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Rahul Gandhi leads INDIA Bloc candlelight vigil over NEET Paper Leak



New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): The Opposition's protests against the alleged NEET exam paper leak escalated in the capital on Thursday as Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and MPs from the INDIA bloc staged a symbolic demonstration at Gandhi Smriti on Tees January Marg.

The protest was held in solidarity with students who died by suicide following the controversy and those injured during recent demonstrations. Rahul Gandhi, dressed in his trademark white t shirt, carried the national flag and a copy of the Constitution, while fellow MPs illuminated the evening with mobile flashlights, creating a candlelight vigil effect.

The gathering sought to highlight what the Opposition described as the government's failure to safeguard the future of young aspirants.

Earlier in the day, barricades were erected outside Gandhi's residence after Opposition MPs assembled there for a meeting. Following the discussions, Gandhi announced their plan to march to Gandhi Smriti, located less than a kilometre away. Three buses

transported Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and other lawmakers to the site, where they joined the vigil.

"Right now, MPs and leaders of the INDIA alliance are peacefully heading to Gandhi Smriti on Tees January Marg. We go to remember the students we lost, the children driven to take their own lives after the NEET paper leak. We go to stand with the students who lie injured today, beaten for peacefully demanding justice and accountability," Gandhi declared. He later told reporters that their initial plan to hold the vigil at India Gate was denied by police authorities. Their buses were briefly blocked before being allowed to proceed to Gandhi Smriti. Sharing a video from inside one of the buses, Gandhi posted: "No one can stop us from standing with the students of India."

The Opposition has vowed to continue pressing for accountability, demanding that the government take responsibility for the alleged leak and the subsequent unrest. The protests mark a significant escalation in the political battle over exam integrity, student safety and public trust in national institutions.

CBI Clears Sanjeev Mukhiya in NEET-UG Paper Leak Case

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday said it did not find any evidence to establish the involvement of Sanjeev Kumar, alias Sanjeev Mukhiya, in the theft or distribution of the NEET-UG 2024 question paper. The paper leak was exposed by the Bihar Police on May 5, 2024. During the investigation, the police suspected Mukhiya to be the kingpin in the case and subsequently named him in the FIR. Mukhiya was reportedly also involved in other cases of paper leaks.

He remained at large for a long time and was later arrested in connection with other cases. In the meantime, the CBI took over the NEET paper leak case and later got his custody. In a statement, the

agency said, "During the investigation, the CBI identified each and every person involved in the theft and onward distribution of the stolen question paper, as also each and every candidate who benefited from it. Multiple chargesheets were filed against 45 persons before the jurisdictional court in Patna. The CBI did not come across any evidence to establish the involvement of Sanjeev Kumar, alias Sanjeev Mukhiya, in the case."

It said that since no evidence was found against Mukhiya, it did not file a chargesheet against him. He subsequently got bail. "Mukhiya remained in judicial custody after getting bail in the CBI case, as he is an accused in certain other cases being investigated by the Bihar Police," it said.

PM Modi announces fast-track courts for Paper Leak Cases

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced that the government will establish fast-track courts to ensure the speedy trial of paper leak cases, asserting that safeguarding the interests and future of students remains the government's highest priority and warning that those responsible for compromising the future of the country's youth "will not be spared."

In a post on social media platform X, the Prime Minister said the decision was aimed at ensuring swift justice and stringent punishment for those involved in

examination paper leaks, which have triggered widespread concern over the integrity of competitive examinations and recruitment tests. "Nothing is more important than the welfare and future of our youth!" Modi said, adding, "We have decided to set up fast-track courts to ensure swift and stringent punishment for those involved in paper leaks. Have directed the concerned authorities and officials to take all necessary steps in this regard. This continues our series of steps for safeguarding the interests of students." Reiterating the govern-



ment's resolve to crack down on those responsible for such offences, the Prime Minister said, "Those who try to harm the future of our youth will not be spared." In his Hindi post, Modi said, "The welfare and future of the country's youth are our highest priori-

ty. To ensure that those guilty in all paper leak cases receive strict punishment at the earliest, fast-track courts will be constituted for the speedy disposal of these cases. Directions have already been issued to the concerned departments to ensure the nec-

essary action." He described the move as "an important step" in the series of measures being undertaken by the government to protect the interests of students and reiterated that "anyone who tampers with the future of the youth will not be spared." The announcement comes amid heightened political and public focus on examination irregularities and paper leak incidents, with concerns over the credibility of recruitment and entrance examinations dominating public discourse in recent months.

The issue has sparked protests by students and

criticism from opposition parties, which have accused the government of failing to prevent repeated examination leaks.

The Centre has maintained that it is committed to protecting the interests of students through legislative, administrative and technological measures to strengthen the examination system. The proposed fast-track courts are expected to expedite the prosecution of those accused in paper leak cases and reinforce the government's efforts to deter such offences through quicker judicial proceedings and stricter punishment.

Wangchuk Ends 27-Day Hunger Strike

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): Climate activist and education reformer Sonam Wangchuk on Thursday ended his 27-day hunger strike that began on June 28, at Medanta hospital in the presence of Union Ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh. Breaking his fast, Wangchuk thanked the Centre and supporters, saying that assurances had been given on the key issues raised by him and that he was therefore calling off the strike.

Wangchuk had launched the hunger strike as part of the ongoing agitation led by the Cockroach Janta Party for students, seeking educational overhaul and Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation from post of Union Education Minister. While the Centre has re-



peatedly maintained that it is open to discussions with representatives of the protest, a conclusion is yet to come for CJP. The development also comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared a video message on social media, stating that the Centre would introduce the Anti-Paper Leak Bill in Parliament on Friday, a move seen by some as address-

ing one of the broader concerns repeatedly raised by youth groups and protesters across the country. Earlier, the education secretary was also sacked by the government. Abhijeet Dipke welcomes Wangchuk's decision but says peaceful protest at Jantar Mantar will continue till Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns in recent days.



Falaknuma News EDITOR in chief Mohd Ather Raheem Saab visited Royal Classic Convention, Attended wedding ceremony of daughter of Area president Yakutpura Mohd Muneer Uddin(Mohsin) and MLA Jaffer Hussain meraj.

President Murmu discusses bilateral partnership with Romanian counterpart

Bucharest, July 23 (GNS) President Droupadi Murmu and her Romanian counterpart Nicusor Dan on Thursday discussed major dimensions of India-Romania partnership as the former is on a state visit to the European state. "President Droupadi Murmu was

warmly received by President Nicusor Dan of Romania at Cotroceni Palace in Bucharest. She was accorded a ceremonial welcome and guard of honour. The two leaders held productive and forward-looking discussions covering the major dimensions of our

bilateral partnership. They also exchanged perspectives on regional and global developments, and on multilateral cooperation," the President's Secretariat wrote on social media platform X. Three Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for bilateral cooperation

in the field of science and technology, sports and the establishment of a Chair of Indian Studies at the University of Bucharest were signed on the occasion. President Murmu arrived in Romania's capital Bucharest earlier in the day as part of her three-nation

visit. This is the first State Visit by an Indian President to Romania in nearly three decades. Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya, and Members of Parliament Dinesh Sharma and Vijay Baghel are ac-

companying the President in this visit.

The President visited Cotroceni Palace, the official residence and office of the President of Romania. During one-to-one meeting and delegation-level talks, the two leaders held productive and forward-look-

India Slams Pakistan's remarks on Kashmir, indus waters treaty at ASEAN

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): India on Thursday slammed the "baseless and unwarranted" comments made by Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Kashmir and Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) at the 33rd Regional Forum meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Manila, terming them as yet another "futile attempt" by the Pakistani establishment to deflect attention from its own internal crisis and its well-proven role as a safe haven for global terrorist networks.

New Delhi highlighted that a multilateral forum was once again "cynically exploited" by Pakistan to



amplify falsehoods and peddle state-sponsored disinformation. "India categorically rejects the baseless and unwarranted comments made by the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister of Pakistan. It is no surprise that a multilateral forum has once again been cynically exploited by Pakistan to

amplify falsehoods, peddle state-sponsored disinformation, and divert attention from its own well-documented record of sponsoring cross-border terrorism," said Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal in response to media queries regarding comments made by Dar. In-

dia made it clear once again that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "have been, are and will always remain integral and inalienable parts of India" with Pakistan having no locus standi to comment on the same.

"Similarly, India's position on the Indus Waters Treaty remains consistent. IWT stands in abeyance in response to Pakistan's continued sponsorship of cross-border terrorism, including the dastardly Pahalgam attack. IWT will continue to be held in abeyance until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism," the MEA statement added.

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Indian diplomacy and the Gaza crisis

Talmiz Ahmad

The last 21 months of military conflicts in large parts of the Middle East have presented complex challenges to the interests of several regional and extraregional states. Not surprisingly, given its historic links with the region and its substantial political and economic ties with regional states, India's responses to various aspects of the conflicts have been closely scrutinized by commentators. It has been noted that, on four occasions, India abstained on UN General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza that were backed by most members of the Global South.

Sonia Gandhi, the president of the opposition Congress Party, last month wrote an article criticizing the country's "muted stance" on the conflicts in Gaza and Iran, describing this as a "surrender of moral values." She attacked the free hand enjoyed by Israel in "an atmosphere of impunity" and insisted on the reaffirmation of India's support for the two-state solution to fulfill Palestinian aspirations.

Another writer said that India's diplomatic balancing act now appeared to be "unravelling (and) revealing inconsistencies" under strong geopolitical challenges. Even India's former National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan felt that Indian foreign policy was facing an "existential crisis" amid serious diplomatic



challenges, such as those posed by the new US administration and the wars in the Middle East, where India seemed "out of sync with reality." These are harsh words for a country whose ties with the Middle East go back at least five millennia — ties that have remained uninterrupted and been nourished over the centuries with fresh inputs so that they meet the changing needs and interests of both sides.

So, why these criticisms? India's diplomatic approach to the Middle East has been bilateral and transactional. It has built very substantial relations with all the regional states, but only on a bilateral basis; it has largely avoided taking a collective view of the region and has avoided engagements through regional cooperation platforms. And it has assiduously avoided any active

involvement with issues relating to Middle Eastern security and stability.

This approach, ideal in peacetime, has been found inadequate amid the horrendous killings that have defined Israel's response to the Hamas attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, and the wanton spread of its attacks to the West Bank, Lebanon and Syria, and to Iran itself, in which it was joined by the US. No wonder Gandhi said that "we cannot remain silent in the face of such destruction."

But recent developments have also raised new challenges for India's core interests. India's hands-off approach as far as security issues are concerned has provided opportunities for other nations to play a leading role in addressing matters of regional security by facilitating engagements between hostile neighbors and encouraging rival Pal-

estinian factions to interact with each other.

There is more. Last month, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations organized a joint conclave with the Gulf Cooperation Council states and China as part of their effort to expand and diversify economic links with other major partners in the face of challenges posed by the US administration. The tripartite joint declaration contained strong ASEAN criticisms of Israel and backing for the peace efforts of the GCC states. Former Indian diplomat Gurjit Singh noted that the declaration affirmed that the ASEAN has matured and is "no longer content to remain a bystander in global affairs."

Gandhi wrote in her article that there was still time for India to "course-correct" and act "clearly, responsibly and decisively."

The first step in the pro-

posed course correction would be for India to affirm the core principle that will guide Indian diplomacy: a commitment to strategic autonomy and the realization of a multipolar world order in which India will be a robust voice of the Global South, recalling its role in the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War.

To end the sense of strategic drift that some commentators have noted, India's diplomacy will also need to exhibit a fresh focus on engagement with its immediate and extended neighborhoods — South, West, Central, Southeast and Northeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean. This will call for the replacement of the outdated bilateral approach to important relationships with the shaping of collective regional approaches, with regular interactions on matters of geopolitics and geoeconomics at specially designed regional platforms.

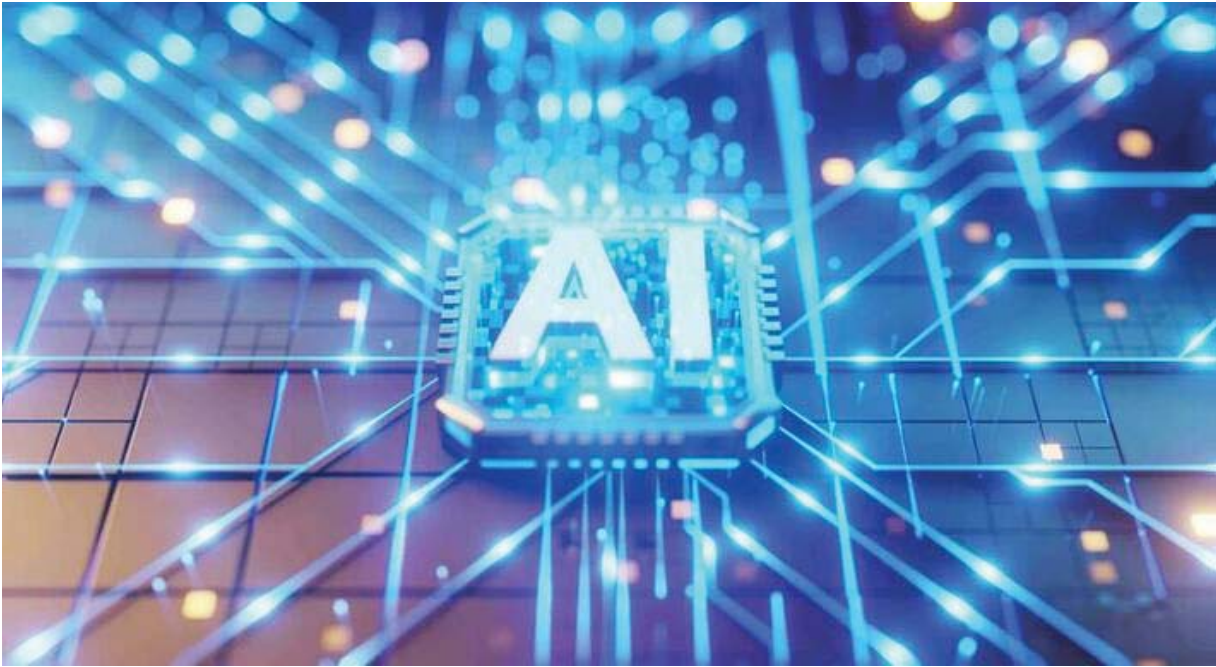
India's substantial and abiding links with the Middle East, founded on energy, trade, investments, joint ventures, connectivity projects and technology partnerships — all brought together by the presence of India's 9 million-strong resident community — will ensure that this region will command its principal attention. But India's new approach will also include an important place for dialogue on issues of security and stability with a view to shaping a regional comprehensive security arrangement.

Writing and learning at stake in the age of AI

Mohamed Chebaro

I have been having increasing trouble explaining to my colleagues in the newsroom that copying and pasting from the internet or any widely available tools that are based on large language models, such as ChatGPT, is counterproductive for journalists, including for their knowledge and professional development. But to no avail. What I have been experiencing as a news editor is not unique or new, as research has been pointing to the extensive use of writing tools at educational and business levels. In the long run, this could undermine crucial human faculties such as critical thinking and information retention.

It is important for the state, society and all learning and content-producing institutions to sound the alarm that continued overreliance on machines will be damaging to humans and society. We should heed the calls of experts who say that many people are unaware that relying only on machine tools to complete tasks will, over time, undermine professional progress and the development of skills. This prevents people becoming better journalists, researchers or academic achievers. It impedes journalists' ability to produce cutting-edge reports and inform society through thoughts and reflections based on new insights. We cannot rely



on re-representing what is already available and is just aggregated by the machine again and again.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology research, conducted with the participation of 54 students, revealed some alarming findings. The students were split into three groups and were each assigned the task of writing an essay in 20 minutes. One group used ChatGPT, the second a search engine and the last group had only their brainpower.

The researchers measured the brain activity of the students during the exercise, while two teachers later marked the essays. The ChatGPT group scored significantly worse than the independent group on all levels. The scientific measures showed that the different areas of their brains connected to each other less often during the exercise. And

more than 80 percent of the ChatGPT-aided group failed to quote anything from the essays they had written when asked about its details afterward.

The ChatGPT group appeared mostly to focus on copying and pasting and the teachers could easily spot their "soulless" essays because of their good grammar and structure, despite their lack of creativity, insight and personal touch.

The results of this pre-print study, which is yet to be peer reviewed, resonated with educators and academics, who are grappling with the impact of digital tools on knowledge and education. The team behind the study received more than 3,000 emails from frustrated teachers.

Lead author Nataliya Kosmyna emphasized during media interviews that the study proves the need for more research

into how artificial intelligence tools are impacting learning and how people can use them more carefully to help the process of learning. However, many from the academic and publishing worlds are already noticing the damaging impact of AI tools being misused by students and writers alike. They make people lazier and less wired into problem-solving or using their initiative. They are also less likely to take ownership and responsibility for what they produce.

This research was not the first to identify a strong correlation between the misuse of AI tools and the diminishment of skills such as critical thinking. Younger users in particular are exhibiting greater dependence on AI tools and are consequently seeing lower cognitive scores. These systems' delivery on demand when triggered

with the right keywords also decreases engagement in deep analytical processes, the study found.

It is a no-brainer, therefore, that a looming shift such as the study suggests from active information-seeking to passive consumption of AI-generated content — could be extremely dangerous for how current and future generations process, evaluate, curate and store knowledge. If not addressed properly, this could have repercussions beyond academic and content-creation settings. Scientists say it could create broader cognitive development problems, potentially affecting our intellectual development and autonomy as a whole.

Tools based on large language models are undoubtedly in the process of revolutionizing our world, especially our educational institutions.

Indian Cities' Potential 'Change Growth Trajectory'

A recent report titled 'Towards Resilient & Prosperous Cities', prepared jointly by the World Bank with the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), covering 24 cities, has estimated that by 2050, India's urban population would nearly double and reach 951 million and 70 percent of all employment would be generated in metros. While extreme heat has been projected in 25 large cities, the heat-treated fatalities are expected to double. In addition, surface floods are expected to rise between 75 and 100 percent in the above period. Without intervention, annual losses from stormwater or pluvial flooding are projected to rise from the current \$4 billion to \$5 billion by 2030 and could reach \$14–30 billion by 2070 due to ongoing urbanisation and climate impacts.

Not just this report, but Indian cities have been in the news for various reasons as high population density over the past few decades has posed an array of critical challenges. But India is not alone as most countries have been witnessing this dilemma. The growth of cities in India has been largely unplanned, leading to a myriad of problems and an urban mess that demands immediate attention. Though the cities face diverse problems, very little attempt has been made to tackle these challenges, mainly due to resource constraints faced by most state governments.

The lack of rural development has witnessed influx of people from the villages and semi-urban areas over decades in search of employment but most, if not all cities, do not have the infrastructure to cope with the increasing population growth. One of the most glaring consequences of unplanned urban growth is the strain it places on existing infrastructure. Basic amenities like potable water supply, sanitation and transportation struggle to keep up with the escalating demands of an ever-expanding population. The result is an overburdened infrastructure that fails to meet the needs of its residents, leading to increased congestion, inadequate services, and a diminished quality of life.

Unplanned urban growth has given rise to a significant increase in traffic congestion. With limited road networks and an unchecked surge in the number of vehicles, commuting has become a daily struggle in many cities. Traffic snarls not only waste valuable time but also contribute to increased fuel consumption, environmental pollution, and health hazards. The absence of comprehensive public transportation systems and proper planning further exacerbates the problem. But the most crucial aspect of the traffic problem is the rapid increase in accidents, specially in the metros and big cities, which occur almost daily.

It's worth noting that among metros, Kolkata has the highest vehicular density with over 2446 vehicles per kilometre of road. The city has around 46 lakh vehicles plying on 1850 km of road space while Delhi has substantially more vehicles (1.52 crore) and has around 34,000 km of toads, giving it a vehicular density of less than 400 per kilometre. As regards Kolkata, it can easily be said that over 40 percent of vehicles, most trucks do not follow environmental norms and, as such, emit black fumes. Thus, air pollution in all the metros and big cities has emerged as a severe problem in recent years, primarily due to large number of transport vehicles and even private buses emittingobnoxious fumes and polluting the environment. One can easily notice emissions from these vehicles which contribute to increased air pollution and environment and greatly affect those living in slums, squatter settlements and pavements. Greenhouse gas emissions are found to contribute up to 70 percent from the urban sector, though this occupies a negligible per cent of the earth's surface. The other aspect of city life, at least in India, is frequent flooding, which even the World Bank report has pointed out. According to environmentalists, governments must conserve water bodies that are buffer zones. The loss of hundreds of lakes and ponds has contributed to the increase in urban flooding. Some of them have stated the urgent need of cleaning up water bodies, preserving open areas, creating sponge parks and reviving stepwells to lower flooding. Cities are aware of the problem but due to financial constraints can do much in this regard.

Whether it is Delhi, Kolkata or Mumbai, quantum jump in residential cover, eating up farmland or vacant areas has hampered percolation of flood water. Down south Chennai is focusing on desilting and cleaning water bodies, stormwater drains and catch pits, while Delhi will soon have a drainage master plan, as per municipal officials. Urban flooding is a serious threat to public health in India. Large cities often experience spikes in dengue, typhoid, chikungunya, and leptospirosis, whenever water collects or is contaminated. Reports from CMC Vellore and other institutes indicate that India had 1 crore cases of typhoid fever in 2021, half of the world-wide total that year.

All the problems witnessed in cities are obviously due to the rapid influx of people into cities that has resulted in a severe shortage of housing facilities with large sections of the population residing in slums. While recognised slums are a little better, squatter settlements are in a pitiable condition as they do not have the necessities of life and majority of metros and big cities are plagued with this problem.

In such a situation, urban living has become a nightmare for most people. With the density of population increasing every year added to the high levels of pollution, the lack of potable drinking water for a significant section of the population, the increase in slums and squatter settlements, uncontrolled diseases with overcrowding of hospitals have all contributed to make city life not all that comfortable. There is little greenery in the metros and big cities, making life even more miserable for old people.

But thinking about the future and the huge population that would invade cities urban survival is imperative and this would depend on a massive infrastructural overhaul in terms of infrastructure and transportation. Huge investments are obviously called for but small steps like solar roof-top, systematic waste collection and management and low-carbon services are the need of the hour in the coming years to make cities liveable. The report warns: Indian cities will be unable to reach their full potential if they stayed on their current development trajectory. They are highly vulnerable to climate impacts because of the heavy concentration of people and assets and limited capacity to manage the impacts. The government must heed and read the writing on the wall.

Urban planning experts have consistently argued that future city development must be guided by data-driven policies rather than reactive measures. Integrating climate resilience into master plans, enforcing stricter building regulations, and promoting mixed-use development can significantly reduce environmental stress while improving accessibility and quality of life. The adoption of smart technologies for traffic management, waste disposal, water conservation, and disaster response can further strengthen urban resilience against emerging challenges.

Equally important is the need to empower Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) with greater financial autonomy and administrative capacity. Many municipal corporations struggle to execute infrastructure projects due to limited revenue sources, shortage of skilled personnel, and delays in project implementation. Strengthening local governance, encouraging public-private partnerships, and ensuring greater citizen participation in urban planning can help cities address long-standing infrastructure deficits more effectively. Ultimately, the future of India's urban landscape will depend on balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability and social inclusion. Creating green public spaces, expanding affordable housing, improving public transport, and protecting natural ecosystems must become central to urban development policies. As India's cities continue to grow, proactive planning and timely investments will determine whether they emerge as engines of sustainable development or remain burdened by congestion, pollution, and climate-related risks.

India's Tiger Reserves grew from 46 to 58 since 2014 - A Testament to PM Modi's Commitment to Tiger Conservation: Bhupender Yadav

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): Speaking on the occasion, the Minister emphasized the importance of ecological balance, conservation awareness among children, and gratitude towards nature. Shri Yadav congratulated schools and teachers for sensitizing young minds about wildlife conservation and preserving biodiversity. Highlighting the Government's commitment to wildlife conservation, the Minister stated, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the number of tiger reserves in India has increased from 46 in 2014 to 58 till date. This growth reflects the Prime Minister's unwavering commitment to protecting our national animal."

The Minister announced the launch of a nationwide tree plantation drive, where over 1 lakh saplings will be planted across all 58 tiger reserves, making it one of the largest such cam-

paigns in the world. Calling for greater environmental consciousness, Shri Yadav urged children and citizens to plant at least one tree in their mother's name under Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam, as a gesture of gratitude to both matru shakti and Dharti Maa (Mother Earth). He said, "Just as our mother nurtures us, so does Mother Earth. A tree offers shelter to birds, bears fruit without asking, and provides oxygen selflessly. Let us all plant a tree for our mothers and for the planet." Yadav also drew attention to the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) launched by India, which aims to protect the seven big cats found globally. He informed that 24 countries have already agreed to join this global effort, with the IBCA headquarters to be based in India.

The Minister called upon the youth to live a life of determination, patience, and humility, and to contribute

back to society through conservation efforts under Mission Life: "Let us not forget, true progress lies in maintaining harmony with nature. The most powerful creature, like the tiger, also teaches us humility. That is the essence of ecological balance." Also gracing the occasion were dignitaries including Union Minister of State (MoEFCC), Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, along with a diverse group of stakeholders including government officials, frontline forest staff, scientists, conservationists, NGOs, students, and community representatives. The presence of different stakeholders highlighted the collective, multi-stakeholder effort required to sustain and build upon the gains made in tiger conservation.

A special highlight of the 2025 celebrations was the Eco-Shop Exhibition, featuring eco-shops from different Tiger Reserves

across the country. The stalls offered a wide variety of community-based sustainable products and eco-development products from the Western Ghats and Southern landscapes. These products represent a fusion of cultural heritage and ecological responsibility. The Eco-Shop Exhibition highlights the critical link between conservation and community livelihoods, showcasing how sustainable enterprise models can empower local communities, support forest-dependent families, and contribute directly to conservation goals by reducing pressures on tiger habitats and mitigating conflict. During the event, Shri Yadav inaugurated plantation drives across all 58 tiger reserves in India, through a virtual mode. As part of this initiative, each tiger reserve will plant 2,000 saplings of indigenous plant species in degraded areas to promote habitat

restoration and strengthen the ecological foundations essential for tiger conservation. The event also included the inauguration of forest nurseries, at three locations in the Aravalli landscape, which will serve as a key resource for afforestation using native species and for fostering long-term ecological resilience. The day also marked the launch of the 'Plastic-Free Tiger Reserves' campaign, aimed at eliminating the use of all single-use plastics within tiger reserves.

The Minister also unveiled four important publications, each highlighting a unique aspect of India's wildlife conservation narrative under the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA): Report on "Status of Small Cats in the Tiger Landscape of India" STRIPES Magazine – Global Tiger Day Special Edition Books – "Waterfalls of Tiger Reserves in India" and

"Water Bodies inside Tiger Reserves of India" by Sh. Bharat Lal and Dr. S.P. Yadav Yadav also distributed NTCA awards under 7 categories that included, Post-humous/Life sacrificed in line of duty; Wildlife Crime Detection, Investigation and Prosecution; Wildlife Monitoring; Wildlife Habitat Management; Wildlife Protection and Anti-Poaching activities; People's Participation & Eco-development and Voluntary Village Relocation works.

Altogether, the celebrations on Global Tiger Day 2025 reflect India's longstanding commitment to tiger conservation, aligning grassroots participation with policy-level strategies. They illustrate a holistic approach that values ecological integrity, community well-being and international cooperation as essential elements for ensuring the long-term survival of tigers in the wild.

India witnesses renewed spurt in oil and gas exploration: Hardeep Puri

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): India is witnessing a renewed surge in oil and gas exploration, particularly in offshore regions, underscoring the country's vast untapped hydrocarbon potential. In a written reply to a starred question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, stated that the opening of nearly one million square kilometres of erstwhile 'No-Go' offshore areas in 2022 has been a landmark development. This move has unlocked significant exploration frontiers, especially in deepwater and frontier regions such as the Andaman-Nicobar (AN) offshore basin, and has been instrumental in triggering the current momentum in offshore activity.

Since 2015, Exploration and Production (E&P) companies operating in India have reported 172 hydrocarbon discoveries, including 62 in offshore areas. The Minister highlighted the geological significance of the AN basin, which lies at the junction of the Andaman and Nicobar Basins within the Bengal-Arakan sedimentary system. The tectonic setting, located at the boundary of the Indian and Burmese plates, has led to the formation of numerous stratigraphic traps that are conducive to hydrocarbon accumulation. This geological promise is further amplified by the basin's proximity to proven petroleum systems in Myanmar and North Sumatra. The region has attracted renewed global interest following significant gas discoveries in South Andaman offshore Indonesia, underlining the geological continuity across the region. While the favourable geology sets a strong foundation, Shri Puri emphasized that the real breakthrough has come from the government's strategic policy interventions and a new exploration approach. The revised strategy has

enabled aggressive acquisition of seismic data, initiation of both stratigraphic and exploratory drilling, and increased engagement with international exploration partners, several of whom have shown keen interest in the newly accessible frontier blocks.

National Oil Companies have planned to drill four offshore stratigraphic wells, including one in the AN basin. These scientific wells are designed to test geological models, validate the existence of petroleum systems, and help de-risk future commercial exploration. Although commercial accumulations have not yet been confirmed, these efforts mark a major step forward in systematic and knowledge-driven hydrocarbon exploration. In a significant development, ONGC and Oil India Ltd (OIL) have launched an ambitious exploration campaign in the Andaman ultra-deepwater region. For the first time, drilling operations are targeting depths of up to 5000 metres. One such wildcat well, ANDW-7, drilled in a carbonate play in the East Andaman Back Arc region, has yielded encouraging geological insights.

These include traces of light crude and condensate in cutting samples, heavy hydrocarbons like C-5 neo-pentane in trip gases, and the presence of reservoir-quality facies. These findings establish, for the first time, the existence of an active thermogenic petroleum system in the region, comparable to those in Myanmar and North Sumatra. While commercial reserves remain to be established, this campaign has validated the presence of a working petroleum system and laid the foundation for focused exploration in the area. Providing an overview of the exploration outcomes so far, the Minister informed that ONGC has made hydrocarbon discoveries in 20 blocks.

Jyotiraditya Scindia Announces Launch of Sanchar Saathi Mobile App in Hindi and 21 Regional Languages

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): Union Minister for Communications, Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, chaired a stakeholders meeting today along with Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, Dr. Neeraj Mittal under the Sanchar Saathi initiative to ideate and further strengthen efforts against telecom-related cyber frauds, in light of the urgent need for greater awareness, implementing preventive measures, and encouraging Jan-bhagidari through citizen reporting.

This citizen-centric digital safety initiative 'Sanchar Saathi' integrates advanced tools such as CEIR (Central Equipment Identity Register) to block stolen or lost phones, DIP (Digital Intelligence Platform), AI-based systems like ASTR (to detect connections taken on fake documents), and FRI (Financial Fraud Risk Indicator) to detect & prevent potential frauds. It has recorded remarkable progress

in securing India's telecom ecosystem. So far, over 82 lakh fake mobile connections have been disconnected, and more than 35 lakh lost or stolen phones have been blocked. The initiative has also successfully prevented 1.35 crore spoofed international calls within just 24 hours of launching this system. System has affected 97% reduction in such calls.

The Sanchar Saathi portal has seen massive public engagement, with 16 crore visits and an average of 2 lakh users every day. Through the AI-powered ASTR tool, citizen reports, and stakeholder inputs, over 4.7 crore mobile connections have been disconnected. The initiative has also led to the blocking of 5.1 lakh mobile handsets, disengagement of 24.46 lakh WhatsApp accounts, and blacklisting of 20,000 bulk SMS senders involved in fraudulent activities.

Under the CEIR system of Sanchar Saathi, 35.49 lakh

lost or stolen devices have been blocked, 21.57 lakh traced, and 5.19 lakh recovered. Today, Sanchar Saathi has onboarded 620 organisations, including central agencies, state police forces, telecom service providers (TSPs), and GSTN, forming a strong collaborative network to counter telecom fraud and cyber threats across the country. In a major step towards increasing accessibility, the Union Minister launched the Sanchar Saathi mobile application in Hindi and 21 regional languages, ensuring its reach across diverse regions. Originally introduced in January 2025, the app allows users to report suspicious communications, block or trace lost/stolen phones, and check for unauthorized mobile connections.

It is now available on both Android and iOS platforms, empowering citizens across India with multilingual digital safety tools. The App has seen more than 46 lakh downloads. The interaction

featured key stakeholders from law enforcement, telecom service providers, financial institutions, and civil society. Participants included Shikha Goel, (Head-Telangana Cyber Security Bureau), Sanjeev Kumar Sharma (DDG – Digital Intelligence Unit), Rajesh Kumar (CEO I4C), Pushpamitra Sahu (CGM, RBI) Shivrath Thukral (Head of Public Policy, PhonePe), M. Paramasivam (ED, PNB) web developers and technical teams of the Sanchar Saathi initiatives, as well as senior officials from C-DOT, RPF and the Department of Telecommunications.

Citizens from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh also shared their experiences with the Sanchar Saathi initiatives, expressing appreciation for its growing efficiency and real-time redressal capabilities. They recounted how they were able to retrieve their stolen handsets swiftly using the platform. Sujit Beck, a citizen cyber warrior.

Mission Karmayogi to enable Government employees to contribute more effectively to nation-building, says Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): In a significant step towards transforming the capacity-building landscape of civil servants in Chhattisgarh, the Capacity Building Commission (CBC), Karmayogi Bharat, and the Government of Chhattisgarh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 28th July 2025 in Raipur. The signing ceremony took place in the august presence of the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Shri Vishnu Deo Sai.

In his address, the Chief Minister affirmed that Mission Karmayogi is a visionary initiative that embodies the aspirations of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He highlighted that the mission would instil the spirit of Karmayogi among government officers and employees, enabling them to contribute more effectively to nation-building. He further stated that the initiative will be pivotal in nurturing a culture of excellence in governance

and public administration across Chhattisgarh.

The event was attended by senior dignitaries including Shri Amitabh Jain, Chief Secretary, Government of Chhattisgarh; Dr. Alka Mittal, Member (Administration), Capacity Building Commission; Shri Subrat In his address, the Chief Minister affirmed that Mission Karmayogi is a visionary initiative that embodies the aspirations of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He highlighted that the mission would instil the spirit of Karmayogi among government officers and employees, enabling them to contribute more effectively to nation-building. He further stated that the initiative will be pivotal in nurturing a culture of excellence in governance and public administration across Chhattisgarh.

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Chhattisgarh; Dr. Alka Mittal, Member (Administration), Capacity Building Commission; Shri Subrat Sahoo, Director General, Chhattisgarh Academy of Administration; Smt. V. Lalithalakshmi, Secretary, Capacity Building Commission & Chief Executive Officer, Karmayogi Bharat; and Shri S.P. Roy, Joint Secretary, Capacity Building Commission. The MoU marks the beginning of an institutional partnership to implement Mission Karmayogi's vision of a competency-based, technology-driven, and continuous learning ecosystem for government officials in Chhattisgarh. Under the initiative, continuous training will be provided to nearly four lakh government officers and employees in Chhattisgarh, and the process has already begun. So far, approximately 50,000 officers and employees have successfully completed online training. As part of the engagement, an orientation session was

conducted for Secretaries, Heads of Departments, and Departmental Nodal Officers. The session highlighted Mission Karmayogi's vision of creating a future-ready and citizen-centric civil service through digital learning, role-based training, and continuous professional development. Shri Rakesh Verma, Chief Operating Officer of Karmayogi Bharat, provided a live demonstration of the iGOTKarmayogi platform, showcasing its key features that enable modular, self-paced, and role-aligned learning. He also emphasized the platform's growing impact, with over 1.26 crore learners across the country benefiting from flexible, need-based capacity-building opportunities.

key outcome of the discussions was the Government of Chhattisgarh's commitment to onboard officials from various departments onto the iGOT platform and initiate their structured learning

"Farmers to receive 12% interest on delayed crop insurance claims" – Shivraj

New Delhi, July 23 (GNS): Union Minister for Agriculture, Farmers Welfare, and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on Tuesday, during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, provided a comprehensive update on the state of agriculture in the country. He shared facts and figures to highlight that the campaign to increase farmers' income is progressing steadily under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Union Minister outlined six key measures taken for agricultural development:

Chouhan stated that over the past 10 years, crop production has increased from 246.42 million tonnes to 353.96 million tonnes. The production of pulses rose from 16.38 million tonnes to 25.24 million tonnes, and production of oilseeds has increased from 27.51 million tonnes to 42.61 million tonnes. Horticulture production also jumped from 280.70 million tonnes to 367.72 million tonnes. The Agriculture Minister also noted a significant increase in milk production in the country, entirely driven by farmers.

On the issue of farmers' income, Shri Chouhan asserted that many farmers have more than doubled their incomes under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, as he compared the previous UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government's agriculture budget of 27,000 crore with the current allocation of 1.27 lakh crore. The PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, which did not exist earlier, now benefits 10 crore farmers, Shri Chouhan said, adding that the central government is providing around 2 lakh crore in fertiliser subsidies annually.

The Agriculture Minister said that under the Modi government, institutional credit has also surged from 7 lakh crore during the UPA era to 25 lakh crore to-

day. Regarding the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), he said the Centre has disbursed claims worth 1.83 lakh crore against a collected premium of 35,000 crore directly into farmers' accounts.

To promote income growth, the government is subsidising mechanisation and providing drip and sprinkler systems under the 'Per Drop More Crop' initiative. Investments are being made in polyhouses, greenhouses, and efforts are also underway to boost fruit and vegetable production and ensure fair procurement.

The Minister emphasised that to raise farmers' income, the government decided to ensure a minimum of 50% profit margin over cost in Minimum Support Prices (MSP). Large-scale procurement is currently underway, and farmers are receiving compensation for crop losses.

Subsidised fertilisers like urea and DAP (Diammonium Phosphate) are also being made widely available, the Minister said.

Chouhan further highlighted that special schemes have been designed for small landholders and tenant farmers. The Centre has allowed owners to authorise tenant farmers to receive PMFBY benefits. Recently, 6.55 lakh tenant and sharecropping farmers were covered under the scheme, benefiting a total of over 41.62 lakh farmers.

Chouhan also informed the House that the PM-AASHA scheme has been launched to procure pulses and oilseeds like tur, masoor, and urad at 100% MSP. Measures are in place to ensure that middlemen don't exploit farmers, and that MSP rates are delivered effectively. He cited data showing that MSP rates have significantly increased: He stressed that MSPs have not only doubled, but procurement volumes have also risen significantly.

CM Revanth orders quality uniforms for all government school students by August 15

Hyderabad, July 23 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday directed officials to ensure that all students in government schools and hostels receive high-quality uniforms by August 15, asserting that there would be no compromise on quality and warning of strict action against negligence in distribution.

Reviewing the uniform supply programme at MCRHRD, the Chief Minister said feedback on the quality, size and overall satisfaction with the uniforms would be collected from every student through WhatsApp after distribution. He said the feedback



would form the basis for decisions on next year's uniform design, colour and other aspects. Revanth Reddy instructed SERP CEO Divya to coordinate with district collectors to speed up stitching work be-

ing carried out by women's self-help groups and asked officials to put greater pressure on suppliers to ensure timely delivery.

He alleged that the previous government had witnessed large-scale ir-

regularities in uniform distribution and said the present government was overhauling the system to provide quality uniforms to children from poor families. The Chief Minister also directed officials to prepare an action plan to ensure that uniforms are supplied to students by June 2 every year from the next academic session.

Government Advisor P. Sudarshan Reddy, Special Chief Secretary Sabyasachi Ghosh, Principal Secretary N. Sridhar, OSD Vemula Srinivasulu, SERP CEO Divya and senior officials attended the review meeting, according to an official statement.

Ponguleti slams BRS over 'False Propaganda' on Indiramma towers

Hyderabad, July 23 (GNS) State Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Information & Public Relations, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, criticized the BRS leadership for showing extreme intolerance towards the 'people's government's' resolve to provide dignified homes of their own to the poor in the heart of Hyderabad city.

He stated that 'Indiramma Houses' are being constructed in the very localities where the destitute reside—treating the constituency as the unit—to fulfill their dream of homeownership. He urged people to apply for these houses at locally available MeeSeva centers. He also mentioned that applications



could be submitted via the MeeSeva WhatsApp number (8096958096) and the website (mee seva.telangana.gov.in). On Thursday, he held a review meeting with officials at his Secretariat office regarding Indiramma Houses, the application process, and related matters. Speaking after the review meeting, the

Minister said:

"While the Congress government, under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, is accomplishing tasks that the BRS failed to achieve during its ten-year tenure, the BRS is attempting to gain political mileage by spreading malicious propaganda to mislead the public. During its decade-long rule, the BRS government failed to fulfill the dream of homeownership for the poor in Hyderabad. It neglected the responsibility of providing homes in the heart of the city to impoverished families who were born, raised, and lived there, instead pushing them to the city's outskirts. It is shame-

ful to claim that constructing substandard houses—lacking basic amenities and located 30–40 kilometers away from jobs, employment, children's education, and healthcare facilities—constitutes 'welfare for the poor.'

The people's government, led by Hon'ble Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, launched the 'Indiramma Towers' project with the vision that even the poor should live with dignity in the heart of Hyderabad. Yet, the BRS is spreading malicious propaganda even against this historic decision to utilize government land for public welfare and provide permanent security to the poor.

BMS Committed to Patriotism and Workers' Welfare: MLA Dhanpal



Falaknuma News

Correspondent M.A.Samad Nizamabad July 23: Patriotism, workers' welfare, and social responsibility have remained the guiding principles of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) since its inception, said Nizamabad Urban MLA Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta while participating in the BMS Foundation Day celebrations at the Nizamabad-II RTC Depot on Thursday.

The MLA unfurled the BMS flag and recalled that the organisation was founded by Dattopant Thengadi on the birth anniversary of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak with the objective of safeguarding the interests of workers while strengthening na-

tional development.

Highlighting the initiatives of the Central Government, Dhanpal said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several welfare measures have been introduced to improve the lives of workers through enhanced social security, employment generation, infrastructure development, and labour welfare programmes.

He said BMS has consistently upheld the belief that the interests of workers and the nation should always take precedence over political considerations. Stressing the importance of labour in building a strong and self-reliant India, he said workers are the backbone of the country's prog-

ress and their contribution is indispensable in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat. He added that while farmers nourish the nation with food, workers build its future through their hard work and dedication.

The MLA also appreciated the efforts of BMS in uniting workers from both the organised and unorganised sectors and protecting their rights while promoting national development. Among those present were corporators Shravan, Matham Pawan, and Jyothi Murali; BMS District President Sai Reddy; Srinivas Chary; State Vice-President Swamy Kumar; RTC workers' union representatives K.B. Singh, Saroj, Ramulu, and other BMS leaders and members.

Centre Intensifies Road Safety Drive in Nizamabad, Jagtial with Rs 1,023 cr Highway Investment :

Falaknuma News

Correspondent M.A. Samad Nizamabad July 23: The Central Government has stepped up its road safety initiatives in Telangana by undertaking large-scale rectification of accident-prone locations on National Highways, Nizamabad Member of Parliament Dharmapuri Arvind said on Thursday.

Quoting the written reply of Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari to his question in the Lok Sabha, Arvind said Telangana has identified 1,513 accident black spots, of which 1,308 have been permanently rectified, while corrective measures at the remaining 205 locations are progressing. The MP said the Centre has accorded special attention to Nizamabad and Jagtial districts. In Nizamabad,



75 out of 78 identified black spots have already been rectified, while work is in progress at the remaining three locations. In Jagtial, 99 of the 107 identified black spots have been addressed and the remaining eight are under different stages of execution.

He said the Union Government is simultaneously implementing several road infrastructure projects on NH-44, NH-61 and NH-63, including the construction of bridges, bypasses and other engineering improve-

ments aimed at enhancing road safety and reducing accidents. Arvind further stated that the Centre has earmarked approximately 1,023 crore for National Highway development and road safety infrastructure in Nizamabad and Jagtial districts. The investment will support black spot rectification, construction of bridges, bypasses and other essential infrastructure to improve the safety and efficiency of the highway network.

Emphasising that the safety of commuters remains a top priority, the MP said he would continue to pursue the early completion of all ongoing projects in coordination with the Central Government to ensure safer and better road connectivity for the people of the Nizamabad Parliamentary Constituency.

ACB books REDCO Divisional Engineer in disproportionate assets case; assets worth over Rs 28 cr unearthed

Hyderabad, July 23 (GNS) The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a disproportionate assets (DA) case against Mutyam Venkata Ramana, Divisional Engineer of the Renewable Energy Development Corporation (REDCO), Khairatabad, Hyderabad, for allegedly amassing assets far beyond his known sources of income through corrupt practices. As part of the investigation, ACB officials on Wednesday con-

ducted searches at the officer's residence, office and seven other locations linked to his relatives, associates and alleged benamidars. The searches were carried out under provisions of Section 13(1)(b) read with Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended in 2018.

During the raids, officials unearthed property documents relating to four residential flats in Serilingampally and Kukatpally worth

Rs 1.23 crore, a G3 commercial building in Kukatpally valued at Rs 1.82 crore and a G 5 commercial building at Guttala Begumpet valued at Rs 2.90 crore. Investigators also found that the officer had allegedly invested in the construction sector through four firms registered in his wife's name and constructed 10 residential apartments at Anjaneya Nagar, Moosapet, with an estimated investment of around Rs 20 crore. The

searches also led to the seizure of bank deposits worth Rs 52.02 lakh, 2,094 grams of gold ornaments valued at about Rs 40 lakh, three vehicles worth around Rs 45 lakh, household articles and electronic gadgets valued at Rs 30 lakh, besides 20 liquor bottles worth approximately Rs 2.5 lakh. A separate case regarding the liquor bottles has been registered by the Madhapur Excise Department. According to the ACB release on Wednesday, the

assets detected during the searches are estimated at Rs 27.65 crore, while further verification of additional assets is underway.

The bureau also recalled that Ramana had earlier been trapped by the ACB in December 2019 while serving as Divisional Engineer (Technical) in the Superintending Engineer (Operations), Cyber City Circle, Hyderabad, for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 25,000 to process a file.

India preparing to host 2030 Commonwealth Games, aims to be top 10 sporting nation by 2036: Bandi Sanjay

Hyderabad, July 23 (GNS) union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Thursday said India is preparing to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and is moving systematically to become one of the world's top 10 sporting nations by 2036 and among the top five by 2047. Speaking after inaugurating the 11th All India Police Judo Cluster Championship 2026 at the GMC Balayogi Indoor Stadium in Gachibowli, Bandi Sanjay said the Narendra Modi government considers sports a key pillar of nation-building and has significantly increased investment in the sector.

The championship, organised by the Central Industrial



Security Force (CISF), has brought together more than 1,600 athletes and officials from 36 teams across the country. CISF ADG (South) Padmakar S. Ransiphe, NISA Director and JG Harpreet Kaur Sohi, and senior CISF officer S.R. Saravanan were present. The union Minister lauded the CISF for successfully organising the national-level event and said

competitions such as Judo, Wushu, Taekwondo, Karate and Pencak Silat help police and security personnel develop discipline, physical fitness, mental strength and quick decision-making skills essential for national service.

Highlighting the Centre's sports initiatives, he said over 1,000 Khelo India training centres have been established in more than 700 districts, benefiting around 27,500 young athletes. He added that the 2026-27 union Budget has increased sports allocation to nearly Rs 4,480 crore, including a Rs 500-crore fund to promote domestic sports equipment manufacturing and sports technology research.

Bandi Sanjay also praised

the CISF for strengthening its sports ecosystem through athlete welfare measures, direct financial support, and one of its largest-ever sports recruitment drives, which inducted 332 athletes, including a record 179 women, besides forming 21 new women's teams across various disciplines.

He said India will host the World Police and Fire Games in Ahmedabad in 2029 and is also making a strong bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games. Urging athletes to compete with integrity and uphold the spirit of fair play, he thanked the Telangana government and the people of Hyderabad for supporting the successful conduct of the championship.

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