

BRS family rule, Congress social justice: CM Revanth Reddy

Hanamakonda, Aug 16 (GNS): Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Sunday launched a sharp attack on the previous BRS government, contrasting its alleged "family rule" with the Congress government's focus on "social justice" and welfare. Addressing the 'Praja Palana-Pragathi Baata' public meeting after launching development works worth Rs 424 crore in Parkal Assembly constituency, Revanth Reddy said Warangal had a long history of fighting against oppression and had repeatedly rejected leaders who considered themselves invincible. The Chief Minister said the Congress government was working 18 hours a day to fulfil its promises and had spent around Rs 1 lakh



crore on farmers' welfare during its 2.5-year tenure. He said the government had procured farm produce worth Rs 90,000 crore, implemented farm loan waivers and Rythu Bharosa and provided a bonus for fine-variety paddy. Highlighting women's welfare, Revanth Reddy said his government

had appointed two women as ministers, revived zero-interest loans and entrusted women's self-help groups with stitching uniforms for students. He said women's groups were also being encouraged to operate solar power plants and petrol bunks to improve their economic

independence. On employment, the Chief Minister said the government had completed recruitment to 72,000 government posts, issued police recruitment notifications and relaxed age limits for unemployed youth. He said vacancies would be identified and filled every

six months, while urging unemployed youth not to be misled by political rhetoric. Taking a political dig at the BRS, Revanth Reddy said the previous government promoted "family justice", while the Congress govt was implementing "social justice". He compared the appointments made during the tenures of K Chandrashekar Rao and himself, pointing out that while KCR appointed family members and close associates to key positions, the Congress government had given ministerial and other posts to leaders from different sections, including Seethakka, Konda Surekha, Adluri Laxman, Kadiyam Kavya, Yashaswini, Vem Narendar Reddy and Professor Kodandaram.

Now, Bengaluru varsity students, alumni oppose CJI, BCI chief visit

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS) Students and alumni of the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) here have opposed CJI Surya Kant and Bar Council of India Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra attending the upcoming convocation of the varsity. In a statement dated August 15, the students and alumni condemned the now-withdrawn BCI order to halt the enrolment of students of NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, and expressed their solidarity with the students at NALSAR, who they said have shown exemplary courage and moral conviction in speaking truth to power. "We are aware that the BCI has closed all proceedings against NALSAR. However, the fact that such unconstitutional and illegal "proceedings" can be initiated by a statutory body against students and faculty members of a public university in the



first place does not alter the nature or the larger impact of such actions or dilute the responsibility of the Chairman and the BCI," the statement signed by 165 graduating students of the Class of 2026, 409 current students and 128 alumni. They claimed that even after the recall of the ban on enrolment and the inquiry order, the BCI has acknowledged the "arbitrary" and "illegal nature" of its actions. According to them, a university convocation is a monumental event in a student's academic life, meant to celebrate years of hard work and persever-

ance. In a country where access to higher education is severely restricted by barriers of class, caste and gender, and poorly designed and conducted entrance examinations, a convocation marks an important achievement for families. "In this context, inviting persons in high office to confer degrees to students towards whom they have publicly expressed their disdain and condescension is offensive, humiliating, and a mockery of students and their struggles," it said. "We stand in unconditional solidarity with our fellow students at NALSAR who have shown exemplary courage and moral conviction in speaking truth to power." They have demanded that the Bar Council of India unconditionally apologise to the student and faculty community at NALSAR for attempting to infringe their fundamental right to free speech and expression.

Congress, Trinamool, DMK defend Sonia Gandhi over Vande Mataram row, CPI-M seeks clarity

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS) With senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi continuing to face backlash over her actions during the rendition of the 'Vande Mataram' a day before, the Trinamool Congress and the DMK, along with her party, came out in her support, while the CPI-M asked the Congress to clarify its position on the national song.



MP Jairam Ramesh had also defended the veteran leader, saying, "There was no attempt to stop it (the song). Because the Congress President (Mallikarjun Kharge) had been standing for a long time, Sonia Gandhi was saying, 'Bring a chair for him and place it there'."

Claiming that Gandhi was being "unnecessarily targeted", Trinamool Congress MP Kirti Azad challenged BJP MPs to sing all the six verses of the national song, saying: "I can't do that. I am being very honest. I can't do that. But does that make me less nationalist? If you can't sing Vande Mataram, you are anti-national...Where are we going (as a nation)?" DMK Spokesperson T.K.S. Elangovan also hit out at the BJP saying: "How

can we say Sonia Gandhi asked to stop the national song? She might have signalled for something else... BJP is known for finding fault with anything. They will be silent over whatever mistakes they do." However, CPI-M General Secretary M A Baby said that there is "some confusion" over rendition of the full version of the national song "because there are three Congress chief ministers today in the country" and therefore asked the party to clarify its position on the matter. "During the flag hoisting function attended by Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan in Kerala, my information is that only the National Anthem was played. Vande Mataram was not played at all. In the case of three other Congress Chief Minister-led governments, Telangana, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh, the full-length song Vande Mataram was played. So, I hope Congress leadership would explain as to what is the position of Congress with regard to the reciting of Vande Mataram," Baby told.

Proud of 'dimagi Naxal' tag, says Chidambaram

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS) The Congress on Sunday hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his "dimagi Naxal" remark. Senior leader P Chidambaram said he was "proud" to be called one, while party general secretary Jairam Ramesh questioned whether demanding a caste census and social justice was enough to earn the label. Chidambaram's response came a day after Modi, in his Independence Day address, warned against what he described as "dimagi Naxals". Chidambaram responded: "I am proud to be a dimagi Naxal." Ramesh said those who questioned the government were routinely given labels, pointing to the Congress' demand for a caste census. He said the government had resisted the demand for years before announcing it would be conducted.

The Congress leader asked whether seeking social justice could be treated as "dimagi Naxal" politics, arguing that the label was being used against those challenging the government. Ramesh then



turned to the controversy involving Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and former MP Sandeep Dikshit, saying he did not consider Rahul's remarks an insult. The controversy followed Rahul hugging Dikshit at a Congress event while making a political point about Modi's much-publicised embraces with foreign leaders. The exchange also included a reference to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, drawing criticism from the BJP. Ramesh defended Rahul and used the controversy to question Modi's diplomatic style, describing it as "huglomacy". On Parliament, Ramesh rejected the government's allegation that the Opposition was responsible for preventing the House from functioning.

NTA orders fresh NET for 3 subjects after panel finds errors

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS) The National Testing Agency (NTA) will re-conduct the UGC-NET in English, commerce and sociology after a committee constituted by it found multiple factual, typographical and translation errors in the three papers. NTA conducted the UGC-NET from 22 to 30 June across 87 subjects, for the award of Junior Research Fellowship, eligibility for assistant professor and admission to PhD programmes. In respect of three subjects, namely English, commerce and sociology, NTA had received several complaints on multiple errors in these papers. Accordingly, NTA formed a committee to enquire into the matter. Candidates claimed the sociology paper had several spelling, grammar and translation mistakes,

including the names of renowned sociologists' being misspelt as "Putzer" instead of "Ritzer" and "Nusbaut" instead of "Nussbaum". There were also allegations that a significant number of questions in the English paper had been repeated from previous years. "The committee found that the three papers had numerous factual, typographical and translation errors, including misspelt names of prominent scholars, garbled book titles, errors in the wording of questions, grammatical mistakes, gender and number agreement errors, punctuation mistakes and non-standard coined terms for established concepts, besides the repetition of a significant number of previously administered questions. The committee

recommended that, in the interest of conducting a fair and error-free examination, these three papers should be re-conducted," the agency said. NTA concluded that defects of this nature could not be adequately addressed merely by dropping questions during the challenge process. "In view of the above, the three papers-English, commerce and sociology--will be re-conducted," it said. English and commerce examination will be conducted on September 9 and Sociology paper will be held on September 10. NTA clarified that no additional examination fee will be charged from the candidates of these three subjects. NTA on Sunday had released the UGC-NET provisional answer keys for 84 subjects.

1st Test: Padikkal, Rahul, Jurel carry India to 460/9 despite Sri Lanka's spin fightback

Galle, Aug 16 (GNS): Left-handed batter Devdutt Padikkal struck a commanding career-best score of 167 as India reached 460/9 in 116 overs on a rain hit day two of the first Test against Sri Lanka at the Galle International Stadium on Sunday. Heavy showers in the morning wiped out the first session and a half, thus restricting play to only 43 overs. India capitalised on the time available by adding 172 runs even as Sri Lanka's spinners made inroads with the second new ball. India lost seven wickets in the shortened day but remain well placed in the game, with the pitch offering more assistance than anticipated to spinners. Kuldeep Yadav (12 not out) and Prasidh Krishna (1 not out) were at the crease at stumps, leaving open the possibility of an overnight declaration to press for



early breakthroughs in Sri Lanka's batting order. Padikkal's innings was the backbone of India's effort, as he combined patience with controlled aggression to dish out a masterclass on batting in the sub-continent. KL Rahul added 82 and Dhruv Jurel chipped in with a

breezy 51, apart from him sharing a 55-run stand with Manav Suthar. Sri Lanka found some encouragement through debutant off spinner Keshara Nuwantha, who picked up three wickets, while left arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya returned figures of 4-109 to stop India from running away with the game. Resuming from 288/2 after a completely washed-out morning session and multiple rain delays, India added 76 runs in an extended 85-minute afternoon session, though they lost three wickets to Sri Lanka's resurgence with the new ball, especially with the hosts being disciplined in their bowling effort. Padikkal showed no signs of slowing down as he flicked pacer Asitha Fernando over mid-on for four to reach his first-ever score of 150 in Tests.

Diabetes prevention must become national priority as rural India faces growing burden: Dr Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh, on Sunday called for making diabetes prevention a national priority, saying rural India is no longer untouched by the diabetes epidemic and requires a community-led, technology-enabled and data-driven response. Addressing the inauguration of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI) Diabetes Rural Outreach Digital Portal and the launch of VISHWAS, the Diabetes Awareness Video Library, Dr Singh said prevention,



early detection, timely intervention and sustained follow-up are essential to reducing the growing burden of diabetes and its complications.

"With more than 70 per cent of India's population below the age of 40, protecting the health and productive potential of the country's young population is essential to the vision of India@2047," he said. Dr Singh said India has made significant progress in healthcare, scientific research and digital innovation, but the next challenge is to ensure that these advances reach people in rural and underserved areas. "Rural India is no longer untouched by the diabetes epidemic and that early detection, timely

intervention, lifestyle modification and sustained follow-up are essential to reduce the burden of the disease and its complications," the minister stated. He said the RSSDI Rural Outreach Programme provides an example of how professional medical societies can complement national health efforts by bringing specialist expertise closer to communities. Under the initiative, villages are being adopted to create a structured system for diabetes awareness, screening, treatment and long-term follow-up.

Cotton imports spell disaster for farmers

Signal from a Lankan island

Sukhpal Singh

Central government announced the removal of 11 per cent import duty on cotton until September 30. Barely 10 days later, it extended the exemption till December 31. This has come as a blow to the farmers of the country as cotton is an important crop, with more than 60 lakh farmers cultivating it. It is also a key source of crop diversification in states like Punjab. That the decision has come at the time of harvest is a recipe for disaster as it would lead to a crash in the cotton prices, causing distress to the growers. This duty was an important tool to shield the Indian farmers from artificially low-priced imported cotton from developed countries, especially Australia and the US. But under the US threat of tariffs and pressure from the textile sector, the government has sacrificed the interests of the most vulnerable group of farmers.

Cotton production has been consistently shrinking in the country. It fell from 6.56 million tonnes in 2014-15 to a mere 5.50 million tonnes in 2023-24. In Punjab, the area under cotton cultivation which was 7.42 lakh hectares in 1998-99, shrank to below one lakh hectares in 2025-26. The government decision threatens the future of this key alternative crop for diversification.

Cotton imports were already at record highs even before the suspension of import duty. They had surged 107.4 per cent in a year: from



\$579.2 million in 2023-24 to \$1.20 billion in 2024-25. With the duty suspended, the imports will only grow, driving prices further down. In fact, cotton prices have been declining since the duty was lifted, signalling acute distress for farmers. The present selling rate of the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is around Rs 56,000 per candy of 356 kg, while imported cotton after duty removal is estimated to cost around Rs 50,000 per candy. For the current harvest, the government has hiked the MSP by 8 per cent. It was supposed to allow farmers to realise around Rs 61,000 per candy, but with cheaper imported stock available, they will be fortunate to come anywhere close to that figure. The farmers might now be discouraged from sowing the crop.

The CCI, which has been procuring cotton at MSP to stabilise the market, is likely to find its role undermined as cheaper imports will make its stock unat-

tractive. The MSP for cotton currently stands at Rs 7,710 per quintal, while the C2+50 per cent cost of production is estimated to be around Rs 10,000 per quintal, leaving the farmers with a short-fall of Rs 2,300 per quintal. The domestic market prices are already well below the MSP, fluctuating between Rs 5,500 and Rs 6,500 per quintal. The latest decision would further widen this gap. The cost of this policy would be particularly visible in the cotton regions of Punjab, Telangana and Maharashtra, which are already among the most indebted agricultural areas in the country. In Punjab alone, farmer debt in 2024 stood at Rs 1,04,064 crore, averaging Rs 2.71 lakh per account. Its cotton belt, ie the south-west, has already been suffering from crop failures due to biotic and abiotic reasons.

Almost all of the cotton belts of the country account for the highest rates of farmer suicides. In the Marath-

wada region, 269 suicides were recorded in the first three months of this year. The policy change might prove to be a death knell for many more farmers.

The scale of the impact is immense. India could end up becoming a net cotton importer if the cheaper cotton from other countries floods the market, as the case is with oilseeds and pulses, where the country spends around Rs 2 lakh crore on importing these crops annually. India's production costs are also structurally higher than those of competitors like Brazil and Australia, which allows these countries to export cotton to India at far lower rates. What makes the situation worse is the global imbalance in subsidies. In 2024, the US handed out \$9.3 billion in subsidy payments to its farmers for commodity crops. The recent tax bill of the US is set to provide them with \$60 billion over the next decade in subsidies and direct pay-

ments. This disparity ensures that American cotton enters the global market at artificially low prices, undercutting Indian farmers, who already operate on thin margins. The arrival of subsidised imports in such a fragile context could accelerate the decline of India's cotton economy.

Another major setback is the 50 per cent tariff levied on Indian exports by the US, which is a huge importer of textile goods from India. It is believed that with this, the purchase of cotton yarn has dropped by half of the previous level. With the textile business slowing down due to these tariffs, the demand for cotton was already set to be lower, even with import duty in place.

The irony is that this decision came days after Prime Minister Modi assured the farmers that the government would not compromise their interest at any cost. On the contrary, the government has removed import duty in the name of relief to the textile industry, putting the future of millions of cotton growers in the dark. Already grappling with high costs of cultivation, falling acreage, mounting debt and an uneven global subsidy regime, farmers face yet another setback. The measure also raises larger questions about policy direction. Instead of strengthening domestic production and addressing the structural issues faced by cotton cultivators, such as pest outbreaks, lack of assured procurement and inadequate support prices.

WHILE India focused its eyes northwards, watching Prime Minister Narendra Modi demonstrate brotherly affection towards Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin for the cameras at Tianjin in China, India's southern neighbour sent a quiet message to both New Delhi and Tamil Nadu. Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, on his fourth visit to Jaffna in the Northern Province within a year — a record of sorts in itself — made an unannounced trip in a naval speed boat to Katchatheevu, becoming the island-nation's first head of government to set foot on the barren island.

By doing so, President Dissanayake was clearly marking Sri Lankan territory. Katchatheevu is part of Sri Lanka. India accepted its neighbour's claim over this speck of land in the Palk Strait in 1974 with the "Agreement between Sri Lanka and India on the Boundary in Historic Waters between the two Countries and Related Matters" (this agreement then led to another in 1976, settling the maritime boundary between the two countries). Nonetheless, Katchatheevu, located between Rameswaram and Jaffna, has been a recurring point of friction in India-Sri Lanka relations. Though it was never demarcated on any map of India, either in the colonial era or in the post-Independence period, Tamil Nadu politicians frequently speak about "taking back" the uninhabited island to soothe frayed tempers and nerves in the fishing jetties in Rameswaram. At the heart of the problem is the conflict over scarce resources between the Tamil fishers on either side of the waters. Simply put, unsustainable practices by Tamil Nadu fishers such as bottom trawling, purse seine and double net fishing have scraped up all but the dregs of marine resources on the Indian side of the Palk Strait. The Sri Lankan side, with more resources because Jaffna fishermen could not put out to sea due to the tough security restrictions during the 30-year civil war, seems more attractive. Near daily incursions by Indian fishermen into Sri Lankan waters sometimes end with their arrests by the Sri Lankan Navy, seizure of their boats and nets, and sometimes, even fatalities.

But instead of addressing the main challenge of creating alternative livelihoods or diversifying fisheries, leaders in the state have propped up the illusion that Katchatheevu is the answer to all their problems. Most recently, Tamil film actor Vijay, who has plunged into politics with a new party called the Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam, has done his bit to perpetuate this myth. At a public rally in Madurai, by all accounts his biggest so far, he asked the government to "do just one small thing" for the state's fishermen: "reclaim this island so that our fishermen can be safe".

Over the years, the Tamil Nadu government has adopted four resolutions demanding the 'return' of Katchatheevu. There are also cases before the Supreme Court asking the agreement to be struck down as "unconstitutional". Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar added fuel to the fire during the 2024 Lok Sabha campaign with remarks that the Congress "callously" gave away Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka. But if taking back Katchatheevu could solve the problems of Tamil Nadu fishers, why do fishing boats from the state venture as far as the shores of peninsular Sri Lanka, and are spotted even farther away, on Sri Lanka's eastern coast? For the record, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath, responding to Vijay's remarks, has categorically ruled out any change in the status of Katchatheevu. For good measure, he also flagged the election in Tamil Nadu — Assembly polls are due next year — and asked Sri Lankans not to pay attention to "speeches made from election platforms".

At home, Dissanayake's touchdown at Katchatheevu is sure to help his National People's Power (NPP) in its continuing public outreach in the predominantly Tamil Jaffna. A large section of Jaffna's people depend on the sea for their livelihood. Among them a perception has taken hold that their Tamil brethren across the sea, who generously helped Tamil militant groups during the war, are now pitted against them. Visiting the island was certainly imaginative of Dissanayake to send home the message that he stands with Sri Lanka's Tamil fishermen.

It could also reverse a perceptible sag in Dissanayake's image over the last few months. The NPP government, which came to power promising sweeping economic changes, and more immediately, changes to the punishing terms of the IMF agreement, has so far managed only a holding operation. The loss of political ground was evident in the local elections earlier this year. The government has, however, been acting on its other promise, of going after corrupt politicians and officials in previous governments. Former President Ranil Wickremesinghe, was the most high-profile politician to be arrested. He has been accused of misusing public funds to attend a ceremony in honour of his wife, an academic, at a British university. As the head of the nearly non-existent United National Party, Wickremesinghe was an easy target. The arrest (he has been released on bail) could raise expectations among the JVP-NPP base of more high-profile arrests. But it would be tougher for the government to go after, say, a member of the Rajapaksa family. Against such power play, Dissanayake's territorial assertion would certainly appeal to the government's core constituency of Sinhala nationalists, who believe fervently that every inch of the island from north to south is ordained for the preservation and protection of the Buddhist faith. Plus, Dissanayake has also sent a message to critics at home who accuse him of being too soft on India — he faced flak for a defence cooperation agreement, and a pact on 'digital transformation' has been challenged in court by a rival politician — that he can stand up for Sri Lanka's interests. Back in Katchatheevu, a small shrine to St Antony, the patron saint of seafarers, has stood on the island for over a century. Historically, fishers from both Rameswaram and Jaffna have gathered at Katchatheevu to celebrate the saint's feast day in March. After the end of the civil war, as Katchatheevu began to attract more pilgrims, the shrine was given a makeover.

The latest visit also brings renewed attention to the delicate balance India and Sri Lanka have maintained over the Palk Strait. While New Delhi has consistently maintained that the 1974 and 1976 agreements settled the maritime boundary, political rhetoric in Tamil Nadu keeps the Katchatheevu question alive. Any attempt to reopen the issue would have wider diplomatic implications and could complicate an otherwise strategically important bilateral relationship.

For fishermen on both sides, however, the dispute is less about sovereignty and more about survival. The livelihood crisis in the Palk Strait cannot be resolved merely through territorial claims. India and Sri Lanka will need to strengthen mechanisms for regulated fishing, joint management of marine resources and gradual reduction of destructive fishing practices. A durable solution must protect both the livelihood of Tamil Nadu fishermen and the traditional fishing rights of communities in northern Sri Lanka. The Katchatheevu issue also carries a strong emotional dimension because of the shared Tamil heritage across the Palk Strait. Families, religious traditions and fishing communities have historically maintained close links despite the international maritime boundary. The St Antony's shrine remains one of the few spaces where people from both sides can meet, making it an important symbol of the region's shared social and cultural history. For India, the challenge will be to separate legitimate concerns over fishermen from demands for territorial revision. New Delhi has a strong interest in maintaining stable ties with Colombo, particularly as Sri Lanka occupies a strategically important position in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, the concerns of Tamil Nadu's coastal communities cannot simply be dismissed, especially when arrests, boat seizures and confrontations at sea continue to generate political pressure.

Dissanayake's Katchatheevu visit, therefore, may prove significant beyond the island itself. It simultaneously reinforces Sri Lanka's territorial position, reaches out to Tamil voters in the north and reassures Sinhala nationalist constituencies that his government will defend national interests. For India and Tamil Nadu, the episode should serve as a reminder that the fishermen's crisis requires practical cooperation rather than political symbolism. The waters separating the two countries may be narrow, but the issues surrounding them demand careful diplomacy and long-term solutions.

Targeting armed forces personnel

Harsha Kakar

Recent floods and cloudbursts in J and K, Himachal, Punjab and Uttarakhand saw the army out as first responders. They were there assisting and supporting the population even before the SDRF and NDRF could reach, largely because of their proximity. It is not that their camps were not affected by the disaster, but priority was to their national brethren, a sign of dedication. Army helicopters were rescuing those trapped in collapsing building while troops, apart from rescue, were accommodat-

ing and feeding those who were stranded on roads or had lost their homes. Every rescue operation carries risks; but since it involves saving our own, these must be taken.

When the nation is humiliated as in Pahalgam or Pulwama, it is the armed forces which regain national prestige. It is in these times that those in power look towards the forces. Once trouble has passed and normalcy restored, the forces are ignored and treated as second class citizens, its members attacked when alone and vulnerable.

Incidents targeting soldiers have been on the rise in recent years. The case of Spice Jet in Srinagar, where the officer has been placed on a five-year flying ban by the airline, with no action against the staff which initiated the assault is a case in point. Neither has DGCA taken the airline to task.

Other instances include



those of manhandling of a soldier at a Meerut toll plaza, an officer and his friend in Bhubaneswar, police inspector slapping an officer in Lucknow and the Col Bath case in Patiala. While the toll plaza company has been banned from further bidding, six arrested, in most other cases there has been hardly any movement in the investigation, especially when police personnel are involved.

In the Col Bath case, the officer had to approach the Supreme Court to get the case handed over to the CBI, which the Punjab Government was unwilling to do, in spite of a High Court order. The Supreme Court, rightly refused to intervene. In its observation, it stated, 'When war is going on, you glorify these Army officers... Your SSP says, I am not able to arrest them (police personnel) in spite of rejection of anticipatory bail because they are police officers... Eight days delay in lodging FIR?! Have respect for Army people. You are sleeping peacefully

in your house because that man is serving the border at -40 degrees.' Nothing could be truer. But such statements fall on deaf ears.

What message did the Punjab Police action convey. Most importantly it sent the message that police protect their own, despite them being in the wrong. Secondly, they can delay action till the case loses media limelight and then quietly reinstate those they supposedly suspended. It would also provide them time to possibly manipulate witnesses to change statements.

Today, in the same Punjab, the army is out rescuing those trapped in floods, possibly including family members of the same state police. Simultaneously, the army is expected to behave with decorum. If it employs force to target concerned police officials, as has happened in the past, it is accused of highhandedness and unlawful action. This also does not bode well for a disciplined force. If it does

not support its own, it is considered weak, and targeted by its own veterans.

In most cases senior officers are blamed for being meek and not acting, whereas they have been pushing for action. It has also been seen that interacting with concerned police authorities has been fruitless, as the Bath case has proved. The police will promise the moon, do nothing, while expecting army officials to maintain a neutral stance.

Simultaneously, soldiers are compelled to approach courts for redressal of their pension cases arising out of disability compensations, cut short by an inconsiderate bureaucracy at the MoD. In Feb this year the Delhi High Court expressed 'dismay' at the way medical board proceedings were being conducted by the MoD and legitimate claims denied at the 'whims and fancies' of certain officials.

In Jul this year the Delhi High Court dismissed nearly 300 writ petitions filed by the MoD, chal-

lenging disability pension awards granted to retired armed forces personnel by the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT).It even rebuked the MoD for objecting to every decision of the AFT.

The High Court observed that disability benefits are not generosity, but recognition of 'hardships endured during military service and it is the Government's responsibility toward those who have served the nation.'Has the MoD learnt its lessons. Unlikely. It is a matter of days before the same exercise is repeated again. If this be the case, then why did the Government even set up AFTs.

AFTs were established for speedily managing grievances concerning the armed forces, most of which are linked to pay and pensions. The MoD appoints members of the tribunal. Currently most of the tribunals remain understaffed for reasons best known to the MoD. Yet the MoD is the body which objects to most of their decisions.

India's top 10 listed developers may achieve booking target of Rs 1.49 lakh crore in FY26

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): India's top 10 listed developers have achieved nearly 30 per cent, or Rs 44,317 crore, of their total booking (pre-sales guidance) targets of Rs 1,49,108 crore in FY 2026 in the first quarter of the fiscal, a report said. "They are on track to achieve their booking targets of over Rs 1.49 lakh crore in FY 2026," ANAROCK Research said in a report. The top 10 listed developers' booking targets in FY 2025 stood at around Rs 1,20,818 crore. In short, they are targeting a 23 per cent pre-sales growth over FY25 in the current fiscal year, the report stated. According to the report, the actual annual sales bookings in FY 2025, Godrej Properties led the pack in the last fiscal with pre-sales of nearly Rs 29,444 crore, followed by DLF, with sales bookings of around Rs 21,233 crore.

"Players like DLF Ltd and Prestige Estates are cases in point - DLF has hit nearly

52 per cent of its total pre-sales target of Rs 20,000-22,000 crore for FY 2026 in Q1 FY2026," says Anuj Puri, Chairman, ANAROCK Group. After the NBFC crisis in 2018 and the ensuing pandemic disruptions, developers faced funding crunches and declining sales. Many, especially the large and listed ones, focussed on deleveraging, improving pre-sales, monetising assets, and raising equity capital. As a result, several top developers have brought down their net debt-to-equity ratios, with some even achieving net cash positions, a report said.

However, the real estate sector's shift from leveraged to balance-sheet-led growth marks a pivotal shift in its investment appeal and operating model.

"With near-zero debt levels, improving buyer sentiment, and favourable monetary policy positions, FY26 sees the industry in a stable,

trust-driven, performance-led cycle that has long-term potential," the report stated.

"This deleveraging phase will positively impact real estate development in India over the long term. With D/E ratios at multi-year lows and equity capital continuing to flow in, developers can expand strategically, consolidate market share, and build consumer trust," Puri added.

The improved financial metrics also make the Indian real estate sector more attractive to institutional and foreign investors, which bodes well for capital formation in the medium term.

The strong first-quarter performance reflects continued demand for residential properties across major urban markets, particularly in the premium and mid-income segments. Developers with established brands, strong project pipelines and healthier balance sheets are increasingly gaining an

advantage as homebuyers place greater emphasis on delivery track records and financial stability.

The report noted that the sector's improved balance sheets are allowing developers to pursue expansion without relying excessively on borrowed funds. Lower interest costs and stronger internal cash generation could provide companies with greater flexibility to acquire land, launch new projects and invest in emerging markets.

The shift towards asset-light and capital-efficient business models is also changing the competitive landscape. Large developers are increasingly using joint ventures, redevelopment projects and strategic partnerships to expand their presence while limiting upfront capital requirements. This approach could help sustain growth even if market conditions become less favourable.

Semiconductor product design leadership forum to boost innovation launched in India

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): In a bid to position India as a global leader in chip design, intellectual property (IP) creation and high-value innovation, a Semiconductor Product Design Leadership Forum was launched here. Launched by the Indian Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), it aims to tackle critical gaps in access to capital, advanced EDA tools, IP acquisition, global collaborations, and specialised semiconductor design talent.

The forum further aims to produce a globally dominant semiconductor design ecosystem for India by creating an enabling environment for Indian engineers to innovate and promote IP creation within the country. Thereby, the ICEA forum will complement the design-linked incentive (DLI) scheme and other policy initiatives.

"As we invest in fabs and manufacturing through the India Semiconductor Mission, it is imperative that

we also strengthen the design ecosystem, for that is where true value, autonomy, and sovereignty lie," said S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, at the event. The Forum Chair, Sandeep Kumar, said that by bringing together fabless companies, IP institutions, tool vendors, supply chains, marketing, and funding agencies, we aim to address structural gaps. The forum brought together over 80 stakeholders, including officials from MeitY, NITI Aayog and global firms.

Stakeholders from the semiconductor ecosystem, including domestic product design companies, DLI-recognised firms, early-stage design startups, and global semiconductor ecosystem companies, attended the event. "ICEA Semiconductor Product Design Leadership Forum reflects our conviction that India must lead not only in manufacturing but also in chip innovation. With this initiative, we envision

catalysing the growth of 500 successful semiconductor product design companies over the next decade," said Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman, ICEA.

Backed by government schemes offering up to 50 per cent fiscal support, India's semiconductor market is projected to grow from \$45-50 billion in 2024-25 to \$100-110 billion by 2030.

The Semiconductor Fabs Scheme and Display Fabs Scheme offer up to 50 per cent financial aid for projects falling under their respective domains. The DLI scheme offers incentives up to Rs 15 crore for each chip design startup.

The forum is expected to strengthen collaboration between Indian semiconductor companies, research institutions, technology providers and investors, helping startups overcome challenges related to product development and commercialisation.

It will also focus on improving access to advanced Electronic Design Automation (EDA) tools and semiconductor intellectual property, which are essential for developing competitive chips for automotive, telecom, consumer electronics, defence and other strategic sectors.

The initiative seeks to encourage greater participation from startups and emerging companies by connecting them with funding agencies, industry partners and global technology firms. This could help Indian companies scale their products and expand into international markets.

The forum will work alongside existing government initiatives, including the India Semiconductor Mission and the Design Linked Incentive scheme, to create a stronger pipeline from chip design and IP development to commercial production.

Bajaj Auto domestic two-wheeler sales down 12 pc in August

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): Bajaj Auto Ltd on Monday reported a 12 per cent year-on-year (YoY) drop in domestic two-wheeler sales to 1,84,109 units in August.

The company's total sales for the month were higher, owing to exports and strong performance in the commercial vehicle segment. The company sold a total of 4,17,616 units (two-wheelers plus commercial vehicles) in August, up from 3,97,804 units in the same month previous year. Meanwhile, cumulative domestic sales declined by 8 per cent to 2,32,398 units in August from 2,53,827 units a year earlier. The two-wheeler exports rose 25 per cent YoY. The overall exports also made up for the loss in the domestic segment, rising 29 per cent (2-wheeler plus domestic), reaching 1,85,218 units compared to 143,977 units in August 2024. Commercial vehicle volumes increased by 21 per cent to 75,729 units from 62,626 previous year,

driven by growth in domestic markets (up 7 per cent) and overseas markets (up 58 per cent). On a consolidated basis, Bajaj Auto's sales from April to August rose 2 per cent to 18,94,853 units. Two-wheeler sales fell 11 per cent domestically to 82,52,732 units. However, the exports in this segment rose 18 per cent during the corresponding period. The commercial vehicle sales increased 14 per cent to 3,07,928 units, driven by exports, which jumped 47 per cent to 1,10,311 units.

Meanwhile, in Q1 FY26, over 10 lakh passenger vehicles were sold in India, with Maharashtra topping the sales chart, according to data from industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM). From April to June, 10.12 lakh passenger vehicles were sold in the country, and the western zone topped sales with 3.21 lakh units. In the upcoming Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms, the Centre is

expected to lower the tax on entry-level passenger vehicles and two-wheelers to 18 per cent, making them more affordable ahead of Diwali.

Currently, all passenger vehicles based on combustion engines are subject to a GST of 28 per cent plus a compensation cess of 1 per cent to 22 per cent based on engine capacity, length, and body type.

The strong growth in exports helped Bajaj Auto offset the decline in domestic two-wheeler sales during August. The company's performance in international markets was supported by demand for motorcycles and commercial vehicles across several overseas markets. The commercial vehicle segment emerged as another key growth driver, with volumes rising significantly during the month. Higher demand in overseas markets, along with steady domestic sales, contributed to the segment's overall im-

Online Gaming Act to come into force soon: IT Secretary

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025, which was passed by the Parliament and has got the President's assent, will be notified soon, Electronics and IT Secretary S. Krishnan said on Monday.

Talking to the media at an ICEA event on semiconductors here, the Secretary informed that all the necessary steps are being taken to bring the law into force quickly. In the monsoon session, Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw introduced the Online Gaming Bill, 2025, which was passed by both houses. In addition to outright banning the offering, operation, facilitation, promotion, advertising, and participation in online money games, the law seeks to regulate and promote social, educational, and esports games.

An online game that is played as a component of

multi-sport events and involves organised competitive competitions between individuals or teams is referred to as "e-sport" under the Bill. The National Sports Governance Act of 2025 recognises these competitions, which are played in multiplayer formats with predetermined rules.

Following the government's move, all online money gaming platforms, including Dream11, Pokerbazi, Rummy Circle and others, have discontinued their money gaming contests. The Electronics and IT Secretary also said that the semiconductor space is an important aspect for India and as "a matter of pride, the first commercial chip built in India is set to roll roll-out this year".

Union Minister Vaishnaw stated last week that the country is looking to build global-scale capabilities to support the markets with the best quality products. India will manu-

facture every component used in mobile phones, including chips, cover glasses, laptops, and servers, positioning the nation as a global player in electronics manufacturing.

During the opening of India's first tempered glass manufacturing facility for mobile devices in Noida, the minister stated that the country's electronics manufacturing sector has expanded six times in the last eleven years, reaching a production value of Rs 11.5 lakh crore, exporting over Rs 3 lakh crore, and providing direct and indirect employment for 2.5 million people. He claimed that value addition is gradually being improved and that the nation's entire electronics ecosystem is growing quickly. The US-based Corning Incorporated and Optimus Electronics have partnered to establish the facility, which will manufacture premium tempered glass under the well-known "Engineered by Corning"

Ola Electric's August sales drop 31 pc on-year: Data

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): Ola Electric's yearly sales fell sharply by over 31 per cent in August compared to the same month previous year, the government's VAHAN data showed on Monday.

The company sold 18,972 units last month, down from 27,624 units in August 2024. However, on a monthly basis, Ola managed to bounce back, posting a 6.3 per cent increase in sales compared to July. This recovery helped Ola climb to the second spot in the electric two-wheeler (E2W) market, overtaking Bajaj Auto. According to the data, the overall E2W industry registered 1,04,306 units in August, marking a 1.4 per cent rise from July. Ola Electric secured an 18.19 per cent share of the market in August, and the boost in its monthly numbers lifted investor sentiment.

Its stock price jumped over 11 per cent to around Rs 60.2, giving the company a market capitalisation of Rs 26,464.98 crore (\$3 billion).

In last five days, the shares of the company were up by Rs 13.12 or 27.21 per cent. In the last one month, the shares climbed over 51 per cent. On a longer timeframe, however, the stock has been cooling off, delivering a return of just over 11.2 per cent in the last six months, while falling nearly 29 per cent so far in 2025.

Bajaj Auto, however, slipped to the fifth spot, registering 11,730 units in August. Its sales dropped 40.3 per cent month-on-month, pulling its market share down to 11.25 per cent from 19.10 per cent in July. Meanwhile, in the previous month, the company saw a steep 57.29 per cent decline in its sales as the electric two-wheeler maker sold 17,848 units in July, compared to 41,802 units sold a year ago. The Vahan data showed n August 1 that the Bhavish Aggarwal-led company's market share dropped to 17.35 per cent in the previous month.

Revoke suspension, create affordable & sustainable model: AHPI to health insurance firms

New Delhi, Aug 16 (GNS): As thousands of health policyholders in India are suffering due to loss of access to cashless hospitalisation, the Association of Healthcare Providers - India (AHPI) on Monday asked health insurance firms to revoke suspension and create an affordable as well as sustainable model.

Speaking to IANS, AHPI Director General Dr. Girdhar Gyani said that AHPI has asked insurance companies to restore the cashless service wherever they have removed hospitals from their panel. He noted that the association will facilitate conversations between hospitals and insurance firms to address the root cause and provide respite to patients.

"We have sent notice to seven of the insurance companies asking them to revoke suspension on hospitals that were removed from the panel. After bringing the services back, we will sit across with them at the table on the is-

suues and fix the rates," Gyani said. "Similarly, we are telling hospitals to be reasonable," he added. His comments come as Niva Bupa Health Insurance on Monday said it has suspended the cashless treatment facility at Max Hospitals across India.

In a statement to IANS, Dr. Bhabhtosh Mishra, Director and COO of Niva Bupa Health Insurance, said the company's agreement with Max expired in May 2025. Talks over premium revisions did not reach an agreement, leading to the suspension of cashless services.

"We would like to inform you that our cashless services at Max Hospitals are currently unavailable," Mishra stated, adding that Star Health and Care Health also face similar issues with Max Hospitals. The AHPI first advised its member hospitals in North India to stop providing cashless treatment facilities for policyholders of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Com-

pany, with effect from September 1, 2025. Gyani said that "the suspension was revoked as the company came forward and addressed all the concerns, and they removed the embargo on some of our major hospitals". A similar notice was also served to Care Health Insurance, with a request for their response by August 31, which they did. Care Health tol that it is providing cashless services. "Please rest assured that valued customers of Care Health Insurance will always receive seamless cashless services at all our network hospitals. We continue to work closely with each one of our partner hospitals to ensure our customers experience the quality care they deserve," Manish Dodeja, Chief Operating Officer, Care Health Insurance, told. Gyani explained that while the government and the public in general want affordable healthcare, insurance companies and the hospitals seek sustainability.

However, sustainability means they have to now improve their operating efficiency, the expert said. "For example, you know, insurance companies in India, they spend roughly 30-35 per cent of the money collected from the premium on the administrative, commissions, and sales. So, we are telling them to cut down on this aspect, because otherwise every year they are raising the premium, so the public is worried about it," Gyani said.

"Similarly, even hospitals must improve their operational efficiency and cut down the expenses that can be cut down. Ultimately, we have to move in the direction that healthcare is affordable at the same time sustainable for hospitals and insurance companies," he told.

The dispute over hospital empanelment and reimbursement rates has raised concerns among health insurance policyholders, particularly those who depend

on cashless treatment during medical emergencies. AHPI said patients should not become the victims of disagreements between insurers and hospitals.

The association stressed that both sides need to adopt a transparent and mutually acceptable approach to pricing. It said negotiations should focus on realistic treatment rates while ensuring that hospitals can maintain quality healthcare services and insurers can offer sustainable policies. AHPI also called for greater efficiency across the healthcare and insurance sectors. Reducing avoidable administrative costs, commissions and operational expenses could help create room for more affordable premiums and better reimbursement arrangements. The ongoing disagreements also highlight the need for stronger mechanisms to resolve disputes between insurers and hospitals without disrupting.

Tata Motors' domestic sales dip 2 pc in August, EVs clock record numbers

Mumbai, Aug 16 (GNS): Tata Motors on Monday reported that its total domestic sales dropped by 2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to 68,482 units in August, compared to 70,006 units in the same month previous year. According to the company's statement, total sales including exports stood at 73,178 units, slightly higher than 71,693 units recorded in August 2024. The decline in domestic performance came mainly from the passenger vehicle (PV) segment, which saw sales fall 7 per cent to 41,001 units, down from 44,142 units previous year. In contrast, commercial vehicles (CV) performed strongly. Domestic CV sales rose 6 per cent to 27,481 units, while total CV sales including exports jumped 10 per cent year-on-year to 29,863 units.

Medium and heavy commercial vehicles, including trucks and buses, also

recorded growth, with domestic sales at 13,405 units against 12,008 units in August 2024. Despite the dip in overall passenger vehicle numbers, Tata Motors' electric vehicle (EV) portfolio continued to shine.

The company recorded its highest-ever monthly EV sales at 8,540 units, marking a 44 per cent jump compared to August previous year. Tata Motors said the record reflects growing consumer confidence in EVs and the accelerating shift towards green, zero-emission mobility.

Total passenger vehicle sales, including exports and EVs, stood at 43,315 units in August 2025, down 3 per cent from 44,486 units in the year-ago period.

Tata Motors said it remains focused on expanding its EV offerings and strengthening its commercial vehicle business, even as passenger car demand saw some moderation dur-

ing the month. Meanwhile, last month, the Indian automobile manufacturer announced that it has re-entered South Africa's passenger vehicle market.

after six years, launching three SUVs and an entry-level compact hatchback.

"Our return to South Africa marks a significant milestone in Tata Motors' global journey. We are excited to bring our new-generation of vehicles engineered with cutting-edge technology, uncompromising safety, and modern design to a market that values safety, quality and innovation. With Motus as our preferred partner, we are confident in delivering a superior ownership experience that resonates with South African consumers and contributes meaningfully to the local economy," Shailesh Chandra, Managing Director, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle Ltd. and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd.

Smart ration cards step towards transparent PDS: Azharuddin

Hyderabad, Aug 16 (GNS): Minister for Minorities Welfare & Public Enterprises Mohammad Azharuddin said that the Telangana Government is committed to ensuring food security and delivering welfare benefits to every eligible family in a transparent, efficient and timely manner.

The Minister was speaking at the Smart Ration Cards Distribution Programme held today at Komuram Bheem Adivasi Bhavan, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Mohammad Azharuddin said that the distribution of Smart Ration Cards is an important step towards modernising the Public Distribution System and making government services more convenient for beneficiaries. He said the new Smart Ration Cards will help beneficiaries carry



and access their ration-card details conveniently, while digitalisation will reduce the difficulties associated with the old ration books.

The Minister thanked Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri A. Revanth Reddy ji for his vision and commitment towards the welfare of the people. He said the Chief Minister is giving special importance to education and is taking several measures to

improve the delivery of welfare schemes.

"The Congress Government has made commitments to the people, and we are working sincerely to fulfil those commitments. Welfare must reach the eligible beneficiary directly, transparently and without unnecessary difficulties," Minister Mohammad Azharuddin said. He highlighted the Government's initiatives

including free bus travel for women, supply of fine-quality rice and other welfare programmes, stating that several schemes are already being implemented while other commitments are being taken forward in phases.

The Minister also appreciated the efforts of Civil Supplies Minister Sri N. Uttam Kumar Reddy Garu for strengthening the Public Distribution System, expanding

the coverage of ration cards and ensuring the supply of quality fine rice.

Recalling his childhood experiences, the Minister said that people earlier faced several difficulties in obtaining ration supplies and maintaining old ration books. Today, technology has changed the system. Beneficiaries are receiving a convenient Smart Card that can easily be carried in a pocket or purse. The process is becoming simpler and more transparent, he said.

The Minister said that the Government is also working to ensure that eligible families receive other welfare benefits, including free electricity and free bus travel for women. He further said that the Government is taking steps to ensure that beneficiaries receive housing facilities closer to their existing localities wherever possible. He noted that in the past,

some beneficiaries were allotted houses far away from their places of residence, affecting employment and family connections.

Under the new approach, the Government is working to identify available land within the concerned localities and provide housing closer to where eligible beneficiaries live. Field-level surveys are also being undertaken for this purpose, he said.

The Minister expressed his appreciation to the District Collector, government officials, Civil Supplies Department officials and field-level staff for their efforts in implementing welfare programmes. He urged parents to give maximum importance to the education of their children and encouraged them to make use of Government schools and residential educational institutions.

Centre must include OBCs in caste census: Ponnam Prabhakar



Hyderabad, Aug 16 (GNS) Telangana BC Welfare and Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Sunday demanded that the Centre immediately include OBC/BC population details in the nationwide caste census, alleging that the exclusion of OBCs from the recently released questionnaire was a serious injustice to Backward Classes.

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan, Ponnam Prabhakar said the Centre had initially indicated that detailed category-wise information on BCs would be collected in the second phase of the census. However, he said the 40-question questionnaire released on August 15 contains references to SCs, STs and "others" but makes no mention of OBCs.

The Minister said authentic caste-wise population data was essential to ensure proportional representation and to seek removal of the 50 per cent reservation ceiling. Without reliable data on the population of BCs, it would be difficult to place a strong case before the Supreme Court for revising the reservation limit, he said.

Ponnam Prabhakar said Telangana had already conducted a comprehensive BC caste survey and sub-

mitted its findings to the court. He urged the Centre to conduct the caste census along with the general Census and collect accurate data on all weaker sections, including SCs, STs, BCs and minorities.

Recalling the principle of "Jitni Abadi, Utna Haq" (rights in proportion to population) advocated by Rahul Gandhi, he said the exact demographic composition of different communities was necessary to formulate effective political, economic and social welfare policies.

The Minister questioned union Ministers Bandi Sanjay Kumar and G Kishan Reddy and Telangana BJP president Ramchander Rao over their stand on the BC caste census and reservations. He alleged that the Centre was "shedding crocodile tears" for BCs while denying them their rightful representation.

Ponnam Prabhakar said he would write to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to ensure the inclusion of BCs in the caste census and correct the omission immediately. He also called upon the BJP leadership to clarify its position on the 50 per cent reservation ceiling and the demand for proportional representation.

Patriotic Fervour Marks Independence Day at Baser Railway Outpost

Falaknuma News
State Correspondent
M.A.Samad

Nizamabad Aug 16 :

The 80th Independence Day was celebrated with patriotic spirit and enthusiasm at the Baser Railway Outpost, functioning under Nizamabad Railway Station. Mohammed Mehboob, Railway Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police, hoisted the National Flag at the outpost on the occasion. The ceremony witnessed the participation of railway police personnel, railway staff, Government school teachers and students, and residents from the surrounding area.

After the flag hoisting, Mohammed Mehboob conveyed Independence Day greetings to all those present and distributed sweets among the police personnel, railway employees, teach-



ers, students and members of the public. The celebrations created a festive atmosphere and highlighted the spirit of patriotism and national unity. Speaking on the occasion, the participants remembered the sacrifices of the freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the country's freedom and emphasised the importance of preserving the values of unity, discipline and national integrity.

Railway Head Constable

Raghupathi, RPCs Murli, Suresh and Tirupati, Railway Station Master In-charge Ravinder, Government school teachers and students, railway staff and local residents were among those who participated in the programme. The Independence Day celebrations concluded on a cheerful and patriotic note, with everyone joining in the spirit of national pride and celebrating the country's 80th Independence Day.

Collector Ashish Sangwan Meets CM Revanth Reddy



Falaknuma News
State Correspondent
M.A.Samad
Nizamabad Aug 16 :
Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy visited Bichkunda in Kamareddy district on Sunday to attend the wedding reception of the daughter of Jukkal MLA Thota

Laxmi Kantha Rao. During his visit, District Collector Ashish Sangwan met the Chief Minister and welcomed him by presenting a bouquet. The Collector also discussed various development and welfare initiatives being implemented across the district. The meeting focused on the progress of government schemes and developmental activities in Kamareddy district. The Collector apprised the Chief Minister of the ongoing programmes and related issues. Public representatives, senior officials and local leaders were present during the Chief Minister's visit.

ress of government schemes and developmental activities in Kamareddy district. The Collector apprised the Chief Minister of the ongoing programmes and related issues. Public representatives, senior officials and local leaders were present during the Chief Minister's visit.

KTR calls for statewide protests against move to scrap Kalyana Lakshmi, Shaadi Mubarak

Hyderabad, Aug 16 (GNS): Bharat Rashtira Samiti (BRS) Working President K T Rama Rao (KTR) today alleged that the Congress government was conspiring to discontinue the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes and called upon party cadre to stage protests across Telangana on Monday.

Addressing a teleconference with BRS lead-

ers, MLAs, MLCs, former public representatives and state general body members, KTR alleged that the government was using a recent High Court verdict as a pretext to scrap the schemes, which he described as important financial support for daughters of poor families. KTR recalled that former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao launched

the schemes on October 2, 2014, with financial assistance of Rs 51,000, which was later enhanced to Rs 75,116 and Rs 1,00,116. He claimed the BRS government had provided around Rs 13,000 crore to nearly 13 lakh beneficiaries during KCR's tenure.

He alleged that beneficiaries under the Congress government were facing delays in receiving assis-

tance, with some families reportedly making repeated visits to government offices even after marriages had taken place. KTR demanded that all eligible pending applications be processed immediately and the assistance released. Questioning the government's handling of the matter in the High Court, KTR asked why it had failed to file a coun-

ter-affidavit despite being granted four extensions and why it had not effectively defended a scheme concerning poor women.

KTR also recalled the Congress election promise to provide "tulam" of gold (10 grams) along with Kalyana Lakshmi assistance and alleged that the government was now attempting to discontinue the scheme to avoid ques-

tions over the unfulfilled promise. He directed BRS constituency in-charges, leaders and activists to organise protests at constituency and mandal headquarters across the State on Monday. He urged the cadre to campaign among people and question Congress leaders over the status of Kalyana Lakshmi, Shaadi Mubarak and the promised gold.

How Parliament House Outgrew its Imperial Design

Hyderabad, Aug 16 (GNS) The building that came to house Indian democracy was not designed as the centre of a sovereign nation. New Delhi was planned around the Viceroy, the Secretariat and the ceremonial projection of imperial authority. A separate legislative building entered the scheme belatedly, after the Government of India Act, 1919, enlarged the machinery of colonial representation. Even when it opened in 1927, the British avoided calling it parliament. "Council House" better expressed the limits of an institution in which representatives

could debate while executive authority remained elsewhere.

That reversal gives Sobhana K. Nair's Housing the Republic its animating idea. The book follows the Council House as it is occupied, altered and gradually made central to the constitutional life of independent India. Its democratic meaning did not reside in the intentions of its architects. It accumulated through political use. Nair says the book arose from "anticipatory grief" as the old parliament's active life was nearing its end. It is part biography, part institutional history and part farewell.



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