

1 cr votes at risk, alleges CM Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad, Sept 7 (GNS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Monday alleged that a conspiracy was under way to delete one crore votes in Telangana under the pretext of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and accused the Election Commission of India (ECI) of functioning at the behest of the BJP. He appealed to the Communist parties to join hands with the Congress to defeat the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whom he described as the “most dangerous person” for the country.

Addressing a meeting to commemorate veteran Communist farmer leader Comrade Sarampally Malla Reddy, who passed away on August 24, Revanth Reddy alleged that the BJP, having failed to win the trust of people through democratic means, was adopting new tactics to retain power. He claimed that anti-BJP votes were being identified and removed booth-wise under the guise of SIR, with SCs, STs and minorities being the main targets.

The Chief Minister alleged that the BJP was replicating its strategy in West Bengal in Telangana by systematically seeking to eliminate votes considered unfavourable to it. He claimed that private agencies were being engaged to conduct surveys and facilitate the deletion of voters.



“The BJP is conspiring to delete one crore votes in Telangana,” he alleged.

Accusing the BJP-led Centre of using the Election Commission of India (ECI) to pursue its political agenda, Revanth Reddy questioned the silence of the BRS on the alleged deletion of votes during the SIR exercise. “We should be united and fight against Modi in the country,” he said. Revanth Reddy said “Elections and fundamental rights of the poor are different aspects” and stressed the need to protect the voting rights of economically and socially weaker sections. He said the Communist parties had historically fought for the rights of the poor and that the red flag had given confidence and reassurance to them.

Revanth Reddy said the Congress had addressed several issues that had been raised through Communist movements over the years including the Minimum Wages Act and the distribu-

tion of 24.56 lakh acres of assigned land to meet the demand for “land to the tiller”. Of this, 10 lakh acres were in the possession of Adivasi community members, he added. The Chief Minister also cited the Employment Guarantee Act and the Food Security Act as measures through which Congress governments had sought to provide livelihood and food security to the poor. He said the Congress would continue to find solutions to the demands raised by the Communist parties.

Recalling the contribution of Malla Reddy, the Chief Minister said the veteran leader had risen from a remote area to the national stage and dedicated his life to the cause of farmers. His death was an “irreparable loss” to the farming community, he said. He also said the government would consult his Cabinet colleagues before taking a decision on developing a memorial for Malla Reddy.

Jaishankar highlights strong gulf, west asia ties amid conflict



New Delhi, Sep 7 (UNI): External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Monday highlighted India's close ties with the Gulf and West Asia/North Africa region at a Consultative Committee meeting in New Delhi. “Chaired a Consultative Committee meeting on India's relations with West Asia today in New Delhi. Highlighted India's close ties with the Gulf and WANA region, including our longstanding partnerships and cooperation in trade, investments, energy, maritime and people-to-people domains,” EAM Jaishankar stated on X.

“Also underscored our efforts towards welfare of 10 million Indians, as well as ensuring energy and fertiliser security, and advancing our trade and connectivity amidst the ongoing conflict in the region,” he added.

Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs, Pabitra Margherita, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and several other dignitaries were present at the meeting.

India, Luxembourg explore deeper space, tech ties in ministerial talks

New Delhi, Sep 7 (UNI): Luxembourg's Minister of the Economy, SME, Energy and Tourism, Lex Delles, met with Union MoS Science & Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh on Monday and proposed identifying areas of collaboration between countries primarily in the space sector, emerging technologies and life sciences. The proposed mechanism could also explore cooperation in areas including Artificial Intelligence, quantum technologies, advanced materials and life sciences, and help develop specific inputs from both sides ahead of the proposed State Visit of Luxembourg to India in January 2027.

The bilateral meeting discussed the current status of India-Luxembourg cooperation in space, opportunities for institutional and commercial collaboration, and preparations for the proposed state visit, the statement from the Ministry of Science & Technology said.



India shifts to proactive defence strategy: Rajnath

New Delhi, Sept 7 (GNS): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said the Indian armed forces have been given both the freedom and resources to respond decisively to threats, including by striking adversaries inside their own territory. Addressing an event here, the Defence Minister asserted that there is a clear distinction between peace and weakness. “If any country promotes terrorism against India, there will be no dialogue; instead, our defence forces will deliver a befitting response,” he stated.

He underlined that while India believes in peace and does not seek war or territorial occupation, peace born of fear is condemnable, whereas war fought for peace is worthy of reverence. Singh said adversaries had attempted to undermine India's security



through multiple means, including misleading the youth in Jammu and Kashmir, funding anti-India activities, spreading terrorism and creating societal divisions. The government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had foiled these designs through rehabilitation, de-radicalisation and creation of employment opportunities. He noted that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed unprecedented

progress since the abrogation of Article 370.

Highlighting India's counter-terror strategy, the Defence Minister referred to surgical strikes, the Balakot airstrike and Operation Sindoor, which targeted terrorists and their handlers. He added that the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty sent a clear message that “blood and water can not flow together.”

On the changing na-

ture of warfare, Singh said space and cyberspace have emerged as new domains alongside land, air and sea. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, drones, autonomous systems and precision weapons are transforming the battlefield. The government aims to make India a nation that develops advanced technologies indigenously and has shifted defence policy from reactive to proactive.

He pointed out that defence production has risen from around Rs 40,000 crore before 2014 to approximately Rs 1.80 lakh crore, while exports have grown 56-fold to over Rs 38,000 crore. The target is to achieve defence exports of Rs 50,000 crore by 2029. Indigenous systems such as Akashteer, Akash missile, Pinaka, Astra, Prachand and Dhruv helicopters,

Tejas fighter, Arjun tank and INS Vikrant reflect this progress. All 16 Defence Public Sector Undertakings are now profit-making, and the defence budget has increased from Rs 2.5 lakh crore to nearly Rs 8 lakh crore over the past 12 years.

Singh emphasised India's strategic autonomy amid geopolitical uncertainties and its focus on self-reliance. Over 16,000 MSMEs are engaged in defence production, and investment proposals worth about Rs 70,000 crore have been received for the Defence Industrial Corridors. The number of defence start-ups has grown from a few dozen in 2018 to more than 2,000.

The Defence Minister expressed confidence that by 2047, India will achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat and emerge as a leader in technology, economy and defence.

SC sets Nov 30 deadline for Aravalli panel report

New Delhi, Sep 7 (UNI): While rejecting a six-month extension sought by a Supreme Court-appointed high-powered committee tasked with defining the Aravalli hills and range, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday (September 7, 2026) questioned whether it was “waiting for his retirement”. The court directed the panel to submit its final report by November 30, 2026. “They should have clearly asked for a date after my retirement... It appears they are waiting for my retirement. We are not going to allow this,” the Chief Justice told Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre.

The Bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana, made it clear that no further extension would be granted, and directed the five-member



panel, headed by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education Director General Kanchan Devi, to “work day and night” to finalise its recommendations. The committee has been tasked with evolving a uniform definition of the ecologically fragile Aravalli hills and range, and recommending measures to regulate future mining. “The high-powered committee has sought an extension till February 28, 2027... We reject this plea,” the Bench recorded in its order, directing the committee to “work day and night and submit its final report by November 30, 2026”.

ECI to hold bye-elections to 5 Assembly seats, 1 LS seat on Oct 6; results on Oct 9

New Delhi, Sep 7 (GNS): Bye-elections to five Assembly constituencies in four states and one Parliamentary seat in Assam will be held on October 6 and the results will be declared on October 9, the Election Commission of India (ECI) said on Monday. Assam's Nagaon Parliamentary constituency had fallen vacant due to resignation of Pradyut Bordoloi, a statement issued by the ECI said. In West Bengal, bye-elections will be held in Nandigram Assembly seat due to resignation of the current Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, and Rejinagar seat which had fallen vacant after the resignation by Aam Janata Unnayan Party Chief Humayun Kabir.

In Tamil Nadu, the Assembly bye-elections will be held in Madurantakam and Dharapuram. By-elections will also be held in Puduch-



erry's Thattanchavady constituency. According to the schedule issued by the ECI, the gazette notification for the bye-elections will be issued on September 9. The last date for filing nominations will be September 16 with September 17 as date of scrutiny of nominations.

The last date for withdrawal of candidature would be September 19, the ECI said in the statement. The ECI said that it has decided to use EVMs and VVPATs in the bye-election in all the polling stations.

Adequate numbers of EVMs and VVPATs have been made available and all steps have been taken to ensure that the poll is conducted smoothly with the help of these machines, the statement said.

The Commission said that the process of updation of electoral rolls in the four states will continue till the last date of filing nominations, with respect to proximate qualifying date, in respect to applications received till 10 days before last date of filing nomination.

Strengthening Women Legislators Benefits Democracy: LS Speaker Om Birla

Faridabad, Sep 7 (UNI): Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Monday that every effort that strengthens the capabilities of women legislators contributes directly to improving the quality of democracy. Speaking at a two-day Capacity Building Workshop on “Gender Responsive Governance for Women Legislators” under the National Commission for Women's ‘She is a Changemaker’ initiative in Faridabad, Birla encouraged women legislators to deepen their understanding of parliamentary processes, policy, legislation and budgets.

The Lok Sabha Speaker called upon women legislators to make their public service a means of strength-



ening inclusive governance and to use their positions to shape the future of their states and the nation.

He also emphasised the importance of dialogue, participation and trust in a democracy. NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar highlighted that the programme has brought together more than 100 women legislators,

including MLAs and MLCs from across the country, providing a national platform for dialogue, experience-sharing and capacity building. She said that women legislators were not only representatives of their constituencies but also powerful voices for education, health, economy, technology, security and good governance.

India, Palestine discuss development priorities

Ramallah, Sep 7 (UNI): Representative of India to Palestine, Mahima Sikand, met Bethlehem Governor Mohammad Taha Abu Alia and Beit Fajjar Mayor Sameeh Thawabteh at the Representative Office in Ramallah on Monday, holding discussions on challenges facing local communities and key development priorities.

“Honoured to welcome H.E. Mr. Mohammad Taha Abu Alia, Governor of Bethlehem, and H.E. Mr. Sameeh Thawabteh, Mayor of Beit Fajjar, to the Representative Office today. We exchanged views on the current situation in Bethlehem Governorate and Beit Fajjar, including challenges facing the local communities and key

development priorities, and discussed avenues for closer engagement in areas of mutual interest,” the representative office stated on X.

“Fondly recalled the 12th International Day of Yoga celebrations in Bethlehem and thanked the Governor for his support. We agreed to further strengthen our cultural and people-to-people ties,” it added. On Sunday, Sikand 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.

Speedy trial is Umar-Sharjeel’s right

JUSTICE MADAN B LOKUR

BOB Dylan might well ask: How many years must a man spend in jail, before he can get bail? The answer, my friend, has been blown away in the wind. Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) held in the lead case of Gulfisha Fatima that Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam were not entitled to bail effectively for another year. They have already been in jail for more than five years, without charges being framed against them by the court concerned. This is tragic as far as the right to personal liberty and the right to a speedy trial are concerned.

Umar and Sharjeel have been chargesheeted for allegedly masterminding the Delhi riots in February 2020 in what is described as a larger conspiracy. In furtherance of the so-called larger conspiracy, they are accused of having committed a “terrorist act” within the meaning of this expression under Section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act or UAPA. Given space constraints, it is not possible to delve into or unravel the conspiracy, but it is possible to try and understand whether their continued detention for more than five years is constitutionally justified.

Riots took place in Delhi in the last week of February 2020; an FIR was lodged on March 6. The Supreme Court records that “the riots were allegedly the outcome of a pre-planned conspiracy orchestrated by Jawaharlal Nehru University student



Umar Khalid along with his associates, who were stated to be affiliated with different organisations.” Neither Sharjeel nor Umar were named as accused in that FIR. Perhaps their alleged role in a larger conspiracy came to notice much later. They were accused for the first time in a supplementary chargesheet filed on November 22, 2020.

Interestingly, Sharjeel had been arrested in the last week of January 2020, a month before the riots. It appears that he got bail subsequently and was again arrested on August 25 that year. Umar was arrested on October 1, 2020, about seven months after the riots. They have been in jail ever since, without trial. An accused person is entitled, as per provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC, which was in force at that time), access to all the material and documents relied on by the prosecution in the chargesheet. In all fairness, the chargesheets, with

all documents, should have been handed over to all the accused persons simultaneously with their filing. For reasons best known to the prosecution, compliance with the statutory mandate was recorded by the trial judge only on August 5, 2023 about three years later. Meanwhile, the prosecution kept filing supplementary chargesheets one after another, with the fourth one on June 7, 2023.

All this while, the accused were in jail and without necessary documentary evidence against them. What is the cause of the delay in framing charges? In this regard, the Supreme Court referred to the case of Tasleem Ahmed (2025) decided by the Delhi High Court. A perusal of the judgment shows that Sharjeel sought an adjournment on two occasions to argue on framing charges. Umar wanted arguments on the charges to begin on September 18, 2023, but his arguments were not heard. In Octo-

ber 2024, he requested an adjournment to argue on framing charges. The Supreme Court noted that it did not want to apportion blame for the delay in framing charges either on the prosecution or the accused persons. I am of the view that this was an incorrect approach to the issue of bail to the accused. The cause of delay ought to have been apportioned, and the initial delay by the prosecution in complying with the mandate of Section 207 of the CrPC ought not to have been ignored or overlooked in a matter of personal liberty.

That personal liberty is a valuable right has been recognised by the Constitution in Article 21 and by the SC in several judgments. The Court has gone a step further and held that the right to a speedy trial is also a valuable right tied up with personal liberty and Article 21. What does this mean? It simply means that if a trial is delayed without any valid

justification, the right to a speedy trial is negated and the accused must be granted bail. The reason is fairly obvious — if the alleged crime is of a very serious nature, such as adversely impacting on the unity or integrity of the country, it must be tried with the greatest urgency and not in a lethargic manner.

Recall the Parliament attack that took place in December 2001: the case was decided by the apex court within four years of the 26/11 terror attack. The prosecution was serious about those cases. Is the prosecution serious about this case? Umar and Sharjeel have been accused of grave offences, a larger conspiracy including a terrorist act resulting in the death of a large number of people, trying to engineer regime change and internationalise the protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act during the visit of the US President. Surely, this was a case that should have been decided within six months and not one where documents were supplied to the accused after three years. Should the accused be deprived of their personal liberty due to a somnambulant prosecution and a meandering case? More than 800 witnesses are yet to be examined. Is there any hope of the trial concluding in the near future? Is the answer blowing in the wind?

Listening to the land and its people, the Gadgil way

At the ground level, people are really interested and they want to get involved. Our report, if nothing else, seems to have served the purpose of triggering such kind of an interest," said Dr Madhav Gadgil while delivering a lecture on ‘Democracy and ecology in contemporary India’ in Delhi in July, 2013. He was referring to the 2010-11 report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP), which he chaired and which was one of the major contributions of Gadgil to India's environmental governance. We accompanied him during some of his travels. They mainly consisted of back-to-back and often heated meetings in some of the remotest corners of the Western Ghats. The meetings were not only about plants, trees and rivers, but also about what the villagers feel about development and how it should happen. No one had asked such questions before. It was the democratisation of environmental governance at its messiest and the most beautiful. Something that was never attempted before. Nor has it been attempted since.

No wonder, the report, produced after such a radically different approach — trusting the people of the land — was not acceptable to the vested interests. In Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala, politicians twisted the report, made false claims, did what they knew best: spread fear amongst people. The report was rejected and the government set up a High-Level Working Group, headed by Dr Kasturirangan, essentially to dilute the recommendations of the WGEEP Report. But the Kasturirangan Committee ended up with a report that was at odds with facts and science. Under the leadership of Dr Gadgil, the Western Ghats saw a brief period of tender hope.

The Gadgil report is a veritable textbook about managing rivers in ecologically important places. No wonder, because one of the initiators of the Movement against Athirapally Dam in Kerala, the late Dr Latha Anantha, worked with Gadgil on this section. Gadgil was an important figure in Kerala's landmark Silent Valley struggle against a hydropower project, which led to a cascade of environmental laws in the country. He also supported the movement against the Athirapally Dam, led by local communities. He was a vocal supporter of the Narmada Bachao Andolan's epic struggle against the Sardar Sarovar project on the Narmada river.

He hailed the Plachimada struggle against Coca-Cola as a ray of hope since this was a struggle led by a panchayat, which brought a multi-national company to its knees. The stance he took against chemical pollution in the Lote Parshuram region of the Western Ghats was so decisive and people-centred that his work is used by the people to this day. He laid stress on the need to engage local people in the decision-making process and increase dissemination of information. He took the example of the 'Australian River Watch' programme, where citizens are trained to monitor the health of a river just by looking at the bio-logical indicators. He said that India should take lessons from this and initiate such programmes. He added that for India to progress, we should take the bottom-up approach and strengthen democracy, rule of law, scientific temperament and traditional ecological knowledge. Indicating how forward-thinking he was, was a key recommendation of the WGEEP report, asking for the initiation of policy and legal steps towards decommissioning of dams in India, when India had no policy or laws in this regard. Gadgil played an important role in drafting the National Biodiversity Act of 2002. He also helped set up the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. As former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said, "Nation builders come in many forms. Gadgil was definitely one of them."

When questioned on how scientific were the local perceptions about natural resources, Gadgil emphasised that the local communities knew the local environmental aspects better than anyone else and hence they must have a key role in any decision-making process about the use of the local resources. Even in the context of climate change, he underlined the need to protect the local natural resources to allow greater adaptation and resilience for the local communities.

In the foreword to a book published by the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People in 2014, Gadgil, in the context of large dams being built for Mumbai, wrote: "Such lopsided development is clearly against broader national interests and since it is people at the grassroots that are best aware of what is happening to the natural, human and social capital, their inputs are critical to arriving at a development strategy that will promote harmonious, balanced development... What we need to concentrate on is implementing that which by all rights must be implemented, namely, the constitutional provisions for protecting the environment and empowering the people. It is this vital service that this report on 'Multiple Dams in tribal belt of Western Ghats for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region' performs, and therefore deserves to be read by concerned citizens." Gadgil was the recipient of Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan and several international accolades. He played a role in moulding the research direction of stalwart institutions, like the Botanical and Zoological Survey of India. A rigorous scientist and ecologist, he was equally, possibly more, at home in the forests and villages, partaking of food with villagers, talking with them about their community-conserved spaces, writing about them and helping protect them. He did not differentiate environmental governance and conservation by the people of the land. So unflinching was his faith in the communities that some of his opinions seemed radical in the conservation circles. But when Kerala was drowning in the 2018 floods, or when the Waynand landslides struck in 2024, when Maharashtra saw multiple casualties in the Western Ghats landslides in 2023 and when polluting companies in Lote Parshuram made world news, one knew how correct he was. Gadgil will be sorely missed.

Gadgil's greatest contribution was perhaps his insistence that environmental protection could not be separated from social justice and democratic participation. He challenged the conventional model in which decisions about forests, rivers and mountains were taken largely by distant institutions, arguing instead that those who depend directly on natural resources must have a meaningful voice. His work demonstrated that scientific knowledge and community experience could complement each other in shaping more sustainable development policies.

His legacy also extends beyond individual reports and environmental movements. Through his research, teaching and engagement with institutions, Gadgil helped nurture generations of scientists and environmental practitioners who viewed ecology as a discipline connected to society. He consistently advocated for transparency, access to information and accountable governance, believing that stronger public participation could help prevent ecological damage before it became irreversible.

At a time when climate change, extreme weather events and rapid development are placing unprecedented pressure on India's ecosystems, Gadgil's ideas remain deeply relevant. His call for decentralised decision-making, protection of ecological systems and respect for traditional knowledge offers an important framework for balancing development with environmental sustainability. More than a scientist, he leaves behind a democratic environmental vision in which protecting nature and empowering communities are seen as inseparable responsibilities.

When politics trumped Punjab’s water security

SS JOHL

IN 1986, the Central government had accumulated huge stocks of rice and was dragging its feet on lifting paddy from Punjab markets. Large quantities of paddy in Punjab markets were damaged/ burned due to internal moisture generating heat. A committee, under my chairmanship, was then set up by the Punjab government to study and resolve the problem. The committee submitted its report to the government, but the report was never examined by the powers that be due to change of government.

The committee had recommended that at least 20 per cent of the area under the rice crop must be replaced with suggested crops in order to maintain the groundwater balance of the state. However, a drought lasting more than four years from 1987 prompted the Central government to press the Punjab administration to increase the area and production of rice and wheat. It ignored the groundwater balance of the state.

In Punjab, hot summer days provide long periods of photosynthesis for the growing crops, but the water requirements of the crops increase substantially. It is known that canal water does not meet even 30 per cent of the water requirements of the cropping pattern of Punjab. About 70 per cent requirement of irrigation water is met through



withdrawal of groundwater. Under these environmental conditions, the crop yields increase in the drought years and, as a result, Punjab does not get any compensation for droughts even. The report was prepared with the long-term vision of 50 years, but, unfortunately, it got sacrificed at the altar of the myopic vision of political leaders. Then, starting from 1998, the foodgrain stocks again built up to unmanageable levels and India resorted to exporting at prices even lower than BPL issue prices. Still, a few shipments got rejected due to poor quality due to the deterioration of the stocks.

During the 2002 General Election, the Congress made it a poll issue and promised that the Johl Report would be updated and implemented to save the ground water and deteriorating environment. The Punjab government constituted another committee under my chair-

manship. The committee submitted its revised report within three months in 2002. The report recommended that at least one million hectares under the rice crop be replaced with suggested crops to maintain the groundwater balance of the state.

However, despite the government giving me the Cabinet rank as vice-chairman of the state planning board, I was not given any opportunity to present the report to the Council of Ministers. Frustrated, I resigned twice, stating, "I am irrelevant to the system of governance by this government." But my resignation was not accepted with the promise that the report would be discussed in the next Council of Ministers' meeting. It never happened. I contacted the Central government and got a Rs 1,600-crore grant approved by the Finance Department and transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture for implementation. I had to go out

of the country on World Bank consultancy work. In my absence, this grant too was lost due to utter political and administrative indifference. Thus, successive Punjab governments frustrated me.

It is a known fact that the production of one kilogram of rice requires about 5,000 gallons of water and wheat needs 3,000 gallons per kg. On an average, 4,000 gallons of water is required per kilogram production of the two foodgrains. Thus, Punjab packs a huge volume of water, mostly from underground aquifers, annually and sends it out of the state. This water withdrawal from subsoil aquifers amounts to over 'one kilometre cubic' block of water extracted annually from underground aquifers. Today, hardly anywhere in Punjab is drinkable water available at less than 300 feet depth. That too requires reverse osmosis (RO) for making it fit for drinking.

Soil is highly polluted with chemicals. As a result, rainwater, if recharged, pollutes the groundwater. Unfortunately, now Punjab is using drinkable water of the future generation for the production of foodgrain for the country. Harvest-time pollution caused by both rice and wheat is well known.

Further, free electricity makes rice and wheat production more paying than any other crop pattern does for the farmers. But, in case water is charged at the right price, the rice crop will not be that remunerative. During the 2002-06 Congress regime, a flat rate on tube well was levied. I worked with the farmers and all of them were paying. Further, I had almost convinced the farmers to pay electricity charge by meters. But on the eve of elections in 2006, CM Capt Amarinder Singh again announced free electricity for the farm sector. All my efforts went to waste.

NITs, IISERs to Align Curriculum with National Priorities

New Delhi, Sept 7 (GNS): The Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan chairs 13th Meeting of the Council of National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (NITSER), at Bharat Mandapam today. The 13th Meeting of the Council of the National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research (NITSER) was held on 13 January 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. The meeting was preceded by the 3rd Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs).

Dharmendra Pradhan reviewed presentations on elevating academic and research standards, enhancing governance efficiency and further boosting innovation and entrepreneurship at our NITs and IISTs. Also, discussed the way forward. The Minister said that our curriculum must be aligned to national priorities. Our PhD programs must be industry-centric, he added. He also suggested to create an industry-led curriculum committee for developing curriculum based on new and emerging job roles and 21st century requirements. The Minister stated that our premier technological institutions must also come under accreditation framework.

work. He also said that NITs and IISTs are poised to serve as vibrant hubs of applied education, research, innovation and future-ready workforce development. They will also make crucial contributions towards driving national progress and realising the vision of Viksit Bharat, he added.

4. Promoting inclusivity through the use of ‘Bharatiya Bhashas’ and adopting artificial intelligence for multilingual learning, committing to take all necessary steps to enable learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds to learn effectively. Align curricula, assessment, academic programmes and research with critical and emerging technologies such as Industry 4.0, green hydrogen, manufacturing, artificial intelligence, data analytics, cybersecurity, quantum technologies and semiconductors driving India’s progress towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat by 2047 through excellence in science, technology and innovation. Specialized PG/M.Tech. Programmes aligned with specific industry requirements.360 degree PhD reforms: Industry-led and Industry-funded PhD; product-based PhD; PhD assignment to faculty based on faculty performance;

The Council also underscored the importance of building robust innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems to enable a transition from job seekers to job creators. 13 NITs that do not presently have an incubation centre should immediately set it upat least 10 NITs should immediately initiate the establishment of a Research Park. Organise a pitching Conclave in July, 2026 for the start-ups incubated in NITs in collaboration with investors and industry stakeholders. Agreed by all the NITs and IISERs: to complete External Peer review in 1 year. The importance of accreditation as a key quality assurance mechanism- institutions resolving to actively participate in the national accreditation framework (NAAC). The meetings were attended by several distinguished dignitaries, including Members of Parliament Shri Ghanshyam Tiwari and Shri Shashank Mani; Prof. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, Executive Committee, NAAC and Chairman, NETF; Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar, former Chairman.

, UGC; Shri Chamu Krishna Shastry, Chairman, Bharatiya Bhasha Samiti; Ms. Debjani Ghosh, Distinguished Fellow, NITI Aayog; Shri Deepak Bagla, Chief Executive Officer, Atal Innovation Mission; Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary,Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; Dr.Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Department of Higher Education; Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology; Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, former Secretary, DSIR; Prof. Govindan Rangarajan, Director, IISc Bengaluru; Prof. Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi; Chairpersons of IISERs, NITs and IIST; Directors of IISERs, NITs and IIST; the Director, CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur; and senior officials of the Ministry of Education.

The Council also stressed the need to strengthen collaboration between NITs, IISERs, industries and research organisations to ensure that academic programmes remain responsive to technological and economic changes.

Greater industry participation in curriculum design, research funding and student training was identified as essential for improving employability and creating a workforce equipped for emerging sectors.

Emphasis was also placed on strengthening research in strategic and emerging areas, including semiconductors, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, green hydrogen and advanced manufacturing. The institutions were encouraged to develop specialised programmes and research initiatives that can contribute to national priorities and support India’s efforts towards technological self-reliance.

YUVA AI for All a significant step towards democratising access to AI Knowledge

New Delhi, Sept 7 (GNS): Commemorating National Youth Day on January 12, 2026, the Government of India reaffirmed its commitment to youth empowerment by spotlighting the newly launched National AI Literacy Program and its flagship YUVA AI FOR ALL course, bridging Swami Vivekananda’s vision of enlightened youth with the tools for an AI-driven future. The program was launched at the Rajasthan Regional AI Impact Summit held in Jaipur on January 6, 2026, by Shri Bhajan Lal Sharma, Chief Minister, Rajasthan; Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister for Electronics & IT, Railways and Information & Broadcasting; and Shri Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Electronics & IT and Commerce & Industry. The National AI Literacy Program aligns with the Government’s vision of a Viksit Bharat, the expansion of Digital Public Infrastructure, and India’s commitment to inclusive, responsible, and democratic adoption of AI.

As a part of this Program, the YUVA AI FOR ALL foundational course was highlighted, to make AI literacy a core life skill, aligned with National Youth Day’s focus on Yuva Shakti. With the course running time, clocked at a little over 4 hours, YUVA AI FOR ALL has been designed as an inclusive entry point to AI learning, requiring no prior technical background. The curriculum covered includes ‘What is Artificial Intelligence, The Technology behind Artificial Intelligence, Using Artificial Intelligence to Learn, Create, think and plan, Artificial Intelligence Ethics and The Future of Artificial Intelligence’.

Speaking on creation of a nationwide movement of collective AI learning, Shri Vaishnaw had stated “It is important that citizens, particularly the youth, whom we honour on National Youth Day, have a basic understanding of what AI is, how it works, where it is used, and also be able to use it responsibly in their lives. Particularly, small scale enterprises will reap the benefits of AI, if they are able to use AI in daily work and increase their productivity. With this objective, the National AI Literacy Program has been launched and it is envisaged that this program will mobilize 10 Lakh learners in the next one year.”

To be made available in 11 languages (Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu), the YUVA AI FOR ALL course is free of any charge and available on leading learning platforms such as FutureSkills Prime, iGOT-Karmayogi, DIKSHA and other popular ed-tech portals. On completion of the course, every learner will get an official certificate from the Government of India.

Apple launches creator studio subscription to power video, music

New Delhi, Sept 7 (GNS): Apple on Tuesday launched Apple Creator Studio, a new subscription-based suite that brings together some of its most powerful creative apps for video, music, imaging and productivity, aimed at creators across skill levels. Unveiled from Apple’s headquarters in Cupertino, California, Apple Creator Studio combines professional tools such as Final Cut Pro, Logic Pro, Pixelmator Pro, Motion, Compressor and MainStage into a single offering.

The subscription also includes new intelligent features and premium content across Keynote, Pages and Numbers, with Free-form set to be added later. Apple said the new service is designed to give creators studio-grade capabilities on Mac, iPad and iPhone, while keeping user privacy at the core.company noted that millions of creators already rely on Apple devices, and Apple Creator Studio builds on that foundation by making advanced creative tools more accessible and flexible.

Final Cut Pro receives new intelligent features for faster and easier video editing on Mac and iPad. Users can now search through footage using text with Transcript Search, find specific visuals using Visual Search, and edit videos in sync with music using Beat Detection.

Inclusive finance must be linked to social security: CEA Nageswaran

New Delhi, Sept 7 (GNS): Inclusive finance has to be embedded in a broader ecosystem of health-care insurance and social security to protect lenders as well as borrowers, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran said on Tuesday. In his address at the Global Inclusive Finance Summit, Nageswaran said one of the main reasons why people default on the repayment of loans was unexpected events such as health-related shocks.

"Even well-designed credit cannot do everything on its own. When illness strikes, even a growing business can stumble," the CEA remarked. Nageswaran called for mainstream banks not to merely be spectators to the process of formalisation of the economy but actively absorb the new proven borrowers into their core portfolios. Talking of financial inclusion, he said: "True impact investing means explicitly pricing in social return and accepting lower financial return in exchange. That is not a weakness; it is the very definition of responsibility in this sector."

Highlighting the success of the PM Svanidhi scheme, Nageswaran said that even street vendors can be disciplined and can grow. "The question now is whether the formal banking system is willing to recognise the reality and offer them overdraft, insurance, and working capital."

Emphasising that a person should not remain a micro borrower forever and should have more financial options in order to expand his or her business, Nageswaran said the most powerful financial inclusion tool is not a loan but a timely payment to these micro entrepreneurs.

"Inclusive finance does not have to be a separate heroic effort. Fair contracts and prompt settlement do more for small enterprises than micro credit ever will," he remarked.

He said credit that is not matched by rising earning capacity leads to stress instead of empowerment.

Patna Workshop to Cut Pendency, Improve Compliance

New Delhi, Sept 7 (GNS): The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, organised a Regional Workshop on Consumer Protection for Eastern States today in Patna, Bihar, bringing together key stakeholders from Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha to strengthen consumer grievance redressal and improve the functioning of Consumer Commissions.

The workshop focused on reducing case pendency, improving compliance of consumer commission orders, using digital tools for faster justice, and addressing emerging challenges such as dark patterns and unfair trade practices in digital market Strong push for digital consumer justice In her keynote address, Smt. Nidhi Khare highlighted the major reforms undertaken by the Department to modernise the consumer grievance redressal system across the country. She underlined the growing role of the National Consumer Helpline (NCH 2.0) as a pre-litigation platform that provides multi-lingual access, online complaint filing and faster resolution through technology. The Secretary also detailed the nationwide rollout of E-Jagruti She stated that E-Jagruti marks a shift from fragmented systems to a transparent, efficient and real-time digital ecosystem, enabling better monitoring and quicker disposal of cases. Emphasising its importance for Eastern India, she said that digital platforms can greatly improve access to consumer justice in rural and geographically dispersed districts of Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha. She urged State and District Consumer Commissions to make full use of video hearings, automated case tools and performance dashboards to reduce delays and ensure timely execution of orders.

Focus on agriculture and price stability Smt. Khare also spoke about the need to strengthen domestic production and procurement of pulses, noting a shift in household consumption from cereals towards pulses. Referring to Bihar’s strong agricultural base, she highlighted the potential for expanding pulses cultivation and structured procurement, including dalhan procurement. She noted that India currently imports pulses such as arhar, chana and urad from countries like Myanmar, Australia and Brazil, and stressed the need to build domestic capacity.

She reiterated the Government’s commitment to MSP-based procurement when market prices fall below MSP, while ensuring that farmers can benefit from higher market prices were available, thereby supporting farmer welfare and food security.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Pratyaya Amrit, Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar, welcomed the focus on digital initiatives and said that such reforms are essential for future-ready governance. He emphasised that citizens must be seen not just as beneficiaries, but as consumers with the right to clear information, fair treatment and timely redressal. He praised initiatives like E-Jagruti and expressed confidence that discussions on emerging issues such as dark patterns would lead to meaningful outcomes. He assured that the recommendations of the workshop would be implemented by the State of Bihar. He also stated that all departments are aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. The workshop was inaugurated by Shri Pratyaya Amrit, Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar, and Shri Abhay Kumar Singh, Secretary, Food and Consumer Protection Department, Government of Bihar. The keynote address was delivered by Smt. Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India. The inaugural session concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Shri Anupam Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs.

The workshop saw participation from Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of Consumer Affairs and Agriculture Departments, Presidents, Members and Registrars of State and District Consumer Commissions, senior State officials, NIC representatives, Chairman and Managing Director of NCCF, and Voluntary Consumer Organisations. The workshop concluded with a shared commitment to expand digital adoption, strengthen institutional capacity, ensure effective execution of orders and enhance inter-State cooperation. The Department of Consumer Affairs reaffirmed its continued support to Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha in building a fast, accessible and technology-driven consumer justice system.

The discussions also highlighted the need for stronger awareness among consumers about their rights and available grievance redressal mechanisms. Stakeholders stressed that consumer organisations and local authorities should work together to ensure that people, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, are able to access digital services and seek timely assistance when faced with unfair practices.

Participants further discussed the challenges posed by the rapidly evolving digital marketplace, including misleading interfaces, hidden charges, deceptive advertising and other forms of unfair trade practices. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms and improving coordination between regulatory authorities were identified as important steps to protect consumers in the digital economy.

EC extends SIR by 3 weeks in Telangana

Hyderabad, Sept 8 (GNS): The Election Commission of India on Monday revised the schedule for Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Telangana, extending the period of filing claims and objections by three weeks.

As per the revised schedule, the period of filing claims and objections will be till October 7, 2026. The period, which began on August 17, was earlier scheduled to end on September 16. The notice phase/disposal of claims and objections will now end on November 5. It was earlier scheduled to conclude on October 15.

The final voter list will be published on November 9. It was earlier scheduled to be published on October 19.

Meanwhile, Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudharsan Reddy, along with Additional Chief Electoral Officer Dr Vasam Venkateswar Reddy,



Deputy Chief Electoral Officer G.S. Chary, on Monday held a video conference with the Commissioner, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) & District Election Officer, Hyderabad, all District Election Officers (DEOs) and Electoral Reg-

istration Officers (EROs) regarding the ongoing SIR.

During the meeting, the CEO focused on issues relating to the delivery of notices and the conduct of hearings under SIR-2026.

He directed the DEOs and EROs to ensure that every

notice is delivered by the BLO to the concerned elector in person. BLOs should seek the assistance of Booth Level Agents (BLAs) to locate elector addresses, particularly in urban areas.

The officials were asked to utilise the additional logins

provided to the districts and to ensure pendency is cleared on time. The DEOs and EROs were directed to ensure that the un-mapping and anomalies case lists are shared with the political parties during the political party meetings and encourage BLAs to ac-

tively participate during the claims and objections period.

The proper uploading of documents should be done by BLOs, BLO Supervisors and AEROs as per the ECI guidelines. The computer operators should not make mistakes, and the EROs/AEROs will be held responsible for mistakes committed by the computer operators under their Supervision, he said. The supervisors were instructed to visit the residences of aged persons and persons with disabilities (PwDs) where the hearing locations have not been covered. The officials were asked to make operational or activate help desks at the ERO and DEO level to assist the electors. Further, the CEO reviewed the progress with the DEOs of all districts regarding the serving of notices, hearing schedules and clearance of pending cases in ERO and DEO logins.

Telangana HC directs police not to stop MLAs from entering Assembly



Hyderabad, Sep 8 (GNS):

The Telangana High Court on Monday directed police not to stop the legislators from entering the Assembly, saying if there is any violation of the rules of the Assembly, it is for the Speaker to take action and not the police. The court also directed the Director General of Police (DGP) to identify the police officers who allegedly manhandled woman MLAs of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) during Monday's incident at the Assembly entrance, take strict action against them and submit a report to the court.

The court passed the interim order on a petition filed by the BRS about Monday's incident and posted the matter for further hearing on September 21. The petitioner informed the court that the BRS legislators were proceeding to the Assembly and they were intercepted by the police and were not allowed to enter the Assembly.

The petitioner's counsel submitted that one of the lady legislators was stopped and her saree was pulled, and the other lady legislator, who was former Home Minister, was held by her neck. He submitted that other male legislators who were wearing black T-Shirts with slogans about the failure of the government were also manhandled, and some of them

received injuries.

The petitioner's counsel argued that the police have no right to stop the legislators from entering the Assembly and if any action has to be taken for wearing T-shirts or not following the rules of the Assembly, then it is the Speaker who has to take action and not the police. Voicing the apprehension that similar action may be taken in the coming days, the petitioner sought direction to the respondents not to obstruct the legislators from entering the Assembly and also a direction to the DGP to look into the police excesses in stopping the legislators from entering the Assembly and take action against such police officials.

The government pleader for Home, however, drew the attention of this Court to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Telangana Legislative Assembly and particularly the Rule 316 and Clauses (xiii) and (xv) thereof to submit that a member shall not wear or display badges of any kind in the House and shall not display flags, emblems or any exhibits in the House without the permission of the Speaker.

He submitted that since the members were proceeding towards the Assembly in Black T-Shirts with slogans thereon, perhaps the police have stopped the legislators.

Telangana Congress demands BRS MLC's dismissal for abusing Dalit Speaker

Hyderabad, Sept 8 (GNS): A derogatory and abusive remark made by a Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) legislator against Telangana Assembly Speaker, Gaddam Prasad Kumar, on Monday evoked strong condemnation from the ruling Congress Party which demanded that the legislator be dismissed from the Legislative Council.

The Speaker turned emotional in the Assembly when Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka condemned the remarks made by Tata Madhu, a member of Legislative Council from the BRS, during a protest by the main Opposition party outside the Assembly in the morning. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, ministers and MLAs demanded that the BRS MLC be dismissed for insulting a Dalit holding a Constitutional post.

Some ministers said a case under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act be booked against Tata Madhu. They also sought an apology from the BRS President and Leader of Opposition, K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR). Seethakka said that KCR did not like a Dalit holding the post of Speaker and called KCR the "ambassador of bad language".

The BJP, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and Communist Party of India (CPI) also condemned the language used



by the BRS MLC against the Speaker. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy demanded that Chandrasekhar Rao apologise for his party legislator's remarks.

He said the MLC should not only apologise but should also resign from his post and also called for dismissing the MLC.

He alleged the BRS acted in a manner that hurt the Speaker's feelings. He stated that this was not only about Gaddam Prasad Kumar as an individual. "The office of the Speaker is a position of the highest stature. Respecting the Speaker is our tradition. We have a responsibility to uphold the traditions of the House," he said. The Chief Minister said some people spoke about the Speaker in a way that made civil society hang its head in shame. Members initiated a discussion on

this, viewing it as an insult to the House itself. This is a matter concerning the dignity of the House, he said.

The Chief Minister termed it an insult to the four crore people of Telangana and said that today is a dark day for Telangana.

"Using such inappropriate and abusive language is an unforgivable offence. They spoke in a manner that insulted the Speaker and his family members. This is not just an insult to Dalits; it is an insult to everyone." Revanth Reddy slammed KCR saying the BRS harbours an anti-Dalit mindset. He said that after promising to make a Dalit the Chief Minister post the formation of Telangana State and after promising three acres of land and the 'Dalit Bandhu' scheme, KCR dismissed a Dalit Deputy Chief Minister.

BRS leaders detained amid ruckus at Telangana Assembly entrance

Hyderabad, Sept 8 (GNS): Amid chaos during the protest by the Opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) legislators at the main entrance of the Telangana Assembly on the first day of the Monsoon Session on Monday, party leaders K.T. Rama Rao, T. Harish Rao and others were detained by the police.

Police stopped the BRS MLAs and MLCs, wearing black T-shirts with slogans over what they called the unfulfilled promises of the state government.

Police officials told them that there was no permission to enter the Assembly in T-shirts. This led to heated argument between the legislators and police, ultimately leading to a scuffle.

BRS alleged K.T. Rama Rao, Jagadish Reddy, and



Sunitha Reddy sustained minor injuries in the police action. Former minister and BRS Deputy Leader in Assembly, Harish Rao fell down during the scuffle.

MLA Sunitha Reddy broke down over the alleged rough handling by the police personnel. The Opposition MLA alleged that police personnel tore her saree and humiliated her. The BRS alleged

Telugu YouTuber detained at Hyd airport over alleged UK job fraud

Hyderabad, Sept 8 (GNS): Popular Telugu YouTuber Ramana Nandana was detained by police at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here on Monday over alleged job fraud in the United Kingdom.

The RGIA police detained the UK-based YouTuber following lookout notices issued against her after a case was registered in Andhra Pradesh. Nandana, who is known for her channel 'Nanadu's World', and her husband Jagarlamudi Madhukar allegedly collected large sums of money by promising jobs in London. A fraud case was registered against Nandana, Madhukar, and his father Mohan Rao at the Ibrahimpatnam Police Station in Andhra Pradesh's NTR district. The RGIA police are likely to hand over the YouTuber to Ibrahimpatnam Police later in the day.

The case at Ibrahimpatnam Police Station was registered on a complaint by Mamillapalli Sivakranthi Kumar, a UK resident.

The complainant alleged that he transferred Rs 15 lakh in multiple instalments to bank accounts linked to Destiny Consul-



tancy, allegedly connected to Madhukar and Nandana, to secure a UK visa extension, employment assistance, and a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). The complainant told police the promised visa services never materialised and a supplied CoS document turned out to be fraudulent. He stated that only Rs 2 lakh was refunded after repeated demands.

The FIR names Jagarlamudi Madhukar as accused number one, Rama Nandana as accused number two, and Mohan Rao as accused number three. They have been booked under charges of cheating and fraud. A Lookout Circular (LOC) was issued for the trio, leading to Nandana's detention upon arrival at the airport.



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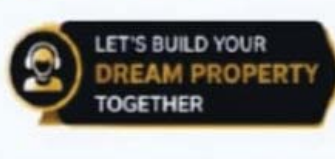
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