

CEC Gyanesh Kumar, ECs Sandhu-Joshi meet; form 6, SIR decisions clarified

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Saturday sought to quell reports of differences within the poll panel, with Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi holding a full commission meeting at Nirvachan Sadan in New Delhi.

In a detailed press note accompanied by a photograph of the three commissioners, the EC addressed allegations concerning its internal functioning, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, voter enrolment and its technology systems. The statement came days after The Indian Express reported on September 23 that Sandhu and Joshi had raised objections to several decisions and orders linked to the SIR exercise. The



reports triggered a wider political controversy, with Opposition parties questioning the functioning of the Commission and demanding greater transparency. The EC maintained that the June 24, 2025, order launching the SIR across states

and Union Territories was approved unanimously by all three commissioners. It said subsequent schedules related to the exercise were also issued with unanimous approval. The Commission further noted that the Supreme Court had upheld the original

SIR order. On Form 6, used for enrolment of new voters, the EC addressed concerns over a declaration introduced during the SIR process requiring applicants to establish their linkage with the previous SIR through their parents' names. The Commission said the declaration had been upheld by the Supreme Court. Outside the SIR exercise, it clarified, forms prescribed under the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, would continue to be used.

The Commission also responded to questions surrounding 97 voters in Goa who had initially been left out of the electoral rolls. It said the Chief Electoral Officer, Goa, had directed Booth Level Officers to conduct house-to-house visits and collect the necessary forms. Of the 97 voters, 81 had already submitted Form 6 for inclusion.

Mamata Banerjee alleges SIR aimed at helping BJP capture Bengal

Kolkata, Sept 26 (GNS): Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday alleged that the sole intention of the Election Commission of India (ECI) behind conducting the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) was to ensure that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could capture power in West Bengal.

Referring to reported differences within the top brass of the ECI, she said that since the beginning of the SIR exercise, she had been claiming that the roles played by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and



the Commission's Information Technology Chief, Seema Khanna, were doubtful. Banerjee, while addressing a public meeting at Steerampore in Hooghly district, referred to the CEC as "Vanish Kumar" and declared that her movement along with other

anti-BJP forces would continue until Kumar stepped down or was removed.

"Just as we caught the tricks of 'Vanish Kumar', we will similarly catch the others behind such wrongdoings. 'Vanish Kumar' must go. Until he goes, our united movement will continue," she said. She added that opposition parties were uniting at the national level to demand Kumar's removal. Banerjee referred to her telephonic conversation with CPI(M) leader M.A. Baby, stressing that when the issue was common, she would not look at party lines.

ECI on defensive, refuses to relent on demand for CEC's resignation: Congress

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): Claiming that the ECI has been forced into a defensive posture, the Congress on Saturday reiterated its demand for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and sought the immediate suspension of the SIR of electoral rolls.

Criticising a press release issued by the ECI after its afternoon meeting to quell reports of internal differences, the Congress described SIR as a drive for "massive disenfranchisement" of several crores of electors. "Nothing short of the CEC's resigna-



tion or prosecution will suffice," said Jairam Ramesh, Congress MP and General Secretary (Communications), referring to the alleged big differences within the Election Commission.

In a message on X, Ramesh said that in the wake of media reports exposing dis-

agreement among ECI functionaries and the nationwide protests that have followed, seeking the removal of "Gyanesh Kumar, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), the Election Commission of India (ECI) has now come out with a press note on September 26th, 2026.

"First, the Press note does not directly deny the story or its findings. It makes a defensive attempt to downplay the same in paragraph 3(i) and 3(ii) but does not say that the allegations are baseless," said Ramesh, pointing to the issues flagged in media reports.

India will act against terror: Jaishankar



New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): Delivering India's National Statement at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday said the country would exercise its right to defend itself against terrorism. He also highlighted the impact of ongoing conflicts on the Global South.

Delivering a response from the podium to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's speech on Friday, where he had criticised India for launching Operation Sindoor last year, Mr. Jaishankar said that there could be "no dilution" of the world's zero-tolerance approach to terrorism.

"Yesterday, a serial practitioner of terrorism misrepresented facts before this Assembly. Arguments were invoked to normalise terrorism and claim immunity from its consequences," said Mr. Jaishankar, attack-

ing Mr. Sharif's speech, in which the Pakistan PM had called Kashmir Pakistan's "jugular vein" and accused India of human rights violations in the region.

Mr. Sharif had also claimed that the BJP government in India unleashed a "reign of terror" against minorities in the country. Mr. Jaishankar said, "Our right to defend ourselves against terrorism will be exercised." He added that governments indulging in state-sponsored terrorism with a "cross-border purpose" must be held to account.

Mr. Jaishankar also responded to Mr. Sharif's statement that India is "weaponising water" by holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance. "Friendship and goodwill cannot co-exist with terrorism. Understandings premised on that will naturally be called into question," Mr. Jaishankar said in his speech.

100 pc ethanol car can bring down fuel cost to equivalent of Rs 25 per litre: Nitin Gadkari

New Delhi, Sep 26 (GNS): Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has said that switching to a car running entirely on ethanol could bring fuel costs down to the equivalent of around Rs 25 per litre.

Gadkari said Toyota's 100 per cent ethanol-powered Innova is set to be launched in October and would not require petrol, as the government steps up its push for alternative fuels amid the ongoing debate over E20 petrol.

Speaking at an event here, Gadkari said the



vehicle would not require petrol and claimed that its running cost would be comparable to that of a petrol-powered car using fuel priced at around Rs 25 per litre.

Gadkari said he had been invited to the launch of Toyota's Innova flex-fuel

vehicle in October. The vehicle is designed to operate on 100 per cent ethanol rather than conventional petrol, and the minister claimed that it would also generate 60 per cent electricity while running.

"Ethanol is being used in 19 countries in the world and today no complaint is coming from any vehicle in India. In October, I have been invited for the launch of Toyota's Innova car that will run on 100 per cent flex fuel," Gadkari said, as quoted by Business Today.

The announcement comes amid an ongoing

debate over India's E20 ethanol blending policy, under which petrol is blended with up to 20 per cent ethanol. The policy has faced questions from sections of the public and lawmakers over its possible impact on vehicle mileage, engine performance and long-term maintenance.

Gadkari said no complaints had been received from vehicles using ethanol-blended fuel in India. The government has also maintained that it has not received widespread or confirmed complaints from vehicle manufacturers.

India-EU FTA concluded on equal terms after 17 years, technology transfer key for growth: Jitin Prasada

New Delhi, Sep 26 (GNS): Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada on Saturday said India was able to conclude its long-pending free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union on equal terms after nearly 17 years of negotiations, while stressing that technology transfers, local manufacturing and artificial intelligence (AI) would play a critical role in the country's next phase of industrial growth.

Speaking at the Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show (UPITS), Prasada said the India-EU FTA marked



a significant achievement for the government, noting that earlier negotiations had struggled to make progress.

"The EU FTA was in talks for 17 years. They were not ready to have a conversation with us. Our government was able to strike a deal on equal

terms," he said. India and the European Union concluded negotiations for the trade pact on January 27, 2026. The negotiations, which began in 2007, had remained stalled for several years before being relaunched in 2022. The agreement took another step forward earlier this month when the European Commission submitted it to the EU Council for authorisation for signature and conclusion.

Highlighting India's evolving approach towards foreign investment, Prasada said the country now expects international companies to contribute to domestic

manufacturing capabilities and technological advancement rather than treating India merely as a consumer market. According to the minister, foreign firms seeking to expand their presence in India would increasingly be encouraged to enter into joint ventures and facilitate technology transfers to support local industry and strengthen manufacturing ecosystems. Prasada also underscored the importance of quality enhancement for Indian products, saying domestic manufacturers must focus on meeting global standards.

AI, Semiconductors, quantum tech to drive India's infrastructure growth: FM

Bengaluru, Sept 26 (GNS): Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the next large investments in India's infrastructure must focus heavily on artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductor chips and quantum computing, while urging MSMEs to adopt AI solutions to improve productivity and compete globally.

Addressing the 7th edition of IITMAA Sangam, the flagship annual con-

ference of the IIT Madras Alumni Association (IITMAA) here, FM Sitharaman said technology and innovation must reach every sector of the economy, including agriculture, renewable energy and advanced manufacturing.

"India's transformation has been driven by sustained efforts to strengthen institutions, restore confidence and open sectors to private participation, while creating policies that en-



able young people, entrepreneurs and innovators to contribute to economic growth," FM Sitharaman said. Highlighting the open-

sions. She also stressed the need for patient capital and new early-stage funding mechanisms for pre-revenue deep-tech and hardware startups. "Our MSMEs, which produce everything from basic components to aircraft parts, need AI solutions to improve productivity and compete globally," FM Sitharaman said, adding that technology-led growth would require greater collaboration across sectors.

She said IIT Madras'

initiative to create a fund to handhold startups exemplifies how academia, industry and government can work together to support innovation and entrepreneurship. FM Sitharaman further said India can achieve more than 10 per cent GDP growth, but this would require greater effort across all sectors and sustained collaboration to convert talent, technology and innovation into economic growth.

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India-US trade deal is too costly for farmers

Devinder Sharma

LIKE the Shakespearean predicament, the bigger dilemma is who to believe and who not to believe. While US Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins has thanked US President Donald Trump for a promising trade deal with India that "delivers for the American farmers". Meanwhile, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, too, applauded PM Narendra Modi for a "historic" deal with America, underscoring that India's sensitive agriculture and dairy sectors have been duly protected. Whether it is a win-win situation for both democracies or an outcome of bullying and high-handedness, only the details will confirm. But what is in the public domain has already sent jitters down the spine of farm unions across the country. They have enough reasons to be worried.

At a time when domestic agriculture continues to face distress, with farmers realising farm prices 30-40% lower than the minimum support price (MSP) announced, any further opening of India's vast market for cheap and highly subsidised agricultural produce will severely hit farm livelihoods.

Already, American farmers receive massive subsidies every year, estimated at \$66,314 per farmer per year (Agricultural Resource Management Survey, 2020), which insulates them from the volatility of the markets.



Besides, the US Administration plans in 2026 to provide \$12-billion of per-acre commodity payments to farmers under the Farmers Bridge Assistance Program (FBA) to cover the losses incurred. Trump had referred to it as 'One Big Beautiful Bill'. While the finer details of the US-India trade deal are still awaited, both the US and India are making loud claims. Brooke Rollins had even announced on social media that the deal would result in the "export of more American farm products into India's massive market, lifting prices and pumping cash into rural America."

This follows the broad contours of the trade deal that were announced by the US President on X, which slashed tariffs from 50% to 18% for Indian goods entering the US and reduced import tariffs to zero for the US exports, in addition to removing the non-tariff barriers. Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has been assuring farmers that

the deal has been struck after carefully 'safeguarding' their interests. Despite the assurances, the India-US trade deal has agitated the farming community. Questioning India's silence, which is refraining from providing any more details, many farm leaders have expressed doubts on farmers' interests having really been protected. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) that led the iconic farmers' protest around New Delhi in 2020-21, has warned that reducing import duties to zero will bring a flood of cheaper imports, and it has threatened fresh protests beginning February 12. Farmer leaders say the proposed protests would be on the lines of the 2020-21 protests.

What infuriates the farming community is that while Budget 2026 has remained largely silent on measures that are needed to prop up farm incomes, there has not been any farmers' consultation on where to draw the red line in protecting the farm sector which is reeling in crisis.

Further, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the richest trading bloc, has in its latest report, estimated that Indian farmers had suffered a cumulative loss of Rs 111 lakh crore between 2000-01 and 2024-25 and that it would be difficult for farmers to sustain another strong blow. "It will not only be a big blow. It will be like a sledge-hammer striking a hapless farming community," warns Harish Chauhan, president of apple growers in Himachal Pradesh. The free trade agreements (FTAs) with the European Union and New Zealand have already provided unprecedented market access for apples, as a result of which the apple industry in the hill states fears being systematically wiped out, he has lamented.

If US apple imports are allowed at zero duty, their apple economy will face ruin, he warns. Already cotton growers, soy producers and onion farmers have been reeling under depressed prices and the

zero duty imports will force farmers to abandon these crops in view of any further slump expected in market prices from cheaper imports. Although Trump talks of \$500 billion worth of US exports per year — that includes energy, technology, coal and agriculture — some analysts believe that the exports will probably be around \$100 billion a year spread over five years. It does not, however, mean that the entire export basket from the US will comprise agricultural produce, dairy and allied sectors.

In some commodities, like cotton, pulses and onions, reports say a quota access will be provided. Nevertheless, what cannot be ignored is the warning that importing food is like importing unemployment. Take the case of cotton. The removal of the 11% tariff on cotton import between September and December 2025 had brought an influx of cheaper cotton, as a result of which the domestic prices fell. While the textile industry rejoiced at the low prices, farmers suffered. In three months, imports surged by 3 million bales and prices dropped by Rs ,000-1,500 per quintal. Moreover, since the non-tariff barriers have to be removed, and India already has a few hundred of these, how will India protect consumers from the US milk imports that are reported to be coming along with non-vegetarian content.

Why Balochistan is turning more violent

ON January 31, Baloch fighters carried out synchronised attacks across Pakistan's Balochistan province, killing 33 civilians and 17 security personnel. The banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) owned up to the attacks, the biggest that Pakistan has seen yet in Balochistan. The militants hit at least 12 locations simultaneously, including police stations, military facilities and government offices manned by civilians. At least two women fighters were involved in the attacks, one of them a suicide bomber who blew herself up outside an ISI office at Nushki in north-western Balochistan. The coordinated attacks appear to have overawed the security forces, who later claimed that in the fighting that followed, they had killed 145 militants. Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi captured the shock and awe of the moment with his remark that "these were not normal terrorists." He added the "India hand" allegation, which Pakistan has repeated in the last two decades without evidence. Naqvi, too, offered none, but he was right about one thing.

The attackers were not "normal terrorists". From the contested accession of Kalat that led to the first uprising in 1948 to as late as the early 2000s, the Baloch insurgency depended on low-grade guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. Militants would attack government infrastructure, such as gas pipelines, power lines and electricity transformers, and scamper into the hills. The insurgent groups were affiliated to some big Baloch tribe, such as Bugti or Marri, and led by tribal sardars, who were part and parcel of the Pakistan establishment.

Akbar Khan Bugti, hunted down and killed in Balochistan in 2006 on the orders of General Pervez Musharraf, then Pakistan's military ruler, was a politician-turned insurgent and a former CM of Balochistan. At the time of his killing, he was a member of the National Assembly. Khair Baksh Marri, sardar of the Marri tribe, who played a leading role in the leftist insurrection against the Pakistani state in the 1970s, was a parliamentarian when he led the revolt. Bugti studied in Oxford. Both went to Aitchinson College in Lahore, a pillar of the Pakistani establishment. The political system had many open lines to them. Many leading politicians counted Bugti and Marri as their friends. Musharraf's refusal to negotiate with Bugti on his 14 demands, including for provincial autonomy and control over its resources, was a huge mistake. The fifth and the ongoing Baloch uprising was sparked by Bugti's killing.

Bugti's unaddressed demands were not new. They had been made by others too. Balochistan is the country's richest in terms of resources, with its deposits of oil and gas, minerals and metals, including copper and gold, a sample of which Field Marshal Asim Munir carried to the US to show to President Donald Trump. The Baloch people are marginal in Pakistan's extractive relationship with the province. Until at least the late 2000s, pipelines carried gas from the Sui gasfields to other provinces, but it was unavailable for most of Balochistan. Since 1993, Pakistan has been giving out mining leases to foreign companies to prospect at Reko Diq for gold and copper. In the 2000s, China, which had been awarded the Gwadar port project by the Musharraf government, was also granted a lease for mining in the Saindak copper-gold mines in Chagai. Now, Munir has dangled the same carrot before Trump, but last week's attack may have taken the sheen off those shiny objects in his briefcase. Pakistan's exploitation of its largest but least populated province has been a festering sore that could have been addressed politically. Instead, the military, which has ruled the country for most of its existence, has opted for an iron fist, that has only made its challenge in the province more difficult than earlier. Today's Baloch insurgency is much more aggressive. It is led by people who bear no political or social resemblance to the tribal sardars, who lived in camps on the rugged hills, but were otherwise Baloch elites whose politics was not anti-Pakistan, aimed only at a fair arrangement within the federation, with themselves as the main beneficiaries.

In contrast, Bashir Zeb, who has led the BLA since 2018, is a diploma holder in mechanical engineering. His father is a doctor and Zeb grew up in a middle-class home at Nushki, a small town in Balochistan, cutting his political teeth as a member of the Baloch Students Organisation Azad, founded by another middle-class professional, Allah Nazar, a doctor and now the leader of the Baloch Liberation Front. Neither man is a political moderate. Under their leadership, the Baloch insurgency has grown more violent, more ambitious. The BLA claimed the first suicide bombing in 2018, in which a bus carrying Chinese workers in Dalbandin was targeted. The BLA has carried out several other attacks targeting Chinese nationals and interests, including another coordinated attack in 2018, a precursor to last week's attack. The 2025 train hijacking, too, was claimed by the BLA. Zeb and Nazar came into the insurgency scene in the time of social media, which has helped them address wider audiences and attract new recruits. The growth of an urban middle class beyond the capital Quetta, in southern Balochistan areas around Gwadar, such as Turbat, Panjgur and Khuzdar, over the last two decades, is a big factor. From these towns has risen a new generation of youth, more educated than their parents and angrier at their marginalisation and the excesses of the military.

The involvement of women in the insurgency is recent and came with the BLA's new leadership. Even when the conservative tribal sardars controlled insurgency, women stepped out of their homes to lead civil society protests to demand the return of thousands of men — their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons — who had disappeared, allegedly by security forces' involvement. Their shift to combatant roles came to the fore with the 2022 incident of a BLA woman suicide bomber, another first for the Baloch insurgency. The 30-year-old Shari Baloch's act of blowing herself up outside the Chinese state-run Confucius Institute, University of Karachi, appears to have motivated other women, and men, to join the BLA and volunteer for the "Majeed brigade", said to be the group's suicide squad. A year after Shari, Sumaiya Qalandrani Baloch blew herself up on a security convoy in Turbat.

In 2024, a woman carried out a fidayeen attack on a Frontier Corps camp to mark the 18th anniversary of the killing of Akbar Bugti.

Experts say if Baloch women are ready to pick up the gun or wear a suicide vest, it is because they have been driven to the wall by the Pakistan state. Last week's morale-shattering attack by the BLA is a sign of the determination with which the new generation of Baloch militants is taking on the army. It signals a new turning point for the insurgents. The attack is also a not-so-subtle message to the big powers.

What next? The track record shows that the army, humiliated by the attack, will punish Baloch people more severely. The cycle of violence will continue. Accusations will be levelled against India, and Delhi will reject them, as it did to the latest one. But if there is one common lesson that history offers to the region, from Sri Lanka to India's Kashmir and North-East to Balochistan, it is this: blaming neighbours may play to domestic galleries, but it does not make challenges, whose geneses lie within, disappear or easier to overcome.

The latest escalation also highlights the changing character of the Baloch insurgency, with a younger, urban and more educated generation increasingly involved in militant activities. The growing participation of women, use of social media for mobilisation and attacks targeting security forces and Chinese interests indicate that the conflict has expanded beyond its earlier tribal and rural base, posing a more complex challenge for Pakistan's authorities.

The Pawar who couldn't become CM

Julio Ribeiro

TENS of thousands of mourners gathered to attend Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's cremation in his home town, Baramati, on January 29. They bid adieu to the man who desperately wanted to become the CM, but couldn't.

I am reminded of Mark Antony's speech at the funeral of Julius Caesar, immortalised by Shakespeare in his play: "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." Ajit was mired in many controversies during his political career. The most serious among them



hence, could not be sequestered even by sale. Parth's company had reportedly purchased the land at a throwaway price. When the media published details of the transaction, Ajit shielded his son and the Devendra Fadnavis government again came to his rescue. The land, of course, had to be restored to the Mahar community.

In another astonishing instance of high-handed behaviour, Ajit was caught on camera reprimanding a woman IPS officer for confronting his supporters who had violated revenue laws. She was ordered to take action against violators by the authorised revenue officer, based on the government's own directives. It was a classic example of a ruling party enacting laws and then expecting the police to close their eyes when those laws were broken!

Ajit's wife, Sunetra, is under legal scrutiny in the

Rs 25,000-crore Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank scam; the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is pursuing the case. These examples should make readers wonder if Ajit was akin to the cat with nine lives. Now that a cruel death in an air crash has taken his life, the grief that the residents of Baramati have expressed seems to have obliterated his alleged misdeeds.

It is also significant that Nitin Nabin, newly-installed BJP president, attended Ajit's cremation along with Home Minister Amit Shah and state party leaders.

Ajit had dumped his uncle and mentor Sharad Pawar in his quest for the CM's gaddi. The latter had done something similar decades ago to occupy the coveted chair in Maharashtra at the age of 37. Sharad parted ways with his own patron and mentor, Yashwantrao Chavan, and ditched then Congress CM Vasantdada Patil to form

the government with the help of legislators who had switched over to his side.

The difference in the two cases is that unlike the Sharad-Ajit relationship, there was no "family" involved in Sharad's ties with Chavan. Last month, the uncle and the nephew reunited to contest the Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad municipal elections. They lost, but the very fact that they got together makes one wonder about their seesaw ties.

Like the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founded by Sharad Pawar is avowedly secular as well as socialist, and ideologically removed from the BJP. Even Ajit, after joining hands with the BJP, made it amply clear that his NCP faction did not subscribe to the anti-Muslim ideology of the saffron party. Some of the candidates he fielded in the recent Mumbai civic elections were Muslims.

Days after Ajit's death,

Sunetra took oath as deputy CM, even as the state government's prescribed three-day mourning period was nearing its end and flags were still flying at half-mast. Many were shocked at the indecent haste.

I have no doubt that CM Devendra Fadnavis, one of Maharashtra's shrewdest politicians, was behind this tactical elevation. Ajit's death had confronted him with the prospect of sustained pressure for political concessions from the other deputy CM, Eknath Shinde, who heads the Shiv Sena faction opposed to the outfit led by ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray.

If Ajit's faction had joined Sharad's NCP, as was rumoured, Sharad would have refused to cast his lot with the BJP lest he lost his secular credentials. Now, if Ajit's loyalists don't return to Sharad's fold, their number (40) in the Assembly would keep the BJP in power in case Shinde's Sena becomes too demanding. Hence the necessity of keeping Ajit's faction in line.

Jumping ship to join the ruling party is a popular game Maharashtra's politicians play. Of course, those who are ideologically committed will not do so, but the truth is that they are rare to find in the state. The lure of office or just profit is sufficient for them. Added to that is the more urgent need of avoiding investigations by probe agencies — the sword of Damocles that the BJP hangs over the heads of those with skeletons in their cupboards.

Budget signals India’s strategic bet on CCUS for deep decarbonisation

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): Union Budget 2026-27 marks a quiet but consequential inflection point in India's climate and industrial policy. While much of the global discourse continues to revolve around renewable capacity additions and long-term net zero pledges, this Budget signals something more structural. It recognises that India's pathway to climate leadership will be determined not only by clean energy expansion, but by its ability to decarbonise hard-to-abate industries without eroding economic competitiveness. At the centre of this recalibration sits Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS).

The commitment of INR 20,000 crore over five years

positions CCUS not as an experimental add-on, but as a central instrument of India's deep decarbonisation strategy. As India pursues rapid economic growth alongside its net zero objectives, this allocation marks a clear shift away from incremental efficiency gains towards structural emissions reduction in sectors where alternatives remain limited. Steel, cement, power generation, refining, fertilisers, and chemicals account for a substantial share of industrial emissions and form the backbone of India's manufacturing economy. These sectors cannot be bypassed in the transition; they must be transformed. What makes this allocation particularly significant is both its scale



and its intent. The funding is directed towards scaling CCUS projects and raising technology readiness levels, enabling wider deployment across end-use applications.

By targeting carbon-intensive sectors where direct electrification or renewable substitution remains technically difficult or commercially unviable, the Budget

acknowledges the real constraints of industrial decarbonisation rather than offering idealised solutions. The sequencing of support reinforces this pragmatism.

The Budget introduces India's first dedicated CCUS budget line with an initial INR 500 crore allocation under the Ministry of Power, building on the CCUS Road-

map released in December 2025. That roadmap outlines a phased approach, beginning with research and development, moving through pilot and demonstration projects, and ultimately progressing towards commercial deployment. The anticipated expenditure of approximately INR 4,500 crore over the next two years reflects a deliberate focus on de-risking early projects rather than forcing premature scale-up. This design choice matters. Multi-year funding is less about immediate emissions reductions and more about long-term positioning. Sustained capital support helps absorb early-stage risk, enables demonstration facilities, and provides clarity for long-lead infrastruc-

ture planning. In doing so, it creates the conditions for CCUS to evolve from pilot initiatives into a viable industrial solution, particularly as India develops its domestic carbon market. The strategic context is equally important. Global carbon standards are tightening, and mechanisms such as the European Union's carbon border adjustments are turning emissions performance into a determinant of trade competitiveness. For India's export-oriented industrial sectors, CCUS is rapidly becoming a strategic necessity rather than a discretionary climate option. Without it, Indian manufacturers risk facing carbon penalties even as they fuel domestic growth and employment.

NPG evaluates seven projects from Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): The 108th meeting of the Network Planning Group (NPG) was held at Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). The meeting was convened to evaluate infrastructure projects. The meeting focused on enhancing multimodal connectivity and logistics efficiency in alignment with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS NMP). The NPG evaluated 07 Road projects for their conformity to the PM GatiShakti principles of integrated multimodal infrastructure, last-mile connectivity to economic and social nodes and 'Whole of Government' approach. These initiatives are ex-

pected to boost logistics efficiency, reduce travel times, and deliver significant socio-economic benefits to the catchment areas of the project. The evaluation and anticipated impacts of these projects are detailed below:

6 Laning of Salem – Kumarapalayam of NH 544 (Tamil Nadu) - The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has proposed the development of a six-lane corridor from Salem to Kumarapalayam in Tamil Nadu, covering a total length of 102.035 km along the high-volume Kochi–Coimbatore–Bengaluru freight and passenger corridor. The project includes the provision of continuous service

roads in built-up and industrial stretches in line with access management requirements, along with the upgradation of junctions, interchanges, and grade separators to improve road safety and traffic flow. It also includes the construction and widening of major and minor bridges, flyovers, Road-over-Bridges (ROBs), and culverts to meet future traffic demands. The proposed corridor is expected to significantly enhance regional connectivity by improving access to industrial clusters, logistics hubs, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), and key freight infrastructure such as railway terminals, Inland Container Depots

(ICDs), and logistics parks. By strengthening integration with the Kochi–Coimbatore–Bengaluru economic corridor, the project will support efficient freight movement, long-haul transport, and multimodal connectivity through improved road–rail–air–port linkages, while also enhancing first- and last-mile access, airport connectivity, and operational efficiency across national and state highways connecting Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, and Hosur, benefiting sectors including textiles, agri-processing, manufacturing, and containerized cargo. Construction of Amaravati Outer Ring Road (Andhra Pradesh) - The Ministry of

Road Transport & Highways has proposed the development of the 189.93 km Amaravati Outer Ring Road (ORR) in Andhra Pradesh as a greenfield project to decongest urban areas and improve regional connectivity across the Amaravati capital region, including Vijayawada, Guntur, and Tenali. The ORR will divert through-traffic away from city centers, provide dedicated interchanges for seamless access to Vijayawada Airport, and allow for future rapid transit corridor integration. Envisioned as a key multimodal logistics corridor, the ORR will integrate with National Waterway-4 and connect major ports such as

Machilipatnam and Krishnapatnam with inland urban and industrial hubs. The project is expected to reduce travel time by 30–40 percent, lower fuel consumption, and cut vehicular emissions, supporting efficient freight movement and environmental sustainability. Construction (widening / strengthening) of 2 lane with paved shoulders from Rafiabad-Kupwara-Chowkibal-Tangdhar (Jammu & Kashmir) - The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has proposed the construction of a 62.10 km two-lane road from Rafiabad to Tangdhar in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir to enhance strategic and regional connectivity in border areas.

IICA Holds Specialised Training on Companies Act, Competition Law & IBC for IES, ITS Officers

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) under Ministry of Corporate Affairs has organised a Specialised Training Program on Companies Act, Competition Law, and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code for 21 officers of the Indian Economic Service (IES) and Indian Trade Service (ITS) from February 02–06, 2026, at its campus in IMT Manesar to strengthen their understanding of corporate regulatory frameworks and governance practices. The programme aims to sensitise officer trainees to key areas such as the Companies Act, Competition Law, Corporate Finance, and Insolvency Law, aligning the curriculum with their professional roles and responsibilities. The initiative is aimed at providing participants with practical exposure to the governance of corporate affairs while enhancing their regulatory and policy perspectives. Through the programme, officers will gain deeper insights into management of company affairs; powers, functions, and investigation procedures of the Competition Commission of India (CCI); economics and law-making; the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) as an evolving economic law; regulatory governance; anti-competitive agreements; abuse of dominance; corporate

finance; debt and default; data-based decision-making; drafting and legislative intent; the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP); regulatory practices; and the roles of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). The training experts include names like Shri Sudhaker Shukla, Former Member, IBBI and Head, Centre for Insolvency and Bankruptcy, IICA; Shri Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh, Director General and CEO, IICA; Shri Dhanendra Kumar, Former Chairperson, CCI; Shri G. P. Madaan, Founder, Madaan Law Offices; Shri Samir Gandhi, Partner, Axiom5 Law Chambers; Dr. M. S. Sahoo, Former Chairperson, IBBI; Dr. Augustine Peter, Former Member, CCI; Dr. Pyla Narayana Rao. Associate Professor, School of Corporate Law and Competition Law, IICA; Shri G. R. Bhatia, Partner, Luthra & Luthra; Dr. Naveen Sirohi, Associate Professor, School of Finance and Management, IICA; Dr. Debajyoti Ray Chaudhuri, Managing Director, NeSL; Dr. Mukulita Vijayavargiya, Former Whole-Time Member, IBBI; Ms. Pooja Bhary, Insolvency Professional; Shri Vikram Kumar, Senior Partner, Incorp Advisory; and Shri Alok Srivastava, Former Law Secretary and Former Member, NCLAT.

New Government-to-Govt collaboration strengthens India’s drone certification ecosystem

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): Reinforcing the Government of India's commitment to Make in India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and Vision 2047, the National Test House (NTH) has taken a significant step towards positioning India as a globally competitive hub for safe, reliable, and certified drone technologies. In this direction, National Test House (NTH) has entered into a government-to-government collaboration with the Standardization Testing & Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) Directorate – Electronics Regional Test Laboratory (North) [ERTL (North)], under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY). This will enable Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) and Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) testing of drones, thus strengthening India's drone testing and certification framework. The collaboration addresses a critical regulatory requirement under the Drone Rules, 2021 and the Certification Scheme for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (CSUAS), 2022, and will significantly enhance India's capability to certify safe, reliable, and globally compliant Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 2nd February 2026 in the presence of Smt. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs; Dr. Alok Kumar Srivastava, Director General, National Test House; Shri

Vivek Kashyap, Scientist 'G', STQC Directorate; and Shri Pradeep Gunjyal, Scientist 'F' and Director, ERTL (North). Under the proposed MoU, EMI/EMC and immunity testing of drones and their subsystems will be carried out at ERTL (North) in accordance with applicable IEC 61000 / IS 14700 standards, while NTH will conduct the rest of the tests at its own premises. The test reports generated through this collaboration will be seamlessly integrated into the Type Certification process, providing drone manufacturers—particularly startups and MSMEs—with a transparent, seamless, credible, and Government-backed certification pathway. This collaborative approach avoids duplication of high-cost infrastructure, enables optimal utilization of existing national facilities, and significantly strengthens India's regulatory framework for drone safety and reliability. It also ensures that drones certified through NTH meet global benchmarks such as IEC/ISO, MIL-STD, ASTM, and RTCA, enhancing international acceptance of Indian-certified drones. By making world-class drone testing and certification accessible and affordable, at substantially lower cost than private facilities, the initiative will accelerate innovation across sectors such as agriculture, logistics, healthcare, disaster management, infrastructure monitoring, and smart cities.

Strengthen Agro-forestry and Bamboo based Economic Clusters in NER

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): The first two-week Online Short Term Internship Programme (OSTI) in 2026 of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has begun. Chairperson, Justice V. Ramasubramanian inaugurated it in the presence of Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal and senior officers. 80 university-level students from diverse academic backgrounds shortlisted out of 1,114 applicants from 19 States and Union territories across the nation are attending it. The two-week programme will conclude on 13th February 2026. Addressing them, Justice Ramasubramanian said that the OSTI, in line with the mandate of the Commission under the PHRC Act to propagate the hu-

man rights discourse in the country, aims to provide college / university students with a comprehensive understanding of promotion and protection of Human Rights. Quoting shlokas from ancient Indian scriptures like the Rigveda highlighted that compassion and forgiveness have been the hallmark of age-old traditions and customs of Indian society. He encouraged the interns to make the best use of the exposure to the various aspects of human rights during their internship with the Commission. He urged them to evolve as better human beings by developing a sense of compassion towards others' suffering before becoming better professionals.

Before this, Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General NHRC emphasised that the internship programme also aims at sensitising youth to evolve as defenders and ambassadors of human rights. He said that the selected interns should imbibe the values and knowledge from the eminent speakers during the OSTI Programme. He said that at their core, human rights are about real people, lived experiences and everyday conduct. Therefore, the interns also need to look beyond statutes and judgements to observe values in action, understand grievances, engage with lived realities and reflect on how violations occur and more importantly how they can be prevented by spreading awareness.

Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakhhuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC gave a detailed overview of the programme's carefully designed curriculum. This includes lectures and virtual tours of institutions such as Tihar Jail, Shelter Home and Police Station to offer direct insights into the realities of human rights. She further informed the interns about various activities and competitions aimed at enhancing their understanding of human rights and boosting their confidence. The programme also features interactions with experts and officials on various dimensions of human rights, including legal safeguards, institutional mechanisms and challenges in protecting vulnerable sections.

India protects its agriculture, dairy sectors in US trade deal

New Delhi, Sept 26 (GNS): India has completely protected the interests of its agriculture and dairy sector in the India-US trade agreement. It is essential to understand why India is protecting its agriculture and dairy sector. Here is a list of key pointers to explain the issue: Agri is sensitive in India: Agriculture and allied activities such as animal husbandry form the backbone of India's rural economy, providing employment to over 700 million people. Unlike in developed economies, where agriculture is highly mechanised and corporatised, in India, it is a livelihood issue. Granting import duty concessions in agriculture for companies of developed countries that heavily sub-

sidize their farmers would mean an influx of cheap food grains and products into India. It would severely impact Indian farmers' incomes and livelihoods. Global agri trade scene: As per reports, over 90 per cent of global food trade is controlled by about five multinational corporations that have historically used predatory pricing strategies. If India reduces protection, domestic farmers could be at the mercy of these global giants, leading to severe political and economic consequences. This makes agriculture a contentious issue for the Indian Government. Developed nations seek greater market access: Agriculture in India is not just an economic activity but a way of life, supporting over 700

million people. India is largely self-sufficient in food production, whereas for countries like the US, Australia and the European Union, agriculture is a major trade industry. According to a report, in 2024, US agricultural exports stood at \$176 billion, accounting for about 10 per cent of its total merchandise exports. With large-scale mechanised farming and heavy Government subsidies, the US and other developed countries view India as a lucrative market to expand their exports. Agri protection: India's agriculture sector is currently protected by moderate to high tariffs or import duties and regulations to shield domestic farmers from unfair competition. Opening up a sector means

reducing import curbs and duties. Kind of import duties in India on imports: India maintains a tariff structure ranging from zero to 150 per cent to protect its agricultural sector. The US also imposes higher tariffs on select agricultural goods — for instance, tobacco (350 per cent). Additionally, the US applies complex non-ad valorem (NAV) tariffs that make imports more expensive, a fact often overlooked in trade discussions, according to an expert. USA's agri exports to India: The US agri exports to India were \$1.6 billion in 2024. Key exports include — Almonds (in shell - \$868 million); Pistachios (\$121 million), Apples (\$21 million), Ethanol (ethyl alcohol - \$266 million).

Trade experts have stated that the US provides massive subsidies to its farm sector and in fact in some years, the subsidy level exceeded 50 per cent of production value for certain products, such as: Rice (82 per cent), Canola (61 per cent), Sugar (66 per cent), Cotton (74 per cent), Mohair (141 per cent), Wool (215 per cent). Are all agri products sensitive? Given that over 50 per cent of India's population relies on agriculture for its livelihood, India treats the entire sector as sensitive. Import or customs duties are particularly important for staple crops, dairy, and key farm products that sustain rural livelihoods. WTO norms: India's agricultural tariffs do not violate WTO commitments. The rules allow

member countries to protect sensitive sectors, particularly those linked to food security and rural employment, which are crucial for India. India's agri exports: In FY 2025, India's total agricultural exports increased to over \$51 billion from \$45.7 billion in 2023-24, with a portion of this going to the US (\$5 billion). India's total exports in FY25 were \$437 billion. India aims to reach \$100 billion in combined exports of agriculture, marine products and food and beverages in the next four years. India is the world's second-largest agricultural producer by value, accounting for just 2.2 per cent of global farm exports, up from 1.1 per cent in 2000, according to World Trade Organisation data.

Bhatti calls for AI, digital push to boost Telangana tourism

Hyderabad, Sept 26 (GNS) Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka called for the extensive use of digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to elevate Telangana's tourism sector to an international level. He emphasized that the government is taking steps with the goal of placing Telangana—a state rich in natural, historical, spiritual, and cultural heritage—at the forefront of the global tourism map.

World Tourism Day 2026 celebrations were held grandly on Saturday at the traditional venue in Shilparamam, centered on the theme "Digital Agenda – Reshaping Tourism with Artificial Intelligence." Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao attended the event. Speaking on the

occasion, the Deputy CM highlighted the significance of this year's theme and stressed the need to revamp the state's tourism sector in line with modern technology. He unveiled a new website designed to showcase the state's tourism on a global platform, as well as a coffee table book featuring stunning photographs. Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the state holds immense potential for health, temple, rural, and eco-tourism sectors. He noted that work on establishing wellness centers in Vikarabad has already commenced. He highlighted that tiger reserves, forests, waterfalls, ancient temples, and the city's historical monuments are major attractions for tourists, making Telangana an ideal destination for those seeking tranquility. He



directed officials to market these attractions effectively on an international scale. He mentioned that the tourism sector has been accorded higher priority in the budget this time com-

pared to the past. He stated that their policy places significant emphasis on visitor safety and quality amenities. He emphasized the need to attract substantial investments by developing

international-standard hotels and other infrastructure through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. He suggested formulating special plans to encourage Hyderabad's software pro-

fessionals—who work under intense pressure for five days a week—to engage in tourism. To this end, he directed the Tourism Minister and the Secretary to soon convene a meeting with

CEOs of major IT companies and operators of tourism projects. He proposed providing 'tourism coupons' to software employees to encourage them to visit Telangana's natural destinations during weekends. The Deputy Chief Minister remarked that tourism is not merely about entertainment but serves as a reflection of the confluence of diverse cultures. Appreciating the new initiatives undertaken by the Tourism Department, he expressed the hope that Telangana's tourism would gain global renown. Several new initiatives related to the Telangana Tourism Department were launched. Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and the Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Archae-

ology, Jupally Krishna Rao, unveiled the redesigned Telangana Tourism website, an online homestay registration system, new tourism promotional trailers, an interactive AR/VR-based learning management system, a coffee-table book on Telangana's tourist destinations, a video/poster themed "My Telangana, My Story, My Destination," and a video on eco-tourism.

On this occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Telangana Government's Archaeology Department and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), in the presence of Minister Jupally Krishna Rao and under the supervision of ASI Superintendent Nikhil Das and Tourism Department Special Chief Secretary Vani Prasad.

Congress stages massive protest at Malkajgiri

Hyderabad, Sept 26 (GNS) Mynampally Hanmanth Rao Garu led demonstration; Congress demands resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar and action on electoral-Roll issues! The Congress Party organised a massive protest at Malkajgiri Chow Rasta, Malkajgiri Assembly Constituency, on Friday, demanding accountability over issues raised by the party concerning the electoral process, including alleged "vote chori," Special Intensive Revision (SIR), and deletion of eligible voters' names from the electoral rolls.

The protest was organised under the instructions and

leadership of Sri Mynampally Hanmanth Rao Garu, Former MLA, Malkajgiri In-charge, Malkajgiri Assembly Constituency. A large number of Congress leaders, activists and party workers from across the Malkajgiri Constituency participated in the demonstration.

During the protest, Mynampally Hanmanth Rao Garu participated in the demonstration and led the party workers in raising slogans demanding accountability from the Election Commission. As part of the protest, Congress workers also burnt an effigy representing Chief Election Commissioner Shri Gyanesh Kumar.

CM Revanth seeks Bharat Ratna for Manmohan Singh

Hyderabad, Sept 26 (GNS) Chief Minister Revanth Reddy demanded that the Central Government confer the 'Bharat Ratna' upon former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, who realized the dream of forming the state of Telangana and upheld the self-respect of its people. He also urged the government to establish a 'Vijnana Kendra' (Knowledge Centre) in Delhi in recognition of Singh's services to the nation. On the occasion of the former Prime Minister's birth anniversary, the Chief Minister unveiled his statue at Wipro Circle in Hyderabad's Financial District on Saturday. He advised the Central Government to make deci-



sions that transcend politics at times. The Chief Minister hailed Manmohan Singh as a great leader who steered the country's economy forward with a quiet, sage-like demeanor. He stated that this matter would be brought to the attention of AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, and advised Rajya Sabha

members to raise the issue in Parliament. He expressed pride in unveiling the statue on Manmohan Singh's birth anniversary during his tenure as Chief Minister.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy praised former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh as a "gem of the nation" whom India can be proud of. He stated that the statue was unveiled with the resolve to pass on Singh's inspiring legacy to future generations. He noted that Singh brought distinction to every role he held—whether as Reserve Bank Governor, Finance Minister, or Prime Minister. It was recalled that Manmohan Singh served as Finance Minister

during the tenure of the late Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991, and the reforms he introduced at that time enabled the country to recover from an economic crisis. The Chief Minister described Manmohan Singh as the visionary leader who ushered in the policies of Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization. He noted that since key institutions of the nation's economy operate from Hyderabad's Financial District, it was deemed fitting to unveil Manmohan Singh's statue in that very area.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy remarked that Telangana's history is viewed in two distinct phases.

Tourism sites set for development



Falaknuma News State Bureau M.A.Samad Nizamabad, Sept 26 District Tourism Officer Pavan Kumar said concerted efforts were underway to develop and improve major tourist destinations across Nizamabad district. He conveyed his greetings to the people on the occasion of World Tourism Day, September 27.

He said several important tourist and heritage sites, including Pochampad, Limbadri Gutta, Siddula Gutta, Dichpally Ramalayam, Sirnapalli Gadi, Khilla Ramalayam, Neelakanteshwara Temple,

Hanuman Temple at Saranagapur and the 100-Pillared Temple at Bodhan, would be developed in a phased manner.

Pavan Kumar said a roofed shed would be constructed at Siddula Gutta at a cost of 50 lakh, while another roofed shed would be developed at Limbadri Gutta with an estimated 70 lakh. The Rajiv Gandhi Auditorium would also be modernised to improve facilities for visitors.

He further said that, with the initiative of the District Collector, steps were being taken to promote eco-tourism in the district's forest areas and develop the backwater region of the Sri Ram Sagar Project as a tourism destination. Special attention was being given to greenery, cleanliness, drinking-water facilities and visitor safety at tourist locations, he said.

The District Tourism Officer appealed to the public to support the development of local tourism and make use of the district's tourist destinations, particularly during weekend holidays.



CP inspects ganesh immersion security at Basar

Falaknuma News State Bureau M.A.Samad Nizamabad, Sept 26 Nizamabad Police Commissioner P. Sai Chaitanya, personally inspected the police bandobust and security arrangements put in place at Basar Bridge in connection with the Ganesh idol immersion celebrations.



sure that devotees face no inconvenience during the celebrations. The Commissioner also issued necessary instructions to officers and field staff to maintain effective coordination and ensure that the immersion programme is con-

ducted peacefully, safely and without disruption. He emphasised strict monitoring of the arrangements and continuous vigilance throughout the immersion process to facilitate the safe movement of devotees and vehicles.

Warangal MP Kadiyam Kavya urges CM to secure central funds, key institutions for region

Warangal, 26 Sept (Patriotic Views): Warangal MP Dr Kadiyam Kavya met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad on Friday and submitted representations seeking the State government's intervention in securing central funds and establishing key institutions in the region.

The proposals include the release of funds under the PM-USHA scheme for Kakatiya University, a 10 crore grant for the development of the archaeological museum at Warangal Fort, the establishment of National

Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) and Central Institute of Tool Design (CITD) centres in Warangal, and the setting up of a full-fledged Passport Seva Kendra (PSK).

Dr Kavya urged the Chief Minister to take up the matter with the Centre and ensure the early sanction and release of funds proposed under the PM-USHA scheme for Kakatiya University. She said the funding would help strengthen the university's academic programmes, research facilities and infrastructure while

improving opportunities for students and researchers.

The MP requested the Chief Minister to coordinate with the Union Government to secure a grant of 10 crore from the Union Ministry of Culture for the development of the archaeological museum at Warangal Fort.

She pointed out that the existing museum building, established in 1991, had deteriorated. Although construction of a new museum building was completed in May 2023, several works, including the shifting and preservation of artefacts.

Seethakka reviews roads, drinking water in Warangal, Khammam

Warangal, 26 Sept (Patriotic Views): A regional review meeting covering the erstwhile Warangal and Khammam districts was held at the Hanamkonda Collectorate on Friday, with Minister Seethakka reviewing the progress of works related to Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Drinking Water Supply.

During the meeting, the Minister said that 445 roads spanning 1,366 km were being developed in the erstwhile Warangal and Khammam districts under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) at an estimated cost of 1,130 crore. She directed contractors to take steps to

commence works under all packages by October 25. In view of the anticipated impact of El Niño, Seethakka called for advance measures to prevent drinking water shortages in the coming months. She directed officials to restore drinking water supply on a war footing in 86 habitations facing problems under the Mission Bhagiratha scheme.

The Minister stressed the need to maintain quality standards in drinking water supply and road development works. She instructed officials to closely monitor the progress of projects and ensure their completion within the stipulated deadlines.



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