FALAKNUMA NEWS

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FALAKNUMA NEWS

ENGLISH DAILY

www.falaknumanews.in

RNI Reg NO.TGENG/26/A3255

VOL: 1 | Issue No: 84 | TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2026 | PUBLISHED FROM HYDERABAD | PAGES: 4 | RS.1/-

Shah to reply on student stir, Opposition wants debate on temple theft too

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): A three-week parliamentary deadlock persisted on Monday with the government giving in to the demand for Home Minister Amit Shah's statement on the student protest in a bid to break the logjam, but the Opposition insisting on a debate on the Ram Mandir donation theft too. Hours after Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told the Lok Sabha that Shah was willing to make a statement on the student protest and reply to a debate on the issue "provided the Opposition listened peacefully and did not run away scared", Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi cited not one but three demands.

"Our first demand was that the Home Minister should tell the country if he gave the orders of police action on students. If he did, he is culpable. If he didn't, he is incompetent. Either way, he has to go. The second demand was that the PM should apologise for mistreatment of students. The third was the discussion on Ram Mandir theft," Rahul said this evening after the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day around 2.20 pm.

Reacting to this, Union Minister JP Nadda accused Rahul of deliberately disrupting Parliament for the last 15 days and misleading the country. He said the government agreed to discuss the NEET paper leak issue in Parliament, accepting Rahul's demand, but the Congress leader kept changing goalposts.

The government's offer for Shah's reply on the student protest came from Rijiju at the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) of the Lok Sabha, which Speaker Om Birla chaired in the afternoon. Later, Rijiju made the same offer in the Lok Sabha, which reconvened at 2 pm after disruptions but the Opposition continued its sloganeering.

Sources who attended the BAC meeting said the government, to break the deadlock, offered Shah's reply or a structured debate on the student protest on the condition that the Congress-led Opposition "participated in it, and did not run away".

The Congress, sources said, did not give any assurance on Rijiju's offer while Samajwadi Party demanded a debate on the Ram Mandir donation issue. "The Congress also backed the Ram Mandir debate demand," sources said, adding that consensus eluded the meeting with the government categorically rejecting the temple theft debate demand citing an ongoing SIT probe into the matter by the Uttar Pradesh Government.

At the same meeting, the Opposition also demanded that two Bills introduced in the Lok Sabha today—the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill-2026 and The National Cooperative Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill-2026—be referred to a joint parliamentary committee for scrutiny. The government didn't commit to this.

At the BAC meeting, the Speaker also made a fervent appeal to the Opposition to let the Lok Sabha function saying their principal demand for Shah's statement had been heeded. "The Speaker urged the Opposition to let the House run, but to no avail," said sources. Soon after the meeting, Law Minister Arjun Meghwal piloted the Tribunals Reforms Bill-2026 in the Lok Sabha when it reconvened and the agenda was passed without any debate as the Opposition continued to protest inside the House.

'Vande Mataram' to be sung from Red Fort for first time on I-Day

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, Aug 10 (GNS): Vande Mataram will be sung from the ramparts of the Red Fort for the first time on Independence Day this year, marking a historic moment as the country celebrates 150 years of the National Song.

The announcement was made by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at a press conference in New Delhi on Monday. He said the rendition of Vande Mataram from the historic monument would be a tribute to its enduring legacy and its role in inspiring millions during India's freedom struggle. The National Song will be sung when Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives at the Red Fort for the Independence Day celebrations. He will then unfurl the National Flag and deliver his customary address to the nation. The celebrations this year will have a special focus on Yuva Shakti, highlighting the contribution of India's youth towards the country's development and the goal of building a Viksit Bharat by 2047, Singh said.

The 2026 celebrations assume added significance as they coincide with the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram. Written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the song became a powerful symbol of India's freedom movement and inspired generations of freedom fighters. The government has also taken steps to strengthen the legal status of the National Song. Parliament recently passed the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, extending legal protection to Vande Mataram against acts of insult.

Students face tear gas, lathicharge in bid to storm Jharkhand Assembly

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS) What began as a protest by hundreds of job aspirants and students over the alleged irregularities in JPSC and JSSC examinations in Jharkhand's capital Ranchi turned into an unprecedented confrontation outside the state Assembly on Monday, with the police resorting to the use of water cannons, tear gas and lathicharge.

Thousands of protesters broke through eight layers of barricading to reach the Assembly gates and its premises, refusing to leave.

The agitation, which entered its 17th day on Monday, was driven by demands for the cancellation of the JSSC CGL and JPSC examinations. The protesters are also seeking reforms in the commission and a CBI probe into the alleged irregularities, including paper leaks and manipulation of OMR sheets. The third round of talks between student representatives and the government on Sunday had failed.

Students began gathering at the protest site around 9 am before marching towards the Assembly. At the Jagannathpur temple, the Ranchi police had erected multiple barriers, including barricades fitted with barbed wire. The march began around 9.30 am. Student leader Devendra Mahto, who is on a hunger strike, reached the protest site in an ambulance. Another student leader, Kush Mahto, who has been on a hunger strike for six days, also joined the march in an ambulance.

FCRA bill 2026 seeks balance between foreign funds, accountability

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): Global funds play an important role in supporting India's development across several areas, and the government has welcomed genuine international partnerships through a legal framework that allows such contributions to be received and utilised meaningfully.

Governments worldwide have become increasingly conscious of the need to ensure that cross border financial flows remain transparent and accountable. With the rapid expansion of global financial networks, digital transactions and cross border funding mechanisms have posed challenges to financial transparency, foreign influence and protection of democratic institutions. India is no exception.

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) provides the framework to ensure that foreign money entering India comes through a registered, accountable and disclosed channel. Organisations receiving such funds are required to account for what they receive and how they spend it.

The Act protects institutions from risks of unregulated foreign financial influence while enabling them to carry out legitimate, impactful work. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 seeks to refine and strengthen this framework by addressing operational gaps, improving clarity, providing for judicial revision and appeal, and rationalising penalties.

The Home Ministry has argued that the Bill is about transparency, accountability and sovereignty, not banning foreign donations. Officials stress that thousands of NGOs remain registered and continue to receive funds, showing that FCRA is a disclosure regime rather than a tool to suppress civil society.

Heavy rain wreaks havoc across MP; 5 bodies recovered after car swept away, 3 missing

Bhopal/Rajgarh, Aug 10 (GNS): Heavy rain lashed several parts of Madhya Pradesh on Monday, leaving five people dead in Rajgarh after a van was swept into a rain-swollen drain, while waterlogging and flooded roads disrupted normal life across the state. The incident occurred in Padana town on the Pachore-Sarangpur road in Rajgarh district when the van carrying 11 people was swept into the Jhiri drain after the driver drove onto an under-construction bridge submerged in water, police said.

The occupants were travelling from Satwas in Dewas district to Kadlavad village. There were three men, four women and four children in the vehicle. "Three people managed to get out. So far, five bodies have been recovered. The identities are yet to be confirmed," a police officer said. According to preliminary information, the driver failed to notice the incomplete bridge as rainwater was flowing over it. The vehicle was swept about 20 feet into the drain. A rescue operation led by SDM Rohit Bamhore and SDOP Arvind Singh was underway till late evening. More details about the incident were awaited.

In another rescue in Rajgarh on Sunday, police and NDRF personnel evacuated saints and devotees stranded at Jal Mandir in Khilchipur after a sudden rise in the water level of the Gadganga River. The downpour severely hit the state capital as well. Bhopal received around seven inches of rain in the last 24 hours, leading to waterlogging in several areas and traffic snarls. Schools were closed as a precautionary measure. Minister Vishvas Sarang visited affected areas and directed officials to ensure relief measures and drain cleaning.

India condemns slovenia embassy defacement, seeks action

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): India on Monday condemned the defacement of the premises of its Embassy in Slovenia by anti-India elements and called for holding the perpetrators accountable. In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated, "Under the Vienna Convention, diplomatic premises are inviolable and must be protected. We have taken up the matter strongly with Slovenian authorities, both in New Delhi and in Ljubljana, so that the perpetrators behind such reprehensible acts are held accountable."

The MEA urged law enforcement authorities to take note of the hateful propaganda and disinformation being spread by such groups. Last month, India's Ambassador to Slovenia, Amit Narang, met Slovenia's Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Tone Kajzer and held discussions on ongoing bilateral cooperation.

"Ambassador Amit Narang was honoured to call on H.E. Tone Kajzer, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia, yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia. The Ambassador handed over a personal letter of congratulations from the External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar to the Minister," the Embassy of India in Ljubljana wrote on X. "Productive and wide-ranging discussions focused on specific steps to elevate the warm and friendly ties between India and Slovenia into a mutually beneficial partnership for the future," it added.

India sends 8 MT of essential medicines to Bolivia

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Sunday that India has dispatched eight metric tonnes of life-saving and essential medicines to Bolivia to support the public healthcare capacity.

"Extending a helping hand to a Global South partner. India has dispatched 8 MT consignment of life-saving and essential medicines to Bolivia in support of its public healthcare capacity. India always stands ready for advancing cooperation through solidarity and shared progress," the MEA said on social media platform X. Bolivia's Vice President Edmand Lara Montano visited India earlier in February and met the Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan on the sidelines of the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, discussing ways to enhance cooperation in solar energy, critical minerals, digitalisation, higher education and the medical sector.

Following their meeting, the Vice-President's Office in a post on X said, "Vice President of Bolivia, Edmand Lara Montano, called on the Vice President of India, CP Radhakrishnan, at Uprashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi today on the sidelines of the India AI Impact Summit 2026."

"The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the steady growth of bilateral relations between India and Bolivia. They discussed avenues for enhancing cooperation in solar energy, critical minerals, digitalisation, higher education, and the medical sector. The leaders also exchanged views on strengthening collaboration in multilateral and other international forums," it added. They discussed ways to enhance cooperation in solar energy, critical minerals, digitalisation, higher education and the medical sector. According to the MEA, India also donated a consignment of 300,000 doses of MR (Measles and Rubella) vaccines, including the essential supplies needed for their administration, to the South American nation in July last year.

India's Ambassador to Bolivia, Rohit Vadhwana, formally handed over the consignment at El Alto Airport in Bolivia's state capital La Paz, at a reception that was attended by Foreign Minister Celinda Sosa Lunda; Minister of Health and Sports, Maria Rene Castro Quisicanqui; and Vice Minister Max Enriquez Nava.

Northeast's battles: Land, coal & corruption

From Dima Hasao to Jaintia Hills, who owns the region's wealth?

Sanjoy Hazarika

THE question of land in the Northeast is central to political power and identity. Let me illustrate it through three recent examples. A Guwahati High Court Judge's admonishment of a corporate lawyer about a private company being allotted 3,000 bighas in the thickly forested and resource-rich Dima Hasao district has drawn wide media attention. The allotment was made by the local district council for the firm, owned by JK Lakshmi Cement of the New Delhi-based JK Group, to operate a mine and cement plant. Public interest in the issue has soared, especially after official videos of the court proceedings surfaced on social media, where the lawyer appeared clueless about the topography of the area. Is it a joke, the judge snapped, asserting that public interest was paramount.

Dima Hasao and two other districts in Assam are governed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, which gives locally elected politicians control over resources such as land, forests and water. The state government does not have much power over these subjects, which can be compared to the district panchayati system but is meant to protect tribal rights as the communities in these areas are poor and vulnerable.

The allotment was made after the Dima Hasao Autonomous Council passed resolutions making the land transfer in October and November last year. Two villages were informed that the acquisition would be done and they would receive compensation. But news accounts of the process say that the council received the bulk of the Rs 50-crore compensation and most villagers were given cheques for Rs 2 lakh while the village heads got Rs 15 lakh. Reactions and opposition erupted, especially after bulldozers (now a familiar sight in Assam aimed at evicting people from forest lands) arrived. A writ petition challenging the allotment was filed in the high court and this is the case where the judge made his remarks.

While the Sixth Schedule empowers tribal groups with specific powers, what needs to be asked is if the council applied its mind rigorously to the issue before deciding.

In the neighbouring state of Meghalaya, coal mining is one of the most sensitive political, economic and environmental issues. Allegations of extensive corruption and misgovernance have been swirling around for decades and the disappearance of lakhs of tonnes of the mineral under the nose of officials earlier this year despite a court order provoked anger.

But when nearly 4,000 tonnes of coal vanished last month and the state Excise Minister claimed it could have been washed away by heavy rains, derision replaced anger. The minister, Kyrmen Shylla, said, "Meghalaya receives the highest rainfall. You never know... because of rain, the coal might have swept away. Chances are very high." But then he appeared to back out, perhaps, because even he realised how absurd this sounded. "I cannot blame just the rain. It could be or it could not be. I really don't have any kind of details," he said. But the issue is anything but funny. The National Green Tribunal banned coal mining in the state in 2014, following a series of mining disasters in what is known as rat-hole mines, where miners have to crawl into poorly ventilated mines to dig out coal. Yet illegal mining has persisted and, in the process, undermined the state's economy as it is untaxed; big names are said to be involved, but are only whispered about and never surface in the public domain. According to the inquiry committee appointed by the high court to investigate illegal mining and transportation of coal, more than 1,500 coal depots were to be inspected by state officials. Only a handful have been checked and Justice BP Katakey is exasperated by the slow pace of the work of the state government. "I find the progress in East Jaintia Hills (district) very slow and unsatisfying, while the quantity in other districts is very small," he remarked.

Meghalaya depends on Central government funds to run its administrative machinery and projects and raises limited financial resources of its own. However, some funding comes from what are euphemistically called EAPs or externally aided projects which are financed by such lending institutions as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the German development organisation, GIZ.

Fair climate finance requires debt reform

Mohamed Adow

When delegates from around the world convened in Bonn, Germany, for the 62nd session of the UN Climate Change Subsidiary Bodies, the specter of sovereign debt loomed large. For African countries, in particular, debt is no longer a problem unfolding in parallel with escalating climate shocks and widening development deficits, but rather the key obstacle to effective crisis responses. Debt reform and climate finance are two sides of the same coin. According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, African countries owe $655 billion in external debt, while debt-service payments have more than doubled since 2010, driven by rising interest rates and currency depreciation. This year, the continent's collective debt-service bill will amount to a whopping $79 billion. In 2023, 34 African countries spent more on debt service than on health or education, let alone disaster relief or green infrastructure.

Comprehensive debt cancelation is a prerequisite to progress on sustainable development. But it is only the beginning. Shaped by colonial power dynamics, the global financial architecture is practically designed to entrench inequality. When issuing loans to developing economies, institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank often impose conditions that constrain these countries' fiscal space and hardwire austerity into domestic policy. Short-term relief thus comes with long-term shackles. Many believe that mobilizing private investment is the key to closing the climate finance gap. "Derisking" climate finance and attracting private capital through tools such as green bonds and blended finance are among the G20's flagship priorities. The decision on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, made at COP29 in Baku last year, likewise emphasizes the importance of private sector participation. South Africa, which assumed the G20 presidency in December 2024, has echoed this approach. For example, at the G20 finance ministers' meeting in February, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa called on the private sector, together with international financial institutions and development banks, to implement "innovative financing and insurance mechanisms" aimed at scaling up funding for disaster prevention and post-disaster reconstruction.

But the private sector has long struggled to engage effectively in climate negotiations or identify viable projects that serve climate, development and commercial objectives simultaneously. Since the infrastructure projects that are needed to strengthen climate resilience mature over a period of 20 to 30 years, countries need reliable access to long-term finance. But credit markets operate on three to five-year time horizons, meaning that borrowers often end up scrambling for more capital, which can be both unpredictable and expensive.

According to the ONE Campaign, the average interest rate on bonds for African countries in 2021 was 5.78 percent, compared to 1.14 percent on loans from the World Bank. These countries will pay $56 billion in additional interest over the lifetime of loans contracted in 2017 to 2021, compared to what they would have paid if they had borrowed at World Bank rates. The much-touted "blended finance" model does not solve this problem, because it often combines public and private funds in ways that leave countries exposed to credit market risk.

The real issue is that private finance is structurally biased against the Global South, owing partly to fundamental flaws in sovereign risk assessments. If the private sector is to help close the climate finance gap without trapping developing countries in cycles of repayment and dependency, we must first resolve the information asymmetries that enable credit rating agencies and institutional investors to define "risk" in ways that penalize developing economies. Ramaphosa — who has voiced support for reforming global credit-rating systems — should help spearhead this process.

At the same time, however, we must recognize the limits of private capital, particularly when it comes to financing for adaptation and loss and damage. There is no substitute for a major expansion of grants and public financing. The responsibility for tackling biases in the global financial system falls on the entire international community not least the advanced economies that are now cutting their climate aid budgets. Nonetheless, African countries must take more responsibility for driving change.

Next prosperity round demands human capital

India has been experiencing bilateral difficulties with the United States. The economic dimensions of these difficulties are expected to impact India adversely. First, the US is India's biggest export destination, and so tariffs, both economic and geopolitical, will adversely impact India's current account deficit and economic growth. Second, the Trump administration's nativist base wishes to limit foreign access to jobs. They see Indian skilled immigrants as a prime political target. Since the US is the favoured emigration destination for educated and upwardly mobile young Indians, this hurts them, especially at a time when their economic prospects within India are at their bleakest this century.

In my analysis, the macroeconomic impact is manageable. India has enough foreign exchange reserves to comfortably finance a temporary widening of the current account deficit if exports and remittances fall, offering temporary elbow room to diversify. There is also scope to moderate imports, especially of luxury discretionary consumption, which has been spiralling in recent years.

However, the picture is different for the peninsula—the five southern states.

As India's premier manufacturing state, Tamil Nadu will take a hit. Thirty-one percent of the state's exported output goes to the US. Thirty percent of Tiruppur's garment exports go to the US. The Tiruppur exporters association estimates that this will cost the industry 6,000 crore. Fresh orders have stalled; existing orders are on hold. With average margins of just eight percent, the sector cannot absorb the tariff shock and remain competitive. Tamil Nadu also accounts for 37 percent of India's electronics exports, a large chunk of which goes to the US.

The impact on Karnataka will be more in the services, especially the IT sector, though aerospace components, petrochemicals and hydraulic and electrical machinery are also exported to the US. The IT services sector generates many jobs, so cutbacks in this sector will have a derivative recessionary impact on domestic demand as well, especially in the Bengaluru-Mysuru belt, which contributes 60 percent of Karnataka's GSDP. For now, Telangana will be less affected than Karnataka, as it is more diversified. While IT exports are sizeable, pharmaceuticals, biochemicals, medical, and business process services exports are also important players in Telangana's growth story. These have also generated spillover effects in Andhra Pradesh (particularly Vishakapatnam). However, if tariffs begin to impact the medical and medical services industries, then the hit to prosperity will be sizeable.

Andhra Pradesh is the poorest state in the peninsula and, therefore, less hit by tariffs on goods, as is also the case with the wealthiest state, Kerala. They export spices (Kerala) and seafood (both) to the US. These are employment-intensive activities. However, the impact will be cushioned if suppliers are proactive, as these exports are highly geographically diversified.

Curbs on skilled migration will also impact the southern states. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana are major suppliers of H-1B visa labour to the US. Its consulate in Hyderabad is the largest in South Asia because of the volume of demand for its visa services. Telugu speakers are the largest pool of Indian immigrants in the US. With curbs on further growth, the direct and indirect (through remittances and investments) impact on the prosperity of these three states could be significant. Kerala and Tamil Nadu will also be impacted, but their emigration flows to the US are smaller and higher-end. High-end emigration faces more relaxed barriers under the new US wage priority system.

There is also a silver lining that leverages the peninsula's high human development and investment in (relatively) attractive metropolitan cities. A consequence of restricting low-paid, insecure H-1B work in the US would be the reduction of huge earnings from investment in patented innovations in IT, fintech, aerospace, medicine, biotech, and business process engineering. These investments have driven the vast increases in wealth in the US in contemporary times. New York, Houston, Chicago and Silicon Valley are not going to give these up to Trump without a fight. Hence, they will try to offshore these activities to less costly locations. They know from the H-1B migration that the supply of cheap, low-end tech labour is abundant in India. Hence, the rapid rise of Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in all peninsular cities, especially Hyderabad. This will replace export income with domestic income, which will temper the impact of Trump's policies on the peninsula (but not on India's trade balance).

The disproportionate impact of Trump's protectionist and nativist policies on the peninsula is a result of its economic and human development success. The peninsula is, and has been, the most modern and forward-looking part of India for at least the past 35 years. Its prosperity is in no small measure linked to its success in maintaining profitable relationships with overseas trading partners and the export of a skilled workforce, especially to the US. The rest of India is more insular, less skilled and less oriented to profitable overseas relationships and, therefore, will suffer much less from the ravages of Trump and his minions. The peninsula is resilient to such adversity. I see great confidence among political and business leaders that they will be able to structurally overcome the challenges through increasing the range of diversification, negotiating with existing customers on cost-sharing these tariffs, and seeking ways to increase productivity rapidly. The governments of all the states have also responded with alacrity to the opportunity that GCCs afford.

In fact, Trump may have done the peninsula a favour. I have been arguing that the next round of prosperity will come to the peninsula not through competing on cheap labour but on demonstrating increased productivity and doubling down on investments in human capital, research and development, and process engineering, to produce—for India and the world—products at the higher end of the value chain.

This is not something in which the Indian government is interested, or even competent to address. If they can maintain macroeconomic stability (a big if) in the face of this shock, that is enough, thank you. It is for the business, political, and intellectual leaders of the peninsula to rise to meet this epochal challenge.

The first priority, therefore, must be to accelerate the diversification of export markets. Dependence on the US cannot be replaced overnight, but southern states have the institutional capacity, industrial base and entrepreneurial networks to expand their presence in Europe, East Asia, West Asia and Africa. State governments should work closely with industry associations to identify sectors where Indian firms can become competitive suppliers rather than simply seeking tariff exemptions for existing exports. The objective should be to build resilience into the export architecture rather than repeatedly negotiate relief after every external shock.

The second priority is to deepen the domestic ecosystem around the industries most exposed to US policy. Garments, electronics, pharmaceuticals, IT services, aerospace and medical technology cannot remain dependent on imported components, fragmented supply chains or low-value production. Southern India has the universities, technical workforce and metropolitan infrastructure needed to move these sectors towards higher-value manufacturing and services. Public policy should therefore focus less on subsidies and more on reliable infrastructure, faster approvals, research partnerships, logistics and access to patient capital.

The GCC opportunity deserves particular attention. If American companies find it increasingly expensive or politically difficult to employ large numbers of workers in the US, they will look for locations that can deliver the same intellectual and technological output at competitive costs. Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kochi and other southern cities are already demonstrating that India can provide such ecosystems.

But simply attracting more back-office employment will not be enough. The next generation of GCCs must move into product development, artificial intelligence, semiconductor design, cybersecurity, biotechnology, engineering and global decision-making functions. That would transform the region from a labour supplier into a centre of innovation.

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ENGLISH DAILY
HYDERABAD, TELANGANA

Prevention, not pills, key to obesity & diabetes: Dr. Singh

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Minister of State PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today addressed the launch of the book “The Weight Loss Revolution Weight Loss Drugs and How to Use Them” authored by eminent endocrinologist Dr. Ambrish Mithal along with Mr. Shivam Vij.

The event was graced by legendary cinema personality Sharmila Tagore and media baron Shobhana Bhartia. Dr. Jitendra Singh, himself a Professor of Medicine, renowned Diabetologist and author of several books, said this book has come at the right time when India is witnessing a surge in obesity and the related metabolic disorders. While awareness and the right kind of information needs to be propagated, he cautioned against disinformation.

He underlined that India, once called the diabetes capital of the world, is now also emerging as the obesity capital, ranking third globally in childhood obesity.

Dr. Jitendra Singh, in his address, highlighted the growing health challenge of obesity and related metabolic disorders such as diabetes mellitus, dyslipidaemia, hypertension, coronary heart disease, and fatty liver disease. He pointed out that there is a sudden awakening across the country about these issues and cautioned against the unchecked spread of disinformation through unscientific diet charts and fad regimens.

Diet prescriptions, the Minister stressed, must always be guided by scientifically validated principles of quantity, quality, and distribution of food intake.

Emphasizing the need for “Indian data for Indian patients”, the Minister observed that central obesity—fat deposition around the abdomen—poses a more serious risk for Indians than Western populations. “Sometimes a simple inch tape around the waist may be more meaningful than a fanciful BMI chart,” he remarked. He also underscored the importance of lifestyle interventions, referring to Indian studies that show regular yoga practice can reduce the incidence of type-2 diabetes by up to 40%. He urged for greater integration of lifestyle modification, modern medicine, and traditional practices to provide holistic solutions.

On the subject of emerging weight loss drugs such as Ozempic and Mounjaro, Dr. Jitendra Singh advised caution, noting that while global experience may be encouraging, clinical outcomes often take decades to manifest. Drawing a parallel with the refined oils episode in India, he said hasty conclusions could be misleading.

Concluding his address, Dr. Jitendra Singh called for prevention-driven strategies, particularly in view of India’s young demographic. With more than 70% of the population below the age of 40, he stressed that the country cannot afford to let their potential be compromised by lifestyle diseases, and therefore, prevention must remain the mainstay of all future health programs.

Quoting Mark Twain, Dr. Jitendra Singh remarked that “economics is too serious a subject to be left to an economist,” adding that in the same way, diabetes and obesity are too serious to be left only to a Diabetologist. He emphasized that unless there is mass awareness, optimum outcomes in tackling these lifestyle diseases cannot be achieved.

The Minister also praised Dr. Ambrish Mithal for producing a timely and authoritative book which, he said, will not only serve as a valuable guide for medical professionals but will also help the public sift through fact and misinformation in an age dominated by social media and quick fixes.

Ayush health services reaching millions through National Ayush Mission and Arogya Mandirs: Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Ayush, hosted its 30th National Seminar on “Management of Illness & Wellness in Paediatrics through Ayurveda” at Scope Complex Auditorium, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, today. The two-day event aims to advance holistic paediatric healthcare by bringing together leading Ayurveda scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students.

The inaugural session was attended by prominent dignitaries, including Vaidya Devendra Triguna, Padma Shri & Padma Bhushan awardee; President, Governing Body, RAV; Prof. (Dr.) Manjusha Rajagopala, Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda; Vaidya Mukul Patel, Guru, CRAV, Governing Body Member, RAV and Vaidya Rakesh Sharma, Governing Body Member, RAV. Building upon the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the consistent guidance of Union Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Ayush, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, the first day of deliberations at the National Seminar reaffirmed that Ayurveda's wisdom can offer new dimensions to paediatric healthcare. Experts underlined that integrating time-tested practices with modern scientific validation will not only help in preventive child healthcare but also in addressing emerging health challenges in a holistic manner. This convergence of knowledge will serve as a foundation for shaping resilient and healthier generations. Union Minister of State (I/C) for Ministry of Ayush, Shri Prataprao Jadhav said in a written message, “Ayurveda has always placed child health as the cornerstone of a flourishing society. This National Seminar is a timely initiative to highlight Ayurveda's comprehensive approach to both illness management and wellness promotion in paediatric care. The deliberations here will enrich practitioners, researchers, and students, advancing paediatric healthcare through Ayurveda.”

Vaidya Devendra Triguna lauded Prime Minister Modi's leadership for elevating Yoga and Ayurveda globally and commended RAV for their focus on paediatric wellness. He acknowledged the contributions of All India Institute of Ayurveda in strengthening the Ayush sector. Prof. (Dr.) Manjusha Rajagopala highlighted that the Ministry of Ayush has seen tremendous growth in public trust since its inception. She further express gratitude to robust government support and the dedication of Ayush professionals. Dr. Vandana Siroha, Director, RAV, in her address, reiterated the seminar's importance in realizing the vision of “Swasth Balak, Swasth Bharat,” and underscored Ayurveda's paediatric branch, Kaumarbhritya, for its comprehensive approach to child wellness.

The event also saw the unveiling of a Souvenir and research Posters, symbolizing key achievements in paediatric Ayurveda. Highlights of Day1:- Scientific presentations spotlighting evidence-based approaches in paediatric Ayurveda Poster sessions featuring innovative research by young scholars and practitioners Interactive dialogues on preventive and promotive child healthcare Academicians, researchers, practitioners, and students of Ayurveda participated in the national endeavour and contribute to shaping the future of paediatric healthcare through Ayurveda.

“TDB backs Indigenous AI-Powered Blood Testing Device for Primary Healthcare”

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): Founded by Mr. Sahil Jagnani and Mr. Ankit Choudhury, alumni of IIT Guwahati, the company emerged from a multidisciplinary team of doctors, researchers, entrepreneurs, professors, and students working to develop affordable diagnostic technologies for underserved populations. Their collaborative R&D, initially supported by BIRAC, led to the creation of the Mobilab device—a portable, battery-operated clinical chemistry analyzer, IoT-enabled and powered by AI/ML algorithms, capable of testing over 25 parameters related to kidney, liver, heart, vitamins, and cancer.

The company holds a patent for “A transmittance-based system/kit for point-of-care quantification” transferred from IIT Guwahati and has filed over six additional patent applications related to integrated mixers, assay development, centrifuges, and proprietary optical systems. The device has already undergone trials on 10,000 patients and recently received a CDSCO manufacturing license.

The project will focus on enhancing the current prototype (M1) to perform five tests simultaneously, reducing patient waiting time, and setting up commercial-scale manufacturing. This next-generation Mobilab will include tests such as Hemoglobin, Creatinine, Bilirubin, Cholesterol, Triglycerides, Uric Acid, Glucose, and GGT, among others. Speaking on the occasion, Sh. Rajesh Kumar Pathak, Secretary, TDB, stated: "Ensuring quality healthcare access in rural and remote regions is a national priority. This project not only addresses affordability and accessibility but also demonstrates India's capability in developing indigenous, AI-powered diagnostic solutions for primary healthcare." The promoters of Primary Healthtech Pvt. Ltd. expressed their gratitude, saying: "TDB's support will accelerate our journey from lab innovation to large-scale deployment. With Mobilab, we envision bridging the healthcare gap for rural and underserved communities, ensuring that advanced diagnostics are available at the point of care, anywhere in India." This collaboration underscores TDB's commitment to fostering indigenous healthcare innovations aligned with Atmanirbhar Bharat and advancing India's presence in affordable medical technologies globally.

The project is expected to strengthen India's point-of-care diagnostic ecosystem by reducing dependence on expensive laboratory infrastructure. Conventional clinical chemistry testing often requires centralised laboratories, trained personnel and longer turnaround times, creating significant challenges for patients in rural and remote areas. A compact and portable platform such as Mobilab could help bring essential testing closer to communities.

The AI and IoT-enabled architecture of the device is designed to support faster and more efficient diagnostic workflows. By combining automated testing with digital connectivity, the system can potentially enable healthcare providers to record, monitor and share diagnostic results more effectively. This could be particularly useful in primary healthcare centres where access to advanced laboratory facilities remains limited. The simultaneous testing capability planned under the project is expected to improve operational efficiency at the point of care. Conducting multiple tests from a single patient sample can reduce waiting periods and help healthcare workers make quicker clinical decisions. The expanded test menu will also allow the platform to address a broader range of common health conditions and support routine screening.

Ayurveda places child health at the cornerstone of a flourishing society: Prataprao Jadhav

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth (RAV), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Ayush, hosted its 30th National Seminar on “Management of Illness & Wellness in Paediatrics through Ayurveda” at Scope Complex Auditorium, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, today. The two-day event aims to advance holistic paediatric healthcare by bringing together leading Ayurveda scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students.

The inaugural session was attended by prominent dignitaries, including Vaidya Devendra Triguna, Padma Shri & Padma Bhushan awardee; President, Governing Body, RAV; Prof. (Dr.) Manjusha Rajagopala, Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda; Vaidya Mukul Patel, Guru, CRAV, Governing Body Member, RAV and Vaidya Rakesh Sharma, Governing Body Member, RAV. Building upon the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the consistent guidance of Union Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Ayush, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, the first day of deliberations at the National Seminar reaffirmed that Ayurveda's wisdom can offer new dimensions to paediatric healthcare. Experts underlined that integrating time-tested practices with modern scientific validation will not only help in preventive child healthcare but also in addressing emerging health challenges in a holistic manner. This convergence of knowledge will serve as a foundation for shaping resilient and healthier generations. Union Minister of State (I/C) for Ministry of Ayush, Shri Prataprao Jadhav said in a written message, “Ayurveda has always placed child health as the cornerstone of a flourishing society. This National Seminar is a timely initiative to highlight Ayurveda's comprehensive approach to both illness management and wellness promotion in paediatric care. The deliberations here will enrich practitioners, researchers, and students, advancing paediatric healthcare through Ayurveda.”

Vaidya Devendra Triguna lauded Prime Minister Modi's leadership for elevating Yoga and Ayurveda globally and commended RAV for their focus on paediatric wellness. He acknowledged the contributions of All India Institute of Ayurveda in strengthening the Ayush sector. Prof. (Dr.) Manjusha Rajagopala highlighted that the Ministry of Ayush has seen tremendous growth in public trust since its inception. She further express gratitude to robust government support and the dedication of Ayush professionals. Dr. Vandana Siroha, Director, RAV, in her address, reiterated the seminar's importance in realizing the vision of “Swasth Balak, Swasth Bharat,” and underscored Ayurveda's paediatric branch, Kaumarbhritya, for its comprehensive approach to child wellness.

The event also saw the unveiling of a Souvenir and research Posters, symbolizing key achievements in paediatric Ayurveda. Highlights of Day1:- Scientific presentations spotlighting evidence-based approaches in paediatric Ayurveda Poster sessions featuring innovative research by young scholars and practitioners Interactive dialogues on preventive and promotive child healthcare Academicians, researchers, practitioners, and students of Ayurveda participated in the national endeavour and contribute to shaping the future of paediatric healthcare through Ayurveda.

Government Implements Comprehensive Measures to Boost Exports and Strengthen Domestic Manufacturing

New Delhi, Aug 10 (GNS): It is the constant endeavour of the Government to boost India's exports including promoting of MSME participation in global trade though export incentives, trade promotion events, and digital platforms to streamline processes. A major thrust has been placed on expanding market access through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Notably, India signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the United Kingdom on 24th July 2025, marking a significant milestone in bilateral trade relations. Meanwhile, negotiations for the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement is ongoing with an aim to conclude by end of the year.

To strengthen domestic manufacturing and export capabilities, the Government has implemented Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for 14 key sectors including Electronics, IT hardware, Pharmaceuticals, Bulk Drugs, High-Efficiency Solar PV Modules, Automobiles & Auto Components, White Goods, Telecom and Networking Products to enhance India's Manufacturing capabilities and Exports. These schemes have incentivized domestic manufacturing, leading to increased production, job creation, and a boost in exports. They have also attracted significant investments from both domestic and foreign players.

To enhance the efficiency of logistics and reduce associated costs across the country, the Government of India has launched landmark initiatives of National Logistics Policy (NLP) and PM Gati Shakti designed to streamline the movement of goods and people by addressing bottlenecks, improving coordination among various stakeholders, and leveraging technology for smarter logistics management. The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan plays a pivotal role in the integrated development of multimodal infrastructure to ensures seamless connectivity, faster transportation, and optimized resource utilization for boosting economic productivity and exports. Complementing these efforts is the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP), a transformative initiative aimed at establishing globally competitive manufacturing hubs with robust connectivity to domestic and international markets. These corridors are envisioned to catalyse industrial growth, attract investments, generate employment, and position India as a key player in global supply chains. Moreover, technology tools like Logistics Data Bank have improved transparency and efficiency. Together, these initiatives represent a strategic vision to modernize India's logistics ecosystem and industrial base, fostering long-term economic growth and global competitiveness.

Grassroots initiatives such as Districts as Export Hubs (DEH) and E-Commerce Export Hubs (ECEHs) are enabling SMEs including start-ups to compete globally through reduced costs and simplified regulations.

The Government has taken measures to promote exports from the districts under the Districts as Export Hubs Initiative. It includes identification of the products and services with export potential in all the districts of the country in consultation with all stakeholders including the States/UTs.

Under the Districts as Export Hubs initiative, district-level export promotion committees are working to identify local products, address supply-chain constraints and facilitate access to international markets. The approach is aimed at converting regional strengths in agriculture, handicrafts, textiles, engineering goods and other sectors into sustainable export opportunities, while creating greater employment and income opportunities at the local level.

The Government is also focusing on improving the participation of small businesses in digital commerce. E-commerce export hubs can help MSMEs access overseas consumers without requiring them to establish extensive physical distribution networks. Simplified customs procedures, digital documentation and improved logistics are expected to make cross-border e-commerce more accessible to smaller exporters.

Greater integration with global value chains remains another important priority. Indian manufacturers are being encouraged to improve product quality, adopt international standards and strengthen their technological capabilities so that they can become reliable suppliers to multinational companies. This is particularly important in sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles, engineering and renewable energy.

The Government is also working to address challenges faced by exporters relating to finance, certification, packaging and market information. Easier access to working capital and export credit, along with greater awareness of international standards and consumer preferences, can help smaller enterprises expand beyond traditional markets. Such measures are particularly important for first-time exporters seeking to establish a presence overseas.

CM Revanth Reddy participates in 'Maha Varuna Yagam' at Nagarjuna Sagar

Nagarjuna Sagar, Aug 10 (GNS): Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and his wife on Monday participated in the concluding rituals of the 'Maha Varuna Yagam' organised by the state government at Vijay Viharam on the banks of the Krishna river, seeking abundant rainfall across the state. The day-long yagam was performed according to Vedic traditions, with 108 Ruthviks from the Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple conducting homa rituals across 11 Homa Kundas amid chanting of mantras and Vedic rituals. Priests concluded the programme by performing Purnahuti (final oblation) in the presence of the Chief Minister.

Revanth Reddy prayed for abundant rainfall in the Krishna and Godavari river basins and sought blessings for optimum water levels in projects including Srisailam and Nagarjuna Sagar, as well as full tanks and ponds across Telangana. He also prayed for a rise in groundwater levels, good crop yields and prosperity for farmers and wished for the health and well-being of people in the state. Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy and his wife also participated in the yagam.

The government said the ritual was conducted in keeping with the traditional practice of performing yagnas and pujas for rains, while also pursuing scientific assessments and planning related to rainfall and water management. Telangana Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukhender Reddy, Ministers Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Konda Surekha, Government Advisers K Keshav Rao and P Sudarshan Reddy, former Minister K Jana Reddy and other public representatives attended the programme.

Old City residents lose Metro Phase-II land stay after HC nod

Hyderabad, Aug 10 (GNS): The Telangana High Court on Monday, August 10, allowed the Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited (HAML) to resume land acquisition for the Metro Rail Phase-II project, vacating a stay it had granted in January 2025 that had put the process on hold.

Justice NV Shravan Kumar passed the interim order while hearing a petition filed by the Telangana government seeking to lift the stay. The court clarified that questions about the legality and procedural compliance of the acquisition process would be examined at the final hearing of the petition, but that the acquisition itself could proceed in the meantime, strictly in accordance with law. The case concerns land acquisition for the Metro Phase-II corridor, which runs from MGBS to Chandrayangutta through Hyderabad's Old City. Eight petitioners, mostly shop and property owners in the area, approached the court arguing that the acquisition was being carried out in a way that was unfair to them.

They alleged that the government was acquiring significantly more land from the left side of the road than the right, rather than taking equally from both sides as the road was widened from 60 feet to 100 feet. They also challenged the compensation offered, saying rates as low as Rs 26,000 to Rs 81,000 per square yard were far below the actual market value of Rs 3 to 4 lakh per square yard in the area, and that their formal objections to the process had not been properly considered before the government proceeded with the acquisition. HAML countered that the alignment had been drawn up based on the officially approved city master plan and verified through drone and satellite surveys. It argued that uneven construction on both sides of the road made a perfectly equal split from both sides impossible, as it would result in a zig-zag alignment.

It added that compensation had been fixed through negotiations and that more than 300 of the 357 affected property owners had already accepted the awards and handed over possession of their properties. The court held that decisions on highway and metro alignment involve technical and engineering expertise that courts are not in a position to second-guess. It also held that blocking the project would harm the larger public interest by delaying a significant transport infrastructure link for the city. On those grounds, it vacated the stay and adjourned the matter for a further hearing on the merits.

BJP to intensify agitation against Cong govt's 'anti-people policies' after Aug 15

Hyderabad, Aug 10 (GNS) Telangana BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Monday announced that the party would intensify its agitation after August 15 against what he described as the Congress government's "anti-people policies" and alleged failures in implementing its promises. Addressing media persons at the BJP state headquarters here, Rao alleged that the Congress government had failed to fulfil its commitments to people even after nearly three years in power. He criticised the state government's response to issues involving departments such as HYDRAA and said the administration had remained inactive despite observations made by the High Court against certain officials.

Calling it a "failure of administration", Rao alleged that the Revanth Reddy-led government had also misled courts on certain issues. Rao said the BJP would continue its fight against policies of the government and questioned why HYDRAA had not taken action to recover more than 300 acres of alleged encroached government land in Balapur and Nadergul areas.

Union Cabinet Secretary discusses 'Reform Utsav' with state Chief Secretaries

Hyderabad, Aug 10 (GNS) Union Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan on Monday held a video conference with the Chief Secretaries of all states to discuss the proposed 'Reform Utsav' initiative of the Government of India aimed at strengthening citizen participation in the reform process. The initiative is proposed to be launched in October 2026 and seeks to identify citizens' suggestions, deliberate on them, convert them into actionable reforms and implement them through a defined roadmap. The initiative will be implemented in three phases. The preparatory phase will be held during August and September, focusing on establishing the governance framework, sensitisation and awareness campaigns.

The main Reform Utsav will be held from October to December. Jan Manthan (Discover) will be conducted from October 1 to 31 to identify issues and suggestions from citizens and stakeholders. Vimarsh (Deliberate) and Jan Samadhan (Deliver) will run from October 10 to November 30, focusing on deliberation and delivery of quick wins and medium-term reforms.

Sankalp Siddhi will be conducted from October 10 to December 20 through national and sub-national events to drive the reform agenda. The follow-up phase will begin from December 28 and focus on regular monitoring of structural reforms and submission of ARTs as prescribed under the initiative. The Cabinet Secretary emphasised active participation of both Central and state governments.

Each state will constitute a State Coordinative Committee headed by the Chief Secretary and appoint a State Nodal Officer to coordinate implementation. Nodal arrangements will also be made at the district level. The initiative will primarily be implemented through concerned state line departments and ministries to ensure that reforms are translated into concrete action at the field level. The Centre will launch a dedicated 'Reform Utsav Portal' for participation, collection of suggestions, monitoring and coordination of activities. The portal will be made available in regional languages to facilitate wider citizen participation.

From Telangana, Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju and senior officials, including Naveen Mittal, Stephen Ravindra, B Papi Reddy, Anudeep Durishetty, Ahmed Nadeem, Mahesh Dutt Ekka, Gourav Uppal, Swathi Lakra, Devasena and Divya Devarajan, participated in the video conference.

Karrigutta to be developed as tourism hub with decline in Maoist activity, says DGP

Mulugu, Aug 10 (GNS): Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) C V Anand on Monday visited Karrigutta, once considered a major Maoist stronghold along the Telangana-Chhattisgarh-Odisha border, and said the region would be developed as a tourism destination with improved basic infrastructure following the restoration of peace. Anand inspected ongoing road construction works in the remote forest area and unfurled the national flag.

He also released white doves as a symbol of peace, marking the transformation of the region once affected by Left Wing Extremism.

Senior officials from the Police, CRPF, Forest, Revenue and other departments accompanied the DGP during the visit, highlighting the government's focus on development in the region following the decline in Maoist activity. Addressing the media, Anand said coordinated operations by the Telangana Police, Greyhounds, special police forces, CRPF, CoBRA units and Chhattisgarh Police had significantly weakened Maoist activities in the region. He said nearly 700 Maoists had surrendered during Operation Kagar, while several senior Maoist leaders were killed in encounters and others had returned to the mainstream.

Only a few Central Committee-level leaders remained active across the country, he added. The DGP said the state government was implementing rehabilitation measures for surrendered Maoists, including financial assistance, land allotment and livelihood opportunities, besides monitoring their reintegration into society.

Anand said Karrigutta had considerable tourism potential and the government planned to develop the area in accordance with environmental and legal norms. Road connectivity was being improved and blacktopping would be taken up shortly. Electricity, mobile connectivity and other basic amenities would also be provided to facilitate tourism, he said. During the visit, Anand distributed essential commodities to Gutti Koya families residing near the Pamuru camp and assured them of continued government support.

He also lauded the role of the Central Reserve Police Force in anti-Maoist operations, noting that CRPF personnel had been working alongside state police forces for decades in difficult terrain. Anand said personnel of the CRPF's 196 Battalion continued to serve in challenging conditions for months away from their families and their commitment and professionalism had played an important role in restoring peace in the region. Additional DGP Sanjay Jain, IG Chandra Shekhar Reddy, Intelligence IG Karthikeya, SIB SP Sindhu Sharma, Mulugu Collector Borkade Hemanth Sahadeorao, Mulugu SP Sudhir Ramnath Kekan, District Forest Officer Vikas Meena, CRPF officers and officials from the Revenue, Tourism and other departments were present.

SCR GM reviews monsoon preparedness, stresses safety

Secunderabad, Aug 10 (GNS) South Central Railway (SCR) General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava on Monday conducted a Safety Review Meeting here to assess the zone's preparedness for uninterrupted and safe train operations during the monsoon. The meeting was attended by Additional General Manager Satya Prakash, principal heads of departments and Divisional Railway Managers of Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Nanded divisions through video conferencing. Srivastava reviewed monsoon preparedness measures with emphasis on track quality and maintenance.

He directed field staff to conduct thorough ballast checks to ensure track stability during heavy rainfall, with particular attention to newly commissioned bridges, road under bridges (RUBs) and railway lines during their first monsoon season.

He instructed railway staff, contractors and agencies to strictly follow safety protocols in all activities related to train operations and stressed the need for immediate reporting of even minor inconveniences to enable prompt corrective action.

The General Manager also directed officials to make preventive arrangements, including trenching and barricading at vulnerable locations, to safeguard train operations.

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, falaknumanews@gmail.com www.falaknumanews.in