

Kashmir’s dream of peace and prosperity put on hold

Nic Robertson

It is a sad irony that so many of the world’s most politically complex and contested territories are also among its most beautiful. Hiking through Pakistan-administered Kashmir last week, it was easy to see why tourists seek out this region of lush forests, fast water, winding trails and spectacular views of the snow-capped Himalayas. Equally clear was the tension along the so-called Line of Control, where Pakistani and Indian forces eye one another through towering deodar cedar trees from outposts just a few hundred meters apart. Since the partition of India by the departing British in 1947, these two vast nations have fought three wars and numerous border skirmishes over Kashmir, and simmering enmity has often threatened to boil over into conflict.

Even against that background, in recent years, this region has become a vacation hot spot for locals during a period of relative calm and a sustained effort to attract visitors. That atmosphere was brutally shattered three weeks ago, when militants killed 26 people, mostly Indian tourists, in the deadliest attack on Indian territory since the 2008 Mumbai massacre.

Survivors said the gunmen accused some of the victims of supporting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose Hindu-



nationalist government stripped Muslim-majority Kashmir of its previous autonomy in 2019 — to angry protests. Kashmir has long been home to extremist groups, and other terrifying accounts told of women and children being separated from their male family members, with some of those men spared by their attackers only if they were able to recite verses from the Qur’an.

Almost immediately, India accused Pakistan of being behind the massacre. Pakistan, which has long been labeled a refuge for militant outfits, vigorously denied the claims, saying instead that it shut down such groups two decades ago and today fights a raging Islamist insurgency on its western border.

In the aftermath, Kash-

mir reverted to an all-too-familiar routine of watching and waiting, amid fear and, in some cases, profound grief. We met Malik Khadim, a farmer who lives in the village of Sarjiwar, on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control. He trembled as he choked back tears, his gaunt, weather-beaten cheeks betraying both the hardships of life in this picturesque but remote and impoverished region and the deep sadness of a man coming to terms with the death of a loved one, in this case his brother.

Malik Farouk was one of two Pakistanis shot dead by Indian forces just across the border the day after the massacre. Indian officials said the two men were planning a terror attack. Khadim instead says his brother was, like him,

a simple farmer, attempting to retrieve cattle that had strayed across the unmarked, unfenced border. Regardless, his death would be one of many in this latest round of conflict.

Both words and actions from officials in New Delhi and Islamabad took on a familiar pattern following the attacks. Diplomats and civilians were expelled from both countries, access to airspace suspended. India spoke angrily of holding the terrorists, and Pakistan, to account; for its part, Pakistan vowed to respond to any attack on its territory as a matter of “military doctrine.” Then, last Wednesday, tension became action. India launched strikes on what it called “terrorist” targets in both Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, killing 31 people,

according to Pakistani officials. Pakistan responded by shelling the Indian side of the Line of Control, killing at least 12 people, Indian officials said. Malik Khadim’s village was one of those caught up in the torrent of cross-border shell fire.

According to a senior Pakistani security source, a raging battle between Indian and Pakistani air forces ensued for over an hour. The source told CNN the clash was one of the “largest and longest in recent aviation history,” involving 125 fighter jets, with missile exchanges happening at distances sometimes greater than 160 km, and neither side’s aircraft actually crossing the Line of Control. CNN was unable to independently confirm the account, nor could it confirm Pakistan’s claims to have shot down five Indian fighter jets, although US and French sources have confirmed at least one Indian jet was downed. Drone and missile attacks have been exchanged and rhetoric from both sides remains bellicose. I have reported on conflict between India and Pakistan here before, about 26 years ago, during the Kargil War. Back then, at least 1,000 soldiers died in a months-long series of battles. The stalemate and uneasy truce reached at that episode’s end reflected the fundamental realities of Kashmir’s often harsh environment.

Food wastage an obstacle to achieving sustainability goals

Zaid M. Belbagi

The Gulf states’ booming tourism industries and internationalized economies have drawn people from across the globe in recent years. Combined with a growing citizenry, this movement has led to a regional population of more than 57 million. The opportunity here is that these additional human resources are driving the region’s economic growth. But the challenge is that this growing population is exerting additional pressures on food supply in the region.

Food consumption in the Gulf is expected to rise by approximately 2.8 percent annually to reach 56.2 million tonnes in 2027. Tourism and population growth are the primary drivers. States in the region have attracted record-breaking numbers of tourists in recent years, going beyond traditional destinations like Dubai and Doha to now also include Riyadh and other Gulf cities. The consequent surge in resorts, hotels and innovative culinary experiences have boosted overall food production and consumption.

But tourists alone are not driving this growth. The Gulf population boasts rising disposable incomes and favorable socioeconomic conditions. The lifestyle in high-income societies involves frequent spending on food experiences due to both



personal preference and social commitments. Another driver of food consumption is the rapid expansion of the food services and delivery sector, offering the Gulf consumer easy access to diverse cuisines. The growing popularity of food delivery services like Getir, Uber Eats and Deliveroo have transformed how people consume and think about food. This cosmopolitan population, with its rising wealth and outgoing lifestyle, has ushered in an advanced gastronomic culture in the region. More than 50 percent of the Gulf population is under 25 years of age and this young population is driving the region’s cultural revolution. The increase in food consumption has provided stimulus to various economic sectors and increased imports of essential food products. However, with more food comes more wastage — and the numbers are beginning to

alarm policymakers and environmental experts alike.

On average, food wastage in the Gulf Cooperation Council is approximately 150 kg per person per year, 14 percent higher than the global average of 132 kg. In Saudi Arabia alone, 4 million tonnes of food is wasted annually. This is not just a domestic issue for the region. Food is wasted along the entire supply chain, during import, delivery, storage and in restaurants. As the GCC states rely heavily on imported goods, about 18 million tonnes, or a third of all imported food, ends up in landfill.

But a significant proportion of food wastage takes place at the consumer level. Food is a central element of the Arab culture of hospitality. In Arab homes, there is a tendency toward overpreparation and abundance. Generosity is deeply rooted in the Arab and Is-

lamic cultures and hosts often prepare large quantities of food for guests. This problem is particularly pronounced during Ramadan. In this period, food wastage is even higher, with up to half of prepared food being discarded. Bahrain, for example, produces more than 400 tonnes of food waste daily during Ramadan, while in Saudi Arabia wastage during Ramadan reaches 4,500 tonnes per day.

As people in the region are increasingly entering the public sphere, the Gulf is also seeing a surge in dining-out culture. Full-service restaurants held 47 percent of the market share in 2024. This translates into high levels of daily food production, often exceeding the actual demand. In the UAE, 38 percent of food in the hospitality sector is wasted. The growing popularity of buffets, particularly preva-

lent in luxury hotels and resorts, has contributed significantly to this challenge, with large amounts of freshly prepared food discarded each day. The irony of overreliance on food imports and high levels of food wastage is not missed by anyone. Economically, high wastage increases the burden on national budgets due to the high cost of food imports and waste management. As an example, food waste in the UAE costs the country more than \$3.5 billion annually. In addition, the environmental impact of this exercise is alarming. Wasted food means wasted water, energy, transportation and plastic packaging, all of which contribute to avoidable carbon emissions. This is not all. The accumulation of food waste in landfill is also connected to the release of methane into the environment.

The GCC states are racing ahead in sustainability investments, climate change mitigation and addressing the challenges of water scarcity and rising temperatures. Their innovative efforts in developing irrigation systems, water desalination technologies and agricultural systems have received international acclaim. Yet, high food wastage remains a fundamental obstacle to achieving the sustainable development that all Gulf national visions aspire for.

Canada's Car-nama: Modi invite marks strategic shift

The new Canadian Government has brought with it a summer of hope. The Indo-Canadian troubles of last year seem to be melting into the past. Though not out of the woods yet, both camps are making the right noises. Carney’s G7 invitation to India’s PM Narendra Modi has brought about mixed reactions across Canada, with Poillievre accepting that India was a necessary invitee and the Khalistani supporters’ meltdown. This is the Canada’s CAR-NAMA moment for Carney and Narendra Modi (Namo) which could help turn the page on Indo-Canadian relationships. Carnama in Hindi translates to miracle or brave act. Mark Carney’s Liberal Government has been eager to distance itself from Trudeau’s image and policies, whilst silently working back channels with global players, like India. Anita Anand and Dr S Jaishankar’s phone diplomacy facilitated Modi’s acceptance for the G-7 after other partners felt it imperative for India to be present. India and Canada have moved a step further, with an intelligence-sharing understanding, to combat the rising threat of international crime and extremism. This came out of the left field and has truly set the cat amongst the pigeons in Canada, in the wake of Justin Trudeau’s allegations against India last year. Canada’s headache has been the US tariffs against Canadian exports to the USA, making all things Canadian, more expensive. This in turn has driven prices up, affected jobs, and brought in higher inflation in Canada.

It is rumoured that a back-channel trade deal between India and Canada may not be far away, signalling Canada’s return as an Indian frontline trading partner, not merely as America’s 51st state, but as a proud nation rich in heritage and the world’s largest natural resources. India is an insatiable consumer of minerals, fuels, pulses, fertilisers, steel, pearls & precious stones, oil & gas, and nuclear fuel. India’s earliest nuclear reactors were built with Canada’s help in the early 1970s and this could kickstart a new wave of mini-reactor technology across India. There are also products like lumber, organic chemicals, plastics and foreign students across Canada. According to the COMTRADE database on international trade, India’s imports from Canada were US \$6.26 Billion during 2024, this was as against 7.5 billion in 2023 when the Trudeau allegations hit trade. Given the jump from US 2.7 billion in 2022 to US\$ 7.5 billion in 2023, there is ample scope to increase that number to US\$10 billion in the coming years by 2026/2027.

As per an Agriculture Canada report, in 2022, India imported Can \$35.4 billion worth of processed food and beverages, with Canada supplying only Can \$20.9 million (0.1 per cent) of that total. There is a case for Canada to increase that by 10x within the next year or two. India’s largest imports from the world were palm oil, soya bean oil, and sunflower oil, and Canada’s share was negligible or non-existent. Defence, Nuclear, automobile and housing are just a few of the sectors for Indo-Canadian cooperation, with India being one of the major QUAD players in the Pacific security region. With the Nijjar case locked into the Canadian legal system, the gaze now moves to India’s concerns about Khalistani terror within Canada, and their transnational terror and extortion plots in India. Car-Nama will have to learn to hyphenate their relationships with the USA, as both nations India and Canada, learn to deal with the American tariffs and maintain their happy positions of strength in the relationship. This is a moment of reckoning for the Mark Carney Government to seize the initiative and he will find Modi’s India a very willing ally.

Reimagining higher education

As India marches toward the centenary of its independence in 2047, the vision of Viksit Bharat a self-reliant, inclusive, and developed nation places education at the very heart of its transformation. Higher education is not merely an instrument for economic growth but a vehicle for intellectual evolution, cultural continuity, and moral clarity. It must not only equip youth with market-ready skills but also shape them into conscious citizens, ethical leaders, and visionary thinkers. The dream of a developed India extends far beyond infrastructure or GDP — it rests on harnessing the true wealth of the nation: its people. To unlock this potential, we need a complete reimagining of the spirit, structure, and purpose of education — an ecosystem that encourages critical thinking, creativity, life skills, global perspectives, and deeply rooted human values. A nation’s future is scripted in its classrooms. For a country that boasts the world’s largest youth population, education is not a sector — it is the soul of its progress. It bridges the gap between aspiration and achievement, between demographic potential and democratic excellence. As such, education must receive central focus in policy, investment, and innovation. While India’s premier institutions are gaining global recognition, there remains an urgent need to universalise quality education, particularly in rural and underserved regions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, with its goal to raise the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to 50 per cent by 2035, marks a pivotal step. Yet access alone is not the destination; excellence must accompany expansion. Every learner, regardless of socioeconomic or geographic background, must have a genuine opportunity to realise their full potential. This demands a flexible and diverse academic architecture — undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that are adaptable, interdisciplinary, and outcome-oriented. The emphasis must shift from traditional, input-heavy models to a learner-centred framework focusing on real-world applicability, innovation, and holistic development. In today’s knowledge-driven world, critical thinking is not a luxury — it is a necessity. Our education system must evolve from rote memorisation to nurturing analytical minds. Students should be encouraged not only to answer questions but to question answers. The university space must transform into a zone of inquiry, dialogue, and debate where every discipline encourages exploration and dissent. Pedagogies must promote problem-solving, project-based learning,

, interdisciplinary research, and Socratic questioning. In such an environment, curiosity becomes the compass and imagination, the engine. True innovation arises when science intersects with ethics and when technology blends with aesthetics. Creativity, too, must be seen not as a niche skill, but as central to national progress. As India aspires to lead in start-ups and innovation, we must instill creative confidence in our students.

Traditional classroom settings — characterised by one-way lectures and passive learning — are increasingly losing relevance for Gen Z learners. Today’s students are disengaged by rigid formats and static curricula. Their dwindling attention spans demand immersive, skill-based, and participatory learning methods. Modern students thrive in experiential learning ecosystems — where they learn through case studies, simulations, field visits, internships, classroom debates, and hands-on projects. They connect better when presented with real-life scenarios before abstract theories. Institutions should champion flipped classrooms, technology-enabled learning, and hybrid pedagogies to replace conventional “chalk-and-talk” models. Resources and training for educators are crucial to foster such dynamic, engaging experiences. In an era of constant disruption, technical prowess is necessary — but not sufficient. An educated individual must be equipped to navigate life with resilience, integrity, and empathy. Our higher education system must balance domain expertise with life literacy — the capacity to understand and manage one’s emotions, collaborate effectively, and act responsibly. Skills like emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, envi-

Bhupender Yadav Stresses Collective Action for Big Cat Conservation



New Delhi, July 14 (GNS): The first Assembly of International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), as envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for conservation of big cats in range countries, was held in New Delhi, today. Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav presided over the meeting. The Assembly, which is apex body of the IBCA, was attended by Ministerial delegation from 9 countries, viz., Kingdom of Bhutan, Kingdom of Cambodia, Kingdom of Eswatini, Republic of Guinea, Republic of India, Republic of Liberia, Republic

of Suriname, Federal Republic of Somalia and Republic of Kazakhstan.

In his address, Shri Yadav said that led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has emerged as a global leader in the wildlife conservation, demonstrating notable successes over the past decade. He called upon the Big Cat range countries to actively engage and collaborate in the initiatives and programmes of the IBCA. He emphasized the importance of collective action to advance the conservation and protection of the seven major big cat species and their natural habitats and assist

in securing our ecological future and mitigate adverse effects of climate change.

The Assembly unanimously endorsed Shri Bhupender Yadav as the President of the IBCA. The Assembly also endorsed Shri S.P. Yadav as the Director General of IBCA. Created by the Government of India, the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) is a coalition of 95 range countries with a mandate for conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma.

The Assembly endorsed the proceedings of the first International Steering Com-

mittee meeting of IBCA, which was held in April 2024, ratified the Headquarters Agreement signed by IBCA with Republic of India, approved the Workplan, Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and the manual of Staff and financial regulations of the IBCA. These will serve as the guiding foundation for the effective governance, operations, and collaborative initiatives of the International Big Cat Alliance.

The ratification of the Headquarter Agreement signed by IBCA with Republic of India, will enable the IBCA to establish its Headquarters and such other offices in the

Host Country as may be necessary to fully and efficiently discharge its official functions and programmes and the Government recognizes the International legal personality of the IBCA and the IBCA Secretariat.

The IBCA was established by Government of India, through the nodal organisation viz. National Tiger Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change vide order dated 12.3.2024. The primary objective of IBCA is to facilitate collaboration and synergy amongst range countries and other stakeholders, consolidating successful

conservation practices and expertise to achieve a common goal of conservation of big cats at global level. This unified approach, bolstered by financial support, aims to boost the biodiversity conservation agenda, halt the decline in big cat populations, and conserve our ecology. During the meeting, the dignitaries from the participating countries also showed their commitment for actively working for achieving the goals of IBCA for conservation of these magnificent species and work wholeheartedly for securing our ecological future and save the biodiversity.

Indian startups raise \$184.75 mn this week

New Delhi, July 14 (GNS): Indian startups continued to attract investor interest as 20 startups raised around \$184.75 million in funding this week. The deals included five growth-stage and 14 early-stage startups, while one startup chose not to disclose its funding details.

Seed funding dominated the funding types this week, with several startups raising capital in their early journey. Other rounds included Series A, pre-seed, pre-Series A, and even late-stage funding rounds like Series G. The startup activity was also spread across cities. Bengaluru led with nine deals, followed by Delhi-NCR with five. Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai also saw their startups securing investments. Sector-wise, fintech startups emerged at the top with six funding deals.

Deeptech and OTT sectors followed with two deals each, while other sectors such as aerospace, foodtech,

e-commerce, and sportstech also saw positive movement.

Among the key highlights of the week was fintech unicorn CRED, led by Kunal Shah, which secured \$72 million from investors, including Lathe Investment, RTP Global, Sofina Ventures, and QED Innovation Labs.

FlexiLoans, a fintech platform focused on MSMEs, also raised \$44 million in its Series C round, while EV component startup Vecmicon raised a total of \$18 million in its Series A round, with \$8 million coming in this week through both primary and secondary transactions. Other notable deals came from the popular QSR chain 'Wow! Momo' and drone technology startup Garuda Aerospace, both of which received fresh investments. On the early-stage front, 13 startups raised a total of \$49.75 million. The biggest among them was aerospace and defence startup Sanlayan Technologies.

TRAI Launches Pilot Project for Digital Consent Management in Partnership with RBI and Banks

New Delhi, July 14 (GNS): The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has observed that a large number of spam complaints are made by the customers against the business entities from whom the consumers have earlier purchased goods or services. On investigation, such business entities often claim that they possess the consent of the consumer for receiving commercial calls and messages.

Under the regulatory framework defined by the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCPR), 2018, an entity can make commercial communications to a consumer irrespective of his/her Do Not Disturb (DND) preferences provided the entity has taken explicit consent from the consumer. However, in many cases, these consents were collected through offline or unverifiable means, making it extremely difficult to ascertain their validity



and genuineness. In several instances, consumers report that their mobile numbers have been acquired by the entities for this purpose through misrepresentation, deception, or unauthorized data-sharing practices.

TRAI has undertaken several innovative regulatory measures in recent years to curb such practices. These include allowing consumers to register complaints against unregistered telemarketers (UTMs) even without prior DND registration, and initiating

large-scale disconnection of telecom resources being misused by the entities for spamming activities. However, verification of consent for commercial communication citing offline consent of consumer, remains a formidable challenge.

To address the issue, the regulations provide for acquiring consent digitally by the entities and registering them in a secure and interoperable digital consent registry maintained by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) for easy verification

of consents while commercial communication is made to the consumers. However, for successful operation of this consent registration framework, onboarding of entities sending commercial communications is a necessary requirement.

Accordingly, to begin the national roll-out, TRAI has launched a Pilot Project in coordination with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) involving select banks and has issued a Direction on 13th June, 2025, to all the Telecom Service Providers, mandating them to pilot this framework in collaboration with banks. Given the sensitivity of banking transactions and cases of financial frauds through spam calls, the banking sector has been prioritized for the first phase of implementation. This Pilot, running under a Regulatory Sandbox framework, will validate the operational, technical, and regulatory aspects of the enhanced.

India Joins Global Elite for Rinderpest Containment; ICAR-NIHSAD Named Category A Facility

New Delhi, July 14 (GNS): India has achieved a significant milestone in the realm of global animal health and biosecurity with the recognition of the ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, as a Category A Rinderpest Holding Facility (RHF) by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The announcement was made during the 92nd General Session of the WOA held in Paris on 29th May 2025, where Ms. Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD) under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and India's WOA Delegate, was formally presented with the certificate of designation by the Director General and President of WOA.

Rinderpest, once known as “cattle plague,” was one of the



most destructive livestock diseases in history before its global eradication in 2011. However, Rinderpest Virus-Containing Material (RVCM) still remains in a few laboratories, posing potential risks if released. To preserve global freedom from the disease, FAO and WOA have implemented strict measures to limit the storage of RVCM to a small number of high-security laboratories worldwide. In alignment with this global initiative, India had designated ICAR-NIHSAD, a high-containment BSL-3 facility and WOA reference labora-

tory for avian influenza, as its national repository for RVCM back in 2012.

India formally submitted its application for RHF status in 2019. A joint inspection of ICAR-NIHSAD was conducted in March 2025 by international experts appointed by FAO and WOA. Following a comprehensive evaluation, the institute has now been officially approved as a Category A RHF for a one-year term, in recognition of its robust biosafety protocols, effective inventory management, and state of readiness for emergency situations.

This recognition places India among a distinguished group of only six facilities worldwide entrusted with the critical responsibility of securely holding rinderpest virus material. It reinforces India's pivotal role in global animal health, biosecurity, and the One Health framework. “India's role in the eradication of rinderpest was historic. Today, its role in preserving that legacy is equally vital. This recognition is not just about containment; it is about responsibility and readiness” remarked Ms. Alka Upadhyaya.

“70% of WHO's total vaccines are sourced from India; 14% of generics imported by the US come from India”

New Delhi, July 14 (GNS): Union Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers, Smt. Anupriya Patel, delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session of the Second Policymakers' Forum organised by Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), here today. Aimed at promoting the recognition of the Indian Pharmacopoeia and collaboration in India's flagship affordable medicines initiative—the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), the Forum is being organized by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in association with the Ministry of External Affairs. An international delegation of policymakers and drug regulators from 24 countries is participating in the forum. The event was also attended by Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Smt. Punya Salila Srivastava; Secretary (South),



Ministry of External Affairs, Dr. Neena Malhotra; Drug Controller General of India and Secretary-cum-Scientific Director, IPC, Dr. Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi. The Forum has brought together policymakers and senior drug regulatory officials from 22 countries (Liberia, Togo, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Rwanda, Lesotho, Eswatini, Kenya, Botswana, Ethiopia, Comoros, Seychelles, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, Zimbabwe,

St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Cuba, Barbados, and Chile), along with two delegates from the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)- Jamaica and Canada, reaffirming India's position as a valued and trusted partner in the realm of global health. This engagement builds on the momentum generated by the First Policymakers' Forum held in August 2024, which resulted in several participating countries formally recognizing the In-

Indian Pharmacopoeia as a book of standards for drugs. The growing international interest in aligning with India's regulatory frameworks reflects the credibility and scientific rigour of the Indian Pharmacopoeia, as well as India's proactive role in advancing global public health objectives.

In her keynote address, Smt. Patel emphasized India's commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality-assured medicines and stressed the importance of

regulatory harmonization in facilitating global health equity. She also highlighted that “under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has emerged as a global hub for affordable healthcare solutions and continues to deepen its partnerships with nations through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and health diplomacy.”

Underlining the importance of the Jan Aushadi Kendras, Smt. Patel stated

that “our Jan Aushadhi Kendras are the shining examples of India's commitment to provide quality and affordable medicines to all our citizens. Jan Aushadhi has been one of the most powerful instruments of bringing down the out-of-pocket expenditure of our citizens.” Highlighting India's strides made in the direction of providing vaccines, Smt. Patel stated that “India continues to be a leading supplier of vaccines. As much as 70% of

WHO's total vaccines are sourced from India.” She further emphasized that “during the COVID-19 pandemic, India started the Vaccine Maitri initiative and supplied vaccines to more than 100 friendly countries which depicts India's deep sense of responsibility towards global health and its intention of helping friendly countries in the times of distress.”

Patel also added that “India continues to be a leader in drug manufacturing, especially when it comes to the generic medicines. 14% of generics imported by the US come from India while India also has the maximum number of US FDA (Food and Drug Administration) recognized drug manufacturing plants.” She further underlined that “70% of our generics are exported to the highly regulated markets and our pharmacopeial regulations are regularly visited to meet the global benchmarks.”

Patel further stated that “we have retained the

WHO's Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT) framework, Maturity Level 3 (ML3) status which reflects the robustness of India's regulatory framework. Presently, 15 countries in the world recognise Indian Pharmacopoeia as a book of standards for drugs, Cuba recently becoming the 15th country to recognise the Indian Pharmacopoeia.” She added that “it is not just a regulatory step, but a move towards bringing more alignment in the quality standards, expanding access to safe and effective drugs and making trade in pharmaceuticals smoother than ever before.”

Patel reaffirmed that “we are committed to helping our partner countries by way of communicating and planning” and “hope to continue to work together to advance the regulatory collaboration and promote the recognition of the pharmacopeial standards so that we can strive fast towards the shared goal of ‘Health for All.’”

Mandaviya inaugurates 15th BRICS trade union forum in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 14 (GNS): Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya, on Tuesday inaugurated the 15th BRICS Trade Union Forum (TUF) Summit 2026 here, calling for building a worker-centric global order where technological advancement is guided by social justice, responsible innovation and human dignity.

Addressing delegates from BRICS countries at the inaugural session, the Union Minister said that India's BRICS Presidency theme, "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability", reflects the country's commitment to ensuring that the future of work remains inclusive, equitable and centred on the welfare of workers. Union Minister

Mandaviya highlighted that India's social protection coverage has increased from 19 per cent in 2015 to 64.3 per cent of the total population in 2025, covering nearly 940 million people, while preliminary estimates for 2026 indicate that the coverage has crossed one billion citizens. On employment generation, the Union Minister said that nearly 170 million employment opportunities have been created in the last decade.

He added that the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana aims to create 35 million formal sector jobs over the next two years through employment-linked incentives. Union Minister Mandaviya said that trade unions have played an important role in safeguarding



workers' rights, strengthening industrial harmony and ensuring that economic progress is accompanied by social justice.

He added that India remains committed to the vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka

Vikas" under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where economic growth and workers' welfare are complementary pillars of sustainable development.

Highlighting the Union government's labour re-

forms, the Union Minister said the Four Labour Codes have consolidated 29 labour laws into a simplified framework while strengthening workers' rights. The reforms provide for universal minimum wages, appointment

letters, improved occupational safety and health, digital compliance systems and, for the first time, formal recognition of gig and platform workers. Union Minister Mandaviya said that India has leveraged digital public

infrastructure to transform labour governance.

He told that the e-Shram portal has registered more than 317 million unorganised workers, enabling them to access various welfare schemes, while the National Career Service Portal connects job seekers, employers, career centres and training providers through a nationwide digital employment platform. Referring to India's social security architecture, the Union Minister said the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), with more than 80 million active members and eight million pensioners, is among the world's largest social security organisations.

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) provides healthcare and so-

cial security benefits to more than 150 million insured persons and their dependants. He added that continuous reforms in EPFO and ESIC have expanded coverage, simplified procedures and improved service delivery.

Union Minister Mandaviya noted that the BRICS countries together represent nearly half of humanity and one of the world's largest labour forces. He said there is considerable scope for enhanced cooperation in areas such as social security, labour mobility, skill development, AI governance and decent work, and expressed confidence that the recommendations emerging from the forum would contribute to the forthcoming BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting.

CM Revanth Reddy Pushes Centre on Warangal, Adilabad Airports



Hyderabad, July 14 (GNS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy urged Union Minister for Civil Aviation Rammohan Naidu to construct the proposed airports at Warangal (Mamnoon) and Adilabad in accordance with international standards. The CM highlighted the strategic and commercial advantages offered by the Warangal and Adilabad airport locations.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met Union Minister Rammohan Naidu on Tuesday at Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan, the Civil Aviation Ministry's office in Delhi. During the meeting, he held extensive discussions with the Union Minister regarding the Warangal airport project. The CM noted that Warangal is a key city, well-connected by rail and road networks and home to the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park, the Kazipet Coach Factory, and other industries. The Chief Minister informed Union Minister Rammohan Naidu that Wa-

rangal would be developed further as an industrial hub in the coming days.

He stated that Warangal would serve as a central hub for the districts of the erstwhile Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, and Khammam regions, as well as Nalgonda, in North Telangana. He requested the provision of MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul), air cargo, and hangar facilities at the Warangal airport. Noting that land acquisition has already been completed, he urged the Minister to invite tenders and commence the works. He requested that the airport construction be completed and ready for inauguration by June 2, 2028. During the meeting, the Union Minister and the Chief Minister discussed the designs for the Warangal airport. The Chief Minister expressed the view that, given Warangal's rich heritage, the designs should reflect Kakatiya history and culture;

Union Minister Rammohan Naidu responded positively to this suggestion.

The Chief Minister also requested Union Minister Rammohan Naidu to establish a civil airport alongside the existing defense-run airport in Adilabad. He assured the Minister that the necessary land for both airports would be acquired and handed over. He called for the establishment of MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul), air cargo, and hangar facilities at the Adilabad airport, similar to those planned for the Warangal airport. The Chief Minister also requested the setting up of Flight Training Organizations (FTOs) at both the Warangal and Adilabad airports. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy suggested to Union Minister Rammohan Naidu that the feasibility of operating seaplanes between Hussain Sagar and the Prakasam Barrage be examined.

Suresh Gopi Promotes Swachhta, Tree Plantation in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 14 (GNS): The Union Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri Suresh Gopi, today called upon students to become ambassadors of cleanliness and environmental protection, stating that cleanliness is not merely a campaign but a culture rooted in personal responsibility and Jan Bhagidari (people's participation).

The Minister was addressing a Swachhta Pakhwada programme organised jointly by the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) at the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Centre for Excellence, Hyderabad. Gopi said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi,



the Swachh Bharat Mission has transformed cleanliness into a nationwide people's movement. He said every clean classroom, litter-free street and green campus reflects the character of responsible citizens and contributes to nation-building. Participating in the tree plan-

tation drive under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, the Minister urged students to nurture every sapling with care.

He said trees are among the greatest gifts that can be offered to future generations as they provide clean air, shade, biodiversity and a healthier

environment. He encouraged every family to plant and nurture a tree, thereby contributing to a greener Telangana and a greener India. The Minister said the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is committed not only to ensuring India's energy security but also to promot-

ing sustainable development and social welfare.

Appreciating the collaborative efforts of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), along with Reliance Industries Limited and Nayara Energy, he said such initiatives demonstrate the commitment of the energy sector towards nation-building beyond its core responsibilities. Urging students to uphold discipline, compassion, integrity and respect for nature, Shri Gopi said excellence is reflected not only in academic performance but also in responsible citizenship.

Ponguleti Announces 1 Lakh Indiramma LIG Houses for QUAR

Hyderabad, July 14 (GNS): State Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations, Sri Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, stated that the people's government—which has been fulfilling the dream of home ownership for poor families in rural areas through 'Indiramma' houses—is now taking another historic step with the same resolve to realize the housing dreams of the poor in the QUAR (Hyderabad Urban Agglomeration) area. He mentioned that, in line with the vision of Honorable Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, one lakh LIG (Low-Income Group) 'Indiramma' houses will be constructed in the QUAR area in a phased manner, and ad-



ministrative sanctions for this initiative have already been granted. On Tuesday, the Minister held a review meeting with Housing Department officials at his Secretariat office regarding the LIG 'Indiramma' housing project for the QUAR area. During the meeting, he announced that the 'Indi-

ramma LIG Housing' scheme for the QUAR area would be launched on the 20th of this month. Ministers in-charge of Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts, Mr. Ponnamp Prabha-kar and Mr. Duddilla Sridhar Babu, along with Hyderabad District Minister Mr. Mohammed Azharuddin, explained

that they would announce the full guidelines for the scheme, covering aspects such as modalities, the application process, eligibility criteria, the tendering process, and implementation procedures.

They stated that the government is committed to constructing one lakh 'Indiram-

ma LIG' (Low-Income Group) houses under this initiative during the 2026-27 financial year. In the first phase, as a pilot project, a minimum of 500 houses would be built in each constituency, with the number going up to 1,000 where local conditions require it.

They noted that the previous government had constructed double-bedroom houses haphazardly—30 to 40 kilometers away from Hyderabad city—without proper foresight; consequently, many people were unable to live there due to concerns that their livelihoods would be disrupted and they would lose access to jobs and employment opportunities.

CPI urges expert panel on Kaleshwaram, asks parties to stop political slugfest

Hyderabad, July 14 (GNS): CPI Telangana State Secretary and MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao on Tuesday criticised both the ruling Congress and the opposition BRS for indulging in personal attacks instead of addressing farmers' irrigation concerns, and demanded the constitution of a high-level expert committee to take a final call on the Kaleshwaram project.

Addressing a press conference at the CPI state headquarters, Makhdoom Bhavan, along with Telangana Rythu Sangham General Secretary Pashya Padma and CPI State Assistant Secretary E.T. Narasimha, Sambasiva Rao said a committee comprising irrigation engineers,



experts from the union Ministry of Water Resources, the Central Water Commission (CWC), and nominees of political parties should comprehensively assess the project and recommend the future course of action.

He urged both the Centre and the State government to stop politicising the issue and instead focus on ensuring irrigation water to farmers, particularly in view of the rainfall

deficit caused by the El Niño effect. He alleged that despite the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) raising concerns over the project nearly three years ago, neither govt had taken timely action to resolve the issue. The CPI leader also called for the speedy completion of pending irrigation projects, including the Nettekoppa, Kalwakurthy, Bhima and Sitarama projects, saying they could provide relief to farmers with mini-

mal additional investment. Welcoming the allocation of the Tadicherla-2 coal block to Singareni, Sambasiva Rao urged the Centre to ensure that all coal blocks in the Singareni region are allotted to the public sector company.

He also appealed to the Election Commission to extend the ongoing voter registration drive by three months, citing concerns that lakhs of eligible voters could be left out. Speaking on the occasion, Pashya Padma demanded that the NDSA-appointed expert committee submit its report on the Kaleshwaram project at the earliest and urged the Centre to accord national project status to the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme.



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EDITOR, PRINTER, PUBLISHER & OWNER by MOHD ATHER RAHEEM PUBLISHED From FALAKNUMA NEWS English Daily 19-4-276/5/A, Flat No.502. 5th Floor, Lake view Residency, Baquar Nagar, BNK Colony, MiralamTank, Hyderabad 500 064. Printed at RIYAZ PRINTING PRESS. #22-8-161 Behind Nayaab Hotel Chatta Bazar, Hyderabad - 500002Telangana. Head Office Contact No.0404537318, www.falaknumanews.in