

Murmu stresses youth welfare, women's leadership, economic resilience in I-Day eve address

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS) Anxieties among students over paper leaks resonated in President Droupadi Murmu's Independence Day eve address, in which she called upon everyone to do their best to secure the future of India's youth.

Describing young people as national assets, the President said, "Just as the government and society must remain united to ensure national security, everyone must contribute to safeguarding the present and future of our students." Murmu made a strong reference to the need to curb paper leaks, describing

public examinations as gateways to opportunities for students. She also noted recent government efforts to strengthen the integrity of entrance tests.

"The Government is undertaking comprehensive steps to reform these examinations. The objectives of these reforms are to completely curb the use of unfair means in public examinations, make the examination system more transparent, more secure, and more trustworthy for the youth. Through the Government's initiatives and emerging economic activities, a wide range of

new avenues are opening up for the youth. By exploring such new opportunities, our young people can embark on new paths to success," she said, adding that the physical and mental wellbeing of young people forms the cornerstone of the country's future. Noting that 65 per cent of the country's population is below the age of 35, the President said families and society share the responsibility of motivating them.

In other wide-ranging remarks, the President spoke about the importance of women's reservation in politics, an agenda



still pending before Parliament after the 131st Constitution Amendment Bill was defeated during the special session in April.

"Along with efforts towards the economic self-reliance of women, we are seeing them in leadership roles across many fields.

It is a remarkable achievement of our democratic republic that the number of women exercising their right to vote is growing. 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' was enacted in 2023 with the purpose of reserving 33 per cent representation for women in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies. Achieving the objectives of this Act will enhance women's role in leadership and make our democracy more inclusive," the President said, nudging the early realisation of the long-pending promise of women's reservation in politics.

The address also focused on India's economic resilience in the face of the West Asia crisis and the country's ongoing campaign for reforms of the UN and other multilateral institutions. Stressing self-reliance as the way forward, the President said warfare and instability in several parts of the world were affecting every country, but India had fared well. "Even in such trying circumstances, our economy is moving ahead as the fastest-growing major economy in the world. According to economic projections, the growth rate of the In-

dian economy is expected to be more than twice the average global growth rate. 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' has further strengthened the foundation of our economic progress and national security," she said, adding that national interests form the basis of Indian foreign policy, with many countries now supporting India's call for reforms of the UN.

In important remarks, the President lauded the Armed Forces for Operation Sindoor and backed the government's stand on placing the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance.

CEC Gyanesh Kumar, Fiji Envoy discuss poll management, staff training

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): Chief Election Commissioner and Chairman of the Council of Member States of International IDEA, Gyanesh Kumar, on Friday discussed issues of election management with the High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji, Jagannath Sami, an official said. The meeting took place at Nirvachan Sadan, the official said. In a message on X, the Election Commission of India said, "Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening democratic cooperation, in line with the vision set out at IICDEM 2026. They also agreed to work closely together to deepen collaboration on election management and the training of election staff." The meeting was the latest in a series of interactions CEC Gyanesh Kumar held with envoys to share India's best electoral practices with other democratic nations.

Earlier this month, CEC Gyanesh Kumar met Ambassador of Mongolia Ulziit Luvсанжав and discussed democratic cooperation and election staff training.



A statement issued by the ECI on social media platform X said, "Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to strengthening democratic cooperation, in line with the vision set out at IICDEM 2026. They also agreed to work closely together to deepen collaboration on election management and the training of election staff." The meeting was part of CEC Gyanesh Kumar's global engagement to share best practices in Indian democracy. In another engagement, CEC Gyanesh Kumar met the Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Azamat Yeskarayev and discussed election management issues.

India's tolerance should not be mistaken for weakness: Doval

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): Just over a year after Operation Sindoor, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval has shared finer details of the decision-making and the resolve behind the anti-terror operation, reiterating that India's generosity and tolerance should not be mistaken for weakness.

In his first interview since Operation Sindoor, Doval shared insights on the military action in a docuseries "Declassified: Operation Sindoor" that chronicles the intense 88-hour military conflict that followed the Pahalagam terror attack, revealing its high-stakes battles and aftermath.

In the docuseries, Doval says, "We had decided the objective of the operation as destruction of the enemy camps, particularly those who had been responsible for the Pahalagam attack."

The NSA said, "The message to the world is very clear — India's generosity or India being tolerant should not be mistaken for its weakness. India can take risks, India can hit hard, irrespective of the consequences."

Launched on May 7, 2025, Operation Sindoor avenged the deadly April 22 Pahalagam terror attack.



The precision strikes by Indian forces during the operation and the response to Pakistan's offensive, including drone attacks, asserted that India's capability to target multiple terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The Operation was temporarily halted on May 10 after the two sides reached an understanding.

Doval's remarks on Operation Sindoor in the docuseries will come in public domain on Saturday — the 80th Independence — with airing of the teleshow.

Earlier on the eve of the 80th Independence Day, President Droupadi Murmu also referred to Operation Sindoor and the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, calling them decisive actions against terrorists and their harbourers.

Fee reimbursement to be credited in advance in students' accounts: CM Revanth Reddy



Hyderabad, Aug 14 (GNS): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday announced that the state government would deposit Rs 2,400 crore towards fee reimbursement directly into the bank accounts of students in advance from this academic year. Addressing a public meeting after unveiling the statues of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule in Hyderabad, the Chief Minister said the reimbursement amount will be credited to students' bank accounts within a month if they apply online. He explained that the new payment system was introduced to stop colleges from withholding certificates citing non release of fee reimbursement.

In a bid to promote skill development from the school level, the Chief Min-

ister also announced a new course that will impart skills alongside academics from nursery through Class 12. He emphasised that a certificate alone is not enough these days and that everyone should acquire technical skills to secure jobs in a competitive world. He noted that as many as 2 lakh nursing jobs were available in Germany and Japan. CM Revanth Reddy highlighted that Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) were established in 119 constituencies in 2024, providing a monthly stipend of Rs 2,000 to students enrolled. He said the main objective of the ATCs is to impart technical skills alongside formal education. The Chief Minister mentioned that in Group 1 recruitment, 60 per cent of the selected candidates belong to the Backward

Classes (BC). With 90 per cent of students scoring full marks, competition in education has intensified significantly.

Referring to the establishment of Young India Sports University, he said the government would provide jobs to those excelling in sports. Cricketer Siraj, world boxing champion Nikhat Zareen and Paralympic bronze medalist Deepthi Jeevanji were given government jobs for their achievements. The Chief Minister criticised the previous government for not providing opportunities to BC communities to pursue higher studies, confining them instead to sheep, goat and cattle farming.

He claimed that Telangana was the only state in the country to conduct the BC Census.

Defence Ministry signs Rs 1,577-Cr loiter munition deals

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): The Ministry of Defence on Friday announced that it has signed contracts worth approximately Rs 1,577 crore with Tata Advanced Systems Limited and NIBE Private Limited for the procurement of Loiter Munition Systems, along with associated munitions and accessories, for the Indian Army. The acquisition is aimed at enhancing the combat capabilities of the Army's artillery regiments and strengthening overall operational readiness.

"The Ministry of Defence has signed contracts with TATA Advanced Systems Limited and NIBE Private Limited for the procurement of Loiter Munition Systems,



along with munitions & other accessories, at an approximate cost of Rs 1,577 crore for the Indian Army," it said.

According to the Defence Ministry, the Loiter Munition System is a critical battlefield asset designed to improve precision strike capabilities.

The system can locate,

track and engage targets with greater accuracy, providing a significant boost to the effectiveness of artillery operations. "The Loiter Munition System is a critical equipment developed to enhance the capability of the Artillery Regiments, thereby strengthening the overall operational effectiveness of

the Indian Army," the ministry stated.

The procurement is being carried out under the Buy (Indian) category through the Fast Track Procedure, reflecting the government's focus on strengthening indigenous defence manufacturing and accelerating the induction of advanced mili-

tary equipment. The ministry said the contracts would help expand the manufacturing capabilities of the domestic defence industry while supporting the government's push for self-reliance in defence production.

"Being procured under the Buy (Indian) category through Fast Track Procedure, the acquisition will bolster the manufacturing capabilities of the Indian industry," the ministry noted.

The acquisition is also expected to provide a further boost to the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative by encouraging the development and production of advanced defence technologies within the country.



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Building Awareness... Strengthening Society

When unity could have changed India's fate

Prof Suresh Chander

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

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

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

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



Zafarnama to the emperor.

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

By the mid-18th century, the Marathas had risen as India's paramount power, their influence stretching from the Deccan deep into the north. The Sikhs, though fragmented into twelve misls (confederacies), had become a formidable presence

in Punjab, harassing Afghan invaders and asserting control over the countryside.

In 1761, Ahmad Shah Abdali-also known as Ahmad Shah Durrani-marched into India with a vast Afghan army, intent on crushing Maratha power. The Third Battle of Panipat followed on January 14, 1761. It was one of the bloodiest battles of the 18th century. Contemporary accounts suggest that over 100,000 men were killed in a single day. The Marathas fought with extraordinary bravery, but they stood alone. The Sikhs, though strong in Punjab, did not align with the Marathas. Distrust, distance, and disunity kept them apart. Abdali's forces butchered the Marathas, leaving their empire gravely weakened.

Panipat was more than a battlefield disaster; it was a turning point that destroyed the prospect of a united indigenous power dominating northern India. Had the Sikhs and Marathas joined forces, Abdali might have been crushed-and the subsequent century of political instability, which opened the doors for British expansion, could have been avoided. A hundred years after Panipat, disunity once again defined India's fate. In 1857, the great revolt, against the East India Company broke out. Soldiers, peasants, princes, and common people across north India rose against British rule in what came to be remembered as the First War of Independence.

Yet the Sikh armies, who

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

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

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

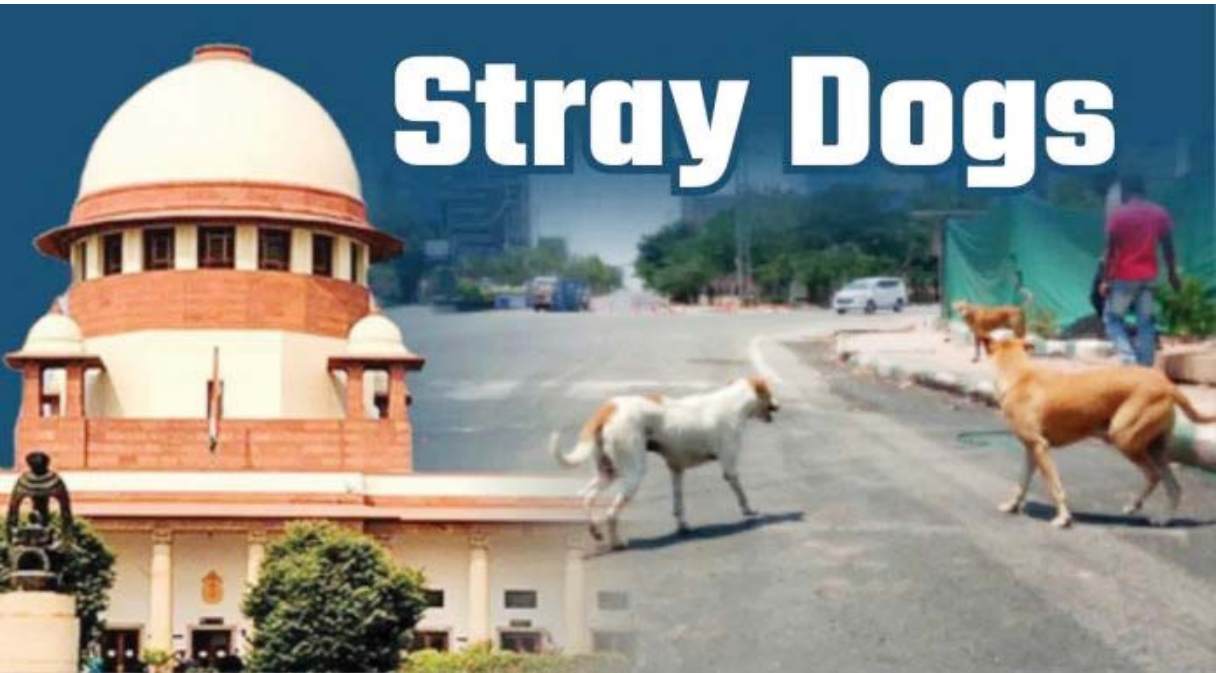
Supreme Court's Refurbished Order on Stray Dogs

By Sushil Kutty

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

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

The Supreme Court directed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to release



sterilised and vaccinated stray dogs back into their localities but not before the dogs are tested and declared rabies-free. Stray dogs betraying aggressive behaviour must be kept separate from the rest of the freely roaming stray dogs.

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

So while dedicated public feeding zones are a relief, the rider that sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs should be released back into their territorial biting

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

Dog-lovers have been saying that parents should doggy-train their kids just like they're potty-trained, adding that children provoking stray dogs is a common sight on India's thoroughfares, keep the children on a leash! Dog-lovers are wholly with the “voiceless dogs”. So much

so, they take exception to even “It's a dog's life”, stray dog's are worthless.

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

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

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

Myanmar:A Crisis in India's Backyard

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

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

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

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

Crucially, the conflict has directly impacted the India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway, a project of immense strategic and economic importance to India. This 1,360 km road network, connecting Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand, is envisioned as the physical embodiment of India's “Act East Policy.” For Northeast India, the highway carries transformative potential: It would transform the landlocked region into a gateway for trade with Southeast Asia, significantly reducing logistics costs and creating a new economic corridor. It is a key enabler for India to strengthen its economic and diplomatic presence in the ASEAN region and a crucial counter to China's growing influence. However, despite its immense promise, the project is decades behind schedule. While the sections in India and Thailand are largely complete, the crucial stretches in Myanmar are stalled, with a new deadline now set for 2027. The highway passes through active conflict zones, creating an extremely dangerous environment for construction workers. Key sections, such as the 120 km Kalewa-Yagyi road and the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa bridge projects, have faced repeated delays due to the violence.

The lack of a stable central government has complicated the signing of a Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA), which is essential for the seamless flow of goods and people. The absence of a reliable partner in Naypyitaw has forced New Delhi to re-evaluate its approach. The highway's fate will depend on New Delhi's ability to navigate the complex and dangerous landscape of a civil war in its own backyard. Recent high-level visits by Indian officials to Myanmar highlight a continued commitment to the project despite the immense challenges. The influx of Chin and Kuki refugees from Myanmar into Mizoram and Manipur has strained resources and caused community tension. While the Mizos share a strong ethnic affinity with the Chin, the issue of illegal immigration has become a flashpoint in Manipur's ongoing ethnic conflict. The era of dealing exclusively with the central government in Naypyitaw is over. India's traditional “neighbourhood first” policy is being tested by a new reality where non-state actors like the Arakan Army wield significant power in key border regions.

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

India must also strengthen its border-management strategy while avoiding measures that could further destabilise communities along the frontier. Greater coordination among the Centre, northeastern states and security agencies will be essential to address cross-border movement, trafficking, arms smuggling and the possible spillover of armed conflict. At the same time, humanitarian concerns cannot be separated from security considerations, particularly in areas receiving refugees and displaced populations.

Another important priority should be expanding India's engagement beyond Naypyidaw. New Delhi will increasingly need to maintain working-level communication with ethnic armed organisations and other influential stakeholders controlling territory along India's connectivity routes. Such engagement need not imply formal recognition, but it could help protect Indian infrastructure, secure construction corridors and keep communication channels open during periods of instability.

India should also accelerate the development of alternative connectivity and economic strategies for the Northeast. Roads, railways, inland waterways, border trade infrastructure and digital connectivity can reduce the region's dependence on any single transit corridor. Completing projects within India while preparing contingency routes through Myanmar would help ensure that the Northeast continues to integrate with Southeast Asian markets despite prolonged instability.

Ultimately, Myanmar's conflict is likely to remain a long-term strategic challenge rather than a crisis with a quick resolution. India will have to balance security interests, humanitarian responsibilities, economic ambitions and diplomatic realities simultaneously. A flexible policy that combines border security, humanitarian engagement, infrastructure protection and dialogue with multiple power centres could allow New Delhi to safeguard its interests while remaining prepared for whatever political order eventually emerges in Myanmar.

Goyal highlights global opportunities for indian industry through FTAs

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday that India's exports this year will be higher than last year, reflecting the growing competitiveness and resilience of the domestic industry, while the government is reaching out to partner countries across the globe to open up new opportunities.

Addressing the 'Bharat Buildcon 2026' conference here, Goyal highlighted India's expanding network of free trade agreements (FTAs) with developed countries, including Australia, the UAE, Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and the UK, with negotiations ongoing with the European Union (EU) and others. These agreements will further open global opportunities for Indian industries such as construction, steel, and allied sectors, the minister pointed out.

India's total exports for FY25 reached an all-time high of approximately \$825 billion, marking a significant growth of about 6.01 per cent over the previous fiscal.

Goyal further highlighted that several developed countries are eager to expand trade relations with India, noting that nations such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have expressed keen interest in entering into FTAs with India.

The minister's assurance came in the backdrop of the hike in US tariffs on Indian exports to 50 per cent as a punitive step for buying Russian oil. Goyal said the government is committed to ensuring that industry does not face unnecessary stress or difficulties arising from unilateral actions by some countries. He urged industry representatives to highlight sectors where alternative markets are required, assuring that the Commerce Ministry is reaching out to partners across the globe to open up new opportunities.

He also highlighted the

vast export potential in steel and iron ore, noting that India could export 15 million tonnes of steel annually, strengthening its export basket with high-quality, competitively priced products.

The minister also drew attention to the acute housing shortage in Australia, where nearly 1 million homes are required. He invited Indian businesses, workers, and experts to seize this opportunity, stating that Australia is open to financial collaboration, technical expertise, and workforce support from India. Training and certification opportunities are also being offered so Indian professionals can meet Australian standards. "If we miss this opportunity, we will have only ourselves to blame," he remarked, calling it a potential game-changer for India's construction and financial sectors. Goyal emphasised that, alongside global outreach, boosting domestic consumption re-

mains a priority. The upcoming GST Council meeting, he noted, is expected to provide measures that will quickly stimulate demand and give a strong boost to domestic manufacturing.

The Minister said the government is focused on supporting industry so that no sector is left behind—whether in accessing international markets or strengthening domestic opportunities. He also encouraged active participation in Quality Control Orders (QCOs) to ensure India emerges as a trusted supplier of high-quality products.

Goyal asserted that the capability of India is not being correctly understood by some experts and media. He pointed out that while certain analysts underestimate the nation's potential, the resilience of Indian industry, the strength of its startups, and the confidence of its people tell a different story. India has successfully navigated challenges such as COVID-19 and

even nuclear sanctions, and today it stands strong, ready to expand its share in global trade. Goyal said that 'Bharat Buildcon 2026' will showcase India's strength, innovation, resilience, and competitiveness as the country marches towards 'Viksit Bharat 2047'.

Scheduled from April 29 to May 2, 2026 at Yashobhoomi Convention Centre in the national capital, 'Bharat Buildcon' is being positioned as India's flagship international platform for the building and construction materials industry. With India's building and construction market valued at over USD 1 trillion and employing millions, the event will provide a one-stop platform to highlight India's capabilities across 37 allied sectors including cement, ceramics, tiles, sanitaryware, paints, hardware and electricals. The exhibition will play a pivotal role in promoting Indian products in international markets, boosting exports, attracting investments.

Jio crosses 500 million customers, powers India's digital revolution

Mumbai, Aug 14 (GNS): Reliance Industries Limited's (RIL) telecom arm Reliance Jio will launch its initial public offering (IPO) in the first half of 2026, company Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani announced on Friday.

"Today, it is my proud privilege to announce that Jio is making all arrangements to file its IPO," Mukesh Ambani said at the company's 48th Annual General Meeting. The conglomerate is aiming to list Jio by the first half of 2026, subject to all necessary approvals, he stated. Ambani informed that Jio has surpassed a 500 million customer base ahead of completing 10 years of operation. "Just a week from now, Jio will enter its 10th year of service to the nation. Looking back, these years have been the most glorious in India's digital history," he said.

He informed shareholders that the Jio family has crossed 500 million customers, symbolising unwaver-

ing trust and support. Jio's bold Deep-Tech initiatives sparked India's technological revolution and became the backbone of our Prime Minister's Digital India Mission, the RIL Chairman said. Listing the achievement he said, Jio made voice calls free from anywhere to everywhere in India, the telecom provider made it a habit for common Indians to watch videos on their mobile and do digital payments, and Jio laid the foundation for India's Digital Public Infrastructure such as Aadhaar, UPI, Jan Dhan, Direct Bank Transfer, and empowered a confident new generation.

As a result of these achievements, the financial performance of Jio is scaling new heights with every passing year. "Jio's revenue was Rs 1,28,218 crore (\$15.0 billion), a growth of 17 per cent YoY in FY-25; and EBITDA was Rs 64,170 crore (\$7.5 billion). These figures are a testimony to the enormous

value Jio has already created, and even greater value it is destined to create," said Ambani. Reliance Jio's proposed IPO is expected to mark a major milestone for India's telecom and technology sector, potentially giving public-market investors direct exposure to one of the country's largest digital platforms. The listing, however, remains subject to regulatory and other necessary approvals, with the company preparing the required steps ahead of the targeted timeline.

Ambani also underlined Jio's growing role beyond traditional telecommunications, with the company expanding its presence across digital services, entertainment, payments, cloud technologies and emerging deep-tech areas. The strategy is aimed at building a broader digital ecosystem that can serve consumers, businesses and institutions across the country.

Scindia Urges Youth to Lead India's Rise as 'Vishwaguru Bharat'

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday made a stirring call to the youth to lead India's next chapter as 'Vishwaguru Bharat.'

Addressing the gathering at ESYA, the tech fest of IIIT-Delhi, he invoked India's grand legacy as a global knowledge hub.

"From Aryabhata's zero, to advances in medical science and surgery, to Nalanda and Takshashila that drew seekers from across the world, this quest for knowledge is in our DNA. The largest library at Harvard pales in comparison to Nalanda. That spark still lies within us," said Scindia. Calling the Tech Fest a 'launchpad to enact bold dreams,' Scindia stressed that India's rise rests on the shoulders of its youth.

On technology, the minister reiterated the role of AI, saying what IT did 40 years ago, AI will do today but the task is not just to build AI, it is to build 'Responsible AI for All' and it must elevate humanity, not dominate it.

The Minister highlighted India's growing leadership in frontier technologies. The Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) has already invested in over 120 futuristic projects spanning quantum computing, terahertz communication, bio-nano systems, indigenous chipsets, and encrypted routers. The minister reaffirmed India's goal to emerge as a global leader in 6G and contribute at least 10 per cent of global patents by 2030 and the heart of this ambitious target lies within the students of India. Scindia reminded students that India's rise is anchored in its civilisational values, adding that "We are a country that has never raised war, that believes in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam." He urged the students to build for

Bharat with solutions for the farmer awaiting precision agriculture, the child in a digital classroom, the patient in a small town relying on tele-health.

Addressing the future innovators who may study abroad, the minister appealed that they may study at the best universities, work in the best labs but must come back home and bring their knowledge, their ambition, and rebuild India into the 'Golden Bird' it once was by turning brain drain into brain gain.

The minister said India's technological progress must remain inclusive and focused on solving real-world challenges. He emphasised that emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing and advanced telecommunications should improve the lives of ordinary citizens while creating new opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship.

India's GDP growth accelerates to 7.8 pc in April-June quarter

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): India's GDP growth accelerated to a robust 7.8 per cent in the first quarter (April-June) of the current financial year compared to the growth of 6.5 per cent during same quarter of FY 2024-25, official figures revealed by the Ministry of Statistics showed

The agriculture sector bounced back with a strong growth rate of 3.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2025-26, as compared to the growth rate of 1.5 per cent registered in the first quarter of the last financial year when farm output was hit by an erratic monsoon. The manufacturing sector posted a growth 7.7 per cent and the construction sector grew by 7.6 per cent. The growth rate of the tertiary sector which includes services shot up to 9.3 per cent during the first quarter of 2025-26 compared to the corresponding figure of 6.8 per cent in Q1 of FY 2024-25.

Gross Fixed Capital For-

mation, which reflects the amount of investment being made in the economy, went up to 7.8 per cent during the quarter from the corresponding figure of 6.7 per cent in the same quarter of the previous financial year.. The government's final consumption expenditure (GFCCE) registered an increase of 9.7 per cent growth rate in nominal terms during Q1 of FY 2025-26, compared to the growth rate of 4 in Q1 of FY 2024-25 . Real private final consumption expenditure clocked a per cent growth rate during Q1 of FY 2025-26 as compared to the 8.3 per cent in the same period of the previous financial year. Apart from the strong performance of the agriculture sector, the massive investments by the government in big ticket infrastructure projects such the highways, railways, ports and airports have helped to drive up the growth rate as India continues to be the fastest growing economy

amid the global slowdown. The growth rate in the April-June quarter has turned out to be higher than 6.5 per cent projected by the RBI for the quarter. The RBI has retained its forecast for India's GDP growth at 6.5 per cent for 2025-26, despite global uncertainties, as it expects strong rural demand on the back of a good monsoon and robust government expenditure on big ticket infrastructure projects to propel growth.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said, "The above normal southwest monsoon, lower inflation, rising capacity utilization and congenial financial conditions continue to support domestic economic activity. The supportive monetary, regulatory and fiscal policies including robust government capital expenditure should also boost demand. The services sector is expected to remain buoyant, with sustained growth in construction and trade in the coming months."

Centre transfers over Rs 4.28 lakh cr as tax revenue to states

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): The Central government has received Rs 10,95,209 crore from April to July of the current financial year, which comprises 31.3 per cent of the corresponding budget estimates (BE) for 2025-26, according to data released by the Finance Ministry. Of this, a sum of Rs 6,61,812 crore constitutes net tax revenue to the Centre, Rs 4,03,608 crore is non-tax revenue, and Rs 29,789 crore is part of non-debt capital receipts. The Centre has transferred Rs 4,28,544 crore to state governments as devolution of share of taxes during this period, which is Rs 61,914 crore higher than the previous year, the Finance Ministry said.

Total Expenditure incurred by the Centre during this period is Rs 15,63,625 crore, which constitutes 30.9 per cent of the corresponding BE 2025-26. Out of this total amount, Rs 12,16,699 crore is on the revenue account and Rs 3,46,926 crore is on the capital account, which is spent on large infrastructure projects.

Interest payments make up Rs 4,46,690 crore of the total revenue expenditure, while major subsidies account for Rs 1,13,592 crore.

The government's capital expenditure on big-ticket infrastructure projects in the highways, railways, ports and power sectors has crossed Rs 3.5 lakh crore compared to Rs 2.6 lakh crore a year ago. This augurs well for the economy as these infrastructure projects push up the growth rate and have a multiplier effect on creating more jobs and incomes. The government's fiscal deficit is also well under control at 29.9 per cent of the budget estimate fixed for the full fiscal year 2025-26.

A declining fiscal deficit reflects the strengthening of the fundamentals of the economy and paves the way for growth with price stability. It leads to a reduction in borrowing by the government, thus leaving more funds in the banking sector for lending to corporates and consumers, which leads to higher economic growth.

India's broadband users cross 984 million in July

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): India's broadband subscriber base grew from 979.71 million at the end of June to 984.69 million at the end of July, marking a monthly growth of 0.51 per cent, the government said on Friday.

The growth was led by mobile broadband services, which continue to dominate with 930.41 million users, followed by fixed wired broadband at 45.49 million and fixed wireless broadband at 8.79 million.

While mobile broadband grew 0.39 per cent, wired broadband saw a higher monthly growth of 1.80 per cent, and fixed wireless broadband registered the fastest rise at 7.09 per cent during July. The largest broadband providers in the country include Bharti Airtel at 307.07 million subscribers, Vodafone Idea at 127.58 million, BSNL at 34.27 million and Atria Convergence Technologies at 2.34 million. In the wireline segment, subscribers rose to 48.11 million in July from 47.49 million a month earlier, registering a growth of 1.32 per cent. BSNL, MTNL and APSFL together held about 20.5 per cent of this market. The wireless subscriber base, including mobile and 5G fixed wireless access (FWA), also grew slightly to 1,171.91 million in July from 1,170.88 million in June. While urban subscriptions increased by 0.50 per cent to 641.03 million, rural subscriptions fell by 0.40 per cent to 530.88 million.

The government also said that India received 15.41 million requests for mobile number portability (MNP) during July. With 984.69 million broadband connections and over 1.22 billion total telephone subscribers, India continues to consolidate its position as the world's second-largest telecom market, driven by mobile data usage, growing fixed broadband adoption, and rapid 5G expansion.

Paytm clarifies on Google Play alert, no issues with Paytm UPI

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): Financial services major Paytm on Friday clarified that Google Play's recent notification on unified payments interface (UPI) handle changes was incomplete and may have created confusion. The company emphasised that there is no disruption to UPI payments on Paytm and both consumer and merchant transactions remain seamless. The update is relevant only for recurring payments such as subscription billing. "This means that if a user was paying for YouTube Premium or Google One storage or to any recurring platform through Paytm UPI, they will simply need to change their old @paytm handle to the new handle linked to their bank which is @pthdfc, @ptaxis, @ptyes or @ptsbi," Paytm explained.

For example, if a UPI ID was abcd@paytm, it will now be abcd@pthdfc (or as per the bank). One-time UPI

payments are not impacted and continue as usual. Paytm noted that this transition is part of its migration to new UPI handles after receiving approval from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to operate as a Third Party Application Provider (TPAP). The deadline to complete the update for recurring mandates is August 31, 2025, which is why Google Play issued its alert. Reassuring customers, Paytm said this is a simple update to ensure uninterrupted recurring payments while all other UPI transactions on the app continue without any change.

Paytm reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 123 crore in Q1 FY26, while the company's operating revenue grew 28 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 1,918 crore. For the June-ending quarter, EBITDA stood at Rs 72 crore, underscoring Paytm's disciplined approach towards cost structure and driv-

ing growth and efficiency through embedded AI capabilities. Paytm has extended its leadership in India's merchant payments landscape, as it continues to add new device subscriptions across MSMEs and enterprises.

Paytm said the migration to new UPI handles is part of its broader effort to strengthen its payments infrastructure following NPCI approval. The company has been working to ensure that customers and merchants can continue using its platform without disruption while recurring payment mandates are updated.

The company also urged users who have active subscription-based payments linked to their old @paytm UPI IDs to update their mandates before the specified deadline. Paytm clarified that users do not need to make any changes for regular, one-time payments, which will continue to function normally.

DoP partners with MapmyIndia to build standardised digital addressing system

New Delhi, Aug 14 (GNS): By integrating with MapmyIndia's mapping platform, we are creating a standardised digital addressing system that will benefit millions of citizens and strengthen India's digital infrastructure for efficient service delivery, Harpreet Singh, Member (Operations), Department of Posts (DoP), said on Friday after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DoP and MapmyIndia - Mappls in the national capital. The partnership aims to boost the Department of Posts' Digital Address Code initiative, DIGIPIN, by making it more accessible and user-friendly. Under the agreement, MapmyIndia will provide its base maps to be integrated into the Know Your DIGIPIN application.

This will allow users to generate accurate DIGIPINs based on their geographic location and

improve visibility across platforms. DIGIPIN will also be embedded into the Mappls app, enabling citizens to search, identify, and navigate to locations using their digital addresses. Additionally, MapmyIndia will allocate DIGIPINs to addresses already present in its database, thereby strengthening location-based services and ensuring wider adoption of the system. Rakesh Verma, Co-founder and CMD of MapmyIndia Mappls, said the collaboration would pave the way for a fully indigenous National Digital Addressing System.

"MapmyIndia Mappls is proud to join hands with The Department of Posts to develop a fully indigenous National Digital Addressing System," Verma said.

He added that integrating the MapmyIndia suite of APIs and SDKs with the Department of Posts' DIGIPIN applications would

empower both citizens and businesses by enabling new services and solutions built around digital addresses.

"The MapmyIndia Mappls suite of APIs and SDKs once integrated into the Department of Posts' DIGIPIN applications will empower billions of Indian citizens and businesses by the creation of various services and solutions around DIGIPIN, while ensuring seamless access to them via the Mappls App," Verma mentioned.

The integration is expected to benefit not just individuals but also enterprises, government agencies, and developers, who can incorporate DIGIPIN into their mapping platforms and applications. This will help foster an ecosystem of innovative digital services under the framework of Address as a Service (AaaS), improving efficiency, delivery, and accessibility across the country.

Telangana to host ‘Invest Telangana’ summit in Dec

Hyderabad, Aug 14 (GNS) The Telangana government will organise the 'Telangana Rising Global Summit 2.0' in December with the theme 'Invest Telangana', it was announced on Friday.

The three-day summit, to be held December 7, 8, and 9, aims to showcase to the world the immense opportunities available for industries and investments in the state, particularly in the defence, aerospace, and pharmaceutical sectors.

The decision was taken in the state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday.

The Cabinet decided to hold the summit this year on a larger scale than the first summit held last year, where the 'Telangana Rising 2047' vision was unveiled. Briefing media on the decisions taken by the Cabinet, Information and



Public Relations Minister P. Srinivas Reddy said the 'Future City' plan will be unveiled during the summit this year.

A decision was made to organise exhibitions and set up stalls showcasing the achievements of Telangana startups and industries across various sectors, as well as new innovations in these fields.

It was also decided to

constitute a sub-committee led by Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Ministers Sridhar Babu, Uttam Kumar Reddy, and Vivek Venkataswamy, alongside other special committees to oversee the summit's organisation.

The Cabinet decided to launch on Independence Day the distribution of smart cards to ration cardholders across the state. Of-

ficials have been directed to make the necessary arrangements in all districts.

While there were previously 2.81 crore ration card beneficiaries in the state, the new government issued fresh ration cards and registered additional family members, extending benefits to an additional 62 lakh people. Currently, the state has a total of 3.42 crore ration beneficiaries, and the

government has finalised all arrangements to issue smart cards to them.

The Cabinet decided to promote the cultivation of seven specific varieties of fine-grain paddy for the 'Vanakalam' (monsoon) season and to raise farmer awareness regarding their cultivation. It was decided to conduct an extensive publicity campaign through all Gram Panchay-

at buildings and 'Rythu Vedikas' (farmers' platforms) across the state. It also resolved to pay a bonus of Rs 500 specifically for these seven fine-grain varieties, starting this year.

It was also noted that Telangana ranked first in the country for paddy procurement during 'Ya-sangi' (rabi). The government procured 81.16 lakh tonnes of paddy at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Of this, the Central government is procuring only 63.62 lakh tonnes. The Cabinet approved the sale of the remaining 17.54 lakh tonnes through an e-auction. Following the recent successful auction of maize, which generated revenue for the state, the Cabinet decided to sell this surplus paddy via e-auction as well, setting a base price of Rs 2,389 per quintal.

Godavari Pushkaralu works to begin in first week of Sept: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Aug 14 (GNS) Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu has directed officials to commence works for the Godavari Pushkaralu-2027 in the first week of September, with the tender process to be completed by the end of August. Chairing the Cabinet Sub-Committee meeting at the Dr B R Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat here on Friday, Sridhar Babu said the State government had allocated Rs 1,000 crore for the Pushkaralu and stressed that there would be no compromise on the quality of works.

The meeting reviewed department-wise preparedness and arrangements. Ministers Konda Surekha, Tummala Nag-

eswara Rao, Ponnampaluri Seethakka, Ponguluri Srinivas Reddy, Vivek Venkataswamy and Aduri Laxman Kumar, along with State Government Advisor P. Sudarshan Reddy, participated. The Minister directed officials to appoint special officers for Tier-1 areas expected to witness heavy pilgrim footfall and establish dedicated command and control centres at key locations. He also called for regular field inspections and a dedicated Endowments Department dashboard to monitor works daily.

He stressed the need for close coordination among all departments, proper road connectivity and immediate resolution of gaps using local funds.

Police parade ground set for 80th Independence Day



Falaknuma News
State Correspondent
M.A.Samad

Nizamabad, Aug 14 The Police Parade Ground in Nizamabad has been fully prepared for the 80th Independence Day celebrations scheduled to be held on Saturday. State Government Advisor P. Sudarshan Reddy will attend the celebrations as the chief guest and unfurl the National Flag at 9:30 AM. District Collector Bhavesh Mishra, Police Commissioner P. Sai Chaitanya, and Additional Collector V. Bhujanga Rao inspected the arrangements at the Parade Ground on Friday.

The officials reviewed the stage, seating arrangements, barricading, public address system and facilities for cultural programmes. Collector Bhavesh Mishra directed officials to ensure compre-

hensive arrangements for the smooth conduct of the celebrations.

He stressed that special attention should be given to the convenience and safety of public representatives, dignitaries, students, youth and the general public attending the programme. He also instructed officials to ensure that exhibition stalls and tableaux are presented attractively.

All district-level officers and employees were directed to participate in the Independence Day programme at the Collectorate and also attend the celebrations at the Police Parade Ground.

DRO B. Geetha, Municipal Commissioner Dilip Kumar, RDO Rajendra Kumar, Trainee RDO Sandeep, ZP CEO Saya Goud, DRDO Sayanna, ACP Prakash and other officials were present during the inspection.

Rajiv Jyothi Yatra Reaches Nizamabad Congress Leaders Welcome Yatra, Pay Tributes to Rajiv Gandhi

Falaknuma News
State Correspondent
M.A.Samad

Nizamabad, Aug 14 The 35th Rajiv Jyothi Sadbhavana Yatra, being undertaken from Sriperumbudur to New Delhi under the leadership of Yatra President Dorai Velu, reached Nizamabad on Thursday.

DCC In-charge Kaudapu Sharath Kumar and DCC Corporation President welcomed the Yatra at the Congress Bhavan. They later paid floral tributes to the portrait of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and recalled his contributions to the country.

Speaking on the occasion, DCC President said the Rajiv Jyothi Sadbhavana Yatra has been continuing for the past 35 years with the objective of promoting peace, unity and communal harmony. He said this year's Yatra commenced on



August 9, observed as Quit India Movement Day, with the message "Quit Terrorism", and will proceed to New Delhi, where it will conclude on August 20, the birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi.

He said the Yatra was being organised to remember Rajiv Gandhi's services to the nation and spread his message of peace, harmony and national unity among the people.

District Treasurer Bhaktavatsalam, AICC Coordinator Ghan Raj, District Youth Congress President Vipul Goud, former Municipal Floor Leader Rajendra Prasad, Janda Gudi Chairman Lavang Pramod, former Corporator M.A. Qudus, Bantu Balram, Mahila Congress leaders Pola Usha and Aparna, Akula Mahender, Jaffer, Raj Gagan, and other Congress leaders and workers were present.

CPI(M) seeks review of E20 Ethanol Policy, cites consumer loss & food security concerns

Hyderabad, Aug 14 (GNS): The CPI(M) Telangana State Committee has demanded a comprehensive scientific study into the quality of E20 ethanol-blended petrol, alleging that the policy is causing financial losses to motorists and posing a threat to food security.

In a statement on Friday, CPI(M) State Secretary John Wesley said the Centre's E20 policy, aimed at reducing crude oil imports, had raised concerns among consumers and the automobile sector.

He said reports based on fuel samples collected from

different parts of the country had indicated high levels of chloride and moisture in some samples.

He cited chloride levels of over 400-500 ppm in Rajasthan, Delhi and Maharashtra and moisture levels of up to 13,000 ppm in Andhra Pradesh.

Wesley said the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) had also raised concerns with the government over fuel quality and standards.

He alleged that the use of E20 fuel was resulting in reduced mileage, adverse effects on engine compo-

nents and increased maintenance costs, particularly affecting owners of older vehicles that were not fully compatible with the fuel.

The CPI(M) leader said E20 petrol was being sold at prices comparable to regular petrol despite the alleged impact on vehicle

performance. He also expressed concern that diverting food crops for ethanol production could affect food security and disrupt cropping patterns.

Wesley demanded that the Centre conduct a comprehensive scientific study on the quality and impact



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Telangana BJP holds ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ Yatra in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Aug 14 (GNS): The Telangana BJP on Friday organised a large-scale 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Yatra in Hyderabad as part of the 80th Independence Day celebrations. The rally began at the Dr B.R. Ambedkar statue near the State Secretariat and culminated at the Swami Vivekananda statue on Tank Bund.

Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, BJP State President N. Ramchander Rao, BJP Mahila Morcha State President Mekala Shilpa Reddy, MP K. Laxman, MP Eat-ala Rajender, besides MPs, MLAs, MLCs, party

office-bearers and others participated. Addressing the gathering, Kishan Reddy urged people to hoist the national flag at their homes and participate in Tiranga Yatras to uphold patriotism and national unity.

He also recalled the sacrifice of ABVP activist Sama Jagan Mohan Reddy of Kakatiya University, who was killed while opposing the burning of the national flag.

Kishan Reddy criticised opposition parties for allegedly obstructing the country's development and urged people to protect India's unity, integrity and security.



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