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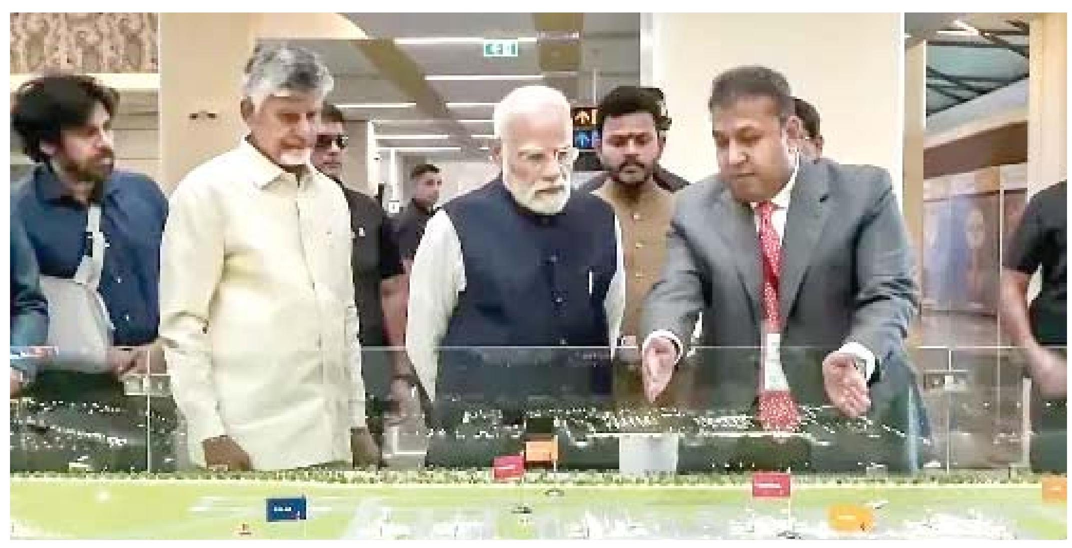
PM Modi launches Rs 18,000 cr projects, calls AP growth engine of Viksit Bharat



Bhogapuram (AP), Aug 1 (UNI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that Andhra Pradesh has the potential to become a growth engine for 'Viksit Bharat'. Speaking at the inauguration of Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district, he said that under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan, the entire NDA team is working for Andhra Pradesh at double the speed. He recalled that he had sought the people's mandate for a 'double-engine government' to ensure that their efforts for the state's development moved forward at the speed of a 'double engine'.

The Prime Minister, who launched development projects worth nearly Rs 18,000 crore, noted that besides the airport, these projects are related to road connectivity, energy security and semiconductors. "These development works are a symbol of the speed at which Andhra Pradesh is progressing today," he said while congratulating people for these projects.

He hoped that these projects will make a significant contribution towards fulfilling the resolve of Swarna Andhra and Viksit Bharat. "Under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh is emerging as a major source of energy in fulfilling the dream of Viksit Bharat," he said.

The Prime Minister said India's aviation sector witnessed extraordinary growth during the last 12 years. He said in 2014, the country had only 74 operational airports, but today that number has increased to 166. "There was a time when air travel was limited to major cities. Under the NDA government, even people from smaller towns and ordinary families are now flying. This growth is not just about building more airports. Through the UDAN Scheme, people from even the poorest families have the opportunity to travel by air and fulfil their aspirations," he said.

The Prime Minister said a few days ago, the government launched the second phase of the UDAN scheme, under which Rs 29,000 crore will be invested to expand regional air connectivity further.

He pointed out that recently a 'hub-and-spoke' airport model was inaugurated in Kashi and today, the same model has reached Amritsar in Punjab. This will connect Amritsar to more than 25 international destinations. PM Modi said that earlier when airports were built, they were often named after members of just one family, but the NDA government changed that tradition.

Affirming that the government's mantra is 'Investment for Employment', he said the government has not only increased the investment but is also encouraging the private sector to invest. Asserting that the creation of any growth centre in the global economy cannot happen with just one factor, he said this requires an entire ecosystem. "Today, in Andhra Pradesh, we are developing the same kind of ecosystem for growth. Chandrababu Naidu works tirelessly day and night at a personal level. The result of this is that today, many major companies from across the world want to come here and invest," he said.

Telangana Per Capita Income Rises 10.23% to Rs 4.19 Lakh: CM Revanth

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said on Saturday that Telangana's per capita income grew to Rs 4,18,931, an increase of 10.23 per cent in a single year. In a social media post, he revealed that Telangana's per capita income for this year (2025-26) is Rs 4,18,931, an increase from Rs 3,80,031 in the last year. The Chief Minister said Telangana's per capita income grew by 10.23% in a single year, an increase of Rs 38,900.

He claimed that Telangana is achieving new heights since Congress came to power in December 2023. He called Telangana a top-performing state. According to him, this was made possible through hard work, focus on economic growth, investments, job creation, balanced development across verticals, shift from ad hocism to policy-based governance, and lots of diligent work, constant reviews, attention to detail, and constant engagement with stakeholders.

"We have reversed a decade of failed governance, sense of gloom and have infused optimism and hope in every citizen and every aspect of governance," said the Chief Minister. "Women, farmers and youth are the biggest beneficiaries of our success. And the coming years will see greater success of my people and state," he added. Meanwhile, Minister for Transport and BC Welfare, Ponnam Prabhakar, met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at his residence to express gratitude regarding the Supreme Court's verdict upholding the previously granted environmental clearances for the Gouravelli, Palamuru-Rangareddy, and Seethamma Sagar projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar stated that this favourable verdict was the result of the Chief Minister's proactive efforts, including consultations with the Central government and appointing eminent legal counsel like Abhishek Singhvi to effectively argue the case in the Supreme Court, while keeping the interests of the people of Telangana at the forefront.

Doval Urges Youth to Link Freedom with National Duty

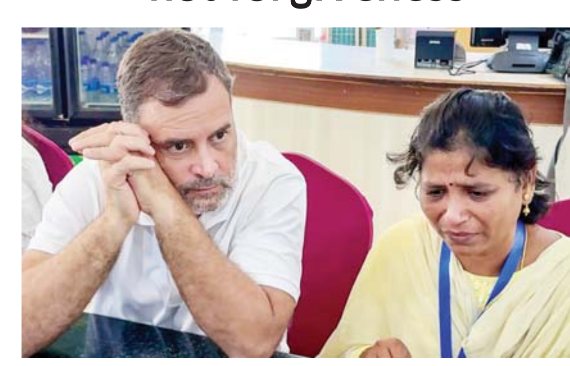
Pune, Aug 1: National Security Advisor (NSA), Ajit Doval, on Saturday cautioned youth against misinterpreting liberty as unrestrained personal choice, urging them instead to align their individual ambitions with national interest. He was speaking at the function organised by the Lokmanya Tilak Smarak Trust after receiving the prestigious Lokmanya Tilak Award from Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

He noted, "Today's youth feel that freedom simply means doing whatever one wishes or pleases. But freedom was never just that." "At a time when no one dared to raise a voice against British oppression, Lokmanya Tilak chose the difficult path of struggle and led the nation." Doval urged the younger generation to ponder Tilak's vision for nation-building, emphasising that true freedom comes with the responsibility of safeguarding and developing the country.

Doval stressed the deeper essence of freedom and national building. Addressing a gathering of leaders, scholars, and citizens, NSA Ajit Doval reflected on the evolving definition of freedom across generations. He noted that modern youth often equate freedom with absolute personal volition—a view he contrasted sharply with the sacrifices that secured India's Independence. "Today is a truly special day. It marks the death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak—an inspirational leader, incredible freedom fighter, thinker, and guide of our independence movement," said Doval.

Revisiting Tilak's historic declaration—"Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it"—the NSA reframed the iconic slogan to suit 21st-century aspirations.

Rahul Gandhi says students need accountability, not forgiveness



Chennai, Aug 1 (UNI): Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday responded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks about "forgiving" young protesters, saying that students across India are looking for accountability and reassurance rather than forgiveness. His comments came after PM Modi, in an Instagram video posted late on Friday, said he would forgive young protesters accused of criticising him and his late mother, describing them as misguided youngsters who needed guidance from elders. Taking to X, LoP Rahul Gandhi said the Prime Minister should acknowledge the challenges faced by students due to examination paper leaks, cancelled examinations and the uncertainty these incidents have created.

"India's students do not need his forgiveness. They are owed his apology," he wrote, urging the government to strengthen the examination system. The Congress leader noted that students are asked to work hard and compete honestly, but often face setbacks when examinations are disrupted. He also referred to families who had lost children following education-related pressures, sharing photographs of his interactions with parents and students.

"Nothing is more painful than seeing a parent grieve their child. Behind every young life lost is a family carrying pain that will never leave them, and serious questions about the education system," LoP Rahul Gandhi said. He further observed that PM Modi had not directly engaged with students or families affected by examination-related problems. According to him, years of preparation can be undone when examinations are cancelled or compromised, leaving students uncertain about their future.

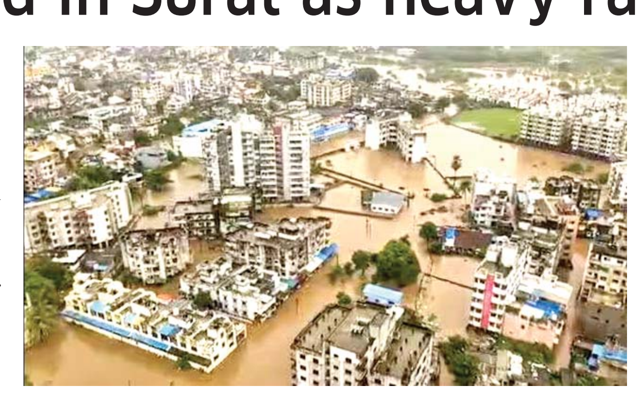
RBI swap scheme draws $40.8 billion Foreign Currency Inflows in Two Weeks

New Delhi, Aug 1 (UNI) Foreign currency inflows under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) special swap facility almost doubled in just two weeks, rising to $40.816 billion by July 31 from $20.718 billion as of July 17. According to the latest RBI data, Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) [FCNR(B)] deposits remained the biggest contributor, accounting for the bulk of funds mobilised under the concessional swap scheme.

The numbers are based on data received from Authorised Dealer Banks and reflect foreign exchange inflows raised through the RBI's special facility. According to the RBI, FCNR(B) deposits contributed $36.725 billion by the end of July, making them the largest source of funds under the facility. Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) accounted for $2.575 billion, while External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) added $1.516 billion. With $36.725 billion mobilised through FCNR(B) deposits, this route accounted for around 90% of the total inflows under the facility. Between July 17 and July 31, total inflows under the scheme increased by $20.098 billion, or around 97%. The rise was driven primarily by FCNR(B) deposits, which increased by $19.319 billion during the two-week period, climbing from $17.406 billion to $36.725 billion.During the same period, inflows through OFCBs rose by $605 million, while ECBs increased by $174 million.

As of July 17, the RBI had reported total inflows of $20.718 billion under the facility. These comprised $17.406 billion through FCNR(B) deposits, $1.970 billion through OFCBs and $1.342 billion through ECBs.

Over 4,000 evacuated in Surat as heavy rains trigger flood alert



Surat, Aug 1 (UNI): More than 4,000 people have been evacuated from flood-prone villages in Surat district as relentless rainfall and rising river levels prompted the administration to intensify rescue and relief measures, with State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams deployed in Olpad and Mandvi under a 'Red Alert' issued by the India Meteorological Department. District Collector Tejas Parmar said the district administration was operating in full alert mode following continuous heavy rainfall since Saturday morning.

He said all necessary precautionary measures had been taken to safeguard residents, and people from villages along the Ambika River as well as other affected rural areas had been shifted to safer locations.

"All necessary precautionary measures have been taken for the safety of citizens. More than 4,000 people from villages along the Ambika River and other affected rural areas have been safely evacuated," Parmar said. Surat district recorded an average rainfall of 222 mm, or around eight inches, during the 24-hour period between 6 a.m. on Friday and 6 a.m. on Saturday.

Ambika taluka received the highest rainfall at 565 mm, approximately 22.5 inches, while the remaining talukas recorded between five and 12 inches of rain. Surat city itself received around five to six inches during the same period.

The Collector said the possibility of heavy to extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places continued.

Although rainfall briefly eased during the morning, heavy showers resumed across all talukas from around 10 a.m., prompting authorities to maintain a high level of preparedness throughout the district.

The overflowing Kim River led to waterlogging in low-lying villages of Olpad and Mangrol talukas, where evacuation efforts had begun on Friday and continued on Saturday as required.

Parmar appealed to residents living along the banks of the Kim River to move to safer locations without delay, warning that the river's water level could rise further. "There is every possibility that the Kim River's water level will continue to increase.

China's unbeatable new export is a process, not a product

Jeffrey Wu

The Chinese "cannot be allowed to export their way back to prosperity," argues US Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, who claims that China's economy is the "most unbalanced in history." Such remarks reflect the growing fear in Washington that China's overcapacity, subsidies and dumping are distorting global trade.

The more pressing concern, however, is not what China exports, but how. Global cost structures are indeed being reshaped, but by a quieter and more complex force: relentless productivity improvements. China is not merely moving more goods, it is exporting a new production model powered by automation, artificial intelligence and state-guided industrial optimization. This shift is disruptive, deflationary and still largely misunderstood.

China's rise as the world's factory in the late 20th century was driven by labor and scale. But now, China aims to achieve a new form of dominance through intelligent infrastructure. No longer confined to apps or chatbots, AI has been embedded across the physical economy — guiding everything from robotic arms and warehouse fleets to autonomous production lines. For example, Xiaomi's "lights-out" factory in Beijing can assemble 10 million smartphones annually with minimal human intervention.

AI conducts a symphony of sensors, machines and analytics that form a tightly woven industrial loop, driving efficiencies that traditional manufacturers can approach only incrementally.

Nor is this technology-driven ecosystem confined to a single factory. DeepSeek's 671 billion-parameter open-source large language model is already being deployed not just for coding but also to optimize logistics and manufacturing. JD.com is revamping its supply networks through automation. Unitree is exporting bipedal warehouse robots. And Foxconn (Apple's primary manufacturing partner) is developing modular, AI-led microfactories to reduce its dependence on static production lines.

These examples may not represent "prestige innovation," but they do attest to a broad culture of industrial optimization. Under the banner of "new quality productive forces," the Chinese government is rolling out AI pilot zones and subsidizing factory retrofits. Cities like Hefei and Chengdu are also offering local grants that rival the scale of national initiatives elsewhere.

The strategy echoes the one pursued by Japanese industry in the 1980s, when automation, lean production and industrial consolidation helped firms outcompete global rivals. But the Chinese approach goes further, blending AI with economies of scale, feedback loops and a unique cultural dynamic known as "neijuan" (involution): a self-perpetuating race to optimize and outcompete, often at the expense of profit margins. BYD, among the most vertically integrated automakers globally, recently cut prices across dozens of models, triggering a $20 billion stock selloff.

In sectors from e-commerce to electric vehicles, this practice has driven such relentless cost compression that the state has occasionally seen fit to intervene. In April, the People's Daily newspaper warned that extreme involution was distorting market stability, citing a destructive price war in food delivery between JD.com, Meituan and Ele.me. And the problem is even more acute in the EV industry. While more than 100 Chinese EV brands currently compete, more than 400 have gone out of business since 2018.

The arena of global competitiveness is unforgiving. Those who survive emerge leaner, more adaptive and better positioned than their legacy counterparts. That is how successful Chinese EV makers have managed to edge into Europe, offering models at price points that local firms struggle to match. Viewed from afar, the process looks chaotic. In practice, though, it resembles natural selection. China is deliberately promoting industrial evolution: the state fosters a wide field of contenders and then lets the market winnow the field. This approach is rippling across industries. In solar panels, Chinese manufacturers now account for more than 80 percent of global production capacity, driving prices down more than 70 percent over the past decade. And a similar trend is emerging in EV batteries, where Chinese firms dominate the cost-per-kilowatt curve. But make no mistake: this deflation does not stem from oversupply or dumping. It reflects redesigned cost structures, which are the result of AI, intense competition and relentless iteration. Thus, Chinese industry has made efficiency a tradable asset — one that is reshaping global pricing dynamics. Once this shift really takes hold, businesses around the world will find themselves adjusting their own pricing strategies, labor deployment and supply chain configurations.

But this development presents new challenges for many economies. Consider the role of central banks, whose mission is to ensure price stability. What can they do if inflation is subdued not by weak demand, but by superior supply-side efficiency coming from abroad? Most likely, monetary policy will lose traction in such a scenario. The march of software advances will not slow just because interest rates rise or fall. Instead, industrial policy will have to come to the fore not as protectionism, but as an adaptive necessity.

5 immutable steps to enduring AI adoption

Edgar Perez

The relentless drumbeat of artificial intelligence adoption echoes through the AI Workshops I run worldwide. Executives, envisioning a revolutionary future powered by algorithms and neural networks, are fervently pushing for its implementation. Yet, a significant chasm exists between this top-down enthusiasm and the ground-level reality experienced by workers. This tension underscores a critical truth: AI's transformative potential remains dormant unless it is embraced by the very employees who will interact with and be impacted by it.

The challenges are multifaceted, ranging from data complexities to integration hurdles. Ultimately, the linchpin for successful AI adoption lies in the unwavering leadership of the CEO. But when will these leaders truly champion the AI cause? When they are convinced that AI is not merely a technological novelty but a potent catalyst for achieving tangible business goals and objectives. Amid the fervent discourse and the inherent skepticism, a fundamental question emerges: How can organizations move beyond the superficial adoption of AI to achieve its deep and lasting integration? The answer lies not in forceful imposition but in a carefully orchestrated journey, guided by a set of immutable principles that address both the strategic imperatives of the C-suite and the practical realities faced by the employee base.

These five steps, when executed with foresight and commitment, pave the way for a future where AI is not just a tool, but an intrinsic part of the organizational fabric, driving innovation, efficiency, and sustainable growth. The first, and arguably most crucial, step in the journey toward long-term AI adoption is the articulation of a clear, purpose-driven AI vision that is inextricably linked to the organization's core business objectives. This was never about chasing the latest technological trends or implementing AI for its own sake. Instead, it necessitates a deep understanding of the organization's strategic priorities, its pain points, and its aspirations for the future. A vague mandate to "adopt AI" is a recipe for confusion, resistance, and ultimately, failure. Employees need to understand why AI is being introduced, what problems it is intended to solve, and how it will contribute to the overall success of the company.

This requires a collaborative effort, involving not just the executive team but also representatives from various departments and levels within the organization. The process should begin with a thorough assessment of the business. What are the opportunities for growth and innovation? What are the key challenges the organization faces? Where are the bottlenecks in current processes?

Once these areas are identified, the focus should shift to exploring how AI (and technology in general) can provide tangible solutions and drive measurable impact, where possible. For instance, a retail company aiming to enhance customer satisfaction might identify long wait times at checkout as a significant pain point. Their AI vision could then center around leveraging computer vision and predictive analytics to optimize checkout processes, reduce waiting times, and personalize the customer experience.

This clearly defined purpose, improving customer satisfaction, provides a compelling rationale for AI adoption that resonates with employees across the organization. Similarly, a manufacturing firm struggling with quality control issues might envision an AI-powered system that uses machine learning to analyze production line data in real-time, identifying anomalies and predicting potential defects before they occur. The business objective here is clear: to improve product quality, reduce waste, and enhance operational efficiency.

One theme I address in virtually all my keynotes is the crucial need to move beyond the abstract and translate AI's potential into concrete, relatable benefits that align with the organization's business strategy. This should be clearly communicated, consistently reinforced, and actively championed by the CEO, setting the tone for the entire organization. Without this foundational clarity, AI initiatives risk becoming isolated experiments, lacking the strategic coherence necessary for long-term integration. Once a clear AI vision is established, it's no time for executives to rest on their laurels. The next immutable step is to cultivate an organizational culture that embraces experimentation, prioritizes continuous learning, and fosters open communication around AI initiatives.

As I continuously stress during my AI Workshops, the adoption of AI is not a linear process; it involves exploration, trial and error, and the inevitable need to adapt and refine strategies along the way. A culture of experimentation encourages employees to explore the potential of AI in their respective domains, to propose innovative use cases, and to test new tools and approaches. This requires creating a safe space where failure is seen not as a setback but as a valuable learning opportunity.

The Levant swings between dreams and deals

The talk of a new Middle Eastern "deal" we have been hearing over the past few days is jarring. The agreement reportedly being cooked up sees Syria cede the Golan Heights to Israel in return for the Lebanese city of Tripoli. The official reactions of Lebanese parties, of course, mixed outrage and condemnation. However, those who understand the intentions they hold behind the scenes and see the implications of Benjamin Netanyahu shaping Washington's vision and approach to the Middle East will address this development with the seriousness it deserves. Moreover, this apparent deal was leaked as Israel tightened its control over Iran's airspace and expanded its list of targets inside Iran. Not only that, but it also coincided with the tacit alignment of Washington, Tel Aviv and Ankara's visions regarding all regional crises, from the Kurdish question to what remains of the Palestinian struggle. Some observers now believe that the Washington-Tel Aviv axis has new priorities with regard to the sectarian dynamics of the Levant, at least temporarily, following the transition from Barack Obama and Joe Biden to Donald Trump. The irony, however, is this same American (Republican) and Israeli (Likud) right had originally bet on "political Shiism" in the region during the buildup to the invasion of Iraq.

Back then, it was the American neoconservatives, working closely alongside the Israeli right, that steered George W. Bush's presidency via his White House advisers and Pentagon officials. At the time, the US was also trying to overcome a trauma, that of 9/11. The neoconservatives exploited this catastrophe to occupy Iraq, which was eventually handed over to Iran. The leader of the Coalition Provisional Authority that oversaw Iraq's transition, Paul Bremer, even boasted that his administration had "ended a thousand years of Sunni rule" in Iraq.

As the saying goes, a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since 2003. To begin with, despite the Democrats' sympathy for the so-called Arab Spring in several Arab countries, they and the Israeli leadership refrained from supporting the Syrian uprising against Bashar Assad's regime. Later, they effectively turned a blind eye to Iran's military intervention to rescue the Syrian regime.

Moreover, the Democratic leadership was keen on ensuring the success of the nuclear deal it had signed with Iran after the Muscat negotiations. As a result of this deal, and the policies pursued by the Obama and Biden administrations, Tehran felt empowered to move freely across the region. In contrast, Netanyahu and his Likud allies never forgot their apprehensions about Iran's role in the Arab arena and continued to seek containment. However, it is clear that Israel has been the biggest beneficiary of Iran's role in the region. It was happy to see Iran become a "bogeyman" that frightened Arab states and compelled them to rush toward normalization with Tel Aviv in pursuit of protection. Moreover, Israel has never truly been concerned by the bombastic rhetoric of the so-called resistance regimes and parties, so long as its borders remained secure … and the possibility of expanding them remained available. Still, in one way or another, the events of Oct. 7, 2023 (the Al-Aqsa Flood operation launched from the Gaza Strip), was a replay of 9/11.

That day undoubtedly marked a turning point for regional alliances, leading to a shift in priorities. Without minimizing the tragedy in Gaza, the most dangerous aspect of Israel's political response was Netanyahu's stated intention to "reshape the Middle East." In Trump, Netanyahu found his long-sought prize. Trump is an ideal partner in drawing this map over the rubble of political entities that never meant anything to either of them, and at the expense of peoples who have never factored into their political calculations.

Indeed, the future of Palestine has rarely seemed as bleak and hopeless since 1948. As for Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, whose borders were drawn by the Sykes-Picot Agreement (which completed what the Balfour Declaration had begun), they may now need to brace for a world in which Turkiye is the region's second power, behind Israel. Lebanon's most sectarian non-Sunni hard-liners likely would not object, in my view, to ceding more than half of the Sunni population and giving up Tripoli (and Akkar and Dinniyeh), if Washington and Tel Aviv guaranteed "privileges" for the Christians and Shiites. In fact, many Lebanese Christians have lost hope in the very idea of "Greater Lebanon," which was born in 1920 and saw Tripoli and other areas added to the country. And many Shiite extremists would be happy to secure a demographic majority by reducing the number of Sunnis in the country. As for Syria, the Sunni majority seems well placed to strengthen its position and to address the fears of the Alawite, Christian, Druze and Kurdish minorities through a deal between the US and Turkiye. Moreover, it is worth keeping an eye on the Syrian-Iraqi border amid the radical shifts and consequential negotiations underway in the Kurdish arena. So, one wonders: will dreams align with the fine print of the deals? Or are we back to the mess of trial and error?phobia and nationalism at the domestic level and increasing the prospect for regional and global conflicts.

Transactioal diplomacy can be shortsighted. This can be seen by comparing the chaotic impact on global trade of the "reciprocal tariffs" announced by Trump in April with the gradual, yet consistent, progress made by the World Trade Organization since its inception in 1995, which has advanced globalization through multilateral negotiations.

The consequences of the increasingly fluid international order are especially evident in the Middle East and North Africa region. In addition to the effects of regional instability, the majority of Arab countries are facing economic stagnation and increasing poverty. According to a report published by the World Bank last month, the poverty rate in MENA has more than doubled to an estimated 9.4 percent this year, compared to only 4 percent in 2010. In the past year alone, an additional 11 million people have fallen below the poverty line.

The rise in poverty in MENA cannot be explained by global crises, such as the 2008 financial meltdown, the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 war in Ukraine. These crises have also affected the rest of the world, but the current global poverty rate of 9.9 percent is less than half the 21 percent recorded in 2010. And the typically disruptive energy price fluctuations tend to have a neutral impact on the MENA region as a whole, which comprises both energy-exporting and energy-importing countries.

An obvious culprit in the region is prolonged conflict and fragility. In this context, Arab nations may ask themselves what kind of diplomacy can halt and reverse their economic and humanitarian descent. Should they adopt a transactional approach or one grounded in principles, or some balance between the two? The question is timely, following Israel's airstrikes on Iran last month. The strikes, considered to be "preemptive" by Israel, are based on 30-year-old statements (also repeated at the UN more recently) by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, then an MP, that Iran could fulfill its nuclear ambitions in "a matter of months, or even weeks" without an external intervention.

Yet, despite decades of warnings that Iran is on the brink of developing nuclear weapons, no credible evidence supports this claim. As recently as March, US intelligence chief Tulsi Gabbard testified before the Senate that Iran was not actively pursuing a nuclear bomb. The International Atomic Energy Agency backed this assessment in May, reporting no indication of an undeclared weapons program, a view later repeated by Director General Rafael Grossi. Nevertheless, Israel's strikes have been endorsed by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who stated that Israel is doing "the dirty work for all of us" in Iran. His assessment was in line with those of the representatives of the G7 countries that met in Canada when the strikes started.

Soon after, the US conducted additional strikes on nuclear facilities in Iran, though a ceasefire was reached two days later, with hopes that it will hold permanently. Proxy wars may serve the interests of powerful nations, but the people caught in their crossfire pay the ultimate price. The Iran-Iraq War of 1980 to 1988 is a case in point. The war devastated both countries. Then Iraq fell out of favor and, in 2003, a US-led coalition, loudly seconded by the UK, invaded it, citing the presence of nonexistent nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Wars exert consequences beyond the warring parties and military targets, often impacting neighboring countries even if they are not involved.

Cabinet okays 4 manufacturing units with Rs 4,600 crore outlay

New Delhi, Aug 1 (GNS): The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved four more semiconductor projects under the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) with an outlay of Rs 4,600 crore. The four proposals approved are from SiCSem, Continental Device India Private Limited (CDIL), 3D Glass Solutions Inc., and Advanced System in Package (ASIP) Technologies. With these, the total approved projects under the ISM have reached 10, with cumulative investments of around Rs 1.60 lakh crore in six states. "These four approved proposals will set up semiconductor manufacturing facilities with a cumulative investment of around Rs 4,600 crore and are expected to generate a cumulative employment for 2,034 skilled professionals, which would catalyse the electronic manufacturing ecosystem, resulting in the creation of many indirect jobs," a Cabinet communique said.

SiCSem and 3D Glass will be set up in Odisha. CDIL is located in Punjab, and ASIP will be set up in Andhra Pradesh. SicSem Private Limited is collaborating with Clas-SiC Wafer Fab Ltd., UK, to establish an integrated facility of silicon carbide-based Compound Semiconductors in Info Valley, Bhubaneshwar.

This will be the first commercial compound fab in the country. The project proposes to manufacture silicon carbide devices. This compound semiconductor fab will have an annual capacity of 60,000 wafers and a packaging capacity of 96 million units. The proposed products will have applications in missiles, defence equipment, electric vehicles (EVs), railways, fast chargers, data centre racks, consumer appliances, and solar power inverters, the Cabinet note said.

3D Glass Solutions Inc. (3DGS) will set up a vertically integrated advanced packaging and embedded glass substrate unit in Odisha. This unit will bring the world's most advanced packaging technology to India. The facility will have a large variety of advanced technologies, including glass interposers with passives and silicon bridges, and 3D heterogeneous integration (3DHI) modules. Planned capacity of this unit will be approximately 69,600 glass panel substrates, 50 million assembled units, and 13,200 3DHI modules per annum.

The proposed products will have significant applications in defence, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, RF and automotive, photonics and co-packaged optics, etc. According to the Cabinet, the Advanced System in Package Technologies (ASIP) will set up a semiconductor manufacturing unit in Andhra Pradesh, under a technology tie-up with APACT Co. Ltd, South Korea, with an annual capacity of 96 million units. The manufactured products will find applications in mobile phones, set-top boxes, automobile applications, and other electronic products. Continental Device (CDIL) will expand its discrete semiconductor manufacturing facility at Mohali, Punjab. The proposed facility will manufacture high-power discrete semiconductor devices such as MOSFETs, IGBTs, Schottky Bypass Diodes, and transistors, both in silicon and silicon carbide.

The annual capacity of this brownfield expansion will be to the tune of 158.38 million units. The devices manufactured by these proposed units will have applications in automotive electronics, including EVs and their charging infrastructure, renewable energy systems, power conversion applications, industrial applications and communication infrastructure. "These would complement the growing world-class chip design capabilities coming up in the country, which are propelled by design infrastructure support provided by the government to 278 academic institutions and 72 start-ups.

India's CPI inflation plunges to 8-year low of 1.55 pc

New Delhi, Aug 1 (GNS): India's inflation rate based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) eased further to 1.55 per cent in July this year, compared to the same month of the previous year, as prices of food declined during the month. This is the lowest level of year-on-year retail inflation since June 2017, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Statistics.

The retail inflation in July was also lower by 55 basis points than the 2.1 per cent for the previous month of June this year which was the lowest level of retail inflation since January, 2019.

Food Inflation in July this year fell into the negative zone at -1.76 per cent as prices declined compared to the same month of the previous year. There was a also decline of 75 basis points in food inflation in July, in comparison to June. This is the lowest level of food inflation since January 2019. The significant decline in headline inflation and food inflation during July, 2025 is mainly attributed to favourable base effect and to decline in inflation of pulses, vegetables, cereals, egg and sugar. The inflation rate also fell due to the decline in cost of transport and communication and education. Besides, there was a mild drop in housing inflation during the month. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank (RBI) has pegged India's CPI inflation at 3.1 per cent for 2025-26 as the steady progress of the monsoon and robust kharif sowing are expected to keep food prices in check.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra recently said, "The inflation outlook for 2025-26 has become more benign than expected in June. Large favourable base effects combined with steady progress of the southwest monsoon, healthy kharif sowing, adequate reservoir levels and comfortable buffer stocks of foodgrains have contributed to this moderation."

CPI inflation, however, is likely to edge up above 4 per cent by Q4:2025-26 and beyond, as unfavourable base effects, and demand side factors from policy actions come into play. Barring any major negative shock to input prices, core inflation is likely to remain moderately above 4 per cent during the year, he explained.

India's retail inflation has dropped sharply due to easing food prices, providing relief to consumers and strengthening expectations of a stable price environment. The decline comes amid improved agricultural conditions, steady monsoon progress, and adequate foodgrain availability. Economists said the moderation in inflation could provide greater flexibility to policymakers, including the Reserve Bank of India, in managing interest rates and supporting economic growth.

RBI Guidelines for Multilingual Service, Faster Grievance Redressal

New Delhi, Aug 1 (GNS): The Reserve Bank of India has, from time to time, underscored the importance of clear and accessible communication between banks and their customers, stressing the need to use the customer's preferred language, the Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

"RBI's Master Circular on Customer Service in Banks states, inter alia, that all customer-facing materials at the branches of Scheduled Commercial Banks must be made available in Hindi, English, and the concerned regional language," Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State for Finance, said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

Reinforcing this requirement, the RBI, through a letter on September 30, 2024, reiterated that all customer communications must invariably be issued in a trilingual format — Hindi, English, and the relevant regional language to ensure transparency, clarity, and convenience for all, the Minister said further. According to the minister, all banks have a robust board-approved grievance redressal mechanism in place to address complaints. "Further, the Reserve Bank – Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2021, provides a cost-free platform for redressal of complaints against RBI-regulated entities (REs) in matters relating to deficiency in service, if the grievance is not redressed or reply is not given by the RE within the prescribed timeline," Chaudhary said.

The government, through the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CP-GRAMS) portal, has had a feedback call centre since June 2022, to assess citizen satisfaction after grievance disposal, and the feedback data gets forwarded to the banks concerned for appropriate action, the Minister informed. Further, RBI's toll-free Contact Centre (14448), operational since November 2021, provides information on the grievance redressal mechanism, assistance in filing complaints, and updates on existing cases.

While the Contact Centre (CC) is available 24x7 through the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), the facility to connect to the CC personnel is available from Monday to Saturday (except National Holidays) in Hindi, English and 10 regional languages.

The RBI's move aims to improve financial inclusion by ensuring that customers, especially those in rural and regional areas, can easily understand banking services, rules, and grievance procedures in their own language. The initiative is part of broader efforts to make banking services more transparent.

Finance Ministry issues corrigendum to Income Tax Bill on advance tax interest

New Delhi, Aug 1 (GNS): The Finance Ministry has issued a corrigendum to the Income Tax Bill, 2025, clarifying the interest applicable on short payment of advance tax. The amendment specifies a 3 per cent interest rate on such shortfalls, bringing the clause in line with provisions under the Income Tax Act, 1961. The amendment specifies a 3 per cent interest rate on such shortfalls, bringing the clause in line with provisions under the existing act.

Under current rules, taxpayers with an annual tax liability of Rs 10,000 or more are required to pay advance tax in four instalments — on June 15, September 15, December 15, and March 15.

If a shortfall in payment occurs, even by a single day beyond the quarterly due date, interest is levied for a minimum period of three months. The Income Tax Bill, 2025 — passed by the Lok Sabha on Monday — is set to replace the 60-year-old income tax law, with a focus on simplification through fewer chapters and reduced wordage. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the revised bill in the house on Monday, following the government's decision to withdraw the earlier draft presented on February 13 this year. To avoid confusion caused by multiple iterations, that version was withdrawn on August 8 after being sent to a Parliamentary Select Committee for review. All of the authorised changes are combined into a single updated text in the revised bill. Most of the 285 suggestions made by the Select Committee, which was presided over by BJP MP Baijayant Panda, are included in the updated draft. The key features of the Income Tax Bill, 2025 include the following: Companies that have chosen the new regime can also take advantage of deductions under Section 80M of the 1961 Act (Clause 148 of the IT Bill, 2025). Clause 93 of the 2025 bill provides deductions for family member gratuities and commuted pensions.

Section 206 divides the provisions of the Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) and the Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT) into two sub-sections. The AMT provisions only apply to non-corporations that have made deduction claims. LLPs with only capital gains income are not subject to AMT if there is no claim for a deduction. In clause 187, the word "profession" has been added after "business" to allow professionals who earn more than Rs 50 crore annually to use the designated electronic payment methods. With the removal of Clause 263(1)(ix), flexibility has been granted to allow refund claims in situations where the return is not filed promptly.

The Finance Ministry's clarification is aimed at removing ambiguity in the new Income Tax Bill, 2025 and ensuring continuity with existing tax provisions. The corrigendum will help taxpayers understand the interest liability applicable in cases of advance tax payment defaults.

The revised bill seeks to modernise India's direct tax framework by simplifying language, reducing complexity, and restructuring provisions into fewer chapters. The government has incorporated recommendations made by the Parliamentary Select Committee to make the legislation more taxpayer-friendly.

Officials said the new law is designed to improve compliance, reduce disputes, and provide greater clarity to taxpayers and tax authorities. The bill introduces several changes related to deductions, minimum alternate tax provisions, electronic payments, and refund procedures. The Income Tax Bill, 2025 replaces the Income Tax Act, 1961, which has governed direct taxation in the country for over six decades.

Make in India booster: OnePlus to manufacture premium tablets in country

New Delhi, Aug 1 (GNS): In a boost for the 'Make in India' initiative, global technology brand OnePlus on Tuesday announced a collaboration with domestic electronic firm Bhagwati Products Ltd (BPL) to manufacture premium tablets. This strategic partnership aligns with OnePlus' long-term vision for India and its recent 'Project Starlight' initiative aimed at deepening local integration.

"As part of these efforts, OnePlus is ramping up its local manufacturing operations. In addition to producing smartphones in India, the company has begun manufacturing its tablet products at M/s BPL's facility based in Greater Noida," the company said in a statement.

Robin Liu, CEO, OnePlus India said, "By localising tablet production, we are reinforcing our commitment to India and creating meaningful value for our user community. This partnership reflects our long-term vision to innovate for India, invest in India, and grow with India."

The collaboration is a boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make India a global technology hub and the country's growing competitiveness in the international market.

Alongside China and Vietnam, India is now a major player in global electronics manufacturing, with companies shifting production to diversify supply chains. Vikas Jain, Co-Founder, Bhagwati Products Limited, said, "This milestone not only marks the addition of OnePlus to our customer portfolio but also the introduction of a new form factor to our manufacturing expertise at our Greater Noida facility." India now has 300 mobile manufacturing units, up from two in 2014. In FY14, 26 per cent of mobile phones sold in India were locally made, which has surged to 99.2 per cent.

Indian pharma sector will not suffer any loss due to Trump tariff: Former ICMR chief

New Delhi, Aug 1 (GNS): The Indian pharma sector, which supplies 80 per cent of the world's generic medicines, will not suffer any loss due to tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump, the ICMR's former Director General, Dr N.K. Ganguly said. The former Indian Council for Medical Research's (ICMR) remarks came amid concerns over the escalation of tariffs to 50 per cent on Indian goods by Trump. "If any country in the world increases tariffs, it does not benefit them because the loss is suffered by that country only. India is a country that provides medicines at cheap rates and also exports them," Ganguly told.

The noted microbiologist said that whether it is Europe or North America, the prices of drugs are very high in foreign countries.

And they do not make generic drugs because it requires manpower, a factory, etc., which are very expensive. In such a situation, generic drugs are imported from other countries.

"As a result, India will not suffer any loss due to this (US) tariff. The loss will be to those who have imposed this tariff because India is a country that provides medicines at the cheapest rates, and the maximum number of drugs are manufactured there," Ganguly told IANS.

India has also reduced the tariff on life-saving drugs, which are manufactured in India, so that the countries that need them can easily procure them.

Thus, "the country that has increased the tariff will suffer losses to its people because they will get medicines at higher rates", the former ICMR chief said.

While the initial duty of 25 per cent on export of Indian goods to the US came into effect from August 7, the additional levy will become effective from August 27.

Higher tariffs will make Indian goods, such as shrimps, organic chemicals, carpets, apparel (both knitted and woven), among others, costly in the US market.

Ganguly said that the prices of drugs are low in India as the country follows a pricing policy for drug manufacturing. "Many schemes are also run by the government, due to which people get medicines at cheaper rates. Apart from this, medicines are also available at cheaper rates at the government-run pharmacy under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana," the expert noted.

The Indian pharmaceutical industry has emerged as a major global supplier of affordable medicines, particularly generic drugs used for treating chronic and life-threatening diseases. Industry experts believe the sector's strong manufacturing base and cost advantage will help it withstand external trade pressures. Dr Ganguly said India's large-scale production capacity, skilled workforce, and established supply chains have made it difficult for other countries to quickly replace Indian generic medicine exports. He added that higher import duties could ultimately increase healthcare costs for consumers in tariff-imposing countries.

The pharma sector has also benefited from India's focus on affordable healthcare through government initiatives aimed at ensuring access to low-cost medicines. Schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana have expanded availability of quality generic medicines at reduced prices. Exporters, however, continue to monitor the impact of global trade policies, currency fluctuations, and regulatory changes in key markets, including the US, which remains one of the largest destinations for Indian pharmaceutical products.

SEBI took action against 89 market manipulators in FY25 with advanced tech

Mumbai,Aug 1 (GNS): Markets regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), on Tuesday revealed that it conducted search and seizure operations involving 89 entities at 71 locations covering 18 cities across the country during 2024-25. The inspections were launched on 24 mutual funds and their Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTAs), plus 13 portfolio managers, according to the SEBI's Annual Report.

The off-site monitoring of all mutual funds was powered by algorithm-based alert systems. The SEBI's inspection drive included 312 stock brokers, 90 depository participants, 51 merchant bankers, 56 RTAs, 207 investment advisers, 149 research analysts, eight credit rating agencies, 11 debenture trustees, seven designated depository participants, seven custodians, and three KYC registration agencies. To strengthen its surveillance and investigation capabilities, the SEBI set up a lab in 2023- 24 with cutting-edge technologies.

During 2024-25, it has added multiple new data sources and new data analytics tools in the lab.

"These tools have significantly streamlined data analysis, reduced time and manual effort, and improved accuracy in identifying connections among entities involved in violation of securities market laws," according to the SEBI.

In order to combat market abuse, a Market Intelligence portal has been developed for market participants to provide market intelligence inputs pertaining to market abuse. The portal has been operational since May 2024.

An Enhanced Surveillance Measures framework has been extended to stocks listed on the mainboard and SME segments with a market capitalisation of less than Rs 1,000 crore. Addressing the abnormal price movement in PSU stocks, the major surveillance frameworks have been extended to PSU stocks.

"To prevent the misuse of client funds by intermediaries, the direct pay-out of securities to the client's demat account was made mandatory. Framework to facilitate safer participation of retail investors in algorithmic trading through brokers and mandating qualified stock brokers to offer ASBA-like facility in secondary markets were taken to ensure that retail investors are protected," SEBI Chairperson Tuhin Kanta Pandey said. Regulated entities have been mandated to disassociate from unregulated entities, which provide advice/recommendations/unverified claims on return and performance. Cautionary advisories

were issued on transacting on unauthorised virtual trading platforms, unregistered online platforms offering unlisted debt securities, and on investing in securities listed on the SME platform, he said in his message in the Annual Report.

"SEBI's regulatory outlook remains steadfast — anchored in trust, guided by resolve to protect investors and driven by the goal to support India's vision 2047. We will continue to pursue a proactive and forward-looking regulatory approach, guided by our core principles of trust, transparency, teamwork and technology," Pandey said.

SEBI said its enhanced surveillance measures are aimed at maintaining market integrity, preventing manipulation, and protecting investors from fraudulent activities. The regulator has been using technology-driven monitoring systems to detect suspicious trading patterns and possible violations.

Azharuddin calls Journalism pillar of democracy at TUWJF foundation day event

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS): Hon'ble Minister for Minorities Welfare & Public Enterprises, Government of Telangana, Sri Mohammed Azharuddin, attended the 10th Foundation Day & Annual Awards Ceremony of the Telangana Urdu Working Journalists' Federation (TUWJF) as the Chief Guest at the Media Academy of Telangana, Nampally, Hyderabad.

Addressing a large gathering of senior journalists, editors, media professionals and distinguished guests from across Telangana, the Hon'ble Minister described journalism as a noble, responsible and sacred profession, stating that journalists are the voice of society and play a vital role in strengthening democracy by presenting facts with responsibility and integrity. Paying rich tributes to the journalism fraternity, Sri Mohammed Azharuddin said journalists deserve the highest respect for their dedicated service to society. He appreciated the tireless efforts of Urdu journalists in preserving the Urdu language, highlighting public issues and serving the community with commitment.

Recalling his journey from international cricket to public life, the Minister said that just as he always gave his best on the cricket field, he remains equally committed to serving the people of Telangana with honesty, dedication and sincerity.

The Minister emphasised that constructive and responsible criticism is an essential pillar of democracy. He said fair and fact-based criticism helps governments improve governance, strengthen transparency and deliver better public services. He appealed to journalists to continue practising ethical and responsible journalism in the larger public interest. Highlighting the importance of collective efforts, Sri Mohammed Azharuddin said the Government, media and society must work together for the overall development of the State and the welfare of all communities. He reiterated the Telangana Government's commitment to the welfare of journalists and to the promotion, preservation and development of the Urdu language. The Hon'ble Minister appreciated the dedicated efforts of TUWJF President Sri M.A. Majid, General Secretary Syed Ghouse Mohiuddin, and the entire Federation for their continued work for the welfare of Urdu journalists. He congratulated the Federation on successfully completing ten years of dedicated service and extended his heartfelt congratulations to all award recipients.

During the ceremony, the Chief Guest, Sri Mohammed Azharuddin, along with Government Advisor Sri Mohammed Ali Shabbir, presented citations, shawls, mementoes and cash awards of 10,000 each to distinguished journalists in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Urdu journalism.

The event was attended by Government Advisor Sri Mohammed Ali Shabbir, Vice Chairman & President, Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society (TMREIS), Sri Mohammed Faheemuddin Qureshi, V. Krishna, Assistant Director, Telangana Urdu Academy, TUWJF President Sri M.A. Majid, office-bearers of the Federation, eminent journalists, editors, writers and media professionals from Hyderabad and various districts of Telangana. The programme concluded with a renewed commitment to strengthening Urdu journalism, protecting the interests of journalists and fostering closer coordination between the media fraternity and the Government.

Ponguleti warns strict action against illegal land deals in Telangana

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS) Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Saturday said the state government would take stringent action against those who allegedly grabbed government land and land belonging to the poor through illegal transactions carried out using the Dharani portal.

Addressing a press conference at the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat, the Minister said the government was conducting a comprehensive investigation into all land transactions from the Dharani regime to the present Bhu Bharati system and warned that those found responsible for irregularities would face legal action.

He alleged that large-scale illegal mutations and unauthorised transfers of government land had taken place during the previous BRS government's tenure through the Dharani portal. Every transaction was being examined with supporting evidence and the findings would be placed before the public, he said.

Ponguleti said the inquiry would ascertain the extent of land included in the prohibited list, who had added it, the reasons for doing so and the circumstances under which such land was subsequently removed.

Allegations made by the Opposition would also be examined, he added.

The Minister clarified that the present government had not added a single acre of land to the prohibited list.

He said the list submitted before the High Court was the one that already existed in the Dharani portal and dismissed allegations that undisputed private lands or residential plots had been newly included as baseless.

He said the government had launched a statewide land resurvey to provide a permanent solution to land disputes. Surveys have been completed in 276 villages and every survey number would be assigned a unique BhuDhar identification number, similar to Aadhaar, he said, adding that objections had been received in only about two per cent of the surveyed cases.

Ponguleti said the government was also working on a comprehensive policy for nearly 85,000 acres of assigned land after considering the differing requirements of urban and rural areas.

Reiterating that the government would not compromise on protecting public land, he said action would be taken strictly in accordance with the law without favouring or targeting anyone.

Criticising the BRS for questioning the Indiramma Towers housing project, the Minister referred to reports of water leakage in 2BHK houses constructed at Kollur during the previous government's tenure and alleged that it reflected poor construction quality. He, however, said the present government would undertake repairs to ensure residents did not face inconvenience.

The Minister also said the state government would release pending payments for Indiramma houses in rural areas despite the Centre not releasing funds, ensuring that beneficiaries were not affected. Ponguleti further said the revision of land market values had generated 10 to 20 per cent higher revenue than anticipated.

He said revenue from the Stamps and Registration Department had increased from around 13,000 crore when the present government assumed office to about 15,000 crore in the previous financial year and was expected to reach 18,000 crore during the current financial year.

He added that the number of property registrations had also increased significantly.

BC Welfare Association demands release of Rs ₹8,000 crore fee reimbursement dues

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS) The National BC Welfare Association today demanded the immediate release of Rs 8,000 crore in pending fee reimbursement dues for students in Telangana and urged the state government to withdraw G.O. No. 9, alleging that it would adversely affect beneficiaries of the scheme. Thousands of students staged a protest at Hastinapuram Junction in L.B. Nagar, demanding clearance of pending fee reimbursement dues for nearly 14 lakh college students.

The demonstration was led by BC Students' Association State President Pagilla Satish. Addressing the gathering, Rajya Sabha member and National BC Welfare Association President R. Krishnaiah alleged that the state government had failed to allocate adequate funds for fee reimbursement and scholarships, affecting students from economically weaker sections. He alleged that the government's policies were adversely impacting BC, SC and ST students and criticised the reported move to discontinue the existing fee reimbursement system.

Krishnaiah also alleged that proposals to close government schools and weaken Gurukul educational institutions would affect access to education for disadvantaged communities.

Calling for an all-party meeting, Krishnaiah urged the government to consult education experts and representatives of BC organisations before introducing any changes to the fee reimbursement scheme.

Referring to the scheme's introduction in 2007, he said it had enabled lakhs of students from weaker sections to pursue higher education and argued that Telangana should continue implementing the programme under the existing system.

ICC hosts 2nd Defence MSME manufacturers forum in Hyderabad

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS) The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) today organised the second edition of the Defence MSME Manufacturers Forum (DMMF) in Hyderabad, bringing together government officials, defence public sector undertakings, industry leaders, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), startups and MSMEs to strengthen India's defence and aerospace manufacturing ecosystem.

Held under the theme "Make in India for the World: Empower MSMEs for India's Defence & Aerospace Future," the forum focused on enhancing the role of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the country's defence production and aerospace supply chain.

Addressing the inaugural session, Chief Guest Krishna Aditya, Special Secretary, Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Telangana, highlighted the growing opportunities for MSMEs in defence manufacturing.

The session was also attended by Commodore P.R. Hari (Retd.), Chairman and Managing Director, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. and Chairman, National Expert Committee on Defence, Aerospace and Space, ICC; Vishnu Malpani, Executive Director, Azad Engineering Ltd.; Praveen P.A., Director, Aerospace and Defence, Government of Telangana; Nikhil Chakravarthy J. (IA&AS), Director, Industries and Commerce, Government of Telangana; MIDHANI Chairman and Managing Director Dr S.V.S. Narayana Murty; and ICC Director General Dr Rajeev Singh. During the event, ICC released the second edition of its report, titled "MSMEs – A Force Multiplier for India's Defence Ecosystem", and announced the introduction of the Southern Region Defence Chair. The forum discussed measures to enhance MSME participation in India's defence and aerospace manufacturing supply chain while promoting collaboration among industry, startups, academic institutions, research organisations and government agencies.

Participants also deliberated on strengthening Telangana's position as a key hub for defence, aerospace, electronics and advanced manufacturing.

Filmmaker Rajamouli exhorts GITAM graduates to pursue excellence with dedication

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS) Acclaimed filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli on Saturday urged graduates to pursue excellence with dedication, passion and perseverance as GITAM (Deemed to be University), Hyderabad, conferred degrees on 1,990 students at its 17th Graduation Ceremony. A total of 1,532 undergraduate, 372 postgraduate and 86 Ph.D. scholars received degrees across various disciplines.

Delivering the keynote address, Rajamouli recalled the philosophy of GITAM founder Dr M.V.V.S. Murthi and called upon the graduates to strive for excellence in their chosen fields through commitment, hard work and purpose.

The ceremony was presided over by GITAM President and Visakhapatnam MP M. Sribharat in the presence of Vice-Chancellor Errol D'Souza. The dignitaries paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and GITAM founder Dr M.V.V.S. Murthi before the commencement of the programme. The university conferred the honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) on noted handloom weaver Gajam Govardhana in recognition of his contribution to handloom weaving and the preservation of India's textile heritage.

Seventeen gold medals were awarded to meritorious students for academic excellence. Digudadi Pranav Rahul of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering received the President's Gold Medal for securing the highest overall rank among B.Tech. graduates.

The university also awarded Ph.D. degrees to 86 research scholars.

The Best Researcher Awards were presented to Dr Mohd. Arshad Ansari, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Prof. M.S. Surendra Babu, Professor, Department of Chemistry, GITAM School of Science. In his presidential address, Sribharat congratulated the graduates and outlined seven guiding principles for success, including dreaming big, believing in oneself, surrounding oneself with the right people, remaining committed to one's goals, continuous learning, humility and keeping one's word.

Hyderabad DCP relieved of duties after FIR against Meta India head

Hyderabad, Aug 1 (GNS) The Telangana government has relieved Hyderabad Deputy Commissioner of Police (Cyber Crimes) V. Aravind Babu of his duties two days after Meta India head, along with several Facebook and Instagram accounts, were booked over content targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to sources, the officer has been ordered to report to the State Police Headquarters.

The action came after the government reportedly took a serious view of the manner in which the FIRs were registered over the alleged derogatory posts during the recent Cockroach Janta Party protests over NEET paper leak. Cyber Crime Police on Thursday registered cases against the India head of Meta, Arun Srinivas, as well as several Facebook and Instagram accounts for alleged circulation of morphed and objectionable videos and images of the Prime Minister on the social media platforms.

The FIRs under various sections of BNS and the IT Act have been registered on the basis of complaints filed by S. Aravind Reddy, a businessman and BJP sympathiser, and T Saikiran Goud, a Telangana BJP activist. The complainants stated that while browsing Instagram, they came across multiple morphed and digitally manipulated videos and images portraying the Prime Minister in an obscene, derogatory and misleading manner.

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