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## Padma awards to Mammootty, Satish Shah, Rohit Sharma and more



New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): Tennis legend Vijay Amritraj, actors Mammootty and Satish Shah, cricketer Rohit Sharma, and playback singer Alka Yagnik were among eminent personalities conferred with the coveted Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday, June 23. In the second civil investiture ceremony at the Ganatran Mandap of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the president presented Padma Vibhushan to former Supreme Court judge K T Thomas for public affairs and eminent Malayalam journalist P Narayanan for contribution to literature and education.

Alka Yagnik, Mammootty, American oncologist Dattatreya Nori, tennis player Vijay Amritraj, industrialist S K M Maeilanandhan and social worker and educationist Vellappally Natesan received Padma Bhushan from the president during

the ceremony. Rupi Soren, wife of JMM founder Shibu Soren, received the Padma Bhushan on behalf of the late leader.

The president conferred the Padma Shri on cricketer Rohit Sharma, who led India to victory in the last T20 World Cup, and hockey player Savita Punia.

Vladimir Mestvirishvili, the Georgian coach who mentored Indian Olympic medallists like Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt, and Ravi Dahiya, was awarded the Padma Shri posthumously. His wife received the award on his behalf.

The function was attended by Vice President C P Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Home Minister Amit Shah among other dignitaries.

The arrival of 83-year-old folk artist and cultural guardian from Nagaland, Guru Sangyusang Pongener, added a dash of

vibrant cultural touch to the ceremony. Dressed in traditional Naga attire, his spirited entry drew a huge round of applause from the audience, including Prime Minister Modi. He received the Padma Shri.

Social worker Budhri Tati, who worked in the field of education and women's empowerment in the previously naxal-affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, also received the Padma Shri. She, too, preferred her traditional dress and received warm applause as she walked up to accept the honour.

The president also conferred the Padma Shri posthumously on actor Satish Shah. The actor was known for essaying prominent roles in the country's first sitcom Ye Jo Hai Zindagi, Sarabhai Vs Sarabhai, and cult movie Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro. His brother received the award on his behalf.

## India's trade rose 5.4% to touch \$1.84 trillion in Q4 of FY26: NITI Aayog



New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): India's total merchandise and services trade expanded by 5.4 per cent year-on-year during January-March in the financial year 2025-26 to reach \$1.84 trillion, reflecting a stable performance despite the uncertainties in global markets, according to NITI Aayog's latest "Trade Watch Quarterly" released on Tuesday.

Ashok Kumar Lahiri, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, released the report in New Delhi, in the presence of the CEO, NITI Aayog and other senior officials.

India's trade performance in Q4 FY2025-26 underscored the continued resilience of the external sector, supported by robust growth in services trade. While merchandise exports

moderated and imports increased, the composition of trade remained broadly stable, the report states.

Services trade remained a key source of strength, with exports growing by 9. Per cent, outpacing import growth and sustaining a strong services surplus. India retained its position as the world's eighth-largest services exporter in 2025, with services exports recording a CAGR of 10.3 per cent during 2015-2025, significantly above the global average.

Overall, India's total trade reached \$1.84 trillion during FY2025-26, with exports growing by 4.2 per cent and imports by 6.5 per cent, highlighting the continued dynamism of India's engagement with the glob-

al economy. The thematic focus of this quarter's edition, India's pharmaceutical sector, has emerged as a strategic pillar of the economy, supported by a strong manufacturing base, global competitiveness in generic medicines, and growing integration into international healthcare supply chains.

Global pharmaceutical and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) demand is estimated at approximately \$1.3 trillion in 2025, while India exported pharmaceutical and API products worth \$35.8 billion.

Supported by its strong capabilities in generic medicines, vaccines, and essential drugs, India continues to play an important role in global healthcare supply chains.

## Energy, cyber threats, terrorism dominate BRICS National Security Advisers' meeting in Delhi

New Delhi, June 23 (UNI) National Security Advisers and heads of delegation from BRICS countries on Tuesday called for deeper cooperation against terrorism and cyber threats, while identifying energy security, food security, supply chain disruptions and climate-induced instability among the major non-traditional challenges confronting the world. Meeting in New Delhi under India's chairship, the 16th BRICS National Security Advisers' Meeting reviewed emerging security risks and pledged closer coordination among member countries to address evolving threats.

According to an official statement, the participants deliberated on challenges relating to energy and food security, supply chain resilience, cyber se-



curity, climate-induced instability and the use of emerging technologies by terrorist networks. The security chiefs also reviewed the outcomes of the BRICS Joint Working Group meetings on counter-terrorism held in May and on security in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) earlier this month. The lead-

ers expressed support for expanding cooperation among BRICS members through capacity building, enhanced information sharing and greater coordination among law-enforcement agencies to collectively tackle terrorism and cyber risks.

They reaffirmed their commitment to combatting terrorism "in all its

forms and manifestations", including countering the use of new technologies by terrorist groups. The meeting, held under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", concluded with the National Security Advisers and heads of delegation calling on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressing full support

for India's BRICS Chairship in 2026. On the sidelines of the two-day gathering, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval held a series of bilateral meetings with counterparts from China, Iran, Brazil, Ethiopia and South Africa.

Most notably, Doval met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, with the two sides reviewing recent developments in bilateral relations and noting progress towards the "gradual normalisation" of ties. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Doval underlined that stable, predictable and constructive bilateral relations were essential for building trust and better understanding between the two countries. The discussions were described as "positive", "constructive" and forward-looking.

## MEA working to repatriate remains of 12 Indians from Qatar

New Delhi, June 23 (UNI) India on Tuesday said that it is coordinating with local authorities to identify and repatriate the mortal remains of the 12 Indian nationals who had lost their lives in the explosion at the Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial city on Sunday night.

Addressing a weekly media briefing, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the incident as "very unfortunate" and said that 66 people of various nationalities had been injured in the blast, though the exact number of injured Indian nationals are yet to be ascertained. He also added that all injured Indian nationals are safe. "Very unfortunate death of 12 Indian nationals. Several others also died of other nationalities, but we lost 12 of our nationals in the tragedy in the Ras

Laffan gas field, where an explosion happened. Several other people have also been injured. I am told that some 66 people are injured across nationalities. We do not know exactly how many of them are Indian nationals, but all those people who are injured are safe," Jaiswal stated.

"We are talking to the local authorities for the identification of the mortal remains, as well as for the transportation of the mortal remains to India. We are also in touch with the family members of those who died in this very unfortunate accident," he added. Earlier in the day, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar expressed deep sorrow over the deaths and injuries caused by the explosion at Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City, including those involving Indian nationals.

## SC declines urgent hearing on plea against Bengal order linking SIR to PDS benefits

New Delhi, June 23 (UNI) The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined an urgent hearing on a public interest litigation (PIL) challenging two West Bengal government measures that allegedly link welfare benefits under the Public Distribution System (PDS) and Annapurna Yojana with the outcome of the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

When the matter was mentioned for urgent listing, the petitioner sought an immediate hearing, contending that the impugned measures could adversely affect access to welfare benefits for a large number of beneficiaries in the state.

However, a Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Joydalya Bagchi advised the petitioner to approach the Calcutta High Court for ap-



propriate relief. Noting that the Calcutta High Court had resumed functioning after the summer vacation, Justice Nagarathna said, "Please take it to the Calcutta High Court." The writ petition, filed under Article 32 of the Constitution, challenges the constitutional validity of an order dated June 4, 2026, issued by the Food and Supplies Department of the West Bengal government and a notification dated May 19, 2026, issued by the Department of Women and Child

Development and Social Welfare. According to the plea, the impugned order directs authorities to identify, scrutinise and delete beneficiaries from the food security framework on the basis of classifications generated during the SIR exercise, while the notification allegedly makes migration of beneficiaries under the Annapurna Yojana contingent upon classifications such as "dead", "shifted", "deleted" and "absentee" electors.

The plea contends that electoral status and classifications emerging from the SIR exercise have no nexus with eligibility for food security benefits or welfare assistance, and that such a linkage could result in the exclusion of large numbers of economically vulnerable persons from welfare schemes.

## India shifts from scale to resilience in energy sector after strait of hormuz Disruption

New Delhi, June 23 (UNI): India's energy security is shifting from scale to resilience as the country expands upstream access and diversifies supply portfolios in the wake of disruptions to the Strait of Hormuz, a report said on Tuesday.

The report from S&P Global Energy said the Strait of Hormuz closure had disrupted about 17 per cent of global LNG supply but India — the world's fourth largest LNG buyer — limited the impact by sourcing cargoes from Oman, the United States, Nigeria and Angola, with imports down only about 5 per cent and 2 per cent year on year in April



and May 2026 respectively. "India is expected to retain some of this diversified LNG sourcing considerations to mitigate future disruptions, potentially influencing its long-term sourcing strategies," said Johan Utama, Principal Research Analyst, S&P Global Energy.

The report highlighted that rerouting via the Red Sea and expanded ship to ship transfers east of Hormuz helped Middle East crude exports rebound to over 10 million barrels per day in June. "The past months have underscored the adaptability of both producers and consumers.

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# Post-Partition Identity Debate

**Prafull Goradia**

Drawing lessons from global experiences and India's own past, introspection and reform within the Muslim community are imperative to strengthen national unity and align with the constitutional vision of equality and integration.

Shaukat Ali Quadri, in his article in this esteemed publication on July 31, has made wise and moderate suggestions, so that Muslims can retain their identity and yet be an integral part of the Indian populace. In this regard, it would be useful to first enumerate the compulsions that loyal Hindu citizens apprehend about their country. The country is vast, with a correspondingly large population. The population speaks a variety of languages, not to mention the numerous dialects. There is a variety of castes; besides these, India also has religious diversities to take care of, not to speak of the racial differences that go with the largeness of the country, with its long and often contentious history.

India obtained its independence from Imperial Britain in August 1947, but before relinquishing the reins of power, several observers, mostly British, had predicted that if Indians were not careful, their country could be threatened with secessions and breakups. In short, having given Muslims the Pakistan the latter wanted, it was now for the Hindus to be cautious, if not also careful. To that extent, India is



not a typical nation of the kind the Western world is used to. Such a typical country should ideally have all or most of its citizens' souls breathing together.

These are points that have never been driven into the minds of Muslim citizens who remained in India after August 15, 1947; Pakistan having been born the previous day. Each political party has propagated its own ideology, which generally has been music to the Muslim ear but not necessarily to the integrity of the country. Islam has, from its beginnings, been a transnational religion, rather like Judaism and Communism. In these beliefs, the coming together of several peoples or groups is no big thing, nor is the break-up of a country a calamity to be mourned. Take the example of Egypt and Syria during the time of the presidency of Col. Nasser.

These two countries briefly formed a union called the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1958, which

dissolved in 1961. Again, a significant number of people in the western wing of Pakistan did not mind their eastern wing seceding. The Soviet Union comprised sixteen republics.

Moscow spontaneously let secede fifteen of these republics and go their way one day in 1991. In fact, the Soviet constitution provided for secession if any republic felt like seceding. This provision in the Soviet constitution reflects the transnational outlook of the communist ideology. Chaim Weizman, the first prophet of modern Israel, had said that there were no Polish Jews, Hungarian Jews, Russian Jews, British Jews, etc, but Jews in France, Jews in Britain, Jews in Russia and so on. Chaim Weizman was also the president of the Zionist Organisation and later first president of Israel. "Workers of the world, unite" was the exhortation in the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848. Indian

Muslims, therefore, in today's times, have to find a way to rise above these transnational impulses. There can be no denying that separatism, and the feeling of being 'distinct' or different from other communities, has been a particular feature of this community's consciousness as well as conduct. In India, this feeling of separateness and being distinct has existed vis-à-vis the Hindus of the country ever since the Muslims first came as invaders to settle in parts of the country — their rule over it and subsequent Hindu resurgence leading to the collapse of Islamic rule and the partition of the country after the departure of British colonial rule in 1947.

It is reasonable to expect that the members of all religions who expect personal laws to be retained would be of a similar bent of mind. In the Constitution of India, Article 14 insists on equality of all citizens. But by the time we reach Article 25, different communities are

allowed different personal laws. There is a Directive Principle of State Policy which expresses a desire of the Constitution to have a Uniform Civil Code, but after 75 years of the Constitution being in force, one community continues to enjoy its personal laws, which have been imported from abroad. Hindus are allowed to have family trusts, while Muslims have the privilege that are called waqf, which is entirely different, and increasingly a matter of contention.

With so many variations, it is difficult to be assured that India is a united and well-integrated nation. The question of all the souls of the country breathing together could be a tall order. Everyone needs to be reminded that there are two nations in the neighbourhood that were once parts of the British Empire.

This makes the Hindu heart harbour fears that one minority or the other might be harbouring extra-territorial or transnational loyalties in its heart. It would be much preferable if the scope for such fears did not exist. We must also not forget that for decades together, the communist parties have been operating with weapons in the hands of many of their armed cadres. Transnational ideologies and the demands of loyalties they impose negate the very notion of national integration and oneness. Therefore, for the Muslim citizens of the country, the path of reform beckons, in their own interest.

# Integral Humanism Shapes Modi's Vision For Inclusive India

In a world torn between extreme materialism and divisive identity politics, India has rediscovered a guiding light in Integral Humanism, the philosophy of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. This vision of holistic, human-centric development — rooted in India's civilizational ethos — finds its true realization today under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Deendayal Ji believed that true development must address the body, mind, intellect, and soul — respecting both individual dignity and social harmony. It is not just about economic upliftment, but about restoring moral and cultural balance in society. For decades, this vision remained neglected, overshadowed by imported ideologies. But since 2014, Modi Ji has breathed life into this philosophy, translating it into governance that reaches every Indian, regardless of religion or caste.

Unlike previous governments that often treated the poor as vote banks or subjects of charity, Modi Ji's governance respects them as partners in national progress. The change is visible — not just in policies but in spirit. Today, millions who once stood at the margins of society have homes, electricity, toilets, bank accounts, and digital access. This is not just welfare; it is dignity-led development, or Antyodaya — the core of Deendayal Ji's thinking. What sets this model apart is its genuine inclusivity. Modi Ji's development is not filtered through religious identities. Whether it is scholarships, homes, or business loans, beneficiaries are selected on the basis of need, not religion. This is in stark contrast to the Indian National Congress, whose brand of secularism often meant minority appeasement and majority alienation. It created a politics of division — Hindus vs Muslims, Dalits vs non-Dalits — in pursuit of votes. The result was fragmented society and stalled progress.

Take the issue of triple talaq. For decades, Muslim women were subjected to instant divorce without justice. Congress, despite being in power, chose silence to protect its vote bank. Modi Ji, however, took a bold, moral stand and banned the practice — not for political gain, but to protect the dignity of Muslim women. This is true empowerment — guided by compassion, not calculation.

Compare this to the infamous Shah Bano case during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, where a Supreme Court ruling favoring justice for a Muslim woman was overturned by Congress under pressure from religious orthodoxy. That moment exposed Congress's unwillingness to stand up for human rights when faced with political cost — a betrayal of both secularism and the Constitution.

Modi Ji's vision also restores pride in India's cultural and spiritual roots. Under previous regimes, even speaking of India's traditions — whether yoga, temples, or festivals — was seen as regressive or majoritarian. Today, the world celebrates International Yoga Day, and our cultural heritage is seen as a strength, not a liability. Yet, every community is included, not excluded. India is becoming modern while staying rooted. Even in foreign policy, Modi Ji's Integral Humanism shines through. India is seen as a voice of the Global South, a compassionate leader, not just an economic power. This moral authority comes from a civilizational mindset — one that sees the world as a family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam), not a battlefield.

Some critics label BJP as majoritarian. But we must ask: who built homes for the poor without asking their religion? Who ensured that Dalits, Muslims, and tribal communities received the same benefits without bias? Modi Ji has proved through action that inclusion without appeasement is possible — that justice can be delivered without compromising identity.

Integral Humanism teaches us to view the nation as a living organism — not a marketplace or a collection of vote banks. Each citizen is a vital part of this body, and governance must nurture every part without conflict. Modi Ji's India reflects this spirit. Unlike Congress, which created divisions and sold dreams, BJP under Modi Ji is uniting hearts and fulfilling aspirations.

As India enters Amrit Kaal, this philosophy offers a roadmap not just for development, but for national unity and moral strength. Deendayal Upadhyay's vision is no longer a forgotten doctrine — it is the soul of New India, built by the hands of every citizen and guided by the leadership of Narendra Modi.

Another significant aspect of Integral Humanism is its emphasis on self-reliance and decentralized development. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay believed that villages and local economies should become the foundation of national strength. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this vision is visible through initiatives such as Vocal for Local, Startup India, Skill India, and the promotion of rural infrastructure. By empowering small entrepreneurs, farmers, artisans, and youth, the government has attempted to create growth that is both sustainable and inclusive. The transformation of India's digital ecosystem also reflects this philosophy in practice. Through Digital India, UPI, and direct benefit transfer mechanisms, corruption and middlemen have been reduced significantly, ensuring that government benefits reach the poor directly. This transparent governance model strengthens public trust and restores dignity to citizens who were once excluded from the formal economic system. Technology, in this framework, is not merely a tool of modernization but an instrument of social justice. Integral Humanism also advocates harmony between development and nature. Unlike blind industrialization models that prioritize profit over environmental balance, this philosophy encourages responsible growth that respects natural resources. Modi Ji's push for renewable energy, solar missions, green mobility, and campaigns such as Mission LIFE demonstrates an effort to combine economic progress with environmental responsibility. India today is emerging as a global advocate for climate justice while safeguarding the interests of developing nations. Education and youth empowerment have also gained renewed focus under this approach. The National Education Policy aims to create an education system rooted in Indian values while preparing students for global opportunities. By promoting innovation, research, skill development, and mother-tongue learning, the government is attempting to nurture confident citizens connected to their cultural roots. This reflects Deendayal Ji's belief that education must shape character and national consciousness, not merely produce workers for the economy. Ultimately, Integral Humanism offers India an alternative path that avoids both excessive individualism and rigid state control. It envisions a society where economic growth, cultural confidence, social harmony, and national unity move together. In Narendra Modi's leadership, supporters see the practical expression of this philosophy through governance that seeks to combine welfare with empowerment, tradition with technology, and nationalism with inclusive development. As India aspires to become a developed nation, this model continues to shape the narrative of a confident and self-reliant New India.

# Courts Must Protect Right To Question Govt, Not Equate Dissent With Anti-Nationalism

**Manoj Jha**

THE idea of a question-free democracy is untenable and deeply dangerous in multiple ways. At the heart of any democratic society lies the freedom to question, dissent and demand accountability from those in power. Governments that treat questions as threats and criticism as sedition erode the very foundation of democratic life. A democracy without scrutiny turns slowly, but surely, into authoritarianism, where fear replaces freedom. It begins to reward conformity and punish conviction and creativity. It breeds a stale culture of obedience.

Let us not forget, a democratic culture is not only essential for politics and governance but also for industry and commerce, education and research, arts and culture, and just about everything humans do. When people feel stifled, they cannot create anything of lasting value. It is for a reason that participation, decentralisation, and risk-taking are considered central to innovation and value-creation in all spheres of life. Similarly, the strength of a nation lies not in the silence of its people but in their active participation in shaping its future through open dialogue and rigorous questioning.

Attempts to delegitimise questioning, whether by branding critics as "anti-



national" or portraying dissenters as enemies of the state, are signs of creeping authoritarianism. If democracy is to remain meaningful, it must remain noisy, argumentative and uncomfortable for those in power.

A democracy that cannot tolerate questions will eventually forget how to answer them. That is a loss no free society can afford.

The problem becomes acute as the judiciary steps in to shield the government from criticism and uncomfortable questions. In view of the recent observations made by the Bombay High Court as well as by a judge of the Supreme Court, it is imperative to appeal to them that they must refrain from using patriotism as a shield to protect the government from being questioned.

In a constitutional democracy, the judiciary is

expected to stand as the guardian of individual rights and civil liberties, not as an amplifier of executive authority. Courts that invoke the language of patriotism to delegitimise dissent or insulate the government from public scrutiny do a grave disservice to the democratic ethos and the Constitution itself.

Such judicial overreach does not strengthen democracy. It suffocates it. It emboldens the powerful, silences the marginalised and sends a chilling message that free speech exists only on terms approved by authority. A court that tells citizens how and where to use their voice is not defending democracy. It is presiding over its slow burial.

Courts must distinguish between loyalty to the nation and to those in power. The two are never the same.

The courtroom must remain a space where the citizens' right to question the state is protected, not suppressed under the weight of nationalism. To conflate criticism of the government with a lack of patriotism is to silence the very spirit of democracy that the judiciary is meant to uphold.

Courts must also resist the dangerous temptation to police where citizens speak and what they say. Courts that start prescribing venues for dissent or sanitising the content of speech cease to be guardians of freedom and become its gatekeepers. The Constitution entrusts the judiciary with the protection of liberty, not its rationing, and certainly not prescribing where one can speak or assemble.

Judicial overreach: Scripting democracy's dialogue. The day courts start de-

ciding which causes are worth speaking about is the day democracy is reduced to a performance on a stage whose script is written by authority. The Bombay High Court's remark questioning why a party does not raise domestic issues instead of organising a meeting on Gaza is regressive. It is an insult to the very idea of free speech and assembly. For a court in a constitutional democracy to tell a political party what it should speak about is an abuse of authority. In India, no institution, however exalted, has the moral or constitutional right to prescribe the content of political discourse. The right to choose one's battles, including the right to be silent on some, belongs to the citizen and the political actor, not to the Bench. Such judicial overreach reeks of paternalism, trivialises genuine domestic struggles and reflects an unspoken arrogance that courts can dictate the priorities of politics. The Supreme Court's instruction to an elected representative like Rahul Gandhi that he must not speak on national issues on social media but only in Parliament delivers a body blow to the very heart of democracy. The Constitution protects citizens' freedom to speak in public spaces, both physical and digital, without seeking permission from any authority. Such a prescription is not the court's mandate.

## NE States Urged To Update Logistics Policy And Boost Connectivity Development

New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): Union Minister of Communications and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jyotiraditya Scindia, has underscored a unified approach to accelerate infrastructure growth in northeastern region (NER), an official statement said on Friday.

The minister outlined five suggestions for bridging infrastructure and connectivity gaps — convergence of NER Infrastructure Grid by preparing a regional Master Plan; establishment of a Monitoring Mechanism for priority projects for the NER; policy push for Multimodal logistic park by way of offering various tax and other concessions; boosting cross border connectivity to promote International trade with neighbouring countries; and enhancing digital connectivity and power transmission infrastructure. Speaking at the High-Level Task Force



(HLTF) on 'Logistics, Infrastructure Connectivity in NER,' Scindia further added that all the infrastructure projects in the NER should be mapped on the PM GatiShakti Portal for better planning of future projects.

The minister urged all the NER states that they should update their state Logistics Policy as per the metric prepared by the Ministry based on the best practices throughout the country, preferably before the next

NEC Plenary Session. The industrial clusters may be developed in the NER along the transport corridors for rapid economic growth of the region. The HLTF meeting focussed on critical gaps in the North Eastern Region in the sectors of Highways, Railways, Waterways, Airways, Logistics, and digital connectivity.

To bridge these gaps, the HLTF meeting decided to formulate a comprehensive Infrastructure Masterplan.

The plan will be developed in consultation with all eight northeastern states and Central Ministries, ensuring a collaborative approach to regional development. The key points of discussion during the meeting included identification of state-specific bottlenecks and challenges, critical connectivity gaps and prioritised infrastructure needs, integration of state budgets; national investments.

## India's Role In US Generic Drug Supply And Impact Of Manufacturing Shift

New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): Imposition of 25 per cent penalty on goods trade with India, with a proposition of additional 25 per cent on the world's largest democracy, can be a bad policy decision for the US and its people, an SBI Research report said on Friday.

On the other hand, India — strategically protecting its sovereignty — must continue to protect its farmers from likelihood of predatory practices of select global conglomerates who may vie for a lucrative 'Desi' pie without investing in sustainable market infrastructure creation, anchoring agri value chain financing and being a partner in welfare schemes that upend 'Ease of Living' for our farming community, the report stressed.

Significantly, India has trumped global giants in milk production between 2015-2024. In the year 2015, India's total milk produc-



tion stood close to 155.5 million tonnes (EU 154.6 MT and US 94.6 MT). By 2024, India's share had swelled to 211.7 MT (growth of 36 per cent), while EU (including Britain) grew to 165.9 MT and the US 102.5 MT, according to the report.

When it comes to the pharmaceuticals market, India has been a cornerstone of the global supply chain for affordable, high-quality, essential medicines, particularly life saving oncology drugs, antibiotics, and chronic diseases' treat-

ments. "In the generic drug market, India supplies nearly 35 per cent of the pharmaceutical needs of the US. If the US shifts manufacturing and API production to other countries or domestic facilities, it will take minimum 3-5 years for meaningful capacity," said the report. In the US, health expenditure per person per annum is around \$15,000, and hence with 35 per cent, India's share in generic drugs tariff is going to impact US citizens significantly.

"Putting tariff on India

pharma exports hurts the US objective of reducing the size of general government and goes against the objectives of DOGE. The US national health expenditures is 17.6 per cent of the GDP and the government-sponsored Medicare and Medicaid account for 36 per cent of the total expenditure," said the report, adding that higher price of affordable medicines increase both expenditure under Medicare and Medicaid and also the out-of-pocket expenditure of private citizens.

## NPPA Fixes Prices Of Key Medicines Including Injectables And Common Drugs

New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): The Union government has fixed the ceiling price of four emergency-use medicines and 37 other drug formulations, which include antibiotics and painkillers. The prices were fixed by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), and the medicines range from treating infections, heart ailments, and inflammation to diabetes and vitamin deficiencies.

"Manufacturers selling branded or generic or both versions of the medicines at a price higher than the ceiling price (plus GST) shall revise the prices downward not exceeding the ceiling price..." the NPPA said. However, manufacturers having an MRP lower than the ceiling price shall continue to maintain the existing MRP, the NPPA added. The emergency-use medicines include Ipratropium, used to prevent wheez-



ing, shortness of breath, coughing, and chest tightness in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Its ceiling price was fixed at Rs 2.96 per ml.

For Sodium Nitropruside, an injectable used to rapidly lower BP in hypertensive emergencies, during surgery to reduce bleeding, and in cases of acute heart failure, it was fixed at Rs 28.99 per ml; for Diltiazem, used to treat high BP and chest pain, it was fixed at Rs 26.72 per capsule; and for Povidone Iodine, used for skin disinfection before and after

surgery and minor wound care, it was fixed at Rs 6.26 per gram. Other medications with prices slashed include paracetamol, atorvastatin, amoxicillin, and metformin. Among the drugs affected is a combination of Aceclofenac, Paracetamol, and Trypsin Chymotrypsin for use as an anti-inflammatory and cardiovascular drug, which comes as a combination of Atorvastatin 40 mg and Clopidogrel 75 mg. According to the NPPA, the notified prices are GST-free, which may be charged additionally if needed.

## GPT-5 Launch To Boost IndiaAI 'FutureSkills' And Expand AI Access

New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): India is OpenAI's second-largest market in the world after the US, and it may well become its biggest market in the near future, according to its CEO Sam Altman. OpenAI sees India as a rapidly growing market, with plans to enhance AI accessibility and affordability, he added. "It's incredibly fast-growing, but what users are doing with AI, what citizens of India are doing with AI, is really quite remarkable," Altman said while launching GPT-5, the latest version of the artificial intelligence system that powers ChatGPT.

He further stated that the company was working with local partners to make its products more effective and affordable for Indian users, and he plans to visit the country in September. In June, OpenAI, in partnership with the government's IndiaAI mission, on Thursday launched the first international expansion of its education platform, that



will help expand access to AI skills training across the country. The initiative, called 'OpenAI Academy India', aims to broaden access to AI education and tools, tapping into India's fast-growing developer community, digital infrastructure, and network of startups and innovators.

It will support the IndiaAI Mission's 'FutureSkills' pillar by expanding access to AI skills training for a wide range of learners — students, developers, educators, civil servants, nonprofit leaders, and small business owners. "India is one of the

most dynamic countries in the world for AI development, with adoption and innovation accelerating at remarkable speed," said Jason Kwon, Chief Strategy Officer, OpenAI. GPT-5 brings together the best of ChatGPT into one unified experience that's designed to get the users best answer, every time. "We are introducing GPT-5, our best AI system yet. GPT-5 is a significant leap in intelligence over all our previous models, featuring state-of-the-art performance across coding, math, writing, health, visual perception, and more.

## LIC Reports 5% Profit Growth, Strong Non-Par Business Momentum

Mumbai, June 23 (GNS): Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), the country's largest life insurer, on Thursday reported a 3.91 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase in its consolidated net profit for the June quarter of the current financial year (Q1 FY26). The profit rose to Rs 10,957 crore from Rs 10,544 crore recorded in the same period previous year (Q1 FY25), according to its stock exchange filing. LIC's net premium income also showed steady growth. For the quarter under review, it stood at Rs 1,19,618.41 crore -- marking a 4.7 per cent rise from Rs 1,14,230.24 crore in Q1 FY25.

"During the first quarter of this financial year, our overall market share by First Year Premium Income was 63.51 per cent and we maintained our leadership in both Individual and Group Business," R Doraiswamy, CEO and MD, LIC said.

"Key elements of our strategy like increase in

Non Par share in Individual business, increase in VNB margin, increase in Banca share are fully on track," Doraiswamy added. On a standalone basis, LIC posted a 5 per cent YoY increase in profit, which rose to Rs 10,986.51 crore compared to Rs 10,461.05 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. The company saw strong momentum in its non-participating (non-par) business. The share of non-par APE (annualised premium equivalent) in the individual segment climbed to 30.34 per cent during the quarter, up from 23.94 per cent in the same period previous year.

The individual business non-par APE rose significantly by 32.63 per cent to Rs 2,142 crore, as per its regulatory filing. LIC's group business APE also posted a healthy growth of 16.14 per cent, reaching Rs 5,590 crore. Overall APE for the quarter increased by 9.45 per cent to Rs 12,652 crore.

## Signature Global Expands Land Bank, Reports Q1 FY26 Growth

Mumbai, June 23 (GNS): Real estate developer Signature Global on Thursday reported a sharp 43.71 per cent drop in net profit for the first quarter (Q1) of FY26, coming in at Rs 34.4 crore compared to Rs 61.1 crore in the previous quarter (Q4 FY25). The decline came even as the company witnessed strong growth in operational revenue -- highlighting rising expenses and lower other income during the quarter. The revenue from operations jumped 66.33 per cent to Rs 865.6 crore in Q1 FY26, up from Rs 520.4 crore in the previous quarter, according to its stock exchange filing. However, other income fell by 34.80 per cent to Rs 32.6 crore, down from Rs 50 crore in Q4. As a result, total income stood at Rs 898.3 crore, marking a 57.49 per cent increase from the previous quarter's Rs 570.4 crore, the company said in its regulatory filing.

On the cost front, total ex-

penses surged by 71.30 per cent to Rs 852.6 crore in Q1 FY26, compared to Rs 497.7 crore in Q4. Despite the drop in profit, Signature Global maintained its expansion momentum. In line with its long-term growth strategy, the company acquired 9.96 acres of land in Sohna during Q1, with a development potential of around 0.53 million sq. ft. Commenting on the performance, Pradeep Kumar Aggarwal, Chairman and Whole-Time Director of Signature Global, said, "Building on the strong momentum of FY25, we delivered a robust performance in the first quarter of FY26, with our operational revenue doubling year-on-year. This growth reflects our continued focus on customer satisfaction and the timely delivery of quality homes." He added that the successful launch of the premium project Cloverdale SPR in Sector 71, along the Southern Peripheral Road.

## Govt Allocates Funds Under RCS-UDAN To Boost Regional Airport Infrastructure

New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): The Airports Authority of India (AAI) and public-private partnerships have incurred a capital expenditure (capex) of more than Rs 96,000 crore during FY 2019-20 to FY 2024-25 on the development, upgradation, and modernisation of airports in the country to keep pace with the growth in air traffic, the Parliament was informed on Thursday.

This includes the AAI's share of more than Rs 25,000 crore and the remaining by private airport developers. The AAI incurs capital expenditure mainly from its own resources and in some part from the budgetary grant of Rs 4,500 crore allocated for the revival and upgradation of unserved and underserved airports, heliports, and water aerodromes under Phase I of the Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (RCS-UDAN). Besides, Rs 1,000



crore has been allocated in Phase-II of the RCS-UDAN to revive additional airports, heliports, water aerodromes and advanced landing grounds during the period 2023-24 to 2025-26, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

The private airport operators incur capex from their own sources, he added. The investments have been made in new airports, expansion and modification of existing terminals, addition of new passenger facilities, new terminals, expansion and strength-

ening of existing runways, aprons, and Air Navigation Services (ANS) work like control tower and technical blocks. Based on the reconciled figures for the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) period (FY 2019-20 to 2024-25), capex expenditure by AAI and private airport developers during the last five years has been Rs 11,742 crore (FY 2020-21), Rs 13,294 crore (FY 2021-22), Rs 17,879 crore (FY 2022-23), Rs 19,260 crore (FY 2023-24), and Rs 19,317 crore (FY 2024-25).

The minister further stated that upgradation and

## Meta-IPSOS Report Highlights Social Media's Growing Role In Financial Decisions

New Delhi, June 23 (GNS): Indians are increasingly taking charge of their financial journeys through digital content, communities, and creators, as 81 per cent of consumers use Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp during the discovery phase of financial products, a report said on Thursday.

"Financial advice is no longer confined to expert columns or in-branch consultations — it's happening on Reels, in WhatsApp groups, and through Instagram creators demystifying jargon in under 60 seconds," according to a joint report of Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, and global market research firm IPSOS. According to the report, 81 per cent of consumers use Meta platforms when first discovering financial products, and this influence continues through the evaluation stage (79 per cent) and



remains strong at the final purchase stage (83 per cent). The digital platforms play a key role throughout the decision-making journey for specific products, including loans (86 per cent), investments (84 per cent), insurance (78 per cent), and savings (82 per cent), the report stated.

"Financial planning is integral to the lives of most Indians across income groups. But this process is rapidly evolving, fueled by digital. Whether it's the growing role of Meta platforms in the purchase journey, the increasing influ-

ence of Reels and creators, the rising role of business messaging or the growing number of women who are taking independent financial decisions," said Shweta Bajpai, Director Financial Services, Media, Travel, Real Estate, & Services (India), Meta. Despite being an industry with substantial offline presence and touchpoints, the report shows that 6 out of 8 touchpoints in the purchase journey of financial products are now digital, with 50 per cent of these digital touchpoints attributed to Meta platforms.

# Consultant appointed for valuation of Hyderabad Metro, raising loans for takeover

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) SBICAPS has been appointed as the consultant to conduct a comprehensive study on the valuation of Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-I, the development of Phase-II, and other related matters.

The consultant will study the valuation of Hyderabad Metro Phase-I, raise loans required for takeover, and select lending agencies. Further, a study will be taken up on Metro Rail expansion, construction cost, and financing for Metro Phase-II, it was decided at a meeting that Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had with Union Minister for Urban Development Manohar Lal Khattar in the presence of

Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister's Office (CMO) described as 'productive' the discussions held between the Chief Minister and the Central ministers on the takeover of Metro Rail Phase-I and the proposed Metro Rail Phase-II.

The meeting was held a day after Revanth Reddy and Kishan Reddy met Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

According to the CMO, the Chief Minister apprised the Union Ministers of the hurdles faced in the takeover of Metro Rail Phase-I and the launch of the second phase.

During the meeting on Tuesday, the CM and the



Central ministers arrived at consensus and decided to appoint a consultant.

The state government and the Centre will decide the future course of action based on the report submitted by the consultant. The CM and

Union Ministers agreed to appoint a senior official from the Union government and the Special Chief Secretary of the State Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department as representatives for coordination during the study by the consultant. The two officials will work in coordination to facilitate the speedy completion of the study and official process. On Monday, the Chief Minister, along with Kishan Reddy, met Railway

Minister Vaishnav and discussed the issue relating to the loan from Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) for Metro Rail Phase-I. Revanth Reddy's meeting with Vaishnav in the presence of Kishan Reddy came a

week after the Chief Minister demanded that the Centre release, without further delay, Rs 13,600 crore towards term loan refinancing for the Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase I, acquired by the state government from Larsen & Toubro Limited.

Revanth Reddy also demanded that the Centre clarify whether it will be part of Phase II of the Hyderabad Metro or not. The Chief Minister had stated that a loan of Rs 13,600 crore was secured from a Japanese entity at an interest rate of 4 per cent. This loan needs to be transferred from the IRFC to the state government. "We even submitted a letter securing the Reserve Bank's approval, yet the loan transfer was blocked," he said and blamed Kishan Reddy for stalling the release of funds.

Kishan Reddy accused Revanth Reddy of running false propaganda against him.

On May 25, the state government signed an agreement with the IRFC for a term loan refinancing facility. The state government had, in April, formally acquired Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase I from Larsen & Toubro Limited for Rs 1,461 crore. As per the agreement, the debt of LTMRL, amounting to Rs 13,538.53 crore, as on April 30, which was guaranteed by L&T, has to be refinanced with a guarantee issued by the Telangana government.

## Drama by Revanth, Kishan on Metro Rail: KTR

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao on Tuesday charged Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Union minister G. Kishan Reddy of "jointly staging political dramas" over the Hyderabad Metro Rail while allegedly concealing a massive scam involving its assets worth nearly Rs 30,000 crore.

Rama Rao alleged that Revanth Reddy was attempting to hand over nearly 250 acres of valuable Metro Rail-linked land and assets worth Rs 30,000 crore to members of his family, relatives and close associates. He also accused the Chief Minister of blackmailing L&T Metro Rail officials and "forcing them out of the state" to facilitate the takeover of these assets.

Addressing a meeting of BRS cadres in Serilingampally, Rama Rao claimed that Revanth Reddy had burdened people of Telangana with L&T Metro Rail's debt of nearly Rs 14,000. "The state government is



willing to assume liabilities that should have remained with the private company. This move will push Metro Rail into financial distress," he warned.

He also questioned the Centre's reluctance to approve Metro Rail expansion proposed by the previous BRS government from Lakdikapal to Patancheru. Had the Hyderabad Airport Metro Express project from the Financial District to the airport been approved, it would have been completed by now, significantly reducing traffic congestion for lakhs of commuters, he said.

## Heavy rains inundate few colonies in Ameenpur near Hyderabad

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) Heavy rains early on Tuesday left several low-lying areas in Ameenpur and Beeramguda near Hyderabad inundated. Rainwater entered houses and submerged vehicles in apartment buildings in a few colonies in Ameenpur, a satellite town in neighbouring Sangareddy district.

Residents of Durga Province colony spent a sleepless night as the floodwater entered the houses, damaging household items. Basements of apartment buildings were flooded, submerging cars and elevators. About 30 families in the colony were affected by inundation. They complained that authorities did not come to their rescue. Some people deployed motors to pump out water from apartment buildings.

Heavy rains with gusty winds lashed parts of western and southern Hyderabad and the outskirts, inundating roads and



low-lying areas. Areas like Chandanagar, Miyapur, Serilingampally, Kondapur, Rajendranagar, Shamshabad, Bandlaguda, and Chandrayangutta were affected. According to the Telangana Development Planning Society, Chandanagar in Cyberabad Municipal Corporation received the highest rainfall of 12.8 cm. Ameenpur recorded 12.15 cm, and Serilingampally recorded 11.98 cm of rainfall. Several areas in Rajendranagar, Ramachandrapuram, Serilingampally, Ameenpur, and Patancheru mandals received

moderate rainfall. The downpour resulted in the disruption of the electricity supply in the affected areas. Overnight rains also caused severe waterlogging near Ramdev Baba Mandir in Shivrampally Jagir under Rajendranagar mandal. Police advised commuters travelling from Nehru Zoological Park towards Aramgarh to use the Dr Manmohan Singh Flyover. Disaster Response Force (DRF) and Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAPAA) teams were trying to clear the water.

## Follow your passion, not social pressure; youth must lead nation building: Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) Telangana BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Tuesday urged youngsters to pursue careers based on their interests and passion rather than societal pressure, while calling upon them to play an active role in nation-building and support the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Addressing the NaMo GenZ Conclave at RTC Bhavan in Chikkadpally, Ramchander Rao said students should not blindly opt for engineering or any particular course merely because others were doing so.

He stressed that today's youth have access to unprecedented opportunities through initiatives such as Startup India, Stand-Up India, Skill India, Mudra Yojana and Rozgar Mela, which have enabled many young people to become job creators rather than job seekers. Highlighting achievements in the education sector under the Modi



government, he said the number of medical colleges, AIIMS, IITs, IIITs, universities and higher education institutions had increased significantly over the past decade, creating greater opportunities for students across the country.

He also cited improvements in higher education enrolment, ITI infrastructure and educational loan support under the Vidya Lakshmi Scheme. Emphasising nationalism as a driving force for development, Ramchander Rao said India's growing global stature was the result of strong leadership and a "Nation First" approach. He asserted

that the country's youth believed in democracy, development and nationalism.

The BJP leader also criticised the Congress government in Telangana, alleging that it had failed to fulfil promises made to the youth, including a job calendar, fee reimbursement and unemployment allowance. He accused both the Congress and BRS of failing to create adequate employment opportunities for young people in the state.

Calling upon the youth to join the BJP and fight for their rights, Ramchander Rao said Telangana's future depended on harnessing the strength of its young population and providing them with opportunities to contribute to the state's development. He also accused the Congress of undermining democratic values during the Emergency period and urged youngsters to work towards building a stronger Telangana and a stronger India.

## Seethakka calls for coordinated action to transform Telangana villages into model villages

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) Telangana Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka on Tuesday directed officials to work in close coordination to transform villages across the state into model villages, stating that development could be achieved only through a collective and planned approach.

Chairing a state-level review meeting of the Rural Development and Pan-

chayat Raj Departments at Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan, Seethakka reviewed district-wise progress of development works and welfare schemes with Additional Collectors, ZP CEOs, DRDOs and DPOs

The Minister reviewed the implementation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme, generation of workdays, payment of pending material bills, construction of Anganwadi centres, Mahila Shakti build-



ings and Gram Panchayat offices, water conservation measures, check dams, rural roads and works under the

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana. She also examined sanitation management, house tax collection, utilisation of 15th Finance Commission funds and drinking water supply during the monsoon season.

Unveiling 'Jalasiri' posters aimed at improving groundwater levels in villages, Seethakka said all departments must prepare joint action plans and work together to achieve comprehensive rural development.

She noted that thousands of crores of rupees would be available to villages over the next five years and stressed the need for effective utilisation of funds.

The Minister directed officials to prepare village-level development plans within the next two months and ensure that every scheme directly benefits the public. She warned that strict action would be taken against diversion or misuse of Gram Panchayat funds and em-

phasized that expenditure should strictly follow prescribed norms, including approval through Gram Sabhas. Stating that the department has a workforce of 1.35 lakh personnel and an annual budget of Rs 34,000 crore, Seethakka said proper planning and efficient utilisation of resources would pave the way for a developed Telangana and improved living standards in rural areas, according to an official statement.

## CMTC and GRC centers inaugurated in Mudhol

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) Mudhol MLA Pawar Rama Rao Patel inaugurated CMTC and GRC centers at Mudhol mandal center. Addressing a meeting held on the occasion, he said that the main objective of these centers is to bring the services of the central and state governments closer to the people. Stating that the central and state governments are giv-

ing top priority to women empowerment, the MLA said that women's groups are not just savings groups but have become a force for strengthening the rural economy.

He said that women are playing a key role in the development of families and the development of society by achieving financial self-reliance through self-help groups.

## Collector Priyanka Ala orders swift resolution of public grievances

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) District Collector Dr. Priyanka Ala directed officials to promptly resolve the applications submitted by the public regarding various issues in the district. The Collector received applications during the 'Praja Vani' (public grievance redressal) program held on Monday at the Collectorate conference hall, accompanied by Additional Collectors Kadiravan Palani and Jitender Reddy, District Revenue Officer Narayana, and Housing PD Ashok Chakravarthy.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector ordered officials to examine the applica-

tions submitted by the public department-wise and resolve them quickly. She also directed officials from all departments to attend the 'Praja Vani' program punctually.

She instructed officials to review pending applications from both the 'CM Praja Vani' and department-specific 'Praja Vani' programs, to thoroughly examine the applications received under 'CM Praja Vani', and to take appropriate measures for their immediate resolution. She further advised that any pending applications from the district-level 'Praja Vani' must be resolved within the stipulated timeframe.

## GITAM's Dept. of English & Other Languages offers future-ready programmes in Humanities

Hyderabad, June 23 (GNS) The Department of English and Other Languages at GITAM, a Deemed to be University, Hyderabad, continues to nurture future-ready professionals through its undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes in English, including BA, MA and Ph.D.

Functioning under the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (GSHS), the department provides a vibrant academic environment that blends intellectual rigour, creativity and research excellence, the University said in a release here today. The depart-

ment is supported by a distinguished faculty with extensive teaching and research experience from reputed national and international institutions.

Faculty members specialize in areas such as Indian Writing in English, Print Culture, Translation Studies, Literature of Migration, Digital Humanities, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Marginality and Literature, Sociolinguistics, English Language Education, Stylistics and Phonetics. Students receive a strong foundation in American Literature, British Literature and

Indian Writing in English while also exploring emerging interdisciplinary fields including Digital Humanities, Comparative Literature, Cultural Studies, Applied Linguistics and English Language Education. To enhance learning and academic engagement, the department regularly organizes workshops, conferences, expert lectures and knowledge-sharing sessions featuring eminent scholars and industry practitioners. Graduates from the department are equipped to pursue careers across diverse sectors, including academia

and research, creative writing, translation, media and journalism, content and technical writing, publishing and copyediting, corporate communication and policy research organizations. The department functions under the leadership of Prof. Rathin Roy, Dean, GSHS; Dr. Samuel Tharu, Director, GSHS; and Dr. Sayantan Mondal, Head of the Department of English and Other Languages.

Merit-based scholarships are available for outstanding students based on their performance in the GITAM Admission Test (GAT) 2026.

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