

## World considers India a reliable power: PM Modi

New Delhi, June 22 (GNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that the world considers India a reliable power. Addressing a media event here, PM Modi said: "Bharat is a fast-growing economy, a credible economy, and along with being among the rising powers, Bharat is also a reliable power." "We are the nation whose consciousness carries the memory of an era. We are a nation with an era's memory chip embedded within us. India today is writing the future of the next 1,000 years. And that is India's biggest guarantee to the world," the Prime Minister observed.

Recalling his recent participation in the G7 summit in France, PM Modi said: "Every leader and every



country in the world clearly understands that for today's India, 'Nation First' is the biggest mantra and the biggest principle."

He said that in the achievements of the past 12 years, the spirit of Nation First remains at the centre. From the Swachh Bharat

Abhiyan to Make in India, from promoting khadi purchases to encouraging local products, all these initiatives succeeded because the people of the country placed the nation above themselves and fulfilled their duty.

India is not a nation that

reacts impulsively to momentary events. We are a civilization that has witnessed both development and destruction. It has endured both. Keeping a positive mindset has been the most effective driver of growth in the country, he observed. The Prime Minister further stated that India has boarded the Reforms Express and the speed will accelerate with the Government adopting an "India First approach" to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat (a developed India).

He said, "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to Make in India, promoting the purchase of Khadi, and encouraging the purchase of local products these initiatives have succeeded because the people of the country have placed

the nation above everything and fulfilled their duties. I salute the citizens of the country..."

The Prime Minister also highlighted the big push to infrastructure in the country with the rapid expansion in the highways, railways and civil aviation sectors which had brought about a radical change in connectivity in the country over the last 12 years.

Besides, he underscored the steps taken by the government to make life easier for the middle-class with the exemption in income tax up to earnings of Rs 12 lakh a year. The provision of cheap medicines, medical insurance facilities were other steps that had eased the burden on middle-class households, he added.

## Lucknow coaching centre blaze leaves 18 dead, majority of victims students



Lucknow, June 22 (GNS) An ordinary afternoon of classes and animation sessions in Lucknow's Aliganj area turned into one of the city's deadliest fire tragedies, leaving 18 persons, mostly students, dead and several others injured after a blaze tore through a commercial building housing a pet shop, its warehouse, animation training centre, library and coaching facilities.

The fire broke out around 2.30 pm in Sector-D of Aliganj. Initial accounts from officials and witnesses suggested that before the blaze started, thick smoke rapidly engulfed the upper floors where students and trainees were attending classes. Within minutes, panic spread through the premises as dozens found themselves trapped. The cause of the fire is reportedly

being told a blast in an air conditioner's compressor, which happened on the second floor of the building.

Many attempted desperate escapes. Some jumped from windows and terraces, while others smashed glass panes and tried climbing down using electric wires. Several people reportedly locked themselves inside washrooms and kept water running in a desperate attempt to survive. For many, however, the smoke proved fatal.

Preliminary probe found that the building had approval for only a residential ground floor, but a four-storey commercial structure was operating from the premises. The building allegedly lacked no-objection certificates from the fire and electrical safety departments. Authorities also found that the premises had a sanctioned elec-

tricity load of 20 kilowatts, but was reportedly drawing 35.50 kilowatts.

The property is registered in the name of Virendra Prasad Shukla, while the building plan was approved in the names of Surendra Shukla and Dhirendra Shukla. According to Lucknow's King George Medical University Medical Superintendent Prem Raj Singh, around 22 to 23 victims were brought to the hospital. Fifteen were declared dead on arrival, while several others were admitted with injuries. Four joint owners of the building have been arrested while the government has suspended four officials for "negligence". The human tragedy unfolded in heartbreaking scenes. Jayant Gupta, a 26-year-old animation student, survived after jumping from the building.

## 4 India-Bound fertiliser ships sail safely out of Hormuz

New Delhi, June 22 (GNS): Four cargo ships carrying vital shipments of urea, di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), and sulphur from the Persian Gulf are headed for Indian ports after successfully crossing the Strait of Hormuz last week, according to an official statement issued on Monday. Navigating through ongoing global trade challenges, these vessels are currently heading toward their designated destination ports— Krishnapatnam, Kakinada, Paradeep, and Mundra. Upon arrival, these fresh imports will immediately offload to supplement the nation's existing fertiliser buffers and secure ongoing agricultural requirements, the statement said.

India's cumulative fertiliser stock position, as of June 22, stands at a robust 196.08 lakh tons, marking a healthy increase from the 168.67 lakh tons recorded during the corresponding period last year. This strong inventory backup comprises 81.44

lakh tons of urea, 20.92 lakh tons of DAP, 55.91 lakh tons of NPK, 12.68 lakh tons of MOP and 25.13 lakh tons of SSP, the statement said. Reflecting high agricultural momentum, total fertiliser sales after the Middle East crisis (from March 1, 2026, to June 21, 2026) reached 153.4 lakh tons, visualising a growth of 13.2 lakh tons compared to last year's sales of 140.2 lakh tons over the same duration.

To protect Indian farmers against unpredictable global market shocks, the government maximised indigenous manufacturing capabilities alongside targeted import arrivals. Post-crisis domestic production scaled up significantly to achieve an impressive 133.12 LMT. This strong domestic foundation has been closely matched by total import arrivals hitting 43.69 LMT at Indian ports during this period, striking an ideal balance between localised output and international sourcing, the statement said.

## NSA Doval, Wang Yi review ties, note progress towards 'gradual normalisation'

New Delhi, June 22 (GNS): National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday reviewed recent developments in bilateral relations and noted progress towards the "gradual normalisation" of ties during talks on the sidelines of the BRICS National Security Advisers' Meeting in New Delhi. The meeting between the two senior officials came amid continuing efforts by New Delhi and Beijing to stabilise relations after years of tensions along the Line of Actual Control.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Doval underlined that "stable, predictable and constructive bilateral relations contribute to building of trust and better understanding between the two sides".

The two sides described the discussions as "constructive and forward-looking". The interaction with Wang Yi was among a series of bilateral meetings held



by Doval on the margins of the 16th BRICS NSAs' Meeting, which India is hosting under the theme "Building Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainable Ability". Doval also met Iran's Deputy Secretary for Defence Affairs at the Supreme National Security Council, Ghadir Nezami-pour, with the two sides reviewing the evolving situation in West Asia and discussing cooperation under the BRICS framework

as well as bilateral ties. In separate talks with Brazil's Secretary of Multilateral and Political Affairs Carlos Cozende, Doval welcomed growing cooperation under BRICS and reviewed the India-Brazil relations. The NSA also met Million Lema Tadesse, Executive Director of Analysis at Ethiopia's National Intelligence and Security Service, with both sides exploring avenues to deepen the India-Ethiopia Strategic Partnership.

## Govt approves Rs 270 cr kavach deployment on 631 route km of east coast railway

New Delhi, June 22 (UNI): The government has approved the installation of its indigenous train protection system — Kavach — on 631 route kilometres (Rkm) of the East Coast Railway network at an estimated cost of Rs 270 crore, the Ministry of Railways said on Monday.

The project will cover six important railway sections under East Coast Railway — Baghuapal-Budhapank, Haridaspur-Paradeep, Khurda Road-Balangir, Naupada-Gunupur, Lanjigarh Road-Junagarh and Bobbili-Salur — according to the ministry. The sanctioned work forms part of Indian Railways' larger pro-



gramme to deploy Kavach with an LTE-based communication backbone across the national rail network.

Kavach is India's indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system designed to enhance operational safety by preventing signal passing at

danger (SPAD), overspeeding and train collisions. The system continuously monitors train movements and automatically applies brakes whenever required, significantly improving safety in train operations.

According to the ministry, installation of Kavach on these routes will provide automatic train protection and collision-avoidance capabilities, helping achieve a higher level of operational safety. In addition to preventing accidents, the system is expected to improve the reliability of train services by enabling safer train movement during adverse weather conditions, including dense fog.

## Employee cannot benefit from failure to update address with employer: SC

New Delhi, June 22 (UNI): The Supreme Court has set aside an Allahabad High Court judgment and a Labour Court award directing the reinstatement of a worker with back wages, holding that an employee who remained absent without authorisation and failed to substantiate his claims could not be granted such relief.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta allowed an appeal filed by M/s Rifilis Engineering Pvt. Ltd. and rejected the claim of employee Arjun Gupta, who had alleged that he was illegally removed from service after attempting to



rejoin duty in June 2012. The dispute arose after the respondent, employed as a moulder since August 2006, stopped attending work from May 14, 2012. The company claimed that he remained absent without intimation and that a notice dated May 18, 2012, was sent to his last known permanent address seek-

ing an explanation. The Labour Court had initially passed an ex parte award in favour of the employee in February 2022. After the matter was remanded by the Allahabad High Court for fresh consideration, the Labour Court again ruled in October 2023, directing reinstatement with 50 per cent back wages and consequential benefits. The Allahabad High Court subsequently upheld the award.

However, the Supreme Court found that both the Labour Court and the High Court had erred in granting relief in the absence of supporting evidence.

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# Middle East model for land restoration



**Nizar Haddad**

At a time when political instability dominates the Middle East and North Africa region, climate change, floods and fires tend to get less attention than usual. And the problems of desertification and droughts become almost forgotten. But this neglect is not only unjustified, it is dangerous. While desertification and droughts are slow-moving and less dramatic than wars, floods and fires, they are just as devastating. Just ask the more than 500 million people living in the MENA region who must cope with them each day.

Whereas healthy land produces food, retains water, absorbs carbon and supports livelihoods, degraded land does not. And from the Atlas Mountains to the Tigris-Euphrates river valley, the MENA region features some of the driest — and most rapidly degrad-

ing — landscapes on Earth. With temperatures in the region rising nearly twice as fast as the global average, water scarcity, extreme heat waves and desertification are increasingly shaping everyday life. Add to that some of the world's fastest-growing populations and the risks to food security, economic stability and social cohesion will only grow.

MENA's experiences are an ominous portent of what awaits other regions, which will soon find themselves facing many of the same challenges. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, the frequency and duration of droughts have increased globally by nearly 30 percent since 2000. More than 3.2 billion people worldwide are now affected by land degradation, with 12 million hectares of arable land lost each year.

But the MENA region also offers reason for hope.

For example, Saudi Arabia — for which I am the FAO's program director — has been investing heavily in mitigating and, where possible, reversing the effects of climate change, including through land rehabilitation, rangeland restoration, reforestation and climate adaptation.

The Kingdom's ambition is exemplified by the Saudi Green Initiative, which includes pledges to plant 10 billion trees and rehabilitate 40 million hectares of degraded land.

Innovation is central to this effort. One novel land restoration technique, developed through a collaboration between Saudi technical institutions and the FAO, uses dry palm leaves to stabilize sand dunes in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. This organic material, which was historically considered waste, protects topsoil from wind erosion and slows the rate at which

water evaporates, thereby ensuring enough moisture for dormant native seeds to germinate.

The FAO is also working with Saudi Arabia to implement science-based land monitoring systems, scale up sustainable land management techniques and train national experts in climate-smart practices. More than 40 professionals have been trained across key regions, including Jouf, Riyadh and the Eastern Province. While solutions are always adapted to the local ecosystem, they are designed with scalability in mind. But climate change is not bound by national borders. That is why Saudi Arabia created the Middle East Green Initiative, which aims to strengthen regional cooperation. At the global level, the Kingdom is spearheading the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership, aimed at helping the most vulnerable coun-

tries cope with drought.

Since the initiative's announcement at the 2024 UN Convention to Combat Desertification, known as COP16, more than \$3 billion has been mobilized. It helps that, beyond being crucial to human well-being, land restoration is a high-return investment: the FAO estimates that every dollar invested in it can yield up to \$30 in economic and environmental returns.

Local nongovernmental organizations and communities are playing a growing role in land restoration efforts, such as by establishing nurseries for native plants, building green belts and raising public awareness. This combination of local action, national direction and international cooperation delivers the kind of robust, lasting results that are needed to build true climate resilience. And it should serve as a model for the rest of the world.

# Public safety, security and effective policing

The safety, security and safe environment on day to day basis is the need of general public, without mincing words. Who is to provide safety, security and safe environment? It is the Government of the day and Government cannot shrug its responsibility by passing the buck to some other agency. Whenever, Wherever and Whoever talks, talks of unsafe living in Jammu, which is very dangerous situation. Broad daylight thefts, dacoity (armed robbery), murders, burglaries (chain, mobile phone or purse snatching) have become order of the day. There is no fear of police or one may say deterrence. There is free for all spurt in such avoidable activities as enunciated above without any fear, which is causing total insecurity in the minds of general public. The public is not safe, a major cause of concern to be taken cognizance of by the Government. There is total lawlessness and total breakdown of law and order, which is giving impetus to criminal activities. Such a breakdown of law and order is not good at all for general public, who otherwise feels unsafe environment all around and hence must be tackled or managed properly and immediately.

Our aim is not to set in motion blame game attitude. But realistically, suggest ways and means to tackle lawlessness. How can these thefts, robberies, burglaries (chain, mobile or purse snatching) and murders be controlled effectively? Few measures are given below in the succeeding paragraphs. Police public meetings must be organized on regular basis, which is not being done presently, so as to sensitize people. Police public friendly meetings will definitely bear fruits and give desired dividends. The SHOs of police stations and police post incharges (OICs police chowki) must utilize services of Ex-Servicemen of the area, who are more than willing always and every time to help Government and police as they enjoy good reputation with the Government agencies, round the clock to curb the ongoing menace as discussed above. The police must utilize these ESM as their radars (ears and eyes) to their advantage towards the cause, who can detect and report relevant information as relating to criminal kind of activities if ever brewing up in their area. This way the police will be able to create deterrence as desired. The cohesiveness is a must clarion call.

Aggressive Patrolling must be organized on regular basis. The patrolling programme, routes and the passwords to be utilized for identification must be coordinated at the Police Headquarters level for better synchronization and ensuring synergy between the troops on the similar lines as is done in the army. The common junction points must be decided between the opposite parties conducting patrolling. The peripheries of respective police stations areas must be patrolled on regular basis. Surprise visits by police teams flying squads at odd timings must be carried out to different suspected places. The aim being to create deterrence of sort. The police must have Quick Action Teams concept as exists in Army basically to quickly act, react and respond to a given situation and nab the criminals on time.

Stricter and stringent enforcement of laws including stricter and exemplary punishments and effective initiatives (no criminal should be left scot free) be implemented to curb unabated criminal activities. It should be considered a matter of worry. The out of the box methods be worked out to nab the criminals so as to put a full stop to criminal activities once for all. Tenant background verification for all people especially living in Jhuggi Zhopdi must be carried out on priority without fail. Very important step in the right direction. How? This police authorities have to work out and they are quite professional and highly efficient and they can, what you and me as citizens cannot. Police must maintain high vigil and step up pro-active vigil stance. How? By carrying out increased surveillance on ground and by establishing effective police check posts and nakas from time time wherever required the most. Trust deficit of police be restored (won) back as Full Trusted hamari police.

Apply par excellence professional expertise and matured experienced knowledge on ground of experts and use minds and wisdom together to create effective deterrence. As it is said prevention is better than cure. Similarly deterrence is the best form of constructive and productive handling and management of law and order. And there are umpteen ways of effectively handling the law and order issues well known to highly professional competent personalities without maltreating, misbehaving or using foul language with the erring individuals. Use mere professional competence. Police ka dar hona bada jaruri hai (the fear of police is very important) to control criminal activities. The criminal should have fear in his mind that if he commits a wrong act he will be prosecuted and heavily punished. If this kind of fear exists, a criminal dare not do a wrong act. But probably the criminals feel kuch nahi hota (nothing happens). Chhoot jayenge (will be left). Institute measures to create police deterrence, of which, supercops are highly capable of. They need to be more hyper active. That's all. Our police, our pride and glory. Our police our majesty, dignity and honor. Hamari police, hum sabh ki aan, baan aur shaan. Hum sabh hain apni police ke saath. We all together will root out criminals activities altogether and make the environment fully safe and secure. Nothing to worry. Hamari police hai saksham (our police is highly capable belt force). Some loose ends are required to be tied up.

The people of Jammu deserve a safe and secure environment. Rising crime rate not only threatens public safety and security, but also impacts tourism and economic development. We on behalf of the people urge the administration to institute effective measures/ methods as deemed appropriate to effectively control the menace, causing worry to the public. The aim being to enhance public safety and ensure peaceful environment all around, so that people can move around and without any anxiety or fear.

The aim of the Government should be to ensure a safer, more secure and prosperous Jammu and as it was during Maharaja Hari Singh's time. We urge the citizens to remain vigilant, cooperate and support the law enforcement agencies. The citizens have the yearning to live in peace and it is the responsibility of the Government to provide safe and secure environment. We the citizens and the police will work in tandem and weed out criminal activities soon and for sure provide safe and secure environment. Hum sabh hain police ke saath. Hum sabh ki ek awaaz. Hamara pucca irada. Hamara pucca biswas. Hum honge kamyab. We all together can and we all together will.

Drug trafficking could be tackled successfully by working in tandem with educational institutions and NGOs to launch awareness and de addiction campaigns. Bovine smuggling at night poses a serious threat to peace and communal harmony. More robust night patrolling required. Establishment of check points on the NH coupled with use of drone surveillance in vulnerable zones will be the right step in the right direction. Rise in anti-social and criminal elements operating in both urban and rural pockets has become the norm. Proactive intelligence input, cyber monitoring and swift legal action to curb any activities aimed at disrupting public peace and order is the need of the hour. Widespread use of gattu/ manjha thread which has caused deaths and injuries and fatalities particularly to two wheeler riders and birds. Complete ban on use of such life threatening threads be imposed.

# Can BRICS reshape the global financial order?

**Dr. John Sfakianakis**

In August 2023, the leaders of the BRICS nations — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — gathered in Johannesburg to declare their ambition to rewrite the international system. A centerpiece of that ambition was a call to reduce dependence on the US dollar. For some, the idea sounded like deja vu; de-dollarization has been a recurring theme in emerging markets since the early 2000s. But this time, the stakes feel different. Global polarization is intensifying, financial weaponization has become normalized and the credibility of existing multilateral institutions is eroding. Yet, for all the hype, the BRICS project remains deeply flawed and uneven.

The notion that BRICS could reshape the global financial order rests more on aspiration than reality. While dollar dominance is indeed being reassessed — not just by geopolitical rivals but also by pragmatic middle powers — building a credible alternative requires more than shared discontent. It demands deep capital markets, interoperable infrastructure, credible institutions and above all mutual trust. On all these counts, BRICS is still struggling. The desire to reduce dollar reliance is not simply ideological but a reaction to a financial architecture long shaped by US interests. The 2008 financial crisis exposed the dangers of global dependency on Wall Street. The 2022 sanctions on Russia, which froze hun-



dreds of billions in central bank reserves and cut Moscow off from SWIFT, sent a clear signal to other BRICS members: your assets can be turned into weapons overnight.

But does fear translate into capability? Not necessarily. Incremental moves are already underway. China has expanded its Cross-Border Interbank Payment System and accelerated digital yuan pilots across Asia and Africa. India has begun settling some trade in rupees, particularly with Russia and the UAE. Russia is developing Mir and the System for Transfer of Financial Messages to bypass Western financial rails. Brazil and South Africa are exploring fintech-led payment corridors. Yet, taken together, these initiatives remain fragmented, politically fragile and institutionally weak. The internal

contradictions of BRICS are glaring. China's outsized role in the bloc breeds discomfort among its partners. The yuan remains nonconvertible. India and China are strategic competitors. Russia is economically isolated. Brazil and South Africa are preoccupied with their own fiscal instability. What unites them is not a shared monetary strategy but a defensive impulse — a desire to insulate themselves from the coercive tools of the current system without agreeing on a viable alternative to replace it.

In this respect, the BRICS bloc echoes the spirit of the Non-Aligned Movement of the 1960s — born from frustration with superpower domination, yet too ideologically and strategically diverse to forge a coherent economic alternative. These aspirations are further undercut by a chronic

lack of fiscal and data transparency across the bloc, which undermines investor confidence and complicates efforts to build trust in any shared monetary or institutional arrangement.

Moreover, the dollar is not just a medium of exchange — it is an ecosystem. From commodity pricing and bond issuance to foreign exchange markets and central bank reserves, it is woven into the plumbing of global capitalism. Displacing it would require an alternative that is not only politically palatable but technically superior. BRICS is nowhere near delivering that. The New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement — touted as BRICS' answer to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank — have underperformed. Lending volumes are limited. Governance structures are

opaque. And the credibility of any shared macroeconomic framework remains questionable in the absence of institutional convergence. Even digital currencies, often billed as a leapfrog solution, are no silver bullet. China's e-CNY remains tightly controlled and untested at scale. Interoperability with other BRICS central bank digital currencies remains aspirational. Moreover, few of these economies inspire enough investor confidence to turn their currencies into regional, let alone global, anchors.

One point bears repeating: the US may well benefit from a credible external challenge. A push from BRICS could serve as a cold slap in the face — forcing America to reckon with the fragility of its own advantages. For too long, dollar dominance has bred complacency. If confronted with a viable challenge, the US could rediscover its competitive edge — leveraging innovation, capital markets and entrepreneurial dynamism to future-proof its leadership. But let's be clear: BRICS is not that challenge yet. It is a concept in search of coherence — a geopolitical brand lacking operational capacity. Its declarations are bold but its execution remains underwhelming. The underutilization of the New Development Bank, for example, is telling: with lending volumes far below expectations and project delivery uneven, the institution reflects the broader gap between BRICS' ambitions and its administrative muscle.

# FSSAI in Consultation with Ministry of Ayush Releases Definitive List of Ayurveda Aahara Products under Category A

New Delhi, June 22 (GNS) The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), in consultation with the Ministry of Ayush, has released a definitive list of Ayurvedic food preparations under the category of "Ayurveda Aahara." This significant step brings India's time-honoured food wisdom into the mainstream, following the introduction of the Food Safety and Standards (Ayurveda Aahara) Regulations in 2022. These regulations recognise foods based on recipes, ingredients, and processes from authoritative Ayurvedic texts, and the new list brings unprecedented clarity and confidence to consumers and businesses alike.

The list, issued under Note (1) of Schedule B of the regulations, draws directly from classical Ayurvedic texts listed in Schedule A, ensuring the authenticity and traditional



basis of these food formulations. This initiative aims to assist Food Business Operators (FBOs) by providing a clear and credible reference for the manufacture of Ayurveda Aahara products.

To facilitate future additions, FSSAI has established a process for FBOs to request inclusion of additional Category A products

not yet listed. Such requests need supporting references from authoritative texts in Schedule A. All future updates or changes will be duly notified by the Food Authority.

Notably, Ayurveda Aahara embodies the richness of India's timeless food culture, rooted in Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest

and most holistic systems of health. These food products are crafted in harmony with nature, blending nutrition, balance, and tradition to promote overall well-being. At the inauguration ceremony of World Food India in November 2023, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had said, "India's sustainable

food culture is the result of a journey of thousands of years. Our ancestors had linked Ayurveda with the food style of the common people. Just as international food culture was developed on the initiative of India, Yoga Day took Yoga to every corner of the world, similarly now Millets will also reach every corner of the world."

Prataprao Jadhav, Minister of State (IC), Ministry of Ayush & Minister of State, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, urged citizens to incorporate Ayurveda Aahara into their daily lives to experience its long-term health benefits. He emphasised that these time-tested dietary practices, rooted in India's traditional wisdom, not only nourish the body but also strengthen immunity, support digestion, and promote overall well-being. "In today's fast-paced lifestyle, adopting Ayurveda Aahara is a meaningful

step toward preventive healthcare and a balanced, sustainable way of living," added the Union Minister.

Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, stated that the release of the definitive list of Ayurveda Aahara products marks a pivotal step in aligning India's traditional knowledge systems with modern regulatory frameworks. "This initiative not only empowers Food Business Operators with much-needed clarity but also strengthens consumer trust in Ayurveda-based nutrition," noted the Secretary.

Prof. Sanjeev Sharma, Vice-Chancellor of National Institute of Ayurveda, deemed to be University (De novo), the nodal Institute for the work, said that the development of the Ayush Aahara Compendium is a significant step in mainstreaming classical Ayurvedic food formulations under a regulated framework.

# "India Ramps Up Shipbuilding Capability to Realise Viksit Bharat": Sarbananda Sonowal



New Delhi, June 22 (GNS) India's shipbuilding industry is undergoing a transformational shift, as the Union Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi accelerates efforts to build a world-class maritime ecosystem—paving the way for a Viksit Bharat by 2047, asserted Sarbananda Sonowal, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW). The Union Minister was responding to a starred question by Dr Rajeev Bharadwaj, MP from Kangra LSC at the ongoing monsoon session of the Lok Sabha.

In line with the Maritime India Vision 2030 and the long-term strategic roadmap of Amrit Kaal, the Union Budget 2025 has announced a series of reforms and investments aimed at significantly enhancing the capacity and competitiveness of Indian shipyards. These initiatives are expected to strengthen India's position as an emerging global maritime power, expressed Sonowal.

Highlighting the government's commitment, Sarbananda Sonowal underlined the "The Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy which is being revamped to address cost disadvantages," thereby helping Indian shipyards compete on equal footing with their international counterparts. The inclusion of credit notes for ship breaking in Indian yards reinforces the push towards a circular and sustainable maritime economy.

To boost infrastructure financing, large ships

above a specified size will now be classified under the Infrastructure Harmonised Master List, making them eligible for long-term, low-interest funding. Simultaneously, the government will facilitate the development of integrated shipbuilding clusters, equipped with modern infrastructure, skill development centers, and advanced technologies. This, the Budget notes, is aimed at "increasing the range, categories and capacity of ships" built in India.

In a landmark move to address the industry's need for long-term capital, the government has proposed a 25,000 crore Maritime Development Fund, with up to 49% government contribution. This fund will mobilise private and port-led investments to expand and modernise India's shipbuilding and repair capabilities.

Recognising the long gestation nature of the industry, tax exemptions on Basic Customs Duty (BCD) for raw materials and components used in shipbuilding and ship-breaking have been extended for another 10 years. "Our commitment to empower and enable our maritime sector is absolute and it is with this intent we are working under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji," said Sarbananda Sonowal.

These budgetary interventions come on top of ongoing reforms that are already reshaping the sector. Indian shipyards currently benefit from financial assistance for contracts signed between April 1, 2016, and

# Union Minister Seeks Faster NFDPP Registrations, Push for Fish Processing & Exports in Bengal



New Delhi, June 22 (GNS) Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh, alias Lalan Singh, today stressed on the necessity of West Bengal to bridge gaps in implementation of fisheries schemes, particularly the low registration of fish farmers with the National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDPP).

At the Regional Review Meeting of the Department of Fisheries, held in Kolkata, the Union Minister pointed out that only a fraction of the State's 32 lakh fish farmers are currently registered, hindering their access to central benefits under the schemes like PM Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY).

The Minister emphasised on the untapped potential of inland fisheries in the state and called for better utilisation of traditional water bodies (pukurs), or pond, development of cooperative structures for fishers and creation of a robust processing ecosystem. Plans were also hinted at for the establishment of a developed dry fish cluster in West Bengal to boost the local employment and exports. Emphasising on the new technologies, he said, new technologies, better training facilities and revival of initiatives like artificial reefs are essential for sustainable growth. He announced that India is currently the world's

second largest fish producer, having seen a 104% growth in fish production. He also mentioned that inland fish production in the last decade has grown by 142%, and stressed that the share of the said sector in fish exports needs to be improved.

Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Shri George Kurian and Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Government of India, Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi were also present at the meeting. Both of them underscored the importance of institutional support, central-state coordination, and efficient delivery mechanisms for fisheries-related schemes.

The Regional Review Meeting, held in a city hotel focused on the progress of flagship fisheries schemes in the four eastern States of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. Presentations and briefings were made by senior officials from the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, and the participating State governments.

The session aimed to assess on-ground implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and PM-MKSSY, while setting a roadmap for improved outcomes in the region.

# Manohar Lal Urges Citizens to Become 'Van Mitras' by Planting Trees

New Delhi, June 22 (GNS) Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, along with Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs; and Power, Shri Manohar Lal, presided over the ceremonial launch of the 'Matri Van' initiative - a green legacy symbolizing ecological preservation and community participation - under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' Programme of Government of India. The event was organized by the Forest Department of Haryana as part of the Van Mahotsav 2025, in Gurugram today. The occasion also saw participation of other dignitaries including Shri Rao Narbir Singh, Minister for Industries and Forest (Haryana), along with senior public representatives and officials from the State Government, were also present during the programme.

The 'Matri Van' initiative - a theme based urban for-



est dedicated to nurturing generations through mother-nature-inspired green efforts - would be developed in an area of 750 acres in the Aravalli Hill area, along the Gurugram-Faridabad Road. It is envisioned as a unique ecological and cultural space that will contribute to biodiversity, public well-being, and urban sustainability. This vision would be achieved through a multi-stakeholder collaboration involving CSR partners, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), NGOs, multinational corporations (MNCs),

school children and government organizations.

Addressing the event, Shri Manohar Lal talked about how Carbon emissions have become the foremost global challenge for mankind. Besides using carbon capture technology to fight this challenge, the Minister encouraged citizens to imbibe the tradition of preventing deforestation and planting more trees to become Van Mitras. He laid stress on how India's increasing share of non-fossil fuel based power generation is going a long way

in reducing carbon emissions. He informed that the share of renewable energy sources has already crossed 50% in the energy mix of the country. Further, the Minister added that metro cities like Gurugram must become an example for others in pioneering initiatives like green buildings, eco-tourism through wildlife safaris, theme-based biodiversity parks etc. In his address, Shri Bhupender Yadav noted that the 'Matri van' green cover will act as a heart and lung for the whole of Delhi NCR.

# Challenges and Opportunities, for inclusive, sustainable elderly care released at the conference addressed by several eminent experts

New Delhi, June 22 (GNS) The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India in partnership with NITI Aayog, Union Ministries of Social Justice & Empowerment and Health & Family Welfare supported the Sankala Foundation in organising a day-long National Conference on 'Ageing in India: Emerging realities, evolving responses', which was held in New Delhi on 1st August, 2025. The conference focused on protecting the human rights and dignity of senior citizens and redefining ageing as an opportunity. It aimed to promote innovative policies, encourage stakeholder dialogue and highlight scalable best practices in response to the evolving challenges and opportunities of India's ageing population.

In his inaugural address, NHRC Chairperson, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian said that India has a rich cultural tradition advocating



care and reverence for the elderly as a fundamental societal value. In this context, he also drew references from the Sangam literature and the Yajur Veda. He called for the integration of these ancient values and principles into modern policy frameworks to ensure the dignity, protection and well-being of senior citizens, in alignment with the NHRC's mandate to uphold human rights. Underscoring the Commission's commitment to protecting the rights of the elderly, he highlighted its

various initiatives, including advisories, core group meetings, research studies and suo motu cognizance cases.

In his special address, Dr. Vinod K. Paul, Member (Health, Nutrition and Education), NITI Aayog, emphasised the importance of healthcare and social security frameworks for the ageing population. He said that empowering families to take care of their elderly should remain the foundation of India's approach. Before this, in his keynote address, the NHRC Secretary General,

Shri Bharat Lal setting the agenda of the conference said that India will have nearly 35 crore elderly people by 2050, when one in every five will be a senior citizen, posing a critical policy challenge. He stressed the need to evolve family and community-based care models rooted in India's family value system and supplemented by global best practices. He cited the NHRC Advisory on the Rights of Widows issued in 2024, which urged state authorities to ensure access to pensions, housing

and healthcare for destitute and elderly widows. He also recalled the NHRC Advisory on Protecting Older Persons during the COVID-19 Pandemic, which focused on equitable access to vaccination, home-based care, mental health support and protection from neglect or abandonment during lockdowns. Viewing elderly people as men and women of knowledge, experience and wisdom, Shri Lal emphasised community-based services and inter-generational engagements for elderly care

on the models of Scandinavian countries and Japan by adapting them to the Indian cultural context. He called on stakeholders to study the report titled 'Ageing in India: Challenges and Opportunities' released in the inaugural session for inclusive and community-led healthcare and enable them to play a continued meaningful role in nation building.

Earlier, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim, Director, Sankala Foundation, outlined the objectives of the conference. It was spread into four thematic sessions addressed by eminent experts. These included 'Strengthening Elderly Welfare: Policy and Practice' chaired by Shri Amit Yadav, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 'Health and Mental Wellbeing of the Elderly' by Smt Preeti Sudan, Former Chairperson, UPSC and Former Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, 'Leveraging Ageing for Growth.

## Revanth meets Rajnath Singh, seeks support for Adilabad airport expansion and DRDO project

Hyderabad, June 22 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi on Monday and discussed several key infrastructure and defence-related projects concerning the state. During the meeting, the Chief Minister thanked the Defence Minister for facilitating the transfer of Defence Ministry land for the Gandhi Sarovar project. He also assured the Centre of the Telangana government's full cooperation in the development of the proposed Indian Air Force airport at Adilabad, particularly in matters related to land acquisition and utility shifting.



Revanth Reddy said the state government would extend all possible support for the project, considering

its importance to national security and regional development. He also assured co-operation for the major ex-

pansion of the upcoming Air Force facility and requested the establishment of a civil aviation terminal alongside

the defence airport to cater to passenger traffic.

The Chief Minister further sought the development of cargo, Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO), and hangar facilities at Adilabad, stating that the district has the potential to emerge as a hub for global aviation companies, especially in view of evolving international aviation dynamics. He also urged the Defence Minister to expedite the sanction of a key DRDO/DRDL project proposed near Devarakadra in Mahabubnagar district, emphasising its strategic and economic significance for Telangana, according to an official statement.

## No compromise on Telangana's water share in RDS: Uttam



Hyderabad, June 22 (GNS) Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has made it clear that the main objective of the government is to protect the rights of Telangana. The minister held a high-level review meeting with officials of the Irrigation Department at the Secretariat today (Monday). They discussed the Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (RDS) and Tungabhadra Dam. Speaking on the occasion, Uttam said that there will be no compromise on the share of water allocated to Telangana in the Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme. He revealed that all steps will be taken to protect the interests of RDS ayacut farmers.

The Minister has issued instructions to the officials to strongly voice Telangana's

rights on the use of Tungabhadra waters. The issues of Tungabhadra water distribution were discussed comprehensively in this meeting. He advised to act vigilantly so that Telangana farmers do not suffer any damage due to the actions of the upstream states. He ordered to give priority to the cultivation needs of the farmers of the Krishna basin. He said that Telangana's argument will be strongly voiced in the tribunal, boards and inter-state meetings. He issued instructions to the officials to prepare a comprehensive report on legal, technical and administrative issues.

The Minister stated that the government is committed to fully utilizing Telangana's share of water. He said that there will be no compromise

in protecting the irrigation needs of farmers. He said that the Telangana government will strongly oppose any decision that will harm the interests of the state. Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy stated that the government will fight on all platforms for the rights of Telangana farmers and the security of irrigation water.

The Minister also directed officials to maintain continuous monitoring of water-related developments and coordinate with all concerned departments to ensure Telangana receives its rightful share. He emphasized that the government will take every necessary measure, including legal action, to safeguard irrigation projects and protect the livelihoods of farmers dependent on Krishna basin waters.

## KTR alleges 'Indiramma Rajyam' caused household crisis

Warangal, June 22 (GNS) Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) Working President K T Rama Rao on Monday alleged that the Congress government's "Indiramma Rajyam" had pushed Telangana into crisis and accused Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of betraying farmers through the state's crop procurement policy.

Addressing a party workers' meeting in Wardhanapet Assembly constituency, KTR claimed that limiting paddy procurement to quantities approved by the Centre would severely affect farmers and amount to a "death warrant" for the farming community.

He alleged that the government had failed to address fertilizer and seed shortages, power supply issues, delays in Rythu Bharosa implementation and the discontinuation of Rythu Bima.

The BRS leader said the

Congress government had failed to deliver any significant welfare or development initiatives during its two-and-a-half years in office and accused it of accumulating debt without creating tangible public benefits. He also criticised Revanth Reddy's frequent visits to New Delhi, alleging that they had yielded no major gains for Telangana.

KTR further accused the government of targeting BRS leaders and workers through political vendetta and assured party cadres of full support from the leadership. Calling for a stronger struggle against the Congress government, he urged party workers to work towards bringing BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao back to power.

He also briefed party workers on the party's membership drive and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) programme.

## Dy CM Bhatti calls for historic success of Chintakani 'Rythu Bharosa' public meeting

Khammam, June 22 (GNS) Telangana Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Monday called for making the massive public meeting scheduled on June 30 at Chintakani a historic event, where Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will launch the transfer of "Rythu Bharosa" funds directly into farmers' accounts across the state.

Addressing a coordination meeting with Congress leaders and public representatives of Madhira constituency in Khamma district, Bhatti said the programme would be the first major public meeting in the constituency since the Congress came to power and would send a strong message about the government's commitment to farmers' welfare.

He said the Chief Minister, along with all state ministers, would participate



in the event. The Deputy CM directed party cadres to undertake micro-planning for public mobilisation and ensure smooth transportation and other arrangements. Six special committees were constituted to oversee organisation, vehicle management, publicity, media coordination, drinking water facilities and volunteer services.

Wyra MLA Malothu Ramadasu Naik announced that around 50,000 people would be mobilised from

the constituency and proposed naming the event the "Rythu Aashirvada Sabha." He urged party workers to make the gathering one of the largest public meetings in Telangana.

Later, Bhatti Vikramarka, accompanied by District Collector Divakar T.S. and Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt, inspected potential venues in Chintakani Mandal and reviewed arrangements for the Chief Minister's visit and the public meeting.

## Jupally directs completion of Bhuvanagiri Fort tourism works by October 2

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri June 22 (GNS) Telangana Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Monday inspected the ongoing tourism development works at Bhuvanagiri Fort and directed officials to complete all works by October 2.

Accompanied by Bhongir MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, Bhongir MP Chama Kiran Kumar Reddy and senior officials, the Minister reviewed the construction of the ropeway, hotel, parking facilities, restrooms, children's play area, decorative lighting, fort restoration, water body beautification, cafeteria, interpretation centre, entrance plaza and other tourist amenities. Expressing dissatisfaction over delays, he instructed officials and contractors to monitor progress continuously and carry out works round-the-clock.

Later addressing the media, Jupally said the government, under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth



Reddy, was giving top priority to tourism development through a new tourism policy. He said Telangana aims to emerge as a premier tourism destination and an international-standard hub for spiritual, heritage and cultural tourism by 2047.

The Minister said the government was developing an integrated tourism circuit connecting Yadadri, Bhuvanagiri Fort and Kolanupaka, while also preserving important Buddhist heritage sites. He noted that Bhuvanagiri

Fort is being developed into a world-class tourist destination at an estimated cost of Rs 56.81 crore under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0, with modern amenities and a ropeway expected to significantly boost tourist footfall and generate employment opportunities. He urged people to support tourism promotion efforts and visit tourist destinations regularly, stating that travel and family outings contribute to mental rejuvenation and a positive outlook.

## Cyient Foundation launches Rs 7.5 cr innovation, employability initiative in TG

Hyderabad, June 22 (GNS) Cyient Foundation on Monday announced a major multi-stakeholder initiative in partnership with leading state universities and government institutions in Telangana to strengthen innovation, entrepreneurship, employability and future-ready skills among students.

The initiative was formalised through MoUs with Osmania University, Kakatiya University, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological

University Hyderabad, Palamuru University, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, and the Commissionerates of Collegiate and Technical Education.

The Foundation plans to invest about Rs 7.5 crore over three years to promote industry-academia-government collaboration, entrepreneurship, innovation, faculty development and employability. The programme will extend to around 152 government de-



gree colleges and 59 government polytechnics across the state. A key focus will be on emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence,

Generative AI, robotics, IoT, drone technology, data analytics, GIS and Industry 4.0. Rural skill development centres will be established at Narayanpet, Mahabubnagar and Warangal, training about 2,000 youth over three years, with more than 50 per cent women participation.

Founder Chairman of Cyient, B V R. Mohan Reddy, said the initiative aims to create a strong ecosystem that nurtures innovation, entrepreneurship and future-

ready skills, transforming students into innovators, job creators and nation-builders. The programme is expected to support over 4,000 students annually through entrepreneurship development initiatives, incubate 20-25 startups every year, train over 200 faculty members and engage more than 50 industry experts as mentors, strengthening Telangana's higher education ecosystem and driving inclusive growth, a company statement said.

## National Education Policy 2020 Has Liberated Students from Being "Prisoners of Subjects": Dr. Jitendra Singh

Hyderabad, June 22 (GNS) Addressing the The Week Education Conclave 2026, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that one of the greatest changes brought about in the last decade has been the introduction of NEP 2020. Explaining its impact in simple terms, he remarked that the policy had "liberated children from being prisoners of the subjects chosen for them by their parents." He observed that the earlier system often compelled students to continue with academic streams irrespective of their interests, limiting flexibility and individual choice.

The Minister said that the flexibility introduced under the new policy has enabled students to make course cor-



rections based on their aptitude. He noted that students who may not wish to pursue conventional career trajectories now have the freedom to explore diverse disciplines ranging from biotechnology to literature and other emerging fields. He further mentioned that, this shift has

resulted in learners entering professions by choice rather than by default, thereby improving the overall quality and motivation of the future workforce.

Referring to the impact of these changes on the scientific ecosystem, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the quality and orientation of young scientists entering research institutions today are markedly different from earlier generations. He observed that many are now choosing careers in science out of genuine interest and aptitude, leading to greater commitment and excellence in research and innovation. Highlighting the role of technology in expanding access to educa-

tion, the Minister stated that educational opportunities have undergone a process of democratisation over the past decade. He said that the optimum use of technology has helped make education more accessible and affordable, reducing barriers that previously restricted opportunities to a limited segment of society.

Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed to emerging trends in competitive examinations as evidence of this transformation. He noted that several candidates securing top ranks in national examinations are increasingly coming from smaller towns and non-metropolitan regions, often without attending expensive

coaching institutions. He mentioned, this reflects the growing availability of educational resources through digital platforms and mobile technologies, which have helped level the playing field for aspirants across the country. The Minister observed that success in today's educational landscape is increasingly being determined by perseverance, self-learning and effective utilisation of available resources. Recalling interactions with students from modest backgrounds who had excelled in highly competitive examinations, he emphasised that determination and disciplined effort continue to remain critical ingredients for achievement.

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