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CM Revanth Reddy pushes talks with Maharashtra on Tummidihatti barrage



Hyderabad, Nov 3 (GNS): Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy ordered the irrigation officials to maintain a good rapport and continue the dialogue with the Maharashtra government on the proposed construction of the Tummidihatti barrage. Instructing the authorities to be fully prepared with comprehensive details of the submerged areas, the Chief Minister emphasized that all relevant documents including existing agreements and other important issues should be exchanged with the Maharashtra government.

The CM and Irrigation minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy held a review meeting with officials on Tummidihetti barrage at Jubilee Hills residence on Tuesday. The Chief Minister made some suggestions to the officials with regard to the recent discussions held with Maharashtra and other related issues. CM Revanth Reddy said that the government is prepared to provide adequate compensation for any lands in Maharashtra that may be affected by submergence and also ready to deposit funds into a joint account of the two state governments.

The Chief Minister noted that the state would not object to Maharashtra to conduct its own survey on the potential submergence of lands. The officials were ordered to furnish all the information sought by Maharashtra in a timely manner. Irrigation Advisor Adityanath Das, Secretary to Irrigation department Sridhar, Engineer-in-Chief, Irrigation, Ramesh, and other senior officials were present.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for close coordination between the two states to resolve outstanding issues and ensure progress on the proposed project. He directed irrigation officials to maintain regular communication with their Maharashtra counterparts and address any concerns regarding land submergence through mutual discussions. Revanth Reddy also instructed the department to keep technical and administrative details ready for further deliberations.

He said timely sharing of information and clarity on compensation arrangements would help build confidence between the two governments and facilitate the next steps towards the construction of the barrage.

Modi says 50 crore Indians overcame extreme poverty

- India's Metro Network Expands Nearly Five-Fold Since 2014
- Urban Infrastructure Investment to Drive Jobs and Growth



New Delhi, Nov 3 (GNS): Underscoring that India is defeating poverty on the ground, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said around 50 crore people had overcome extreme poverty in India in the last 10-12 years of NDA rule. The Prime Minister said that India stands as a nation that is not only the fastest-growing economy but also the fastest poverty reducer.

Speaking after virtually inaugurating and laying the foundation stone for Pune Metro projects worth around `21,800 crores, Mr Modi pointed out that India's operational Metro network has increased nearly five-fold. He said that the metro network, which covered 248 km before 2014, now covers 1,200 km and stressed that better urban infrastructure will accelerate the country's economic growth.

Referring to two major achievements driving global discussion about India, the Prime Minister, citing the latest World Bank report, said that the nation has maintained the world's fastest growth rate amid difficult international conditions while lifting 50-crore citizens out of extreme poverty within just 10 to 12 years.

"Earlier, the fight against poverty was only in slogans; today India is defeating poverty on the ground," Mr Modi said. Observing that India's twin milestones as the fastest-growing economy and the fastest poverty reducer are interlinked, Mr Modi explained that a growing economy and expanding Budget enable higher public investment, while money once lost to scams and leakages now reaches beneficiaries directly. The Prime Minister said that treasury investments in roads, rail, airports, Metros, electricity, water, and gas pipelines simultaneously improve living standards and generate employment. "Both these accomplishments are connected to each other," he noted.

Recalling the launch of the "Garib Kalyan Mela" initiative during his tenure as Gujarat chief minister, Mr Modi said that the scheme focused on delivering welfare schemes directly to beneficiaries and encouraging them to overcome poverty. Stating that the mission initiated back then has continued uninterrupted as true good governance defined by the 'power to empower', he emphasised that this transformation is the result of years of deliberate and planned efforts rather than a sudden occurrence. "Therefore, 50-crore Indians have defeated poverty," he noted. Explaining that poverty reduction benefits the wider nation beyond the families escaping deprivation, the Prime Minister pointed out that it revitalises the national economy and creates a new middle class whose purchasing power drives market demand and opens new possibilities from shops to factories. "Meaning, decreasing poverty in India is taking the economy of India to a new height," he observed.

Rajnath Singh stresses defence reforms



New Delhi, Nov 3 (GNS): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday noted that modern warfare has undergone a "fundamental transformation" with the battlefield now extending to "space and cyberspace".

Addressing the 'Delhi Defence Dialogue 2026', Rajnath Singh also stressed the need for reforms in the defence sector, saying: "Reforms represent our willingness to change. 'Atmanirbharata' (self-reliance) represents our determination to create. Collaborations represent our confidence to partner with the world, and exports represent our readiness to compete with the world."

While cautioning that self-reliance without reform may not deliver its full potential, he said: "Self-reliance without collaboration may limit our technological horizons, and self-reliance without exports may not achieve the scale and competitiveness that a modern defence industry requires. Together, these four elements define the transformation we seek in India's defence ecosystem."

Rajnath Singh noted that recent conflicts across the world have demonstrated that the character of warfare is undergoing a "fundamental transformation".

"The battlefield is no longer confined to land, sea or air. It extends into space, cyberspace and the digital domain. The distinction between conventional and unconventional warfare is being increasingly blurred," he noted. He further noted that the world is also witnessing a transformation in the economics of warfare.

"Relatively expensive drones and autonomous systems can challenge sophisticated and costly military platforms. The ability to innovate rapidly, manufacture at scale, and replenish capabilities has become as important as possessing advanced weapon systems," he said while emphasising that these developments underline an important reality.

LS Speaker Om Birla attends PAC chairpersons' conference in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 3 (GNS): Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla attended the Conference of Chairpersons of Public Accounts Committees (PACs) of Parliament and State and Union Territory Legislatures at the Kerala Legislative Assembly in Thiruvananthapuram.

The conference brought together chairpersons and representatives of Public Accounts Committees from Parliament and various State and Union Territory legislatures to discuss matters relating to legislative oversight, financial accountability and the functioning of parliamentary institutions. The Public Accounts Committees play an important role in examining government expenditure, reviewing audit reports and ensuring that public funds are utilised in accordance with approved financial procedures. Their work also strengthens transparency and accountability in public administration.

The participation of the Lok Sabha Speaker highlighted the importance of cooperation among legislative institutions in strengthening democratic practices and ensuring effective financial scrutiny.

The conference provided an opportunity for representatives of different legislatures to exchange views and experiences on improving the functioning of Public Accounts Committees and reinforcing accountability in governance.

Chhattisgarh Now Naxal-Free: HM Amit Shah

Raipur, Nov 3 (GNS): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said Chhattisgarh has become Naxal-free and is poised to rank among the top three states in the tourism sector in the coming years. Addressing the closing ceremony of the Chhattisgarh Rajyotsav in Naya Raipur, HM Shah said the state possesses immense tourism potential with treasures such as the Gariaband region, Balameshwari temple, Dantewada's Danteshwari temple and the unique Bastar Dussehra.

He recalled that it was once said the land is rich, but the people are poor, and assured that within 10 years both the land and its people would be prosperous. HM Shah said the goal under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to create a state where people are happy and affluent, and the land itself is prosperous and thriving.

He noted that out of the 26 years since the state's formation, the BJP has been in power for 20 years. During this period, he said, the annual budget has increased 30-fold, per capita income has risen significantly, and the Gross State Product has grown 25 times.

Jairam Ramesh calls ECI's Form-6 clarification 'Word Games'; demands halt to SIR



New Delhi, Nov 3 (GNS): Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Tuesday sharply criticised the Election Commission of India's latest clarification on Form-6, terming it another set of "word games" that clarify nothing and expose how poorly designed the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process is.

In a post on X, Ramesh said each damage-control attempt by the ECI only highlights the flaws in the SIR exercise.

He pointed out that Form-6 clearly asks applicants whether they are "applying for inclusion for the first time."

According to him, the ECI's clarification that voters seeking re-inclusion during SIR can also be treated as first-time applicants is a "deceptive word" game aimed at covering up a flawed process that forces voters to make a false declaration. Ramesh further alleged that after asking voters to sign such a declaration, the Commission is now offering them protection from legal consequences after the fact. This, he said, shows how poorly thought through the entire SIR process has been. The Congress leader noted that the Chief Electoral Officer of Maharashtra had written to the ECI arguing that Form-6 cannot be used in this manner.

He also referred to an ongoing case before the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court, where the court has questioned the logic put forward by the ECI, particularly as it leaves out absent and shifted voters. Ramesh asserted that the ECI cannot address the real problem — that the SIR is designed for exclusion.



India, Poland moving decisively to further strengthen bilateral economic ties: Minister Jitin Prasada



New Delhi, Nov 3 (GNS): The Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Jitin Prasada, said on Tuesday that India and Poland are moving decisively and effectively in the direction to strengthen bilateral economic ties amid the negotiations to implement the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Prasada, who met Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Ignacy Niemczycki in Warsaw, said the ties between India and Poland are getting stronger under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Poland said the two nations are entering a new chapter of cooperation

Following Prime Minister Donald Tusk's recent visit to Delhi and Bengaluru, Deputy FM Niemczycki met Prasada in Warsaw. "We are focusing on concrete areas of cooperation: A space agreement and new flight connections with @LOTPLAirlines; shipbuilding, mining and defence industries; and digitalisation and support for the EU-India Free Trade Agreement", said Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Economic ties with the world's most populous country are gaining tremendous momentum," it said in a post on X. Last month, PM Modi and his Polish counterpart Tusk set a target of doubling bilateral trade between the two countries by 2030, according to a joint statement issued after their meeting here. The leaders called for early signing and ratification of the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as well as its timely implementation, to unlock new opportunities for trade and investment, diversifying and strengthening critical value chains, and opening new markets, the statement said. PM Modi invited Polish companies to expand their investments and operations in India and to benefit from India's large market, skilled workforce and growing manufacturing and innovation ecosystem.

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Public trust key to India's nuclear push



K Ramanathan
Arunendra Kumar Tiwari

IN his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid stress on the critical role of nuclear power in building a truly self-reliant India and achieving energy independence. The importance of nuclear energy is also reflected in this year's Budget, subsequent policy statements and efforts to open the sector to private sector participation.

An interim target of achieving 100 GW (gigawatts), which includes both large and small reactors, by 2047 has also been envisaged. Small Modular Reactors (SMRs with a capacity of 300 MW or below), are gaining special attention these days as they can play a key role in decarbonising hard-to-abate industries, providing a stable power supply to remote areas, serving captive power requirements and producing hydrogen. Hard-to-abate industries — such as cement, steel, power, oil and natural gas, chemicals and fertilisers — are difficult to decarbonise due to high energy requirements and emissions from chemical processes.

Three types of SMRs — 200 MWe (megawatt electrical) Bharat Small Modular Reactors, 55 MWe SMRs and five MWth (megawatt thermal) High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactors — are being designed and developed indigenously. These augur well for realising India's nuclear vision. The road ahead, however, is not that rosy. There are hurdles to be crossed, the main one being ensuring public acceptance by addressing apprehensions about human safety and environmental impacts.

Public unease around nuclear energy is deeply shaped by history. Memories of Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011) continue to loom large, fuelling perceptions that a nuclear accident is both catastrophic and inevitable. The core fear is the uncontrolled release of radioactive material in the event of severe accidents that could cause long-term environmental damage and health impacts.

Radioactive waste, with its millennia-long hazard profile, is another persistent worry. Questions are often raised about the long-term storage safety, risks of leakage and economic costs.

For SMRs, these general fears are compounded by their limited operating experience, potential siting closer to population centres, fuel supply chains and waste management. As private sector participation grows, questions may also arise about adequate availability of trained operators. The regulatory framework in India is fairly strong. The public concern thus seems to be based on limited public exposure to factual safety records and modern reactor safety features.

India's nuclear fleet has operated for decades with an enviable safety record. As documented in reports, radiation exposure to plant workers has consistently been well below global regulatory limits, with public exposure averaging less than 10 per cent of the prescribed thresholds. The country's plants follow a "defence-in-depth" approach — multiple, redundant safety barriers, robust heat removal systems, emergency core cooling and airtight containment structures.

After the Fukushima disaster, Indian reactors underwent significant safety upgrades: hydrogen recombiners to prevent explosions, filtered containment venting systems to limit radiological release and enhanced flood protection measures. Every site also has Severe Accident Management Guidelines (SAMGs) in place, supported by emergency power backup and mobile equipment for extreme events.

India's operating nuclear power plants have demonstrated a commendable safety record. The International Atomic Energy Agency, in its latest safety review, has acknowledged the strong commitment and professionalism of India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)/Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in ensuring nuclear and radiation safety in the country. Building on this foundation, emerging technologies like SMRs incorporate advanced safety features to further enhance reliability and public confidence. The SMR concepts incorporate passive safety systems that function without human intervention or external power, relying instead on natural forces such as gravity. This inherent resilience makes them particularly robust in the face of extreme events, including station blackout scenarios. Their design offers multiple advantages: smaller reactor cores containing less fissile material, thereby reducing the potential radiological source; and lower operating pressures in certain configurations.

Furthermore, factory fabrication of modules ensures stringent quality control and reduces variability associated with on-site construction. These combined features not only strengthen overall safety but also make it possible to consider smaller Emergency Planning Zones, opening opportunities for siting reactors closer to demand centres such as industrial hubs or urban microgrids.

It is heartening to note that the DEA and the AERB are looking into this matter with requisite urgency. Nonetheless, regulatory bodies emphasise that emergency planning will continue to be rigorous for all nuclear facilities to safeguard against security-related contingencies.

Building public trust is a major prerequisite for ensuring successful deployment of nuclear power plants. India's own experience — local opposition in some cases — shows that even the best-engineered plant can face hurdles if safety is not understood and accepted by those living nearby. It would also be desirable that the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) and the AERB involve a few other reputed organisations to ensure wider outreach with no information bias. The communication strategy must be proactive right from the site selection stage and address all safety concerns. Sharing of success stories in India and other countries would also be helpful. By embedding such outreach into the project timeline, SMR development can move beyond a technology-first approach, making public trust and acceptance a parallel pillar to engineering excellence, and projecting the plant as a shared community asset from the outset.

The successful implementation of the SMR programme will depend not only on technological advancements but also on the ability to establish a transparent and accountable institutional framework. With private companies entering the nuclear sector, clearly defined responsibilities among developers, operators, equipment suppliers and regulators will be essential. Safety standards must remain uniform, irrespective of whether a facility is operated by a public sector undertaking or a private entity. Commercial considerations should never take precedence over nuclear safety.

Another important aspect is the development of a skilled workforce capable of managing the expanding nuclear energy ecosystem. SMRs may involve advanced reactor designs, digital monitoring systems, automated safety mechanisms and specialised fuel technologies. This will require continuous investment in technical education, specialised training and research programmes. Universities, engineering institutions and national laboratories should collaborate with the Department of Atomic Energy to prepare professionals for the emerging requirements of the sector.

Indigenous manufacturing will also be crucial to the long-term success of India's nuclear ambitions. Developing domestic capabilities for reactor components, specialised materials, instrumentation and control systems can reduce dependence on overseas suppliers. It would also create opportunities for Indian engineering companies, small and medium enterprises and technology startups. A strong domestic supply chain would improve project execution, strengthen energy security and generate employment opportunities.

Fuel availability and the management of spent nuclear fuel require equal attention. As the number of reactors increases, India will need a reliable and sustainable nuclear fuel cycle supported by appropriate infrastructure. Advanced fuel technologies, recycling capabilities and secure waste management facilities must evolve alongside reactor deployment. Public communication on these aspects should clearly explain the scientific safeguards, regulatory oversight and long-term management arrangements adopted by the country.

The economic viability of SMRs will be another decisive factor. Although modular construction and standardised designs could reduce construction periods and improve cost predictability, the actual economics will depend on financing arrangements.

Is War Necessary For Peace?

The Ongoing War in the Middle East has certainly stirred and jolted the present world posing quite a very complex and jumbled proposition as to whether in the course of critical times war becomes a living reality to create and regenerate a congenial scenario for having life long stint of the enduring peace amongst the societies for the ultimate prosperity and prolonged usefulness of holistic human endeavor forever. Let us dive deep and churn out the ultimate basic truth: Human civilization has always oscillated between the ideals of peace and the harsh realities of war. Philosophers, Strategists and political leaders do often debate that as to whether war can ever be justified as means to achieve lasting peace. While some argue that war is sometimes necessary to eliminate tyranny or restore stability. History repeatedly demonstrates that wars often create deeper divisions, suffering, and long-term instability. The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East or West Asia—particularly the wars involving Gaza strip, Israel, Iran and Yemen raise serious questions, whether war truly leads to peace or merely perpetuates cycles of violence. In theory, some scholars of International relations believe in the concept of " war for peace". The logic is that decisive military action can dismantle oppressive regimes or deter aggression. For example, the devastation of world war ii, Institutions like United Nations were created to maintain global peace. However, the paradox remains that while war may sometimes stop a particular threat, it rarely removes the deeper political, economic and ideological conflicts that caused it.

The contemporary conflicts in West Asia highlight this dilemma quite vividly. The Israel- Palestine conflict which escalated dramatically after October 7 Hamas -led attack on Israel, has resulted in massive destruction and humanitarian crises. Thousands of civilians have suffered, cities have been devastated and the region remains deeply polarized. Similarly the long standing rivalry between Iran and Israel has raised fears of a wider regional war, while the civil war in Yemen continues to devastate one of the world's poorest nation. These conflicts illustrate that war often multiplies grievances than resolving them. Another critical dimension of these wars is the role of geopolitical interests and natural resources The Middle East possesses nearly half of the world's proven oil reserves, making it strategically vital for global energy security. Major powers have historically competed for influence in the region to secure access to the resources such as petroleum and natural gas. The involvement of external powers in countries like Iraq and Syria have often been interpreted by critics as driven partly by resource interests and strategic dominance. While uranium resources are not the central factor in Middle Eastern conflicts, nuclear ambitions, particularly those associated with Iran—have intensified global tensions. Thus it is not entirely inaccurate to say that resource competition, combined with strategic arrogance and ideological rivalries fuel many of these wars.

However, reducing all conflicts merely to the struggle for oil or uranium would be an over simplification. Historical grievances, territorial disputes, religious divisions and political power struggles also play a major role. For example, roots of Israel -Palestine conflict lie in the complex history surrounding the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948, displacement of populations and unresolved questions of sovereignty. These layered causes make it extremely difficult for military solutions alone to bring sustainable peace. The consequences of war extend far beyond the immediate battlefield. Humanitarian catastrophes, displacement of millions, destruction of infrastructure, and long term psychological trauma are common outcomes. Economies collapse, Education systems are disrupted and generations grow up in environments of fear and instability. The refugee crisis arising from conflicts in Syria and Yemen demonstrates as to how regional wars can become global humanitarian challenges. For a country like India, these conflicts carry serious implications. Our country heavily depends on energy imports from Gulf region, making stability in west Asia crucial for its economic security. Escalating conflicts can lead to higher oil prices, disruption in shipping routes and inflationary pressures on the Indian economy. Furthermore, millions of Indian expatriates work in countries such as united Arab emirates, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Any regional instability directly affects their safety and livelihoods. India must, therefore, carefully balance its diplomatic relations with all sides while advocating peace and stability.

India's traditional foreign policy principle of strategic autonomy and peaceful existence can pay a constructive role in addressing such crises. Right from beginning, India has supported dialogue, non-alignment and multilateral diplomacy. In recent years, India has strengthened ties with Israel while also maintaining cordial relations with Arab countries and Iran. This balanced approach places India in a unique position to encourage dialogue and humanitarian cooperation. For the purpose of resolving the gigantic crisis facing the Middle East and prevent further global instability, several measures are essential such as:- 1.Diplomatic engagement must replace military confrontation.

International organizations like the United Nations must be strengthened to so that they can act as effective mediators. 2. Major powers should avoid turning regional conflicts into proxy wars. When external powers compete for influence, local disputes often escalate into prolonged wars. 3. Economic cooperation and regional development initiatives can reduce tensions by creating shared interests. Investments in education, infrastructure and employment opportunities can help stabilize societies that are currently vulnerable to conflict. 4. Humanitarian aid and reconstruction must be prioritized to alleviate the sufferings of civilians. 5. Finally there must be a global commitment to ethical leadership and restraint. Military strength may deter aggression but arrogance and unilateralism often deepen hostility. Genuine peace requires justice, dialogue and mutual respect among nations.

Dams, negligence, and the making of Himalayan

Himanshu Thakkar

SCARY visuals, rainfall data, messages on social media and some pronouncements of the Supreme Court reflect the severity of the flood disaster in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal is known to be vulnerable to landslides, mudslips, cloudbursts, flashfloods, erosion, seismicity and floods. But how floods become disasters is linked to the way we treat the landscape, environment, regulations, people and floods.



A number of anthropogenic factors have led to a rise in the scale of the disasters. Himachal Pradesh has the largest installed capacity of hydropower projects and the largest number of dams among the Himalayan states. The key requirements of the decision-making process related to such projects include honest environmental, social and disaster impact assessments and management plans at both project and river basin levels. Also needed are cumulative impact assessments, transparent appraisal and credible monitoring and compliance mechanisms. Most of these aspects are missing at both the state and central levels.

The hydropower projects and dams can help moderate floods only if they are operated with that objective in mind. Their standard operating procedures, including rule curves, updated every five years, must be in the public domain, along with the identity of the authorities responsible. Dam operations must be informed by the actual water flow and rainfall in the upstream and downstream catchments and rivers and the carrying capacity of the rivers and catchment in the downstream.

All information related to dam operations must be put in the public domain (the website) on a daily basis and archived for at least five years. Functioning early warning systems must be in place not only in glacier catchments of dams and hydro projects but also in all landslide- or flashflood-prone streams. The accountability mechanism must kick in whenever any operating procedure is violated. Rivers and streams must have the adequate waterway capacity to carry potential flood waters. The encroachments, particularly those that have come up over the last couple of decades, must be systematically and humanely removed. Muck arising out of the construction of dams, hydro projects, roads, railways, townships, bridges, mining, etc, must be disposed of systematically so that it does not enter the rivers, reducing their carrying capacity. This requires policy and credible governance, including monitoring, compliance and accountability mechanisms.

We must learn from the past disasters. The government must institute an independent assessment of each disaster to understand what happened, who was responsible, what lessons can be learned, and who should be held accountable. Without this basic step, we cannot understand the impacts and implications of these disasters. The First Information Reports (FIRs) filed in August by the HP Government against the BBMB and other dam operators is a good first step; it must be taken to its logical conclusion. It should not be ineffective, like the notices that the HP Chief Secretary issued to many dam authorities in August 2023. We also need to underline the failure of the Central Water Commission, the national flood forecaster. It has not only failed to forecast most floods, even its monitoring seems to break down at every sign of disaster. Its inflow forecasting does not take into account the rule curve nor is it ready to name any dam for wrong operations. Similarly, the IMD has failed to provide actionable, location- and time- specific rainfall forecast. The word cloudburst is used so regularly, but in most cases, the IMD refuses to certify the events as cloudbursts since in most cases, it does not have the means to quantify the local rainfall.

The Doppler radars, that help forecast high-intensity rainfall events, are non-functional at most places. And the IMD fails to report river basin- and sub-basin-wise rainfall, the key requirement to forecast river and dam inflows. On disaster management, we do well in rescue and relief operations, but miserably fail in prevention — a front on which so much can be done. A good example is the Guidelines on Management of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), brought out by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in October, 2020. The GLOF provides useful suggestions on preventing disasters and reducing their impact, but none of its key recommendations have been implemented since it came out. Why are the national and state dam safety authorities silent on the avoidable disasters brought upon by wrong operations of dams year after year? Why do we see no impact of the Dam Safety Act?

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



New Delhi, Oct 3 (GNS): In a significant step towards positioning Chhattisgarh as a major hub for agricultural and processed food exports, the Regional Office of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was inaugurated at Raipur during the 2nd India International Rice Summit held in Chhattisgarh. The inauguration was attended by Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of Medical Education, Govt of Chhattisgarh, Shri Shyam Bihari Jaiswal, along with other dignitaries.

Chhattisgarh, with its rich and diverse agri-ecosystem, offers significant export potential across a wide range of products. These include premium non-basmati rice varieties and Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged products such as Jeeraphool Rice and Nagri Dubraj Rice. The State also produces a variety of fruits and vegetables including guava, banana, dragon fruit, jackfruit, custard apple, tomato and cucumber, along with important minor forest produce such as mahua, tamarind, herbal and medicinal plants, providing strong opportunities to expand its presence in global markets. The establishment of the APEDA Regional Office in Raipur marks an important milestone for Chhattisgarh's agrarian economy. The new office will facilitate farmers, producer groups, cooperatives and exporters by providing services such as export registration, advisory support, market intelligence, certification assistance, export facilitation, infrastructure development and market linkage support. Recently, the APEDA Regional Office in Raipur also facilitated the export of fortified rice kernels from Chhattisgarh to Costa Rica and Papua New Guinea.

Addressing the occasion, Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai stated that the opening of the APEDA Regional Office in Raipur is a mission to integrate Chhattisgarh's farmers with the global economy. He highlighted the potential of the State's farmers, exporters and entrepreneurs in global agri-markets and expressed confidence that Chhattisgarh would emerge as a leader in high-value and sustainable agricultural exports. He thanked Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, for sanctioning the APEDA office in Chhattisgarh based on the request of the State Government, and assured full support to APEDA and the Department of Commerce in expanding exports of agricultural and organic products from the State.

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

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

New Delhi, Oct 3 (GNS): Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav on Monday chaired a meeting of the National Institute for Research & Application of Natural Resources to Transform, Adapt and Build Resilience (NIRANTAR), a platform of institutions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) aimed at improving coordination and collaboration.

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

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

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

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

Concluding, Shri Yadav said that the "Whole of Government" approach, along with better coordination and cooperation, was essential for achieving meaningful outcomes from the NIRANTAR platform.

He further stressed the need to strengthen scientific research and ensure that its findings translate into practical solutions for environmental conservation and sustainable development.

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

New Delhi, Oct 3 (GNS): Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Minister of State for Education Shri Jayant Chaudhary chaired the First General Body Meeting of the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) today at Kaushal Bhawan, New Delhi. During the meeting Shri Jayant Chaudhary said "India's skilling ecosystem is undergoing a paradigm shift—from fragmented systems to a unified, outcome-oriented framework aligned with education, industry, and future technologies. NCVET is playing a significant role in making this transformation credible, transparent, and learner-centric,".

Addressing the meeting, Shri Jayant Chaudhary emphasized that the integration of skilling with mainstream schooling and higher education, enabled through the National Credit Framework and other initiatives of NCVET are making skilling aspirational and ensuring seamless horizontal and vertical mobility for learners across the education ecosystem. The General Body was apprised of the institutional progress made by NCVET since its operationalisation on 1 August 2020. As the apex national regulator for Skilling, NCVET has successfully subsumed the functions of the erstwhile National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) and National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT), thereby consolidating India's previously fragmented skilling regulatory architecture.

At present, NCVET regulates 161 Awarding Bodies and 68 Assessment Agencies across the country.

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

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

The General Body deliberated on several strategic national initiatives, including:

- SOAR (Skilling for AI Readiness): A flagship initiative aimed at democratizing AI learning, which has already recorded over 1.74 lakh enrolments.

- Project Punah Sthapan: An innovative programme facilitating the transition of Defence personnel to the civil workforce, with 20 Tri-Services institutions recognised as Dual Awarding Bodies.

"From Campuses to Nation-Building, India's Youth Are Powering Viksit Bharat": Sarbananda Sonowal

New Delhi, Oct 3 (GNS): India's young generation is no longer waiting on the sidelines but is actively shaping the country's political, economic and social future, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) Sarbananda Sonowal underscored the central role of youth in the journey towards a developed India.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inspired by the ideals of Swami Vivekananda, Sonowal said India's youth are playing an active role in shaping the country's future. "The journey towards Viksit Bharat is a national mission, and its success depends on the energy, ideas and leadership of our young citizens," he said.

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

New Delhi, Oct 3 (GNS): The increase in India's rural demand, reflected in figures such as the surge in two-wheeler sales, spells good news for India's $4.2 trillion economy, which in 2025 passed Japan to emerge as the world's fourth-largest, media reports said.

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

The article points out that the improvement in rural demand suggests that growth is trickling down in what is by any yardstick a highly unequal society, with too much wealth and buying capacity concentrated at the top of the pyramid. That purchasing power is improving in a wider section of people is also a morale booster for a country that in 2025 suffered a series of setbacks. Punitive tariffs imposed by the Trump administration led to significant job losses in jewellery, garments and marine sectors, the article states.

"There have also been questions about the quality of Indian data raised by the International Monetary Fund and some economists. But the empirical evidence now showing up is hard to ignore - even from this distance - and Singaporeans should take note of this growth pole. All the more given the wheeze in big regional economies such as Indonesia's and Thailand's, and persistent concerns about China," the article states. The article highlights that the prospects of broad-based growth in India spell good news for Singapore's companies, such as DBS Bank, Sembcorp, Singtel and CapitaLand - all of which have significant presence in that economy either directly or via significant stakes in key Indian companies. The Indian market has also been Singapore investment company Temasek's top-performing portfolio over the past decade, the article added.

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

New Delhi, Oct 3 (GNS): Experts across the Ministry of Ayush institutions including National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) has called for Artificial intelligence (AI) and related technologies to monitor, verify, and document the quality and journey of medicinal plants right from the farm (the "farm-gate") through the entire supply chain, in a two-day National Seminar on "Design and Development of Tools for Quality Assessment of Medicinal Plants at Farm Gates". The seminar held on 8–9 January 2026 at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, brought national focus to India's medicinal plant sector—assured quality, traceability, and standardisation of raw materials at the point of origin. The seminar convened policymakers, scientists, technologists, industry leaders, and researchers to deliberate on strengthening farm-gate quality systems as a foundation for the sustainable growth and global competitiveness of India's Ayush and medicinal plant ecosystem.

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

The discussions highlighted that India is both technically and institutionally prepared to adopt AI-based diagnostics, digital phenotyping, and integrated quality frameworks, reinforcing the credibility of Indian medicinal plant raw materials in domestic as well as international markets. Day Two was dedicated to roadmap building through two structured expert brainstorming sessions on Integration of Artificial Intelligence in the Indian Medicinal Plant Industry, and use of Blockchain Technology for Supply-Chain Transparency and Traceability. The sessions resulted in a strong consensus that digital tools at the farm gate—such as portable quality-testing devices, AI-enabled decision-support systems, and blockchain-based traceability platforms—are no longer optional but essential to ensure authenticity, safety, and global competitiveness of Indian herbal raw materials.

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

Participants unanimously underscored that quality must be built at the point of origin, directly supporting NMPB's mandate to empower primary producers and collectors. The deliberations validated the practical deployment of AI and digital tools to reduce adulteration, variability, and farmer losses, while also establishing the critical role of blockchain-enabled end-to-end traceability for exports and pharmacopoeial compliance. The seminar also highlighted the integration of traditional knowledge systems such as Vriksha Ayurveda with modern quality-control frameworks, demonstrating how India's heritage can be scientifically validated and digitised to strengthen global acceptance. Strong emphasis was placed on capacity building, with participants gaining exposure to advanced tools, standards, and evolving policy directions. The seminar laid a robust foundation for developing a national framework for AI-enabled, traceable, and standardised medicinal plant supply chains. The outcomes directly support the national priorities of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India, while reinforcing India's leadership in the global Ayush sector.

The deliberations strongly underscored the need for continued and expanded support for pilot projects, technology deployment, and farmer-level capacity building under NMPB-supported initiatives, positioning farm-gate quality as a cornerstone of India's medicinal plant economy. The adoption of AI-based technologies is expected to bring greater transparency and efficiency to medicinal plant cultivation and marketing. By enabling early identification of quality-related issues, these tools can help farmers and collectors adopt appropriate cultivation, harvesting and post-harvest practices. This would also minimise rejection of raw materials and improve the economic returns of primary producers.

Experts also stressed the importance of developing affordable and user-friendly testing technologies that can be deployed in rural and remote areas. Portable devices capable of assessing important quality parameters at the farm gate would allow farmers to verify the quality of medicinal plants before they enter the market. Such decentralised testing facilities could strengthen quality assurance and reduce dependence on expensive laboratory-based assessments.

The integration of blockchain technology was identified as an important step towards establishing confidence in the medicinal plant supply chain. Recording information about cultivation locations, harvesting dates, processing methods, storage conditions and transportation would enable stakeholders to verify the origin and authenticity of raw materials. This would be particularly beneficial for exporters seeking to meet stringent international quality and traceability requirements.

The seminar also highlighted the need to bring farmers, traditional medicine practitioners, researchers and pharmaceutical manufacturers onto a common platform. Greater collaboration would facilitate the exchange of scientific knowledge and traditional practices while ensuring that quality standards remain consistent across different stages of production. Special attention was recommended for small farmers and forest-based collectors.

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Bhatti calls for effective implementation of central schemes in Telangana



Hyderabad, Nov 3 (GNS): Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka on Tuesday called for better focus on implementation of Central sector schemes and programmes in Telangana, and directed officials to ensure that such programmes and schemes make most of the funding and generate the expected outcomes.

Mr Vikramarka, who chaired a meeting with all department heads and senior officials at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat on Tuesday, emphasised the need to maximise the flow of funds from the Government of India under Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS). Reviewing the progress of fund utilisation under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes by different departments, the Deputy Chief Minister stressed the importance of ensuring that the funds allocated by the Centre are effectively utilised and that the intended benefits reach the people.

He pointed out that the State Government is also contributing 40 per cent of the funds towards these schemes and, therefore, it is essential to closely monitor not only the utilisation of funds but also the outcomes and benefits generated through their implementation. He directed officials to prioritise schemes that deliver tangible benefits to the State and its people.

All department heads were also advised to make effective use of the services of Liaison Officers working at Telangana Bhavan, New Delhi, for coordinating with the Central Government, securing the release of funds and ensuring timely follow-up on pending matters. The officials were also asked to ensure timely follow ups and pursuit of status on matters raised in letters to various Union ministers by the Chief Minister, and the Deputy Chief Minister.

He called on the officials that they should make the most of the Central programmes such as the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment. Resolve pending and technical issues to take the schemes forward, he said, and suggested to the irrigation, urban development, transport, agriculture and health departments to effectively implement central schemes which can pave the way for the continuation of the schemes and additional funding for the same.



Today.03 November 2026 Falaknuma News Urdu Daily Paper Launch!dr. Khaja Awais Ahmed Chairman Islamia Group of Institutions & President Print and Electronic Media Association of Hyderabad! Falaknuma News Urdu & English Daily Editor in Cheif Mohd Ather Raheem.

Actor Sonu Sood presents best educational award to Mohammed Sajid Ali at Bharat Leadership Summit



Hyderabad, Nov 3 (GNS): Renowned actor Sonu Sood presented the Best Educational Award to Mohammed Sajid Ali, Correspondent/ Director of Royal Para Medical and Vocational Junior College, Bahadurpura,Hyderabad, during the prestigious Bharat Leadership Summit held at TheTivoli Hotel, New Delhi. Expressing his gratitude, Mohammed Sajid Ali thanked the Bharat Leadership Summit management for recognising and honouring the institution's contribution to education.

Established in 1999, Royal Para Medical and Vocational Junior College, located at Bahadurpura, Hyderabad, has been dedicated to providing quality education and vocational training for students. He described the award as a proud moment for the institution and an encouragement to continue its commitment to educational excellence.

Seethakka seeks healthcare facilities for tribal communities in Mulugu



Hyderabad, Nov 3 (GNS): Telangana Minister Seethakka expressed gratitude to doctors who are contributing to nation-building through their services in the medical field, stating that access to healthcare is a fundamental right of every individual, irrespective of their place of residence or social background.

Speaking about healthcare facilities in tribal regions, she emphasised the urgent need to provide quality medical services to Adivasi and tribal communities, particularly those living in remote forest areas. The Minister said Mulugu district holds a special place for her and that she is well aware of the living conditions and healthcare challenges faced by its people. She stressed that children should not suffer due to anaemia and malnutrition.

Seethakka appreciated AIIMS Bibinagar for coming forward to support hospital construction and expand healthcare services in Mulugu district. She also welcomed the joint initiative of AIIMS Bibinagar and Sammakka Saralamma Central Tribal University to provide basic medical training to local communities.

She proposed that the training centre should facilitate medical check-ups in tribal areas, healthcare services for pregnant women and nutritional monitoring for children. She called for special attention to diseases and health concerns such as sickle cell disease, malaria and anaemia. The Minister stressed the importance of training local tribal youth as healthcare workers so that they can provide medical assistance within their own communities. She also welcomed the proposal to create health awareness in local languages, including Koya, Gondi and Lambadi.

She emphasised that research activities should be conducted with the participation of Gram Sabhas and the consent of local communities. Assuring full support from the Telangana government, Seethakka said all possible assistance would be extended to AIIMS Bibinagar in expanding healthcare services in Mulugu. She requested the authorities to initially establish satellite health centres in Eturunagaram and Mulugu and introduce telemedicine facilities.

The Minister said the Panchayat Raj Department, Women and Child Welfare Department, Anganwadi network and Rural Water Supply Department would work in coordination with AIIMS to strengthen healthcare services in the district.

She further advised doctors visiting tribal villages to first understand the lifestyle, traditions and cultural practices of local communities. She also encouraged medical students to come forward to serve in remote and underserved areas. "Tribal communities must receive dignified healthcare in their own regions and in their own languages. That is our goal," Seethakka said. She expressed hope that Mulugu district would emerge as a national model for tribal healthcare and thanked the AIIMS Bibinagar team for coming forward to support the initiative. Sultania, and Secretary, Planning, Gaurav Uppal, briefed the Deputy Chief Minister on the status and progress of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and the utilisation of funds by various departments.

Ponnam appeals to CM for drought relief in three Mandals



Hyderabad, Nov 3 (GNS): Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has urged Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to declare Husnabad, Koheda and Akkannapet mandals in Siddipet district as drought-affected areas due to severe rainfall deficit caused by the El Niño effect.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, the minister stated that these three mandals in the Husnabad Assembly constituency are facing severe drought-like conditions, causing significant hardships to farmers and the general public. He pointed out that inadequate rainfall has severely affected the agricultural sector and warned that drinking water shortages could also arise in the coming days.

The minister further stated that out of the seven mandals in the Husnabad constituency, only two have so far been officially declared drought-affected, while the remaining mandals are also experiencing severe rainfall deficits. Highlighting the difficulties faced by farmers and residents, Ponnam Prabhakar requested the Chief Minister to include Husnabad, Koheda and Akkannapet mandals in the drought-affected list and take necessary relief measures. He also mentioned that residents of the affected mandals and villages have been unanimously passing resolutions demanding that their areas be declared drought-affected.

The minister appealed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to consider the prevailing situation and take appropriate steps to provide relief to the affected farmers and people. Ponnam Prabhakar stressed that declaring the mandals drought-affected would help eligible farmers access government assistance and enable the administration to take up necessary drought mitigation measures. He called for timely intervention to prevent further distress among agricultural households. He also urged the concerned departments to assess the ground situation, examine crop losses and drinking water requirements, and coordinate relief efforts to address the immediate needs of residents in the affected areas.

The minister emphasised that the government should respond promptly to the repeated appeals from local residents, noting that timely recognition of drought conditions would help ensure that farmers receive the support they need and prevent the situation from worsening in the affected mandals.

2,200 crore worth of development works underway in Makthal: Vakiti Srihari



Makthal, Nov 3 (GNS): Telangana Minister Vakiti Srihari has announced that development works worth approximately 2,200 crore are currently underway in the Makthal Assembly constituency. He said a special action plan has been prepared to ensure comprehensive development of every village.

As part of the initiative, the minister conducted a detailed review meeting with Sarpanches and senior party leaders representing all 39 villages in Makthal mandal at his camp office. He allotted 20 to 30 minutes for each village to discuss local issues, basic infrastructure requirements and pending development works. He personally noted the problems and directed officials to prepare plans for their resolution.

Addressing the meeting, Minister Srihari said, "If people who have knowledge and awareness remain silent, injustice will prevail." He urged local leaders to speak up about the development taking place in Makthal and said that serving the land where he was born remains his primary commitment.

The minister highlighted several major development projects underway in the constituency. He said BT roads are being constructed at a cost of 500 crore, while CC roads and drainage facilities are being prioritised in all villages. An advanced hospital is being constructed in Makthal town at a cost of 80 crore and is expected to be made available to the public before the upcoming Sankranti festival. A modern sports stadium is also being developed at a cost of 26 crore. The government has sanctioned 237 crore for the Makthal–Narayanpet four-lane road, and the tender process has been completed. Construction work is expected to begin soon. He further stated that modern rehabilitation villages are being developed for families displaced by the Bhootpur Reservoir project. The government has allocated 50 crore for Anugonda, 28 crore for Ankenpally and 30 crore for Dadanpally.

The minister also highlighted bridge projects, including the Chityala–Gajrandoddi barrage-cum-bridge and the Katrevupally bridge, stating that some works have already been completed.

Flaws in SIR, alleges Telangana Voter Rights Forum

Hyderabad, Nov 3 (GNS): Telangana Voter Rights Forum (TVRF), a civil society platform, on Tuesday, November 3, demanded that the SIR exercise be completely rolled back and CEC Gyanesh Kumar resign.

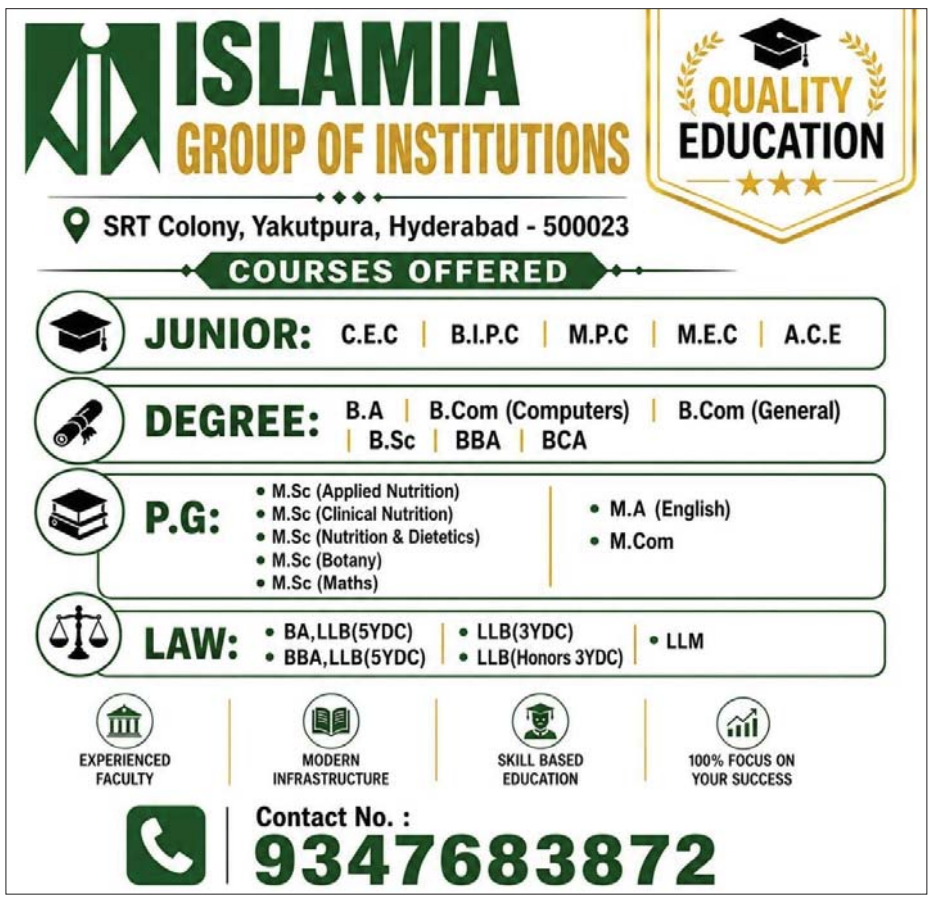
TVRF said it has conducted a "social audit of the SIR process and public hearings" here during October, directly meeting hundreds of voters, which showed the alleged fundamental flaws in the exercise.

Eminent citizens who addressed the press meet were Prof G Haragopal, economist and political analyst Dr Parakala Prabhakar, social activist Prof Padmaja Shah, educationist and social activist Maria Tabassum, Sister Manjula of National Dalit Christian Watch, and human rights lawyer Adv SQ Masood.

On behalf of TVRF, Dr A Suneetha presented key findings of the public hearings; Mary Liz Dias and Irfan facilitated the testimonies of deleted voters; and Kiran Vissa anchored the press meet. Economist and political analyst Parakala Prabhakar, who was a jury member at a public hearing, questioned the comments of Union Home Minister Amit Shah about three crore foreign infiltrators in the country.

Prabhakar said that if that is really true, the government should be able to give state-wise and constituency-wise details of these infiltrators. Prabhakar, husband of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, alleged that the government is wrongly stating that the SIR exercise has been conducted so many times in the past. He claimed, "This is the first time in the country that an SIR of this nature is being conducted where every voter is being asked to submit a form and being deleted if the form is not received."





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