

HM Amit Shah highlights efforts to Make India drug-free in three years

Panaji, Sep 6 (UNI): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday reiterated the commitment to make the country drug-free over the next three years and highlighted efforts made to tackle trafficking and strengthen the country's anti-narcotics framework.

Speaking at a press conference to highlight the fight against narcotics, Home Minister Shah said, "We are committed to build a drug-free India."

"A timeline has been set, different Ministries have been made responsible, measurable outcome targets have been fixed, and quarterly reviews and outcome-based accountability and responsibility are also going to be fixed by us," he added.



He shared the roadmap for the next three years and the data reflecting the progress made in the fight against narcotics, saying that the country stands at a critical juncture where it must collectively ensure that addiction is defeated for the sake of future generations. "During the Congress rule from 2004 to 2014, 26 lakh kg of drugs were seized. Today, that figure has increased from

26 lakh kg to more than 1.19 crore kg seized during the period from 2014 to 2026," he said.

The Home Minister added that the value of the drugs seized during the Congress rule was around Rs 40,000 crore, while under the campaign led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the value has reached Rs 1.89 lakh crore. Sharing details of de-

Amit Shah said that from 2004 to 2014 the quantity of drugs destroyed stood at 3.36 lakh kg while the quantity destroyed during 2014 to 2026 stood at 48.66 lakh kg. The Union Minister also highlighted efforts to strengthen inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination through Narco-Coordination (NCORD) mechanism.

The mechanism provides a structured, institutionalised platform for co-ordination among Central Ministries, state governments and enforcement agencies for monitoring drug trafficking, precursor diversion, demand reduction and rehabilitation, resulting in improved enforcement outcomes and intelligence-sharing.

India, Saudi discuss strengthening cooperation in labour and manpower sectors

Riyadh, Sep 6 (UNI): Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vardhan Singh, on Sunday met Saudi Arabia's Human Resources and Social Development Minister Ahmad bin Sulaiman Alrajhi and discussed cooperation in labour and manpower sectors.

"Pleased to meet H.E. Eng. Ahmad bin Sulaiman Alrajhi, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development of Saudi Arabia. Held wide-ranging discussions on further strengthening India-Saudi Arabia cooperation in the labour and manpower sectors, reflecting the depth and growing momentum of our Strategic Partnership. Grateful to Ahmad bin Sulaiman Alrajhi for the invitation and warm hospitality," MoS Singh stated on X.



Singh arrived in Saudi Arabia, on his first official visit, on Saturday and was received by the country's Deputy Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Dr Tariq Al Hamad.

"Arrived in Riyadh on a bilateral visit to the Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia. Warmly received by Ambassador Shri Vipul and HE Dr Tariq Al Hamad, Deputy Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development. I look forward to fruitful engagements with Saudi counterparts and meaningful interactions with Indian diaspora

and business leaders in the Kingdom," MoS Singh stated on X. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), during the visit, which will go on till September 8, MoS Singh will also be meeting the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Climate Affairs Envoy, the Vice Minister for Environment, Water and Agriculture, as well as other dignitaries.

MoS Singh will interact with a large cross-section of the Indian community in Saudi Arabia and Indian business leaders, entrepreneurs and professionals during the visit. "He will interact with Indian workers, reflecting the Government of India's unwavering commitment to the welfare of Indian workers overseas," the MEA said in a statement.

DRDO develops jammer to counter AI-enabled 'smart' radios

New Delhi, Sep 6 (UNI): With military communication systems becoming increasingly resilient to electronic countermeasures, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is developing an advanced system to counter 'smart' or cognitive radio networks that use artificial intelligence to evade detection and jamming.



automatically alter their settings to use the radio spectrum more efficiently. They can continuously scan for unused or underutilised frequency channels and rapidly switch frequencies, making them difficult to monitor or intercept using conventional jamming systems. The Defence Electronics Research Laboratory, a DRDO establishment, is the nodal agency for executing the project. It is seeking Indian industry partners for the design and development of the SCJS.

According to DRDO's requirements, the system

should be capable of monitoring and jamming radios operating in the 30 MHz to 6,000 MHz frequency range, with 360-degree detection coverage and a range of 20 km. It should also be capable of countering radios that change frequencies at rates of up to 2,000 hops per second. The wide frequency range covers several tactical communication bands used by modern military systems, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), loitering munitions and software-defined radios.

Unlike conventional radios that operate on preset channels, cognitive radios use artificial intelligence and machine learning to analyse their operating environment and dynamically switch between spectrum channels, potentially within microseconds, to evade interference.

Ukraine says ready to observe ceasefire during negotiations

Kyiv, Sept 6 (GNS): Ukraine is ready to observe a ceasefire in air strikes against the Russian cities involved in the negotiation process, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced. "From now through the end of Saturday, as well as on Sunday and Monday, Ukraine is ready to refrain from strikes on Moscow," Zelensky said on X after a phone conversation with US President Donald Trump's envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Ukraine is expecting Russia to take similar steps regarding Kiev, Zelensky said. According to Interfax-Ukraine news agency, Witkoff and Kushner plan to visit Kyiv on Sunday, following their trip to Moscow. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin had sub-

stantive, constructive and extremely frank talks with US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner in a trusting atmosphere in Moscow, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said early Sunday morning. Ushakov said the discussion on extremely serious issues took place in a working-format setting and informally over dinner.

Ushakov said that the Russian side provided clear and comprehensive assessments of the situation unfolding amid the special military operation. "In particular, note was taken of the real advances made by the Russian army within the combat zone; confidence was expressed in achieving the stated objectives, and the need to eliminate all root causes of the conflict was emphasized," he noted.

Supreme Court to hear plea seeking checks on sharp airfare fluctuations

New Delhi, Sep 6 (UNI): The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea seeking regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India.

As per the apex court's cause list of September 7, the matter would be heard by a bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta.

On August 17, the Centre had told the top court that it has fast-tracked the framing of rules under the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, which is aimed at modernising India's aviation sector, and the same would be finalised within three weeks.

The government had placed the draft rules before the bench in a sealed cover and said some final



discussions were going on.

The apex court had noted that Additional Solicitor General Anil Kaushik, appearing for the Centre, sought three-week time to get the draft rules finalised and place it before the court. The top court is hearing a plea filed by social activist S Laxminarayanan, who has sought a robust and independent regulator that ensures transparency and passenger protection across the

civil aviation sector and regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India.

Senior advocate Ravindra Srivastava, appearing for the petitioner, had argued before the bench that till the time the new rules come into force, the old rules are operating.

Questioning the "lack of willingness" on the part of authorities and the effectiveness of the existing mechanism, he had argued that airlines were charging exorbitant fares. On July 13, the top court had asked the Centre to place the rules framed under the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, before it. It had said the rules be placed before it in a sealed cover, irrespective of whether those have been placed before Parliament.

South Delhi building collapse: People trapped under debris calling on phones for help

New Delhi, Sep 6 (UNI): Around 30 to 50 students could be trapped under the debris of the five-storey building that collapsed in south Delhi's Satya Niketan area on Sunday afternoon, with some of them calling for help on phones, according to locals. Rescue work was underway with several people being pulled out from the rubble.



residents of nearby buildings rushing out of their homes only to see the horror of a pile of rubble in place of the PG accommodation bustling with students.

Many scrambled to remove the debris with bare

hands and whatever tools they could get after the collapse of the five-storey building, Hostel Daze, in the congested colony lined with private student hostels, eateries and shops near the heart of Delhi University's

South Campus. A local Rajen Chhetri, who works with the Delhi Police, said the building had around 15 rooms, with two to three students sharing each, and repair or construction work was underway in the basement.

India, Palestine discuss avenues of cooperation across agricultural value chain

Ramallah, Sep 6 (UNI): Mahima Sikand, Representative of India to the State of Palestine, on Sunday welcomed Mohammad Daraghme, Mayor of Tubas, and his delegation to the Representative Office and discussed potential avenues for cooperation in agriculture.

"Pleased to welcome H.E. Dr Mohammad Daraghme, Mayor of Tubas, and his delegation to the Representative Office today. Providing a comprehensive briefing on Tubas, the Mayor highlighted its importance as the food basket of Palestine, its strengths in the field of renewable energy, as well as on key challenges facing



the area," the Representative Office of India in Ramallah stated on X.

"We discussed potential avenues for cooperation with India, particularly climate-smart and water-efficient agriculture and the application of technology and innovative solutions across the agricultural value chain," it added.

Last month, the Repre-

sentative Office facilitated the evacuation of a group of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarship awardees from Gaza. "This week, the Representative Office of India successfully facilitated the evacuation of a group of ICCR scholarship awardees from Gaza, in close coordination with the Embassy of India in Jordan

and ICCR," the Representative Office stated on X.

"The scholars have since arrived safely in India and joined their respective universities. We wish them every success in their academic journeys in India," it added.

Earlier in August, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Secretary Sripriya Ranganathan, during her official visit to Palestine, inaugurated a government of India-supported Quick Impact Project at the Jericho Women's Charitable Society School, in Ramallah. "Amb. Sripriya Ranganathan, together with H.E. Dr Hussein Hamayel, Governor of Jericho and the Jordan Valley.

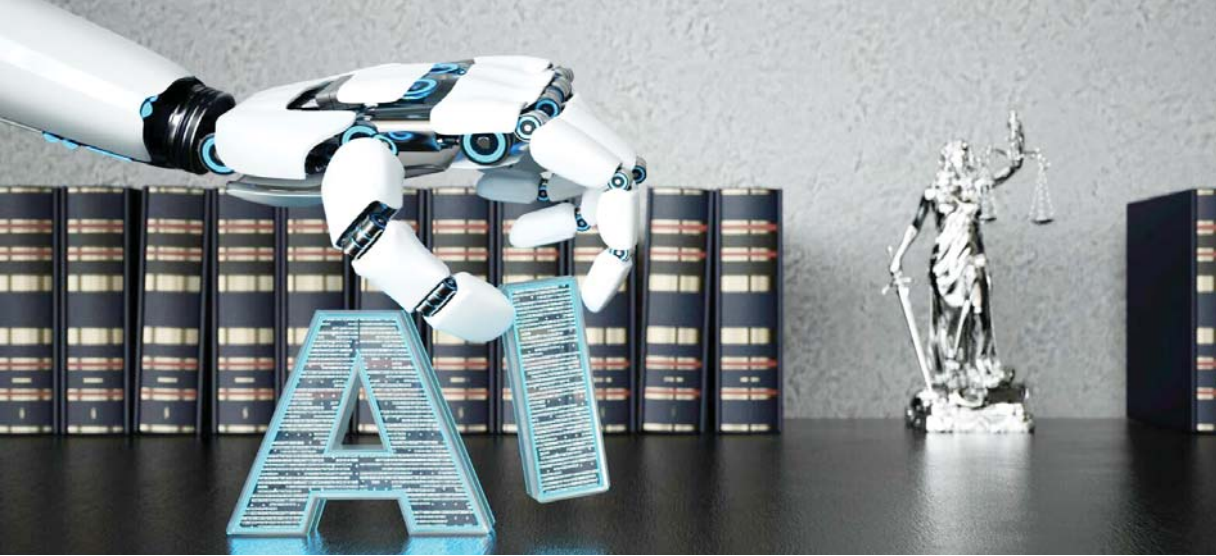
Fair use or free ride? AI copyright dilemma

DINESH C SHARMA

TOWARDS the end of 2025, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade published a working paper on 'Generative AI and copyright'. It is the report of an expert committee to examine the vexed question of copyright protection in the era of artificial intelligence, and its findings will most likely form the basis of India's policy on the subject in the near future.

Generative AI products like ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, etc, are large language models (LLMs) that generate content based on prompts given by users. For instance, one can provide a brief storyline and ask ChatGPT to write a short story in the style of RK Narayan or Premchand, and it would generate it. Similarly, Dall-E, Midjourney (and other similar text-to-image and text-to-video generation models) can make a painting on a given subject based on prompts to generate it in the style of, say, Jamini Roy or MF Husain or a short movie clip in Satyajit Ray's style. Such outputs from generative AI models are based on their training that uses data from a variety of types of sources (like novels of Narayan or paintings of Husain and others).

The data used for training AI models may fall in different categories — copyrighted, copyright-expired works and data in the public domain available for 'fair use'. Ever since



technology firms launched commercial versions of generative AI products, the question of their use of copyrighted material, such as books, research papers, photographs, films and other forms of creative expression has become central to the AI debate. It has posed complex legal, ethical and moral questions. Another unresolved issue is the copyrightability and authorship of AI-generated outputs.

Governments and courts in many countries have been struggling to deal with this new phenomenon — data training of AI models. Technology companies worldwide, including in India, have argued that AI models do not violate copyright laws as they are not copying or plagiarising copyrighted books, photographs, etc, but using them only as segregated datasets to train algorithms using patterns, styles, structures in terms of statistical relationships to enable them to gener-

ate new content. This, they claim, amounts to the well-accepted dictum of 'fair use' of creative works.

To argue that AI models are not 'copying' original works but only 'learning' from them does not hold water. This is because the process of training an AI system involves multiple steps, including copying and storage of data (original works), which, in effect, constitutes infringement. This, the AI industry says, can at most be considered a 'technical infringement', not a legal one. Rejecting the notion that no copyright licensing is required, and after studying various models being discussed or implemented elsewhere in the world, the expert committee has recommended a hybrid framework for India. It has suggested a blanket licence to AI developers for the use of lawfully accessed copyright-protected works for training AI systems, provided the copyright holders are paid a royalty. But rightshold-

ers will not have the option to withhold their works for use in the training of AI systems. A centralised non-profit entity consisting of rightsholder organisations and designated by the government would be responsible for collecting the payments from AI developers. This entity would have copyright societies and industry organisations as its members, and these member-organisations would be responsible for passing on the royalties to individual creators. A certain percentage of the revenue generated from AI systems trained on copyrighted content would be payable as royalties, and the rates would be fixed by a government committee.

Technology companies argue that regulating the use of creative works and enforcing new copyright laws to make licensing compulsory would hinder technological innovation. They demand complete exemption of text and data mining (TDM) from copy-

right laws to enable the training of AI models. The representative of the industry body, Nasscom, in the expert committee disagreed with its recommendations and gave a dissent note. Instead of a copyright system based on the revenue of AI models, it wants a layered system of using copyrighted materials.

Nasscom has suggested that it was the responsibility of rightsholders to prevent the use of their publicly available work for TDM, and for this, they should be given an 'opt out' option at the point of availability of their work. For content which is not publicly accessible, rightsholders should be able to protect their rights through contract or license terms. All this puts the onus on rightsholders to protect their work, which, under the present circumstances, is very difficult because copyright is being violated openly and protected material is available online illegally.

Nepal elections: Litmus test for Gen Z

Nepal is moving full steam ahead towards the March 5, elections, which are a referendum on the performance of traditional parties and the key outcome of Nepal's fifth revolution (Jan Andolan) last September. Elections are due a month earlier in Bangladesh after its fourth revolution, where violence is manifest between the old and new guard. In Nepal, too, cadres of the ousted KP Oli - CPN (UML) — government have clashed with Gen Z (Z) revolutionaries; 120 days on, graffiti across Nepal still reads 'No to Oli.' I spent all of December in Kathmandu, Pokhara, and villages near Pokhara, where people are asking how their lives will change after elections — especially after the arson and vandalism during the protests cost \$5 billion (the government's estimate is \$572 million). On September 9, all state institutions had collapsed, forcing Oli to resign; in the prolonged vacuum that ensued, the Army was unable to protect government property. The Army, in its response to the government enquiry, has said it had to make a choice between protecting people (leaders and officials) and property. The Gen Z protests were "not all that spontaneous", as initially reported; I found sufficient anecdotal information and documented evidence that the US stirred the pot — something Oli hinted at recently in a party convention speech. Further, some doubt lingers about the likelihood of elections being held on time, though interim PM Sushila Karki is confident there will be no delay.

Gen Z protests were ostensibly against the internet ban, which escalated after police firing killed 17 protestors. That figure rose to 77 martyrs. I saw damaged iconic buildings in the Kathmandu Valley being restored. The people's uprising that piggybacked on the Gen Z protests expanded the latter's demands from good governance, elimination of corruption, and job creation to constitutional amendments that would restore political stability and voting from abroad. Around 2,000 youth (7 lakh annually) leave the country every day for employment.

About the outcome of its Andolan, Gen Z says: "We'd gone to shoot a chicken but we killed a tiger." Gen Z is a collective of 49 disparate groups, whose public face is Sudan Gurung, a rock band musician turned head of a humanitarian organisation. He has signed at least three significant agreements with Karki, most notably the Ten-Point Agreement (akin to the July Charter in Bangladesh) in December, which includes constitutional amendments that, according to Nepali advocate Radhesham Adhikari, will be difficult to implement and may become a hurdle to timely elections. After the agreement, Karki said: "My government was formed to address issues that arose from the Gen Z uprising; all political parties (126) must take a view that elections will be held on time. We are not enemies of political parties, though we are the result of the Gen Z uprising and their issues." Although the two biggest parties, Nepali Congress and CPN (UML), have filed writ petitions for restoration of Parliament, they will fight the elections. While Gen Z has not formed a political party, some members are joining Bibeksheel, Ujjyalo Nepal and Rashtriya Swatantra Party, the election symbols of the last two being the Bulb and Bell. Further, the enigmatic RSP President Rabi Lamichhane, jailed for fraud cases, has been released. Ujjyalo Nepal was formed by former Chairman of Nepal Electricity Board and serving minister, the dynamic Kulman Ghising, who rid Kathmandu of 18 hours of load-shedding. Bulb and Balen — the effervescent Mayor of Kathmandu, Balen Shah — struck the mother of mergers with Bell, with Shah as the PM face of RSP. Gen Z leaders such as Gurung and Purushottam Yadav are backing RSP, which will become formidable. Pre-poll alliances and mergers are the new normal, which even older parties (NC and UML) are reconsidering after the boost to RSP — precisely the virus of political instability Gen Z wanted to remove.

Despite being ousted from government, four-time PM Oli won a landslide third-term chairmanship of UML. Given his party's strong grassroots organisation and most government officials being his appointees, Oli could spring a surprise. While five-time PM and NC leader Deuba will step down as party president, he will fight elections an unprecedented eighth time. The party is divided: India-backed Shekhar Koirala; US-supported Gagan Thapa; and the Bimalendra Nidhi/KP Sitaula groups. Thapa has unilaterally ordered a special NC convention on 8 January to be elected President.

Four-time PM Prachanda, minus the Maoist tag, remains the great survivor and coordinator of the reminted Nepal Communist Party, consisting of ten Left parties. Except for the RSP, the new crop of parties will not make a significant dent in older parties, which are likely to return but with smaller vote-share and seats in Parliament. The royalist Rashtra Prajatantra Party, while saying the failed democratic system led to the Gen Z revolution, has not sought a referendum on restoration of monarchy but decided to wait until there is "broad political consensus". Yogi Adityanath's name resonates perennially over formation of a Hindu Rashtra and revival of monarchy. The outgoing Chinese Ambassador Chen Song met Karki and made the unusual diplomatic request to keep the Chinese company that built the USD 216 million Pokhara International Airport out of the commission investigating corruption. Oli's fall was a big setback for Beijing, given his nationalism (anti-Indianism) that resulted in his signing the BRI, the Transit Agreement, authenticating the One China policy, attending the last SCO summit, attending the PLA victory parade, calling Tibet Xizang, and endorsing the Global Security Initiative and Xi Jinping Thought. Still, the Left's 60 per cent majority in Parliament is expected to reduce to less than 50 per cent post-elections. India has been quietly proactive, backing elections and providing assistance in electoral logistics. China's likely waning influence in Parliament is good for Delhi. Instead of the usual anti-India sentiment, China is bearing the brunt for encroachments in the North. Elections will be held on March 5, which could run in phases, otherwise the unknowns of a constitutional void will kick in. Koirala has said that if elections are not held, Parliament must be restored. Either way, nothing may change for ordinary Nepalis without constitutional amendments. It is unlikely to be a happy new year for Nepal.

The coming election is therefore likely to be judged not only on party manifestos but also on whether the political establishment can respond to the anger expressed by the younger generation. Employment, corruption, public services and accountability are expected to remain among the most important concerns for voters, particularly young Nepalis who have increasingly looked abroad for economic opportunities.

For the traditional parties, the challenge will be to rebuild public trust while preventing further fragmentation. The emergence of new political forces and independent personalities has changed the electoral landscape, but their ability to convert street-level popularity into an organised nationwide political structure remains uncertain. Voters may therefore deliver a mixed verdict, weakening established parties without completely displacing them.

The constitutional question will also remain central after the polls. Demands for greater political stability, stronger accountability and reforms to the electoral system have gained momentum following the uprising. Any new government will have to balance these demands with the practical difficulties of securing the required political consensus for constitutional amendments.

Nepal's geopolitical balancing act will add another layer of complexity. India, China and other external partners will closely watch the formation of the next government, particularly its approach to infrastructure, connectivity, trade and security. Kathmandu is likely to continue seeking economic support from both neighbours while attempting to protect its strategic autonomy.

The longer road to faster growth

TN NINAN

SUCCESSIVE years of rapid economic growth have encouraged commentators to suggest that the economy may at long last be on a higher growth track. This is because growth in the last five financial years (2021-26), taking into account the advance estimates for the current fiscal year, averages a handsome 8.1 per cent — the best on record. But this number should be seen in context. The latest five-year record is on the back of a depressed base, because the economy had shrunk in the Covid year, 2020-21. If one takes the pre-Covid year (2019-20) as the base, growth in the latest six years has averaged a less flattering 5.7 per cent. That is slower than the growth record of the previous 19 years, from the turn of the century to the pre-Covid year, a period that averaged 6.5 per cent growth.

The key question is how much of the latest growth record represents recovery from the 2020-21 downturn, and what is the sustainable growth rate now. Some published growth forecasts for the next financial year hover around the 6.5 per cent level. On that basis, looking at the three-year cycle (2024-27), growth would average 6.8 per cent. That is the same as in the first term of the Modi government. This suggests that there is as yet no marked increase in the sustainable



growth rate. Going beyond the headline growth numbers (which in any case raise questions about data quality), one needs to look at several other numbers to understand the economic situation. For, at most times in earlier periods, one or the other economic indicator was often out of kilter. Either inflation was high, or the trade deficit was large, as was the fiscal deficit, or banks and companies had troubled balance sheets. In contrast, the economy today has been characterised as being in the Goldilocks phase, with low inflation, balanced trade, a reduced fiscal deficit, and with bank and corporate balance sheets in their best-ever shape.

Yet key macro numbers suggest caution. The fiscal deficit at 4.4 per cent of the GDP, while on a declining

trend, is higher than the average for the first term of the Modi government (3.6 per cent) — perhaps because of an investment push and also reflecting more honest accounting! But public debt too remains high, though on a declining trend. At 81 per cent of the GDP, it does not provide headroom for counter-cyclical fiscal action if the economy suffers a downturn.

Meanwhile, savings and investment rates (critical for growth) are lower than earlier. Gross fixed capital formation has been put at 30 per cent of the GDP for the current year. This is lower than the average of 34 per cent for eight years till 2012-13. The number dipped below 30 per cent in 2015-16 before going back over that threshold in 2022-23. Meanwhile, the share of merchandise exports in economic activ-

ity has reduced over time. That is usually a contra-indicator for faster growth.

If one wants data to support a growth-ascendant narrative, one has to look to other numbers. Critically, the country may transition in the current year from the "medium" to the "high" category on the UN's human development index, having progressed from the low to medium category two decades ago. This reflects sustained improvement in education levels, life expectancy and incomes, but note that there is also a "very high" index category that encompasses over 70 countries. When it comes to economic management, tax rates (corporate tax, income tax, GST) are now more reasonable than before. The digital public infrastructure that has been put in place and

gained wide usage should improve system-wide productivity. So too should the massive investment in physical infrastructure, which has speeded up goods movement on both road and rail (though paradoxically, it has negatively affected the sales of commercial vehicles!).

Many sectors have benefited from reform, like real estate; and manufacturing may at last be getting some momentum, led by the electronics sector. The recent free trade agreements should also yield some benefits down the road. The structural constraint most frequently mentioned is consumption, whose sluggish growth has held back private corporate investment (capital goods output has grown the slowest among industrial segments). The good news at the bottom of the income ladder is that there has been a sharp drop in the absolute poverty numbers, but this may not translate into much consumer demand, especially since employment has shifted towards rather than away from an already overpopulated agriculture sector.

Higher up the income ladder, consumer debt is at a high point. Household financial liabilities doubled from Rs 8.99 trillion in 2021-22 to Rs 18.79 trillion in 2023-24. These liabilities used to be about a quarter of household financial savings; that ratio has gone up to a third.

Initiative Launched to Empower Farmers and Producer Organisations and Promote Chhattisgarh’s Agri Exports

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): In a significant step towards positioning Chhattisgarh as a major hub for agricultural and processed food exports, the Regional Office of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was inaugurated at Raipur during the 2nd India International Rice Summit held in Chhattisgarh. The inauguration was attended by Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of Medical Education, Govt of Chhattisgarh, Shri Shyam Bihari Jaiswal, along with other dignitaries.

Chhattisgarh, with its rich and diverse agri-ecosystem, offers significant export potential across a wide range of products. These include premium non-basmati rice varieties and Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged products such as Jeeraphool Rice and Nagri Dubraj Rice. The State also produces a variety of fruits and vegetables including guava, banana, dragon fruit, jackfruit, custard apple, tomato and cucumber, along with important minor forest produce such as mahua, tamarind, herbal and medicinal plants, providing strong opportunities to expand its presence in global markets. The establishment of the APEDA Regional Office in Raipur marks an important milestone for Chhattisgarh's agrarian economy. He highlighted the potential of the State's farmers, exporters and entrepreneurs in global agri-markets and expressed confidence that Chhattisgarh would emerge as a leader in high-value and sustainable agricultural exports. He thanked Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, for sanctioning the APEDA office in Chhattisgarh based on the request of the State Government, and assured full support to APEDA and the Department of Commerce in expanding exports of agricultural and organic products from the State.

The APEDA Regional Office was inaugurated during the 2nd edition of the India International Rice Summit, organised by the Rice Exporters Association of Chhattisgarh in collaboration with APEDA and other organisations. A two-day Chintan Shivir on rice exports also concluded on the same day, featuring dedicated sessions on export promotion of organic rice and measures to boost exports of non-basmati rice, including GI-tagged rice varieties from India.

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Yadav Stresses Balanced Policy for Environment and Industry, Highlights NIRANTAR’s Role

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav on Monday chaired a meeting of the National Institute for Research & Application of Natural Resources to Transform, Adapt and Build Resilience (NIRANTAR), a platform of institutions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) aimed at improving coordination and collaboration.

Highlighting the strategic importance of natural resources, the Minister said that today's geopolitics largely rests on natural resources and their utilisation. He said, “Our strengths lie in our natural resources, particularly bio resources”, adding that while India has advanced in manufacturing, data, software and other industrial sectors, four essentials of life i.e. food, medicine, energy and oil ultimately emanate from nature.

Stressing that India has a large repository of natural resources, Shri Yadav said there was a need for balanced, suitable and wise utilisation of these resources. The country must make a "balanced policy for environmental protection and industrial development”, he noted. The Minister said the four verticals of NIRANTAR focus on different aspects of research, assessment of outcomes and their ultimate utilisation. He underlined the importance of India's bioresources and said the platform could play a crucial role in ensuring their sustainable use for development. Referring to climate change challenges, Shri Yadav said glaciers were diminishing and “development in critical ecosystems like the Himalayas should be balanced”.

He said that institutions like the G.B. Pant National Institute for Himalayan Ecology and the National Institute for Sustainable Coastal Management could play an important role in this regard through cooperation and collaboration.

The Minister said that MoEFCC should be a contributor to the country's development, while preventing the over-exploitation of natural resources. He added that policymaking for preservation and conservation has a wide impact on the economy. He said NIRANTAR should focus on three aspects: research, its role in policymaking and the way ahead, and emphasised the importance of institution building through committed and capable human resources.

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Shri Jayant Chaudhary chaired the First General Body Meeting of the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT) today at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi. During the meeting Shri Jayant Chaudhary said “India's skilling ecosystem is undergoing a paradigm shift—from fragmented systems to a unified, outcome-oriented framework aligned with education, industry, and future technologies. NCVET is playing a significant role in making this transformation credible, transparent, and learner-centric.”

Addressing the meeting, Shri Jayant Chaudhary emphasized that the integration of skilling with mainstream schooling and higher education, enabled through the National Credit Framework and other initiatives of NCVET are making skilling aspirational and ensuring seamless horizontal and vertical mobility for learners across the education ecosystem.

The General Body was apprised of the institutional progress made by NCVET since its operationalisation on 1 August 2020. As the apex national regulator for Skilling, NCVET has successfully subsumed the functions of the erstwhile National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) and National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT), thereby consolidating India's previously fragmented skilling regulatory architecture.

At present, NCVET regulates 161 Awarding Bodies and 68 Assessment Agencies across the country. A key highlight of the meeting was the review of the Revised Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Awarding Bodies and Assessment Agencies (2025). The guidelines are aligned with NEP 2020, the National Credit Framework (NCrF), and the revised NSQF 2023, with a strong focus on learning outcomes, technology-enabled assessments, and evidence-based monitoring.

The Minister lauded the launch of KaushalVerse, NCVET's unified Digital Enterprise Portal, which automates core regulatory functions including recognition, qualification management, monitoring, and grievance redressal. KaushalVerse is envisioned as the digital backbone of India's skilling regulatory ecosystem, enhancing transparency, efficiency, and ease of compliance.

Jayant Chaudhary: India’s Skilling Ecosystem Shifts to Unified, Outcome-Driven Model

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Shri Jayant Chaudhary chaired the First General Body Meeting of the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVT) today at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi. During the meeting Shri Jayant Chaudhary said “India's skilling ecosystem is undergoing a paradigm shift—from fragmented systems to a unified, outcome-oriented framework aligned with education, industry, and future technologies. NCVET is playing a significant role in making this transformation credible, transparent, and learner-centric.”

Addressing the meeting, Shri Jayant Chaudhary emphasized that the integration of skilling with mainstream schooling and higher education, enabled through the National Credit Framework and other initiatives of NCVET are making skilling aspirational and ensuring seamless horizontal and vertical mobility for learners across the education ecosystem.

The General Body was apprised of the institutional progress made by NCVET since its operationalisation on 1 August 2020. As the apex national regulator for Skilling, NCVET has successfully subsumed the functions of the erstwhile National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) and National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT), thereby consolidating India's previously fragmented skilling regulatory architecture.

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“From Campuses to Nation-Building, India’s Youth Are Powering Viksit Bharat”: Sarbananda Sonowal

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): India's young generation is no longer waiting on the sidelines but is actively shaping the country's political, economic and social future, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) Sarbananda Sonowal underscored the central role of youth in the journey towards a developed India.

On the occasion of National Youth Day, Sonowal was speaking at the National Conclave on “Viksit Bharat ka Sankalp aur Yuva”, organised by Hansraj College at Vigyan Bhawan here today. Sonowal said “the confidence, innovation and ambition of young Indians reflect a decisive shift in how India is being built.”

Paying tribute to Swami Vivekananda, Sonowal said the ideas of the iconic thinker remain deeply relevant for today's youth. “Swami Vivekananda believed that all strength lies within the individual. His call to 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached' continues to inspire young Indians to pursue excellence with purpose,” Sonowal said.

Highlighting India's demographic advantage, the Union Minister said youth today form the largest segment of the population and represent the country's greatest strength. “The strength of India's youth is the strength of the nation itself. Empowering young people can change the direction of India's future,” Sonowal said. Sonowal said that under the inspiring leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, youth empowerment has moved from rhetoric to policy. “Since 2014, youth have been placed at the centre of governance and nation-building. For the first time, their aspirations, skills and ideas are shaping national priorities,” he said.

Sonowal noted that while youth participation in nation-building remained limited for decades after independence, a clear shift has taken place over the past decade. “A new era has begun where young Indians are driving political participation, economic growth and India's global presence,” he added. Referring to flagship initiatives, Sonowal said programmes such as Skill India and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana are equipping crores of youth not just to seek employment but to become job creators. Startup India, he said, has created a robust ecosystem of entrepreneurship and innovation led by young Indians. The Union minister said the National Education Policy has made education more practical.

„ future-ready and globally competitive, enabling students to respond to rapidly changing economic and technological realities. “Knowledge, technology and skills are the backbone of a modern society, and India is steadily moving towards global leadership,” he said. Sonowal also highlighted initiatives such as Khelo India for identifying sporting talent from across the country and providing global exposure, and Digital India for strengthening connectivity and access to opportunities.

Earlier, last evening, Sonowal interacted with students from Assam participating in the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026, describing them as confident, articulate and reflective of India's emerging leadership class. Sonowal said the government's youth-first approach is unlocking opportunities across sectors, including India's growing maritime economy.

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): The increase in India's rural demand, reflected in figures such as the surge in two-wheeler sales, spells good news for India's \$4.2 trillion economy, which in 2025 passed Japan to emerge as the world's fourth-largest, media reports said.

An article in Singapore's The Straits Times cites a National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) survey, which found that 42.2 per cent of rural households saw their incomes grow in 2025, with about 80 per cent of households reporting higher consumption. It also points out that a recent survey of 30 chief executives of big companies conducted by the Business Standard financial daily found that more than eight in 10 of them had plans to make fresh investments or expand capacity in 2026.

The article points out that the improvement in rural demand suggests that growth is trickling down in what is by any yardstick a highly unequal society, with too much wealth and buying capacity concentrated at the top of the pyramid. That purchasing power is improving in a wider section of people is also a morale booster for a country that in 2025 suffered a series of setbacks.

Punitive tariffs imposed by the Trump administration led to significant job losses in jewellery, garments and marine sectors, the article states.

“There have also been questions about the quality of Indian data raised by the International Monetary Fund and some economists. But the empirical evidence now showing up is hard to ignore - even from this distance - and Singaporeans should take note of this growth pole. All the more given the wheeze in big regional economies such as Indonesia's and Thailand's, and persistent concerns about China,” the article states. The article highlights that the prospects of broad-based growth in India spell good news for Singapore's companies, such as DBS Bank, Sembcorp.

Surge in India’s rural demand reflects broad-based growth

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IIT Delhi hosts National Seminar on Advancing Farm-Gate Quality Assessment of Medicinal Plants

New Delhi, Sept 6 (GNS): Experts across the Ministry of Ayush institutions including National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) has called for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and related technologies to monitor, verify, and document the quality and journey of medicinal plants right from the farm (the “farm-gate”) through the entire supply chain, in a two-day National Seminar on “Design and Development of Tools for Quality Assessment of Medicinal Plants at Farm Gates”.

The seminar held on 8–9 January 2026 at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, brought national focus to India's medicinal plant sector—assured quality, traceability, and standardisation of raw materials at the point of origin. The seminar convened policymakers, scientists, technologists, industry leaders, and researchers to deliberate on strengthening farm-gate quality systems as a foundation for the sustainable growth and global competitiveness of India's Ayush and medicinal plant ecosystem.

The seminar was inaugurated with keynote addresses by Prof. Dr. Mahesh Kumar Dadhich, Chief Executive Officer, NMPB, and Prof. Dr. Tanuja Nesari, Director, Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA). Their addresses set the national policy and scientific context for quality-driven growth, emphasising the need to integrate innovation, regulation, and traditional knowledge to build global confidence in Indian medicinal plant raw materials. Technical sessions on Day One examined the entire medicinal plant value chain—from sustainable cultivation and regenerative agriculture to AI-enabled quality assessment, digital traceability, and supply-chain integration. Experts from ICAR–Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Research (DMAPR), IIT Delhi, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Ayush , Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Himalaya Wellness, and Herbalscape Crops shared evidence-based insights and field experiences.

The discussions highlighted that India is both technically and institutionally prepared to adopt AI-based diagnostics, digital phenotyping, and integrated quality frameworks, reinforcing the credibility of Indian medicinal plant raw materials in domestic as well as international markets.

Day Two was dedicated to roadmap building through two structured expert brainstorming sessions on Integration of Artificial Intelligence in the Indian Medicinal Plant Industry, and use of Blockchain Technology for Supply-Chain Transparency and Traceability. The sessions resulted in a strong consensus that digital tools at the farm gate—such as portable quality-testing devices, AI-enabled decision-support systems, and blockchain-based traceability platforms—are no longer optional but essential to ensure authenticity, safety, and global competitiveness of Indian herbal raw materials.

The seminar delivered clear and actionable outcomes aligned with the objectives of NMPB and the Ministry of Ayush. It enabled rare national-level convergence among policy institutions, scientific bodies, industry stakeholders, and global health organisations, fostering integrated solutions rather than fragmented interventions.

Participants unanimously underscored that quality must be built at the point of origin, directly supporting NMPB's mandate to empower primary producers and collectors. The deliberations validated the practical deployment of AI and digital tools to reduce adulteration, variability, and farmer losses, while also establishing the critical role of blockchain-enabled end-to-end traceability for exports and pharmacopoeial compliance.

The seminar also highlighted the integration of traditional knowledge systems such as Vriksha Ayurveda with modern quality-control frameworks, demonstrating how India's heritage can be scientifically validated and digitised to strengthen global acceptance. Strong emphasis was placed on capacity building, with participants gaining exposure to advanced tools, standards, and evolving policy directions. The seminar laid a robust foundation for developing a national framework for AI-enabled, traceable, and standardised medicinal plant supply chains. The outcomes directly support the national priorities of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India, while reinforcing India's leadership in the global Ayush sector.

The deliberations strongly underscored the need for continued and expanded support for pilot projects, technology deployment, and farmer-level capacity building under NMPB-support initiatives, positioning farm-gate quality as a cornerstone of India's medicinal plant economy.

The experts also stressed the importance of creating simple, affordable and field-friendly technologies that can be used directly by farmers, collectors and local processors. Such tools could help identify medicinal plant species, detect adulteration and assess key quality parameters at the point of procurement, reducing dependence on lengthy laboratory-based processes.

The proposed digital framework is expected to improve coordination among farmers, traders, manufacturers, regulators and exporters by creating reliable records of cultivation, harvesting, processing and movement of medicinal plants. Better traceability could also help strengthen consumer confidence and support Indian herbal products in meeting international quality and safety requirements.

CM Revanth Reddy assures teachers of resolving PRC, Increment issues in two years

Hyderabad, Sept 6 (GNS): Chief Minister Sri A. Revanth Reddy assured that if teachers extend their cooperation and allow for a two-year window, he would resolve all their issues, including those related to PRC (Pay Revision Commission) and increments. He appealed to all teachers to cooperate in establishing Telangana's education system as a guiding light for the rest of India, particularly as the government implements reforms to shape the future of the underprivileged.

The Chief Minister participated in the Teachers' Day celebrations held at the Government Junior College in Kodangal. Legislative Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, Minister Damodara Raja Narasimha, Government Advisor



K. Keshav Rao, along with public representatives, officials, and a large number of students, took part in the event. Marking the birth anniversary of former President of India and exemplary teacher Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the Chief Minister paid floral tributes to his portrait and extended Teachers' Day greetings to all teachers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated, "We will resolve all employee issues based on financial feasibility. The Education Department should stand as a model compared to other departments. You are the guides for the children's future. Give us two years. I appeal to every teacher in the state: it is my responsibility to amicably resolve all

issues within two years—even without you having to ask." "Let us establish Telangana's education system as a role model for the rest of India. Teachers are the key figures in this endeavor, and they must rededicate themselves to the cause. You should treat the students under your care with the same dedication and concern that you would

apply to shaping the future of your own children at home. I have complete faith in our teachers. You serve in government roles for over 30 years, whereas we politicians must face a 'test' before the public every five years. If I fail to deliver on my promises, the decision—and the grading—rests entirely with you. The power to decide lies in

your hands." The Chief Minister remarked. "It is not a good sign for the government or the state if teachers take to the streets. Your role differs from that of other departments; you are the architects of the children's future. If you resort to protests, it sends the wrong message. As Chief Minister, I appeal to you: please give me two years.

Hyderabad Police foil attempt by BJP to take out rally to Charminar



Hyderabad, Sept 6 (GNS): Police in Hyderabad foiled the attempts by the BJP to take out a rally from Balapur to Bhagyalakshmi Temple at Charminar on Sunday, ahead of Telangana Liberation Day, drawing angry protests from the party. BJP in-charge for Maheswaram constituency, Andela Sriramulu Yadav and other party leaders were detained when they tried to take out 'Vimochana Jaitrayatra'.

Meanwhile, Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao asked if celebrating Telangana Liberation Day is a crime in Congress-ruled Telangana. "Having sunk to deep depths of appeasement, Congress Party has once again crushed democracy by 'stopping the Vimochana Jaitrayatra from Balapur to Charminar and arresting Maheshwaram BJP in-charge," he said.

"Why is Congress so afraid of celebrating Telangana Liberation Day? We may have moved far beyond 1948, but Congress mindset is still Razakar and Nizam DNA. In its rampant vote-bank politics and appeasement, Congress has forgotten that India is a democracy. BJP leaders are stopped, detained and arrested for everything, from dharnas and protests to even celebrating Telangana Liberation Day. Shame!" Ramchander Rao posted on 'X'. The BJP is gearing up to celebrate Telangana Liberation Day on September 17.

All India Milli Council - Telangana legal aid team working at abids

Hyderabad, Sept 6 (GNS): The All India Milli Council – Telangana Legal Aid Team is actively providing legal aid, guidance and counselling services at the Milli Legal Aid Centre, Abids, Hyderabad, with the objective of strengthening access to justice and extending timely legal support to deserving and genuine cases.



Momin Roshan Zameer, Advocate, In-Charge, Legal Aid, All India Milli Council – Telangana, State General Secretary & In-Charge Social Media, Legal Cell (Law, Human Rights and RTI Department), Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), and Member, Hyderabad Waqf Protection and Co-Ordination Committee, Government of Telangana, is coordinating the legal aid activities along with Mir Mahmood Ali, Milli Council – Abids Branch & Family Counselor, and team members Farhan, Hamza and others.

The Legal Aid initiative is being carried out under the guidance of Moulana Mufti Umar Abideen Sahab, General Secretary, All India Milli Council – Telangana, with the support and coordination of Afsar Jahan, Secretary, Milli Legal Aid – Telangana. Shujath Hussain, Legal Aid Co Ordinator. Speaking on the occasion, Momin Roshan Zameer, Advocate, stated that the Legal Aid Centre has been established with the aim of providing accessible legal guidance, counselling and assistance to genuine persons who require support in understanding and pursuing their legal rights and remedies.

He stated that the centre will particularly extend assistance to victims, innocent persons, economically weaker individuals, socially vulnerable persons and others facing genuine legal difficulties, subject to proper verification of facts and the legal merits of each matter. The centre will provide preliminary legal guidance in matters relating to criminal cases, family and matrimonial disputes, civil issues, legal documentation, rights and entitlements, and other genuine legal concerns. Where necessary, deserving matters may be guided or referred through appropriate legal and counselling channels in accordance with law.

Momin Roshan Zameer further emphasized that every matter will be examined carefully and objectively, and that legal assistance will be provided strictly in accordance with the facts

of the case, applicable law and due legal procedure. The centre will focus on ensuring that genuine grievances receive appropriate attention without compromising legal standards or judicial process.

He stated that lack of legal awareness, financial difficulties or inadequate guidance should not become a barrier to access to justice. Through this initiative, the Legal Aid Team seeks to create greater awareness among the public regarding their legal rights, available remedies and proper legal procedures. The Milli Legal Aid Centre, Abids, will continue to receive genuine grievances, conduct preliminary consultations, provide legal awareness and guidance, and facilitate appropriate legal assistance wherever required.

The initiative of the All India Milli Council – Telangana Legal Aid Team represents a continued effort towards legal awareness, access to justice, community support and assistance to deserving persons, while upholding the principles of law, fairness and due process.

Ahead of Telangana Assembly session, Congress demands KCR's resignation

Hyderabad, Sept 6 (GNS): Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) staged a 'Maha dharna' at Indira Park here on Sunday to demand the resignation of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) President K. Chandrasekhar Rao as the Leader of Opposition and also as Member of Legislative Assembly.

Congress leaders, including ministers, criticised KCR for drawing salaries and allowances but not attending the Assembly session. They said that the former Chief Minister was using public money but staying away from the people. They demanded that former CM KCR resign from his MLA post, citing his failure to attend the Assembly for a thousand days, his neglect of the responsibilities as Leader of Opposition,



and his inaccessibility to the people of his constituency. They alleged that KCR had drawn Rs 1.32 crore in salary while staying at his farmhouse and not attending the Assembly. They also alleged that Rs 21 crore from the exchequer had been spent on his security and bulletproof vehicles. Ministers Ponnamp Prabhakar, D. Sridhar Babu, Mohammed Azharuddin,

government advisor Hanumantha Rao, senior leader Jagga Reddy and others participated in the protest. The 'Maha Dharna' was held ahead of the monsoon session of the Assembly, beginning on Monday. Minister for transport and BC welfare, Ponnamp Prabhakar, said it was not appropriate for an individual who fails to respond to public issues to continue serving as an MLA.

Congress will be in power in Telangana till 2040: Goud



Hyderabad, Sept 6 (GNS): TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud made it clear that they fought for the aspirations of the people of Telangana, namely water, funds and appointments. Speaking at the Mahadharna organized by the Congress Party at Indira Park Dharna Chowk in Hyderabad demanding KCR's resignation, he said that they are ready for a public debate anywhere on the difference between a thousand days of Congress rule and ten years of BRS mischief, and do BRS leaders have the courage to accept that challenge? He said. He reminded that his government is giving priority to the welfare of the poor while carrying the huge debts incurred by KCR in the past, and that it is distributing rice to the poor like no other state in the country.

Mahesh Goud said that KTR is limited to social media and enjoying momentary pleasures, and that despite being educated, he is behaving in an uncivilized manner. He said that the Congress has the credit for protecting the culture of Telangana and respecting great people like Gadgar, Andesri, Phule, and Sardar Sarvai Papanna. He criticized KCR for being confined to the farmhouse for the political interests of his son and son-in-law, and for failing miserably in coming to the Assembly and speaking on public issues. He advised KCR to resign and step down if he is unable to do so. He asserted that the Congress has the power to rule the state for decades and that its government will remain in power in Telangana until 2040.



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