

India, Slovakia upgrade ties to comprehensive partnership; ink 11 pacts

BRATISLAVA, Jun 15 (GNS): India and Slovakia on Monday elevated their ties to a comprehensive partnership and firmed up 11 agreements to expand the bilateral cooperation in a range of areas such as migration, digital technology and defence following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Slovak counterpart Robert Fico. The two leaders also agreed to work towards the "earliest" implementation of the India-European Union free trade agreement that is expected to significantly shore up the bilateral economic engagement.

Modi is in Bratislava as part of his weeklong visit to Europe. It is the first visit to

the European nation by an Indian prime minister.

"We have decided to elevate our relations to the status of a Comprehensive Partnership. This symbolises our shared beliefs, shared priorities, and shared future," he said in his media statement.

The comprehensive partnership aims to take bilateral relations to a new level, strengthen existing cooperation mechanisms and explore new avenues for deepening cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The prime minister said he and Fico discussed ways to give a "new direction" to the ties.

Modi and Fico also agreed to enhance cooperation in the energy

sector with a view to promoting energy security, sustainability and resilience through diversification of energy sources, including nuclear energy and geothermal power. "Our potential is vast. Our aspirations are even greater. Automobile, railways, advanced manufacturing, and green technologies are areas of particular interest to us," he said. "Today, we combined our strengths on all these issues and took several important decisions for the benefit of the people of both countries."

Modi also said that the defence cooperation between India and Slovakia is a testament to the "deep mutual trust and strategic convergence" between the



two sides. A Letter of Intent was finalised on defence cooperation following the talks between the two leaders. The prime minister said it will give new momentum for cooperation

between defence industries of the two sides.

"India and Slovakia are also moving forward with close coordination on the global stage. We agree that all disputes and ten-

sions should be resolved peacefully," he said. "We also agree that global institutions need to redefine themselves to address the realities and challenges of the 21st century. We will work to strengthen global efforts in this regard," he added. Modi also conveyed his appreciation to PM Fico for the cooperation Slovakia extended in finalising the India-EU free trade agreement. "We will work towards its earliest implementation so that industries, startups, and traders of both countries can derive maximum benefit from it," he said.

In his remarks, PM Fico hailed the India-EU FTA, describing it as one of the "most ambitious" trade

pacts ever signed.

"Slovakia not only welcomes this agreement, but it will take the necessary and practical steps for the implementation of this agreement," he said.

The agreements inked following Modi-Fico talks are set to provide for deeper bilateral cooperation in areas of labour migration, defence, digital technologies, higher education and quantum communication.

In the meeting, the two leaders, recognising the growing geopolitical, economic and technological importance of the Indo-Pacific, acknowledged the value of a stronger partnership between India and Slovakia in support of mutually beneficial cooperation,

regional connectivity, open international trade, freedom of navigation, peaceful resolution of disputes, according to a joint statement.

Modi and Fico expressed support for the orderly, safe and legal mobility of skilled professionals and welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of labour migration to facilitate mobility. The two sides also agreed to work towards the early conclusion of a Social Security Agreement, which would contribute to safeguarding the welfare and social protection of working professionals engaged in mobility between India and Slovakia.

SC Notice on EWS Quota in Punjab Schools

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS): The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Punjab government on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) alleging continued non-implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, resulting in the denial of free education to children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups.

Referring to the government's response, the CJJ observed that a counter affidavit confirmed admissions under the economically weaker sections (EWS) category in private schools. However, the petitioner submitted that while at least 50,000 students ought to have been admitted under the EWS quota, information obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) Act showed that some schools had not admitted even a single child under the scheme for nearly 15 years.

At this, the CJJ Kant-led Bench advised the petitioner to undertake a comprehensive study and gather data on the number of recognised private schools and admissions made under the RTE quota.

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India successfully tests long range land attack cruise missile: DRDO

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS): In a major boost to India's defence capabilities, the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the successful flight-test of the indigenously developed Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) on Monday.

The flight test was conducted from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. "All the test objectives were fully met, as per the data captured by various tracking instruments deployed by Integrated Test Range, Chandipur," said the R&D wing of the Defence Ministry in a statement.

The missile achieved all mission objectives, validating critical technologies and demonstrating India's growing long-range precision strike capability. The launch was witnessed by senior officials from DRDO and user representatives from the Indian Navy & the Indian Air Force. Among those who monitored the launch activities were the Defence Secre-



tary & Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D), and the Chairman, DRDO, Rajesh Kumar Singh.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the entire DRDO team and the Industry Partners on the successful flight test of LRLACM and commended the efforts of all team members involved. Notably, the LRLACM

is an indigenously developed missile with all sub-systems developed by various DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry partners. Aeronautical Development Establishment, Bengaluru, is the Nodal Laboratory. The LRLACM's successful test also advances towards the Aatmanirbhar Bharat goal and a stronger national defence ecosystem.

India-bound LNG ship among 1st to cross Hormuz after US-Iran deal

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS): A liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker chartered by India's Petronet LNG has become one of the first commercial vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz following the announcement of a preliminary agreement between the United States and Iran. The Malta-flagged tanker Disha, carrying LNG loaded at Qatar's Ras Laffan export terminal, crossed the strategic waterway on Monday and is heading to Dahej Port in Gujarat. The vessel is expected to arrive on Friday, June 19, according to ship-tracking data.

The crossing marks an early indication that maritime traffic could gradually return to normal after months of disruption caused by conflict in the region. Data from maritime tracking platforms showed that Disha had remained within Gulf waters for more than three months before resuming its voyage. The vessel reportedly kept its Automatic Identification



System (AIS) active while navigating the strait.

Its passage is being closely monitored by shipping companies, insurers and commodity traders as they assess whether commercial operations can safely resume through the route.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy chokepoints, linking Gulf producers to international markets. Disruptions to traffic through the narrow waterway have affected shipping costs, insurance premiums and energy supplies worldwide.

Despite the successful transit, vessel movements through the strait remain limited as operators continue to evaluate security

conditions and await further clarity on the implementation of the US-Iran agreement. US President Donald Trump announced on Monday that Washington and Tehran had reached an agreement intended to end hostilities and facilitate the reopening of the waterway. Iranian authorities have also indicated that restoring navigation through the strait forms part of the proposed framework.

The agreement is expected to be formally signed in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 19, with additional negotiations planned in the following weeks. Prospects of renewed shipping activity have already eased concerns in energy markets.

NEET-UG 2026 Paper Leak Case: Delhi Court Extends Judicial Custody Of 10 Accused Till June 29

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS): A Delhi court on Monday extended till June 29 the judicial custody of 10 accused in the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The accused were produced before the Rouse Avenue Court through video conferencing from Tihar Jail upon the expiry of their previously granted judicial custody. The court extended the judicial custody of Yash Yadav, Mangilal Biwal, Dinesh Biwal, Vikas Biwal, Dhananjay Lokhande, Tejas Harshad Shah, Shubham Khairnar, Manisha Waghmare, Manisha Sanjay Havaldar



and Dr Manoj Shirure till June 29. The Rouse Avenue Court also permitted the CBI to interrogate accused Shubham Khairnar, Manisha Waghmare and Dhananjay Lokhande inside jail on June 17, 18 and 19, respectively. The probe agency has been allowed to question each of the accused for one hour as part

of its ongoing investigation into the alleged examination paper leak. The CBI has so far arrested 13 accused in the case and is investigating an alleged network involved in procuring and circulating NEET-UG question papers ahead of the examination.

Earlier, on June 1, the Rouse Avenue Court had

remanded accused Dr Manoj Shirure, Tejas Harshadkumar Shah and Manisha Sanjay Havaldar to judicial custody till June 15. The Central agency has alleged that Shirure, a Latur-based doctor, played a key role in facilitating three students, including the son of an accused coaching centre owner, in obtaining Chemistry questions from alleged kingpin P.V. Kulkarni before the examination. Shah, a Physics faculty member at Pune-based Abhang Prabhu Medical Academy (APMA), is alleged to have received leaked Physics questions from co-accused Manisha Havaldar.

IUML demands quota for Muslims in jobs

Coimbatore, June 15 (GNS): Reiterating its demand for proportionate reservation for Muslim community in government jobs, the Tamil Nadu unit of Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) on Jan 15 said a delegation would soon meet the state Governor in this regard.

Despite having many eligible candidates, the Muslim community was not properly represented in the government jobs, particularly in education field, IUML state president Prof Khader Moideen told presspersons here today.

The delegation would put forward its demand through a memorandum to Governor Surjit Singh Barnala,

Moideen said and appealed that at least two vice-chancellors' posts should be reserved for Muslim community. Since the members of the community, with 10 per cent of total population, were not proportionately accommodated in the government jobs, many eligible and educated youths were forced to engage in petty business for livelihood and some were discontinuing their studies, he said.

Commenting on law and order situation, Moideen said that Tamil Nadu police, once a role model to other states, of late had lost its steam and "criminals are becoming more intelligent than police machinery."

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RJD has an EBC dream in Bihar. It'll take more than tickets & tokenism

The Extremely Backward Classes, which make up 36 per cent of Bihar's population, showed their aversion to RJD in 2020. New EBC state president Mangani Lal Mandal may not be enough to break it.

Arvind Kumar

As Bihar gears up for the assembly elections later this year, the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal has appointed Mangani Lal Mandal as its new state president—the first time it has chosen someone who belongs to the Extremely Backward Classes, or EBCs, a voting bloc that comprises 113 castes and makes up 36 per cent of the state's population. So far, though, EBCs have shown an aversion toward the RJD. Instead, they have gravitated toward the JDU, now in alliance with the BJP, which mobilised its election machinery in Bihar immediately after winning the Delhi assembly election. The question now arises whether the RJD will succeed in its efforts to attract EBCs through the appointment of Mandal.

Based on an analysis of caste-wise candidate nominations by the RJD and JDU, and their respective victories in the 2020 Bihar assembly election, I argue that the RJD needs to move beyond political appointments for the mobilisation of such communities. It also needs to

focus on exclusive policies intended to empower EBCs. Otherwise, it will be extremely difficult to break the scepticism of the EBCs.

Bihar is well known for caste-based political mobilisation. The caste background of candidates is an important indicator of how parties build their social coalitions. It also helps us to understand the support of different castes for various political parties.

Let's take a look at the caste-wise candidate nominations and wins of the RJD and JDU in the 2020 Bihar assembly election. This analysis examines the caste composition of nominees and elected representatives from the RJD and JDU in the 2020 Bihar Assembly election, based on candidate data from media reports.

The graph below shows that the RJD's highest number of candidates came from the Yadav community (58). After them, only three other groups—EBCs (19), Scheduled Castes (19), and Muslims (18)—had candidates in double digits. Seen as a whole, the RJD focused primarily on its traditional MY (Muslim-Yadav) base,



followed by an attempt to bring in EBCs. However, its EBC candidates performed badly. Out of 19 nominated, only four won.

In contrast, JDU's EBC candidates performed impressively. It nominated 17 EBC candidates, out of which 12 won. The party's overall ticket distribution was also not concentrated on any one social group. Seven social groups—

Yadav (18), EBC (17), SC (16), Kurmi (15), Kushwaha (15), Muslim (11), and Bhumihar (10)—had candidates in double digits. It's worth noting, though, that the highest number of JDU candidates also came from the Yadavs.

This nomination profile might be symbolic, but it also conveys a message that the party is not against the legitimate

representation of any particular social group. Here, the RJD did not appear as above board, as it had nominated only one candidate from the Kurmi caste, which is the support base of the JDU.

In short, the above comparative analysis reveals EBCs have largely steered clear of the RJD. Despite nominating a larger number of candidates from

the group, only four of its 19 EBC candidates won, compared to 12 of JDU's 17. It is often stated that Nitish Kumar has created a constituency of women, MBCs, and Mahadalits, and these social groups have gradually become a strong support base of the JDU. To break the social base of any political party, a rival typically deploys two strategies: ticket split-

ting and policy changes.

The former means nominating candidates from those castes and communities, while the latter involves promising policies that benefit them. The RJD relied on the first strategy, nominating a high number of EBC candidates in the 2020 election. One may counter that the RJD also adopted the strategy of policy change by promising 10 lakh government jobs, from which EBCs would also potentially benefit. So why did EBCs not respond to such promises? One answer could be low educational attainment among EBCs and their limited ability to benefit from reservation policies. Across North Indian states, EBCs have demanded a sub-categorisation within OBC reservations, arguing that they are unable to compete with politically dominant OBC groups such as Yadavs and Kurmis. The BJP responded by appointing the Justice Rohini Committee to examine this demand. At the same time, welfare schemes introduced by the Narendra Modi government have

also reached these communities. Because of its alliance with the BJP, the JDU has benefited from both strategies—ticket splitting and policy response—while opposition parties like the RJD have remained stuck on the former. This could partly explain the aversion of EBCs toward the RJD.

In the upcoming election, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav is promising to extend the limit of reservation, along with the introduction of a domicile policy for government jobs. However, none of these policies are specifically targeted to address the grievances of EBCs. Unless the party does that, it would be a herculean task to break the aversion. To sum up, the RJD's attempt to expand its social coalition by adding EBCs to its MY base did not deliver encouraging results in the last election. Relying on ticket-splitting alone to mobilise these communities hasn't worked. The party now needs to explore mechanisms beyond candidate nomination. Offering specific welfare schemes could be one of them. Otherwise, it may just be staring at a repeat of 2020.

Are Indian Muslims privileged or victims? Rijju, Owaisi aren't giving you the full picture

Affirmative action exists for Indian Muslims, but it must be restructured to address the hierarchy within the community. It is Pasmanda Muslims who sit at the bottom.

Amana Begam

Minority affairs minister Kiren Rijju's interview with The Indian Express set the internet ablaze on Monday. "Minorities receive more government support... Whatever Hindus get, minorities also do. But what minorities get, Hindus don't," he said. His subsequent X post triggered a public spat with MP Asaduddin Owaisi. "You hold a constitutional post, not a throne. Minority rights are fundamental rights, not charity," he wrote in response to Rijju's post.

Predictably, this sparked a fresh round of political theatre. Accusations flew from both sides, each vying to claim the moral high ground.

However, the real crux of the debate is the open clash between two ideas. On one hand is the old narrative, which views minorities as marginalised groups in need of protection—the victimhood narrative that has long been the foundation of political discourse. On the other hand, a new idea is on the rise: the argument that minorities are actually privileged due to the policies put in place to protect them. The implication is that the majority Hindus are at a disadvantage since they don't benefit from the kind of policies and support systems extended to minorities.



This clash of narratives is the reality of Indian discourse. While Rijju tallies up the benefits minorities receive, Owaisi focuses on the incidents where Muslims have been victims of lynching and hate speech. And both fail to address the nuances of India's complex reality. Affirmative action indeed exists for minorities, including Indian Muslims, who face significant socio-economic challenges. However, these policies must be restructured to address the

hierarchy within the Muslim community. And it is Pasmanda Muslims who sit at the bottom.

Meanwhile, notorious gangsters like Mukhtar Ansari and Mohammad Shahabuddin are treated as respected leaders by Owaisi. Any action against such individuals is painted as an attack on the entire Muslim community, diminishing the real struggles of Muslims.

Rijju is wrong in his claim that India is the only country to protect its mi-

norities—there are several other nations with similar policies. But he is right when he points out that within the Indian subcontinent, Muslims are doing relatively well compared to the minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

While Rijju's argument highlights the state of the subcontinent, it also avoids the fact that there is room for improvement. Owaisi's side rightly argues that India should hold itself to higher standards. But there is a contradiction: the values Owaisi

wants the Indian majority to uphold—inclusion, equality, and respect—are not the ones he lives by. Owaisi objects to Ahmadis calling themselves Muslims, which echoes the exclusionary attitudes in some of our neighbouring Muslim-majority countries. Indian Muslims are quick to critique the majority's treatment of minorities. Yet, we fail to question how we treat those within our community who don't fit into our narrow definitions. Commenting on the Rijju-Owaisi spat,

BJP leader Prakash Reddy argued that India's constitutional structure exists because the majority is Hindu. To some extent, this may be true; the majority often influences a country's identity. But the argument often gets distorted: it frames the majority as the victim, or as a benevolent entity doing a favour to an undeserving, non-secular minority. This is where we need clarity on the conversation. A secular, inclusive, and fair society isn't just good for minorities—it's

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crucial for the majority too. When diversity and justice are upheld, it benefits everyone, not just the marginalised. Look at the countries where minorities are made to suffer. Where equality is sidelined, it's not just the marginalised who suffer; everyone does. A society that values justice, equality, and respect for all creates stability, growth, and prosperity for the majority and the minority alike.

Despite the lack of nuance, the Rijju-Owaisi debate is essential. It opens the door to a much-needed

dialogue, which is critical if we wish to understand the complexities of India's social landscape. The conversation allows us to question our assumptions and at least attempt to understand one another. Open dialogue isn't about debating benefits and policies, or pointing fingers—it's about creating space for both sides to express their concerns, articulate their realities, and work toward a more inclusive society. Without these discussions, we risk letting misunderstandings fester and divisions deepen.

Over 1.53 lakh offers made by big firms to youth under PM Internship Scheme: FM

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS) Over 1.53 lakh offers have been made by the top companies in the country to youth during the first two rounds of the Prime Minister Internship Scheme (PMIS) that was launched in October 2024, Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, informed the Lok Sabha.

The minister said in a written reply that in round one of the PM Internship Scheme Pilot Project, the partner companies posted more than 1.27 lakh internship opportunities on the PMIS Portal across the country.

Against this, more than 6.21 lakh applications were received from about 1.81 lakh candidates. Partner companies made over 82,000 internship offers to over 60,000 candidates, out of which more than 28,000 candidates accepted offers to join the internship, and over 8,700 candidates joined their internship.



She further stated that in round two of the PM Internship Scheme Pilot Project, which commenced on January 9, 2025, about 327 partner companies have posted over 1.18 lakh internship opportunities (new and edited unfilled opportunities of previous round) across 735 districts of the country. Over 4.55 lakh applications were received from over 2.14 lakh applicants, in this round. As on July 17, 2025, partner companies have made over 71,000 offers to youth and

over 22,500 offers have been accepted. "Currently, rolling out of offers and the process of acceptances/ joining by interns is in progress," Sitharaman added. The PM internship scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2024-25. It aims to provide internship opportunities to one crore youth in top 500 companies in five years.

As an initiation to this scheme, Ministry of Corporate Affairs launched a Pilot Project of the scheme on

October 3, 2024, which is targeted to provide 1.25 lakh internship opportunities to the youth in one year.

Youth between the age group of 21-24 years, who have passed High School, Higher Secondary School, possess a certificate from an ITI, hold a diploma from a Polytechnic Institute, or are graduates with degrees such as BA, B.Sc, B.Com, BCA, BBA, B. Pharma, etc. and are not employed full-time and are not engaged in full-time education are eligible to apply.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs is actively working with various stakeholders such as state governments, industry associations, educational institutions etc. for promotion and implementation of the scheme, Sitharaman said.

The ministry is also carrying out information, education and communication activities to reach out to the target groups across the country, she added.

Microsoft issues urgent security patch after 'active attacks' on document-sharing software

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS)

Tech giant Microsoft has issued urgent security patch after observing "active attacks" on server software used by government agencies and businesses to share documents within organisations. According to Microsoft, the vulnerabilities apply only to SharePoint servers used within organisations. SharePoint Online in Microsoft 365, which is in the cloud, was not hit by the attacks, the organisation informed. "Microsoft is aware of active attacks targeting on-premises SharePoint Server customers by exploiting vulnerabilities partially addressed by the July Security Update," said the tech giant in its security advisory. The company recommended security updates that customers should apply immediately.

The US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also said it is aware of the at-



tacks and is working closely with its federal and private-sector partners. The vulnerability is related to a case of remote code execution that arises due to the deserialization of untrusted data in on-premise versions of Microsoft SharePoint Server.

Microsoft said the current published content is correct and that the previous inconsistency does not impact the company's guidance for customers.

"After applying the latest security updates above

or enabling AMSI, it is critical that customers rotate SharePoint server ASP.NET machine keys and restart IIS on all SharePoint servers," Microsoft said. "If you cannot enable AMSI, you will need to rotate your keys after you install the new security update," its added.

The US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has added 'CVE-2025-53770' vulnerability to its Known Exploited Vulnerabilities (KEV)

catalog, requiring Federal Civilian Executive Branch (FCEB) agencies to apply the fixes by July 21, 2025. "Microsoft has released security updates that fully protect customers using SharePoint Subscription Edition and SharePoint 2019 against the risks posed by CVE-2025-53770, and CVE-2025-53771. Customers should apply these updates immediately to ensure they're protected," said the company in its security update.

India's GDP to grow at 6.5 pc this fiscal, inflation to soften at 4 pc on average: Crisil

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS) A Crisil report on Monday projected India's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at 6.5 per cent this fiscal (FY26), supported by improving domestic consumption, among other positive indicators.

The Crisil Intelligence's near-term outlook report suggested US tariff-related global uncertainty as the top risk to India's growth. "However, growth is expected to be supported by improving domestic consumption driven by an above-normal monsoon, income tax relief and the RBI MPC's rate cuts," the report mentioned.

GDP growth accelerated to 7.4 per cent on-year in the fourth quarter of last fiscal from 6.4 per cent in the previous quarter. Overall, GDP grew 6.5 per cent last fiscal (FY25).

Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation slid to 2.1 per cent in June, the lowest in 77 months, as food infla-



tion turned negative.

"Based on the inflation trajectory, prediction of an above-normal monsoon, and the expectation of soft global oil and commodity prices, we expect CPI inflation to soften to 4 per cent on average this fiscal from 4.6 per cent last fiscal," the report mentioned.

The report expects one more RBI repo rate cut this fiscal, and a pause thereafter. "The MPC cut the rate by 100 bps between February and June 2025. Its change in stance from accommodative to neutral in June highlights the front-loading of rate cuts and the

data-dependent approach hereon. The 100 bps CRR cut will be implemented in four tranches between September and November 2025," it mentioned.

On fiscal health, the Union Budget has targeted a reduction in the central government's fiscal deficit to 4.4 per cent of GDP this fiscal from 4.8 per cent last fiscal. "Gross market borrowing is estimated at Rs 14.8 lakh crore for this fiscal, 5.8 per cent higher on-year. The government plans to carry out 54 per cent of the budgeted borrowing in the first half of the fiscal," said the report.

Mahindra Logistics' Q1 loss widens to Rs 9.44 crore

Mumbai, June 15 (GNS) Mahindra Logistics on Monday reported a wider net loss of Rs 9.44 crore on sequential basis in the first quarter (Q1) of FY26, compared to a loss of Rs 5.29 crore in the previous quarter (Q4 FY25).

However, the Mumbai-based company's revenue from operations rose to Rs 1,624.59 crore in Q1, up 3.54 per cent from Rs 1,569.51 crore in the previous quarter, according to its stock exchange filing. Its total income also saw a growth of 3.69 per cent on quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) basis, reaching Rs 1,629.66 crore compared to Rs 1,571.68 crore in Q4 FY25. However, total expenses during the quarter grew at a faster pace -- rising by 4.12 per cent to Rs 1,635.44 crore from Rs 1,570.75 crore in the previous quarter, the company stated in its regulatory filing.

The increase in expenses was mainly due to higher operating costs and employee benefits. Operating

expenses stood at Rs 1,407.4 crore, employee costs were Rs 104.48 crore, while finance cost and depreciation amounted to Rs 22.53 crore and Rs 64.57 crore respectively. Other expenses came in at Rs 36.46 crore.

Mahindra Logistics Limited (MLL) is one of India's third-party logistics (3PL) companies. It is part of the Mahindra Group, operating under Mahindra Partners, the group's private equity arm. It provides supply chain and enterprise mobility solutions to over 400 corporate clients across sectors such as automotive, engineering, consumer goods, and e-commerce. The company follows an 'asset-light' model, focusing on customised and technology-driven logistics solutions rather than owning a large fleet. It also offers employee transportation services under brands like Alyte and Meru, and has a freight forwarding division that manages air, ocean, and project cargo logistics.

India's listed startups raise over \$5 billion from public markets in FY25

Mumbai, June 15 (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 that 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 discipline, 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. The stock closed at 266.14, down 1.95 per cent.

India houses nearly 53 pc of world's global capability centres

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS) India houses nearly 1,700 Global Capability Centres (GCCs) spread across tier 1 and 2 cities, accounting for around 53 per cent of the total number of GCCs worldwide, a report said. Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Delhi-NCR, Mumbai and Pune account for 94 per cent of the total number of GCCs in India, said Vestian Research, an occupier-focused global workplace solutions provider, in its report.



mately 150 new centres are expected to be established annually. The IT sector leads the landscape in India, accounting for approximately 49 per cent of the total number of GCCs nationwide, followed by the BFSI (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance) sector, which holds a 17 per cent share.

Collectively, the Healthcare and Lifesciences, Engineering and Manufacturing, Consulting Services, and Telecom and Media sectors

contribute around 19 per cent to the overall number of GCCs in India, the report highlighted. "India's leading office markets continue to offer a compelling value proposition to GCCs, characterised by competitive costs, a highly skilled workforce, robust infrastructure, progressive policy incentives, and a conducive business environment," said Shrinivas Rao, CEO, Vestian. However, selecting the right location remains criti-

cal to the long-term success of any GCC, he added.

Bengaluru has the highest number of GCCs (487) spread across various industries, accounting for 29 per cent of the total number of GCCs in the country.

With the presence of 273 GCCs Hyderabad has emerged as the fastest-growing GCC hub in the country. While the NCR region houses 272 GCCs, Mumbai has 207 GCCs, and Pune accounts for 178 GCCs, as per report. GCCs have evolved significantly since their emergence in the 1990s, as companies began leveraging offshore locations for cost-efficient operations and a skilled workforce. From initial focus on IT support and back-office services, GCCs have now become hubs for innovation, research, and development, and their number reached approximately 3,200 centres around the world, according to the report.

Zomato's parent firm Eternal clocks huge 90 pc drop in Q1 net profit, revenue up

New Delhi, June 15 (GNS) Eternal, the parent company of online food delivery platform Zomato, on Monday reported a massive 90 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 25 crore in Q1 FY26, compared to Rs 253 crore in the same quarter last fiscal (Q1 FY25).

On the sequential basis (month-on-month), Zomato clocked 35.89 per cent drop in net profit, from Rs 39 crore in the Q4 FY25, according to its stock exchange filing. The Zomato and Blinkit operator registered revenue from operations at Rs 7,167 crore, up around 70 per cent from Rs 4,206 crore a year ago.

On the profitability front, consolidated Adjusted EBITDA declined 42 per cent on-year to Rs 172 crore in Q1 FY26, "largely on account of the continuing investments in quick commerce and going-out", the company said in its share-



holders' letter. It was "partly offset by the improvement in food delivery Adjusted EBITDA margin (as a percentage of NOV) to 5.0 per cent from 3.9 per cent a year ago, said Eternal.

In its quick commerce business Blinkit, the margins improved from -2.4 per cent of net order value (NOV) in Q4 FY25 to -1.8 per cent despite continued investments in new store roll-outs and seasonal factors. "We added 243 net new (Blinkit) stores this quarter, taking our store count to 1,544 stores by the end of the quarter. We are on track

to get to 2,000 stores by Dec 2025," said the company. The NOV of its B2C businesses grew 55 per cent YoY (16 per cent QoQ) to Rs 20,183 crore in Q1 FY26.

"This was the first quarter where our quick commerce NOV exceeded food delivery NOV for the full quarter. On an annualised basis, we are now at almost \$10 billion of annual NOV across our B2C businesses and quick commerce is now our largest B2C business contributing to almost half of this annualised NOV," said Eternal CEO Deepinder Goyal said that "the YoY

growth is likely to bottom out now as we recover from the demand slowdown we started seeing in late 2024".

"For FY26, it looks unlikely that the business will deliver a 20 per cent+ NOV growth but we should be north of 15 per cent and hopefully trending towards 20 per cent YoY growth in FY27," said Goyal.

Going forward, the company will only be disclosing NOV (and will discontinue disclosing GOV), as "we believe that NOV is a better measure of growth in our B2C businesses including food delivery". Earlier this month, Eternal appointed Aditya Mangla as CEO of its food ordering and delivery business for a period of two years. "I am super excited to see how Aditya shapes the future of Zomato over the next two years, until it is time to hand over the baton to someone else," said Goyal in the shareholders' letter.

CM Revanth Reddy Seeks Constituency-Wise Review of Assurances

Hyderabad, June 15 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday directed the Planning Department to prepare a constituency-wise report on the implementation of promises made by the government and reviewed the progress of the 99-day 'Praja Palana-Pragati Pranalika' programme conducted across the state.

During a review meeting on the special initiative carried out between March 16 and June 12, the Chief Minister sought details on assurances made to the public during his district tours and government programmes since assum-



ing office and the extent of their implementation.

Describing the programme as an exercise that brought the government closer to the people, Revanth Reddy reviewed department-wise initiatives and the outcomes achieved

so far. Officials from various departments submitted reports detailing activities undertaken from the district level down to villages. The Chief Minister appreciated departments that actively participated in the 99-day action plan and recalled his

Warns Officials Over Non-Compliance

earlier instructions to senior officials, from Principal Secretaries to District Collectors, to undertake monthly field visits. Taking a serious view of non-compliance, Revanth Reddy directed Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao to submit a report identifying officials and District Collectors who had failed to conduct field visits. He also ordered that explanations be sought immediately from such officials as to why disciplinary action should not be initiated against them.

"The government will not tolerate officials who fail to

comply with its directives," the Chief Minister warned.

Revanth Reddy observed that some departments had failed to adequately publicise initiatives undertaken under the 'Praja Palana-Pragati Pranalika' programme and directed senior officials to ensure wider dissemination of government activities through media and digital platforms. He instructed officials to systematically record feedback received from public representatives and citizens and ensure that issues raised during village visits were re-

solved promptly. The Chief Minister also directed departments to document all development works, foundation stones laid and public assets created during the past three months. Revanth Reddy asked Panchayat Raj officials to prepare an immediate list of villages lacking Gram Panchayat buildings and formulate an action plan for constructing new facilities. The meeting also reviewed the installation of solar power plants on school buildings, implementation of facial recognition systems in education

and healthcare institutions, and attendance-monitoring mechanisms for employees in schools, colleges, Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and major hospitals, including Osmania and Gandhi Hospitals. To strengthen monitoring, the Chief Minister ordered district-wise reviews of the Praja Palana programme and directed the appointment of a senior IAS officer as Special Officer for each district. These officers, working in coordination with District Collectors, will review the implementation of special programmes undertaken during the 99-day period, assess development works and gather

public feedback on welfare schemes. The Chief Minister further instructed officials to release district-wise progress reports and compile details of government schemes, beneficiaries and development works at the district, constituency, mandal and village levels.

He said all such information should be integrated into a public dashboard to improve transparency and accountability.

Rajya Sabha member Vem Narender Reddy, DGP C.V. Anand, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Sheshadri and senior officials from various departments attended the meeting.

TG Govt launches breakfast, milk scheme for 29 lakh school students

Hyderabad, June 15 (GNS) The Telangana government launched a breakfast scheme for students in government schools as the educational institutions reopened on Monday after summer vacation. The government is providing breakfast to students in 1,269 government schools across the state.

According to officials, 1.44 lakh students of schools and intermediate (Class 11 and 12) will benefit from the scheme. The government had also announced extending the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to students pursuing higher secondary education in government junior colleges. Under this scheme, every student will be given milk on three days a week and ragi malt on the remaining three days. Breakfast scheme for students from pre-primary to intermediate was announced in the State Budget 2026-27.

The government expects this initiative will improve



nutrition and health outcomes, increase attendance and punctuality, and reduce dropouts and absenteeism.

Minister for Transport and Backward Classes Welfare Ponnampallam Prabhakar inaugurated the breakfast scheme at Raj Bhavan Government High School. He also distributed books and notebooks among students. The hustle-bustle at schools resumed on Monday as educational

institutions reopened for the new academic year. Students, most of them wearing new clothes and carrying bags, were seen heading to schools with enthusiasm.

Traffic police in Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Malkajgiri commissionerates made arrangements to regulate traffic around schools.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy extended his best wishes to all stu-

dents on the reopening of schools after the summer vacations.

"A school is not just a place to learn lessons. It is a temple that shapes our personality and the future of our nation. Every book is like a door to a new world. Every lesson is a path to a new opportunity. Education is the power that illuminates our future. I firmly believe that the future of the nation lies in the

classrooms. That is why we have undertaken numerous reforms to ensure the education sector flourishes with the highest standards," the Chief Minister said in a message. "Apart from providing nutritious food like morning breakfast and midday meals, we have taken several other measures. Start each day with enthusiasm and acquire knowledge under the guidance of your teachers. Study hard. Embrace good values. Strive continuously to turn your dreams into reality," he told students.

"Today's students are tomorrow's builders of India. Bring out the talent within you and stand as a source of pride for your family, society, state, and nation. Education is the greatest wealth - no one can steal it from you. Victory comes through education, and development comes through education. Wishing that this academic year brings knowledge, joy, and success to all of you," he added.

Seethakka launches 'Amma Maata-Anganwadi Baata', expands child welfare initiatives



Hyderabad, June 15 (GNS) Telangana Women and Child Welfare Minister Seethakka on Monday said Anganwadi centres are being developed as foundational educational institutions that play a vital role in shaping children's future.

Participating in the "Amma Maata - Anganwadi Baata" programme at Mallepally and Mahatma Gandhi Nagar Anganwadi centres in Hyderabad, the Minister launched a child enrolment drive, conducted Aksharabhyasam for children, distributed uniforms, books and toys, and handed over Vidyarambham certificates to children entering primary school. Nampally MLA Majid Hussain was also

present. Seethakka said the government is focusing on the holistic development of children through nutrition, pre-school education and healthcare services.

She urged parents to enrol their children in Anganwadis, stating that there was no need to spend heavily on private nurseries. The Minister said Anganwadis are now providing two sets of uniforms, 57 types of educational and play materials, special nursery completion certificates and activities aimed at enhancing children's creativity and learning abilities. She added that around nine lakh children are enrolled in 38,000 Anganwadi centres across the state. Announcing the statewide expansion of

the breakfast scheme following its successful pilot in Bhadrachalam and Adilabad districts, Seethakka said nutritious meals such as Khichdi and Egg Biryani are also being served. She noted that Anganwadi teachers have received special English-language training.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to quality early childhood education and nutrition, the Minister flagged off an awareness rally and called upon parents to make full use of Anganwadi services.

Senior Women and Child Welfare Department officials, Hyderabad District Collector Priyanka Ala, Anganwadi staff and local residents attended the programme.

Make child labour eradication a social movement: Minister Vivek

Hyderabad, June 15 (GNS) Telangana Labour and Mines Minister Dr G Vivek Venkataswamy on Monday called for transforming efforts for the eradication of child labour into a mass social movement and urged all sections of society to work towards building a child labour-free Telangana. Speaking at a programme organised to mark World Day Against Child Labour at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram in Baghlingampally, the Minister said every child belongs in school, not at work, and stressed that protecting childhood and ensuring quality education



for all children is a collective responsibility.

Expressing concern over children being forced into labour due to poverty and difficult family circumstances, he appealed to society to

identify such children and help bring them back into the education system. Recalling Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's emphasis on education, he noted that many former child labourers had trans-

formed their lives through learning and secured good employment opportunities.

Vivek Venkataswamy called for extensive awareness campaigns, including through social media, to eliminate child labour completely. He said the goal could be achieved only through coordinated efforts by the government, voluntary organisations, social activists and the public.

Highlighting government initiatives, the Minister pointed to the establishment of Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs), skill development programmes and

language training for overseas employment aimed at creating better opportunities for youth.

He also praised voluntary organisations and activists working to rescue child labourers and integrate them into mainstream education, urging everyone to join hands in safeguarding children's rights and future.

The Minister also emphasised the need for stronger enforcement of existing child labour laws, stating that regular inspections and strict action against violators are essential to deter the practice.

KTR blames Revanth Reddy for failure to secure metro phase-2 approval

Peddapally, June 15 (GNS) Bharat Rashtira Samiti (BRS) Working President K T Rama Rao (KTR) on Monday launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, accusing him of spreading falsehoods to cover up his failure to secure Central approval for Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-2.

In a statement, KTR said the Centre had sanctioned Metro projects for cities in Uttar Pradesh, Ahmedabad and Visakhapatnam, but the Telangana government had failed to obtain approval for Hyderabad's proposed expansion. He alleged that despite making numerous visits to Delhi,



Revanth Reddy was unable to convince the BJP-led Centre to clear the project.

Accusing the Chief Minister of targeting the BRS instead of questioning the Centre, KTR claimed that Revanth Reddy was avoiding criticism of the BJP due to alleged political compulsions. He demanded

that the Chief Minister explain to the people of Hyderabad why the Metro Phase-2 project had not moved forward.

Defending the previous BRS government, KTR asserted that the credit for completing the Hyderabad Metro Rail project belonged entirely to former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. He said that when BRS came to power in 2014, only 28 per cent of the Metro work had been completed and the remaining 72 per cent was executed under KCR's leadership, making the project operational and serving nearly five lakh passengers daily.

Kavitha launches 'Baayi Baata', alleges neglect of Singareni workers

Peddapally, June 15 (GNS) Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) President Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Monday launched the week-long 'Baayi Baata' (Coal Mine Outreach) programme from the Kasipet-1 mine in Mandamari and accused the state government of misleading Singareni workers instead of addressing their issues.

Before reaching the mine, she offered prayers at the Godavari River near Godavarikhani. During her visit, she interacted with workers and discussed their concerns, particularly dependent employment and workers' welfare.

Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha alleged that the Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka should focus on securing additional coal



mines and framing policies for Singareni rather than submitting representations. She claimed the government had failed to resolve issues such as income tax concerns and regular Medical Board meetings.

Stating that acquiring more coal mines could create nearly one lakh jobs, she opposed privatisation and the reduction of underground mining operations. She said TRS and Hind Mazdoor Sangh

(HMS) would jointly continue to fight for workers' rights and future employment opportunities.

Kavitha further alleged that if the government was genuinely interested in protecting Singareni, it should immediately clear the Rs 50,000 crore dues owed to the company. She criticised the expansion of open-cast mining projects, claiming they compromised worker safety.

Raising concerns over the welfare of workers' families, she pointed to inadequate educational and healthcare facilities and opposed what she described as growing privatisation in the healthcare sector. Referring to TRS's five-point welfare agenda, termed 'Panchajanyam', she promised free corporate-standard education and healthcare if implemented.

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