

India, Netherlands elevate ties to strategic partnership, sign 17 pacts



The Hague: Driven by shifting global geopolitics, India and the Netherlands elevated their ties to a strategic partnership and inked 17 agreements to boost cooperation in defence, critical minerals and other key sectors during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Dutch counterpart Rob Jetten. In their meeting on Saturday evening, the two prime ministers expressed deep concern over the situation in West Asia, especially its serious implications for the region and beyond in view of disruptions caused to the glob-

al energy supplies and trade networks. Modi and Jetten also called for freedom of navigation and global flow of commerce through the Strait of Hormuz, while opposing any "restrictive" measures, and reaffirmed their support for ongoing initiatives in this regard, according to a joint statement. February 28, after the US and Israel launched a joint attack on Iran, triggering retaliatory strikes. The two leaders also discussed the situation in Ukraine - marked by the ongoing conflict with Russia and security developments.

Kharge, Rahul to Attend Satheesan's Swearing-in Ceremony on Monday

New Delhi: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chief Rahul Gandhi will attend the swearing-in ceremony of Kerala chief minister-designate V D Satheesan in Thiruvananthapuram on May 18, sources said on Sunday. The party sources said Wayanad MP and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will also attend the ceremony. There was no confirmation on whether Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi would also attend. Also Read - Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar Takes Oath as 23rd Governor of Kerala



Satheesan had earlier said the national leadership would invite leaders from other states for the ceremony. All chief ministers of Congress-ruled states -- Karnataka, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh -- will also attend. The party has also invited Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

Vijay, but a confirmation from him is awaited. Satheesan will take oath along with his Cabinet at the ceremony, which will begin at 10 am at the Central Stadium Thiruvananthapuram, party leaders said. The Congress-led UDF won 102 of the 140 assembly seats in the Kerala elections.

300 Motorists Held in Weekend Drunken Driving Checking in Cyberabad



Hyderabad: The Cyberabad Traffic Police (CTP) conducted a special drunk driving enforcement drive over the weekend, resulting in the apprehension of 300 offenders. Of the 300 offenders, 253 were motorcyclists while nine of them were three-wheeler riders and 38 were four-wheeler riders. The offenders were categorized based on their Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels. Around 232 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 36 mg/100 ml to 200 mg/100 ml, while 35 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 201 mg/100 ml to 300 mg/100 ml and 33 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 301 mg/100 ml to 550 mg/100 ml. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud

Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic-1) G Hanmanth A Rao said all the offenders will be produced before the court in the court concerned. The condition and causes a fatal accident, such individuals will be booked under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Culpable Homicide Not Amounting to Murder). The maximum punishment under this section is 10 years of imprisonment along with a fine. In the last week from May 11 to 16, a total 96 DD cases were disposed of in the courts, in which seven persons got fine plus jail while two persons got fine plus social service and 87 persons got fine only.

Adilabad Selects 337 Beneficiaries For 2BHK Houses Through Lottery From 1,032 Applicants

ADILABAD: District authorities in Adilabad have selected 337 beneficiaries through a lottery for allotment of 2BHK houses constructed during the previous BRS regime, officials said. The selection was conducted in Adilabad municipality, where 337 beneficiaries were chosen from 1,032 applicants through a lucky draw. Officials said the houses are located in KRK Colony in Adilabad, and in Jainad and Khanapur mandal headquarters. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The administration has planned to distribute the houses to eligible beneficiaries on



June 2. Officials said earlier distribution had been postponed following disputes among applicants over the selection process. According to officials,

seven beneficiaries were selected from each of the 49 wards in the municipality through a random draw. The list of selected beneficiaries will be displayed on the municipal notice board, and objections, if any, can be submitted within three days. The final list will be issued

after scrutiny. Adilabad collector Rajarshi Shah said the selection process was conducted in a transparent manner and that allotment would be made to the identified beneficiaries. Separately, officials said steps are being taken to expedite construction of Indiramma houses. Inspections are being carried out to identify issues faced by beneficiaries and reasons for delays. In Mancherial district, additional collector P. Chandraiah, mayor Dharani Madhukar and commissioner Anvesh reviewed progress of Indiramma housing works and directed contractors to speed up construction.

Naidu Greets Scientists, Hails Andhra's Quantum Ecosystem on Telecommunication Day

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday greeted scientists, researchers and students Telecommunication and Information Society Day while highlighting the state's growing quantum technologies ecosystem. The chief minister said the occasion underscored the importance of secure communications, trusted digital infrastructure and cyber resilience for the future of nations. Also Read - TTD Achieves Over 89 pc Green Cover In Tirumala "Today is World Telecommunication and Information Society Day. It reminds us that secure communications, trusted digital infrastructure and cyber resilience are critical to the future of

nations. Amaravati Quantum Valley is taking another important step towards building a world-class quantum ecosystem driven by innovation, research and indigenous technology development," Naidu said in a post on 'X'. Also Read - Nara Devansh Launches Dino Deets Podcast On YouTube The chief minister noted that Amaravati Quantum Valley was taking another important step towards building a world-class quantum ecosystem driven by innovation, research and indigenous technology development following the launch of Quantum Computing Reference Facilities on April 14. He said a private college in Amaravati, in partnership with C-DOT, the



Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, and Amaravati Quantum Valley, would establish a first-of-its-kind Quantum-Secure Communications Test Bed for communica-

tions and cyberspace. Also Read - Naidu Seeks Relief For Aquaculture Farmers; Writes Letter To Centre Naidu said the facility would support research and testing of quantum communication hardware, He added that the initiative would create opportunities for students, researchers, startups and young innovators from Andhra Pradesh to participate in developing future technologies.

KTR demands Bandi Sanjay's dismissal to ensure impartial investigation in POCSO case

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Sunday demanded the immediate removal of Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar from the Union Cabinet to ensure a fair and impartial investigation into the POCSO case involving his son Bandi Sai Bageerath. He said as long as Bandi Sanjay remained in office, the investigation could not be transparent and independent. Addressing the party gathering in LB Nagar, Rama Rao said it was perhaps unprecedented in India for a look-out notice to be issued against the son of a sitting Union Minister. "Who protected him for nine days while he was absconding? That question must be answered," he said. The BRS working president said far from distancing himself from the case, Bandi Sanjay had personally threatened and intimidated the victim's parents. "The Union Minister's son committed an injustice against a minor girl, and the Union Minister himself went after her family. Allowing such a person to continue in a constitutional position is an insult not just to Telangana but to the entire country," he said. Calling out Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" campaign, Rama Rao said such slogans were meaningless if those in power shielded the accused instead of protecting the victim. He said justice could not be achieved if such slogans remained merely political rhetoric. He warned that unless influential individ-



uals were held accountable, women and minor girls would be discouraged from reporting abuse in the future. "Society must not send the message that influential individuals are above the law," he said. He praised the victim's mother and her family for refusing to yield alive. He said the women's wing had protested across Telangana, approached the Women's Commission and the DGP, and demonstrated at Dr B R Ambedkar's statue demanding justice. He also appreciated BRS general secretary RS Praveen Kumar for his sustained efforts in supporting the victim's family.

Bandi Sanjay on Allegations against Son in POCSO Case

Hyderabad: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar broke his silence following a week of intense emotional and personal turmoil for his family after his son Bandi Bageerath joined the investigations into the alleged POCSO case registered against him. In a post on X, Sanjay expressed profound gratitude to millions of supporters while firmly asserting that his family has done no wrongdoing and will vindicate themselves through the legal system. The family, his mother suffered from a heart stroke too. He assured his supporters that there has been "no wrongdoing from our side", emphasising his unwavering commitment to the judicial process. "Over the past one week, my family has gone through one of the most emotionally difficult phases of our lives. There were



moments of pain, anxiety, helplessness and deep emotional strains. The situation affected my entire family deeply. My mother suffered a heart stroke during this difficult phase, which was very traumatic. But in these testing times, the immense love and support extended by lakhs of people across the country gave me strength to stand firm." the minister said. Also Read - Fire Breaks Out in YTPS in Nalgonda, None Injured He made an appeal to his party cadre to remain focused on their organisational goals rather than becoming overwhelmed by the case, stating that it is a "personal family matter" and vowed to

fight it legally. "I want to reassure every well-wisher, supporter and karyakarta that there has been no wrongdoing from our side. We have complete faith in the legal process and truth will ultimately prevail. At the same time, I request everyone to understand that this is a personal family matter and we will continue to fight it legally with complete faith in the judiciary and justice system," strengthening BJP in Telangana and continue your hard work for the party and ideology," he said. Signing off with the Sanskrit saying, 'Yato Dharmastato Jayah' (Where there is righteousness, there is victory), he affirmed,

Naidu Seeks Relief For Aquaculture Farmers; Writes Letter To Centre

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has written to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan seeking measures beneficial to aquaculture farmers amid concerns over rising shrimp feed prices. During a review meeting chaired by Special Chief Secretary B Rajasekhara at the Secretariat here, the state government decided to appeal to the union minister keeping farmers' interests in view, particularly on issues such as incentives for fish meal exports and restrictions on soy imports. Also Read - Puttaparthi To Be Centre For Producing India's 5th-generation Fighter Jets "CM Naidu wrote to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan seeking steps favourable to aquaculture farmers in view of the rising shrimp feed prices," an official release late on Saturday said. According to officials, the meeting discussed the impact of feed price hikes on the aquaculture sector and the problems being



in raw material prices and suggested the use of alternative inputs. Representatives of feed manufacturing companies informed the meeting that prices of key raw materials increased by more than 20 per cent between January and April 2026. Also Read - Couple Ends Life on Railway Tracks According to officials, fish meal prices rose from Rs 1.5 lakh per tonne to Rs 2.4 lakh, fish oil from Rs 2.8 lakh to Rs 4.4 lakh and soy lecithin from Rs 68,000 to Rs 1.1 lakh. The companies claimed that an additional burden of around Rs 25,000 was being incurred in manufacturing each tonne of feed and sought an increase of Rs 25 to Rs 31 per kilogram, the release said. However,

farmer representatives strongly objected to the proposed increase, alleging that companies fail to pass benefits to aquaculture farmers whenever raw material prices decline. Also Read - Plastic Ban at Chinnaganjam Beaches from June 1 They further alleged that feed manufacturers, processors and exporters were functioning as a single business group and imposing an additional burden on aqua farmers. Farmer representatives requested the government to continue existing feed prices for at least two months until completion of the summer crop and also sought subsidised electricity at Rs 1.50 per unit for Andhra Pradesh State Aquaculture Development Authority (APSADA)-licensed aquaculture farms, the release said. The meeting also decided to introduce a mechanism for fixing shrimp feed prices every month based on raw material costs, similar to the poultry feed pricing policy. Officials further opined that a system should be implemented to fix shrimp

farmer representatives strongly objected to the proposed increase, alleging that companies fail to pass benefits to aquaculture farmers whenever raw material prices decline. Also Read - Plastic Ban at Chinnaganjam Beaches from June 1 They further alleged that feed manufacturers, processors and exporters were functioning as a single business group and imposing an additional burden on aqua farmers. Farmer representatives requested the government to continue existing feed prices for at least two months until completion of the summer crop and also sought subsidised electricity at Rs 1.50 per unit for Andhra Pradesh State Aquaculture Development Authority (APSADA)-licensed aquaculture farms, the release said. The meeting also decided to introduce a mechanism for fixing shrimp feed prices every month based on raw material costs, similar to the poultry feed pricing policy. Officials further opined that a system should be implemented to fix shrimp

Telangana police on high alert ahead of Bakrid to prevent illegal cattle transport

Hyderabad: With Eid al-Adha, popularly known as Bakrid, nearly ten days away, the Telangana police are on high alert to prevent any communal flare-up and prevent illegal transportation of cattle in the State. Telangana DGP CV Anand had held a meeting with the Superintendent of Police of all districts and the Commissioners of Police across the State and directed field officers to maintain strict vigilance against illegal cattle transportation and smuggling during the festival period. He also warned that strict action would be taken against violations of animal transport and slaughter laws. He said 52 interstate check posts and 203 checkpoints within the State have been activated to monitor suspicious vehicle movement and enforce transport regulations. He appealed to the gau rakshak groups not to take law into their



hands and inform the police if they have any suspicion about illegal transportation of the cattle. In Hyderabad, the police set up border check posts and inter-zonal check posts at different points to prevent illegal transportation of cattle. The DGP had instructed the officials to intensify vehicle checks, monitor cattle fairs, and prevent any attempts to disturb communal harmony, including through social media posts or public gatherings. The cattle traders buy the animals from the

weekly cattle markets conducted at different villages across Telangana. The State government had tightened the norms for cattle sale and purchase, making veterinary doctor certificates mandatory to finalise the deal. However, despite the directions, the gau rakshak groups continue to waylay trucks on suspected the norms for cattle picion of cattle smuggling at different places, leading to a stand-off between the police and the cattle traders. In an incident at Saroomagar

last week, a group of persons claiming to be gau rakshaks damaged a vehicle and pelted stones at the police, resulting in injuries to an Inspector. A case was registered at Saroomagar police station. On Saturday night, two groups pelted stones Gudimalkapur, creating panic in the area. Several vehicles were damaged in the stone pelting. The Gudimalkapur police registered a case against people for pelting stones, leading to injuries to police and the general public, and for vandalism.

Tamil Nadu Voters Throng Tirumala During Counting Day, Offer Prayers

Tirupati: As counting of votes for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections commenced on Monday, a large number of pilgrims from across Tamil Nadu arrived at Tirumala to seek blessings of Lord Venkateswara, with many linking their visit to the electoral process. By 12.30 pm, over 26,000 devotees had darshan, while all compartments in the Vaikuntam Queue Complex were filled. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) began accommodating pilgrims in additional holding areas at Narayanagiri gardens as the inflow continued.



Officials expect the turnout to increase further by night, especially after clearer trends or final results emerge. Also Read - Lokesh, Jagan Congratulate Vijay On His Electoral Debut In Tamil Nadu Politics Tirumala witnessed a steady stream of devotees from the early hours, with several pilgrims stating they were fulfilling vows

taken during the campaign period. Supporters of different political parties, including Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), were seen among those waiting in queues. Several pilgrims said visiting Tirumala during significant moments is a long-standing practice among Tamil devotees. "We have strong faith in Lord Venkateswara. Elections

are important for us, so I came to pray for the success of my party, TVK, and for a change in governance", said R. Suresh, a voter from Coimbatore. Also Read - Srikalahasti: Four Killed As Ambulance Hits Stationary Lorry On Highway The TTD clarified that while devotees were free to hold personal beliefs, political expression of any kind is not permitted within the temple premises. Vigilance and security staff were deployed in adequate numbers to manage the crowd, and the flow of pilgrims remained smooth despite the increased turnout.

Puttaparthi To Be Centre For Producing India's 5th-generation Fighter Jets

ANANTAPUR: Puttaparthi is set to emerge as a major hub for aerospace and defence manufacturing with establishment of facilities linked to India's indigenous fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA). The proposed aerospace and defence ecosystem around Puttaparthi Airport, spread across nearly 650 acres, is expected to include the AMCA project and subsidiary units by Bharat Benz. Officials said the initiative is expected to boost industrial development in Sri Sathya Sai district. Also Read - Naidu Seeks Relief For Aquaculture Farmers; Writes Letter To Centre Defence minister Rajnath Singh, along with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the AMCA project, which is being positioned as a milestone in India's push towards self-reliance in advanced defence manufacturing under the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission. Developed by the



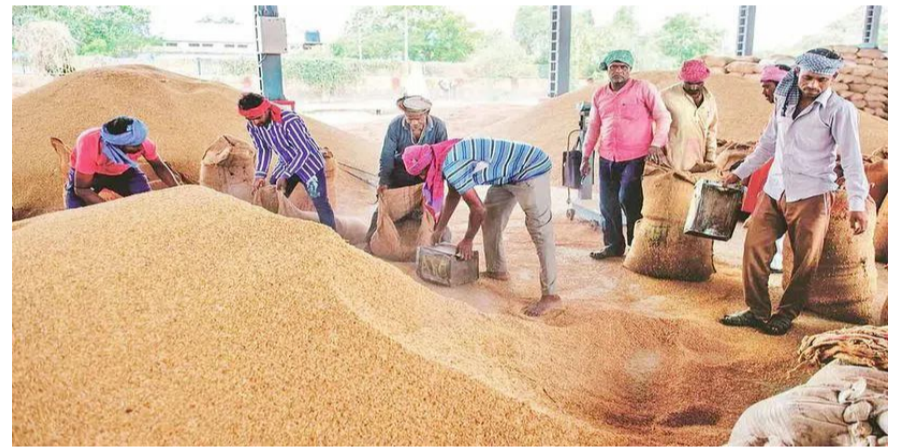
Aeronautical Development Agency under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the AMCA is envisaged as a twin-engine, multi-role stealth fighter aircraft equipped with advanced avionics, sensor fusion systems, artificial intelligence-assisted mission systems, and internal bays for weapons. Also Read - Students Duped with Promise of Jobs in Startup AMCA will have advanced integrated sensor suites, AESA radar, infrared search and track systems, electronic warfare suites, multi-sensor data fusion, 360-degree situational awareness, and autonomous mission-support systems. The aircraft is designed with radar-absorbing materials and diverterless supersonic air inlets

to reduce radar signature. It will carry both internal and external weapons, including beyond-visual-range missiles, precision-guided bombs, anti-ship missiles, and close combat missiles. Also Read - Couple Ends Life on Railway Tracks Officials said the aircraft is being developed for multiple combat roles, including air superiority missions, precision strikes, maritime warfare and suppression, and destruction of enemy air defence systems. According to technical details displayed at the event, the aircraft is expected to achieve a maximum speed of Mach 1.8, operate at a service ceiling of 55,000 feet and carry payloads up to 6,500 kg in non-staught configuration. Also Read - Plastic

Ban at Chinnaganjam Beaches from June 1 The Aeronautical Development Agency, which recently completed 40 years since inception, stated that it had developed more than 190 indigenous Line Replaceable Units (LRUs) and conducted over 6,000 developmental test flights through various combat aircraft programmes. Officials said the success of LCA (light combat aircraft) Tejas programme had laid the technological foundation for the AMCA project. The agency stated that collaborations have been established with national laboratories, academic institutions, PSUs, MSMEs, and start-ups to strengthen India's defence-aerospace ecosystem. Two Indian Air Force squadrons have deployed LCA Tejas. The enhanced LCA AF Mk1A variant would soon enter service. Defence experts say AMCA programme will place India among a select group of nations with indigenous fifth-generation fighter aircraft capability.

Nalgonda farmers allege heavy deductions at paddy procurement centres

NALGONDA: Amid mounting distress over delays in paddy procurement, farmers in Nalgonda district are now alleging abnormal deductions at procurement centres and rice mills, leading to heavy financial losses. Farmers say they are already incurring losses due to deductions made at procurement centres in the name of chaff and moisture. Adding to their difficulties, several rice mills are allegedly reducing sizeable quantities from farmers' stocks through computerised weighbridges. Telangana Farmers Federation president Namireddy Yadagiri Reddy alleged that rice mill managements were deducting 35 kg to 40 kg per tractor load, which usually carries around 54 to 55 quintals of paddy. He said the issue was widespread in several parts of the district, particularly in Molkapatnam, Vemulapally and other mandals in the



Miryalguda region. According to him, farmers were already facing deductions of nearly five kilograms per bag at IKP centres before the stocks reached the mills. Farmers also complained about additional charges being collected during procurement. They alleged that Hamali charges Rs 100 per load, while another Rs 100 was being collected as clerks' or agents' charges. Despite repeated complaints to officials, farm-

ers said little action had been taken against erring rice mills. They alleged that inspections conducted by authorities were limited to a few days and failed to bring any lasting change. Last week, Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Roads & Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy visited a few procurement centres in the erstwhile Nalgonda district and reviewed the procurement process. However, farmers said hardships

and losses continued unabated. Another issue troubling the farming community is the arrival of paddy stocks from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh at local rice mills. Farmers alleged that every rice mill in Miryalguda receives at least two to three truckloads of paddy from Andhra Pradesh daily. They claimed that these stocks were being given priority, while local farmers were forced to wait for several hours for procurement.

Nallavalli farmers oppose land acquisition for proposed industrial cluster

Sangareddy: The farmers of Nallavalli in Gummadidala mandal had strongly opposed the government's move to acquire 337 acres of land in survey numbers 142 and 160 in the village. While the government wanted to develop these lands into an industrial cluster through Telangana Industrial and Corporation Limited (TGIC), the farmers opposed the move, saying that they would lose their livelihood. The farmers of Nallavalli are known for cultivating a variety of vegetables apart from dairy farming. Nallavalli and neighbouring villages would supply a good amount of vegetables and milk to parts of Hyderabad every day. As the government had already issued the notification for acquisition of 337 acres of land, the



farmers met District Collector Prateek Jain and presented a representation, demanding that the government withdraw the proposal. The farmers complained that they would lose their livelihood. The farmers also and presented a rehearsed multiple meetings in the village and passed a resolution in the Grama Sabha

against the government's move. Since most of these farmers were small farmers, farmer B Prabhakar Goud said that and presented a reprehey had no other alternative properties to depend on in their lives. Otherwise, they urged the government to pay market price for their land so that they can buy same piece of land close

to their villages to live peacefully. The villagers were already worried as the government decided to set up a dump yard close to Nallavalli at Pyranagar. They have already been fighting against the proposed dump yard since it would pollute the environment and groundwater.

Netherlands Returns 11th Century Anaimangalam Copper Plates To India

New Delhi: The Netherlands on Saturday handed back 11th-century Chola dynasty copper plates to India, in an event attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the country. India has been pursuing the return of the Anaimangalam Copper Plates, known in the Netherlands as the Leiden Plates, since 2012. The 21 copper plates are considered the most significant surviving records of the Chola dynasty and are among the important artefacts of Tamil heritage held anywhere outside India. The copper plates, belonging to the times of Rajaraja Chola I, weigh approximately 30 kilograms and are bound together by a bronze ring bearing the royal seal of the Chola dynasty. Known in the Netherlands as the Leiden Plates, the inscriptions date back to the reign of Emperor



Rajaraja Chola I between 985 and 1014 CE and are regarded as among the most important pieces of Tamil heritage preserved outside India. The copper plates document grants of land revenues and taxes to the Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam built by Sri Mara Vijayotunga Varman, the ruler of the Srivijaya kingdom in pres-

ent-day Indonesia.

Historians say the inscriptions provide rare insight into the maritime links, religious pluralism and cultural exchanges that connected South India and Southeast Asia during the height of Prime Minister Modi, took Chola power. The records underline how Hindu rulers of the time patronised Buddhist institutions, reflecting a long

Indian tradition of religious coexistence and support across faiths. Prime Minister Modi, took to X and wrote, "A joyous moment for every Indian! Chola Copper Plates dating back to the 11th Century will be repatriated to India from the Netherlands. Took part in the ceremony for the same in the presence of

Prime Minister Rob Jetten. The Chola Copper Plates are a set of 21 large plates and 3 small plates and largely contain texts in Tamil, one of the most beautiful languages of the world". He added, "They relate to the great Rajendra Chola I formalising an oral commitment made by his father, King Rajaraja I. They also showcase the greatness of the Cholas. We in India are immensely proud of the Cholas, their culture and their maritime prowess. I thank the Government of the Netherlands and Leiden University in particular, where the Copper Plates were kept since the mid-19th century". The PM's visit to the European nation from May 15 to 17 is his second trip to the country after his 2017 visit and comes at what officials described as an "important juncture" in India-Netherlands ties.

CNG Price Hiked by Rs 1 Per kg in Delhi-NCR, Second Rise in Two Days

New Delhi: Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) prices were raised by Rs 1 per kg across Delhi-NCR with effect from Sunday, marking the second hike in two days. Following the latest revision, CNG will now cost Rs 80.09 per kg in Delhi. In Noida and Ghaziabad, the price has increased to Rs 88.70 per kg. The latest hike comes after CNG prices were increased by Rs 2 per kg on May 15. With this revision, CNG prices have risen by a total of Rs 3 per kg within 48 hours. Also Read - 55 AAP MLAs Meet Sunita, Say Jailed Kejriwal Should Not Resign Earlier on Friday, the Centre increased petrol and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre across the country. Following the revision, petrol prices in New Delhi rose from Rs 94.77 to Rs 97.77 per litre, while diesel prices increased from Rs 87.67 to Rs 90.67 per litre. The fuel price hike comes amid rising global crude oil prices triggered by the ongoing conflict in West Asia. The geopolitical tensions, par-



ticularly the US-Israel and Iran conflict that began on February 28 this year, have disrupted global crude oil supplies and pushed Brent crude prices above USD 100 per barrel. Also Read - UP: Hearing in 2018 Defamation Case Against Rahul Gandhi Postponed to April 12 Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday defended the hike in fuel prices, comparing India's increase with those seen in

other countries following the West Asia conflict. "As the world battled rising fuel costs after the West Asia conflict, India stood apart. While several countries witnessed petrol & diesel hikes ranging from 20% to nearly 100%, India limited the increase to just +3.2% for petrol & +3.4% for diesel," Rijiju said in a post on X. Also Read - Adhere to Half-Day School Norms in AP: Child Rights Body He

praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for balancing economic stability with public welfare and said public sector oil companies absorbed major losses to shield citizens from inflationary pressure. "Even as Brent crude crossed \$100/barrel and global markets turned volatile, India's public sector oil companies absorbed huge losses for weeks to protect citizens from inflation and

economic pressure," Rijiju added. Rijiju also shared figures comparing fuel price hikes in various countries. According to the data, Malaysia saw petrol prices rise by 89.7% and diesel prices by 112.7%, while the United States reported increases of 44% in petrol and 48.1% in diesel prices. China recorded hikes of 21.7% in petrol and 23.7% in diesel prices.

Fire Breaks out in Thiruvananthapuram-Delhi Rajdhani Express in MP

Indore: A fire broke out in an AC coach of the Thiruvananthapuram-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district on Sunday morning, railway officials said. No casualties have been reported in the blaze that broke out at 5.15 am in the B-1 coach of the train (12431) carrying 68 passengers, prompting emergency measures, senior railways commercial manager Sourabh Jain said. The incident occurred between Alot and Lunirichha stations under the Kota division of the railways, Ratlam division PRO Mukesh Kumar said. Also Read - 55 AAP MLAs Meet Sunita, Say Jailed Kejriwal Should Not Resign The affected coach was later detached from the rake, and the overhead electric supply (OHE) was promptly switched off to ensure



safety. The fire in the coach was subsequently doused, Kumar said. All the passengers were deboarded from the train. None of the passengers sustained injuries, Kota

railway PRO Ravindera Lakhara told PTI. Arrangements have been made to accommodate them in other coaches for the journey up to Kota,

officials said. An additional coach will be attached at Kota station to restore full capacity in other coaches for the journey. The Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of

Ratlam has reached the spot, and the accident relief train has also arrived there, Kumar said. The cause of the fire is under investigation, the officials said.

Pre-stamp Postal Covers from Odisha Fetch Record Prices at US Auction



Bhubaneswar: Two pre-stamp era postal covers posted from Odisha have fetched record prices at a recent auction conducted by the Siegel Auction Galleries in the United States. The covers were part of the Magnolia Collection of Indian Postal Stationery. These rare covers belong to the period before the invention of postage stamps, when postal charges had to be prepaid by the sender. They are among the earliest known postal covers from Odisha and bear the city names "Pooree" and "Sumbulpore," spellings that were in use during the East India Company's rule over the region. Also Read - 27 Rescued from Odisha Over Suspected Conversion-Linked Trafficking The official folded letter addressed to P. DaCosta and posted from Puri on May 2, 1838, bears the oval hand stamp marking "POOREE/FREE." The cover was sold for \$950, nearly Rs 1.20 lakh, at the US auction. The Sambalpur cover, posted on September 3, 1850, was addressed to Androssan, Scotland. Bearing the framed hand stamp "SUMBULPORE/PAID," the cover travelled via Calcutta, Marseilles and London before reaching the addressee on October 21. It was sold for \$800, nearly Rs 1 lakh, to an unknown bidder. Also Read - CNG Price Hiked by Rs 1 Per kg in Delhi-NCR, Second Rise in Two Days According to Anil Dhir, Vice-President of the Eastern India Philatelic Association and a Fellow of the Philatelic Congress of India, pre-stamp covers from Odisha are scarce and highly valuable, often featuring early hand stamps or manuscript markings from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He said Odisha's early postal history was largely governed under the Bengal Presidency, with crucial mail routes and early hand-struck stamps connecting Cuttack, Puri and Balasore to Calcutta. Early postal routes were established by the East India Company to link the administrative centres of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Dhir, who is also the convener of INTACH Bhubaneswar Chapter, said many heritage post offices and Dak Bungalows in the State have either been demolished or heavily renovated over the years. "These are important vestiges of the colonial era and should be properly preserved because of the rich history associated with them," he said.

27 Rescued from Odisha Over Suspected Conversion-Linked Trafficking



Bhubaneswar: Railway Police in Odisha rescued 27 persons, including 19 minors, from Soro Railway Station in Balasore district on Saturday after suspecting an alleged attempt to transport them for activities linked to religious conversion. Two youths accompanying the group have been detained for questioning. According to police sources, the group had reportedly travelled from the Kaptipada area of Odisha's Mayurbhanj district and was being taken to Angul when the incident came to light. Also Read - 55 AAP MLAs Meet Sunita, Say Jailed Kejriwal Should Not Resign Officials said suspicion arose after railway personnel at Soro station noticed an unusually large group of children and young persons accompanied by only two handlers. The group had first arrived at the Soro bus stand before moving towards the railway station. During preliminary questioning, the two youths allegedly told

police that the children were being taken to Angul for educational purposes and to attend a summer programme. However, investigators reportedly found inconsistencies in their statements, prompting a more detailed inquiry. Also Read - UP: Hearing in 2018 Defamation Case Against Rahul Gandhi Postponed to April 12 Police later intervened and rescued all 27 persons, including 19 minors and eight adults, amid suspicions of possible trafficking and attempts at religious conversion. The rescued minors and accompanying persons were subsequently handed over to Childline India Foundation officials for counselling, care and verification of their identities and backgrounds. Railway Police have launched a detailed investigation to determine the exact circumstances under which the group was being transported and whether any organised network may have been involved. Authorities are also examining possible

links to trafficking or coercive religious conversion activities. Officials said statements of the rescued persons were being recorded, while the two detained youths continued to Case Against Rahul Gandhi Postponed to April 12 Police later intervened and rescued all 27 persons, including 19 minors and eight adults, amid suspicions of possible trafficking and attempts at religious conversion. The rescued minors and accompanying persons were subsequently handed over to Childline India Foundation officials for counselling, care and verification of their identities and backgrounds. Railway Police have launched a detailed investigation to determine the exact circumstances under which the group was being transported and whether any organised network may have been involved. Authorities are also examining possible

2nd Hike In 48 Hrs: Delhi's CNG Rate Crosses Rs 80/kg Amid Global Oil Tensions

New Delhi: India's leading city gas distributor Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) on Sunday increased compressed natural gas (CNG) prices by Re 1 per kg across its network -- marking the second hike within 48 hours and adding to the fuel cost burden on commuters in the Delhi-NCR region. Following the latest revision, the price of CNG in Delhi has risen to Rs 80.09 per kg, crossing the Rs 80-mark for the first time. In Noida and Ghaziabad, CNG will now cost Rs 88.70 per kg. The latest increase comes just two days after IGL had raised CNG prices by Rs 2 per kg on May 15, taking the Delhi rate to Rs 79.09 per kg at that time. Sunday's hike has further pushed up transportation costs for private vehicle owners, cab operators and public transport users dependent on CNG. The recent CNG price revisions coincided with a broader increase in retail fuel



prices announced by the Centre on May 15. Petrol prices were raised by around Rs 3 per litre and diesel by nearly Rs 3 per litre in the national capital. Following the revision, petrol in Delhi is retailing at Rs 97.77 per litre, while diesel costs Rs 90.67 per litre. The fuel price surge comes amid escalating tensions in West Asia and the continuing blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical

energy trade routes. Nearly one-fifth of global oil and gas trade passes through the narrow passage, and supply disruptions have pushed international crude oil prices sharply higher. Responding to criticism over rising fuel costs, Kiren Rijju said India has managed to limit the increase in petrol and diesel prices despite a sharp spike in global crude prices. He noted that several countries witnessed fuel price

increases ranging from 20 per cent to nearly 100 per cent, while India's petrol and diesel prices rose by only 3.2 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively. Rijju added that even as Brent crude crossed the \$100 per barrel mark and global markets turned volatile, India's public sector oil marketing companies absorbed significant losses for weeks to shield consumers from a larger inflationary impact.

Major Blaze On Delhi-Bound Rajdhani Express Near MP's Ratlam Contained; Passengers Unharmed

Kota: A massive fire broke out in one of the coaches of the Delhi-bound Rajdhani Express in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district early Sunday. No one was injured in the incident, officials confirmed. The fire first broke out in an air-conditioned coach of the train Thiruvananthapuram when the train was near the Vikramgarh Alot railway station. The incident occurred at around 5:15 a.m. in the B-1 coach, which was carrying 68 passengers. Major Blaze On Delhi-Bound Rajdhani Express Near Rajasthan's Kota Contained; Passengers Unharmed (ETV Bharat) It was the Guard who first reported the fire, following which the train was brought to a halt using emergency brakes. Personnel from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and onboard railway staff, along with other officials, began to evacuate passengers right away, clearing the coach in



approximately 15 minutes. According to Saurabh Jain, the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of the Kota Railway Division, the fire on the train has now been brought completely under control. "Fortunately, there have been no casualties of any kind," he said. As a precaution, nearby coaches were also evacuated. Relief and rescue teams from the Kota Railway Division were sent to the location shortly after the incident was reported. Following the fire, officials said that the affected coach was promptly detached from the rake.

Additionally, the overhead electric supply (OHE) was switched off to ensure safety. Additionally, arrangements were made to accommodate the deboarded passengers in other coaches for the journey up to Kota, according to the railway officials. The train restarted its journey later, and an additional coach will be attached at Kota station to restore full capacity. The railway officials further stated that the cause of the fire has not been determined as of now. The officials are investigating to ascertain the cause. A list of emer-

gency contact numbers for a specific railway section between Luni Richha and Vikramgarh Alot has also been released -- Kota Enquiry: 6375898943, At Site: 09256099269. The 12431 Rajdhani Express train left Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, on Friday, with a scheduled arrival at Delhi's Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station at 12:30 p.m. This comes close on the heels of another incident that occurred on May 15, when a fire broke out in two AC coaches of the Hyderabad-Jaipur Special Express at Nampally Railway Station.

Cyber Crime: Grenadian Man In Dubai Under ED Scanner

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has found that a Grenadian man based in Dubai is the "beneficial owner" of a Delhi-based company accused of perpetrating a "large-scale" betting, gaming and cyber fraud-linked money-laundering ring in India, along with others. The central agency said in a statement on Saturday that it conducted searches at the premises of the company -- Pay10 Services Private Limited (formerly known as Bhartipay Services Private Limited) -- apart from Asian Checkout Private Limited (ACPL) and some others between May 13 and May 15 in

Delhi-NCR, Ludhiana and Mandi Gobindgarh (Fatehgarh Sahib district) in Punjab and Agra in Uttar Pradesh. An email sent to Pay10 by PTI on May 13 has remained unanswered. An email query sent to Asian Checkout on the ED charges made against it also did not elicit an immediate response. The ED said these companies were "payment aggregator" platforms and alleged that they were involved in "large-scale digital and cyber fraud-related money laundering activities." The investigation has identified the cartel involved in arranging fake bills for Pay10 for the purpose of money



laundering. "The Ultimate Beneficial Owner (UBO) of Pay10 has been identified as a Grenadian individual based out of Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)," the agency said. Grenada is a Caribbean country. The ED said certain chartered accountants (CAs) have also been found involved

with the foreigner. There is a well-structured modus operandi involving the laundering of hundreds of crores of rupees through fake websites and payment gateways, the agency said. Several "fictitious" websites were created to project "bogus" sale of goods and services where no genuine underlying business activity was carried out. The funds generated through such "fake" transactions were routed through payment gateways and thereafter layered, diverted and con-

me is behind this." Swapna said the police had assured her a forensic team would be sent to investigate the incident. "I have filed a complaint. There is victory and defeat in elections, that is part of politics. But I never imagined politics could become this cruel," she said. "I had no idea I would one day feel this much unsafe. I have done something for my country. I entered politics to fulfil dreams and serve people. If someone has to witness such days after losing an election, then no one will want to enter politics anymore," an anguished Swapna said. Appealing for protection, she said, "This new government is speaking about women's safety. I have requested the administration and the government to provide security to me and my family. That is all I want." When asked whether members of her own party had stood beside her during the crisis, Swapna paused before replying. "I do not want to comment on that. The people who stood with me till the day before the election results changed completely within 24 hours," she said. The incident has, however, triggered sharp reactions in the locality. A section of local residents and even some relatives of the athlete-turned-politician alleged that the fire may have ignited by someone within the family itself. The residents also accused Swapna's two brothers of creating an atmosphere of intimidation in the area. As police reached the spot,

Prez Murmu Approves Increasing Supreme Court Judge Strength To 37



New Delhi: President Draupadi Murmu has approved the Union Cabinet's decision to increase the strength of the Supreme Court from 34 to 37 judges, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said on Sunday. "The President is pleased to increase the Judge strength of the Supreme Court from 33 to 37 Judges (Excluding the Chief Justice of India) by promulgating The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026, which has further amended the "Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956," the minister said in a post on

X. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had on May 5 approved the proposal for introducing The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament to amend The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 for increasing the number of Judges of the Supreme Court of India by 4 from the present 33 to 37 (excluding the Chief Justice of India). According to the government, the decision has been taken in view of the apex court's increasing workload and the rising number of

pending cases. The expansion in judicial strength is expected to improve efficiency in the disposal of matters and reduce delays in hearings. An Act to increase the strength of judges of the Supreme Court of India was originally enacted in 1956. Since then, the sanctioned strength of judges has been revised several times in line with the increasing demands on the judiciary. The strength of the Supreme Court was last increased in 2019, when Parliament amended the of judges from 30 to 33, excluding the Chief Justice of India, through

the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2019. With the latest amendment ordinance, the total sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court will now rise to 38 judges, including the Chief Justice of India. The move is being seen as a significant step towards strengthening judicial infrastructure and enhancing access to timely justice across the country. The decision was widely welcomed by members of the legal fraternity, who described it as a timely step to deal with rising pendency and growing litigation before the apex court.

Someone Close to Me Set My House On Fire: Asian Games Gold Medallist And TMC Candidate

Jalpaiguri: For Swapna Barman, the political defeat she suffered in the recent Assembly elections appears to have turned into something far more personal and unsettling. The Asian Games gold medallist, who contested the Rajganj Assembly seat in north Bengal on a Trinamool Congress ticket and lost to the BJP, on Friday alleged that her old family home in Jalpaiguri was deliberately set on fire. Visibly shaken and emotionally overwhelmed, Swapna claimed that not only had someone attempted to torch the property, but also the incident had left her feeling abandoned by people she once trusted. "What hurts most is that no relative came forward to help," she said after arriving at the police station to lodge a complaint. "I feel this has happened because I entered politics."

The fire reportedly broke out at the family's old residence in Patakata Ghoshpara area of Jalpaiguri, where fuel wood was stored. Police from Jalpaiguri Kotwali police station and personnel from the fire department rushed to the spot after receiving information. However, by the time firefighters arrived, the flames had largely been brought under control. Standing outside the police station, Swapna spoke with visible anguish. "At first, I thought someone was joking when they told me about the fire. I never imagined anyone would actually set the house on fire," she said. "I did not see who did it. But I feel someone very close to



angry locals reportedly surrounded officers and staged protests, demanding action against her brothers. Some residents claimed they were unable to live peacefully in the locality because of alleged harassment and insisted that the brothers be arrested. The controversy deepened after Swapna herself posted about the incident on social media. "Had I known things would come to this, I truly would never have entered politics," she wrote. "Today, even my house has been set on fire." Swapna had resigned from her railway job to contest the Assembly elections from Rajganj as a Trinamool Congress candidate. Her entry into electoral politics had generated considerable public attention, given her rise from severe financial hardship to becoming one of India's most celebrated athletes after winning gold in the heptathlon at the Asian Games. Her elder brother, Pabitra Barman, described the terrifying moments after the fire broke out. "The fire started in the area near me and I tried to put it out ourselves before informing the police and fire department." He explained that their younger brother Asit and

his wife had previously stayed in the old house, but had moved out after alleged threats following Swapna's electoral defeat. "After my sister lost the election, my younger brother was threatened with assault. Since then, he and his wife were no longer staying in the old house and had shifted to Swapna's new residence," Pabitra said. "We do not know who carried out this act or how it happened. A few days ago, miscreants had also vandalised the CCTV cameras installed at our new house," he alleged. Pabitra also echoed Swapna's disappointment over the reaction of the neighbours. "No one from the locality came forward to help us," he lamented. Confirming the incident, Jalpaiguri fire department official Ambardeep Sen said, "We received information that a fire had broken out at Swapna Barman's house. By the time we arrived, the fire was already under control. The blaze had started in an abandoned section where fuel wood was stored, but it had been extinguished before we could begin operations. An investigation is underway to know the actual cause of fire."

Raghu Rai — the candid chronicler of India's soul

The journey from the grainy romance of black-and-white film in the 1960s to the seductive lure of colour films of the 1970s, through the luminous magic of Kodachrome transparencies, and more recently, into the relentless immediacy of the digital age, spanning six unbroken decades, is no ordinary feat. It is a saga of seeing, feeling, and enduring, captured photogenically by Raghu Rai, a master craftsman who passed away at 83 on April 26. He was not merely a photojournalist, but a diligent and candid chronicler of India's soul, a man who captured fleeting truths



sparked and steered by his brother, set him on a lifelong pursuit of light,

shared aesthetic grammar. One refined the name; the other redefined the gazelle's gaze. Indira Gandhi at a press conference.

Formidable Entry Raghu Rai entered photography in 1965 with disarming force. Within a year, he was already steering the visual narrative as Chief Photographer at The Statesman. By 1972, his images had travelled to Paris and struck a deep chord with the legendary lensman Henri Cartier-Bresson, who ushered him into Magnum Photos, a prestigious, international image-cooperative that documents world events with high-quality visual storytelling.

Raghu Rai built a rare trust with two towering figures, Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa. Both recognised his eye and instinct. In those guarded spaces, Raghu Rai did not intrude; he witnessed. He distilled authority and compassion into frames of quiet intensity. With both women commanding global attention, his images travelled far and wide, carrying the weight of their presence and the pulse of their times. His coffee-table books on Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa remain visual epics.

In 1976, he stepped away from The Statesman to shape the visual grammar of a newly launched Sunday magazine in Calcutta. His coverage of the 1977 Andhra Pradesh super cyclone marked his first major engagement with large-scale human tragedy. Sent into the ravaged coastal belt, Raghu Rai walked into a world that seemed emptied of breathalked into a world that seemed emptied of brea, villages flattened into memory, boats hurled inland like wreckage, carcasses caught in uprooted trees, and a silence heavy with loss. His frames held survivors in their rawest truths with only an unblinking intimacy that placed the viewer inside the wound. That assignment did not just document a disaster; it also defined a photographer. It hardened his instinct, sharpened his empathy, and set the course for a lifetime of witnessing.

Mother Teresa By 1980, he moved to New Delhi and was at the nerve centre of the fledgling India Today magazine, helping define its visual identity in its formative years. Between 1982 and 1991, his photo essays on India's social, political, and cultural churn were fierce, layered, and impossible to sidestep. Thereafter, the era of

photo features started across Indian mainstream and vernacular publications.

Recognition came early and never ceased. He received the Padma Shri in 1971, and his 1992 National Geographic cover story on wildlife management earned global acclaim. His work appeared in leading international publications and exhibitions worldwide. Raghu Rai was not merely a participant in global photography but was one of its arbiters, serving multiple times on the jury of the World Press Photo and UNESCO's International Photo Contest. A photograph of a dozen vultures set against the backdrop of the Taj Mahal revealed his relentless eye and restless conscience—qualities that made his images not just speak, but scream, and endure. Honest Image What set him apart was his refusal to mimic. He transformed documentation into experience — crowds into choreography, streets into living tapestries and faces into narratives. The age-old saying, "One photo is equivalent to 1,000 words", magically transformed to 10,000 words,

Raghu Rai's photos of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy in 1984 remain among the most haunting visual records of human suffering. He did not sensationalise the tragedy; instead, he lent it dignity. His images carried grief, anger, and an almost unbearable intimacy, compelling viewers to confront the nerve centre of the fledgling India Today magazine, helping define its visual identity in its formative years. Between 1982 and 1991, his photo essays on India walked into a world that seemed emptied of brea social, political, and cultural churn were fierce, layered, and impossible to sidestep. Thereafter, the era of photo features started across Indian mainstream and vernacular publications. Recognition came early and never ceased. He received the Padma Shri in 1971, and his 1992 National Geographic cover story on wildlife management earned global acclaim. His work appeared in leading international publications and exhibitions worldwide. Raghu Rai was not merely a participant in global photography but was one of its arbiters, serving multiple times on the jury of the World Press Photo and UNESCO's International Photo Contest. A photograph of a dozen vultures set against the backdrop of the Taj Mahal revealed his relentless eye and restless conscience—qualities that made his images not just speak, but scream, and endure. Honest Image What set him apart was his refusal to mimic. He transformed documentation into experience — crowds into choreography, streets into living tapestries and faces into narratives. The age-old saying, "One photo is equivalent to 1,000 words", magically transformed to 10,000 words,

Chenchu relocation from Amrabad Tiger Reserve — Conservation effort or Tribal displacement?

The recent relocation exercise initiated by the Telangana government in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve in Nagarkurnool district has raised serious constitutional, legal, ethical, and humanitarian concerns among Adivasi communities, tribal rights groups, and civil society organisations. While the process is officially presented as wildlife conservation and rehabilitation under Project Tiger, many members of the Chenchu community and rights defenders allege that it is proceeding without adherence to the constitutional safeguards, statutory protections, and democratic procedures guaranteed to Scheduled Tribes, particularly the Chenchus, who are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). Chenchu tribals oppose relocation from Amrabad Tiger Reserve. Opinion: Uphold the spirit of Forest Rights Act. The relocation process is inconsistent with the spirit of the notified Chenchu Reserve declared in the Amrabad Hills of erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. In 1942, the government notified rules reserving the Chenchu Reserve to protect the community, its welfare, livelihood, and roughly one lakh acres of forest land essential for its survival. These measures were based on the remarkable study of the Chenchu conducted by Dr von Fürer-Haimendorf.

Beyond Compensation For the Chenchus, forests are not merely resources but the foundation of identity, autonomy, and survival. Relocation, therefore, represents not only physical displacement but also the erosion of cultural continuity, community institutions, and ecological knowledge that cannot be compensated through monetary packages alone.

The proposed package for the Amrabad Tiger Reserve provides two options: either payment of the entire package amount (Rs 15 lakh per family) directly to the family, or relocation and rehabilitation of the village. However, families opting for the rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) package are required to move from the Scheduled Area to the non-Scheduled Area of Bacharam. The displacement of tribals from the Scheduled Area is governed by the provisions of the Land Acquisition and R&R Act, 2013, under which the consent of the Gram Sabha is essential.

The relocation creates long-term risks for tribal communities. If Adivasi families are relocated outside Agency protections, what happens to the safeguards available under the Fifth Schedule, PESA, tribal protective land transfer regulations, and Scheduled Area governance systems? The displaced Adivasis may become vulnerable to land alienation, economic exploitation, and eventual landlessness. Authorities often justify relocation on the grounds of inadequate



infrastructure within tiger reserves.

However, this raises a fundamental question: why should development require displacement instead of strengthening infrastructure and services within existing tribal habitations? The prevailing approach appears to treat relocation as the only solution while ignoring coexistence models that can protect both wildlife and indigenous rights.

Framing the issue as a choice between tiger conservation and Adivasi existence is deeply problematic, especially when indigenous communities have historically played a crucial role in conserving forests and biodiversity. Living Together Significantly, even the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, in its meeting reportedly held on 17 March 2026, is said to have emphasised the importance of coexistence between wildlife and local communities, including within core tiger habitats.

This reflects an emerging recognition that democratic conservation and indigenous habitation are not necessarily contradictory. According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and recent tiger estimation reports, Telangana has witnessed a gradual increase in tiger numbers in recent years, particularly in Amrabad and Kawal Tiger Reserve landscapes. The 2022 All India Tiger Estimation reportedly recorded around 21 tigers in the Amrabad Tiger Reserve, while subsequent Forest Department assessments and media reports suggest that the number has further increased in recent years, with reports indicating that Amrabad now hosts more than 30 tigers. However, increasing tiger populations should not be used to create a narrative in which Adivasi communities are viewed as incompatible with conservation. The rise in tiger numbers itself has occurred in landscapes historically inhabited and protected by indigenous communities such as the Chenchus. This reinforces the argument that coexistence models are not only possible but historically proven.

The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, read with Article 244, provides special protections for Scheduled Tribes living in Scheduled Areas, and institutions such as the Tribal Advisory Council (TAC) were specifically created to ensure that policies affecting tribal communities are examined through the lens of constitutional justice and tribal welfare. In this context, the ongoing relocation exercise raises serious concerns because, as per GO Ms No. 117, Social Welfare and Labour Department, dated 28 January 1958, issued by the Governor, any scheme or project affecting the livelihoods and rights of tribal communities must be placed before the TAC. However, concerns have been raised that the proposed relocation of Chenchu communities from their traditional forest habitats under the tiger conservation programme was not placed before the TAC for deliberation and resolution, thereby raising important questions regarding the legality and constitutional validity of the process.

What Law Says The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), recognises the authority of Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas over community resources, customary governance, and local decision-making. According to community accounts, instead of conducting genuine Gram Sabha consultations involving all affected Chenchu families, authorities allegedly invited only selected individuals — including some non-tribals — to participate in decision-making by Gram Sabhas in matters affecting tribal lands, resources, and livelihoods. Selective consultations cannot substitute constitutional procedures. The NTCA Guidelines themselves mandate that the free and informed consent of the Gram Sabha and affected villagers must be obtained in writing regarding the proposed resettlement package or option. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA), recognises individual and community rights over forests, customary resources, particularly for Chenchu Habitat Rights in the forests. Under Section 5 of the FRA, Gram Sabhas are also empowered to protect forests, wildlife, biodiversity, and habitats, and to ensure compliance with their decisions regarding community forest resources. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006, and the NTCA Guidelines governing relocation from core tiger habitats also impose mandatory safeguards. Relocation must comply with both the

Wildlife Protection Act and the Forest Rights Act. The Guidelines explicitly provide that even in cases of voluntary relocation, the rights of people should be recognised and settled before relocation. Under Section 38V(5) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, relocation from critical tiger habitats can occur only after these safeguards are satisfied. NTCA Guidelines require recognition and vesting of rights before relocation, scientific establishment of irreversible ecological damage, examination of coexistence options, informed consent of Gram Sabhas, and provision of livelihood and rehabilitation guarantees. They also clearly state that relocation is voluntary and can occur only if people are willing to move.

Under Section 4(2)(c) of the FRA and the NTCA Guidelines, the state must establish that "other reasonable options of coexistence are not available" before relocation can proceed. The Chenchu relationship with the landscape is fundamentally different from commercial exploitation or destructive extraction. If tiger populations have increased in landscapes historically inhabited by Chenchus, the State must answer whether coexistence models were genuinely explored before resorting to relocation. One of the gravest concerns in the Amrabad relocation process relates to the apparent failure to implement the Forest Rights Act before initiating relocation. In several Chenchu villages within the tiger reserve, Community Forest Rights claims reportedly remain pending before the Sub-Divisional Level Committees and District Level Committees. Numerous Individual Forest Rights claims are also said to remain unresolved or only partially recognised. In villages such as Rayuledupenta, some families reportedly received only IFR claim numbers while formal pattas were never issued. It is also alleged that the National Human Rights Commission directed authorities to distribute titles immediately, but implementation remains incomplete. Further, Habitat Rights — especially crucial for PVTGs such as the Chenchus — reportedly have not even been initiated despite directions issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. Habitat Rights are particularly important because they recognise the collective rela-



in timeless frames. Raghu Rai recalls first meetings with Husain and Mother Teresa

A realistic reckoning of Raghu Rai's life behind the lens reveals staggering scale and even sharper selectivity. Even at a modest rhythm of 100 frames a day across 200 working days a year, he would have produced 20,000 images annually — easily crossing well over a million in six relentless decades. That is a conservative estimate, as in moments of conflict, catastrophe, and political churn, his shutter would have fired far more, especially in the liberating surge of the digital era.

Yet the real story lies not in volume but in verdict. From this ocean of images, only a razor-thin slice, perhaps a few thousand, survived his uncompromising eye to define his legacy. From millions of moments, only the most piercing endured, appearing in newspapers, magazines and over two dozen coffee-table books

First Shot at 2 Trained as a civil engineer yet drawn to music, Raghu Rai stumbled into photography at 23, thanks to a nippy-nudge from his elder brother S Paul, an established photographer himself, who placed a modest camera in his restless hands. What followed was nothing short of alchemy. Like a fish discovering water, Raghu Rai instinctively took to the lens, shooting the ordinary until it turned extraordinary.

Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa. Photos: Raghu Rai One early, arresting image — a tight, unblinking close-up of a wide-eyed foal — caught his brother's discerning eye. It was swiftly dispatched to The Times of London, published without hesitation, and rewarded handsomely.

That moment was ignition. Encouraged further, Raghu Rai began sending his work to Indian newspapers, where his images were received with equal fervour. Those first affirmations,



Jannik Sinner beats Medvedev to reach Italian



Rome: Home favourite Jannik Sinner held his nerve under immense pressure, surviving a fine performance by Daniil Medvedev and a late-night suspension before returning on Saturday afternoon to eventually fight past the Russian 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 in the semifinals of the Italian Open in Rome. With this win, Sinner preserved his pursuit of the Career Golden Masters as he reached the final of the event in his home country. After a dominant first set, the World No. 1 was dragged into a gruelling contest, with Medvedev gradually imposing himself and forcing the Italian into extended defensive exchanges. When the 30-year-old levelled the match,

Sinner appeared under severe pressure, but he responded with grit and composure to lead 4-2 before play was suspended for the night due to rain. Returning to court 18 hours later, the Italian held to love and then had two match points on Medvedev's serve. Though unable to finish the job on return, he held his nerve on serve to secure his place in the ATP Masters 1000 final. "It was a very different challenge and a tough challenge," Sinner said. "Usually, during the night, I don't struggle to sleep. With this determined semi-final win, Sinner extended his record Masters 1000 winning streak to 33 matches, surpassing Djokovic's previous benchmark of 31 after

defeating Andrey Rublev in the quarter-finals. He also became just the second player, after Rafael Nadal in 2011, to reach the final of the season's but this time it was not easy... I am very happy with how I handled this situation and that I'm back in the final." By reaching the Rome championship match for a second consecutive year — following defeat to Carlos Alcaraz in the 2025 final — Sinner now stands one win away from completing the Career Golden Masters. If he defeats Casper Ruud in Sunday's title showdown, the 24-year-old would become only the second man, alongside Novak Djokovic, to capture all nine Masters 1000 titles.

With this determined semi-final win, Sinner extended his record Masters 1000 winning streak to 33 matches, surpassing Djokovic's previous benchmark of 31 after defeating Andrey Rublev in the quarter-finals. He also became just the second player, after Rafael Nadal in 2011, to reach the final of the season's first five Masters 1000 tournaments, having already lifted trophies in Indian Wells, Miami, Monte-Carlo, and Madrid. Heavy rain in the Italian capital late on Friday night forced play to be suspended at 9:45 p.m. CEST. When play resumed on Saturday, Sinner clinically reeled off the two games he needed to earn a two-hour, 37-minute win.

AI Becoming Infrastructure Of Intelligence: TCS Chairman N Chandrasekaran



Artificial intelligence is no longer just a technological layer but is rapidly becoming the operating foundation and "infrastructure of intelligence" for enterprises globally. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Chairman N Chandrasekaran said. In his letter to shareholders in the company's Annual Report for 2025-26, Chandrasekaran noted that TCS has scaled up the execution of its 'Human+AI' operating model, generating an annualised revenue of USD 2.3 billion in AI services and USD 11.5 billion in new-age services, including cloud, data, and cybersecurity. He noted that AI will

fundamentally influence how enterprises invest, organise supply chains, manage risk, and serve stakeholders, with generative and agentic AI now entering a new phase of growth as customers decisively move from experimental pilots to scaled deployments and embed AI into core functions. Looking ahead, the Chairman outlined a comprehensive future strategy centered on establishing secure, resilient, and sovereign AI infrastructure. A key priority for the IT major, he said, will be building an AI operating system tailored for industries to accelerate the deployment of agentic AI solu-

tions. Furthermore, TCS plans to construct India's first AI-focused data centre featuring a rack density greater than 160 KW, while strengthening its 'Infrastructure to Intelligence' offerings through expansive partnerships with hyperscalers, frontier AI firms, and industrial OEMs. Highlighting global macroeconomic shifts, Chandrasekaran noted that as global constraints on power, compute, and geography intensify, India is emerging as a strategic '+1' destination for AI infrastructure. TCS reported a 12.22 per cent jump in its March quarter net profit to Rs 13,718 crore, supported by

expanded profit margins. For fiscal year 2025-26, its profit after tax increased 1.35 per cent to Rs 49,210 crore compared to Rs 48,553 crore in FY25. The company added 2,356 jobs in Q4 to take the overall number of employees to 584,519 as of March 31, 2026, marking the first quarter of net addition after two consecutive quarters of decline. It signed new deals of USD 12 billion in the three months to March, led by North America at USD 5.4 billion and the banking, financial services and insurance business at USD 2.8 billion.

Sports & Youth Week celebrations from May 18



Hyderabad: With the objective of ensuring that government services directly reach every citizen, the Telangana Government has decided to organize Sports and Youth Week celebrations from May 18 to 23 as part of the 99-day "Praja Palana Pragathi" programme being implemented by the Department of Youth Services and Sports. To make this programme a grand success, innovative awareness about vative activities and events have been planned throughout the week. In this connection, the Department of Sports & Youth services will organize a series of youth and sports activities across the State from May 18 to May 23 as

part of the "Praja Palana Pragathi Pranalika" 99-Day Action Plan. The programme aims to promote physical fitness, youth empowerment, leadership development, social responsibility, and employment opportunities among young people. The six-day "Youth & Sports" theme campaign will be implemented at State, District, and Mandal levels with active participation from youth organizations, sports persons, students, volunteers, public representatives, and the general public. The activities will begin on May 18 with "Fit & Active Telangana", featuring marathons, walkathons, yoga, meditation, aerobics, and

Zumba sessions across the State. A 5-km marathon will be organized at L.B. Stadium in Hyderabad and at district headquarters, while Mandal headquarters will host walkathons and well on May 19, Career & Skill Development Day will focus on creating awareness about skill development courses, Sports University opportunities, 5-km marathon will be organized at L.B. Stadium in Hyderabad and at district headquarters, while Mandal headquarters will host walkathons and well on May 19, Career & Skill Development Day will focus on creating awareness about Skill University programmes, and Agniveer recruit-

ment through virtual sessions conducted at State and District levels. Youth Leadership Summit programmes will be conducted on May 20 to encourage leadership, innovation, and civic awareness among youth. Youth Parliament sessions and painting competitions on social and developmental themes will also be organized with ping awareness about participation from educational institutions and youth groups. and, May 21 will be observed as "Play & Participate - Sports Day", promoting mass participation in sports and recreational activities at various levels under the supervision of District Youth and Sports Officers.

Govt tightens import rules, puts silver under licensed regime



New Delhi: Within days of levying high customs duties on precious metals, the government on Saturday imposed import curbs on silver by putting the metal under licensed regime for inbound shipments. The government, on May 13, hiked import duty on precious metals — gold, and silver — from 6 per cent to 15 per cent. The effective duty (including 3 per cent IGST) is over 18 per cent. It was hiked to control the outflow of forex by curbing non-essential imports. The import policy for silver, including silver played with gold and platinum, "are revised from free to restricted... with immediate effect," the Director General of Foreign Trade said in a notification.

Under the restricted category need a government license for imports. The import curbs, however, will not be applicable for imports by 100 per cent Export Oriented Units (EOUs), Special Economic Zone (SEZ) units provided such imported goods are not sold in the domestic market. According to the commerce ministry data, silver imports jumped more than two-fold to USD 411 million during April. In 2025-26, the imports jumped about 150 per cent to USD 12 billion due to higher prices. In volume terms, it rose by 42 per cent to 7,334.96 tonnes in the last fiscal. Silver was priced at around Rs 2.53 lakh per kg. The metal is an essential component in

several industries, ranging from electrical switches and solar panels to chemical catalysts and medical equipment. India's foreign exchange reserves have declined to USD 690 billion in the week ended May 1 from an all-time high of USD 728.49 billion during the week ended February 27, before the outbreak of the West Asia war, which has put pressure on the rupee through costlier imports. According to the RBI data for the week ended May 1, India's foreign currency assets (FCAs), which form the largest component in forex reserves, fell to USD 551.8 billion, while gold reserves fell to USD 115 billion.

From 'Mass Entertainer' To 'Weak Second Half' - Here's What Netizens Feel About Suriya's Film



After a one-day delay caused by last-minute financial issues, Suriya and Trisha Krishnan's much-awaited film Karuppu was finally released in theatres on Friday, May 15. Directed by RJ Balaji, the film opened to packed shows and huge excitement among fans. Soon after the first-day-first-show screenings ended, social media platform X was flooded with reactions from moviegoers praising the action drama. Going by the early response, Karuppu has impressed many fans with its mix of action, emotions, comedy, and mass moments. Several viewers especially praised Suriya's screen presence and perform-

ance in the film. One fan wrote, "#Karuppu is a sure shot blast. @RJ_Balaji, you truly deserve this success, sir. @SaiAbhyankkar's isai is a morattu elavation, @dop_gkvishnu camera work was fire, Finally our singam @Suriya_offl sir back with a banger! Wishing the entire team a mega blockbuster success." Another viewer was all praise for Suriya's acting in the climax and wrote, "Climax Suriya's acting was Top Notch. He portrayed Karuppanasamy with his eyes and Body Language. ser shared, "Very good fir #Suriya #Karuppu." Many fans called the film a complete commercial entertainer. A tweet read,

"#Veerabhadru Good movie. Proper commercial movie with emotions+action+comedy. Had some flaws, but no boring scenes and best summer entertainer for families. #Karuppu." However, not all reactions were completely positive. Some viewers felt the second half could have been better. One user shared, "Very good fir first half followed by weak second half with a ser shared, "Very good fir few good moments in between and a satisfying climax. 3/5 SA I ABHYANKAR SA VIOUR." Another netizen wrote, "#Karu ppu. Suriya shines, but the writing doesn't. After an average start, the film dips in the second half

due to a weak villain and a screenplay that lacks the necessary grip." Before its release, Karuppu faced a major hurdle after screenings scheduled for May 14 were cancelled due to financial troubles involving producer SR Prabhu of Dream Warrior Pictures. The sudden postponement left many Suriya fans disappointed. On Friday morning, Suriya shared a special message for fans on social media and thanked them for their patience and support during the difficult situation. Sser shared, "Very good fir haring posters of the film, he wrote, "Dear all... Thank you for being with us! #Karuppu

Three Detained Under Goondas Act In 'Jana Nayagan' Piracy Case



Tamil Nadu Police have invoked the Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities Act (1982), often called the Goondas Act against three accused arrested in connection with the online piracy leak of Jana Nayagan, the much-anticipated film starring TVK chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay. The three accused - identified as Prashanth, Selvam and Balakrishnan - were detained under the preventive detention law by the Tamil Nadu Cyber Crime Wing as part of the ongoing investigation into the high-profile leak, police sources said.

Directed by H Vinoth and produced by KVN Productions, Jana Nayagan has been one of the most closely watched Tamil films in recent years, largely because it is widely projected as Vijay's final film appearance before his full-time political career. The controversy erupted after an HD-quality version of the film allegedly surfaced online even before its theatrical release, triggering outrage across the Tamil film industry. Industry bodies, producers and several film personalities strongly condemned the leak, calling it a major blow to the Tamil cinema industry.

Superstar Rajinikanth was among those who publicly demanded stringent action against those responsible. KVN Productions subsequently lodged a formal complaint with the Chennai Cyber Crime Police, following which an extensive probe was launched. Why Goondas Act Was Invoked Police have so far arrested nine individuals in connection with the case. Investigators believe the accused were part of a network involved in illegally accessing and distributing copyrighted film content online. Officials said one of the detained accused had reportedly

worked as a freelance assistant editor on another film project, raising suspicions about possible insider access and technical involvement in the leak. Cases were registered undg outrage across the Tamil film industry. Industry bodies, producers and several film personalities strongly condemned the leak, calling it a major blow to the Tamil cinema industry. Superstar Rajinikanth was among those who publicly demanded stringent action against those responsible. KVN Productions subsequently lodged a formal complaint with the Chennai Cyber Crime Police, fol-

B. Srinivas

Madhasetty Prakash & Family

Happy Anniversary

Madhasetty Laxmikala & Madhasetty Prakash

From Near & Dear

B. Srinivas

K. Sajjanlal & Family

HAPPY Anniversary

Jayasri & Srikanth

From Near & Dear