which terrorist financing is an offence, economic offences are dealt with by the Finance Ministry.

The Central Bureau of Investigation also has responsibilities for economic offences, terrorism and FICN. The contemporary structures and procedures in place, including the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), are focused on large-scale financial fraud and cannot detect the money being canalised to terrorists. It is difficult for the agencies dealing with economic offences to distil terrorist financing cases from the reports they receive. The FIU received 1,81,27,460 cash and 3,68,592 suspicious transaction reports in 2023-2024 and disseminated 2,750 cases to intelligence and law enforcement agencies. However, its effect on CFT has been negligible.

ISIS Use of Wahhabi Texts to Justify Violence and Destroy Heritage

Kitab al-Tawheed (The Book of Monotheism), authored by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in the 18th century, is a seminal text in Wahhabi ideology, emphasising a strict, literalist interpretation of tawheed (Islamic monotheism). It is revered in Salafi circles as a revivalist canon, leading to its direct linkage with the ideological foundations of violent extremist groups like ISIS and Al Qaeda. This article explores how Kitab al-Tawheed has been co-opted and manipulated to justify radicalism, violence, and the recruitment of young Muslims by the groups mentioned above and a plethora of their spin-offs. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's doctrine emerged in response to what he perceived as widespread religious "innovations" (bid'ah) and deviations from pure Islamic monotheism. It was the era of the Ottoman caliphate, and veneration of Sufi saints and assemblies at their shrines or khanqahs was widespread, as it is even today, and seen as a soft and traditional form of Islam. Abd al-Wahhab professed the abolishment of such practices as they, according to him, contradicted the principle of tawheed (oneness of God and the supremacy of His sole authority). His doctrine deemed approaching Sufis as seeking intercession between man and God – he labelled it as shirk (polytheism or accepting an equal authority to God). Visitation of shrines, in his view, was akin to paying homage at the threshold of false gods or idol worship. Wahhab's ideas first gained currency among Arab tribals and soon gained political power through his alliance with Muhammad ibn Saud, a tribal lord, leading ultimately to the creation of the Saudi state. It was then that the institutionalisation of Wahhabi ideology took shape. The uncompromising dualism in Kitab al-Tawheed, dividing Muslims into true monotheists and heretics, laid fertile ground for takfiri ideologies that excommunicate fellow Muslims. Takfirists believe that once Muslims veer away from original Islamic principles, they turn into enemies and are thus subject to annihilation.

Doctrinal Rigidity and the Takfiri Mindset

One major flaw in Kitab al-Tawheed is its doctrinal rigidity. Even short of research, it nevertheless sets a discourse that appears like a long fatwa, or edict. It contains numerous unauthentic reference texts and misinterpretations that categorise deviations from pure tawheed as major acts of disbelief, often punishable by death. This binary worldview has been foundational in the takfiri logic employed by ISIS. Takfir, in simple terms, is the act of declaring another Muslim an apostate (outside Islam's periphery) and then condemning them to death. This dangerous doctrine is central to ISIS ideology and has been used to justify the killing of traditional Muslims, Sufis, secular Muslims, and anyone who opposes ISIS — let alone non-Muslims.

The text's emphasis on "loyalty and disavowal" (al-wala' wa-l-bara') — loyalty to monotheists and disavowal of polytheists — has been interpreted by radicals as a divine mandate to wage war against all perceived "deviants". This absolutist conviction erases room for pluralism and facilitates ideological radicalisation.

From Theology to Violence: How ISIS Uses Kitab al-Tawheed

ISIS, in its propaganda and training literature, often quotes Kitab al-Tawheed and other Wahhabi treatises to legitimise its violence. The book's interpretations are presented to recruits as evidence that killing apostates and heretics is not just allowed but required to purify the ummah. For instance: Targeting Sufis and Traditional Sunnis: ISIS attacks on Sufi shrines and Sunni mosques have been justified using Wahhabi condemnation of shrine reverence and saint veneration, which are labelled as unforgivable acts of shirk in Kitab al-Tawheed. Recruitment Rationale: Young Muslims, unfamiliar with the diversity of Islamic traditions, are indoctrinated using simplified versions of Kitab al-Tawheed. Its strong anti-pluralist messages are packaged as heroic resistance against Western imperialism and internal corruption. Destruction of Heritage: ISIS's destruction of ancient religious sites results from radical Wahhabi views that such places are physical symbols of "idolatry" and must be erased. This iconoclasm is rationalised through the same verses and text cited in the book.

The danger of Kitab al-Tawheed lies not in its existence but in its weaponisation. When presented as the sole legitimate interpretation of Islam, it fosters an exclusionary mindset. Traditional Sunni and Sufi scholars have historically emphasised tawheed while maintaining a broader and inclusive jurisprudence that accommodates differing schools of thought. ISIS, however, rejects this legacy entirely, using Kitab al-Tawheed as the theological bedrock to dismantle centuries of Islamic diversity.

In recent years, the rise of digital Salafism has profoundly impacted certain segments of Indian Muslim youth. Online platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp, and Telegram are facilitating the extensive distribution of Wahhabi-inspired content, which includes accessible translations of Kitab al-Tawheed. These materials frequently advocate for a narrow and exclusionary interpretation of Islam, categorising traditional practices such as the veneration of Sufi saints and visits to shrines as un-Islamic or even polytheistic. Consequently, a significant number of young Muslims are distancing themselves from India's rich and diverse Islamic heritage, resulting in a sense of identity confusion, increasing sectarian divisions, and a rise in intolerance towards other Muslim sects. This transformation in ideology, propelled by externally financed networks and unregulated digital material, presents a significant challenge to our society. To tackle this issue, Sufi institutions should enhance their outreach efforts and reinvigorate an education that is spiritually inclusive and deeply rooted in Indian traditions.

In recent years, the ideological influence of Kitab al-Tawheed has increasingly reached Indian Muslim youth through translated literature, online sermons, and foreign-funded Salafi institutions. Among segments of Indian Muslim youth, Kitab al-Tawheed has contributed to a growing rejection of the country's rich Islamic traditions. It has alienated them from their cultural and spiritual roots, promoting a black-and-white worldview. This has led to increased sectarianism, identity confusion, and, in some cases, susceptibility to online radical content and extremist narratives. The reduction of Islam to rigid dogma also diminishes the emphasis on ethics, compassion, and communal harmony — values which are deeply rooted in Indian Islam.

In contrast, Indian Sufi Islam offers a spiritually enriching, pluralistic, and peace-centred path. Rooted in centuries of coexistence, Indian Sufi traditions celebrate love for God, service to humanity, and respect for all faiths. Sufi saints like Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, Nizamuddin Auliya, Imam Ahmed Raza, and Shah Meena preached an inclusive message that integrated Islamic teachings with local culture, fostering harmony and devotion rather than division. To counter the radical impact of Wahhabi literature, Indian Sufi institutions must become more proactive in engaging youth. Through khanqahs, spiritual education, digital outreach, and community service, they can offer young Muslims a balanced Islamic identity — one that is rooted in Indian soil, aligned with Islamic ethics, and resistant to ideological extremism. In this ideological battle, Indian Sufi Islam is not just a cultural legacy; it is a vital shield against the rise of extremism among the youth.

Hope takes root in Meghalaya

Sanjoy Hazarika

MEGHALAYA put its best foot forward for the visiting VIP earlier this month. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was on her first long trip, one of four days, a substantial one by any measure for a senior colleague of the Prime Minister, to this small state.

The FM's visit was well-choreographed by the state government, led by its affable Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, an NDA ally. There was a visit to what she called an "iconic" living root bridge in Sohra (old name Cherrapunji); the town used to hold the record for the world's highest rainfall but has been more in the news in recent weeks for the sensational murder of Raja Raghuvanshi.

For those whose minds have been swayed by the garish media coverage of that messy business, remember that the root bridges are engineering marvels which will outlast such events. They represent ancient traditions in modern times; a staggering 72 bridges in Meghalaya are mentioned in the UNESCO cultural landscapes listing. Local villagers weave the bridges from the extended roots of India rubber trees and create ladders, platforms and towers. One account said the FM remarked that the root bridges represented "a global benchmark in ecological resilience".

The visit wasn't exactly a relaxed one — she packed a lot into those four days. Apart from an interview with



a young entrepreneur by the pretty Ward's Lake in Shillong, she opened the state's first major mall, flagged off the first consignment of pineapples — among the sweetest produced in the country — to Dubai, visited Sohra's Ramakrishna Mission (a pioneer of modern education in the region), interacted with members of the business community, farmers and women SHGs (self-help groups), laid the foundation stone of a conference centre as well as that of a massive concert and football venue in this music and sports-loving state.

Sitharaman was clearly impressed and she posted photos as well as videos on social media. That should have pleased the state gov-

ernment, which had, smartly and strategically, decided not to raise the issue of funds or other matters directly with her. It let others who were meeting her do the talking and pose questions. The FM underlined the improvement in Meghalaya's health sector, which once made extremely dismal reading. The state's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) or the number of women who die in childbirth was among the highest in the country in 2020-21, at 243 per one lakh live births. Thanks to a multi-sector approach, which combined better access to healthcare, transit homes for high-risk pregnant women, transportation facilities and a new app which enabled closer monitoring and report-

ing of pregnant women by health workers at different levels, the MMR dropped dramatically and now hovers around 107. This is an extraordinary achievement by any measure and Meghalaya received high praise at an international conference in Berlin this year that celebrated innovative and creative bureaucracy. Also, there has been a significant decline in infant mortality, although stunting and anaemia among children remain critical obstacles.

The FM must also be aware of the continuing challenges, which the CM himself readily admits. The Primer on Maternal and Child Health in Meghalaya, published by Accountability Initiative, said there were a

range of issues which continue to resist change and need continuous and long-term focus. "Problems of social taboos, teenage pregnancies, poverty, remoteness, etc. pose long-term constraints. Addressing them must remain a protracted focus of the state," the primer said. Another challenge was highlighted by Ibalarithisha Syiem in 4Front News, "HIV cases in Meghalaya have surged by over 220 per cent in the past two decades, with the state now ranking sixth in India for HIV prevalence. As of 2025, more than 10,000 people are living with HIV, yet much of society still treats it as a distant or taboo issue".

Since she moved in a cavalcade which swept through roads and highways, Sitharaman perhaps did not encounter traffic gridlock, one of the major problems that is the bane of growing cities, whether Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Guwahati or Shillong. Unlike other cities on this list, which are in the plains, Shillong's narrow sloping roads on hills of different gradients do not lend themselves easily to expansion. The city is becoming more crowded with concrete buildings looming over lanes and thousands of vehicles being added to its vehicular population every year. Parking is a problem and jams are long and painful, although scooter taxis and walking are options. The Shillong Times, quoting official data, says Meghalaya has about six lakh registered vehicles; the East Khasi Hills district.

India-EFTA free trade pact to come into effect from October 1: Piyush Goyal

Mumbai, June 14 (GNS) Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday that the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) will officially come into effect on October 1, that would facilitate the creation of 1 million direct jobs in India.

EFTA comprises Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The landmark pact, signed on March 10, 2024, is likely to unlock huge foreign direct investment (FDI) and deepen trade and economic co-operation across several sectors. "India-EFTA TEPA to come into effect from 1st October," the minister posted on X. EFTA nations have committed an investment of \$100 billion, which would help create 1 million direct jobs in India.

A dedicated India-EFTA Desk has been launched to



promote trade, investment, and business partnerships. Goyal said the desk will act as a 'single-window platform' for both governments and private companies.

The India-EFTA deal includes \$50 billion in FDI within the first 10 years; an additional \$50 billion over the next 5 years; and generation of 1 million direct jobs in India.

TEPA marks one of India's most comprehensive trade pacts and is expected to open up premium European markets for Indian exporters while bringing

in capital, innovation, and jobs. As part of the pact, EFTA is offering 92.2 per cent of its tariff lines which covers 99.6 per cent of India's exports to the region. The EFTA's market access offer covers 100 per cent of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP). Under the agreement, India is offering 82.7 per cent of its tariff lines which covers 95.3 per cent of EFTA exports of which more than 80 per cent import is gold.

The effective duty on

gold remains untouched. Sensitivity related to PLI in sectors such as pharma, medical devices and processed food etc. have been taken while extending offers. Sectors such as dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products are kept in the exclusion list.

As part of the pact, domestic customers will get access to high-quality Swiss products, such as watches, chocolates, biscuits, and clocks, at lower prices as India will phase out customs duties under the trade pact on these goods over 10 years.

Industry 4.0 should be adopted in CPSEs for global competitiveness: Govt



New Delhi, June 14 (GNS) Industry 4.0 is being considered for future incorporation into the Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) MoU assessment framework, and that early adoption will be key to enhancing global competitiveness, the government has said.

In a strategic step towards fostering innovation and smart manufacturing, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Ministry of Finance, organised a workshop on Industry 4.0 here, which brought together experts, policymakers, and leadership of CPSEs to discuss strategies for adoption

and scaling up of Industry 4.0 technologies across sectors like Energy, Power, Construction, Infrastructure, Telecom and Services.

K. Moses Chaloi, Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, emphasised the importance of embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) as a national mission. In his address, Chaloi underscored the need for a "Whole-of-CPSEs" (WoC) approach on the lines of the "Whole-of-Government" framework urging all CPSEs to collaborate in integrating 4IR enablers such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of

Things (IoT), Digital Twins, 3D Printing, and 5G-enabled smart infrastructure into their operations.

As part of expert presentations at the workshop, A. Anand, a deployment expert, shared rich experience in applications and field deployment of Digital Designing, Reverse Engineering, and 3D Printing across industry verticals, drawing from India's first 5G Labs and 3D Printing Centres of Excellence. Dr. Prabhjot Singh Sugga, Associate Professor at SPA, highlighted the transformative potential of Digital Twin platforms in infrastructure, plant man-

agement, and disaster resilience and Vidushi Chaturvedi, an AI expert, spoke on leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for predictive analytics, resource optimisation, and intelligent decision-making.

The DPE reiterated its commitment to support CPSEs in leveraging Industry 4.0 for operational excellence and sustainable development. The workshop marks a significant step toward realising this vision through collective efforts and strategic implementation across the CPSE ecosystem, according to the government.

India's agri-exports surge in Q1 FY26, rice exports lead

New Delhi, June 14 (GNS) India's exports of agricultural and processed foods got off to a great start in FY26, growing 7 per cent year-on-year to \$5.96 billion in the April-June quarter (Q1 FY26). The centre-piece of India's agricultural exports is still rice. The shipments of both non-basmati and basmati rice increased by 3.5 per cent to \$2.9 billion in Q1. This comes after rice exports in FY25 reached a record \$12.47 billion, a 20 per cent increase over the previous fiscal year, as per official data.

For more than 10 years, India has maintained its position as the world's largest rice exporter, accounting for 40 per cent of the global rice trade, as per industry data.

The surge follows the government's decision to remove export controls, including the minimum export price, in late 2024 in response to abundant



stock and record harvests, the reports highlighted.

In Q1, buffalo meat, dairy, and poultry exports grew by a strong 17 per cent to \$1.18 billion.

According to reports, India has established itself as the world's second-largest exporter of buffalo meat, with important markets in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Malaysia, Egypt, and Iraq.

Through certified integrated meat plants, which are routinely inspected by importing countries to guarantee adherence to international standards, APEDA coordinates these exports. In the meantime,

exports of fruits and vegetables increased by 13 per cent to \$0.95 billion, indicating a rise in the demand for Indian produce worldwide. Meanwhile, products under the APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority) umbrella contributed significantly to the export surge, the report stated.

In FY25, APEDA-coordinated exports reached \$25.14 billion, up 12 per cent from FY24. These products now account for 51 per cent of India's total agricultural exports, with the remainder comprising marine products, tobacco,

RBL Bank's Q1 net profit falls 46 pc YoY to Rs 200 crore

Mumbai, June 14 (GNS) RBL Bank on Saturday posted a net profit of Rs 200 crore for the first quarter of current financial year (Q1 FY26), down 46 per cent year-on-year (YoY), the private sector lender said in an exchange filing.

The bank had posted Rs 371.5 crore profit in corresponding quarter a year ago (Q1 FY25). However, the private bank saw a strong rebound sequentially from the Rs 69 crore reported in Q4 FY25.

Meanwhile, the bank's total standalone income stood at Rs 4,510 crore, marginally higher than Rs 4,475.6 crore recorded in Q4 FY25. At the same time, interest income remained steady at Rs 3,441 crore, while non-interest income, which includes fees, commissions, forex earnings, and investment gains rose to Rs 1,069 crore from Rs 1,000 crore in the preceding quarter. Operating profit before provisions came in at Rs



702.9 crore, down from Rs 861 crore in Q4 FY25 and Rs 859 crore in Q1 FY25, indicating pressure on core operating performance.

On the asset quality front, gross non-performing assets (GNPA) rose slightly to Rs 2,685.9 crore. Despite the increase in absolute terms, the GNPA ratio improved to 2.78 per cent from 2.60 per cent in Q4 FY25. Net NPAs increased to Rs 428.8 crore, with the net NPA ratio rising to 0.45 per cent from 0.29 per cent in the previous quarter, as per the filing. "We have navigated a challenging environment with resilience and dis-

cipline, delivering strong momentum in secured retail and commercial banking while deepening our granular deposit base, said R Subramaniakumar, MD and CEO, RBL Bank.

During Q1 FY26, slippages in the JLG portfolio have moderated, with SMA levels reverting to Q1 FY25 level. The core engine remains robust—anchored in disciplined execution, profitability-driven growth, and a sharp customer focus, the CEO added. Meanwhile, the shares of the bank fell nearly 2 per cent on Friday amid selling pressure, a day ahead of Q1 results.

HDFC Bank clocks 13 pc sequential drop in Q1 net profit, announces Rs 5 special dividend

New Delhi, June 14 (GNS) HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a 13 per cent sequential drop in net profit (unaudited consolidated) for Q1 FY26 at 16,257.91 crore, down from Rs 18,834.88 crore in the previous quarter that ended on March 31. On the year-on-year basis, India's largest private lending bank registered a marginal dip of 1.3 per cent in net profit from 16,474.85 crore it clocked in Q1 FY25 (after accounting for minority interest).

The bank earned an interest income of Rs 77,470 crore, which was up 6 per cent from Rs 73,033 crore reported in the corresponding quarter of the last financial year. HDFC Bank's interest expenses reached Rs 46,032.23 crore during the review period, compared to Rs 43,196 crore in the previous year, marking a rise of 6.6 per cent. According to the exchange filing, the net interest income

(the difference between interest earned and interest expended) for the quarter ending June 30, 2025, increased by 5.4 per cent to Rs 31,439 crore, up from Rs 29,839 crore for the quarter ending June 30, 2024. HDFC Bank announced issuance of first-ever bonus shares in the proportion of 1:1 which means one equity share for every 1 fully paid-up equity share, each held by the members of the bank as on the record date of August 27. The bank also announced a special interim dividend of Rs 5 per equity share for FY 2025-26. "The Special Interim Dividend shall be paid to the eligible Members on Monday, August 11, 2025," the HDFC bank said in its stock exchange filing.

The gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio stood at 1.40 per cent, while the net NPA ratio was 0.47 per cent as of June 30, both slightly higher than the year-ago levels.

Critical mineral-rich northeast offers a massive opportunity for India

New Delhi, June 14 (GNS) Long treated as a remote corner of the country, the northeastern region is becoming a frontrunner in several fields amid a mega infrastructure drive, and the mineral-rich states are now receiving focused attention to transform untapped resources into drivers of economic growth, employment, and local empowerment. This is crucial as the world races towards clean energy, making critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, rare earths, graphite and vanadium, among others.

The government recently announced that northeast is home to several critical minerals, including lithium, cobalt, chromium, rare earths, graphite, and vanadium. The National Mineral Exploration Trust's ongoing survey has identified 38 blocks in the region, and seven have been cleared for auction. Critical minerals are essential to semiconductors,



smartphones, servers, precision tools, telecom equipment, medical electronics, batteries, and clean energy, among others. These inputs underpin industrial strength and national resilience. Global supply chains remain vulnerable due to geopolitical concentration and strategic trade controls and a focused national mission was both timely and necessary.

Recently-concluded 'North-East Mining Ministers' Conclave' in Guwahati underlined the Centre's commitment to strengthen

mining infrastructure, fast-track project approvals, and promote sustainable mining practices in the northeastern region. The development of the northeast is central to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, with the eight states — Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim — rightfully celebrated as Ashta Lakshmi. India's mineral auction framework has gained strong momentum in recent months. Since FY2024-25, a total of 283 mineral blocks

have been put up for auction by the State and Central Governments. Of these, 161 mineral blocks have been successfully auctioned, bringing the cumulative tally to 515. This includes five mineral blocks from Assam and four critical mineral blocks from Arunachal Pradesh, opening new avenues for industrial growth and employment in the region.

These auctions underscore the readiness of the North-East to play a central role in India's critical mineral strategy, while also reflecting the government's commitment to transparency and competitiveness in resource allocation.

India holds 8 per cent of the world's rare earth element reserves, which gives it the potential of playing a key role in the gradually evolving global supply landscape as China's current dominance is projected to decline, according to a recent CareEdge report.

Nearly 76,000 Indian startups now led by women: Minister

New Delhi, June 14 (GNS) Around 76,000 startups in India today are women-led and a large number of them from tier 2 and 3 cities, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said on Saturday.

The minister said that India's path to becoming a developed nation by 2047 will be led by empowered women and youth, as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi under the paradigm of women-led development. Addressing a conference here, Dr Singh stated that over the last 11 years, the PM Modi government has focused its governance architecture around four pillars — the Poor, Farmers, Youth, and Women.

"Women-centric governance has not only empowered individuals, but reshaped society. What began as targeted welfare has now evolved into institutional leadership," he told the gathering. The minister launched the Jeevika



E-Learning Management System App, aimed at providing accessible learning for women, and unveiled the publication titled "Shashakt Mahila, Samridh Bihar", which celebrates women's contributions to Bihar's progress.

Dr Singh elaborated on the PM Modi government's structured and comprehensive approach to women empowerment, built across four key pillars. The first phase, Access and Inclusion in Institutions, marked a

historic shift in India's educational and military landscape. The second phase, Scientific and Technological Empowerment, has empowered women through targeted schemes such as WISE (Women in Science and Engineering), GATI (Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions), CURIE, and the Women Scientist Programme.

The third phase, Economic and Social Empowerment, has witnessed a massive scale-up of wom-

en's access to financial resources. Over 48 crore Jan Dhan accounts have been opened for women, while more than 60 per cent of Mudra Yojana beneficiaries are women entrepreneurs.

The creation of over 3 crore 'Lakhpati Didis' through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) is transforming rural economies. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, homes registered in women's names are providing not just shelter but also financial and social dignity.

Salar Jung Museum to be cultural crown of revitalised Musi riverfront: Bhatti

Hyderabad, June 14 (GNS) Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Sunday said the Salar Jung Museum would emerge as the cultural crown of a rejuvenated Musi Riverfront as the state government moves ahead with plans to transform the river and strengthen Hyderabad's heritage tourism ecosystem.

Speaking at the celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of the Salar Jung Museum and the 137th birth anniversary of Mir Yousuf Ali Khan, Bhatti described the museum as a reflection of Hyderabad's spirit and a symbol of the city's rich composite culture.

He praised Salar Jung III's contribution to preserving

global heritage, noting that his collection of over 43,000 artefacts represented an extraordinary commitment to art, history and culture.

"While we often forget small things in our daily lives, Salar Jung III preserved entire civilizations," Bhatti remarked, describing the collection as a testament to the visionary's dedication to safeguarding humanity's cultural legacy.

The Deputy Chief Minister said Salar Jung III spent his personal wealth to acquire rare treasures from across the world and convert them into a public asset, leaving behind a legacy that continues to enrich future generations. Highlighting the museum's diverse collection,



Bhatti said it housed Hindu bronze idols, copies of the Quran, Christian sculptures and Buddhist artefacts under one roof, reflecting Hyderabad's syncretic culture and the Deccan's Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb. Linking heritage

conservation with urban development, he said the Telangana government was committed to rejuvenating the Musi River and developing an international-standard riverfront comparable to the River Thames in Lon-

don and the Seine in Paris. "The Salar Jung Museum will not remain an isolated monument. It will become the cultural crown of a revitalised Musi Riverfront," he said. Bhatti said the govern-

ment was preparing plans to integrate the museum into a broader heritage tourism circuit that would connect major landmarks, including the Charminar, Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs, Chowmahalla Palace and Falaknuma Palace. The ini-

tiative will include improved transport connectivity, night tourism, guided heritage walks and multilingual visitor services, he said. Emphasising the economic value of heritage conservation, Bhatti said tourism linked to heritage sites could generate employment opportunities for local guides, artists, transport operators and hospitality businesses. The Deputy Chief Minister also stressed the need to make museums more interactive and accessible to younger generations.

He said partnerships would be developed with institutions including the University of Hyderabad, Indian Institutes of Technology, International Institute of Information Technology Hy-

derabad and Indian School of Business to promote research, innovation and educational engagement.

Describing Hyderabad as a city that balances heritage and innovation, Bhatti said it was not only home to historic landmarks but had also emerged as a global centre for information technology, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and emerging technologies such as quantum computing. He also urged international investors visiting Hyderabad to explore the city's cultural landmarks in addition to business destinations, saying the city's heritage, cuisine and traditions formed an important part of Telangana's cultural economy.

TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud Releases List of 60 Nizamabad Corporation Division Presidents

Hyderabad, June 14 (GNS) Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud has officially released the list of Division Presidents for all 60 divisions of the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation, aiming to strengthen the Congress Party's grassroots organizational network. Welcoming the appointments, Nizamabad Urban District Congress Committee President Bobbili Ramakrishna congratulated the newly appointed leaders and ex-



pressed confidence that they would work tirelessly to expand the party's reach and effectively implement its programmes among the people. As per the list, Division No. 1 was allotted to

Aila Rajalingam, 2 Panjala Naveen Kumar Goud, 3 T. Srinivas Reddy, 4 Muthyala Vinod Kumar, 5 Kalleda Ashok, 6 Vadiyala Shraavan, 7 Kiran Saipuram, 8 Kodimunjala Ganesh, 9 Dileep Kumar, 10 Syed Ismail, 11 Syed Raffiq uz Zama, 12 Mohd Mohsin, 13 Ram Singh, 14 Syed Shakeel, 15 Mohd Amjad Khan, 16 Pancharreddy Akshay Kumar, 17 Shaik Saleem, 18 Kyatham Hanmandlu, 19 Sirigiri Shankar, 20 Mendi Mallikarjun, 21 Renjarla Ganga Shivaprasad, 22 Mara Nirish

(Prabhu), 23 Yelasani Anvesh Reddy, 24 Pala Srinivas, 25 Yemula Prasad, 26 Andyala Ravi Kanth, 27 Bushanam Pavan Goud, 28 Mohammed Abdul Qayyum, 29 Mohd Asif Ahmed, 30 Abdul Inayath Khan, 31 Shaik Zafar, 32 Javeed Ahmed Khan, 33 Shaik Nabi, 34 Md Naser Ahmed, 35 Tudigena Rajesh, 36 Ch. Srikanth, 37 Bhasakar Datrika, 38 V. Sarojana, 39 Pawar Kapil, 40 Telu Raj Prakash, 41 Shaik Saber, 42 Shaik Nooruddin, 43 Pullolla Praveen Kumar, 44 Tharla Rajesh, 45 Bharath

Katkam, 46 Abdul Rashad, 47 Gummula Gangadhar (Prasanna), 48 Ama Rajendar (Raju), 49 Dibbakar Raju, 50 Armour Sandeep, 51 B. Naveen Chand, 52 Syed Nawaz, 53 Shoaib Akthar, 54 Shaik Zakir, 55 Abdul Riyaz, 56 Syed Riyaz, 57 Mohammed Iliaz Noor, 58 Asad Bin Hamdan, 59 Shaik Azar and 60 M.A. Ali Arif. Party leaders described the appointments as a significant step toward strengthening local leadership and enhancing organizational effectiveness across all municipal divisions.

Naveen Yadav Urges BLAs to Strengthen Voter Roll Revision

Hyderabad, June 12 (GNS) Telangana is rapidly emerging as one of India's most promising logistics destinations, backed by strategic infrastructure investments, progressive policies and a future-focused vision, State IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu said on Friday.

Delivering the keynote address at the International Conference on Shipping and Logistics 2026 (ICSL 2026), organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) at HICC, the Minister said logistics is the backbone of economic growth, connecting manufacturers, farmers, businesses and markets.

He noted that in today's global trade environment, resilience, speed, reliability and adaptability have become as important as efficiency. Highlighting Telangana's achievements, Sridhar Babu said the state



contributes nearly five percent to India's GDP, ranks seventh among merchandise-exporting states and recorded exports worth over Rs 1.61 lakh crore during 2024-25. Despite being landlocked, Telangana has transformed its geographical position into a strategic advantage through strong multimodal connectivity, Logistics Policy 2.0, expanding air cargo infrastructure and the upcoming Mega Multimodal Logistics Park at Manoharabad. Inviting investors and industry leaders to partner with the state, the

Minister said Telangana is ready to support industry, connect markets and build the logistics ecosystem of the future. FTCCI President Ravi Kumar said Hyderabad is well-positioned to emerge as India's premier hub-and-spoke logistics destination, while Logistics Committee Chairman Kamal Jain said the conference brought together policymakers, industry leaders, technology providers and academia to discuss the future of India's logistics sector. The conference featured panel discussions on cargo infrastructure, multimodal freight transport, AI-driven logistics, and workforce development.

Participants stressed the need for stronger collaboration among government, industry and academia to enhance India's logistics competitiveness and build a globally competitive supply-chain ecosystem.

HCSC, Hyderabad Police Launch 2nd Margadarshak Cohort

Hyderabad, June 12 (GNS) The Hyderabad City Security Council (HCSC), in collaboration with Hyderabad City Police, on Sunday organised the certification ceremony for the first cohort of the Margadarshak Programme and formally launched its second cohort aimed at strengthening community participation in public safety initiatives.

The Margadarshak Programme is a community-driven initiative designed to create a network of trained volunteers and safety ambassadors who can support law enforcement agencies in promoting public safety, emergency response, women's safety, cyber awareness and community engagement. According to organisers, more than 80 participants successfully completed the training modules and received Margadarshak certification under

the inaugural cohort. Officials said the first batch demonstrated the effectiveness of structured community engagement and highlighted citizens' willingness to actively contribute to public safety efforts. The certified volunteers are expected to serve as community ambassadors for safety awareness across the city. Building on the programme's success, the second cohort was launched during the event. Organisers said the new batch has already attracted 280 participants, reflecting growing public interest in community policing and collaborative safety initiatives.

The ceremony brought together senior police officials, community leaders, partner organisations, trainers and participants to celebrate the achievements of the first batch and reinforce efforts.

Important Meeting of Editors of Small Newspapers Held

Hyderabad, June 12 (GNS) An important meeting of editors of small newspapers was held today, June 13, 2026, at the office of Daily Super Express in Azampura to discuss the issue of pending advertisement bills that have remained unpaid for the past two years. The participants expressed serious concern over the continued delay in the clearance of these bills by the Government and the Department of Information and Public Relations. The speakers observed that numerous representations had been submitted to the Government and the concerned department during the last two years. However, despite repeated efforts, no significant progress has been made towards resolving the issue. The participants regretted that small



newspapers are facing financial difficulties due to the non-payment of dues, while neither the Government nor the concerned department appears to be taking adequate interest in addressing the matter.

After detailed deliberations, the meeting unanimously resolved to organize a peaceful march from Gun Park, opposite the State Assembly, to the office of the Department of Information and Public Relations, seeking

the release of the long-pending bills. The participants expressed hope that editors of small newspapers from across the State would extend their support and ensure the success of the march. It was further decided that on Monday, delegations would meet office-bearers of various journalists' organizations to apprise them of the issue and seek their cooperation. The date and other details of the proposed march will be announced subsequently.

We Will Allot House Plots to Journalists Individually - CM Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad, June 12 (GNS) Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy clarified that the government is firmly resolved to allot house plots to journalists on an individual basis, rather than through societies. Speaking at a meeting with journalists in New Delhi on Saturday, the CM said, "We constituted a cabinet sub-committee with the specific aim of providing house plots to journalists. Please

bring any issues you have to the attention of Ministers Bhatti Vikramarka, Utam Kumar Reddy, Jupally Krishna Rao, and Duddilla Sridhar Babu. Once the sub-committee meets and finalizes its recommendations, we will draft the minutes and secure cabinet approval before you even finish a cup of tea." The CM explained that the policy of individual allotment would prevent fu-

ture legal complications. "It is possible to file a legal challenge against societies, but if plots are allotted in individual names, no one can file such a petition. Challenging individual allotments would require filing separate cases against each person, which is not practical. Our intention is to ensure there are no disputes regarding these house plots in the future," Revanth Reddy stated.

BJP Must Win Municipal Polls to Ensure Hyderabad's Development: Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad, June 14 (GNS) Telangana BJP president N. Ramchander Rao on Sunday called upon party workers to intensify grassroots outreach ahead of the upcoming Municipal Corporation elections and alleged that a strong anti-incumbency sentiment was building against the Congress govt in the state.

Addressing a BJP workers' meeting at Maharana Pratap Hall in Amberpet in the city, Rao urged party cadres to visit every household and explain what he termed as the failures of the Congress government during its two years in office. He alleged that the Congress had failed to fulfil

several promises made before the Assembly elections, leading to growing dissatisfaction among youth, farmers, women, government employees, pensioners and other sections of society.

Claiming that Telangana Congress had become the "mother of lies", Rao accused the state government of misleading the public on paddy procurement and farmers' welfare.

He said BJP MPs, MLAs, MLCs and party leaders had exerted pressure on the government by visiting procurement centres across the state and raising farmers' concerns. Despite this, he alleged, farmers were forced to sell



produce below the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and faced hardships due to delays and inadequate arrangements at procurement centres. The BJP leader criticised

the state government's publicity campaigns on grain procurement and alleged that claims of record procurement were misleading. Referring to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's

criticism of the Centre, Rao challenged him to an open debate on the contribution of the union Government to Telangana's development.

He said the Centre had sanctioned projects and investments worth over Rs 13 lakh crore to the state, including institutions and infrastructure projects such as AIIMS, industrial parks, textile parks, national highways and railway projects.

Rao also targeted both the Congress and BRS, alleging that the two parties were protecting each other politically despite publicly criticising one another.

Referring to the Kaleshwaram project controversy and the Vote-for-Note case,

he alleged that there existed a "Fevicol bond" between the Congress and BRS and claimed that both parties were safeguarding each other's interests.

The BJP leader also criticised the government's handling of recent rains in Hyderabad, alleging a lack of preparedness despite repeated warnings about the monsoon season. He questioned the administration over rain-related deaths and urban flooding incidents and said the government should focus on addressing civic infrastructure issues in Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Malkajgiri before speaking about future development projects.

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