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Opposition leaders pass 'Public Impeachment' resolution seeking removal of CEC Gyanesh Kumar



New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): Opposition leaders, social activists, students and civil society members on Saturday unanimously passed 'symbolic public impeachment' resolution, demanding the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar and criminal proceedings against him over alleged electoral irregularities and vote theft.

The programme was organised at the official residence of Congress President and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, at 10 Rajaji Marg.

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar presided over the proceedings.

The event was attended by Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and K.C. Venugopal, along with Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Samajwadi Party leader Dharmendra Yadav, Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav and more than 250 Opposition MPs and other participants.

Presenting the resolution, Kharge accused the Election Commission of manipulating electoral rolls and election results in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

He alleged that the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise had resulted in the deletion of 13.2 crore voters' names and accused the commission of centralising control over electoral rolls and excluding other Election Commissioners from important decision-making processes.

Kharge claimed that citizens' constitutional right to vote was under serious threat, alleging that Gyanesh Kumar was functioning under the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

He also demanded an immediate halt to the SIR exercise.

Rahul Gandhi, addressing the gathering, alleged that deleting 13.2 crore names amounted to removing nearly 15 per cent of the electorate.

He said that this raised serious questions about the legitimacy of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, in which the difference between the Opposition and the ruling parties was around three percentage points.

Rahul Gandhi also demanded that Gyanesh Kumar face criminal proceedings, including a sedition case, alleging that the Opposition possessed sufficient evidence of electoral wrongdoing.

'Threat Of Dimagi Naxals Remains': PM Modi Warns Against Ideological Challenge After Anti-Naxal Gains



Ekta Nagar (Gujarat), Oct 31 (GNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday warned that the threat of what he called "dimagi Naxal" (intellectual Naxalism) had not disappeared, even as he claimed that the country had broken the backbone of armed Naxalism and eliminated all Naxal-affected districts by March this year.

Addressing the 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' gathering at Ekta Nagar in Gujarat, PM Modi said the country had made significant progress in its campaign against Left-wing extremism, but citizens needed to remain alert to what he described as an ideological threat.

"We have ended Naxalism in remote areas. But the threat of intellectual Naxalism has not yet passed from the country. The nation must always remain alert to these intellectual Naxalites," he said.

The warning came after the Prime Minister referred to his address at the same venue a year ago, when he had pledged that the country would not rest until it was free of Naxalism and Maoist violence. "That resolve had now been fulfilled," he said.

PM Modi had earlier claimed that 126 districts were affected by Left-wing extremism in 2015, while no district remained affected by Naxalism by March this year. "Regions that had endured decades of violence were now being connected to the mainstream development through roads, mobile networks, schools and healthcare facilities," he said. The Prime Minister also paid tribute to security personnel who had lost their lives in operations against Naxalism and welcomed families from affected regions who attended this year's National Unity Day celebrations.

In the second part of his address, PM Modi warned against intellectual Naxalism within a broader appeal to protect national unity.

The Prime Minister alleged that some forces were attempting to divide Indians, spread rumours and damage the country's image through social media.

He urged citizens to identify such activities and confront them collectively, saying that the country could not afford to become divided at a time of global instability and external challenges. PM Modi also called for progress towards securing the country's borders, preventing infiltration and demographic changes, and moving towards what he described as a secular civil code. "The national resolve to build a developed India by 2047 must continue despite obstacles and challenges," he

AAP Releases First List Of 40 Candidates For Punjab Polls



New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday sounded the election bugle in Punjab, releasing its first list of 40 candidates for the 2027 Assembly elections following a survey. The names were finalised after deliberations at the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) meeting chaired by AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal here.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will again contest from Dhuri, with the early announcement giving candidates several months to reach out to voters and highlight the work of the AAP govt and jailed minister Sanjeev Arora, who is facing money laundering charges, from Ludhiana West. Kejriwal congratulated all 40 candidates and called upon the party to surpass its 2022 performance in the 2027 elections, stating: "The party has given tickets to these candidates following a survey conducted among the people. I congratulate all 40 candidates and call upon everyone to break even the record set in 2022 in the 2027 elections."

Following the conclusion of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) meeting, CM Mann also congratulated all the candidates and stated, "The Aam Aadmi Party has released its first list of 40 candidates for the upcoming 2027 Punjab Assembly elections.

ED Arrests SP Leader Azam Khan In Jauhar University-Linked Money Laundering



Ghaziabad, Oct 31 (GNS): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Samajwadi Party leader and former minister Mohammad Azam Khan in a money laundering case, an official said on Saturday. Azam Khan will soon be produced before the Special Court (PMLA), Ghaziabad, for custody proceedings, the official said in a statement. The Samajwadi Party leader's arrest by the ED comes close to the provisional attachment of land and buildings belonging to Mohammad Ali Jauhar University in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur district, valued at Rs 426.46 crore, in connection with the money laundering probe involving the Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust, Azam Khan, and others.

The fresh trouble for the Azam Khan came in the backdrop of a short-lived relief offered to him and his son Abdullah Khan by the Allahabad High Court by suspending their sentence in the dual PAN card case and also granted them bail on Thursday.

In the money laundering case, the ED attached assets of the University that have a current estimated market value of around Rs 1,170 crore. The university campus, located at Jauhar Nagar in Rampur's Singhankhera village, is owned by the Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Trust, which was founded and is controlled by Azam Khan, who also serves as the institution's honorary Chancellor, said the ED.

The investigation stems from 26 FIRs registered at Azeem Nagar police station in Rampur, alleging that agricultural land belonging to farmers was forcibly acquired for the university.

The ED said enquiries by the district administration also found that nearly 34 acres of enemy property at Singhankhera village had allegedly been occupied for the university despite the cancellation of the land lease. The land has since been recovered by the Custodian of Enemy Property through the district administration. The agency claimed its investigation revealed that funds intended for public works were diverted to the university, government-funded projects were executed on the private campus, and money from contractors awarded government contracts was routed back to the trust as donations.

Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumes charge as 29th Chief of air staff



New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit assumed charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff on Saturday, succeeding Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, who superannuated after 42 years of distinguished service to the nation. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit was commissioned into the Fighter Stream of the Indian Air Force on December 6, 1986. Over a career spanning four decades, the Air Chief has rich experience across diverse domains such as Operations, Flight Testing, Capability Development and Joint Staff assignments.

"An accomplished Fighter Pilot, Qualified Flying Instructor and Experimental Test Pilot, he has over 3,300 hours of flying experience on a wide range of aircraft, including the Mirage-2000, various MiG variants, Jaguar and several transport aircraft," the Indian Air Force (IAF) said in a statement.

The IAF said that Air Chief Marshal Dixit is widely recognised for his contribution to the modernisation of the Indian Air Force and was instrumental in finalising the Jaguar and MiG-27 upgrade projects and in the completion of the Initial Operational Clearance (IOC) and Final Operational Clearance (FOC) activities of the LCA Mk-I Tejas.

"His operational command assignments include command of a Mirage-2000 Squadron, a Forward Base Support Unit in the Western Sector and Air Force Station Bidar, a premier fighter training base of the IAF," the force said.

He has served as Air Defence Commander at Southern Air Command, Senior Air Staff Officer at South Western Air Command and Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, steering key capability development and procurement initiatives.

Kumbh mela a symbol of cultural and spiritual power: President Murmu



Nashik, Oct 31 (GNS): President of India Droupadi Murmu, after the inauguration of the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha Kumbh Mela 2026-28 on Saturday, said that she felt deeply happy and blessed to be present at the event. President Murmu hoisted the sacred flag and performed the ritualistic Ganga Pujan amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras at the holy Ramkund of the Godavari River.

The ceremony was attended by the Governor of Maharashtra Jishnu Dev Varma, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar, along with other ministers, sadhus, and saints.

Addressing the gathering on this occasion, President Droupadi Murmu said, "I feel deeply happy to be here. I consider myself fortunate to participate in this grand ceremony." President Murmu mentioned that she had darshan at Trimbakeshwar and at the holy Kushavarta Tirtha. She highlighted that the Kumbh Mela is held at four places and is renowned worldwide as a symbol of cultural and spiritual strength. She noted that historical references show the Kumbh being celebrated as far back as 1,400 years ago. Describing the event, she said that the Kumbh Mela is a symbol of faith and social unity. "I offer millions of bows (koti koti pranam) to this holy land. This is a land of penance (tapo bhumi), blessed by the footprints of Lord Shri Ram. I offer my respects to Mother Godavari," she added.

CM Fadnavis stated that development work in Nashik is progressing at a rapid pace and that the appearance of Nashik and Trimbakeshwar is set to transform. He noted that while some people initially doubted whether the works would be completed, and although citizens faced temporary inconvenience, the development projects are now coming to fruition.

CM Fadnavis remarked, "The sadhus and saints are our masters; we are merely servants. Forgive us if any mistakes occur. We will leave no stone unturned to make this Kumbh Mela grand and glorious."

The Nashik District Guardian Minister Girish Mahajan said that today was an extremely historical, auspicious, and proud day not only for Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, but for all of Maharashtra.

Under the auspicious presence of President Murmu, the flag hoisting took place simultaneously at the sacred Ramkund in Nashik and the holy Kushavarta Tirtha in Trimbakeshwar.

Manipur govt agrees to pay ex-gratia to kin of 32 Kuki-Zo civilians killed in violence: Key Kuki Body

Imphal, Oct 31 (GNS): The Manipur government has agreed to provide ex-gratia compensation to the next of kin of 32 Kuki-Zo civilians killed in violence attributed to the NSCN-IM and ZUF-K, the Kuki-Zo Council (KZC), the apex body of the Kuki-Zo tribal community in the state, said on Saturday.

A senior KZC leader said that an ex gratia amount of Rs 10 lakh is expected to be provided to each of the bereaved families.

According to a KZC statement, a meeting between the council's leaders and government representatives was held at the District Magistrate's office in Churachandpur on Friday to discuss the concerns and demands raised by the council.

"During the meeting, KZC presented its concerns regarding the prevailing situation and the grievances of the Kuki-Zo people. Following extensive deliberations, the government agreed to provide ex-gratia compensation to the next of kin of 32 Kuki-Zo civilians who lost their lives in violence attributed to NSCN-IM and ZUF-K," the statement said.

The council said the decision reflects the need to honour the memory of the deceased and extend support to their bereaved families. The government also agreed to take responsibility for transporting the bodies of all the deceased to their respective villages for the final rites, the KZC said.

According to the council, eight bodies of Kuki-Zo victims are currently lying in the morgue of Churachandpur District Hospital for a prolonged period, while some others have already been buried due to unavoidable circumstances.

Both arrangements — payment of compensation and transportation of the bodies — are expected to be completed within seven days, the statement said. The KZC also raised several other pressing issues and demands concerning the security, welfare and political aspirations of the Kuki-Zo people.

The government has taken these matters under consideration and assured the council that they would be reviewed and responded to in due course, the statement said. While describing the commitments on ex-gratia compensation and transportation of the deceased as steps towards addressing the immediate concerns of the bereaved families, the KZC emphasised that the broader grievances and legitimate political aspirations of the Kuki-Zo people require concrete and time-bound action.

The council said it would continue to pursue these matters with the government until meaningful outcomes are achieved.

Meanwhile, Manipur Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen on Saturday urged the authorities concerned to make every possible effort to trace and rescue two Kuki youths who went missing from Kangpokpi district on the evening of October 28.

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Time for Indian consumers to unite and assert

Makarand R Paranjape



Last year, I took voluntary retirement from Jawaharlal Nehru University, once India's leading Left-leaning institution. My experiences there are detailed in my book, JNU: Nationalism and India's Uncivil War (2022). I experienced a campus suffocated by ideological conformity; the Left's intolerance was stifling. But Right rigidity and anti-intellectualism are scarcely better. Earlier, I had watched scholars and students shunned for daring to question Marxist dogma or exploring nationalist perspectives. Inquiry gave way to loyalty tests. Now, the pendulu has swung to the other extreme. In the big tech world too, fundamental questions are often sidelined for metrics and growth. In fact, the more negative and more sensational the content, the more eyeballs and clicks. In the superficial digital chatter, one misses the depth of academia, its insistence on probing root causes, even if it is sometimes lost in theory.

I was recently invited to an international conference on 'Social media and society in India' at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. My topic was the space for criticism in India. The organiser, Joyojeet Pal, affable but focused, teaches at the School of Information. Pal studies the data, both big and small, to understand how social media influences human behaviour. In one of his co-authored papers, he argues that it is not the big as much as the small-but-crucial data that provides a better grasp of how things are really moving.

I couldn't agree more. I consider myself less ideologically programmatic than pragmatic and curious. That is why, in the roomful of left-leaning Indian and US social media influencers, I thought I should offer my main—rather than pain—point in the form of a sutra. India is a criticism-surplus society which is criticism-deficient where it matters.

Improvement is impossible without criticism; modernity depends on it. As also on creativity and innovation. But the more powerful we are, the more imperious and impervious to criticism. In fact, we think that our critics are our enemies. We hound, harass, even jail them. But that is not the path to greatness. Not everyone who criticises us is corrupt or contaminated. When will we realise this? Indeed, we need to regain innocence after experience, as William Blake suggested. I was speaking mostly to myself. Because, as I said quite candidly, "If I read this room right, there is not a single person who supports the Indian Prime Minister or his party. I have also been in rooms which are exactly the opposite. You could make a similar statement about the US. Such fragmentation and polarisation hurts democratic societies." Ergo, one side's hall of fame is the other side's wall of shame. I was using phrases that I had heard over dinner the previous evening. The way out? Intermedial hermeneutics. No side has the exclusive or absolute claim to truth. We can't be ideologically non-aligned. But we must understand and accept our leanings and limitations. After, we can't believe our own propaganda.

That, in a sense, captured why I left academia—and why I also longed to return. The academy ought to be a safe space where differing views can be expressed respectfully and rationally. But it no longer is. Our ability to unpack and bridge such deep social and ideological divides is severely threatened. Whether in the United States or India, many academics seem baffled, frightened, and unsure of their future.

Last year, I took voluntary retirement from Jawaharlal Nehru University, once India's leading Left-leaning institution. My experiences there are detailed in my book, JNU: Nationalism and India's Uncivil War (2022). I experienced a campus suffocated by ideological conformity; the Left's intolerance was stifling. But Right rigidity and anti-intellectualism are scarcely better. Earlier, I had watched scholars and students shunned for daring to question Marxist dogma or exploring nationalist perspectives. Inquiry gave way to loyalty tests. Now, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme.

In the big tech world too, fundamental questions are often sidelined for metrics and growth. In fact, the more negative and more sensational the content, the more eyeballs and clicks. In the superficial digital chatter, one misses the depth of academia, its insistence on probing root causes, even if it is sometimes lost in theory.

What I liked about the conference on social media was the rich and diverse mix of speakers, almost every single one of them smart, well-informed and deeply immersed in their art and craft. The conference, tackling social media's role in India's politics, culture and economy, united scholars, influencers and practitioners. Unlike the usual echo chambers, it offered a lens on the incessant polarisation. Accessible digitally to a larger audience, it invited global voices, proving academia could engage the world without losing rigour. Space constraints allow just one example. Viraj Sheth, co-founder of Monk Entertainment, highlighted social media's complex operations. Sheth, who manages influencers like Bollywood stars and the recently disgraced 'Beer Biceps' creator Ranveer Allahbadia, spoke about navigating the influencer economy. His agency builds brands, turning talent into fame and money. We are all 'users' hooked to scrolling, he said. But when the algorithm is done with you, the platform dumps you. Digital snakes and ladders lead to mental illness. Each night, we seek the last desperate dopamine fix just before we turn in. Sheth called it "hooks and tricks".

Disinformation and drama, cheap fakes as well as deepfakes, devastate lives. The missteps of influencers ripple through millions. Are we going to return to smaller communities to counter the tripe and hype?

To me, rearming the truly educated with deep cognition is the only antidote to pseudo cognition. Criticism and creativity show the way forward. That is how intermedial hermeneutics works, finding clarity and lucidity in a confusing world by refusing to succumb to readymade answers and positions.

But those who speak truth to power need protection. Who will provide it? A social media exposé against the corrupt and the powerful can result in grave personal loss, injury, even death. Who will safeguard the guardians of truth and democracy? The fourth pillar, mainstream or digital, lies broken by political power and public distrust.

I enjoyed listening to presentations across so many disciplines and perspectives. But that is because I have learned to reject ideological cages, preferring disciplined inquiry and the old-fashioned search for truth. Whether by studying algorithms via computational tools, politics and propaganda by social theory, lives via literature, or activism via motivated philanthropy. No one method is perfect. Insularity does persist, even fester. But what is Sanatan Dharma if it is not faith in the dictum satyameva jayate?

Tech's tunnel vision, academics jousting in silos, funded research or activism—all these will persist. But so will the urge to make society more humane, equitable, and the world a better place. To be deeply aware and conscious of our responsibilities is already to have taken sides.

India's strategic dilemma with US

Whenever the issue of the United States as a strategic military ally of India is discussed, discomforting memories of the past resurface. In 1971, when Indian forces were on a blitzkrieg in what was then East Pakistan (later, Bangladesh), the US had ordered its Seventh Fleet's 'Task Force 74' to sail menacingly into the Bay of Bengal. As a complicit partner of Pakistan, the US had overlooked the genocidal actions of the Pakistanis and instead adopted a threatening posture against India. It was a complete public relations disaster for the US is one thing, but the reiterative wrongs of the US actions to be on the wrong side (when Pakistanis created mujaheddins in 80's and re-directed terror towards India) in the hyphenated Indo-Pak equation till late 1990's, is factual. Only when the products of Pakistan's 'terror nurseries' started rebounding and attacking US interests, did the US recoil.

Today, the world has evolved with newer geopolitical realities and threats that call for recalibration of alliances and perspective. China looms large on the global stage with its expansionist tendencies and that naturally makes India the most credible 'pivot' to counter the same, for the US. Beyond convergence on Sino-wariness, the additional threat from religio-terrorism (supported duplicitously by China's 'steel brother' Pakistan) has brought about a more positive bind in the US-India realm. Consequently, recent times have seen unprecedented growth of bilateral trust and engagement that has manifested in increased trade, transfer of weaponry and technology, nuclear deals and strategic jointsmanship, e.g. QUAD etc. All this has led Delhi to shed the shibboleths of the past and usher into a more realpolitik-led nuance that it describes as 'strategic autonomy'. Basically, it suggests walking the most optimum path for India's security without getting constrained with the compulsions of belonging to any binary 'bloc'. This enabled India to acquire cutting edge weaponry like Hellfire missiles, MQ 9B Drones, Apache attack helicopters etc. from the US, and simultaneously S-400 missile batteries, Akula-II nuclear submarines, Kamov KA-226 etc., from the Russians. Such flexibility allows for sourcing the most optimum weapon given various considerations, as also hedging against known and unknown risks of overdependence on one source.

Therefore, while the sourcing for armaments has gone up considerably from the 'Western' nations (even South Korea recently), the dependence on Russian vendors to keep legacy platforms functional, continues. Questions about price-versus-quality (read Russian-versus-Western) always abound, and this along with other tropical considerations e.g., timelines, reliability of spare, maintenance costs etc., determines which nation to source weapons from.

One underlying and often unsaid consideration has always been about the reliability of the alliance with the sourcing country. Questions of supplying country's reliability lurk with murmurs of a proverbial 'kill switch' (backdoor stop for deactivation of weapons platform at the hands of supplying nation) or simply stopping spares, munitions and other wherewithal that could render the platform inefficacious, at critical times. However, while sourcing from Russia has gone down substantially for a variety of good reasons, history is instructive that whenever India has faced external hostility or concerning shortfalls - the Russians have never let India down in terms of supplies et al. The reliability of Russians has been time-tested and perhaps that of the USA as a military supplier, briefly tested in the immediate aftermath of the bloody Summer of 2020 (Indo-Chinese standoff), when it expedited supplies.

However, it made good commercial sense for the Americans and the weaponry that it supplied then was aimed at its own nemesis i.e., China - but would that 'ally' spirit be honoured in similar measure had India sparred against an US-ally (even someone like Pakistan?). One can only conjecture, except that that current geopolitics does pit US and India as 'natural' allies circumstantially, though it requires more test of time and situations.

It is here that the behaviour of the USA via-a-vis India in recent times (even if it were to be in the commercial realm) under Trump 1.0.2 has yet again triggered queries of reliability and trust. The ensuing trade/tariff war has afforded no special leniencies or generosity of treatment to India, as could be expected of a special or natural 'ally' (neither have the NATO/EU countries and allies been spared). Instead, Trump has demonstrated an intent and willingness to inflict as much pain onto other countries (including allies) to further its own interest unilaterally - without considering the urgencies and vulnerabilities of allies. This does not make for reassuring optics.

Former US Secretary of Defense (from previous Trump administration), James Mattis, had bemoaned, "strength of a nation is inextricably linked to the strength of our unique and comprehensive system of alliances and partnerships" and added "we cannot protect our interests or serve the role effectively without maintaining strong alliances and showing respect to those allies".

As a military man well-versed with the importance of trust and 'allies', Mattis had called out Trump's brazen insensitivity that would be counterproductive in the long run. Today, Trump shows the same indifference and selfishness with another lever of governance i.e., economics, that augurs badly in terms of building trust in the US as a military supplier or ally. Trump may not have a long memory, but other countries do, and that lack of trust amongst so-called allies will haunt the US in the long run.

The brave new universe of social media

Vinay Sahasrabuddhe



It was the World Consumer Rights Day on March 15. As in the past, Consumer International, a global organisation championing such rights, picked a theme for the day—this year, it was 'A just transition to sustainable lifestyle'. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the theme reflects concerns India has been voicing for years about climate change and sustainability. It aligns with the prime minister's call for adopting a Lifestyle for Environment or LiFE. India is home to the world's largest population of consumers. The term itself is a great leveller. From the richest industrialists to the poorest citizens—everybody is a consumer despite their diverse realities. Yet, the community of consumers remains an amorphous entity that is extremely hard to unite and mobilise. In comparison to various other distinctly identifiable social groups like farmers, labourers and students, consumers usually show little regard for their rights and responsibilities.

A rare experiment in organising consumers effectively and protecting their interests to work towards the lofty ideal of consumer justice is the Mumbai Grahak Panchayat (MGP), which is celebrating its golden jubilee this year. Founded by social and political activist Bindumadhav Joshi of Pune, freedom-fighter-turned-musician Sudhir Phadke and social-worker-turned-municipal-corporator Madhukar Mantri, MGP has evolved as a text-book example of sustainable community organisation. The key to MGP's functionality is its well-knit network of smaller consumer groups. The average strength of each such group remains at 15-20 families. These groups internally distribute and collect a demand sheet of primarily grocery items every month, mentioning the approximate prices of the items sought. Accordingly, members of the group deposit the requisite amount in the group's bank account. The apex federal body of such groups conducts wholesale purchase of the items demanded.

Later, such items are carefully packed in stipulated units and distributed among the groups. Members of every such group, by rotation, select the home of a member family as the distribution centre. On an appointed date, the members collect their items from the distribution centres. This activity cycle continues uninterruptedly all through the year. Every aspect of this community work remains well-orchestrated and on schedule. Rarely would members miss the date for depositing demand sheets. The federal body mandated to make wholesale purchases has earned a name for getting fair and competitive prices and an uncompromising approach towards the goods' quality. Trustworthy leadership, self-regulated discipline and the centrality of consumer justice—transparency and accountability—could be cited as hallmarks of the MGP's success.

It must also be noted that while the MGP is a non-profit, voluntary organisation, it has always refused to compromise with its fundamental value system. Refraining assiduously from the lure of seeking donations from wholesale grocery traders or manufacturers, and not seeking any advertisements from manufacturers or big trading organisations for MGP's magazine are two of the few policy approaches that it scrupulously adheres to. Besides, the organisation has also contributed to consumer activism in its own way at times, like playing a key role in the passage of the law to establish the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority in 2017.

No wonder then that the MGP today has 2,505 consumer groups with around 30,000 members. Its network covers just about six districts in the Konkan and Pune regions, but has a tremendous potential to expand. Meanwhile, its work has earned attention from global consumer protection bodies. It made persistent efforts to make the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection more comprehensive and for the UN Conference on Trade and Development to create an inter-governmental group of experts. Senior UNCTAD officials have commended MGP, saying that its participation has always added value to the deliberations and "successfully led (them) to the modernisation and expansion of the UNGCP, including on e-commerce, financial services, dispute resolution and redress and international cooperation".

Although MGP's achievements are truly historic, the challenges before the consumer movement in general and the MGP in particular are becoming more complex. This is because, like in politics, in consumer affairs too it is hard to tell people something that is unpopular but in the larger interests of the group. From banks to gyms, and from theatres to public transport, the need for greater efforts to achieve consumer justice is felt every day in different walks of life. Take the example of media. Consumer bodies have been rightly and somewhat sufficiently vigilant about adulteration in food. But what about the growing tendency of adulterating news with views? Consumers of various kinds of media—print, electronic and digital—need to come together to protect their interests. But sadly, this has never been attempted.

In the entertainment sector, several state government are supporting movie and drama producers with financial grants. This has led to the production of a greater number of works, but unsurprisingly, it has added neither to the quantitative nor qualitative growth of movie- and theatre-goers.

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India to have 126 doppler radars by 2026 as govt ramps up weather monitoring

New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): In a decisive move to strengthen India's meteorological capabilities, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting of India Meteorological Department (IMD) and key ministries to review India's weather and disaster preparedness, and also rolled out roadmap for accurate forecast. The Minister called for expediting expansion of Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) coverage and modernization of meteorological systems across the country.



At present, Delhi has 18 Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) in operation. During the review, the Minister directed officials to expedite the installation of 50 additional systems, with a long-term goal of scaling up to 100 AWS. This move aims to bring Delhi's weather forecasting infrastructure on par with global standards. These automated systems are designed to deliver highly specific, accurate, and timely forecasts, significantly enhancing the city's capacity to monitor and respond to changing weather conditions.

Amidst the growing frequency of extreme weather events, Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized the urgent need for real-time, impact-based forecasting that can help minimize damage and save lives. "No weather hazard should go undetected or unpredicted," the Minister asserted, underscoring the government's resolve to build a resilient early warning system that reaches every corner of the country.

A key highlight of the review was the ambitious expansion of the Doppler Weather Radar network, which is set to rise from the current 37 operational radars to 73 by 2025-26, and further to 126 by 2026. The new installations are being planned in high-priority regions such as Bengaluru, Raipur, Ahmedabad, Ranchi, Guwahati, and Port Blair, among others.

The Minister was briefed on the selection of radar sites and the overall progress of the "Mission Mausam" launched by PM Narendra Modi, which aims to revolutionize India's weather monitoring infrastructure. The plan includes improved satellite meteorology systems, upgraded numerical prediction models, and a more robust radar-based forecasting mechanism.

"The ability to track extreme weather events with greater precision will not only boost disaster management efforts but also directly benefit farmers, fishermen, aviation, and various other sectors," Dr. Jitendra Singh noted during the meeting, which included senior officials such as Earth Sciences Secretary Dr. M. Ravichandran and IMD Director General Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra. The review also took stock of financial allocations and approvals pending for key weather-related infrastructure projects. Dr. Jitendra Singh urged ministries to fast-track decisions to ensure timely implementation. With climate change intensifying the unpredictability of weather systems, the push for enhanced radar coverage and more efficient dissemination of forecasts is seen as critical for national preparedness.

The meeting, according to ministry officials, marks a significant step in India's journey toward becoming a global leader in climate resilience and disaster risk reduction. The Minister's review has now set the wheels in motion for a more coordinated and technologically advanced response to India's meteorological challenges. The initiative will also focus on strengthening coordination between the IMD, disaster management authorities and various state agencies to ensure that weather alerts are communicated quickly and effectively to vulnerable communities.

Pralhad Joshi inaugurates Solar PV testing facility in boost to green energy drive

New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): Marking a major advancement in India's green energy capabilities, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, on Tuesday inaugurated the PV Module Testing and Calibration Lab at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) at Gwal Pahari in Haryana on the outskirts of the national capital. The Minister said that the new lab will set global benchmarks in solar R&D, testing, training, and policy support while marking a bold step towards self-reliance, innovation, and global excellence.

Joshi said that NISE is now equipped to offer comprehensive testing, calibration, and certification services, particularly for photovoltaic modules and technologies where no established standards currently exist.

He termed the lab a pioneering facility for India and further highlighted that as Indian companies scale up the production of large modules, this lab will ensure that products meet the highest quality standards. Joshi noted that the lab also aligns with BIS standards and will provide a major boost to the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and support India's aspiration to become a global manufacturing hub. The minister also underlined the importance of NISE as a training ground for government officials, industry professionals, and international delegates. He appreciated NISE's efforts in training over 55,000 Suryamitra technicians and for installing more than 300 solar air dryer-cum-space heating systems in Leh, which are being used by farmers to dry apricots. He pointed out that such initiatives strengthen technical capacity and foster collaboration among government, industry, and academia. The new facility will enable NISE to significantly improve its efficiency, quality, and research in accordance with global benchmarks, he added.

Highlighting the exponential growth in the renewable energy sector during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's term in office, the minister said that India's installed solar capacity increased from 2.82 GW in 2014 to crossed 106 GW now, marking a growth of over 3,700 per cent. In terms of manufacturing, solar module production has increased from 2 GW in 2014 to 80 GW, with a target of reaching 150 GW by 2030. Alongside solar progress, the minister also underscored the achievement of 50 GW in wind energy capacity.

Emphasising the government's ambitious targets, Joshi said that India is firmly on track to achieve the 500 GW non-fossil fuel energy target by 2030, including 292 GW of solar energy, as envisioned by the Prime Minister. The Minister also urged NISE to step up efforts in global research impact and patent generation.

He highlighted the need for deep research, innovation, and global collaboration. He advised NISE to build partnerships, develop talent, and push boundaries so that its work resonates across laboratories, manufacturing units, and solar farms worldwide. He acknowledged that NISE is already working on advanced technologies like Perovskite Solar Cells and Bifacial Panels. Going forward, he said, NISE should undertake initiatives for mass adoption of innovations such as AI for Solar Power Forecasting.

New Officers to Boost Viksit Bharat Goals: MoS Chaudhary

New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): Union Minister of State for Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary presided over the Passing Out Parade today as Chief Guest of the 75th batch of 42 Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Indirect Taxes) officer trainees, including 25 men and 17 lady officers at NACIN, Palasamudram. Five officers are from the Royal Government of Bhutan were also part of the training programme. Also present were Shri Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, CBIC, Ms Aruna Narayan Gupta, Member, CBIC, and Dr. M. Subramanyam, Director General, NACIN, along with senior officers of CBIC and dignitaries. The Passing Out Parade, National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes & Narcotics (NACIN), Palasamudram, marks the culmination of an intensive 18-month training programne and commences their journey as Karmayogi, dedicated to safeguarding India's economic interests.

In his address on the occasion, Shri Chaudhary commended the batch's achievements and emphasised their responsibility in building a transparent and accountable tax system. Shri Chaudhary highlighted the role of IRS officers in economic growth and urged them to lead with courage and clarity. The Minister expressed confidence in their ability to advance the Government's vision of Viksit Bharat by promoting economic progress and social equality.

In his address, Shri Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, CBIC, congratulated the 75th batch officers and outlined their pivotal role in revenue mobilisation, trade facilitation, and national development and urged them to stay updated, uphold integrity, and embrace digital transformation to serve efficiently. Shri Agarwal further urged them for a balance between enforcement and facilitation, encouraging officers to lead with empathy, confidence, and discipline. In her address, Ms. Aruna Narayan Gupta, Member, CBIC, stressed on ethical conduct, empathy and continuous learning, while underscoring "Sevabhav" as a foundational quality for IRS officers, urging them to approach their duties with empathy, humility and a service-oriented mindset. She emphasised that public servants must remain accessible, fair and citizen-centric in their conduct, reinforcing that serving people is at the heart of governance.

The parade included a display of drills, showcasing the professionalism and discipline of the officers and also reaffirmed NACIN's role as a world-class institution committed to excellence in training and nation-building. The event concluded with the officers taking a solemn pledge to uphold the values of integrity and service as they step into their roles as economic enablers and defenders of the nation.

The 75th batch underwent an intensive training programme covering various aspects of customs administration, GST, indirect taxation, anti-smuggling operations, narcotics control, international trade and tax enforcement. The programme was designed to equip the officers with the professional knowledge, administrative skills and technological expertise required to meet the evolving challenges of revenue administration.

The participation of five officers from the Royal Government of Bhutan also reflected the growing cooperation between India and Bhutan in capacity building and professional training. The joint learning environment provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and strengthen institutional ties between the two countries in customs administration and related areas.

The Minister also encouraged the newly inducted officers to make effective use of technology, data analytics and modern administrative practices to improve tax compliance and strengthen enforcement mechanisms. He stressed that officers must ensure that taxpayers are treated with fairness and respect while maintaining strict action against tax evasion, smuggling and other economic offences.

The successful completion of the training programme marks an important milestone for NACIN, which plays a key role in developing skilled officers for India's indirect tax and customs administration. The newly trained officers are expected to contribute towards efficient revenue collection, smoother trade operations, improved compliance and the broader goal of building a transparent, accountable and citizen-friendly tax administration.

The ceremony further highlighted the importance of continuous professional development in public administration, with newly inducted officers being encouraged to uphold constitutional values and maintain the highest standards of professionalism throughout their careers.

NAAS and TAAS sign MoU to enhance collaboration in Agricultural science and research

New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): The National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) and the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS) jointly organized an interactive meet and felicitation ceremony to honour two eminent agricultural scientists -- Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Director General, ICRISAT, and Dr. M.L. Jat, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) & Director General, ICAR—on their appointments to prestigious leadership roles in their respective institutions, in New Delhi today.

A significant highlight of the programme was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between TAAS and NAAS, aimed at enhancing collaborative initiatives in agricultural science, research, and policy development.

During the event, Dr. M.L. Jat called upon the agricultural fraternity to come together in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Amrit Kaal. He emphasized the urgent need for science and evidence-based policymaking in agriculture and bringing smile on their faces, while also underscoring the importance of creating sustainable livelihoods for farmers. It is a time for common collaborative mission to bring smiles in famers face and align our goals to our nation's goals, he added.

"We must study emerging agricultural demands in the context of global megatrends. Strengthening both internal systems and external capacities, and ensuring their synergy, is key to building a resilient agricultural ecosystem," he stated. He further highlighted the challenges arising from the diversity of Indian agriculture and the necessity for well-planned, integrated approaches to address them.

Dr. Himanshu Pathak spoke on the critical role of science in societal transformation. He emphasized that every society must adopt and promote scientific thinking, and acknowledged the past successes of collaborative efforts between the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and NAAS. He expressed optimism that continued partnership-sparticularly between ICAR, CGIAR, and the Special Innovation Team (SIT)would further strengthen agricultural research and innovation in India.

Dr RS Paroda, Chairman, TAAS, stated that our agricultural challenges encompass national food security, nutritional security, and environmental sustainability. These can be addressed by mitigating climate change, transforming grey areas into green spaces, and promoting regenerative agriculture, he added. The ceremony also featured addresses from leading agricultural experts and dignitaries, including Dr. P.K. Joshi; Dr. Ashok K. Singh; and Dr. W.S. Lakra, who emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration to address future challenges in Indian agriculture. The event concluded with a collective reaffirmation of commitment to innovation, evidence-based policymaking, and inclusive growth in the agricultural sector.

The MoU between NAAS and TAAS is expected to provide a stronger institutional framework for joint research programmes, knowledge sharing and policy-oriented discussions. The partnership will facilitate interaction among agricultural scientists, policymakers, research institutions and other stakeholders to identify emerging challenges and develop practical solutions for the farming community. It also aims to promote the exchange of scientific expertise and strengthen the link between agricultural research and its field-level implementation.

The experts highlighted the growing impact of climate change, declining natural resources, changing food consumption patterns and emerging agricultural technologies on India's farming sector. They stressed that research priorities must be aligned with farmers' needs, ensuring that scientific innovations translate into improved productivity, higher incomes and sustainable agricultural practices. Greater attention was also called for towards soil health, water conservation, crop diversification and efficient resource management. The speakers further emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation between national and international agricultural research organisations to accelerate.

Hear from Former Beggars to Understand Causes, Impact: DEPwD Secretary

New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DoSJE), Government of India, in collaboration with the World Bank, organized a powerful and thought-provoking seminar with the theme - 'Population Out of Reach – SMILE (Beggary)' - on 25th April, 2025, in New Delhi. The objective of the seminar was to deliberate on strategies and share knowledge regarding the rehabilitation of beggars, the homeless, and the destitute population, with participation from both national and international experts. This event formed part of an ongoing knowledge seminar series aimed at deepening dialogue and action to strengthen social protection systems for the most vulnerable sections of society in India.

Addressing the Seminar as the Chief Guest, Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, shared his vision on inclusive development and disability-friendly outreach. He emphasized the need to hear directly from real stakeholders — those who have transitioned out of begging — to understand the root causes and impact of support systems. He also acknowledged the complexity of the issue, touching upon its social, religious, and economic dimensions.

On the other hand, the keynote address by Ms. Benedicte Leroy De La Briere, Lead Economist, World Bank, brought a global lens to the discussion on beggary rehabilitation. She highlighted the significance of the partnership between the World Bank and the Ministry of Social Justice, noting that such events provide valuable grassroots insights and authentic data from the field. They emphasized the importance of foundational documentation—such as having a registered address, a bank account, and access to healthcare—as essential to identifying and supporting individuals in vulnerable conditions. The representative concluded by stressing the need to focus today's discussion on targeted interventions and actionable solutions. Shri Ajay Srivastava, Economic Advisor (MoSJ&E), shared that approximately 18,000 individuals have been identified under the SMILE initiative, of which 1,612 have already been rehabilitated. He assured that efforts are underway to accelerate the rehabilitation of the remaining individuals. Ms. Debolina Thakur, Joint Secretary and Economic Advisor (DoSJ&E), also addressed the gathering, highlighting that many social challenges are shared globally. She noted that several international organizations are actively working to address these issues, and India too has many institutions making commendable efforts. Mr. Alemseged W Yohannes Bedane, Senior Social Protection Consultant, Ethiopia, shared the success story of the Urban Destitute Support Programme, which has led to the rehabilitation of thousands of homeless individuals. From Brazil, Ms. Beatriz Oliani and Ms. Camila Cabral presented São Paulo city's progressive policies and urban social welfare strategies. The seminar featured compelling presentations by nodal officers and grassroots organizations. Notable contributions came from Ms. Anuradha Chagti (Secretary, Social Welfare, Chandigarh Administration), Shri Snehil Kumar Singh (District Collector, Kozhikode). Partner organizations including Atchayam Trust (Tamil Nadu), PRAWES Rehabilitation Centre (Madhya Pradesh), UMMEED (Uttar Pradesh), and Udayam Homes (Kerala), also shared on-the-ground realities, challenges, and success stories in engaging with hard-to-reach populations. Further, Ms. Neena Pandey, Head of the Department of Social Work, and Dr. Tarique, Founder of Koshish Trust, delivered insightful presentations focusing on policy frameworks, ethical aspects, and the importance of community-based rehabilitation models.

The event was held in a hybrid format, ensuring inclusive participation from a broad spectrum of practitioners, policy-makers, international delegates, officials from the World Bank and students of social development across the country. Lively discussions, experience sharing, and actionable insights made this seminar a meaningful step towards building a more inclusive and responsive social protection system in India. Detailed discussions were held on creating structured frameworks to address social issues systematically.

The Department of Social Justice reaffirmed its commitment to continuing such knowledge-sharing platforms in the future, to promote innovation, foster collaborations, and work toward building a just and inclusive society. Participants stressed that rehabilitation efforts must go beyond providing immediate shelter and financial assistance, focusing instead on long-term social and economic reintegration. They highlighted the importance of skill development, vocational training, livelihood opportunities, counselling and access to essential government welfare schemes to help individuals.

Youth Must Lead Environmental Activism and Heritage Preservation: Dr. Mandaviya

New Delhi, Oct 31 (GNS): Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, inaugurated the National Service Scheme (NSS) - National Convention at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi today, marking the return of the prestigious gathering after a break of 15 years. The two-day convention will witness participation from more than 200 NSS officers from across the country. Addressing the NSS Convention, Dr. Mandaviya highlighted the need to redefine 'Seva' in the context of current global challenges. Drawing on his experience as a former NSS volunteer, he emphasized the importance of engaging youth in environmental activism, cultural preservation, and experiential learning.

"In the digital era, the meaning of 'Seva' must transform. Our youth must be at the forefront of environmental activism, heritage preservation etc. Experiential learning should go hand in hand with Seva must be the new norm," he said. He emphasized the transformative role of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), launched in 2023 under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, describing it as a unifying platform to channel the energy and potential of youth towards nation-building. Dr. Mandaviya urged all stakeholders to work collectively to inspire, empower, and equip young individuals to become informed and active contributors to the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

Earlier in the day, Dr. Mandaviya chaired the meeting of the National NSS Advisory Council, laying emphasis on modernizing youth volunteerism and aligning NSS with emerging national priorities. The Advisory Council comprises eminent personalities such as Dr. Himanshu Rai, Mr. Ronnie Screwvala, Mr. Malhar Kalambe, Ms. Usha Sharma and Smt. Geetanjali Kirloskar, along with senior officials from NCC, UGC, AICTE, CBSE, and academic bodies. Key resolutions were passed during the meeting include the formation of expert sub-committees for revamping NSS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), introducing research-driven initiatives, updating award mechanisms.

, and enhancing training frameworks. The strategic convergence of NSS and NCC under the Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) platform was also discussed to create a unified, holistic model for youth engagement.

The strategic integration of NSS and NCC within the Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) platform was actively explored to foster greater synergy and establish a unified, comprehensive approach to youth engagement. In line with the objectives of the National Education Policy, discussions also focused on linking NSS volunteer activities with enhanced employability, the provision of academic credits, and recognition through nationally accredited skill certifications.

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HYDERABAD, TELANGANA

Vakiti Srihari calls for stronger India-Germany ties

Invites German Investments to Telangana



Hyderabad, Oct 31 (GNS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has described the Supreme Court's verdict—affirming that all rights to the 550 acres of land in Survey Numbers 100 and 101 in Miyapur, Ranga Reddy district, belong to the government—as a historic judgment. On behalf of the people of Telangana, he expressed his gratitude to the Supreme Court judges for delivering a verdict in favor of the state government, thereby preventing the alienation of government land valued at approximately Rs. 50,000 crore.

While on a visit to Delhi, the Chief Minister spoke to the media alongside Members of Parliament, following the Supreme Court's clear ruling on the 550-acre tract in Miyapur. He hailed the judgment as a major victory for the people of Telangana. He stated that he has directed officials to take all necessary measures to secure the lands in Miyapur. He emphasized that government lands, once reclaimed from encroachers, will be utilized for the public good. He noted that since his administration—a government of the people—assumed office, it has fought effectively in the courts to prevent the alienation of state-owned lands, successfully safeguarding properties valued at approximately Rs. 1.5 lakh crore to date. He added that, in addition to the 550 acres in Miyapur, the government has secured valuable land across seven major locations in the state through these legal efforts. It was stated that leaving the lands secured by the government as they are poses a risk of them being alienated or misappropriated; therefore, the government intends to utilize them for public benefit. Lands protected by the government will be handed over to the respective departments—forest lands to the Forest Department and revenue lands to the Revenue Department. A cabinet sub-committee, appointed for resource mobilization, will study the potential sale of these lands and how the resulting funds can be used for development initiatives. It was clarified that these funds will primarily be directed toward the development of Dalits, Girijans, and Adivasis, providing education to the ultra-poor, constructing 'Indiramma' (housing scheme) homes, developing irrigation projects, and serving other public welfare purposes.

It was noted that following the formation of Telangana, there were attempts to seize valuable government lands, both around Hyderabad and elsewhere in the state. For instance, private individuals and investors attempted to encroach upon 550 acres of government *poramboke* (unassessed/wasteland) property—comprising survey numbers 100 and 101 in Miyapur, Ranga Reddy district—under the guise of developing residential colonies.

Over the past three years, the government has engaged in continuous consultations with legal counsel and presented strong arguments in court to protect these lands, successfully safeguarding assets valued at 50,000 crore.

CS Directs 20% reduction in water consumption



Hyderabad, Oct 31 (GNS): Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju today reviewed the drinking water supply situation in the core urban region at the Secretariat and emphasised the need for coordinated water security measures to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply while conserving available freshwater and groundwater resources.

The Chief Secretary said that all necessary measures should be put in place to optimise water usage and ensure the sustainable management of available resources. He informed that the implementation of the Green Tankers initiative in the core urban region would commence from November 1. He directed all government departments to utilise treated water for construction, landscaping, cleaning and other non-drinking purposes. He also instructed officials to regularly verify the quality of treated water supplied by Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) to ensure compliance with prescribed standards. The Chief Secretary directed the Managing Director of HMWSSB to submit a daily report indicating the quantity of treated water transported and supplied, in million gallons per day (MGD). During the meeting, HMWSSB Managing Director Ashok Reddy briefed the Chief Secretary on the contingency plan to ensure drinking water availability. He informed that the additional 40 MGD scheme under Mission Bhagiratha would be completed by November 15.

He further stated that Mission Bhagiratha would continue bulk water supply to all Urban Local Bodies merged into the municipal corporations until August next year. The Water Board will also supply treated water through Green Tankers on demand, on the lines of its existing drinking water tanker service. The facility will also be made available through a dedicated mobile application, enabling consumers to access treated water conveniently.

As part of the Save Water Campaign, efforts are being undertaken to reduce water consumption by 20 per cent across individuals, institutions and industries through awareness and conservation measures.

TG SAFE Suspends Licences of 14 Hyderabad Eateries Over Food Safety Violations

Hyderabad, Oct 31 (GNS): The Telangana Standards Authority for Food and Essential Drugs (TG SAFE) conducted a massive food safety inspection drive across the Golconda and Charminar zones of Hyderabad on Saturday, suspending the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) licences of 14 restaurants and eating establishments over serious hygiene and food safety violations.

A total of 22 enforcement teams comprising Food Safety Officers and police personnel inspected 22 restaurants and food establishments as part of the drive. The inspections revealed several serious violations, including unhygienic kitchens, cockroach and housefly infestations, spoiled vegetables, expired food products, improper food storage and repeated use of cooking oil.

During the inspections, officials collected 21 food samples on suspicion of adulteration. As much as 544 kg of spoiled and contaminated vegetables, leftover food, expired food products and pest-infested food articles were discarded on the spot. Another 13 kg of used cooking oil was also discarded on suspicion of repeated use. The enforcement teams found several establishments operating under highly unhygienic conditions. Violations included damaged flooring, stagnant water, greasy walls and chimneys, poor drainage facilities, rodent droppings and the presence of cockroaches and flies. In some kitchens, raw meat was stored improperly, while vegetarian and non-vegetarian food items were kept together in refrigerators.

Officials also found prepared and semi-prepared food items stored without proper labels, leftover food kept in refrigerators and food handlers working without essential protective equipment such as hairnets and gloves. Several establishments had failed to maintain mandatory records, including employee health certificates and pest-control documentation.

Show-cause notices were issued to eight establishments for serious violations. They include Taj Falaknuma Palace at Engine Bowli, Hotel Sabzi at Charminar, Pista House Restaurant at Shahalibanda, Sweekar Hotel at Santosh Nagar, Mandi at 36 Arabian Kitchen at Charminar, Golconda Hotel and Resorts at Masab Tank, Imperial Multicuisine Restauran.

Vivek Venkatswamy Calls for 8% Growth to Achieve $3 Trillion Telangana Economy by 2047



Hyderabad, Oct 31 (GNS): State Minister for Labour, Employment, Training, Mines, and Geology, Gaddam Vivek Venkatswamy, stated that an annual economic growth rate of 8% is required for India to evolve into a $5 trillion economy and for the state of Telangana to grow into a $3 trillion economy by 2047, transforming both the nation and the state into developed entities. He emphasized that, alongside economic growth, equal priority must be given to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

The Minister participated as the chief guest at the concluding session of a two-day national conference on "Economic Growth, Sustainable Development, and Public Policy," organized as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Dr. Marri Channa Reddy Human Resource Development Institute (Dr. MCR HRDI).

The Minister noted that the skill development of human resources plays a pivotal role in economic growth. He pointed out that there is a gap between the skills possessed by youth graduating from educational institutions and the skills required by industries, and stressed the need to bridge this divide. It was suggested that educational institutions should go beyond their existing courses and training programs to equip youth with the specific skills actually required by industries. A call was made to strengthen coordination and partnerships between industries and educational institutions. The importance of providing training that combines practical knowledge with technical skills—thereby enhancing job prospects for students—was highlighted.

In this regard, it was noted that the state government is modernizing 65 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) into 'Advanced Training Centers.' Plans are already in place to establish an additional 54 such centers, with the government's goal being to have a total of 122 Advanced Training Centers operational by next year. This initiative aims to provide youth with modern technical training tailored to industrial needs, ultimately improving their employment opportunities.

Furthermore, it was advised that youth should look to seize international employment opportunities. Pointing to the growing global demand for skilled human resources, the Minister shared observations from recent visits to Japan and Germany.

Jamia Alumni hold key meeting at MLC residence in Patna

Plan grand foundation day event



Patna, Oct 31 (GNS): A significant meeting of the Jamia Alumni Association was held today at the residence of Bihar Legislative Council Member and Senior Jamia Alumnus Dr. Khalid Anwar.

The meeting was attended by Irfaan Jamiawala (AAJMI Mumbai), Safdar Ali, Masroor Faizi along with his brother, and Jamia Alumnus and media professional Amit Kumar.

The members discussed preparations for the 106th Foundation Day (Youm-e-Tasees) of Jamia Millia Islamia. It was emphasized that Jamia's 106-year history is not just the history of a university, but of a movement.

On this occasion, MLC Dr. Khalid Anwar stated that Jamia has always given leaders, teachers, journalists and social workers to the nation and that all Jamia alumni of Bihar should come together on one platform.

It was decided in the meeting that very soon a grand program will be organized in Patna by the Bihar Alumni Association on the occasion of Jamia Foundation Day, in which Jamia alumni, educationists and social activists from across Bihar will participate.

The date and venue of the program will be announced soon.

Delimitation, quota to proceed despite SIR stir: Sanjay Kumar

Hyderabad, Oct 31 (GNS): Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday, October 31, said the NDA government would go ahead with delimitation, the NRC and 33 per cent reservation for women, despite the Opposition's agitation against the SIR of electoral rolls.

Alleging that the Congress was targeting constitutional institutions, he said the party had attacked the Election Commission, questioned Operation Mahadev, which was launched after the Pahalgam terror attack, and made critical remarks against the Supreme Court.

On the Congress's demand for elections using ballot papers, he said BJP MLAs and MPs from Telangana were ready to seek re-election on ballot papers in the next Assembly polls. He asked Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to say whether the Congress was ready to do the same in the state. "I am saying this without the permission of our leadership. I will persuade our central leadership," he told reporters here.

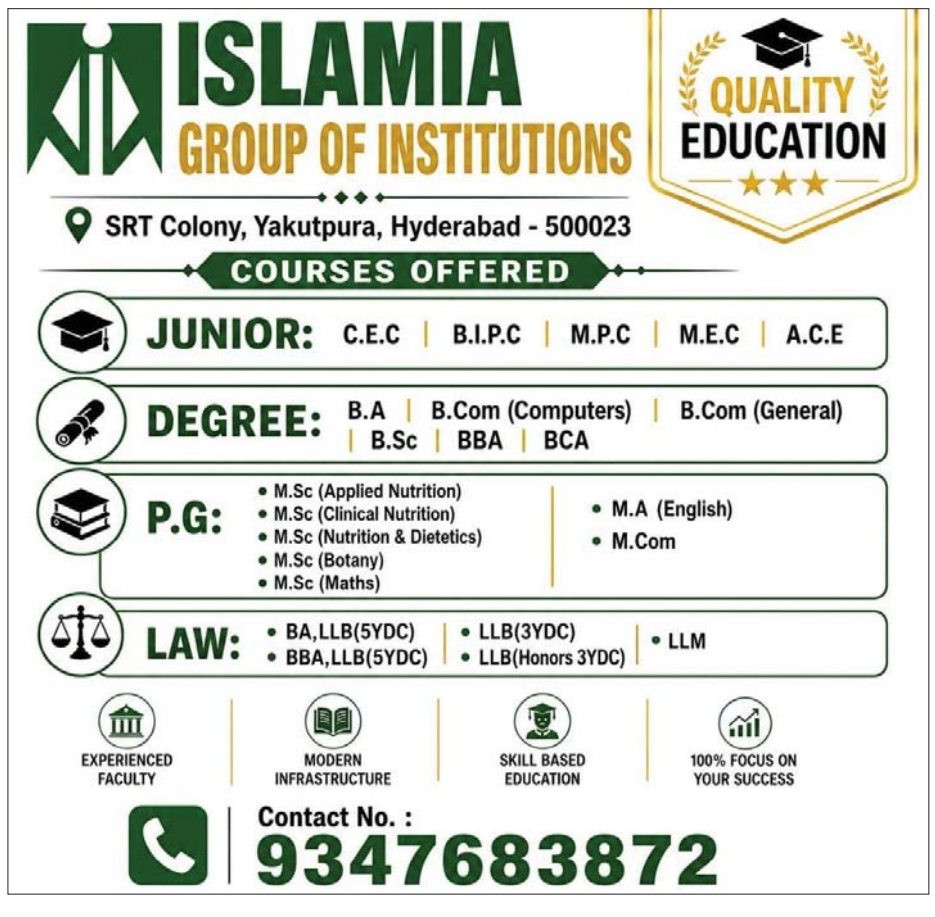
He said the Congress's decline began long ago, even though it was now alleging that the BJP was trying to win elections through Special Intensive Revision.

Charging that the Congress, the Communists, the AAP and the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) were trying to create an environment similar to the recent unrest in European countries, he said such tricks would not succeed as long as Narendra Modi was Prime Minister.

"There is no question of getting scared. SIR will continue. The National Register of Citizens will be implemented. We will provide 33 per cent reservation to women and extend opportunities to them in legislatures. We will take up the delimitation process. The 'Indi' alliance under Rahul Gandhi's leadership will witness a great scene after these are implemented," the Union Minister of State (Home) said.

The Congress takes credit for securing independence, he said, but asked how it could join hands with people like AISA president Neha Bora and Abhijeet Dipke. He cited American singer Mary Millen's allegation that the CJP was "funded by donors" in the US and reports of Neha Bora praising the Gen Z movement in Bangladesh.





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