RNI Reg NO.TGENG/26/A3255

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FALAKNUMA NEWS
ENGLISH DAILY

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VOL: 1 | Issue No: 51 | SATURDAY 04 JULY 2026 | PUBLISHED FROM HYDERABAD | PAGES: 4 | RS.1/-

Press freedom needs courage, responsibility: VP Radhakrishnan

New Delhim, July 3 (GNS): Democracies flourish when media informs, asks meaningful questions, and encourages informed public debate while respecting facts, maintaining credibility and adhering to the highest professional standards, asserted Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan while addressing the 80th Foundation Day celebrations of the Organiser Weekly at the national capital's India Habitat Centre on Friday.

Freedom of the press is meaningful only when exercised with courage and responsibility, he said.

"Born in one of the most turbulent moments in our national history. Few publications can claim to have witnessed documented and participated in India's journey from the very dawn of India's Independence," he added. The Vice-President described the publication's journey as one of "continuity, resilience and sustained commitment to public discourse across generations".

Referring to the legal challenge it faced against censorship in 1949, Vice-President Radhakrishnan said it marked the first such step in Independent India.

"The history of Organiser can not be separated from the history of free expression in Independent India. In 1949, it faced censorship for raising issues concerning Hindus in Pakistan and fought it out in the Supreme Court," he reminded.

"The legal battle became a landmark in the evolution of media freedom," Vice-President Radhakrishnan said. He referred to the newspaper's engagement with issues relating to Jammu and Kashmir, the Praja Parishad movement, national security during the wars with China and Pakistan, Swadeshi, the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and several other significant developments in India's public life.

Paying tribute to the publication's role during the Emergency, the Vice-President noted that Organiser and its sister publication 'The Motherland' became rallying points for those committed to safeguarding constitutional democracy.

India's AI Talent, Industry Skilling Boost GCC Appeal: Sitharaman

"France/New Delhi, July 3 (GNS): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said India's AI-ready talent pool and industry-backed skilling programmes are creating new opportunities for the country's middle class while positioning India as the preferred destination for Global Capability Centres (GCCs). Speaking at a panel discussion on "How to Promote the Rise of a New Middle Class?" during the Rencontres Economiques d'Aix-en-Provence at Aix-Marseille University in France, FM Sitharaman highlighted India's strategy for fostering inclusive economic growth through skill development, innovation and social welfare measures.

"AI is creating new opportunities. With industry-backed skilling programmes and AI-ready talent, India's middle class is powering innovation and making India the preferred destination for Global Capability Centres," the Finance Minister said. FM Sitharaman said the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence is opening up new opportunities, with industry-supported skilling initiatives preparing India's workforce for emerging technologies.

According to the Finance Minister, the country's AI-ready talent is enabling the middle class to drive innovation while strengthening India's position as the preferred destination for Global Capability Centres.

FM Sitharaman also outlined the government's broader approach to improving the quality of life and expanding the middle class. The minister said India's development model is based on a holistic strategy that combines affordable housing supported by interest subsidies, skill development programmes, internship opportunities and concessional loans for aspiring entrepreneurs.

CEC urges sction sgainst docial media misinformation

New Delhi, July 3 (GNS): Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Friday cautioned ECI's Media and Communication Officers against false narratives propagated on social media, asking them to counter the spread of misinformation.

Addressing the ECI's Second one-day Conference for Media and Communication Officers, CEC Gyanesh Kumar asked the participants to engage proactively to prevent social media misinformation, said an official statement. Speaking to over 260 Media and Communication Officers, CEC Gyanesh Kumar also discussed strategies to spread awareness and blunt attempts to erode trust in institutions.

The participants included Media Nodal Officers (MNOs) and Social Media Nodal Officers (SMNOs), along with District Media Nodal Officers/District Public Relations Officers (DPROs) from various districts of the 16 participating States/UTs, and senior officers from the respective State Departments of Public Relations (DPRs).

He added that the highest ever voter turnouts in the recent Assembly Elections were proof of the trust that the Indian electors have in the country's electoral system.

CEC Gyanesh Kumar emphasised that every action of the Commission is based on the Constitution of India, Electoral Laws and written instructions issued from time to time in a transparent manner.

India, Malaysia reaffirm long-term cooperation

New Delhim, July 3 (GNS): The 12th Meeting of the India–Malaysia Joint Sub-Committee on Defence Science, Technology and Industry Cooperation was held on Friday in New Delhi, where both countries reaffirmed their commitment to long-term cooperation and strengthening defence industrial ties.

"The 12th Meeting of the India–Malaysia Joint Sub-Committee on Defence Science, Technology and Industry Cooperation was held on 3 July 2026 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Vijay Namdeorao Zade, Joint Secretary (Naval Systems), Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, from the Indian side, and Mr. Mohd Nizam Bin Mohd Khir, Undersecretary, Defence Industry Division, Ministry of Defence, from the Malaysian side," the Department of Defence Production of India wrote on X. "Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to long-term cooperation and strengthening defence industrial ties between the two countries," it added.

On Wednesday, the Indian Navy and Royal Malaysian Navy held discussions focused on strengthening bilateral engagements, enhancing maritime cooperation and collaborative pursuit towards maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The discussions were held during the 11th edition of the Indian Navy and Royal Malaysian Navy Staff Talks that concluded in New Delhi.

SC halts CAG audit of Delhi power discoms till July 15

New Delhim, July 3 (GNS): The Supreme Court on Friday ordered maintenance of status quo in the dispute over the audit of Delhi's private electricity distribution companies (discoms), staying further steps in relation to the proposed audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) as well as the direction to appoint an independent chartered accountant. A bench of Justices K.V. Viswanathan and Shree Chandrashekhar passed the interim order while hearing appeals filed by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) challenging orders of the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL).

Issuing notice in the matter, the apex court observed that the controversy raises an important legal question requiring consideration and directed that status quo be maintained till further orders. Listing the matter for further hearing on July 15, the Supreme Court stayed the operation of the relevant portion of the APTEL's judgment directing the DERC to appoint an independent chartered accountant to conduct the audit.

It also directed that the CAG will not proceed further with the audit in the meantime. The dispute traces its origin to an earlier apex court judgment in a batch of matters concerning tariff orders issued by the DERC between 2011 and 2014. In its August 2025 decision, the Supreme Court had expressed concern over the accumulation of regulatory assets by electricity distribution companies and directed electricity regulatory commissions to undertake a "strict and intensive" audit into the circumstances in which such regulatory assets had accumulated.

India's humanitarian assistance and development projects for Afghan people continue

New Delhim, July 3 (GNS): Highlighting the ongoing humanitarian assistance cooperation with Afghanistan, India on Friday expressed commitment to supporting Kabul through aid and development projects. "We had strongly condemned the airstrikes that happened from Pakistan into Afghanistan, in which several civilian lives, including women and children were lost. We had offered our condolences on the passing away of precious lives and we had also at the same time reiterated our strong support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Afghanistan," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said during a weekly media briefing in New Delhi.

"As far as in terms of support with Afghanistan, we have an ongoing humanitarian assistance cooperation. We have been sending them medicines. We have been sending them other support and we have also been offering development projects which can bring benefit to the lives of people there and that continues," he added.

On June 29, Taliban Deputy Spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat said that least 36 civilians, including women and children, were killed, while 163 others were injured in Pakistani airstrikes in Afghanistan's Paktia, Paktika and Kunar provinces.

Citing reports, Fitrat said the attacks carried out on Sunday night in the Gayan district of Paktika, Tsamkani district of Paktia and Manogai district of Kunar by Pakistani forces resulted in the death of 36 civilians and injuries to 163 others, as well as complete destruction of three residential houses.

According to Fitrat, Pakistani forces' jets bombed a civilian residence in Mandokhail village of Tsamkani district, killing one elderly man and a child and injuring several members of the family. He alleged that when local residents gathered to conduct rescue operations, the area was bombed for a second time, killing 28 villagers and injuring 158 others. Fitrat further said that in the Walust village of the Gayan district, another civilian residence was bombed, killing six individuals, the majority of whom were women and children. Additionally, in the Barolo village of the Manogai district, he said that the airstrike hit a civilian residence, resulting in significant property damage. Notably, India has been providing humanitarian support to Afghanistan, including through the supply of essential medicines and other aid.

India pays respects at funeral ceremony of former Iran supreme leader Khamenei

Tehran, July 3 (GNS): Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita and Bihar Governor Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain (retired), paid their tributes representing India at the funeral ceremony of former Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran.

"Governor of Bihar Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain and I represented India at the funeral ceremony for Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, former Supreme Leader of Iran, in Tehran. Conveyed our respects on behalf of the government and the people of India," MoS Margherita wrote on social media platform X.

Khamenei was killed in an epochal attack by the US and Israel on February 28, marking an inflexion point in the 46-year Shia-theocratic rule. His son, Mojtaba Khamenei, was selected as Iran's new Supreme Leader in March this year.

"The high-level representation in the ceremony underscores the importance of civilisational ties, including people-to-people connection, between the two countries, providing a robust foundation to political and economic engagements," a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said. Farewell ceremonies will be held at Imam Khomeini's Mosalla prayer hall in Tehran on July 4-5, followed by funeral procession ceremony in Tehran on July 6. Another funeral procession ceremony will take place in Iran's Qom city on July 7. The final funeral ceremony will be held in Mashhad on July 9, followed by burial at the holy shrine of Imam Reza, Tasnim news agency reported.

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A History of Missed Alliances

Prof Suresh Chander

Shivaji and Guru Gobind Singh never met, the Sikhs and Marathas stood apart at Panipat, and a century later Sikhs and Scindhias sided with the East India Company. Our history books remain silent on these lost chances that shaped centuries of subjugation.

History often turns not only on the wars that were fought but also on the alliances that never materialised. In India's past, moments of disunity proved more decisive than defeats in battle. The 17th and 18th centuries show how fractured leadership and missed opportunities left the subcontinent vulnerable-first to Afghan invaders and later to British colonists.

Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630-1680), crowned in 1674, was a visionary who laid the foundations of the Maratha Empire through daring campaigns, administrative reforms, and a relentless defence of swaraj against Mughal domination. Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), the tenth Sikh Guru, was equally transformative. In 1699, he created the Khalsa, turning the Sikhs into a spiritual and martial brotherhood that could withstand persecution.

Both men faced the same adversary: Aurangzeb (1618-1707), the Mughal emperor whose bigotry and cruelty alienated vast sections of his empire. Shivaji fought him on the battlefield; Guru Gobind Singh resisted him through the sword and the pen, famously writing his Zafarnama to the emperor.

Yet Shivaji and Guru Gobind Singh never met. Their struggles ran parallel but separate. Imagine if they had joined hands-the Marathas striking from the Deccan and the Khalsa from the north. Aurangzeb's imperial power, already stretched, might have collapsed decades earlier. Instead, the Mughal empire lingered until Aurangzeb's death in 1707, leaving a fractured legacy that others would exploit.

By the mid-18th century, the Marathas had risen as India's paramount power, their influence stretching from the Deccan deep into the north. The Sikhs, though fragmented into twelve misls (confederacies), had become a formidable presence in Punjab, harassing Afghan invaders and asserting control over the countryside.

In 1761, Ahmad Shah Abdali-also known as Ahmad Shah Durrani-marched into India with a vast Afghan army, intent on crushing Maratha power. The Third Battle of Panipat followed on January 14, 1761. It was one of the bloodiest battles of the 18th century. Contemporary accounts suggest that over 100,000 men were killed in a single day. The Marathas fought with extraordinary bravery, but they stood alone. The Sikhs, though strong in Punjab, did not align with the Marathas. Distrust, distance, and disunity kept them apart. Abdali's forces butchered the Marathas, leaving their empire gravely weakened. Panipat was more than a battlefield disaster; it was a turning point that destroyed the prospect of a united indigenous power dominating northern India. Had the Sikhs and Marathas joined forces, Abdali might have been crushed-and the subsequent century of political instability, which opened the doors for British expansion, could have been avoided. A hundred years after Panipat, disunity once again defined India's fate. In 1857, the great revolt, against the East India Company broke out. Soldiers, peasants, princes, and common people across north India rose against British rule in what came to be remembered as the First War of Independence.

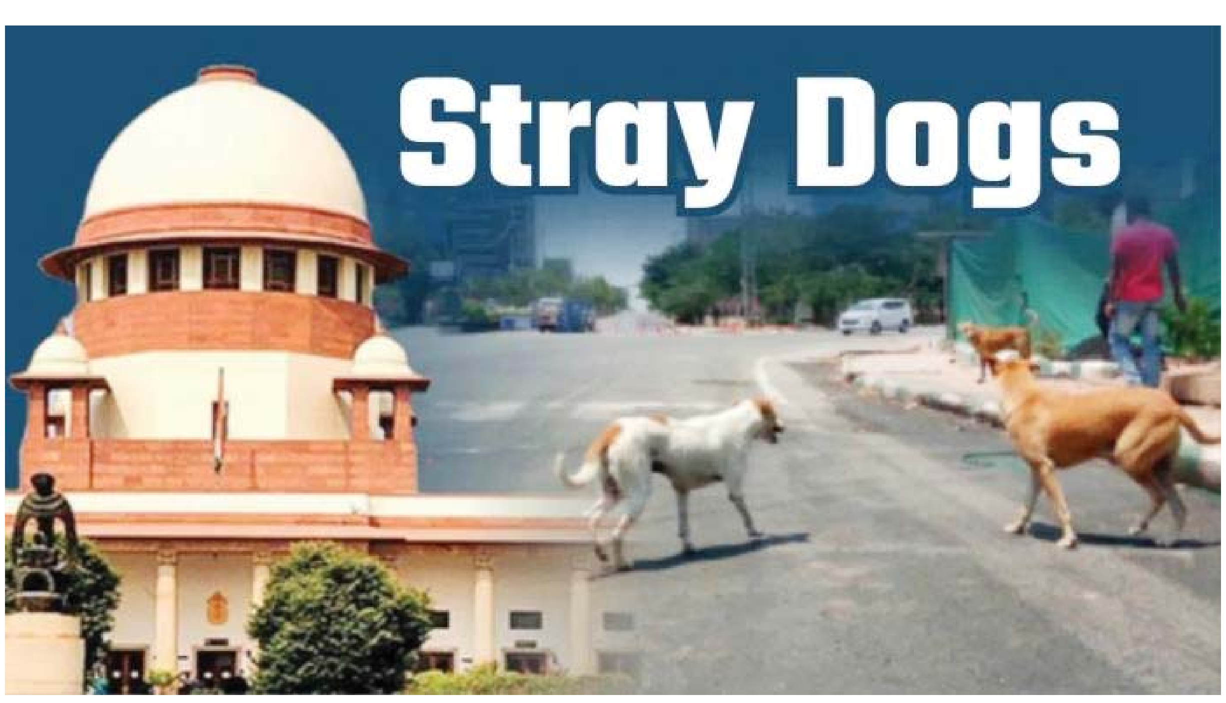
Yet the Sikh armies, who had been defeated in the Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845-46 and 1848-49, chose to side with the British rather than the rebels. The memory of betrayal by both Hindu and Muslim rulers during their own wars shaped this decision. Similarly, the Scindhias of Gwalior-descendants of the once-mighty Marathas-remained loyal to the Company, helping suppress the uprising.

The result was predictable. The rebellion, fractured and unsupported by India's strongest military forces, collapsed within a year. Once again, the absence of unity prolonged foreign domination-this time for nearly a century more. The Price of Disunity

The tragedy is not that Indians lacked courage or vision. Figures like Shivaji and Guru Gobind Singh embody both in abundance. The Marathas at Panipat fought with legendary valour, and the freedom fighters of 1857 displayed extraordinary determination. But courage divided cannot overcome organised adversaries. Abdali at Panipat and the British in 1857 triumphed less because of their strength and more because India's strongest powers stood apart. Contrast this with Europe. When Napoleon Bonaparte threatened continental order, Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria-often bitter rivals-repeatedly set aside differences to form coalitions. They fought together, again and again, until Napoleon was finally defeated at Waterloo in 1815. Europe learned the value of unity against a greater foe; India, tragically, did not.

Stray Dogs, Human Safety and Compassion

By Sushil Kutty



The Supreme Court has modified its dog-order of August 11 and "dog-lovers" are beyond relief, except that the order doesn't meet everybody's expectations. The best thing about the order is that dog-lovers have been told not to feed strays on the streets and roads, in the vicinity of schools and at the entrances to gated communities. Food is not always an distraction but dogs might take exception to a stray child or elderly man invading the public feeding areas randomly selected by the compassionate dog-lovers.

The problem is every dog-lover who feed stray dogs selects his or her feeding place. The dog-lover is as territorial as the dog! The Supreme Court's modified order says the strays should be captured, sterilized and immunized and then released back into the human population. And because the stray dogs have been vaccinated against Rabies, children wouldn't be in danger. The most that will happen will be fear of dogs instilled in the child, a fear that will stay for the rest of his/her lifetime. Fear of stray dogs is an international phenomenon. In Netherlands, it led to strong measures taken and today Netherlands is beyond the ken of stray dogs. But India being 'Sanatani', Indians are default animal-lovers, not just dog-lovers.

The Supreme Court directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to release sterilised and vaccinated stray dogs back into their localities but not before the dogs are tested and declared rabies-free. Stray dogs betraying aggressive behaviour must be kept separate from the rest of the freely roaming stray dogs.

Is the MCD capable of carrying out this task? As it is, dog-lovers have been questioning the commitment of the inept MCD. The feeling drummed into the average Indian that our justices are a notch above common mortals. The stoppage of public feeding of stray dogs is a great relief to people who use roads for a smooth travel from 'Point A' to 'Point B'. Stray dogs often take a liking for unprotected ankles and calves.

So while dedicated public feeding zones are a relief, the rider that sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs should be released back into their territorial biting grounds is still scary for the child and the majority of the elderly. Predicting dog behaviour is not in the domain of children and the elderly. The top court's order says designated feeding zones must be created and animal lovers can adopt stray dogs using the services of the MCD. A lot has been alleged about the MCD, will the municipal body up to the task? Only time 8will tell, but the three-judge bench of the Supreme Court has taken up the challenge with all sincerity with the hope that no dog breaches its trust.

Dog-lovers have been saying that parents should doggy-train their kids just like they're potty-trained, adding that children provoking stray dogs is a common sight on India's thoroughfares, keep the children on a leash! Dog-lovers are wholly with the "voiceless dogs". So much so, they take exception to even "It's a dog's life", stray dog's are worthless.

The Supreme Court on Friday sought to make amends. giving back to stray dogs their territorial rights is akin to ensuring human rights. But isn't sterilization a breach of dog-rights? Dog spelled and pronounced back-to-front is GOD! And, here, you have dog-lovers affirming that the best way to ensure the end of the stray dog menace is to sterilize them and let time take its toll.

The standard lifetime of a dog is at the most 15 years and sterilized dogs will not get aggressive if their breeding rights are taken away without ado. Aggressive behaviour and rabies are signs. The MCD has been hogging money earmarked for stray dogs. There are about 20 dog-NGOs affiliated to the MCD, and they're no better than the MCD.

Chances are the Supreme Court will "look into the matter" when it draws up the promised "national dog policy. As it is, Friday's verdict applies not only to Delhi-NCR but to the entire country. The final national "dog" must not lose sight of dedicated feeding zones for the stray dogs. Asking parents to doggy-train their children is as impractical as expecting the municipal bodies to set up dog-shelters for crores and crores of stray dogs. The verdict was delivered by a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N V Anjaria, The key modifications include release of sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs into the same area they were rounded up from; That the court has put a stop to feeding stray dogs in public spaces is the game-changer. Rest assured, the strays are not going to take it as an insult.

Myanmar: A Crisis in India's Backyard

Myanmar today is not a single, unified entity but a complex mosaic of competing forces. The military junta, or the State Administration Council (SAC), is losing its grip on the country, ceding territory and influence to a determined resistance movement composed of People's Defence Forces (PDFs) and powerful ethnic armed organisations (EAOs). For India, particularly its northeastern states, this unfolding crisis is not just international news; it is a matter of vital concern, impacting security, trade, and regional stability.

Since the February 2021 coup, Myanmar has been in a state of escalating civil war. The military, known as the Tatmadaw, has faced unprecedented resistance, suffering its worst losses in history. Its forces have been routed from numerous towns and military outposts, particularly in the northern and western parts of the country. A key turning point was Operation 1027, a sweeping offensive launched in late 2023 by the Brotherhood Alliance that demonstrated the military's vulnerability and inspired resistance forces nationwide. The junta has since resorted to brutal tactics, including indiscriminate airstrikes and forced conscription. The humanitarian situation is dire. As of late 2025, over 3.5 million people are internally displaced, and a staggering 19.9 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. Public services have collapsed, and the economy is in a state of freefall, with widespread poverty and food insecurity.

For India and Bangladesh, the most consequential development is the rapid rise of the Arakan Army (AA) in Rakhine State. The AA has seized control of a majority of the townships in the state, including the entire 271-kilometer border with Bangladesh. They are now a de facto governing body in much of the region, administering justice and controlling trade. The AA's ultimate goal, rooted in their ethno-nationalist ideology, is to restore the sovereignty of the ancient Kingdom of Arakan, which they believe was a distinct entity from the rest of Burma. This presents a profound geopolitical puzzle. The AA's territorial gains put them in control of critical infrastructure projects that are central to the strategic interests of both India and China. India's Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project: This project, a cornerstone of India's "Act East Policy," is designed to provide a sea-river-road route from Kolkata to the northeastern states via the Sittwe Port in Rakhine. With the AA now controlling this region, he project's success is entirely contingent on their cooperation.

Similarly, the deep-sea port and oil and gas pipelines in Kyaukphyu are central to China's BRI. While Beijing has reportedly intensified its backing of the junta, it also appears to be preparing for a scenario where the AA controls the facility, given the group's stated commitment to protecting foreign investments. The Chittagong-Rohingya connection further complicates the situation. The AA's territorial ambitions have raised concerns in Dhaka, while its shifting stance on the Rohingya — caught between a history of ethnic tensions and recent exploitation by the junta — adds a delicate layer to the crisis for both Bangladesh and the international community.

Crucially, the conflict has directly impacted the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway, a project of immense strategic and economic importance to India. This 1,360 km road network, connecting Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand, is envisioned as the physical embodiment of India's "Act East Policy." For Northeast India, the highway carries transformative potential: It would transform the landlocked region into a gateway for trade with Southeast Asia, significantly reducing logistics costs and creating a new economic corridor. It is a key enabler for India to strengthen its economic and diplomatic presence in the ASEAN region and a crucial counter to China's growing influence. However, despite its immense promise, the project is decades behind schedule. While the sections in India and Thailand areThe lack of a stable central government has complicated the signing of a Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA), which is essential for the seamless flow of goods and people. The absence of a reliable partner in Naypyitaw has forced New Delhi to re-evaluate its approach. The highway's fate will depend on New Delhi's ability to navigate the complex and dangerous landscape of a civil war in its own backyard. Recent high-level visits by Indian officials to Myanmar highlight a continued commitment to the project despite the immense challenges. The influx of Chin and Kuki refugees from Myanmar into Mizoram and Manipur has strained resources and caused community tension. While the Mizos share a strong ethnic affinity with the Chin, the issue of illegal immigration has become a flashpoint in Manipur's ongoing ethnic conflict. The era of dealing exclusively with the central government in Naypyitaw is over. India's traditional "neighbourhood first" policy is being tested by a new reality w largely complete, the crucial stretches in Myanmar are stalled, with a new deadline now set for 2027. The highway passes through active conflict zones, creating an extremely dangerous environment for construction workers. Key sections, such as the 120 km Kalewa-Yagyi road and the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa bridge projects, have faced repeated delays due to the violence.

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The situation demands a nuanced and flexible approach from New Delhi, one that recognises the de facto authority of groups controlling the ground while maintaining diplomatic channels with all stakeholders. The super highway dream, the Rohingya crisis, and the fight for autonomy in Myanmar are all part of a single, complex tapestry that demands a strategic and forward-looking response from India. The outcome of this war will directly impact the economic future and security of India's Northeast, making the conflict in Myanmar a defining geopolitical challenge for New Delhi.

India must also strengthen its border management architecture without disrupting the deep historical, cultural and ethnic ties shared by communities living along the India-Myanmar frontier. Enhanced surveillance, improved fencing in vulnerable stretches, coordinated intelligence sharing and greater capacity for the Assam Rifles and other security agencies are essential to prevent the movement of arms, narcotics and insurgent groups. At the same time, humanitarian considerations must remain central to India's refugee policy, particularly in states such as Mizoram where local communities have welcomed displaced people based on longstanding ethnic and familial bonds.

Another critical dimension is the growing strategic competition between India and China in Myanmar. Beijing has consistently sought to safeguard its economic investments and strategic access to the Indian Ocean through the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. As power shifts from the military to ethnic armed organisations in several regions, both India and China are adapting their engagement with local stakeholders. New Delhi must ensure that delays in its connectivity projects do not create strategic vacuums that could further expand China's influence in India's immediate neighbourhood.

India should also intensify its engagement with ASEAN, Bangladesh and other regional partners to promote a coordinated response to Myanmar's prolonged instability. Humanitarian assistance, border security, refugee management and infrastructure connectivity require multilateral cooperation rather than isolated national responses. As a country with strong historical links to Myanmar and growing strategic interests in Southeast Asia, India is well positioned to play a constructive diplomatic role in encouraging dialogue and supporting efforts toward an inclusive political settlement.

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BIS should be industry-friendly, promote voluntary quality standards: Minister

New Delhi, July 3 (GNS): Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Pralhad Joshi presided over the 9th meeting of Governing Council of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in New Delhi. He is ex-officio President of the Governing Council of BIS.

During his presidential address, the Union Minister said BIS has brought 371 districts in the country under mandatory hallmarking scheme of jewellery thereby, providing quality assurance to consumers. He directed that more districts be also added in the coming year. He laid special emphasis on making industry and other stakeholders more aware of BIS initiatives.

He also stressed upon the importance of Indian standards for various products and services and appreciated the milestone achievements of BIS with formulation of 23798 Indian standards across sectors. Joshi mentioned the support provided by BIS to various Ministries/ Departments in increasing the number of QCOs from 14 in 2014 to 191 today, covering 774 products along with two horizontal QCOs, which would contribute towards safety of consumers.

He highlighted the contribution of BIS in promoting a quality ecosystem. The Minister said that BIS is more than a regulator and urged the Bureau to act as a facilitator by adopting industry friendly approach and promoting the adoption of BIS mark on voluntary basis. Appreciating that the laboratories processed over 2.5 lakh samples in 2024-25, he also said that BIS should make concerted efforts to enhance transparency in sample testing and issuing certifications.

He placed importance on the need for increased engagement with MSME sector to handhold these small units and ensure their preparedness for compliance with technical regulations. Appreciating initiatives such as Manak Manthan and Manak Samvaad at the level of Branch offices of BIS, he laid emphasis on closer engagement with industry, accessibility and prompt redressal of any problems faced by the small industries. In order to strengthen the regulatory system, he emphasized that BIS should have zero tolerance towards any malpractices. Approving proposals worth Rs. 78 crore to strengthen testing capacity in areas such as aerospace components, solar PV modules, organic food, and high-voltage equipment, he expressed the need to boost the testing infrastructure in the country to match the demands of an emerging economy. He pointed out that all these holistic efforts will help in positioning India as a global leader in standardization.

Ministers from Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Gujarat and Assam, who are members of the Governing Council, were also present during the meeting.

Inter-Ministerial coordination key to Viksit Bharat 2047: Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, July 3 (GNS): In a first-of-its-kind initiative, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences; Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space; and Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh today convened a high-level joint meeting of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) with Secretaries of different other Ministries.

The meeting aimed to iron out, face to face, on the spot, long-standing administrative and personnel-related issues confronting various Ministries and departments. The Minister's emphasis was on "Ease of procedures" for "Ease of Research". "Simplification of administrative rules is crucial for India's innovation driven economic growth through ease of R&D," said Dr Jitendra Singh. Emphasizing the simplification of procedures, Dr. Jitendra Singh observed that many of the issues plaguing scientific institutions are rooted in inconsistencies in recruitment rules, service conditions, retirement ages etc — which often vary in comparison to other civil servants and line ministries. This ambiguity, he noted, leads to administrative conflicts, particularly since members of the scientific fraternity are engaged through a variety of modes such as national and international institutes, lateral entry, and deputation frameworks.

Dr. Jitendra Singh underlined the need for more uniformity in administrative mechanisms across all Science and Technology departments. He stated, "These administrative roadblocks must be addressed if we are to promote ease of doing research and innovation in India. Science and Technology, coupled with research and innovation, are going to be the harbingers of India's economic growth, he said.

Recognizing his dual role as the Science and Technology Minister and the Minister of DoPT, Dr. Singh said he was fully aware of the administrative issues being faced by scientific departments. He took the initiative to bring all concerned ministries onto the same page to resolve systemic bottlenecks and lay the groundwork for future policy reforms. "This is a very important meeting," Dr. Jitendra Singh remarked, "because it sets the tone for inter-ministerial collaboration, the whole of the Govt approach to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat @ 2047. We must shift away from the orthodox route, which takes a long time to channel solutions, and instead use such breakthrough meetings to resolve issues in real time."

Highlighting the government's broader efforts toward administrative efficiency, Dr. Jitendra Singh referred to DoPT's recent drive to weed out more than 1,600 obsolete laws and simplify procedures for the benefit of citizens and the scientific community alike. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing the visionary framework through the Viksit Bharat @ 2047 initiative, which recognizes that administrative reform is a critical component of national development. The Minister emphasized, "Administrative procedures should be as simple as possible. We need to move from rule to role, from rigidity to responsiveness, from delay to delivery."

The Minister also stressed the importance of creating a governance framework that keeps pace with the rapidly evolving scientific and technological landscape. He observed that delays in administrative approvals and procedural complexities often discourage researchers and institutions from pursuing ambitious projects, ultimately affecting India's global competitiveness in innovation and advanced research.

Dr. Jitendra Singh called upon all participating ministries to adopt a collaborative and solution-oriented approach in resolving inter-departmental issues. He said that regular consultations among ministries would help identify bottlenecks early and ensure that policy decisions are implemented efficiently without unnecessary procedural delays.

Officials participating in the meeting discussed several personnel-related matters, including recruitment norms, career progression, deputation policies, service conditions and retirement benefits for scientists and researchers. The discussions focused on developing a more harmonised administrative framework that addresses the unique requirements of scientific institutions while maintaining consistency across government departments.

Myntra's 22nd EORS live with over 4 million styles from 10,000+ brands

Bengaluru, July 3 (GNS): Myntra, one of India's leading fashion, beauty, and lifestyle destinations, on Saturday kicked off the 22nd edition of its flagship End of Reason Sale (EORS). The much-awaited mega fashion shopping event is sure to dazzle fashion and beauty enthusiasts across the country. Shoppers from metros and non-metros can explore a vast selection of over 4 million styles from more than 10,000 brands, including international, domestic, and homegrown brands.

With something for every taste and trend, it's the ultimate destination for those looking to refresh their wardrobes and beauty shelves with the season's most stylish picks. The categories that are witnessing traction from consumers during EORS include men's casual wear, men's and women's ethnic wear, women's western wear, beauty, and personal care, watches and wearables, accessories, travel essentials, sports footwear, kids' wear, and wedding collections.

Several popular brands that are witnessing heightened traction include Levi's, Nike, adidas, H&M, MANGO, L'Oreal, Lakme, Libas, Decathlon, New Balance, Wrogn, US Polo Assn., Puma, and Rare Rabbit, among others. From breezy silhouettes to vibrant statement pieces, the collections offer something for every occasion, mood, and personal style. Adding to the thrill, FWD, Myntra's Gen-Z proposition, features over 200K+ trend-first styles from brands including SZN, Freakins, Bonkers Corner, Glitchez, Anouk Rustic, Lulu & Sky, KPOP, and Outzider among many others.

Exciting new launches for the 22nd edition of EORS

The 22nd edition of EORS is making shopping delightful with a slew of new launches. These include the US-based iconic brand GAP, and the famed designer Tarun Tahiliani's luxury pret line -- OTT, both launching on Myntra for the first time. Other exciting new collection launches include Emporio Armani, Elie Saab, K-18, and the new Alia Bhatt x L'Oréal Casting Crème Gloss line, in the Beauty category. Sneaker lovers are in for a treat with new arrivals including the adidas Originals Superstar 2, adidas Spaziel, Puma Palermo, and Lotto Leggenda.

Home and living get a refresh with stylish launches from Royal Oak, COIRFIT, Drogo. Furthermore, as part of its continued support for emerging made-in-India brands, customers are able to shop from new D2C brands launched under Myntra's Rising Stars (MRS) Home Edit programme including Phool, Modish Couture, and Sleep Spa this season. New launches in the watches and wearables category include Realme (Air 7 Pro, Air 7, and Wireless 5), Swiss Military, Noise Icon 2, Boult (K30 & W30), Daniel Klein, French Connection, and Belkin -- making this season of EORS one of the most comprehensive and thrilling yet.

This platform will serve as a vigilant watchtower against misinformation: Prataprao Jadhav

New Delhi, July 3 (GNS): In a landmark step toward strengthening consumer protection and regulatory oversight in the field of traditional medicine, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Ayush; and Union Minister of State, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, today launched the AyushSuraksha Portal at Ayush Bhawan, New Delhi. The portal was unveiled during a press briefing, marking a significant moment in the Ministry's efforts to enhance accountability and transparency across the Ayush sector.

Speaking at the event, the Minister stated, "with the launch of the Ayush-Suraksha Portal, we are empowering citizens and professionals alike to become active participants in safeguarding the integrity of Ayush systems. This platform will serve as a vigilant watchtower against misleading advertisements and ensure that only safe and credible products reach the people."

"The AyushSuraksha Portal represents a significant advancement in pharmacovigilance and regulatory convergence within the Ayush ecosystem. By integrating data from State Licensing Authorities, national pharmacovigilance centres, and key regulatory stakeholders, the portal facilitates real-time monitoring, systematic analysis, and coordinated action on misleading advertisements and adverse drug reactions. We have made it accessible to the public so that any citizen can directly report misleading ads or ADRs via the portal," said Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush.

The Ayush Suraksha Portal has been developed in accordance with the Supreme Court's order dated July 30, 2024, in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 645/2022, wherein the Court emphasized the need for a centralized dashboard for monitoring and publishing data related to misleading advertisements and adverse drug reactions. The Court directed the Union of India to ensure that such a system is established to allow State Licensing Authorities to report complaints, share inter-state referrals, and update the status of actions taken. The Ministry of Ayush has met the directive well before the Court's deadline of June 2025.

The portal, developed with the technical support of the Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS) and aligned with the National Pharmacovigilance Program, allows consumers, healthcare professionals, and regulatory authorities to report and monitor misleading advertisements and adverse drug reactions through a seamless digital process. The system integrates multiple authorities, including the Ayush vertical under CDSCO, MoI&B, CCPA, NCISM, NCH, PCI, FSSAI, and State Licensing Authorities, ensuring coordinated response and enforcement.

EaseMyTrip sees sharp 59 pc sequential drop in Q4 net profit, revenue slips

Mumbai, July 3 (GNS): Online travel aggregator (OTA) EaseMyTrip has reported a sharp decline in its net profit for the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY25, as earnings fell by over 59 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) compared to the previous quarter (Q3 FY25).

Nishant Pitti-run company's net profit after tax (PAT) stood at Rs 13.9 crore in Q4 FY25, down from Rs 34 crore in Q3 FY25, according to its stock exchange. The company also witnessed a drop in revenue from operations, which fell to Rs 139 crore in Q4 FY25 from Rs 150 crore in Q3 FY25 -- a decrease of approximately 7.33 per cent.

Compared to the same quarter last year (Q4 FY24), revenue dropped by 15 per cent from Rs 164 crore. This suggests that growth for the online travel platform remained sluggish on the quarterly basis. Total income during the quarter also fell by 6.54 per cent to Rs 143 crore, while total expenses surged by nearly 22 per cent to Rs 130.9 crore in Q4 FY25 from Rs 107.5 crore in the previous quarter. For the full fiscal year FY25, EaseMyTrip's revenue remained almost flat at Rs 587 crore, compared to Rs 590 crore in FY24. Meanwhile, total expenses for the year increased to Rs 460 crore, as per its regulatory filing. Air ticketing, which remains the company's core revenue driver contributing 68 per cent of overall revenue, saw a 28 per cent drop to Rs 94 crore in Q4 FY25 from Rs 132 crore in the same period previous fiscal (Q4 FY24). Hotel packages contributed 16.5 per cent of revenue, bringing in Rs 23 crore. Despite the quarterly dip, the company managed to post a profit before tax of Rs 12 crore in Q4 FY25, compared to a loss of Rs 17 crore in Q4 FY24. On an annual basis, profit before tax was largely stable, coming in at Rs 143 crore in FY25 versus Rs 142 crore in FY24. EaseMyTrip's stock ended the last trading session at Rs 11.28, up 0.71 per cent, giving the company a total market capitalisation of Rs 3,997 crore.

Cooking oil to turn cheaper as Centre halves customs duty on imports

New Delhi, July 3 (GNS): The government has halved the basic customs duty on crude palm oil, crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil from 20 per cent to 10 per cent to bring down prices of cooking oils in the local market and ease the strain on household budgets.

The reduction in customs duty has kicked in with immediate effect as the government wants to lower edible oil prices which had risen by as much as 17.4 per cent in April at time when the retail inflation has been declining. The move is also expected to benefit domestic oil processing industries as it reduces raw material costs for them. With the 10 per cent duty cut, the total import duty on the three oils will effectively come down to 16.5 per cent from 27.5 per cent. In September 2024, the government imposed a 20 per cent basic customs duty on crude and refined vegetable oils. After the revision, crude palm oil, crude soyoil, and crude sunflower oil attracted a 27.5 per cent import duty, compared to 5.5 per cent previously, while 35.75 per cent customs duty is levied on refined grades of the three oils.

India's edible oil imports are estimated to be around 15-16 million tonnes annually. This represents a major chunk of the country's overall edible oil consumption, estimated to be between 23 and 25 million tonnes.

While India imports palm oil from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, soyoil and sunflower oil are imported from Argentina, Brazil, Russia and Ukraine.

The Centre is keeping a close watch on inflation and on Thursday announced the imposition of stock limits on wheat applicable to wholesale traders and retailers across the country to prevent hoarding and speculation that drives up inflation.

The order imposes a limit of wholesale traders (MT) is 3,000 metric tonnes (MT) on the wheat stock that wholesale traders are allowed to keep. For retail traders the stock limit has been fixed at 10 MT, .

Azharuddin launches online portal for Christian Minority Welfare Schemes

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) Telangana Minister for Minorities Welfare and Public Enterprises Mohammed Azharuddin on Friday launched the Online Beneficiary Management & Monitoring System (OBMMS) for the Telangana Christian Minorities Finance Corporation (TGCMFC), enabling online applications for self-employment schemes for Christian minorities.

The Minister inaugurated the portal at the Dr B R Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat and formally launched online applications for the Sewing Machine Scheme for Christian minority women and the Motor Bike/e-Bike/Scooty/e-Scooter and Petty Business Schemes for eligible beneficiaries.

Azharuddin said the initiative, launched under the leadership of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, aims to promote transparent, technology-driven governance and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for Christian minority women and youth through self-employment.

Online applications will be accepted from July 3 to July 18 (up to 5 p.m.). Eligible applicants must be aged 21-55 years for the Sewing Machine and Petty Business schemes and 21-50 years for the vehicle schemes. The annual family income should not exceed Rs. 2 lakh in urban areas and Rs 1.5 lakh in rural areas.

Government Advisor on Minorities Welfare Mohammad Shabbir Ali, TGCMFC Chairman Deepak John, Principal Secretary B. Shafiullah, Director Abdul Hameed, Managing Director P. Sabitha and other senior officials attended the launch.

DGP stresses technology-driven, people-centric policing

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) C.V. Anand on Friday directed police officers across the State to strengthen people-centric policing by leveraging technology, enhancing visible policing and improving public accessibility.

Chairing a high-level review meeting with Unit Officers and Station House Officers (SHOs) at the State Police Heaquarters, the DGP reviewed the implementation of key policing initiatives, including the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), visible policing, cyber crime investigation, narcotics control, road safety, crime detection and police station inspections.

Emphasising the need for visible policing, Anand instructed officers to remain accessible to the public, regularly inspect police stations and closely monitor law and order, investigations and public grievances.

He directed officers to function from their offices instead of camp offices and ensure that designated public visiting hours at police stations are strictly followed.

The DGP also cautioned police personnel against unnecessarily intervening in civil disputes, particularly land-related matters, and asked officers to keep a close watch on misinformation and rumours circulating on social media. Highlighting the role of technology in policing, he directed all police stations to make optimum use of CCTNS, e-Sakshya and the Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS).

He instructed SHOs to upload digital evidence to the e-Sakshya portal immediately after registration of FIRs to facilitate efficient investigation and prosecution.

He said nearly 60-70 per cent of CCTNS data updation had been completed across the State. Adilabad, Rajanna Sircilla and Jayashankar Bhupalpally districts were commended for their performance, while Bhupalpally, Siddipet and Nalgonda were appreciated for effective implementation of e-Sakshya. Kamareddy and Wanaparthy recorded the highest utilisation of the e-Summons system.

Noting that nearly 70 per cent of crimes registered in the four Hyderabad Commissionerates are cyber crime-related.

Dy CM Bhatti accuses BRS of leaving Telangana with Rs 8.21 lakh crore debt

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) Telangana Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Friday accused the previous BRS government of pushing the state into a debt trap of Rs 8.21 lakh crore and challenged former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) to a public debate on the state's finances.

Addressing a press conference at the Secretariat, Bhatti alleged that BRS leaders K T Rama Rao and T Harish Rao were running a "Goebbels-style" misinformation campaign to conceal the financial burden left by the previous regime. He said the Congress government had repaid Rs 2.08 lakh crore, including principal and interest, in the last two-and-a-half years while restructuring high-interest loans, reducing the repayment burden from Rs 34,058 crore to Rs 11,915 crore and saving the state around Rs 22,142 crore.

The Deputy Chief Minister also rejected allegations of irregularities in Singareni Collieries, asserting that not even a kilogram of coal could go missing due to the company's geo-fencing security system.

He announced a comprehensive vigilance inquiry into the opposition's allegations of missing coal and accused the previous BRS government of failing to secure new coal blocks for Singareni while allowing key blocks to go to private players.

Bhatti further defended the government's welfare measures, saying hostel diet charges were now being released regularly, student allowances had been enhanced and uniforms, shoes and textbooks were being procured transparently through open tenders.

He urged the opposition to stop spreading what he described as baseless allegations and participate in discussions based on facts.

Seethakka seeks special relaxations for tribal gram panchayats before 16th Finance Commission

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) Telangana Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka) on Friday urged the 16th Finance Commission to provide special relaxations for Adivasi, tribal, Scheduled Area and backward Gram Panchayats in performance-based grants and 'Own Source Revenue' norms, stating that rural local bodies should not be judged solely on tax collection.

Addressing a national workshop on recommendations for rural local bodies under the chairmanship of union Panchayat Raj Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Seethakka said equal importance should be given to service delivery, sanitation, transparency, digital governance and public participation.

She sought flexibility in grant eligibility for Gram Panchayats with low revenue potential and significant tribal and Scheduled Caste populations.

The Minister also requested continued Central funding for 62 Gram Panchayats in Telangana where elections have been delayed due to pending court cases, saying development should not suffer in such exceptional circumstances.

She urged the Centre to continue adequate untied basic grants, strengthen digital infrastructure, staffing and internet connectivity in remote villages, and provide higher weightage in fund allocation for Scheduled Areas, backward districts and geographically challenging regions.

Emphasising cooperative federalism, Seethakka said stronger Gram Panchayats backed by financially empowered states were essential for building a stronger India, according to an official statement.

ACB books Telangana DSP in disproportionate assets case; raids unearth properties, cash and gold

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) The Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a disproportionate assets case against Sankireddy Bheem Reddy, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), presently serving in the Police Computer Services (PCS), Hyderabad, alleging that he amassed assets far beyond his known sources of income through corrupt practices and dubious means during his service.

Following the registration of the case, ACB officials conducted simultaneous searches on Thursday at the officer's residence and 15 other premises linked to his relatives, friends, benamidars and associates. During the raids, officials unearthed documents relating to a large number of immovable properties, including a villa at Vessella Meadows, Ibrahimbagh; a G 2 residential house with penthouse and a flat in Telecom Nagar; a flat in Gachibowli; a share in a commercial complex at Manikonda; commercial space near Manikonda Marrichettu Junction; two flats at Tellapur; several open plots in Hyderabad, Patancheru, Nagole and Mominpet; agricultural lands in Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Karnataka and Devanahalli near Bengaluru; besides an investment of Rs.75 lakh in M/s Sri Raghavendra Rock Sand Minerals. Documents relating to over 20 properties, including agricultural land at Muchintala village, were seized during the searches, a ACB statement said on Friday.

The ACB also recovered cash of about Rs.3.60 lakh from the DSP's residence and another Rs.40 lakh from the house of his alleged benamidar. In addition, officials found about two kilograms of gold ornaments, around 20 kilograms of silver articles and bank deposits amounting to nearly Rs.19.91 lakh. The ACB said the market value of the seized immovable properties is likely to be several times higher than their registered document value. Further investigation into the case is underway.

Additional CEO inspects Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) Telangana Additional Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vasam Venkateswarlu Reddy on Friday inspected the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the Khairatabad and Rajendranagar Assembly constituencies and directed officials to strictly adhere to the Election Commission of India (ECI) guidelines during the verification process.

During his visit, the Additional CEO reviewed the SIR exercise at Polling Station No. 211 in the Khairatabad constituency and Polling Station No. 184 in the Film Nagar and MRC Colony areas of Banjara Hills.

He also inspected polling stations in Kokapet and Manchirevula under the Rajendranagar constituency.

He reviewed the progress of the door-to-door voter enumeration and instructed Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to personally distribute enumeration forms to voters. He also directed them to verify and process cases involving permanently shifted, deceased and duplicate voters strictly as per ECI norms using the BLO App. Emphasising voter awareness, Venkateswarlu Reddy urged officials to inform eligible citizens that they could also register online through the ECI's voter services portal. Khairatabad Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), BLOs and other election officials accompanied him during the inspection.

AI will not replace Doctors, but Doctors using AI will lead future healthcare: D Nageshwar Reddy

Hyderabad, July 3 (GNS) Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to make healthcare more accessible, affordable and efficient, but it should complement rather than replace doctors, AIG Hospitals Chairman Dr D Nageshwar Reddy said on Friday while delivering the 16th Foundation Day Lecture at the ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education.

Speaking on the theme, "Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Healthcare," Dr Nageshwar Reddy remarked, "AI will not replace doctors, but doctors who use AI will replace those who don't." He said AI is transforming drug discovery, radiology, telemedicine, precision medicine, cancer detection and remote patient monitoring, while significantly reducing drug development timelines.

Highlighting AI initiatives at AIG Hospitals, he spoke about MIRA, an AI-powered medical assistant that supports doctors, nurses and patients, and iSAVE, an early warning system that alerts clinicians before a patient's condition deteriorates.

He said AI has also improved pre-surgery evaluation, reduced surgery dropout rates and enhanced screening for diseases such as fatty liver and cancer.

Stressing the need for ethical adoption, Dr Nageshwar Reddy said issues relating to data privacy, quality and regulation must be addressed to ensure AI benefits all sections of society.

ICFAI Chancellor Dr C Rangarajan, who presided over the function, said AI was still in its early stages and should be used responsibly to make healthcare more affordable and inclusive. Vice Chancellor (I/c) Dr. T. Koti Reddy, faculty members, students, research scholars and other dignitaries attended the lecture. Dr. Nageshwar Reddy also underscored the importance of equipping healthcare professionals with AI-related skills, saying continuous training and collaboration between doctors.

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, Miralam Tank, Hyderabad 500 064. Printed at RIYAZ PRINTING PRESS. #22-8-161 Behind Nayaab Hotel Chatta Bazar, Hyderabad - 500002 Telangana. Head Office Contact No.0404537318, www.falaknumanews.in