

19 Killed, 25 Injured in Kolkata Durga Puja Pandal Stampede

KOLKATA, Oct 17 (GNS): At least 19 people were killed and 25 injured in a stampede at an overcrowded Durga Puja pandal in north Kolkata on Saturday evening after heavy rain triggered panic among hundreds of revellers gathered for Saptami celebrations. The toll could rise.

The tragedy struck near the Chorbagan Sarbojain Durgotsob mandap at Radha Madhab Saha Lane in Girish Park after a downpour began around 7 pm. The pandal, themed Orob (Beyond Sound), had attracted huge crowds for its elaborate decorations. According to preliminary accounts, hundreds of visitors had been waiting in long queues for hours when the rain began. Many rushed to find shelter, triggering a commotion in the narrow approach to the pandal. Several people fell and were trampled as the crowd surged. Survivors



described chaotic scenes as people struggled to free relatives trapped beneath others who had fallen. Some alleged that rescue assistance was delayed, leaving them struggling for nearly half an hour to pull out their loved ones.

Police, fire brigade and disaster management personnel subsequently launched rescue operations, shifting victims, many of them unconscious, to Calcutta Medical College and Hospital.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, state health minister Sharadwat Mukherjee and Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Nand visited the site and the hospital to assess the situation. He said, "So far 17 people died while 25 others were injured. Among the injured, condition of two is critical. The stampede happened after a microphone announcement by the organisers. In view of the tragedy, we have

decided not to get into any festivity at the government to stand by the affected."

Police closed the pandal to visitors following the tragedy. The state government launched a toll-free helpline, 18003455678, to assist affected families. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the stampede in Kolkata is extremely distressing and announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

"The stampede in Kolkata is extremely distressing. My thoughts are with those who have lost their loved ones. May the injured recover at the earliest," Modi said in a post on X. Meanwhile, Union home minister Amit Shah had his programmes in West Bengal rescheduled for Sunday in the wake of the stampede. He will visit the hospital to meet the injured on Sunday.

SC: Internet Access for Children Is a Fundamental Right

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): The Supreme Court on Saturday held that the right to access and use the internet is a fundamental right of every individual, including children irrespective of their age, saying that measures to protect children from online sexual exploitation must target harmful content and those responsible for its circulation rather than restrict children's access to the internet.

In its judgment dealing with the circulation of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Material (CSEAM) on online platforms, a bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K. Vinod Chandran said that the safety of children and their freedom were not at odds with each other, and that children were entitled to both. The apex court was hearing an application filed by Just Rights for Children Alliance (JRCA) seeking effective implementation of the Supreme Court's September 23, 2024, judgment in Just Rights for Children Alliance vs S. Harish, which dealt with the obligations of social media intermediaries to report suspected offences involving child sexual abuse material.

In its judgment, the Supreme Court held: "We have no hesitation in saying that the right to access and use the internet is a fundamental right of every individual



under Article 21 read with Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Our children, irrespective of their age enjoy the same rights."

It added that denying children access to the internet altogether would be as absurd as suggesting that children below a certain age did not have a conscience worth protecting or freedom of speech worth expressing. The Justice Pardiwala-led bench said that although the internet was

far from safe for children, any measure intended to ensure their safety must be directed at harmful material and those responsible for it, and not at children themselves. "To keep the child away from the internet on account of such failures would be to mistake the victim for the problem," it said.

Highlighting the importance of digital access in children's lives, the Supreme Court said the internet was a marketplace of ideas, creative expression and information, with its value extending to adults and children alike.

"For many children, particularly in remote areas, it is often the only source of learning and information. Likewise for children with special needs, the internet is often the only place where they are able to find company in others like them," the judgment said.

Imran Khan seeks stay on FRRO's 'Leave India' notice

Mumbai, Oct 17 (UNI): Bollywood actor Imran Khan has filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court seeking a stay on the order issued by the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) directing him to leave India before October 28. In the petition, it was pointed out that FRRO failed to specify the alleged immigration violation by Imran Khan. It further urged the court to direct FRRO to show the record on the basis of which they took the decision.

It was also shared that FRRO has not taken into account Imran Khan's lifelong residency rights as an OCI cardholder.

The petition stated that he was given only 14 days to leave the country, that too without a prior inquiry, show-cause notice or even an opportunity to present his side.

It was further argued in the petition that the protest site was not a restricted area

and the actor did not breach any barricades. It was also mentioned that Imran Khan was leaving when he was suddenly surrounded by the media, followed by his detention.

For the unaware, Imran Khan was directed by the FRRO to leave India by October 28 after he allegedly unlawfully participated in the recent August Kranti Maidan protests, held to demand the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

In the order issued by the FRRO, Imran Khan was accused of violating the Foreigners Act by participating in the protest, as he is not a citizen but has an Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI).

BJP leader and former MP, Kirit Somaiya, had approached the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and immigration authorities on October 13. The politician urged them to issue a Look Out Circular (LOC) against Imran Khan.

AISA Chief Neha Bora released, CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke gets conditional bail

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): All India Students' Association (AISA) president Neha Bora was released early Saturday after spending the night in police custody, while Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke was also freed after being granted conditional bail in a fresh preventive proceeding linked to the proposed 'Lehra Do Tiranga' protest in Connaught Place. Both were detained on Friday as they headed towards the national capital's central business district for the planned march, held amid protests against the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demands for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's resignation.

Following her release, Bora demanded that Delhi Police free all those detained during the demonstrations, asserting that peaceful dissent could not be treated as a criminal



act. "I have been released! Delhi Police, release all detained protesters! Fighting for Democracy and the Constitution cannot be criminalised!" she wrote on X. In another post, she thanked lawyers who had worked through the night to secure the release of detainees, acknowledging Supantha Sinha, Manik Gupta, Abhik Chimni and his team for their legal assistance. Speaking about her detention, Bora alleged that the police had violated due process and kept her in custody overnight.

She said she was de-

tained at Mandi House and released around 5 am after formalities under Section 65 of the Delhi Police Act were completed. "Law and order are being flouted in every possible way. Ordinary citizens are treated as if they were hardened criminals," she said, questioning the legal basis for keeping protesters in custody throughout the night. Bora also alleged that she was initially prevented from consulting a lawyer and that her legal team had to spend five to six hours trying to reach her. Calling for an end to the SIR ex-

ercise, she demanded the impeachment of Gyanesh Kumar and the release of all protesters still in custody, including Dipke.

AISA said it would continue its campaign against the electoral roll revision exercise. Dipke, meanwhile, was produced before the Special Executive Magistrate (SEM) court at Mandir Marg Police Station on Saturday in connection with a fresh preventive proceeding under Sections 126 and 170 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). According to Delhi Police, he was taken into custody for allegedly violating a peace bond furnished on October 10. He was subsequently released after signing another peace bond, police said. The latest action followed an earlier preventive proceeding on October 10, when Dipke was detained aboard an aircraft at Delhi airport and asked to furnish an undertaking to maintain peace for one year.

'Yes, we want regime change': Uddhav attacks centre

Mumbai, Oct 17 (UNI): The Shiv Sena Uddhav Balasahb Thackeray on Saturday strongly criticised the Centre over allegations of attempting a "regime change."

He delivered a fierce rebuttal, stating that if opposing the government democratically is branded as a regime change, then "Yes, we are trying to bring about a regime change, and we stand here precisely to overthrow this power."

Addressing an awards presentation ceremony organised by the All India Journalists' Conference here, Thackeray questioned how the opposition could remain silent when the ruling establishment deprives citizens of their fundamental rights to express opinions through elections and stage peaceful protests.

He attacked the Centre for labelling anyone who raises a voice against the government as "anti-national."

Responding to the controversy surrounding the

phrase "regime change," Thackeray referred to advocate Prashant Bhushan's recent remarks in Delhi.

"If the ruling party claims that we are attempting to change this system, what is wrong with that?" he asked.

He questioned what could possibly be incorrect about standing up for a change of government when those opposing it are denied their rights to vote and protest freely. He also launched a sharp attack over police action against protesters in Delhi. "I want to ask Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rajnath Singh, and those deploying thousands of police personnel in Delhi—have these police officers been brought in to play Dandiya during Navratri?"

Thackeray alleged that young protesters were being brutalised, heads were being smashed, and women and young girls were subjected to violence, including hair-pulling and tearing of clothes.

Rahul Gandhi accuses Delhi Police of sexual harassment and assault on women protesters

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has accused the Delhi Police of subjecting women and female students participating in protests to sexual harassment, physical assault and humiliation, alleging that such actions were intended to intimidate protesters and silence dissent.

In a strongly worded post on social media platform X, Rahul alleged that women demonstrating in defence of democracy had faced sexual harassment, had their clothes pulled and had been assaulted on their private parts. Condemning what he described as the police's treatment of women protesters, he said the conduct had crossed "shameful limits". "Sexual harassment, pulling clothes and attacks on private parts - the brutality of the Delhi Police against female students and women raising their voices for democracy



is crossing shameful limits," Rahul said. He alleged that the incidents were part of a broader conspiracy to suppress dissent by creating an atmosphere of fear and humiliation, discouraging people from questioning those in authority. "This is all part of a conspiracy to silence voices - frighten and humiliate people so much that no one dares to raise

questions again," he said. Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and union Home Minister Amit Shah, Rahul alleged that their apprehensions about losing power were being reflected in the conduct of the police, resulting in violence against young people and women.

"Modi and Shah know that the day power slips from their hands, the story

of their arbitrary rule will come to an end. This fear of theirs reaches the police and erupts as violence against the country's youth and women," he said. Rahul's allegations come amid mounting political tensions over the handling of protests in the national capital, with opposition parties accusing the authorities of using police action and restrictions to curb demonstrations.

The Congress has repeatedly questioned the treatment of students, women and opposition activists during protests, arguing that the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression must be protected. The latest allegations have brought the conduct of the Delhi Police, the safety and dignity of women protesters and accountability for the alleged use of force into sharper focus. The allegations also add to the wider political debate over the handling of dissent in the national capital, with

Law is a living conversation shaped by diverse voices: CJI Surya Kant at NLSIU convocation

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice Surya Kant, on Saturday said that law is not static but evolves through the minds and actions of those who practise it, describing it as a "living conversation" shaped by diverse voices and perspectives. Addressing the 34th Annual Convocation of the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), in Bengaluru, the CJI said legal education must go beyond textbooks, statutes and case law to foster intellectual independence, ethical responsibility and the ability to engage with people holding different viewpoints.

"Each time we listen to perspectives that diverge from ours, we are reminded that the law itself is a living conversation and that it is shared by voices that do not always harmonise but together create the symphony of justice," he said.

The CJI said that the le-



gal profession demanded not only mastery of statutes and precedents but also the courage to defend what is just and the humility to listen to voices that often remain unheard. He stressed that intellectual independence required fearlessness, the ability to hear before judging, distinguish a person from a position, and disagree without denying another person's dignity.

"The law, as you will soon discover in its living form, is

not static. It breathes, and it evolves through the minds and actions of those who practise it," the CJI said.

He told the graduating students that the cases they argued, contracts they drafted, advice they gave and judgments they wrote would contribute to the larger architecture of justice in the country.

Describing law school as a space where ideas collide and convictions are tested, CJI Kant said the purpose

of legal education extended beyond learning constitutional and legal principles to encountering people whose backgrounds, beliefs and interpretations challenged one's own.

The CJI cautioned the graduates against compromising their values when expediency tempted them or easy shortcuts appeared attractive, urging them to remain guided by the principles imbibed at the institution.

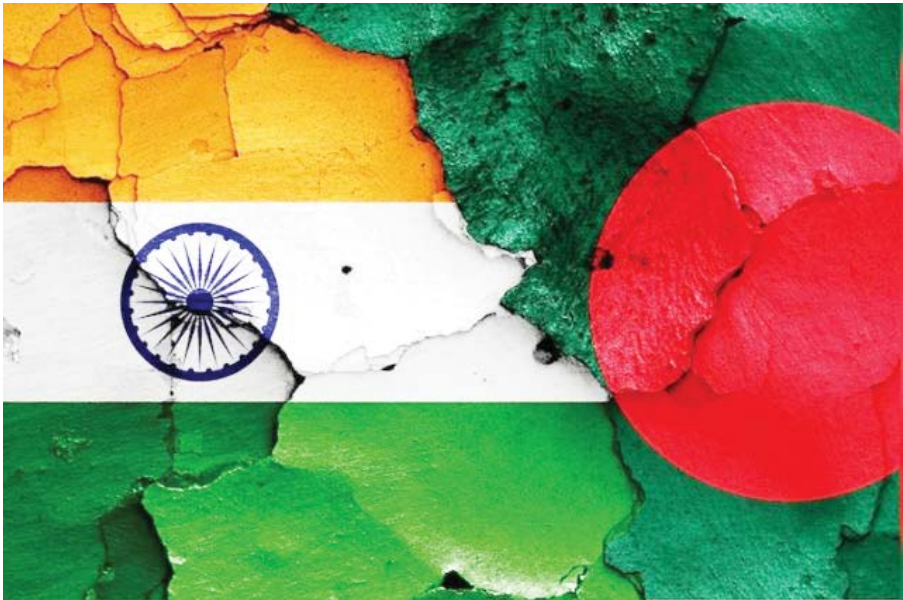
Building Tomorrow’s Hyderabad: Roads, Connectivity & Vision

Prof (Dr) DK Giri

The latest in India-Bangladesh ties is the ban on imports of yarn from India by Bangladesh through land and ports. It may have been done in retaliation to New Delhi stopping the transshipment facility for Bangladeshi goods through ports and airports. This act by India has apparently been provoked by Mohammed Yunus’ ‘Freudian slip’ or deliberate statement during his tour to China. He said that Northeast India is landlocked, Bangladesh is the guardian of the ocean for the region and could be the gateway for China’s influence in Northeast India. So, the tit-for-tat seems to be the case between India and Bangladesh since Yunus became the Head of Bangladesh government under the sobriquet of chief advisor to the interim Bangladesh government.

Mohammad Yunus is 84-year-oldhas been an academic, with little experience in politics. He earned unrivalled reputation through the Grameen Bank, an institution he created to lend money to poor rural women entrepreneurs to do business and earn their living. This scheme became such a big success that Yunus was awarded with the highly prestigious Noble prize. His international reputation persuaded the Bangladesh military to install him as the ‘titular head’ of the government. Bangladesh military still has the remote.

Be that as it may, under the pressure from the military and from pro-Pak and pro-China but anti-India forces, Yunus is behaving strangely. He did show some of his own self when he appealed to the rioters to



stop tormenting the Hindu minorities. But that was a natural human display of sympathy and solidarity. The physical violence may have subsided, but Hindus continue to live in fear and insecurities. This is a major cause of concern for Indians and New Delhi. Second, Yunus, due to his geo-political inexperience, is playing into the manipulation of China. Beijing is deviously sneaking into South Asia, to encircle India by a hostile neighborhood. Beijing mollicoddled Nepal against India by flaunting it surplus money. It did the same in Maldives, Sri Lanka and now Bangladesh. Pakistan is a different case. It has become a vassal state of China. Beijing uses Pakistan against India wherever it sniffs an opening. The Chinese game plan aims at browbeating India by seducing away her smaller neighbours. It is indeed sad that Bangladesh fails to see the long-term benefits of associating with India. The shared history, cultural affinities and eco-

nom ic mutuality should not be lost on its leadership. The present young generation of Bangladeshis may not remember the pain and horror of the 1971 partition. Without the active intervention of India, the violent and ghoulish occupation of the country by Pakistan would have continued unabated. America was trying to caution as well as counsel India against it. But India and its Prime Minister Indira did. The rest is history.

Seikh Hasina gratefully acknowledges the contribution of India to the liberation of Bangladesh. She had gone through the trauma and torment with her father, Seikh Mujibur Rehman, who spearheaded the liberation movement.At any rate, one could not live in the past. New Delhi could hardly expect eternal obligation of Bangladesh for liberating it. Remember how Germany psychologically turned against America although it rebuilt the war-torn country with the latter’s money that came under the Marshall

plan. The mistake of basking in the reflected glory of the past should not continue to be committed by India. New Delhi has to deal with Bangladesh as it is today– rising Islamic radicalism, a generation unconnected with the liberation movement, caught in crosshairs of India vs Pakistan and China, and Trump’s American given Yunus’ expressed liking for Democrats.

Second, New Delhi should not repeat the strategic mistake it did in Nepal at one point in time. That is when it supported the Madhesis in relation to the government in Kathmandu. New Delhi should deal with Bangladesh, not just Seikh Hasina. The resentment, and later, revolt occurred against Hasina when she made reservation in jobs for 1971 freedom fighters’ family members. They were already getting a pension. Hasina became overconfident heedless of the shimmering discontent that blew in her face consuming her government. She should sort out

herself and her party and possibly plough her way back into politics of Bangladesh. It is the internal political matter of her country. India giving asylum to her is another matter independent of the political turmoil in Dhaka.

Third, New Delhi should not let Dhaka slip away into the Chinese camp. India is presently using the carrot and stick policy. The suspension of transshipment facility has hit Bangladesh hard, especially its garment industry, which is its major export industry. Thousands of workers are scared of losing their jobs. Bangladeshi media has reacted sharply for incurring the displeasure of New Delhi and the consequent cancellation of the facility. Finally, New Delhi should treat the deterioration of India-Bangladesh ties as a consequence of Chinese attempt to sting India through her neighbours. India can no longer ignore the hard fact that China is her biggest threat. New Delhi should deal with China, but not get carried away by Beijing’s deceptive benevolence of granting easy visas to 85000 Indians. Beijing’s overtures are a desperate reaction to American tearing tariffs of 245 per cent on Chinese exports.

Some of us have written trees of articles to alert South block to the lurking menace of China. The External Affairs Minister, thankfully, has recently publicly acknowledged that India could no longer ignore that China is a problem. New Delhi’s robust geopolitical strategy towards China should restore friendship and normalcy with all her neighbours except Pakistan who is incorrigible at its best.

Crude at \$80 means serious trouble

Brig Anil Gupta (Retd)

The horrific black day, 22nd April 2025, will remain etched in the memory of Indians for many years to come. It just fell short of an indirect attack on India’s sovereignty but has raised the important question of the intent of Pakistan to continue to bleed India through thousand cuts. The provocative speeches of the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Gen Munir and Saifulah Kasuri, a deputy of LeT Chief Hafiz Saeed and the Deep State’s intent to make Kashmir as “land of the pure” are believed to be the triggers for this barbaric massacre which can be committed only by the beasts. Three of the beasts belong to the terror land of Pakistan while the other two locals were trained by the fountainhead of Jihadi terror, Pakistan. Rightly, Pakistan has been identified as the perpetrator and the main culprit of the horrific attack. But does the buck stop there? It’s time for hard talk and thorough introspection of the lapses that allowed the jihadis to carryout the massacre with impunity.

It’s time to call spade a spade. There are clear cut administrative and security lapses. The blame game cannot go endlessly nor should an attempt be made to push the incident under the carpet. Accountability needs to be fixed, those responsible for the lapses identified and the heads must roll. The area being isolated, away from the roadhead with no motorable connection, a slippery trek with deep gorges, dense forests provides an ideal target for the terrorists apart from being prone to accidental falls and injuries. Apparently, the coordination between the security agencies and the local administration



was lacking. The area was not secured, there were no security pickets either on the foot/pony track or in the Valley itself. There were no medical aid posts. There are no rescue teams placed in the area to provide immediate assistance even in the case of an accidental fall leave alone a terrorist attack. There are no cctv cameras placed for surveillance and security. All these glaring lapses have happened despite the fact that the area is promoted as “mini Switzerland” and is one of the most popular tourist hotspot during the Pahalgam sojourn having a daily footfall of 500 souls approximately. While the Baisaran Valley is 30-40 mins away from the roadhead, the nearest medical facility is another 30-40 mins away from the roadhead. It’s a clearcut case of things being taken for granted resulting in the setting in of complacency.The net result of the complacency has been the deadly massacre of the innocent tourists who had come to enjoy the so called “heaven on the earth” that turned into a bloody hell for the unsuspecting ladies and children accompanying them, some of them just married and were there to enjoy their honeymoon.

They will never forgive those responsible for these lapses and nether should the nation’s leadership which should be uncompromising in identifying the culprits however well placed they may be.

Hurriyat may have been dismembered but the separatist mindset still prevails among the Valley based political leadership. The narrative of “outsiders” is being promoted by these leaders and their cohorts in Jammu region. This narrative is promoting separatism and exclusivity. Till such time this narrative is shed away, total integration of J&K with rest of the country will remain a myth. Just like a wolf wearing lion’s skin does not become a lion, sub-nationalist leaders do not become secular or democrats by joining the democratic process. Under the garb of freedom of expression, the poisonous and divisive statements made by such leaders act as elixir for the Jihadi terrorists.Jammu travel guide

The tourists have been thronging to Kashmir based on the assurances given by the top leadership that all is well and it is safe and secure to visit. Tempting campaigns are being launched by the tourism department to attract

and lure the tourists. Many such campaigns are led by the CM himself. It is thus incumbent on the government to ensure the safety and security of the tourists through holistic appreciations of the security of the various tourist destinations and not permitting the tourists to venture into areas considered unsafe. Either keep all the tourist hotspots safe and secure or declare them as “No Go” areas. Proper advisories need to be issued to the tourists by the administration. No surety has been given by anyone that the tourists will not be targeted by the terrorists. Hence this presumption should not be allowed to cloud the minds of the planners and administrators.Moreover, there should be no hurry in declaring certain areas as terror free zones. Such situations are transitory and temporary because the terrorists like water follow the path of least resistance. They reemerge when the resistance weakens. No area should be declared terror free till the last gun is eliminated from the union territory.

There is also a need to review the entire gamut of security in the union territory of Jammu and Kash-

mir. The Unified Command System needs to be enforced strictly. There is no scope of turf battles when it comes to national security. Egos and false sense of equivalence needs to be shunned.

It is the era of domain experts. The government needs to issue an order that there is no inter se equivalence of ranks between the Army, State police, Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and civil administration officials. J&K is not facing merely an internal security problem. It is the battleground of a proxy war and jihadi terror unleashed by our enemy who is hellbent to destabilise India and exploit to the hilt our internal fault lines including the religious diversity. J&K needs a new model to combat this threat.

Rashtriya Rifles (RR) should be made responsible for the internal security and counter-terrorism grids with Director General Rashtriya Rifles (DGRR) being made the overall commander of all forces deployed for these tasks. Overall responsibility of HQ Northern Command. GOCs 15, 16 and 9 Corps should be made responsible for the counter infiltration grid & the defence of LOC and IB.

Why we must learn to laugh at ourselves again

Once upon a time, we laughed without offence or guilt. We laughed at power, at politics, at bureaucracy, and most of all, at ourselves. It was a laughter steeped not in mockery but in a shared understanding of the absurdities of life. Remember R. K. Laxman’s Common Man? The bespectacled, bewildered figure who stood silently witnessing the nation’s daily dramas was our collective conscience drawn in ink. His was the lens through which middle-class India smiled at its foibles. No one was spared, and yet no one was wounded. His cartoons, which ran for decades under the banner You Said It, didn’t merely capture the socio-political temperature — they made us laugh through the chaos, without cynicism, without rage, and it inspired us to gauge ourselves on the scale of changing times. How far we’ve come — and not for the better! Just the other day, The Times of India reported that Western Railway in Mumbai asked for the removal of a hoarding that humorously depicted Mumbai’s famously crowded local trains.

Everyone who knows the city even remotely will vouch that the depiction wasn’t far from reality. But even reality now seems too irreverent to tolerate. Our thresholds have shrunk. Satire is suspect. Irony is an offence. And humour — a great salve to wounded hearts — has become a minefield. It is as though we have forgotten how to laugh without hurting, or how to be the subject of a joke without taking it personally. The public frame has grown brittle. Everything is either an insult or an agenda. Our collective skin has thinned, and with it, our ability to process humour as a mirror rather than a missile. We have become sensitive to our peril, for laughter now is no more a medicine but an action to be indulged in stealth. We now laugh at our own risk, for not all out there are amused. But let us pause here. What does it mean to laugh at oneself? And why is it so crucial to the health of a society, and to the sanity of the individual? To laugh at oneself is acknowledging one’s imperfections without shame or embarrassment. It is to accept the human comedy in which we are all actors, fumbling, contradicting, faltering and having great falls like Humpty-Dumpty.

It is an act of humility. And humility, unlike humiliation, does not diminish. It enlarges us. It softens the ego, smoothenes the sharp edges of pride, and allows us to be more forgiving — towards others, yes, but especially towards ourselves. We are not meant to take ourselves too seriously. The capacity to see one’s absurdity, to smile at it, and even to share it with others, is a mark of inner strength. In that laughter is a quiet wisdom — the wisdom to know that life is far too unpredictable to be lived in perpetual indignation. And as creatures, we are too tiny and insignificant in the canvas of the cosmos. Philosophers from every tradition have hinted at this. In Zen, the enlightened monk is often depicted laughing. In ancient Greece, Socrates was known for his irony, and his capacity to deflate pomposity through humour. Closer home, the Bhakti poets gently mocked dogma and orthodoxy. Their irreverence was rooted in love, not spite. They knew that humour could illuminate truth in ways solemnity never could, and it was taken in its true spirit. But today, we confuse being offended with being right. And so, we silence the comedian, the cartoonist, the satirist, and slowly, we silence ourselves. We build fortresses around our fragility and call it righteousness. We seek apology where we should seek perspective.

This is not a defence for vulgarity or cruelty masquerading as humour, which too has become abundant in these indiscreet times. We know the difference between crassness and coolness. And we must always be vigilant against humour that punches down, that mocks the marginalised, that cloaks prejudice in punchlines or masks depravity in insensitivity. But the answer to bad humour is not humourlessness. It is better humour. Finer irony. Truer satire. And most of all, a thicker skin. As a society, we need to grow up. We need to rediscover the art of laughing together and at ourselves.

The Common Man did not need to speak because the society around him understood the language of the silent chuckle. That silent chuckle is now endangered. Let us then re-learn the ability to look at ourselves with a smile, not a scowl. Let us not fear humour; let us fear the day when we lose our humour. When people can no longer laugh at themselves, they are no longer free.

China Fortifies Against Trump 2.0 Trade War

The escalating trade tensions between the two top economies of the world show no sign of ending. U.S. President Donald Trump has steadily raised tariffs on imports to 125 percent, in turn, Chinese President Xi Jinping raised levies to 125 percent on American goods. Considering this escalating trade war, Chinese leaders have opted to prioritise improving domestic consumption, modernising the industrial setup, and promoting technological self-sufficiency.

Premier Li Qiang’s Work Report presented during the National People’s Congress seeks to revive the economy. In a nod to the onslaught of Trump’s tariff war, the Work Report acknowledges that China faces mounting external and internal challenges. The trade war with the U.S. has the potential to exacerbate existing problems and create new ones. The Party-state is grappling with drained consumer confidence because of President Xi Jinping’s zero-COVID strategy that mandated arbitrary lockdowns, and its bid to deleverage the property sector.

Since 2020, new regulations have effectively starved developers of credit from banks, resulting in some projects getting abandoned. In turn, this credit squeeze for developers has affected buyers who were unable to get their apartments on time. The advance sale of houses hit a nearly two-decade low in 2024 as real estate firms left projects unfinished. Pre-sale of flats benefits both realtors and buyers. Real estate developers can recover their investment faster, allowing them to proceed with new projects. Home buyers stood to gain from pre-sale discounts and further appreciation in asset prices after completion. Pre-booking had become the primary method of buying a flat in China and facilitated the expansion of housing stock. Leading developers are feeling the heat. China Vanke Group, a big name in the realty sector, posted a loss of 49.5 billion yuan (US\$6.8 billion) for 2024, making it the first time it has had such a disastrous showing since it went public in the early 1990s. Other firms like Country Garden are seeking to restructure offshore debt that was US\$16.4 billion at the end of 2023. China’s 100 largest realtors sold units cumulatively valued at yuan 4.35 trillion (US\$609 billion) last year, down 30 percent compared to 2023. The housing and banking sectors are closely connected. With consumer sentiment not picking up, that has caused credit to plateau, and banks, too, are facing a problem. The non-performing loans at China’s big-four lenders—Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, China Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank of China and Bank of China—have touched 1.3 trillion yuan (US\$182 billion) in 2024, rising by 82 billion yuan (US\$11.26 billion).

Thus, the Work Report proposes a new approach to rebuild the real estate sector through issuing special bonds to the tune of 4.4 trillion yuan (approximately US\$609 billion) towards acquisition of plots, construction, purchase of unsold housing stock, and settlement of arrears owed by local governments to businesses. Earlier, bonds would be used to finance large infrastructure projects. Another tranche of yuan 1.3 trillion (approximately US\$182 billion) of special treasury bonds will be issued, out of which a sum of yuan 500 billion (approximately US\$69 billion) will go towards recapitalising large state-owned commercial banks. Over the years, China adopted a strategy to fuel growth by investing large amounts of capital, which has resulted in the problem of overcapacity. Prices of goods dropped for the second consecutive month in March as a mounting trade war has heightened anxieties about a mounting stock of unsold exports, which could lead to domestic prices plunging even lower. To tide over deflationary fears, a sum of yuan 500 billion (approximately US\$69 billion) will be utilised towards initiatives that induce spending, like a trade-in programme that encourages people to replace consumer durables and vehicles with newer ones.

Quantum computing to revolutionise innovation and scientific discovery: Jyotiraditya Scindia

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): Quantum computing is not just another step forward but a giant leap that will define innovation, accelerate scientific discovery and unlock multiple solutions to human problems that were hitherto always thought of as insurmountable, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Friday. The minister pointed out that future now is no longer just digital, the future now is quantum.

"And the ripple effects of quantum computing are already touching not only scientific discovery but also our lives. Let's step into the quantum age with boldness, brilliance, and a clear sense of purpose," he said during the third International Quantum Communication Conclave in the national capital. The conclave was organised as part of India's definite steps in taking lead in the areas of quantum communication technologies, especially in light of the National Quantum Mission launched in 2023 with an outlay of Rs 6,003.65 crore.

The mission, a key initiative under the Prime Minister's Science and Technology



Innovation Advisory Council, aims to seed and scale up R&D in quantum technologies while fostering a vibrant and innovative ecosystem across academia, industry, and start-ups. As part of the event, three significant documents were unveiled to support and promote the deployment of quantum secure technologies: the Standard on Generic Requirements for Quantum Random Number Generators (QRNG), a Technical Report on Migration to Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC), and a Technical Report on Quantum Secure 5G/ Beyond 5G Core using PQC. Dr Chandra Sekhar

Pemmasani, Minister of State for Communications, said India is committed to lead the quantum technology transformation.

"Through the national quantum mission, we are investing deeply in quantum computing, quantum communications, quantum sensing, and quantum materials. Our vibrant startup ecosystem, our world-class research institutions, and our industry pioneers are already delivering indigenous quantum solutions ready for deployment," said Pemmasani. Principal Scientific Adviser Professor Ajay Kumar Sood highlighted that the conclave is taking place

in the year 2025 which has been declared as the Year of Quantum by the United Nations General Assembly.

Sood dwelt on the evolution of Quantum Technologies over the last 100 years, stating that "today, we are in the second revolution of Quantum Mechanics of the newest technology frontier where we now have the tools to controlling the quantum systems."

The conclave was organised by Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), the technical arm of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Telemat-

ics (C-DOT). The conclave also highlighted the importance of developing secure communication systems to protect sensitive information against emerging cyber threats. Experts stressed that quantum-resistant encryption and quantum communication technologies will play a crucial role in safeguarding government networks, financial transactions, critical infrastructure and digital services as computing capabilities advance. The newly released technical documents are expected to help establish standards and provide guidance for the adoption of secure, next-generation.

India's steel industry poised for global growth, focus on FTAs and self-reliance: Piyush Goyal

Mumbai, Oct 17 (GNS): India's steel industry is set to play a significant role in meeting both domestic and global demand, Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday. The minister emphasised India's position as a highly efficient, cost-effective, and high-quality producer of steel, asserting that the sector will not only cater to India's growing needs but also contribute significantly to global demand in an increasingly competitive environment.

"The country is actively pursuing free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries and regional blocs, including the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and New Zealand, to gain greater access for its steel products," Goyal said at the sidelines of the Steel India 2025 event here. "India is consistently focused on self-reliance (Atmanirbharta). But when we talk about Atmanirbharta, we are not closing the doors to the world. We are, in fact, opening the doors wider because every country will have its competitive advantages for different products,"



the minister said.

India is currently negotiating 10-12 such agreements to ensure that its steel, known for its cost-effectiveness and high quality, is available to international markets, the Union Minister added. Goyal also mentioned that India's steel industry is well-positioned to contribute to the growing needs of the world while also addressing the needs of domestic consumers. "The government remains vigilant and proactive in protecting the steel industry against unfair trading practices," he stated.

"India has already taken steps to safeguard its industry from the dumping

of steel at irrationally low prices, as identified in a quasi-judicial inquiry by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)," Goyal noted. India's commitment to boosting its steel sector is reflected in its diplomatic efforts to engage with key trading partners.

With the global trade environment becoming more uncertain, India's push for FTAs is crucial in ensuring continued access to international markets. The trade pact with the UK is reportedly near completion, and negotiations for the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) with the US are advancing ahead of schedule.

Fitch Ratings sees Adani Ports' acquisition of NQXT as positive step for global diversification

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): Fitch Ratings has characterised Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited's (APSEZ) acquisition of the North Queensland Export Terminal in Australia as credit neutral, while highlighting its positive strategic implications.

The global ratings agency believes the acquisition will support APSEZ's efforts toward international diversification, a key long-term goal for the company.

Announced on April 17, 2025, the acquisition involves APSEZ issuing new equity shares to the current shareholders of North Queensland Export Terminal (NQXT), who also belong to the same promoter group as APSEZ. The deal is subject to regulatory and shareholder approval.

Fitch expects APSEZ's financial stability to remain unaffected by the acquisition, forecasting gross leverage to stay around 3x from FY26 to FY29. The transaction is anticipated to increase the company's global EBITDA contribution from 4 per cent to 10 per cent, marking a significant step in its global expansion strategy. Additionally, the acquisition slightly

raises the share of coal in APSEZ's cargo mix, though this is expected to decline over time due to stronger growth in containerised and other non-coal segments. Operationally, the impact on NQXT is expected to be minimal, as APSEZ already operates the terminal. The terminal, with an annual coal throughput of 35 million tonnes and a current utilisation rate of 70 per cent, requires limited capital expenditure in the medium term. Moreover, long-term take-or-pay contracts and a remaining lease life of 85 years provide strong cash flow visibility for APSEZ. The acquisition also poses minimal refinancing risk, with NQXT holding no debt maturities until 2030. Its existing debt structure includes conservative features such as restrictions on additional borrowing and controlled cash outflows, further ensuring financial discipline.

The importance of Fitch's view lies in the agency's global influence on investor sentiment, particularly in emerging markets. As a major credit rating agency, Fitch's assessments are closely watched by global investors, financial institu-

tions, and policymakers. A credit-neutral but strategically supportive view from Fitch signals that the acquisition is a calculated move that strengthens APSEZ's long-term business profile without jeopardising its financial health.

While the acquisition may not immediately impact APSEZ's credit rating, Fitch's analysis affirms the strategic rationale behind the move, reinforcing investor confidence in the company's global growth ambitions.

The North Queensland Export Terminal (NQXT) is located in the Port of Abbot Point, approximately 25 kilometres north of Bowen, Queensland, Australia. It's the most northerly deepwater coal export terminal in Australia. Fitch noted that the acquisition aligns with APSEZ's broader strategy of expanding its international footprint and strengthening its position in global maritime trade. By integrating the Australian terminal into its portfolio, the company is expected to enhance geographic diversification, improve long-term revenue visibility and leverage its existing operational expertise.

India's equity markets emerge resilient amid global trade war shocks

Mumbai, Oct 17 (GNS): India's equity market has shown its resilience despite global uncertainties, and is well-positioned in a world reshaped by trade and tariffs, a report said on Friday.

The BSE 500 recorded a 6.25 per cent gain in March — its best monthly performance in 15 months, indicating that much of the market excess has likely been corrected.

India's macro fundamentals are notably resilient. GDP growth is projected at 6.5 per cent in FY25, supported by strong domestic consumption, capex, and manufacturing upcycle, according to the report by PL Asset Management, the asset management arm of PL Capital Group (Prabhudas Lilladher). The March Manufacturing PMI rose to 58.1 an eight-month high while industrial output expanded 5 per cent YoY in January.

The re-emergence of US-China trade tensions in April 2025 has impacted global indices, echoing the market behaviour last seen during the 2018 trade war.

While indices like the S&P 500 and Nasdaq fell by 13 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, India's Nifty 50 remained

relatively resilient, falling just 3 per cent. "Spreads for higher risk factors are near zero, a point from which historically markets have entered a recovery phase. In recent months, Quality factor bottomed out, and we're now seeing early signs of a rotation back towards Value, suggesting a market tilt towards fundamentally cheaper, cyclical names," the report mentioned.

Momentum's dominance has faded sharply, as investors shift focus to low volatility. The Smallcap outperformance has unwound, with rotation back into Largecaps, reflecting a market preference for size and stability. These are signs as the market positions itself for a recovery phase. "The recent trend in early 2025 shows a moderate rise in stocks near their lows, suggesting caution among investors amid potential uncertainties or corrections."

However, with extreme pessimism already built in, this could signal that a rebound is on the horizon as markets begin to price in a potential turnaround," the report noted.

"As global markets recalibrate to a world shaped by geopolitical fragmentation

and macro uncertainty, our strategies remain focused on adaptive, quantitative frameworks that capture alpha across cycles," said Siddharth Vora, Fund Manager, PL Asset Management Executive Director, PL Capital (Prabhudas Lilladher).

The report highlighted that investors are increasingly prioritising companies with strong fundamentals, reasonable valuations and stable earnings amid continued global volatility. The shift from momentum-driven stocks towards value-oriented investments could create opportunities in sectors linked to domestic consumption, infrastructure, manufacturing and capital expenditure. Large-cap stocks are also regaining investor interest as market participants seek relatively greater stability during uncertain periods.

PL Asset Management said the outlook for Indian equities will depend on the strength of domestic economic activity, corporate earnings growth and developments in global trade relations. While tariff-related disruptions and geopolitical tensions could continue to influence market sentiment, resilient

Corporates pre-commit 10.8 mn sq ft office space in India via 38 deals

New Delhi, March 7 (UNI) Corporates pre-committed close to 38 office space deals, covering a total area of around 10.8 million square feet during the six-month period from October 2024 to March 2025, a report said on Friday. These deals have been pre-committed by companies in Bengaluru, Mumbai and the National Capital Region (NCR), according to the report by Anarock. "The increased demand from both Indian companies and global MNCs, along with changing workplace needs such as advanced tech infrastructure and ESG compliance, has driven the pre-commitment activity," said Peush Jain, Managing Director of Commercial Leasing and Advisory at Anarock Group.

A growing number of global capability centres (GCCs) are also expected to drive demand further, as companies seek large, high-quality workspaces that allow them to maintain their unique identity. Bengaluru led the trend with nearly 5.7 million sq. ft. of pre-committed space, accounting for 53 per cent of the total, fol-

lowed by Mumbai with 3.1 million sq. ft. (29 per cent) and NCR with 2 million sq. ft. (19 per cent).

These three cities are home to a large number of domestic companies and multinational corporations (MNCs) in the technology, banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI), and co-working sectors. With the availability of quality Grade A+ office space falling short over the past two years, many companies have chosen to secure their future offices through pre-commitment deals.

These agreements, signed during the under-construction stage of a project, help companies secure prime locations, negotiate better lease terms, and avoid future rental hikes.

Bengaluru saw the highest average deal size, with corporates committing to about 0.5 million sq. ft. per deal.

In Mumbai, the average size was 0.4 million sq. ft., and in NCR, it stood at around 0.1 million sq. ft.

The report noted that 42 per cent of the total deals were for spaces larger than 0.3 million sq. ft.

ED seeks look-out circular to nab Jaggi brothers in Gensol case

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): The Enforcement Directorate has asked the Bureau of Immigration to issue a look-out circular against Puneet Singh Jaggi and Anmol Singh Jaggi, the promoters of Gensol Engineering Ltd, in connection with an investigation into the diversion of funds from the scam-hit company, reports said on Friday. A portion of the loans raised by Gensol from financial institutions is suspected to have been diverted overseas in violation of the Foreign Exchange Act (FEMA). Investigations are on to collection information on other firms linked to the Jaggi brothers that may have been used as front companies to route funds to foreign accounts, an NDTV Profit report said.

Anmol Singh Jaggi is reportedly in Dubai, while Puneet Singh Jaggi was questioned by ED officials for over 6 hours in connection with the case on Thursday. Earlier in the day, a news report had cited sources to say that Puneet Singh Jaggi had

been taken into custody, but a senior ED official later denied any arrest or detention of the businessman.

The ED has searched multiple premises in Delhi, Gurgaon, and Ahmedabad linked to the Jaggi brothers. The ED is investigating suspected foreign exchange violations involving unauthorised remittances of around Rs 200 crore to Rs 300 crore. Government-owned Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) has already filed a complaint with the Delhi Police against Gensol Engineering Ltd for allegedly filing false documents to take loans for buying electric vehicles. The public sector undertaking said it is also examining the matter internally under its anti-fraud policy. The investigation will focus on tracking missing delivery receipts for EVs financed by the PFC.

Gensol had taken loans to the tune of Rs 978 crore from the PFC and the Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) to buy electric vehicles.

Maruti Suzuki India's Q4 profit falls 4 pc, announces Rs 135 dividend

Mumbai, Oct 17 (GNS): Maruti Suzuki India on Friday reported a 4.29 per cent drop in its net profit at Rs 3,711.1 crore for the fourth quarter of last fiscal (Q4 FY25), compared to Rs 3,877.8 crore in the same period in the previous fiscal. According to its stock exchange filings, the company's total expenses rose 8.55 per cent YoY to Rs 37,585.5 crore in the March 2025 quarter. However, the company's revenue from operations rose by 5.86 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 38,848.8 crore, up from Rs 36,697.5 crore a year ago. The automaker also registered a slight growth in overall income, which stood at Rs 40,674 crore during the quarter, compared to Rs 38,235 crore in the year-ago period.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) came in at Rs 4,264.5 crore. The EBITDA margin stood at 10.5 per cent, the company said its filings. Even as profits dipped, the company's

board has recommended a record final dividend of Rs 135 per share for FY25, the highest-ever announced by the company. This is subject to shareholder approval at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM). The record date for the dividend is August 1, and the payment will be made on September 3. "The dividend on equity shares for the year ended March 31, if declared at the ensuing Annual General Meeting, will be paid to the Members as at the close of business hours on Friday, August 1, (Record Date). The date of payment of dividend is September 3," the company said in its filings.

This marks the 19th time Maruti Suzuki India has declared a dividend. In previous years, the company had announced dividends of Rs 125 per share in August 2024, Rs 90 per share in August 2023, and Rs 60 per share in August 2022.

Around 2:40 pm, the shares of the company were trading at Rs 11,642, down by Rs 252 or 2.12 per cent

on Friday on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The rise in revenue from operations indicates continued business activity during the quarter, although higher expenses weighed on profitability. The increase in total costs may reflect pressure from raw material prices, manufacturing expenses and other operating costs. EBITDA of 4,264.5 crore, with a margin of 10.5 per cent, remained a key indicator of the company's operating performance amid changing market conditions and cost pressures. Maruti Suzuki's record proposed dividend of 135 per share highlights its commitment to returning value to shareholders despite the quarterly decline in net profit. Investors will closely monitor the company's sales performance, demand for passenger vehicles, production costs and new model launches in the coming quarters. The movement in its share price also reflects market attention.

Boult Audio's net profit declines by 37 pc in FY24, revenue up 41 pc

New Delhi, Oct 17 (GNS): Boult Audio, the bootstrapped consumer electronics brand, has reported a 37 per cent drop in its net profit to Rs 2.5 crore for the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24), compared to Rs 4 crore in FY23. The Delhi-based company, which designs and manufactures wireless earbuds, headphones, smartwatches, and speakers, saw its revenue from operations increase to Rs 697 crore in FY24 from Rs 498 crore in the previous fiscal, as per its financials.

Boult also made Rs 5 crore from non-operating revenue, bringing its total revenue to Rs 702 crore. However, the rising expenses, particularly in materials, advertising, and post-supply discounts, outpaced the revenue growth.

Boult's cost of material consumed surged by 25 per cent to Rs 402 crore, making up nearly 58 per cent of its total expenses. Advertising expenses jumped by 74 per cent to Rs 162 crore, and post-supply discounts saw

an 84 per cent increase to Rs 70 crore, as per an Entrackr report. As a result of these rising costs, Boult's overall expenses climbed by 41 per cent to Rs 699 crore in FY24, according to its financials. This increase in operational costs significantly impacted the company's bottom line, leading to a sharp decline in its net profit. The company's domestic sales saw a growth of 45 per cent, reaching Rs 620 crore, while international sales remained stable at Rs 77 crore, contributing 11 per cent to the total revenue.

However, unlike its competitors, Boult has maintained its bootstrapped status and is led by co-founders Varun Gupta and Tarun Gupta, who own a combined 49.5 per cent stake in the company. According to industry experts, while the company is making efforts to build its brand and prepare for high-volume sales, the growing competition in the consumer electronics market and the rising cost

pressures have made it difficult for Boult to maintain profitability.

The company's strong revenue growth was largely driven by increased domestic demand, reflecting the expanding market for affordable audio devices and wearable electronics in India. However, the sharp rise in advertising expenditure suggests that Boult is investing heavily in brand visibility and customer acquisition as it competes with established electronics manufacturers and emerging direct-to-consumer brands. Higher material costs and discounts offered to boost sales have further narrowed its profit margins, highlighting the challenge of balancing market expansion with sustainable earnings. Despite the decline in profitability, Boult's bootstrapped business model allows its founders to retain significant ownership without relying on external equity funding. The company's future performance will depend on its ability.

CM Revanth Reddy to meet top CEOs in Delhi for invest Telangana summit

Hyderabad, Oct 17 (GNS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will meet CEOs and industrialists of leading global and national companies in Delhi on October 29 to promote the Invest Telangana Global Summit 2026, scheduled from December 7 to 9 at Bharat Future City. The state government will organise a curtain-raiser event, where the Chief Minister will personally invite leading corporate executives to the summit, sources said on Saturday.

The government is stepping up efforts to attract global investors and position Telangana as a preferred investment destination. Companies proposed to be invited include Amazon Web Services, Google, Microsoft, Apple, Meta, Pfizer,



Novartis, Tesla, the France-based aerospace and defence MNC Safran and ITC, among others. Of the 220 proposed members of the summit council, 125 have accepted the government's invitation so far. Nearly 300

representatives from 10 sectors have also agreed to participate, the sources said.

Investment roadshows have been held in Chennai and Bengaluru to promote the event. Programmes are also planned in Australia,

Dubai, West Asian countries and the United States by October 25. Roadshows will be held in Mumbai on November 3 and Ahmedabad on November 4.

The summit's theme is "Your Investment, Our Assurance", and its guiding concept "Pledge to Plot to Plant to Payroll to Product". These highlight the investment process from initial commitment and land allocation to industrial establishment, employment generation and production, the sources said. The three-day Invest Telangana Global Summit will be organised across four halls at the Young India Skills University premises in Bharat Future City. The government is making arrangements to accommodate delegates from India

and abroad, with around 1,000 hotel rooms in Hyderabad earmarked for participants. The tendering process for the event, estimated to cost ₹150 crore, has been initiated. Outdoor courtyard works are targeted for completion by November 15, while indoor arrangement and works at the university are scheduled to be completed by November 30. An exhibition featuring 25 leading companies from 10 sectors will showcase industrial capabilities and investment opportunities, the sources said. The government is also planning cultural programmes showcasing Telangana's traditions, folk arts, classical dances, fashion, handicrafts, cuisine and Bathukamma celebrations to an international audience.

Dy CM Bhatti calls for singareni expansion

Hyderabad, Oct 17 (GNS): Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Energy, Shri Bhatti Vikramarka, has extended his greetings to the workers, employees, officials, representatives of labor unions, and their families on the auspicious occasions of Bathukamma, Dasara, and Diwali. He stated that the people's government is taking proactive measures to secure a sustainable future for Singareni by acquiring new mines and pursuing a multi-faceted expansion in the thermal and solar energy sectors. He urged the workers, employees, and officials to work collectively to strengthen the organization and enable it to compete effectively in the evolving coal market.

He noted that the coal extracted by workers—who



labor under challenging conditions in both underground and open-cast mines—serves as a driving force for Telangana's power requirements and the state's overall development. He further called upon them to work with an enhanced sense of responsibility to ensure an uninterrupted supply of coal to power plants,

especially during times of climatic challenges, such as those brought about by the 'El Niño' phenomenon. Bhatti Vikramarka stated that to compete with other entities in the evolving coal market, it is essential to provide high-quality coal at an affordable price, enhance productivity, and reduce unnecessary expenditures.

Why Did Maulana Azad Fail to Raise Muslim Concerns Within the Congress Government?

A Historical Question About Muslim Education, Representation and Social Justice in Independent India



By Irfan Jamiawala
Social Justice Writer and Political Thinker
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad occupies an important place in the history of India's freedom struggle. He was a prominent leader of the Indian National Congress, a strong advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, and independent India's first Education Minister. His contribution to the development of modern education in India remains significant. However, history should not be examined only through the achievements of its great leaders. It must also be examined through the lives of ordinary people whose problems remained unresolved.

This raises an important question: If Maulana Azad held such a prominent position in the Congress and served as Education Minister from 1947 to 1958, what concrete efforts were made during his tenure to address the educational, economic and social challenges facing Indian Muslims?

This question is not intended to deny his contribution to the nation. It is an attempt to examine whether the ideals of national unity were adequately translated into social and economic equality.

1. Did Raising Muslim Issues Mean Promoting Communalism?

At the time of independence, India was struggling with the consequences of Partition, communal violence and the displacement of millions of people. In these difficult circumstances, Maulana Azad strongly supported a united India and rejected the idea that Indian Muslims could not share a common national identity with other communities. His commitment to composite nationalism was an important part of his political vision. But a fundamental question remains: Does national unity require a community to remain silent about its genuine problems?

Demanding better educational opportunities, fair employment, economic security

and adequate political representation for Muslims is not communalism. These are legitimate concerns in a democratic society. National unity becomes meaningful when every citizen enjoys dignity, equal opportunity and a fair chance to participate in the country's progress.

2. As Education Minister, What Was Done for Educationally Disadvantaged Muslims?
Maulana Azad served as India's first Education Minister from 1947 until his death in 1958. During this period, India began building the institutions and policies needed to expand modern education, scientific learning and technical training.

His contribution to the country's educational development deserves recognition.

Nevertheless, it is reasonable to ask whether the benefits of educational development reached economically weaker sections of Muslim society in sufficient measure.

Muslims were not a socially or economically uniform community. Many families depended on traditional occupations, small businesses, weaving, handicrafts and daily-wage work. Poverty and limited educational access created serious obstacles for children from these backgrounds.

The relevant question is not whether the Education Minister should have served only one religious community. He was responsible for the education of the entire country.

The question is whether the educational policies of that period adequately addressed the needs of poor and disadvantaged citizens, including Muslims who faced particular social and economic barriers.

Answering this question requires a careful examination of contemporary policies, educational statistics and government records rather than assumptions about an individual's intentions.

Tummala seeks central aid for farmers amid drought conditions in Telangana

Hyderabad, Oct 17 (GNS): Telangana State Agriculture Minister Tummala Nag-eswara Rao participated in a 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan' video conference held on Saturday, chaired by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tummala announced that the 'Khet Bachao Abhiyan' would be conducted in Telangana from October 22 to November 30. He stated that the program would be implemented in villages with the cooperation of staff from all-India agricultural institutions and universities.

The Minister further noted that due to a lack of rainfall and the impact of El Niño, drought-like conditions have emerged in 315 mandals across the state. It was stated that the state gov-



ernment has directed officials to assess the condition of crops, conserve available water resources, and ensure the provision of necessary irrigation water and electricity to protect crops until harvest. A request was made for the central government to provide immediate financial assistance to effectively address these challenges.

Keeping the El Niño phenomenon in mind, the

Minister urged the central government to allocate an additional, dedicated budget for micro-irrigation and for the procurement of seeds for mid-season crops. It was emphasized that proactive measures must be taken to mitigate the losses faced by farmers due to adverse weather conditions.

Addressing the issue of fertilizer prices and subsidies, the Minister noted that the high subsidy on urea keeps its price lower compared to other fertilizers, leading to excessive urea usage, which negatively impacts soil health. The Minister requested a rationalization of fertilizer prices and subsidies—without imposing an additional financial burden on farmers—to promote the balanced use of fertilizers.

Madhu Yashki: SIR targets dalits, tribals, minorities

Hyderabad, Oct 17 (GNS): AICC Professionals Congress Chairman Madhu Yashki Goud has made serious allegations against the Modi government at the Centre. He alleged that 13 crore votes were illegally deleted across the country under the name of 'Special Intensive Revision' (SIR). Speaking to the media in Hyderabad, he said that a large percentage of the deleted votes belonged to Dalits, Adivasis and minority communities.

He said that after Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister in 2014, the Constitution was in danger and Rahul Gandhi formed the Professionals Congress in 2017 to protect it. He clarified that this fight is not for the future of the Congress but for the future of the people of the country. However, the Election Commission of India has previously denied these allegations made by the Congress on the deletion of votes. The claim that 13 crore votes were deleted is untrue and that this is only

the number of people identified under the 'homeless, address changed, deceased and duplicate' category during the preparation of the draft lists. Speaking on the occasion, Madhuyashki said that 50 professionals are being trained in the first batch and 100 in the second batch through the Manmohan Singh Fellowship. He assured that he will effectively discharge his responsibilities as the Chairman of the Professionals Congress.

Madhu Yashki Goud alleged that the voter-roll revision process could disproportionately affect vulnerable communities if adequate safeguards were not in place. He called for transparency in the verification and deletion of electoral entries and urged the Election Commission to ensure that every eligible voter retains the opportunity to exercise their franchise. The Election Commission, however, has rejected the Congress's interpretation of the figures, stating that the numbers cited.

Chief secretary reviews Telangana global summit preparations

Hyderabad, Oct 17 (GNS): Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju today reviewed the arrangements for the upcoming Telangana Global Summit at a meeting held at the Secretariat. The meeting focused on the preparations for the prestigious event, with particular emphasis on extending invitations to key stakeholders and ensuring the participation of prominent dignitaries from various sectors.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary reviewed the status of invitations for the Invest Telangana Global Summit and its curtain-raiser events scheduled to be held in Hyderabad on the 24th and New Delhi on the 29th. Officials in-



formed him that invitations for both events had been sent out.

The Chief Secretary directed the officials concerned to ensure that all relevant stakeholders from the aerospace, space and defence sectors are invited to participate in the two events. He emphasised

the importance of reaching out to key industry representatives, sectoral experts and other prominent personalities whose participation would contribute to the objectives of the Global Summit. He also instructed officials to extend invitations to ambassadors of various countries, representatives of leading industry associations such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), besides other eminent personalities representing diverse sectors.

Harish Rao accuses Revanth Reddy of failing to protect Telangana's water interests

Hyderabad, Oct 17 (GNS): Former minister and BRS leader Harish Rao has severely criticized Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He accused him of betraying the Telangana society by harming the interests of the state. He was furious that efforts are being made to deprive irrigation projects in the state of water and that the government is raising its hands in the name of El Nino. He questioned why the government is being negligent in the most crucial irrigation issue. Speaking to the media at Telangana Bhavan, he accused the Revanth Reddy government of being

responsible for the drought conditions in the state.

Harish Rao criticized that although 10 motors are available in the Devadula project, only three are being operated. He said that the government responded only after they expressed their objections. He said that even though Andhra Pradesh has received less rainfall compared to Telangana, there is no drought situation there and there is no need to declare a break in crop cultivation. He criticized that farmers in Telangana are facing difficulties.

Harish Rao accused AP Chief Minister Chandrababu



Naidu of trying to divert Godavari waters to other areas. He criticized Revanth Reddy for supporting proposals to divert water from Telangana in the name of Godavari-Cauvery linkage. He said that in the past, Godavari-

Banakacharla and Godavari-Nallamalasagar proposals did not move forward, and now new efforts are being made in the name of Godavari-Cauvery linkage.

Harish Rao said that AP leaders did not make such proposals when BRS chief KCR was the Chief Minister. He accused the AP rulers of bringing new proposals to the fore only after Revanth Reddy came to power. He criticized that the government is failing to protect the water interests of Telangana.

Harish Rao demanded that the state government immediately review the operation of irrigation projects

and ensure that available water resources are utilised effectively to protect standing crops. He said farmers should not be left to bear the consequences of administrative delays and called for a clear action plan to address the emerging drought-like conditions. He also urged the government to explain the steps being taken to provide irrigation water and electricity to farmers during the crucial crop-growing period. The BRS leader further stressed that Telangana's share of Godavari water must be safeguarded in all interstate discussions and proposed river-linking projects.