

## SC issues notice on plea seeking national database for advocates, social media conduct rules

New Delhi, Jun 18 (GNS) The Supreme Court on Thursday issued notices to the Centre, the Bar Council of India (BCI), all State Bar Councils, and the University Grants Commission (UGC) on a writ petition filed by the Bar Association of India (BAI) seeking the establishment of a nationwide advocate verification mechanism to identify and eliminate fake lawyers, as well as the formulation of a social media code of conduct for advocates.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice V Mohan heard the petition and sought responses from the authorities concerned.



The petition sought the establishment of a National Digital Registry for the Legal Profession of India (NDRLP) to facilitate nationwide verification of

advocates and law degrees, alongside the formulation of a social media and digital conduct code for members of the legal profession.

During the hearing, the

Chief Justice of India underscored the need to strengthen young members of the Bar, observing that many of the challenges facing the legal profession could

be addressed by ensuring that young lawyers have a secure and supportive professional environment. At the same time, the Chief Justice stressed that the overwhelming majority of advocates are responsible professionals who are fully aware of their ethical obligations. He noted that individuals engaging in inappropriate conduct on social media may not necessarily be enrolled advocates.

The Chief Justice noted that several associations of young lawyers across High Courts and district courts are actively engaged in constructive academic pursuits, including organising lectures, seminars, and

discussions on legal issues. Describing these initiatives as an encouraging development, he said they represented far more than a mere ray of hope and reflected the Bar's confidence and promising future.

The Court also considered the Bar Association of India's plea for the creation of the National Digital Registry for the Legal Profession of India (NDRLP), a centralised database aimed at verifying advocates and their academic qualifications. At the outset, Chief Justice Kant described the proposal as an innovative idea that could be effectively implemented through the use of technology.

## Akhilesh Yadav targets UP Minister over alleged ticket

### Transfer and contract deals



New Delhi, Jun 18 (GNS) Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday launched a sharp attack on a minister in the Uttar Pradesh government, citing a news report that alleged widespread corruption linked to promises of election tickets, transfers, postings and government contracts, and claiming that those who allegedly paid money in advance

are now searching for the minister after realizing they had been misled. In a post on his WhatsApp channel, Yadav used satire and political innuendo to target the unnamed minister, referring to reports that disgruntled aspirants, officials and contractors were now holding meetings to locate him and seek accountability for alleged financial dealings.

"Until yesterday, only those aspiring candidates who had paid advances in the hope of getting election tickets were searching for the rumour-driven minister. But now people have realised that the claim of getting '30 seats' was merely a rumour. Not only is he unlikely to get even a single seat, but even if he somehow gets one, he is not expected to win," Yadav wrote.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister

ter further alleged that the circle of dissatisfied people had widened beyond political aspirants. According to Yadav, Assistant Engineers (AEs), Junior Engineers (JEs), AMA officials and departmental contractors who had allegedly paid money in exchange for transfers, postings and contracts were now also looking for the minister.

"Now that the truth is coming out, it is being heard that AEs, JEs, AMA officials and departmental contractors are sitting together in 'panchayats' to search for him, after paying advances for transfers, postings and contracts," the Samajwadi Party chief said.

In a particularly pointed remark, Yadav suggested that the minister's alleged illicit earnings had become a source of trouble for him. "The very money from alleged black earnings that gave rise to his grand claims is now convening panchayats against him," he said.

The remarks come amid an intensifying political battle between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the opposition Samajwadi Party ahead of upcoming electoral contests in Uttar Pradesh. The SP has repeatedly accused the BJP government of corruption.

## Telangana to become education, sports hub: CM Revanth

Hyderabad, June 19 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday affirmed that the state government has resolved to transform Telangana into an education and sports hub in the country.

The establishment of Young India Integrated Residential Schools and Young India Sports University is part of initiatives aimed at introducing revolutionary reforms in education and winning medals in the Olympics in the future, the Chief Minister said.

He was addressing a gathering of students at LB Stadium, where he, along with Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla, launched the distribution of Young India student kits to 27.50 lakh students and laid foundation stones for sports complexes in different districts.

Warning that the "AI storm" is leaving millions unemployed, the Chief Minister said the government has launched skill



development programmes for the youth to create more blue-collar jobs. A facility to provide German and Japanese language teaching programmes alongside English has also been created to help the youth secure jobs abroad. Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) have been transformed into Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs), and a Skill University has been established to develop the youth's talent and shape them into skilled manpower. The Chief Minister emphasised that students educated in social welfare institutions should become doctors, IAS

and IPS officers, and political leaders. He called upon students to join as active partners in the reconstruction of Telangana. CM Revanth Reddy held the previous BRS government responsible for the deterioration of education standards in the state, saying they failed to increase the diet and cosmetic charges during their decade-long tenure. He added, "We increased the charges immediately upon assuming office. Many government schools were closed down in the last government, and they have been reopened in recent times."

## Agriculture belongs to sustainable products: FM Sitharaman

Shillong, June 19 (GNS) Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday emphasised that the future of agriculture belongs to those who produce "better, cleaner, safer, more traceable and more sustainable products" rather than simply increasing output. She made the remarks while inaugurating Northeast India's largest organic spice processing unit in Ri Bhoi district, highlighting Meghalaya's deep rooted culture of sustainability and community stewardship as placing the state in a unique position to emerge as a national leader in premium organic agriculture.

The Rs 32 crore facility, established by the Eastern Ri Bhoi Organic Farmer Producer Company (FPC), is expected to directly benefit around 5,500 organic farmers across Meghalaya and the wider Northeast by boosting value addition, reducing post harvest losses and strengthening access to



domestic and international markets. Addressing farmers and community leaders, Sitharaman noted that Meghalaya had embraced sustainability long before it became a global priority. Referring to traditional Khasi wisdom that emphasises accountability for human actions, she said decisions related to soil, water and farming practices are crucial for long term agricultural resilience.

"Consumers across the world are increasingly demanding high quality, sustainably produced and traceable agricultural prod-

ucts. Meghalaya has a natural advantage in this emerging global market," she said.

The minister described the facility as the culmination of nearly a decade of institution building efforts by the farmer producer company and a model of how community participation, targeted investments and government support can generate inclusive growth. The processing unit, the first organically certified spice processing facility in the Northeast, is equipped with cold storage, dry storage, washing, drying and pulverising infrastructure.

## Telegram temporary ban proportionate, valid measure to protect NEET integrity: Delhi HC

New Delhi, June 19 (GNS) The Delhi High Court on Friday upheld the Centre's decision to temporarily suspend Telegram's services across India ahead of the NEET (UG) 2026 re-examination, ruling that the government had strictly followed the procedure prescribed under law while invoking emergency blocking powers and that the restrictions satisfied the test of proportionality.

Dismissing a petition filed by Telegram FZ LLC challenging the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's (MeitY) blocking order, a single-judge Bench of Justice Tejas Karia held that the temporary sus-

pension of the messaging platform till June 22 and disabling of its message-editing feature till June 30 were justified in the circumstances surrounding the nationwide medical entrance examination. "Given the emergency nature of the Impugned Order, the reasons supplied in arriving at the decision were sufficient. As Respondent No. 1 (Union government) has strictly followed the procedural steps as required under Section 69A of the IT Act, the challenge to the Impugned Order on the ground non-communication of reasons cannot be sustained," the Delhi High Court said.

On the issue of proportion-



ality, Justice Karia said that the requirements laid down by the Supreme Court stood fulfilled. "Applying the parameters laid down in Anuradha Bhasin (judgment), this Court is satisfied that the requirements of proportionality stand fulfilled, namely: (i) identification of a legitimate objective; (ii) existence of a rational nexus between

the objective and the measure adopted; (iii) necessity of the measure in the facts and circumstances of the case; and (iv) adoption of the least restrictive measure available," the judge said.

The Delhi High Court added that the measures adopted by the government constituted "the least restrictive measure" available for

achieving the stated objective and therefore could not be termed disproportionate.

Telegram had challenged the Centre's decision to temporarily suspend its services across India till June 22 and disable the message-editing feature till June 30. The restrictions were imposed under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act following recommendations made by the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Rejecting Telegram's contention that only specific channels or accounts could have been targeted, the Delhi High Court found that the platform's architecture enabled rapid dissemination

of content and made enforcement through channel-specific takedowns ineffective.

"It is noteworthy that Telegram permits the large-scale addition of users to channels and groups. The platform architecture of Telegram is conducive to amplification and mass dissemination of content, enabling information to reach a substantial number of users within a short span of time," the judgment said. It further observed that Telegram's Cloud-based structure, extensive bot ecosystem and ability to create mirror channels allowed unlawful actors to quickly reconstitute networks even after enforcement action.

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# Trump and Iranian President Pezeshkian sign preliminary peace agreement

Evian, Jun 18 (GNS) US President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian have signed an initial agreement to extend the ceasefire for another 60 days and lay the groundwork for reopening the Strait of Hormuz and launching negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme.

Trump signed a landmark memorandum of understanding with Iran at the Palace of Versailles on Wednesday, marking what both sides described as the first major step toward ending the war between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The signing ceremony took place shortly before a state dinner hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron in the palace's historic halls.

Video footage released by the White House showed Trump signing the Persian-language documents before handing the pen to Secretary of State Marco Rubio and instructing him to pass it to the Iranian delegation for the corresponding signature. All present applauded Trump for signing the deal. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed the Iran-US Memorandum of Understanding in a short time gap. Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson said the agreement had been digitally signed by President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a key intermediary between the US and Iran, said the agreement had entered into force with "immediate effect" after both



sides signed it. The agreement, officially known as the Islamabad Understanding, was signed by both presidents after months of indirect negotiations and international mediation efforts. The memorandum takes effect

immediately and establishes a framework for a broader peace settlement that both nations will seek to finalize within the next 60 days.

The ceremony at Versailles represented a highly diplomatic moment following

months of escalating tensions and conflict that began on February 28 with the assassination of the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several senior Iranian military commanders, which reshaped the

political and economic landscape of the Middle East. The war rapidly expanded into a broader regional crisis, disrupting energy markets and international trade.

The cost was borne by the world as it disrupted the energy supply lines, fertilizers, and much more. France president Emmanuel Macron described the signing as one of the most "significant diplomatic achievements" of the year, bringing together representatives of two nations that have remained adversaries for decades. Under the terms of the preliminary agreement, Iran will reopen the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, a crucial global shipping route through which approximately one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas

exports normally pass. The memorandum also outlines a proposed \$300 billion (\$224 billion) reconstruction and development initiative intended to support Iran's post-war recovery and economic stabilization.

In addition, the United States has agreed in principle to terminate all sanctions imposed on Iran as part of a final settlement, though details regarding implementation remain subject to further negotiations.

One of the most contentious issues—Iran's nuclear programme—has not yet been fully resolved. The memorandum establishes a 60-day negotiation period, which may be extended by mutual consent, during which both sides will attempt

to reach a comprehensive agreement on nuclear safeguards and verification measures. As part of the initial understanding, Iran reaffirmed that it would not pursue or develop nuclear weapons. The agreement also provides for Iran's enriched uranium stockpiles to be diluted under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations' nuclear watchdog. This represents a compromise from Washington's earlier demand that all enriched nuclear material be removed from Iranian territory. Speaking to reporters during the G7 summit in France, President Trump defended the agreement as a necessary step to prevent a potentially severe global economic crisis.

## Strong testing infrastructure crucial for consumer protection and ease of doing biz: Pralhad Joshi

Mumbai, June 19 (GNS): A robust testing and certification infrastructure is essential for protecting consumer interests, improving product reliability and facilitating ease of doing business, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Friday.

Laying the foundation stone for the expansion of testing facilities at the National Test House (NTH) campus in Mumbai, the Minister said a strong quality assurance ecosystem plays a vital role in ensuring product reliability and supporting ease of doing business. He noted that world-class testing infrastructure is an important pillar of the government's vi-



sion of Atmanirbhar Bharat. "Strengthening the country's quality ecosystem is essential for improving the global competitiveness of Indian products and advancing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat," the minister mentioned. The Minister visited

the NTH Mumbai campus to mark a major milestone in the expansion of the country's quality assurance and testing infrastructure.

The programme began with a Bhoomi Pujan ceremony and the laying of the foundation stone for future

expansion of testing facilities at the campus.

Joshi praised the efforts of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the National Test House in expanding advanced testing capabilities across the country and making quality testing services more accessible to industries and consumers.

He also toured the laboratories at the Mumbai facility and interacted with scientists, technical experts and officials to review ongoing modernisation initiatives and testing capabilities.

During the event, the minister inaugurated a Microbiological Testing Laboratory at the National Test House in Mumbai.

## Ashwini Vaishnaw flags off Chhapra-Anand vihar train, Bihar will get 200 new trains in 7-8 years

Patna, June 19 (GNS): Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Friday inaugurated the new weekly train service between Chhapra Junction railway station and Anand Vihar Terminal. During the event, the Railway Minister also virtually flagged off two additional train services connecting Maul to Delhi and Zahirghat to Varanasi.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Saran MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy and Maharajganj MP Janardan Singh Sigrival, among other leaders. Addressing the gathering, Vaishnaw announced that Bihar would receive more than 200 new



trains over the next seven to eight years as part of a major railway expansion plan.

He said the state is witnessing unprecedented growth in railway infrastructure and that projects worth more than Rs 1.15 lakh crore are currently underway across Bihar. The

Railway Minister revealed that the Delhi-Varanasi-Patna bullet train corridor has received approval. According to him, once operational, the high-speed rail project will reduce travel time between Patna and Delhi to just 4 hours and 41 minutes. He further stated

that there are plans to extend the corridor up to Sili-guri in the future. Vaishnaw said Bihar's railway budget has increased significantly under the leadership of Narendra Modi, enabling rapid modernisation and expansion of rail infrastructure throughout the state.

## Home Ministry actively engaged with SC to address case pendency: Shah

New Delhi, Jun 19 (GNS): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said his ministry is "actively engaged" with the Supreme Court to work out a new system for reducing the pendency of cases in the apex court and high courts, and ensure timely justice for people.

Speaking at the inauguration of the All India Fingerprint Conference-2026 organised by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) here, Shah stressed that police and forensic experts should accurately collect evidence from the crime scene and ensure that these are "not contaminated" to secure a fast and correct conviction. He also spoke about the three new criminal laws introduced by the Modi gov-

ernment to ensure timely justice. "We identified the loopholes (in the old criminal laws) and 90 per cent of the law-based ones have been addressed.

"The Union home ministry is actively engaged with the Supreme Court for creating a new system to address volume-based delays in the high courts and the Supreme Court," Shah said. He said the government is "determined" to prevent delays in the criminal justice system.

Addressing police and forensic experts from across the country, the minister told them to file timely chargesheets, follow up with the prosecution, and pursue cases before the courts to ensure timely decisions.

Shah said converting in-



formation or data into intelligence is important and cited the example of the Mahabharata, where Lord Krishna played this role and ensured victory for the Pandavas against the numerically superior Kauravas.

He said all the data gathered from crime scenes should be analysed with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning

tools to find crime patterns so that not only crimes can be pre-empted, but criminals are also caught quickly.

The minister said that a modus operandi bureau, which he suggested creating within the NCRB four years ago, should now start working to study crime patterns, repeat offenders, and interstate and international criminal networks. Shah stressed that not only should the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) be used for identifying criminals, but the database must be enriched by adding fingerprints collected from crime scenes. "There are numerous such cases where NAFIS has been of great help in simplifying even the most complex

cases. But I still believe that NAFIS is being utilised only 10 per cent of the time.

"NAFIS should not be used just for finding criminals, it can succeed only when you enrich the NAFIS data through fingerprints obtained from every crime scene," the home minister said. It is a two-way system that is very useful in proving the criminal, but the crime can be proven only when data is generated, Shah said.

"When it comes to the criminal justice system, our country is going through a phase of transformation. In the old days, the police station was considered a tool to maintain law and order.

"If there was a dispute anywhere, the station house officer would resolve the

matter; otherwise, it would go to court, and cases would remain pending for years on end," he said. The time has come to make the criminal justice system a suitable means for every citizen to obtain the due rights given by the Constitution, he said.

Shah stressed the need for imparting training to use the tools under the new criminal laws to produce only necessary and essential evidence in the chargesheet, which confirms the role of a criminal. "Fingerprint match confirmed, telephone records match confirmed, face match confirmed, eye and DNA match confirmed, and then you go before the court with 250 pieces of evidence. So what's the use of technology then?" he said.

## Rajnath: Conventional warfare still relevant today

Nagpur, Jun 19 (GNS): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said conventional warfare and means are still relevant today as they were in 1947, and noted that a nation that fulfils its own needs can march ahead with confidence. He was speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for a 10,000-tonne aluminium extrusion press at the state-owned Yantra India Limited (YIL) in Ambajhari, Nagpur. The new facility will help reduce dependence on imports of critical aluminium components.

Singh said supply chains can get disrupted when war erupts. "In such a scenario, every nation wants essential

items to be manufactured domestically," he said. A nation that fulfils its own needs can march ahead confidently, Singh said. "Conventional warfare and means are still relevant, as they were in 1947," Singh said, adding that they would remain crucial even in 2047. This is why military industrial bases would remain important even in future, he added. Singh noted that India's defence production surged to more than Rs 1,78,000 crore in 2025-26, which was just Rs 46,000 crore in 2014. Similarly, the country's defence exports have now risen to Rs 40,000 crore from Rs 1,000 crore in 2014, he said.

## Karnataka: Shivakumar orders crackdown on misuse of guarantee schemes

Bengaluru, June 19 (GNS) The review meeting on the implementation and progress of the Karnataka government's guarantee schemes was held on Friday at the Committee Room of Vidhana Soudha under the chairmanship of Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar.

Chairing the meeting, CM Shivakumar made it clear that no eligible beneficiary should face hardship while the government acts against misuse of its flagship guarantee schemes. He stressed that the objective was only to prevent ineligible beneficiaries and fraudulent claims from availing benefits, while ensuring genuine beneficiaries continue to receive assistance without interruption.

During the meeting, Shivakumar pointed out that many beneficiaries of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme had taken bank loans. In several cases, the financial assistance credited under the scheme was automatically adjusted against outstanding loan amounts. As a result, many beneficiaries had changed their bank accounts to ensure they could access the benefits directly. He instructed officials to ensure that such beneficiaries are not inconvenienced during the verification process.

The Chief Minister observed that stringent safeguards had been put in place while implementing the Gruha Jyothi scheme to prevent misuse and said



similar precautions in other guarantee schemes could have significantly reduced instances of fraud.

Officials informed the meeting that cases had been detected in which Gruha Lakshmi benefits were being credited even to deceased beneficiaries. Shivakumar directed authorities

to take immediate steps to prevent such misuse.

He also suggested that beneficiaries should receive a voice message on their mobile phones immediately after the Gruha Lakshmi amount is credited to their accounts, enabling them to confirm receipt of the benefit. Officials brought

to the meeting's attention that certain Airtel Payments Bank accounts operated by Airtel SIM users were allegedly being misused through UPI-linked transactions. The Chief Minister instructed officials to examine the issue and take corrective measures.

The meeting also noted

that some benefits were being transferred to bank accounts located outside Karnataka. Shivakumar directed officials to ensure that benefits under the guarantee scheme are credited only to accounts within the state, stating that Karnataka's welfare schemes are intended exclusively for

eligible beneficiaries residing in Karnataka and not for voters of other states.

The Chief Minister further suggested that financially well-off beneficiaries willing to voluntarily surrender the benefits of guarantee schemes should be encouraged to do so, thereby enabling more deserving beneficiaries to receive assistance.

The meeting also discussed the growing financial burden on poor and middle-class families due to the Central government policies, rising prices and declining per capita income.

Detailed discussions were held on two major technical issues affecting the implementation of the Gruha Lakshmi scheme. These in-

cluded delays in obtaining data on deceased beneficiaries and issues with beneficiaries whose e-KYC, bank accounts, or NPCI-linked accounts had become inactive. The review meeting also examined observations made in the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report. According to the report, multiple beneficiaries were receiving Gruha Lakshmi payments through a single bank account, resulting in nearly Rs 60 crore in disbursements across 3 lakh instalments. The report also flagged cases in which individuals had registered multiple accounts to avail benefits and raised concerns about the lack of verification of information furnished in earlier applications.

## India's First Green Hydrogen Plant Begins Operations at Kandla Port

Gandhinagar, June 19 (GNS) Union Ports, Shipping & Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday inaugurated the indigenously made 1 MW Green Hydrogen Power Plant at the Deendayal Port Authority, Kandla in Gujarat. The plant is capable of producing approximately 140 metric tonnes of green hydrogen annually and is poised to play a crucial role in maritime decarbonisation and sustainable port operations.

The minister praised the establishment of a fully Aatmanirbhar, future-ready hydrogen ecosystem built entirely by Indian engineers and called it an inspiration for ports across the country to adopt eco-friendly and innovative technologies. He also lauded DPA's continuous commitment to green initiatives, citing the earlier deployment of India's first Made-in-India all-electric green tug for operations



at the port. Recalling the Prime Minister's laying of the foundation stone for a 10 MW Green Hydrogen Plant during his visit to Bhuj on May 26, Sonowal appreciated the swift execution of the project. The commissioning of the 1 MW module within just four months, as part of the larger 10 MW project, reflects a new benchmark for the implementation of India's green hydrogen ecosystem.

"Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) has turned that vision into reality, a shining example of speed, scale, and skill under Maritime India Vision

2030," the minister said. This milestone stands as a powerful symbol of India's green transformation under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and reinforces the nation's commitment to achieving Net Zero emissions, Sonowal said. "Congratulating the leadership of DPA and the engineering excellence of L&T, the Minister said: "I commend the entire team of Deendayal Port Authority, led by the Chairman, and appreciate the engineers of L&T for delivering this complex project with remarkable speed and precision."

## India's power demand to rise 4 pc in 2025, renewable energy output surges: IEA

New Delhi, June 19 (GNS) India's electricity demand is expected to grow by 4 per cent in 2025, as cooler summer temperatures in the first half of the year (H1 2025) reduced consumption and pushed the annual peak load to September, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its mid-year electricity market update. The Paris-based agency said industrial activity was also impacted by global economic uncertainties in the first half of the year, leading to just 1.4 per cent YoY growth in demand between January and June 2025.

However, demand is expected to pick up in the second half, reaching an overall growth rate of 4 per cent for the year. For 2026, the IEA forecasts a stronger 6.6 per cent growth, driven by increased industrial and services sector activity and rising use of air conditioners.

According to Ministry of Power estimates cited by



the IEA, India's peak electricity load this year could touch 270 GW -- up 8 per cent from last year -- and is likely to occur in September instead of the summer months. The peak will be met by expanding generation capacity, the report said. The government is also considering setting air conditioner temperature standards between 20°C and 28°C, which could potentially cut peak demand by as much as 60 GW by 2035.

On the generation front, renewable energy sources posted strong growth in the first half of 2025. Combined output from solar and wind plants rose 20 per cent YoY, raising their share in the electricity mix to nearly 14 per cent from 11 per cent in the same period previous year. Solar PV generation was up 25 per cent and wind generation by nearly 30 per cent. Hydropower output rose 16 per cent year-on-year due to improved water

availability, while nuclear generation increased 14 per cent, helped by the commissioning of the 700 MW Unit-7 at Rajasthan's nuclear power station in March. Its twin, Unit-8, is expected to start operations in 2025-26, part of India's plan to reach 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047 under the Nuclear Energy Mission.

The surge in low-emission power generation, along with slower demand growth, led to a 3 per cent

drop in coal-fired electricity generation in the first half of 2025 -- the first such decline in the first half of a year since 2020.

Gas-fired generation fell sharply by around 30 per cent, returning to 2023 levels. For the full year, coal-based power output is expected to edge up 0.5 per cent before growing 1.6 per cent in 2026, while gas-based generation is likely to decline 3 per cent in 2025 and then rebound 7 per cent in 2026.

Nuclear output is expected to rise 15 per cent this year and 19 per cent next year, while solar generation could grow 40 per cent in 2025 and 28 per cent in 2026. Wind power is projected to see growth of about 10 per cent in both years, and hydropower is set to expand 7 per cent in 2025 and 10 per cent in 2026. The IEA also projected that India's emissions intensity will fall by 3.8 per cent annually.

## Nifty, Sensex open lower as new Trump tariffs kick in

Mumbai, June 19 (GNS) The Indian markets started the day on the lower side on Friday, tracking weak global cues amid new Trump tariffs. The pharmaceutical stocks took the biggest hit, with Nifty Pharma declining 2.75 per cent. At 9.25 am, Nifty 50 was down 51 points or 0.21 per cent from yesterday's close, now at 24,716, while the BSE Sensex has slipped 179 points or 0.22 per cent, trading at 81,005.

Among broad market indices, both BSE MidCap and BSE SmallCap rose 0.05 per cent. Among sectoral indices, the Nifty FMCG index was an outlier with a gain of 1.46 per cent. Apart from strong selling in pharmaceutical stocks, Nifty IT shed 0.80 per cent, the Nifty Metal index fell 0.99 per cent.

Among Nifty stocks, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) showed biggest gains with 4.45 per cent surge, followed by Tata Consumer Products, Hero MotoCorp,

Maruti Suzuki, and Trent. Among laggards, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories took the lead slipping 1.41 per cent followed by Cipla, ONGC, Larsen & Toubro, and Tata Steel.

"Despite Nifty's bounce yesterday, the index remains vulnerable unless it sustains a move above the 24,800 mark. A close above this level could potentially open the path toward the 25,000 level. On the downside, immediate support is at 24,600, followed by 24,500," said Hardik Matalia from Choice Equity Broking. "As elevated volatility and conflicting technical signals prevail, traders are advised to follow a cautious 'sell-on-rise' approach, especially when using leverage. Book partial profits during rallies and maintain tight trailing stop-losses. Fresh long positions should be considered only if the Nifty manages to sustain above the 25,000 mark," Matalia added.

## India overtakes Japan as world's 3rd largest solar energy producer: Minister



New Delhi, June 19 (GNS) Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi has said that India has surpassed Japan to become the third-largest producer of solar energy globally, which is a significant development in the nation's clean energy development.

India produced 1,08,494 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of solar power, more than Japan, which produced 96,459 GWh, Joshi stated, citing data from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

The minister has shared the update via a post on

the social media platform X. "India has outpaced Japan in solar energy generation — producing 1,08,494 GWh compared to Japan's 96,459 GWh — and is now the world's third-largest solar power producer," the Minister said.

Thanks to the visionary leadership of Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodiji, India is leading the way in the global clean energy revolution, he further wrote. IRENA, a global agency that supports countries in their transition to sustainable energy, provides comprehensive data and policy support

for renewable energy development worldwide.

The development comes as India pushes forward with its ambitious target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel electricity capacity by 2030 through a diversified energy strategy.

In addition to its solar success, India is also expanding its wind energy portfolio. Earlier last month, the minister informed the Parliament that the installed wind energy capacity in India had reached 51.67 GW as of June 30 this year.

According to data presented by the minister in a written reply in the Lok Sabha, the country's wind energy capacity has been steadily growing over the last three fiscal years, from 2,275.55 MW added in 2023-2024 to 3,253.39 MW added in 2024-2025 and 1,637.02 MW of new capacity installed in the April-June quarter of 2025-2026.

## Ola Electric's market share halves, July sales plunge over 57 pc



Mumbai, June 19 (GNS) Ola Electric, once the leader in India's electric two-wheeler market, is seeing its dominance fade fast as the company sold 17,848 units in July -- a steep 57.29 per cent drop from 41,802 units sold a year ago, the government's VAHAN data showed.

The Bhavish Aggarwal-led company's market share dropped to 17.35 per cent in July, compared to 38.83 per cent in the same month previous year. This decline has badly hit Ola Electric's market value. Its market capitalisation has fallen by more than 45 per cent, from Rs 33,521

crore (\$3.95 billion) to Rs 18,190.2 crore (\$2.14 billion). The stock is now trading at around Rs 41.2, well below its listing price of Rs 76. Soon after listing, the shares had touched an all-time high of Rs 157.4. In last six months, the shares have dropped over 43.3 per cent or Rs 31.69. On year-to-date (YTD) basis, the shares of the company dropped by over 52 per cent or Rs 44.84.

The company's volumes have also fallen sharply month-on-month, as it continues to face growing competition and user complaints, as per multiple reports. The slump in sales

comes after a difficult financial performance. In Q1 FY26, Ola Electric reported a net loss of Rs 428 crore, up nearly 30 per cent from the same quarter previous year.

Revenue from operations fell by almost 50 per cent to Rs 828 crore. E-scooter deliveries in the quarter dropped from 1,25,198 units a year ago to 68,192 units this year.

In its recent shareholder letter, the company said it is focusing on "consolidating and institutionalising operations, improving margins, and preparing for the next phase of growth" with new products.

## India's sugar production to rise 18 pc YoY, exports likely to touch 2 mn in next season

Mumbai, June 19 (GNS) India's sugar production is projected to rise 18 per cent to 34.90 million tonnes in the 2025-26 season starting in October, according to a forecast released by the Indian Sugar and Bio-energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA).

The increased production will take Indian sugar exports to 2 million tonnes between October 2025 and September 2026. In the current 2024-25 season (October-September), ISMA estimated sugar production at 26.10 million tonnes. "The sugar production is estimated to be higher at 34.90 million tonnes with upward bias," said ISMA President Gautam Goel. About 5 million tonnes of sugar can be diverted next season for ethanol production compared with 3.5 million tonnes in the current season, he added. The government has allowed ex-



ports of 1 million tonnes in the current season. ISMA had earlier urged the government to continue with the restrictions on ethanol imports, as the measure has spurred India's petrol blending program.

This spur, in turn, facilitated the timely payment of wages to sugarcane farmers. Goel said the industry body will seek "timely" permission for 2 million tonne sugar exports, increased diversion for ethanol. The industry also expects higher minimum selling prices for sugar and ethanol derived

from B molasses and cane juices, he added. Approximately 27 lakh tonnes of sugar have been diverted for ethanol production up to April 30, 2025, during the current season. An additional 6 to 7 lakh tonnes are expected to be diverted over the remaining season, according to ISMA data. For the 2025-26 season, ISMA forecasts higher sugar output in the top-producing states: Uttar Pradesh at 10.25 million tonnes, Maharashtra at 13.26 million tonnes, and Karnataka at 6.61 million tonnes.

## Cabinet gives go-ahead for railway projects worth Rs 11,169 crore

New Delhi, June 19 (GNS) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday approved four multi-tracking railway projects with a total investment of Rs 11,169 crore, according to a cabinet communique.

These projects are the Itarsi-Nagpur 4th Line, the Aurangabad (Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar)-Parbhani Doubling, the Aluabari Road-New Jalpaiguri 3rd and 4th Line, and the Dangoaposi-Jaroli 3rd and 4th Line. The four projects covering 13 districts across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by 574 km.

The increased line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian



Railways. The proposed multi-tracking projects will enhance connectivity to approximately 2,309 villages with a population of about 43.60 lakh.

These are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as coal, cement, clinker, gypsum, fly ash, containers, agricultural commodities, and petroleum products. The capacity augmenting works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 95.91 mil-

lion tonnes per annum, the statement said. "These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion. The projects are in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a New India, which will make people of the region 'Aatmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive development in the area, which will enhance their employment and self-employment opportunities," the communique said.

## Swiggy's losses nearly double in Q1 to Rs 1,197 crore

Mumbai, June 19 (GNS) Swiggy Limited, the food delivery and quick commerce platform, on Thursday reported a net loss of Rs 1,197 crore year-on-year (YoY) for the June quarter (Q1 FY26), almost double the Rs 611 crore loss it posted in the same period previous year (Q1 FY25). On quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) basis, the Bengaluru-based firm posted a net loss of Rs 1,081 crore in the previous quarter (Q4 FY25), according to its stock exchange filing.

The widening losses were mainly due to its Quick Commerce division, Instamart, where the financial strain deepened sharply. On an EBIT basis, losses from Instamart jumped to Rs 797 crore from Rs 379 crore a year ago. Swiggy's overall EBITDA loss also increased to Rs 954 crore, compared to Rs 544 crore in the same quarter previous year.

However, the food and grocery delivery major re-

corded a 53.9 per cent jump in its revenue from operations to Rs 4,961 crore during the June quarter against Rs 3,222 crore in Q1 FY25.

However, the company recorded strong growth in revenue, which rose 54 per cent to Rs 4,961 crore from Rs 3,222 crore in the year-ago quarter. Revenue from the food delivery business stood at Rs 1,799 crore, up from Rs 1,515 crore, while Quick Commerce revenue more than doubled to Rs 806 crore from Rs 374 crore. The food delivery segment showed operational improvement, with EBIT rising to Rs 202 crore from Rs 67 crore previous year. But losses continued to grow in supply chain, distribution, and platform innovation. Gross order value (GOV) for Swiggy's B2C business climbed 45 per cent YoY to Rs 14,797 crore. Food delivery GOV grew 18.8 per cent to Rs 8,086 crore, while Quick Commerce GOV surged 108 per cent to Rs 5,655 crore.

# Focus on English proficiency without neglecting mother tongue: Telangana Governor

Hyderabad, June 19 (GNS) Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Friday urged teachers to promote English language proficiency among students while ensuring the preservation of their mother tongues and cultural heritage.

Interacting with participants of the two-week English Language Proficiency Programme (ELPP) organised for teachers working in Tribal Welfare Educational Institutions, the Governor presented certificates to those who successfully completed the training programme at Lok Bhavan. The programme, organised by the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, was aimed at enhancing the English language teaching skills of teachers serving in Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions across the State.

As part of its support for teacher capacity-building initiatives in the tribal welfare sector, Lok Bhavan sanctioned 12.80 lakh from the Governor's Discretionary Fund for the programme.

A total of 50 teachers and five faculty members from EFLU participated in the training. Addressing the participants, Shukla appreciated the efforts of EFLU and the Tribal Welfare Department in strengthening the communication and teaching abilities of educators working in remote tribal areas. He observed that im-



proved English proficiency among teachers would help enhance students' confidence and communication skills, while also expanding their access to higher education and employment op-

portunities. The Governor noted that teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of students and said that such capacity-building programmes would help bridge educational gaps and

contribute to the holistic development of children in tribal regions. Referring to the financial assistance extended through Lok Bhavan, he reiterated the Raj Bhavan's

commitment to supporting initiatives aimed at the welfare and advancement of tribal communities. Expressing confidence in the trained teachers, Shukla said they should strive to provide quality education and serve as role models for their students. "We must work together to bring positive change in the lives of tribal students through quality education. Lok Bhavan will always extend support to initiatives related to tribal welfare," he said.

The Governor emphasised that while students should be equipped with the skills necessary to compete in

an increasingly globalised world, equal importance must be given to preserving their mother tongues and the rich cultural heritage of tribal communities.

Congratulating the participants on successfully completing the programme, he urged them to effectively utilise the knowledge and skills acquired during the training for the benefit of their students. Special Chief Secretary to Governor M. Dana Kishore, EFLU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nagaraju, Joint Secretary to Governor K. Shashikiran Chary and Associate Professor Dr. Raja Ram were present.

## Govt Schools to Compete with Corporate Institutions; Vidya Kit Distribution Begins for 2.7 Million Students: Dy CM Bhatti

Hyderabad, June 19 (GNS) Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday said the Telangana Government has launched a historic initiative to transform government education and ensure that students from poor and middle-class families receive facilities on par with those available in corporate schools.

Addressing a programme on the distribution of Vidya Kits to government school students, the Deputy Chief Minister said nearly 2.7 million students across the State would benefit from the initiative. He described the programme as a landmark step towards strengthening students' self-respect and improving educational standards in government institutions. He said the kits include



high-quality uniforms, shoes, textbooks and other essential materials designed to match the standards of private and corporate schools. Unlike previous administrations, the present government is ensuring accountability and quality in the implementation of welfare programmes, he added. Bhatti said Chief Min-

ister Revanth Reddy has taken personal interest in improving educational opportunities for government school students, viewing their future as integral to the State's development. The provision of quality uniforms and footwear, he said, would instill confidence among students and help eliminate any sense of inequality.

Highlighting the government's broader education reforms, the Deputy Chief Minister said 100 Young India Integrated Residential Schools have been sanctioned across Telangana, each with an investment of 200 crore and equipped with world-class infrastructure. He cited the recently inaugurated Telangana Public School at Arutla village as an example of the government's vision for modern educational institutions.

The school's infrastructure, including its ultra-modern kitchen facilities, surpasses those available in many private institutions, he said. Stating that the government aims to develop all government schools on similar lines, Bhatti said education, infrastructure and student

welfare remain top priorities of the administration.

The Deputy Chief Minister also criticised opposition parties for making what he termed baseless allegations against the government despite its efforts to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged sections of society. Such criticism, he said, reflects a narrow outlook towards the State's progress and student welfare.

He reiterated that the Vidya Kit distribution programme would continue uninterrupted and described it as one of the flagship initiatives of the Indiramma Government.

Bhatti expressed gratitude to students, parents and the people of Telangana for their support in the successful implementation of the programme.

## Telangana plans modern grain silos at 20 locations: Uttam Kumar Reddy

Hyderabad, June 19 (GNS) Telangana Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday said the state government is considering the establishment of modern grain silos at 20 locations across major paddy-producing districts to strengthen storage infrastructure and reduce post-harvest losses.

Speaking at a review meeting with representatives of grain storage and transportation sectors at the Dr B R Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat, the Minister said the government is studying the feasibility of creating a silo network with an initial storage capacity of 50,000 metric tonnes.

With paddy production and procurement increasing every year, Uttam Kumar Reddy said modern



silos would complement, not replace, the existing procurement and storage system involving self-help groups, IKP centres and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies.

He said the proposed facilities would help preserve grain quality, reduce storage losses, speed up transportation and improve

supply chain efficiency through scientific storage, automation and modern logistics integrated with railway connectivity.

The Minister directed officials and agencies to submit detailed proposals on locations, storage capacities, investment requirements and implementation strategies.

## Kishan Reddy: Three bullet train corridors to transform Telangana



Hyderabad, June 19 (GNS) Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Sri G. Kishan Reddy, along with State Minister for Roads & Buildings and Cinematography, Sri Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, performed the groundbreaking and inauguration ceremonies on Friday for Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRF) road projects worth approximately Rs. 87 crore in the Maheshwaram and Ibrahimpatnam constituencies of Ranga Reddy district. Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister Kishan Reddy stated that road construction works costing approximately Rs. 100 crore have been sanctioned using Central Government funds to provide better road connectivity for Thimmapur village with various other areas. He revealed that improved

connectivity is being established for locations including Kongara, Ravirala, Srisailam Road, Lachunuru, Avaramiyagudem, Jabarguda, Eliminedu, Kappadu, Turkagudem, Charlapatlagudem, Ibrahimpatnam Road, Gummadavelli, Meerkanpet, and Kurmidda. He further added that measures are underway to enhance connectivity with the Madhapur and Begumpet areas as well. It was stated that rural development in the Ranga Reddy district would accelerate further if basic infrastructure—such as roads, electricity, and drinking water—were improved. The region, located near Hyderabad, is rapidly urbanizing and offers immense potential, particularly for the real estate sector.

A Union Minister revealed that three high-

speed rail corridors have been proposed for Telangana as part of nationwide bullet train projects. While the preliminary estimated cost for establishing bullet trains on the Hyderabad-Pune, Hyderabad-Bengaluru, and Hyderabad-Chennai routes is around 5 lakh crore, this figure could rise to 10 lakh crore due to escalating land acquisition costs. Survey work for these high-speed elevated rail corridors is currently underway; the Central Government has prepared an action plan to expedite the project by initiating the tendering process immediately after the completion of the survey and the Detailed Project Report (DPR). These three bullet train corridors are expected to be game-changers for Telangana's development.

## Industry status for tourism sector in Kerala Budget a historic step: KTM

Kochi, Jun 19 (GNS) The Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) Society on Friday described the Kerala Budget's decision to grant industry status to the tourism sector as a "historic milestone", saying the move is expected to attract substantial investments and accelerate the growth of one of the state's key economic sectors.

Welcoming the announcement, KTM Society President Jose Pradeep said industry status would enable tourism enterprises to avail themselves of the same incentives and concessions

extended to industrial units, including benefits related to electricity, water supply and taxation. He said the decision would not only provide significant relief to existing tourism entrepreneurs but also encourage fresh investments in Kerala's tourism sector, while contributing to higher GST revenue for the state. Pradeep also welcomed the government's proposal to amend existing laws to permit unused land in plantation sectors such as tea, coffee and cardamom estates to be utilised for tourism projects. He said the

move has the potential to bring about transformative changes in Kerala's tourism landscape by unlocking new investment opportunities. KTM Society Secretary S. Swaminathan said the budget had addressed several long-pending demands of the tourism industry.

He welcomed the proposed upgradation of amenity centres and houseboat terminals under the Alappuzha Mega Tourism Circuit, saying the initiative would significantly strengthen the state's tourism infrastructure. He also

praised the announcement of a dedicated treatment plant for houseboat waste in Vembanad Lake, describing it as a permanent solution to pollution concerns that have affected the lake for years.

Swaminathan further highlighted the proposed master plan for the development of Pathiramanal Island, along with the construction of a ropeway to the destination, saying the projects reflect the government's long-term vision for sustainable tourism development. The KTM also welcomed the

proposed pilgrimage tourism circuit connecting Art-hunkal Basilica, Ambalapuzha Temple, Mannarasala, Krishnapuram Palace, Mata Amritanandamayi Math and Oachira Temple.

It said the introduction of the Green Marshals programme, involving women personnel at major tourist destinations including Fort Kochi, Munnar, Kovalam and Alappuzha, demonstrates the government's commitment to improving visitor safety while promoting women's participation in tourism management.

## SIR constitutional exercise to update voter rolls: Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad, June 19 (GNS) Telangana BJP State President N Ramchander Rao on Friday said the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is a constitutional exercise undertaken by the Election Commission of India to update and clean voter lists and is not a BJP programme. Addressing a workshop of BJP karyakartas at Nagole for the Ranga Reddy Urban District, he said SIR has been conducted 11 times since Independence, with the last exercise held in 2002.

He alleged that Congress, BRS and AIMIM were spreading misinformation



by claiming that Muslim votes would be deleted.

Ramchander Rao clarified that no genuine voter from any community would lose voting rights and said the exercise aims to remove deceased, duplicate and fake voters from the electoral rolls. He stressed that

only Indian citizens are eligible to vote and called for the removal of illegal and fake entries.

He urged BJP workers, particularly BLA-2 representatives, to actively participate in the SIR process, assist voters, identify duplicate and deceased voters, and ensure that all genuine voters remain on the rolls.

Stating that future elections will be conducted based on the updated voter lists, he called upon party workers to create awareness about the exercise and counter what he termed as false propaganda by opposition parties.

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