

Revanth warns of 20% vote deletions, directs Cong to protect voters



Hyderabad, Aug 13 (GNS): Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday warned Congress leaders of the possibility of around 20 per cent of votes being deleted during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and directed party leaders to take immediate steps to protect voters' names from being removed from the electoral rolls.

Addressing a Zoom meeting with senior Congress leaders here, Revanth Reddy held party in-charge ministers and booth-level leaders responsible for ensuring that eligible voters' names are retained in the electoral rolls. The Chief Minister directed the in-charge ministers to conduct reviews with parliamentary and Assembly constituency in-charges in their respective districts and identify and rectify issues related to the SIR process. He asked the district in-charge min-

isters to complete reviews within the next two days and prepare a report for every Assembly constituency. Assembly constituency in-charges were instructed to stay in their respective constituencies for four days, identify problems and take steps to resolve them comprehensively.

Revanth Reddy warned that the party would not tolerate any failure to implement a proper action plan in accordance with the directions of the AICC. He said any failure to act cautiously could cause significant political damage to the party in the future and asked leaders to take responsibility for protecting eligible voters' names. The Chief Minister also directed Congress leaders to expose what he alleged was a BRS-BJP conspiracy to delete votes and asked party workers to remain vigilant throughout the SIR exercise.

Centre Approves Rs 605.71 Cr for Agriculture in Rajasthan, Telangana



New Delhi, Aug 13 (UNI): Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday approved an allocation of Rs 340.59 crore for Rajasthan and Rs 265.12 crore for Telangana under the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and the Krishonnati Yojana.

The financial approvals were issued during a virtual meeting held by Chouhan from Bhopal with Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Kirori Lal Meena and Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao. Agriculture Secretary Atish Chandra and senior officials from the Union Government participated in the meeting, along with senior agriculture officials from both states. The approvals were issued following a review

of the annual action plans cleared during the Project Approval Committee meetings of the two states, utilisation of the first mother sanction and expenditure progress achieved so far.

Chouhan appreciated Telangana's new model for Farmer ID and fertiliser distribution and congratulated the state's Agriculture Minister for the initiative. He said the model would help deliver services to farmers in a more transparent and effective manner. The Union Agriculture Minister also noted that Telangana's expenditure under the Oilseeds and Pulses Missions is behind schedule. He emphasised the need for regular monitoring of expenditure and implementation progress under these missions by the state.

Rahul Gandhi vows Congress fight against Modi, Shah without hatred or violence

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS) Former Congress President and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has said that for change, it is necessary to protect India's diversity and freedom of expression of every individual with political power, therefore, Congress will continue its fight without hatred and violence. Addressing the closing ceremony of the national session of the 'Constructive Congress', Mr. Gandhi said here on Thursday that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi want to snatch the freedom of the people.

He said that instead of molding India into a single



set system, the people of the country should be given the freedom to speak their mind and move forward with their identity. He said that the old strength of the RSS was small traders and small businessmen, but demonetisation and GST have harmed these same classes. The country's small traders and traditional professions have suffered

from demonetisation and the current system of Goods and Services Tax (GST). Small traders were sidelined and the influence of big capitalist groups in the organization as well as BJP's politics continued to grow.

Mr. Gandhi also mentioned the media and said that a large part of the media has also been captured, but

journalists have to play their role and convey the truth to the people. He said that the owners of media houses get calls from above and the news is fixed. He said that there is a national spirit and this national spirit simply means that the people of India should not suppress their voice under the pressure of any power. No per-

son should be stopped from expressing their religion, culture or views. If you are a Sikh, you can talk about Guru Nanak, if you are a Muslim, you can talk about Allah, if you are a Jain, you can talk about Mahavir and if you are a Hindu, you can talk about Shiva. Whoever has to talk, he should talk.

While circling Prime Minister Narendra Modi on foreign policy, Mr. Gandhi said that India should keep its national interests first and have relations with all countries. In the context of Iran, America and Russia, he said that India had an opportunity to strengthen its role on the global stage, because Iran, Russia and America were friendly countries of

India, but the Indian government could not take advantage of it. He alleged that the government's priority has become limited to strengthening the country's political structure and taking economic cooperation from its supporting business groups.

Mr. Gandhi said, "The Congress' fight against Mr. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah will continue. This fight will not be fought on the path of hatred and violence, but on the path of the country's culture, brotherhood, love and non-violence. Until the day Narendra Modi resigns and Amit Shah steps down, we will not let them sleep. We will keep them awake—but without hatred and without violence."

Kenyan Speaker visits India, calls on Vice President Radhakrishnan

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, Moses Wetang'ula, is visiting India to strengthen parliamentary exchanges between India and Kenya, including the recently constituted Parliamentary Friendship Groups, the Indian Embassy in Kenya said on Thursday. "Kenya and India share a longstanding cordial friendship with strong legislative exchanges among the two Parliaments. I have arrived in New Delhi, India, for an official visit to the Lok Sabha at the invitation of my counterpart, the Hon. Shri Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha," Wetang'ula stated on X.

He added that H.E. Amb received him. Mary Mutuku, Deputy Head of Mission of the Republic of Kenya to India, alongside Hon. Umeshbhai Babubhai Patel, Mem-



ber of the Lok Sabha, looked forward to productive bilateral engagements aimed at deepening friendship, parliamentary ties and cooperation between Kenya and India. Om Birla welcomed Wetang'ula along with the Kenyan parliamentary delegation to the Indian Parliament. "The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the longstanding friendship between India and Kenya,

rooted in shared democratic values and a common historical legacy. The recently constituted Parliamentary Friendship Groups in both countries will provide an important platform for deepening parliamentary engagement, fostering greater understanding between our two Parliaments and strengthening people to people connections," Speaker Birla noted on X.

Jaishankar, Liberia FM discuss shipping security, key cooperation areas

New Delhi, Aug 13 (UNI): External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Thursday met his Liberian counterpart Sara Beysolow Nyanti and discussed the safety and security of commercial shipping, as well as mining, health, agriculture, water, and training.

"Delighted to meet Foreign Minister Sara Beysolow Nyanti of Liberia. Congratulated her on the inauguration of new Embassy of Liberia in New Delhi today. Had productive conversation on safety and security of commercial shipping, mining, health, agriculture, water and training," EAM Jaishankar stated on X.

"Our meeting also focused on much-needed UNSC reforms. Confident



that our South-South cooperation will continue to strengthen," he added.

The Liberian Foreign Minister arrived in India earlier in the day.

Extending a warm welcome to the s Foreign Minister, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated, "Warmly welcome Foreign Minister Sara Beysolow Nyanti of Libe-

ria on her arrival in New Delhi. The visit provides an opportunity to further strengthen the warm and close ties between India and Liberia." On Tuesday, EAM Jaishankar met a Parliamentary delegation from Liberia for a peer learning programme and reaffirmed commitment towards deeper Global South partnership.

BCI bars 2026 NALSAR graduates from enrolment pending probe into protes

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): The Bar Council of India (BCI) on Thursday asked state bar councils not to enrol, for now, any student passing out of NALSAR Law University, Hyderabad, in 2026, till the time it completes an inquiry into the protest by a section of students against inviting CJI Surya Kant to the next convocation.

In a letter addressed to state bar councils, Bar Council of India Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra said, "Till further orders, no student of NALSAR University of Law, who obtained the Law Degree in the year 2026, shall be enrolled by any State Bar Council as an Advocate." "A student of Law, having no regard or respect for the highest Judicial Office of the country, is not expected to be a



responsible or sensible Advocate, Teacher or a Judge. Such persons shall always be a liability on the profession," he said. The BCI also sought a factual report from the University on the persons instrumental in initiating, organising, or mobilising the campaign regarding the participation of the CJI at the upcoming convocation of NALSAR University of Law, the date of which is still to be finalised.

The BCI asked the University to state whether

permission was sought or granted for any protest or organised activity, and whether any University rule concerning student conduct, discipline, use of University platforms, or the conduct of official functions was invoked. "Where information is available, the University should also indicate whether any person identified as a principal organiser or coordinator is already enrolled as an advocate with a State Bar Council and provide the relevant enrolment particulars," said Mishra.

He said, "It is also necessary to reiterate that legal education necessarily encourages critical reasoning, debate and analysis of judicial decisions. But, at the same time, those seeking entry into a regulated profession intrinsically connected.

Centre moves to offer railway concessions to acid attack survivors

New Delhi, Aug 13 (UNI): The Central government accepted a proposal for offering concessional travel facilities to acid attack survivors, prompting the Supreme Court to give the government six weeks to submit a draft policy on the issue, a lawyer said.

The policy will help grant concessions in railway travel to acid attack survivors who need to undertake periodic visits to well-equipped hospitals in cities, the lawyer said on Thursday. Additional Solicitor General Archana Pathak Dave, appearing for the Centre, told the apex court that the Railway Board has in-principle agreed to grant travel concessions to acid attack victims under the 'patient category'. However, Dave said the policy is still



being prepared, including how the concession will be given and its duration.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant directed the Centre to place on record the draft of the proposed policy within six weeks. The petitioner told the bench, also comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V. Mohana, that the existing concessions available under the 'patient category' have limitations. He said that this facility was usu-

ally associated with a journey from a particular station to a particular destination. At the same time, acid attack survivors may have to travel to different cities for treatment. He also cited the need to repeatedly obtain concession certificates from different hospitals as an additional problem, especially in the early months of an attack when treatment may be extremely necessary. The petitioner, Atijeevan Society, also demanded consideration of an emergency ticket quota for such passengers.

"The emergency quota is required because survivors need to travel at short notice. If they don't get these treatments in time, then it becomes a failure," said the petitioner, a suggestion that was supported by the bench.

Public trust key to India’s nuclear push

Radioactive waste, with its millennia-long hazard profile, is a persistent worry.

K Ramanathan
Arunendra Kumar Tiwari

IN his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid stress on the critical role of nuclear power in building a truly self-reliant India and achieving energy independence. The importance of nuclear energy is also reflected in this year’s Budget, subsequent policy statements and efforts to open the sector to private sector participation.

An interim target of achieving 100 GW (giga-watts), which includes both large and small reactors, by 2047 has also been envisaged. Small Modular Reactors (SMRs with a capacity of 300 MW or below), are gaining special attention these days as they can play a key role in decarbonising hard-to-abate industries — such as cement, steel, power, oil and natural gas, chemicals and fertilisers — are difficult to decarbonise due to high energy requirements and emissions from chemical processes.

Three types of SMRs — 200 MWe (megawatt electrical) Bharat Small Modular Reactors, 55 MWe SMRs and five MWth (megawatt thermal) High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactors — are being designed and developed indigenously. These augur well for realising India’s



nuclear vision. The road ahead, however, is not that rosy. There are hurdles to be crossed, the main one being ensuring public acceptance by addressing apprehensions about human safety and environmental impacts.

Public unease around nuclear energy is deeply shaped by history. Memories of Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011) continue to loom large, fuelling perceptions that a nuclear accident is both catastrophic and inevitable. The core fear is the uncontrolled release of radioactive material in the event of severe accidents that could cause long-term environmental damage and health impacts.

Radioactive waste, with its millennia-long hazard profile, is another persistent worry. Questions are often raised about the long-term storage safety, risks of leakage and economic costs.

For SMRs, these general fears are compounded by their limited operating experience, potential siting closer to population cen-

tres, fuel supply chains and waste management. As private sector participation grows, questions may also arise about adequate availability of trained operators. The regulatory framework in India is fairly strong. The public concern thus seems to be based on limited public exposure to factual safety records and modern reactor safety features.

India’s nuclear fleet has operated for decades with an enviable safety record. As documented in reports, radiation exposure to plant workers has consistently been well below global regulatory limits, with public exposure averaging less than 10 per cent of the prescribed thresholds. The country’s plants follow a “defence-in-depth” approach — multiple, redundant safety barriers, robust heat removal systems, emergency core cooling and airtight containment structures.

After the Fukushima disaster, Indian reactors underwent significant safety upgrades: hydrogen recom-

biners to prevent explosions, filtered containment venting systems to limit radiological release and enhanced flood protection measures. Every site also has Severe Accident Management Guidelines (SAMGs) in place, supported by emergency power backup and mobile equipment for extreme events.

India’s operating nuclear power plants have demonstrated a commendable safety record. The International Atomic Energy Agency, in its latest safety review, has acknowledged the strong commitment and professionalism of India’s Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)/Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in ensuring nuclear and radiation safety in the country. Building on this foundation, emerging technologies like SMRs incorporate advanced safety features to further enhance reliability and public confidence. The SMR concepts incorporate passive safety systems that function without human

intervention or external power, relying instead on natural forces such as gravity. This inherent resilience makes them particularly robust in the face of extreme events, including station blackout scenarios. Their design offers multiple advantages: smaller reactor cores containing less fissile material, thereby reducing the potential radiological source; and lower operating pressures in certain configurations.

Furthermore, factory fabrication of modules ensures stringent quality control and reduces variability associated with on-site construction. These combined features not only strengthen overall safety but also make it possible to consider smaller Emergency Planning Zones, opening opportunities for siting reactors closer to demand centres such as industrial hubs or urban microgrids.

It is heartening to note that the DEA and the AERB are looking into this matter with requisite urgency.

Self-learning as the new pillar of education and management

Anyone dealing with management learns the ‘how’ of a process. This is important because the ‘how’ explains the steps that have to be undertaken for the completion of tasks. It focuses on the skills. It focuses on the sequencing of the acts. It focuses on the resources needed to discharge the action. All this, and more, is a foundation of skills to accomplish a task. There can be no two opinions about that. whereas this is useful, it is not enough, because the timing of the intervention is very often the fulcrum of the successful reaction. This is judgement. This is not an operational skill. Similarly, every skill and action has an intensity, and that intensity has to be acceptable to the group for the individuals of the group to be galvanised into action. Likewise, there are other gentler and subtler inputs required to take the action from inception to conclusion. Some of them cannot be learnt without practice and without an internal, innate aptitude for self-development and the ability to relate to people.

Ultimately, successful completion of an act is a subtle process involving many attributes beyond the gross skills of the steps in doing the job. Management theorists have no ready-made answers to this but believe the process of training and development is complete only when taken to its logical conclusion through practice. It can be said that, ultimately, of the many inputs needed for the successful completion of a task, the most critical is self-development and the instinct to grow. The parameters of this have yet to be worked out to elevate it to a level of teachability and skill sharpening. The net conclusion is that all components of learning are important, but perhaps among the more significant ones is the linking of one ability with another, one skill with another, and above all, having the auto-motor ability of the mind sharpened enough to put it all together in a holistic perspective.

Thus, it is the learning that requires an openness of the mind to receive inputs without judgement and without any additions in the free flow of receiving, doing “trades”. This last phrase is not yet common in management literature and, inter alia, will cover knowledge, skills, insights, instincts, and above all, practices for getting on with the tasks. The list elaborated has no claim to be exhaustive and needs to be a continuous process. This will be a differentiating factor in the level of skills that people have in being successful or otherwise. There is a clear need to further strengthen the theory of learning, not only with gross skills but also with subtler predilections, as well as with the positioning of the mind to keep inventing as one goes along, meeting the challenges.

This is based on the need to encourage organic talent and grow one’s skills alongside the growth of the mind, not to overlook the knowledge components. It would be useful to recognise that an enumeration would have its own classification and its own sub-narratives, depending upon the nature of the action at stake.

Consider the mechanical action of an engineering variety, where the nature of the material and the ultimate nature of the outcome determine the distance which has to be covered between the two to lead to the crux of action. On the other side of the spectrum would be abstractions that are rooted in ideas and require a cognitive approach, which is far more cerebral than operational situations that need skills in the fingers, the hand, and indeed the body parts themselves.

It would be useful to recognise that learning theory is a continuation of levels of fulfilment of the task from A to Z in all areas of action, and that a useful way of segmenting skills to be taught is to see what is presently termed as ‘learning’ at the school level, the collegiate level, and the postgraduate level. Indeed, the postgraduate level is merely one level of learning, as indicated earlier in the text. It has to become self-generating with the parallel stream of learning through one’s own life. This would raise the question of the formalisation of the teaching-learning process, and it may be a good idea to have a parallel stream of teaching for each operational content, along with the knowledge inputs. Put simply, each course may require clarity on what the knowledge content is and what the operational content of both these streams is. There should be facilitation for the learner to be able to teach himself and keep the learning alive. This raises the subtler question of self-learning beyond classroom learning. For this, it would be necessary to generate literature which can be acquired by an adult to train himself independently, even when formal learning has ended. But what one is hoping to focus on is the whole third leg of learning, which is self-learning, to keep the torch of learning alive throughout one’s career. This itself is a challenge and calls for the creation of literature which needs attention from the ab initio level to levels that can encompass all types of challenges. It is about time human resources specialists started the creation of a talent pool, faculty-wise and domain-wise, to respond to this need.

Whereas some thought has been given to learning on the job, more attention needs to be paid to learning beyond the classroom at the self-orientation level to keep in touch with the requirements of problem-solving.

Artificial intelligence is adding a new dimension to education as it permeates the curriculum, the learning process, and curricular planning. There is a basic revolution waiting in the paradigm of teaching and learning. The future appears exciting and challenging to a point where only time will tell how it is going to take shape and affect the life processes of those in the learning and teaching profession.

Freeing Youth from Government Job Obsession

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (UT of J&K), Government jobs have long been viewed as the gold standard of employment as symbols of stability, security, and social standing. However, in a rapidly evolving economic landscape, this aspiration has morphed into an unhealthy obsession. With limited vacancies and an ever-growing number of applicants, thousands of educated youth find themselves trapped in a cycle of waiting, disillusionment, and passivity.

Ironically, while local youth turn away from available work, over seven lakh migrant workers from states like Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are filling essential roles in construction, transport, hospitality, driving, vending, and domestic services across the UT. These opportunities exist, yet social stigma, outdated mindsets, and lack of career guidance prevent local youth from seizing them. This reluctance to engage in available work comes at a steep economical and psychological cost. Many young people especially in rural areas are dropping out of higher education, not due to poor performance, but because they no longer see the value in degrees that don’t lead to employment. Disheartened parents are increasingly advising their children to forgo further education and start earning early, further feeding the cycle. Despite efforts like new universities, technical institutes, and job fairs, results have been underwhelming. Poor placements, systemic inefficiencies, and a reservation system that sometimes sideline merit, have limited the impact of these initiatives. In several districts, few students secure jobs, despite the frequency of recruitment drives.

The fallout is visible and alarming. Highly qualified individuals including PhDs and postgraduates now queue up for posts not befitting their education. Coaching centres are shutting down. Government school standards remain low, and private education is often unaffordable, forcing many to exit the education system altogether. The result is a paradox: youth who are overqualified for basic jobs, underqualified for skilled ones, and are unwilling to accept either. J&K today faces a unique labour paradox; not a shortage of people, but a shortage of willing workers. While the private sector remains fragile and agriculture has declined due to shrinkage agricultural land, traditional industries and business practices like handicrafts, apples, shawls and tourism are also floundering due to underinvestment, and lack of innovation. The 2022 Sub-Inspector recruitment, which drew nearly 95,000 applicants for just 1,200 posts, is a stark indicator of the crisis. Meanwhile, over 32,000 Government posts remain vacant, stalled by administrative delays.

Dams, negligence, and the making of Himalayan floods

The failure of the national flood forecaster Central Water Commission cannot be ignored.

Himanshu Thakkar

S CARY visuals, rainfall data, messages on social media and some pronouncements of the Supreme Court reflect the severity of the flood disaster in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal is known to be vulnerable to landslides, mudslips, cloudbursts, flashfloods, erosion, seismicity and floods. But how floods become disasters is linked to the way we treat the landscape, environment, regulations, people and floods.

A number of anthropogenic factors have led to a rise in the scale of the disasters. Himachal Pradesh has the largest installed capacity of hydropower projects and the largest number of dams among the Himalayan states. The key requirements of the decision-making process related to such projects include honest environmental, social and disaster impact assessments and management plans at both project and river basin levels. Also needed are cumulative impact assessments, transparent appraisal and credible monitoring and compliance mechanisms. Most of these aspects are missing at both the state and central levels.

The hydropower projects and dams can help moderate floods only if they are operated with that objective in mind. Their standard operating procedures, including rule curves, updated every five years, must be in the public domain, along with the identity of the authorities



responsible. Dam operations must be informed by the actual water flow and rainfall in the upstream and downstream catchments and rivers and the carrying capacity of the rivers and catchment in the downstream.

All information related to dam operations must be put in the public domain (the website) on a daily basis and archived for at least five years. Functioning early warning systems must be in place not only in glacier catchments of dams and hydro projects but also in all landslide- or flashflood-prone streams. The accountability mechanism must kick in whenever any operating procedure is violated. Rivers and streams must have the adequate waterway capacity to carry potential flood waters. The encroachments, particularly those that have come up over the last couple of decades, must be systematically and humanely

removed. Muck arising out of the construction of dams, hydro projects, roads, railways, townships, bridges, mining, etc, must be disposed of systematically so that it does not enter the rivers, reducing their carrying capacity. This requires policy and credible governance, including monitoring, compliance and accountability mechanisms.

We must learn from the past disasters. The government must institute an independent assessment of each disaster to understand what happened, who was responsible, what lessons can be learned, and who should be held accountable. Without this basic step, we cannot understand the impacts and implications of these disasters. The First Information Reports (FIRs) filed in August by the HP Government against the BBMB and other dam operators is a good first step; it must be taken to its

logical conclusion. It should not be ineffective, like the notices that the HP Chief Secretary issued to many dam authorities in August 2023. We also need to underline the failure of the Central Water Commission, the national flood forecaster. It has not only failed to forecast most floods, even its monitoring seems to break down at every sign of disaster. Its inflow forecasting does not take into account the rule curve nor is it ready to name any dam for wrong operations. Similarly, the IMD has failed to provide actionable, location- and time- specific rainfall forecast. The word cloudburst is used so regularly, but in most cases, the IMD refuses to certify the events as cloudbursts since in most cases, it does not have the means to quantify the local rainfall.

The Doppler radars, that help forecast high-intensity rainfall events, are non-

functional at most places. And the IMD fails to report river basin- and sub-basin-wise rainfall, the key requirement to forecast river and dam inflows. On disaster management, we do well in rescue and relief operations, but miserably fail in prevention — a front on which so much can be done. A good example is the Guidelines on Management of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), brought out by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in October, 2020. The GLOF provides useful suggestions on preventing disasters and reducing their impact, but none of its key recommendations have been implemented since it came out. Why are the national and state dam safety authorities silent on the avoidable disasters brought upon by wrong operations of dams year after year? Why do we see no impact of the Dam Safety Act?

India's astronauts reflect PM Modi's flagship mantras in space mission, says Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh today said that the flagship mantras consistently practised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi are steering India's growth story, including its ambitious space programme. "Shubhanshu's Space voyage vindicates the vision of an Atmanirbhar and Vishwabandhu Bharat", said Dr Jitendra Singh.

The Minister was speaking at an ISRO press conference here where he formally introduced two Indian-origin astronauts, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla and Group Captain Prasanth B. Nair, to the country.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that in a single mission,



India's astronauts had lived up to the three flagship mantras that Prime Minister Modi has been practicing and propagating for nearly 12 years. The first, Atma Nirbhar Bharat, was reflected in the use of fully indigenous kits and technology during the mission, a principle that will also guide the forthcoming Gaganyaan programme. The second, a Whole of Government and Whole of Nation approach, was evident in the contributions from diverse institutions such as the Department of Bio-

technology, IISc Bengaluru and IITs, with experiments that even pointed towards the future possibility of a "space physician." The third, Vishwa Bandhu Bharat, was demonstrated by the fact that while the experiments were conducted by an Indian astronaut, their benefits would reach humanity at large—strengthening both India's confidence and the world's trust in wider collaborations.

Dr. Jitendra Singh underlined that the astronauts' achievements reflected the Prime Minister

Modi's emphasis on integrating India's traditional strengths with modern innovation. He noted that India's expanding presence in space research and exploration has been enabled by policies that encourage openness, collaboration, and private sector participation. Introducing the astronauts, he said their presence and experiences would inspire a new generation of young Indians to look at space research as a career and national calling.

The Minister added that their training and

participation in international missions also serve as valuable preparation as India moves closer to its own human spaceflight programme, Gaganyaan.

Both astronauts interacted with the media and shared their experiences, ranging from rigorous training to the unique challenges of living and working in space. They also highlighted the spirit of teamwork and scientific pursuit that underpinned the Axiom-4 mission.

Shubhanshu Shukla, who recently became the first Indian to travel to

the International Space Station as part of the Axiom-4 mission, shared his experiences as the mission pilot of the Crew Dragon spacecraft. He described how months of training across multiple international space agencies prepared him for the flight, but said the actual experience of space went far beyond what could be taught on the ground. He spoke of the physical adjustments the body undergoes in orbit, the invaluable lessons from working on experiments aboard the ISS, and the

collaborative spirit of astronauts and scientists from across the world. "This mission has been extremely successful in achieving its objectives, but more importantly, it has given us insights that cannot be documented on paper. These will be critical as India prepares for Gaganyaan and beyond," he said.

Shukla added that one of the most rewarding aspects of the mission was inspiring young Indians to dream of space. Recalling his live interactions from orbit, he said children of-

ten asked how they could become astronauts. "That, for me, was the biggest win of this mission—that kids are already dreaming of space. The good news is that ISRO and India are ready to make these dreams a reality," he said, urging students to believe that they too could one day travel to space.

Group Captain Prasanth B. Nair, who trained alongside Shubhanshu Shukla for the Axiom-4 mission, described the experience as a reminder of India's growing stature in the global space community. Drawing from his interactions abroad, he said that India's achievements were met with respect and admiration, often accompanied by surprise at the scale of progress made with humility. He emphasized that India's approach to space was rooted in inclusivity and shared benefit, reflecting the nation's belief in the oneness of humanity.

“Farmers’ interests will be protected; I will personally visit Karnataka to assess the situation” – Chouhan

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): A high-level meeting on areca nut development was held today at Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi, under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The meeting was attended by Union Minister of Heavy Industries Shri H. D. Kumaraswamy, Union Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi, Ministers of State, Members of Parliament from areca nut-producing regions, and senior officials from various departments and ministries. Several important issues related to the areca nut crop were discussed in detail during the meeting.

Referring to a World Health Organization (WHO) report, the Union Minister said the report had created some confusion regarding areca nuts produced in Karnataka. To dispel these misconceptions, the Indian Council

of Agricultural Research (ICAR)'s team of scientists is conducting studies and the team has been instructed to submit its report within a fixed time frame.

Chouhan said that people in India have been consuming areca nuts since time immemorial, and it is used in every auspicious occasion in the country. He said a disease like "areolate mildew", which destroys areca nut trees, is being addressed by scientific teams. The availability of clean planting material was also discussed. The Union Agriculture Minister said the government is seriously considering appropriate compensation to farmers for the heavy losses caused by viral infections. Issues such as illegal imports of areca nuts, moisture problems, and price differentials between small and large nuts were also extensively discussed. He as-

sured that all issues will be resolved in a time-bound manner and that the interests of farmers and the areca nut industry will be fully protected. The Minister said that areca nut is an important commercial crop that holds a significant place in India's religious, social, and cultural practices. Due to the presence of various alkaloids, it is also used in Ayurvedic and veterinary medicines.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan further said he would personally visit Karnataka along with a team of scientists and experts to review the situation on the ground and formulate a roadmap for the development of areca nut cultivation. India is the world's largest producer of areca nuts, accounting for about 63% of total global production. In 2023-24, India produced approximately 14 lakh tonnes of areca nuts from 9.49 lakh hectares.

Karnataka ranks first, with a production of 10 lakh tonnes from 6.76 lakh hectares, followed by Kerala, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and others. The total market value of areca nuts produced in the country is approximately 58,664 crore as per current prices. It is estimated that around six million people in India are occupationally dependent on areca nut farming. In 2023-24, India exported 10,637 tonnes of areca nuts worth 400 crore. Major export destinations include the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, Nepal, Malaysia, and the Maldives.

To protect the interests of areca nut farmers, the Government of India has taken various measures, such as: The government has been implementing various measures to strengthen areca nut cultivation, improve productivity and safeguard farmers

from market-related challenges. These include support for research, quality planting material, disease management and post-harvest technologies.

The meeting also stressed the need to strengthen scientific research to tackle diseases affecting areca nut plantations. Scientists and agricultural institutions have been asked to develop effective solutions and ensure that modern technologies reach farmers at the field level.

Chouhan said greater emphasis would be placed on providing farmers with healthy and disease-resistant planting material. He directed officials to examine measures for improving nurseries and ensuring the availability of quality seedlings in major areca nut-producing regions. The issue of illegal imports was also discussed, with officials directed to strengthen monitoring mechanisms.

PLI Scheme Brings Down Cost of Rare Disease Treatment from Crores to Lakhs

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): Amit Agrawal, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers delivered a special address during the inaugural session of the Rare Diseases Conference 2025 at FICCI Auditorium yesterday. The Conference was organized on the theme "Making Rare Care Possible: Availability, Accessibility, Awareness."

In his address, Shri Agrawal commended the organisers for bringing focus to an issue of growing significance that has historically not received adequate attention. He underlined that although rare diseases may appear infrequent individually, collectively they affect nearly one in every twenty individuals—around 5% of the population—making them a major public health concern. He emphasized that the rare disease challenge

should be seen through a human lens and as a question of inclusion, not merely a medical or technical problem.

Citing the Prime Minister's inclusive vision of Divyangjan, Shri Agrawal called for a response from government, industry, academia and civil society to address the multifaceted burden faced by patients and caregivers. Referring to the Prime Minister's Independence Day address, he recalled: "We are known as the pharmacy of the world but isn't it the need of the hour to invest in research and development? Shouldn't we be the ones providing the best and most affordable medicines for the welfare of humanity?"

Highlighting significant policy measures, the Secretary informed that Rare Diseases were included as a focus area under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharma-

ceuticals. As a result, eight drugs for rare conditions have been supported, including Eliglustat for Gaucher's Disease, where the cost of treatment has come down from 1.8–3.6 crore annually to 3–6 lakh. Other supported treatments include Trientine for Wilson's Disease, Nitisinone for Tyrosinemia Type 1 and Cannabidiol for Lennox–Gastaut Syndrome, among others.

He noted that such tangible reductions in treatment costs demonstrate the transformative potential of targeted policy interventions. The Secretary also encouraged corporates to factor in rare disease patients under their CSR initiatives and patient assistance programmes, considering the heavy financial and emotional burden on affected families. He urged all stakeholders to evaluate their policies, regulations, funding models and programme.

DHR-ICMR hosts International Meeting on Health Research and Innovations in Public Health

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): The Department of Health Research (DHR) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) inaugurated a two-day regional meeting titled "Health Research and Innovations in Public Health: Exchange of Good Practices across RESEARCH Platform." The event, held at the Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, brought together senior representatives from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Timor-Leste to deliberate on strengthening health research systems, facilitate the exchange of good practices and promote cross-border collaboration in South and Southeast Asia. The meeting is part of the Regional Enabler for South and Southeast Asia Research for Health (RESEARCH) Platform, which aims to foster solidarity, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration among participating countries.

Delivering the plenary address, Dr. V.K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog commended the participating countries for their significant progress in advancing the health and well-being of their citizens. "The progress we see across these countries is a testament to their commitment to health. There is tremendous scope for us to learn from each other, co-create research products, and translate science into action. By working together, we can accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals across the region," said Dr. Paul.

Dr. Rajiv Bahl, Secretary, Department of Health Research and DG, ICMR, stated, "The issues we face are common to all of us, and it is time for our region to move towards shaping its own narrative. Research is the way forward, and by learning from each other's

research ecosystems, we can build stronger systems, generate knowledge that reflects our realities, and translate it into better health for our people," he said. Representatives from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Timor-Leste also delivered opening remarks, drawing attention to the health concerns that affect their populations and the region as a whole, such as anaemia, maternal and child health, tuberculosis, vector-borne diseases and non-communicable diseases. They emphasized the vital role of governments in ensuring public trust in science, highlighted the importance of sustained investments in capacity building alongside expanding infrastructure, and reiterated their commitment to regional solidarity in advancing health research and innovations.

On the occasion, Dr. Paul also launched an exhibi-

tion showcasing medical innovations supported by ICMR's Medical Device and Diagnostics Mission.

Secretariat (MDMS). The exhibition highlights a range of innovative products and technologies developed by Indian innovators to address pressing public health challenges and modernize healthcare delivery in the country.

Over the next two days, the meeting will include deliberations on diverse aspects of health research systems, including governance structures, research financing, mechanisms for prioritizing research agendas, and approaches to ensuring transparency and ethics. Countries will also discuss strategies to foster medical technology innovations, translate research into policy and programmes, and strengthen collaboration across sectors and with international partners.

Ethanol Blending Boosts Farmers' Income and Rural Economy: Petroleum Minister Hardeep S. Puri

New Delhi, Aug 13 (GNS): The Government has achieved remarkable progress in promoting biofuels as a sustainable alternative to petroleum products, stated Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, in a written reply to a starred question in Lok Sabha today. The promotion of use of biofuels has been undertaken through the National Policy on Biofuels. Government has been promoting the blending of ethanol in petrol under the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme with multiple objectives. As a green fuel, ethanol supports environmental sustainability efforts of the Government, reduces dependence on crude oil imports while saving foreign exchange, and promotes the domestic agriculture sector.

The EBP Programme has resulted in expeditious payment to farmers of more than Rs.1,25,000 crore from

Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) 2014-15 up to July 2025, besides savings of more than Rs.1,44,000 crore of foreign exchange, net CO2 reduction of about 736 lakh metric tonnes and substitution of more than 244 lakh metric tonnes of crude oil.

Under the EBP Programme, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) achieved the target of 10% Ethanol blending in petrol in June 2022, i.e. five months ahead of the target during ESY 2021-22. The blending levels further increased to 12.06% in ESY 2022-23, 14.60% in ESY 2023-24, and 19.05% as on 31st July 2025 during the ongoing ESY 2024-25. During July 2025 alone, Ethanol blending of 19.93% was achieved.

To support ethanol production across the country, the Government has taken several steps including expansion of feedstock for ethanol production, administered price mechanism

for ethanol procurement, lowered GST rate to 5% for ethanol used in the EBP Programme, introduction of various Ethanol Interest Subvention Schemes (EISS) during 2018-22, and a dedicated subvention scheme for Cooperative Sugar Mills to convert existing sugarcane-based distilleries into multi-feedstock plants for ethanol production from molasses as well as grains. Additionally, Long Term Offtake Agreements (LTOAs) between OMCs and Dedicated Ethanol Plants, multimodal transportation of ethanol to enhance availability, and increasing ethanol storage capacity along with allied infrastructure have been put in place.

Further, to facilitate advanced biofuel production, the Government has notified the 'Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan- Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran) Yojana' in 2019, amended in 2024, informed Shri

Puri. The scheme aims to establish advanced biofuels projects in the country using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstocks including crop residue.

It also provides remunerative income to farmers for their otherwise waste agriculture residues, creates rural and urban employment opportunities, addresses environmental pollution caused by biomass burning, and contributes to the Swachh Bharat Mission. The scheme has a total financial outlay of Rs. 1,969.50 crore, of which Rs. 1,800 crore is allocated for commercial-scale advanced biofuel projects and Rs. 150 crore for demonstration-scale projects. Government has also taken several measures to promote the use of biodiesel. These include prescribing indicative target of blending of biodiesel in diesel/direct sale of biodiesel under the National Policy on Biofuels.

Govt for special focus to Kukatpally development: CM Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad, Aug 13 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said the State government would accord special focus to the development of Kukatpally constituency and urged people to seek the development works they needed.

Speaking at a public meeting after laying the foundation stone for Indiramma Indlu Towers in the CURE area at KPHB Colony on Thursday evening, the Chief Minister recalled that the people of Kukatpally had supported him when he contested as an MP and sent him to Parliament.

Revanth Reddy said he could not undertake development in Kukatpally to the extent expected by people while he was in the Opposition as the previous government had not sanctioned funds. "Now, we have full authority to develop Ku-



katpally," he said, directing IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu to give special attention to the constituency. The Chief Minister asked people to compare the previous government's 10-year rule with the Congress government's two-year administration. He highlighted various welfare measures, including fine-grain rice for

3.28 crore people, 200 units of free electricity to poor families, LPG cylinders for 500 and free travel for women in RTC buses.

He said the government had facilitated Rs 65,000 crore in bank-linked loans for self-help groups and was encouraging women to become bus owners and establish petrol bunks

and solar plants. Stalls had also been provided at Shilparamam to enable self-help groups to market their products, he added.

Revanth Reddy said the government was repaying debts incurred by the previous administration while simultaneously implementing welfare and development programmes.

Referring to the Indiramma Indlu Towers project, he said the government had decided to construct one lakh houses in the first phase for the urban poor. He assured residents that the government would protect their existing lands during the process and urged them not to believe false propaganda on social media.

'Hindus, Muslims like 2 eyes to me': Revanth Reddy

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy today said Hindus and Muslims were equal to him and described the two communities as "two eyes" of the State.

Speaking at the Minorities Excellence Summit held at Komaram Bheem Adivasi Bhavan in Banjara Hills today, the Chief Minister said former Congress president Sonia Gandhi had demonstrated through her actions that Hindus and Muslims were equally important.

Revanth Reddy said the Congress party deserved credit for implementing 4 per cent reservation for minorities in Telangana.

Referring to BJP leader Amit Shah's earlier statement that the reservation would be removed if the BJP came to power in the State, he said the Congress had effectively implemented the quota.

He further said minority youth had secured jobs in Group-I and Group-II services and the government had ensured minorities received their rightful representation. He cited the appointment of a minority community member to the Telangana Public Service Commission and said his government pursued recruitment-related legal issues up to the Supreme Court to ensure the process was completed.

The Chief Minister highlighted the appointment of Mohammed Azharuddin as a Minister and said boxer Nikhat Zareen was given a Group-I-level job along with a cash award of Rs 3 crore. He also said the government amended rules to facilitate the appointment of Mohammed Sirajuddin as a DSP.

Calling upon minority youth to focus on skills along with education, Revanth Reddy said there were considerable employment opportunities in countries such as Germany and Japan. He said the State had established a Skills University to enhance the skills of students and urged youth to acquire skills that could transform their lives.

The Chief Minister also alleged that attempts were being made to delete voters' names under the pretext of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

2 women killed in govindpet highway accident



Falaknuma News State Correspondent M.A.Samad Nizamabad, Aug 13: Two women were killed and two others seriously injured when a speeding lorry rammed into a stationary tourist bus near Govindpet Bridge in Armoor Mandal on the National Highway. The victims were pilgrims from Kinwat in Maharashtra's Nanded district who were travelling to Hyderabad for the darshan of Chinna Jeeyar Swamy in two tourist buses. The accident occurred after one of the buses developed a tyre puncture and was stopped on the highway. Some passengers got down and sat on the central divider while waiting for the tyre to be repaired. A lorry coming from behind reportedly failed to notice the stationary bus

and crashed into it. Due to the impact, the bus moved forward and hit the passengers sitting near the divider. Sujatha (54) and Madhavi (47) died at the spot. Sunitha and Chitakka sustained serious injuries and were rushed to a government hospital for treatment.

Police immediately reached the scene, shifted the injured to hospital and regulated traffic on the highway. Nizamabad Police Commissioner P. Sai Chaitanya, visited the accident site and reviewed the circumstances of the crash. He obtained details from the police officials and inspected the rescue and traffic management arrangements. The Commissioner directed officials to ensure the injured receive proper medical treatment and to closely monitor their condition. The bodies were

shifted to the government hospital for post-mortem examination. Police registered a case and launched an investigation into the accident, including the possible negligence and over-speeding of the lorry driver. Police advised motorists to use hazard lights and reflective warning triangles whenever vehicles stop on highways due to tyre punctures or mechanical problems. Passengers were also advised to move to a safe place away from the highway instead of sitting on road dividers. Armoor ACP Venkateshwar Reddy, SHO Satyanarayana, MVI Rahul Kumar, along with police personnel from Armoor, Jakrapally and Balkonda and transport department officials, participated in the rescue and traffic management operations.

Sandipani College Students Excel at State Level

Aiman Maseera Secures First Rank; Asma Jabeen Bags Second Rank

Falaknuma News State Correspondent M.A.Samad Hyderabad Aug 13: Sandipani College students from Kamareddy have achieved remarkable success in the Intermediate BiPC stream, securing the first and second ranks at the State level. The meritorious students were felicitated by Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Government Advisor Mohammed Ali Shabbir at a programme held at Banjara Komaram Bheem Bhavan in Hyderabad.



Aiman Maseera, a first-year BiPC student, secured the State first rank by scoring an impressive 439 marks out of 440. Her outstanding achievement was appreciated by the Chief Minister and Government Advisor. Asma Jabeen, a second-year BiPC student, secured the State second rank, further highlighting the academic excellence of Sandipani College and bringing pride to Kamareddy district.

The State Government honoured both students and presented them with laptops as a token of appreciation. Revanth Reddy and Mohammed Ali Shabbir congratulated the students and said that recognizing academic excellence would encourage more students to work hard and achieve higher goals. The college management, faculty members and parents expressed happiness over the students' exceptional performance. They attributed the success to the students' dedication, teachers' guidance and parents' constant encouragement. The achievements of Aiman Maseera and Asma Jabeen have brought pride to Kamareddy and serve as an inspiration to other students to strive for academic excellence.

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Centre will not encroach on states' mineral powers: Kishan Reddy

New Delhi/Hyderabad, Aug 13 (GNS) union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Thursday said the Centre had undertaken a series of reforms in the coal and mining sectors to ensure transparency in mine allocation, strengthen state revenues and promote co-operative federalism.

The Minister rejected allegations that the Centre was attempting to encroach upon the powers of State

governments or reduce their revenues. He said the objective was to ensure uniform pricing of major minerals and strengthen domestic production while reducing dependence on imports. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Kishan Reddy said 141 coal mines had been auctioned so far, with production commencing in 105 blocks. He said mine allocations to both public sector under-

takings and private companies were being carried out through a transparent e-auction process.

The Minister said state governments' share of revenue from minerals had increased substantially following the reforms introduced by the Narendra Modi government. He said states currently receive 88 per cent of mineral revenue, compared to 65 per cent in 2014, while the Centre's

share had declined from 35 per cent to 12 per cent.

In the coal sector, he said the revenue received by states had increased from around Rs 12,000 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 58,592 crore, with states now receiving between 90 and 96 per cent of the revenue. He said 100 per cent of auction premiums and royalties were transferred directly to the States. Kishan Reddy said funds collected under the

District Mineral Foundation (DMF) were being utilised through district administrations for infrastructure, education, healthcare and other development works in mining-affected areas.

Clarifying concerns over the legislation passed in Parliament, he said the Bill related only to major minerals and did not make any changes to minor minerals, which remained under the jurisdiction of the States.



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Centre praises TG's progress in RKVY implementation

Hyderabad, Aug 13 (UNI) union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan today appreciated Telangana for its excellent progress in implementing the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and expressed willingness to sanction the second tranche of RKVY funds to the State. He also appreciated the Telangana government for effectively implementing the Framework for Fertilizer Sale (FFS) app introduced by the Centre. The union Minister lauded Telangana's achievements in a video conference convened by the union Agriculture Ministry today with three States to review the

implementation of Central government schemes, in which Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao participated. During the meeting, Tummala requested the union Minister to ensure 100 per cent procurement of pulses grown in Telangana, particularly in view of the prevailing El Niño conditions. Chouhan responded positively to the request.

The Telangana Agriculture Minister also urged the union govt to take special initiatives for the procurement of maize and other crops grown by farmers in the State, according to an official statement.



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