

## News Brief

### Nitin Gadkari chairs review meeting of road & highway projects in J&K

Srinagar, June 18, (IANS) Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari chaired a high-level meeting to review the progress of the road and highway projects in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

"Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for the big-ticket infrastructure projects in the UT," an official statement said.

"We are working with dedication for J&K's strong and glorious tomorrow."

### Terrorist killed in encounter was top LeT/TRF commander

Srinagar, June 18 (IANS) Security forces said on Tuesday that the terrorist killed in Monday's encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora District was a top-ranking militant of the LeT and TRF.

Addressing a joint Press conference, Brigadier 3 sector, Atul Tyagi said that Umar Lone, who was killed in Aragam Village of Bandipora in a joint operation by the Army, police and CRPF, had been active since 2018.

"He belonged to Pattn area of Baramulla District and was active since 2018. He was a category 'A' terrorist of LeT and TRF. He was under our scanner for quite some time and an operation was launched after we got information about the movement of terrorists in Aragam area yesterday."

### BJP names election incharges for forthcoming Assembly polls

New Delhi, June 18 (IANS) The BJP on Monday announced names of incharges and co-incharges for the forthcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

BJP National President, JP Nadda has appointed Union Minister Bhpender Yadav as a state incharge and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw as co-incharge of Maharashtra.

### Assam leaders extend condolences for train accident victims

Guwahati, June 18 (IANS) Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma offered condolences for the loss of lives in the tragic train accident after Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express collided with a goods train close to Rangapani station near New Jalpaiguri on Monday morning. Sarma took to his X handle and wrote: "The tragic train collision between the Kanchanjunga Express and a goods train is extremely unfortunate. My heart goes out to the families of those who have lost their lives and prayers for the swift recovery of the injured."

## India's spices exports hit record \$4.46 billion in FY24

New Delhi, June 18 (IANS) The export of spices and its products reached an all-time high in FY 2023-24 at a record \$4.46 billion making India a key player in the global trade.

The growth was seen owing to a rebound in volumes and higher prices for certain varieties such as pepper, cardamom and turmeric.

According to the latest data by the Spices Board under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the export of spices/spice products from the country has been 15,39,692 tonnes valued at Rs

36,958.80 crore (\$4.46 billion) during FY 2023-24.

The red chilli exports hit a record \$1.5 billion in FY24, a 15 per cent increase from the previous year's \$1.3 billion which is driven by robust demand from China and Bangladesh.

According to Spices Board data, red chilli export volume increased by 15 per cent in FY24 to 6.01 lakh tonnes from 5.24 lakh tonnes the previous year.

Red chilli exports, worth \$1.5 billion, comprised about 34 per cent of India's total spices exports.

China was the top importer of Indian red chillies in FY24, purchasing over 1.79 lakh tonnes valued at Rs 4,123 crore, according to Kedia Advisory.

This represents a 14 per cent increase in volume and a 21 per cent increase in value from 1.57 lakh tonnes worth Rs 3,408 crore in FY23.

Chilli exports to Bangladesh jumped by 67 per cent in FY24, reaching 90,570 tonnes, up from 53,986 tonnes the previous year.

"India's red chilli exports have reached unprecedented heights in FY24, fueled by escalating demand from key importing nations. The surge in exports, especially to China and Bangladesh, reflects the growing recognition and preference for Indian spices worldwide," Kedia Advisory said.



BADRINATH, Devotees gather to have a darshan of Lord Badrinath on the occasion of Ekadashi in Badrinath on Tuesday. UNI

### K'taka HC grants bail to Bhavani Revanna in kidnap case

Bengaluru, June 18 (IANS) Karnataka High Court on Tuesday granted anticipatory bail to Bhavani Revanna, mother of Prajwal Revanna, the arrested JD(S) ex-MP and prime accused in the sex video scandal.

Bhavani Revanna had filed an anticipatory bail petition in a kidnap case linked to the sex video scandal. The bench headed by Justice Krishna S. Dixit passed the order and also restricted her entry into the Mysuru and Hassan districts.

The victim in the kidnap case hails from the Mysuru district and Hassan is the native district of Bhavani Revanna. The bench stated that Bhavani Revanna had answered 85 questions asked by the police and, hence, the argument of Bhavani Revanna's non-cooperation to the probe can't be accepted.

She need not give the answers that the police want from her, the bench stated.

Bhavani Revanna is presently appearing before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in connection with the kidnap case of a maid, who allegedly suffered sexual assault at the hands of Prajwal Revanna and her husband JD(S) MLA H. D. Revanna. MLA Revanna was jailed in connection with the case and is out on conditional bail.

### Yoga nurtures physical, mental and spiritual growth: Jadhav

New Delhi, June 18 (IANS) Union Minister of State for Ayush, Prataprao Jadhav, said on Tuesday that yoga nurtures physical, mental, and spiritual growth while also promoting societal harmony.

Ahead of the 10th edition of International Day of Yoga (IDY), which is celebrated across the world annually on June 21, the minister emphasised that this year's theme 'Yoga for Self and Society' highlights yoga's dual role in fostering individual and societal well-being.

"The enthusiastic par-

ticipation of millions in recent years reflects the profound impact of yoga on communities," Prataprao Jadhav said.

This year's IDY celebrations will be held in Srinagar, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi once again at the helm.

Since 2015, PM Modi has led the IDY celebrations at various locations, such as Kartavya Path in Delhi, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Ranchi, Jabalpur, and even the UN Headquarters in New York.

In the last 10 years, IDY has set four Guinness Book of World Records.

A total of 84 countries participated in the yoga session at one place and, gradually, each year, witnessed an increasing number of participants from across the world and last year, in 2023, a total of around 23.

4 crore people from across the world participated in the IDY event.

As a special initiative, this year, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is organising a unique initiative 'Yoga for Space' to mark the IDY 2024.

## By-election for two MLC seats in Andhra on July 12

Amaravati, June 18 (IANS) By-election for two seats of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council under MLAs quota will be held on July 12, announced the Election Commission on Tuesday.

The by-election will be held to fill the vacancies caused by the disqualification of C.

Ramachandraiah and the resignation of Shaik Mohammed Iqbal. Ramachandraiah, who was elected as MLC under the MLAs quota on YSR Congress Party ticket in 2021, was disqualified in March this year after he defected to the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

Iqbal resigned as MLC and also quit YSRCP to join TDP in April. The term of both the MLCs was up to March 29, 2027. The Election Commission will issue a notification for the by-election on June 25. Nominations will be received up to July 2 while the scrutiny of nominations will be taken up on July 3.

Last date for withdrawal of candidatures will be July 5. Polling will be held on July 12 while counting of votes will be taken up

the same day.

Given the strength of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the 175-member Assembly, it is sure to win both the seats. In the recent Assembly elections, NDA won 164 seats. The TDP alone bagged 135 seats. Its allies Jana Sena Party (JSP) and BJP won 21 and eight seats respectively.

Legislative Council Chairman Koye Moshenu Raju in March 2024, disqualified YSRCP rebel MLCs Vamsi Krishna Yadav and C. Ramachandraiah after the then ruling party sought their disqualification for defecting to JSP and TDP respectively.

While Ramachandraiah was elected as MLC under the MLAs quota, Vamsi was elected under the local bodies quota.

The by-election to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Vamsi is likely to be announced later.

--IANS



NEW DELHI, Union Minister and BJP National President JP Nadda being greeted by Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar at a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday. UNI

## Power demand in North India at record high amid scorching heat wave

New Delhi, June 18 (IANS) The demand for electricity in India's northern region scaled its highest-ever peak of 89 GW amid the scorching heat wave on Monday, the Ministry of Power said on Tuesday.

"The Northern Region of India has been experiencing high demand conditions due to a prevailing heat wave since May 17 this year.

Despite these challenging conditions, the highest ever peak demand of 89 GW in the Northern Region was successfully met on June 17," according to a Power Ministry statement. This achievement was made possible by importing 25 to 30 per cent of the region's power requirement from neighbouring regions.

All utilities have been advised to maintain a high state of alert and minimise forced outages of equipment, the official statement explained.

In response to the increased demand and to ensure adequate power availability across the country, the Ministry of Power said it has implemented a series of measures to meet the highest-ever peak demand of 250 GW during this ongoing summer season.

As part of the mea-

sures, directions have been issued for imported coal-based plants to continue the generation support during the high-demand period.

Minimum planned maintenance of generating units has been scheduled during this period to keep up the high level of power generation.

All power generating companies (GENCOs) have been advised to keep their plants in healthy condition to ensure full capacity availability for optimal operation of various generation sources.

Adequate coal stocks are being maintained at coal-based thermal stations.

Hydropower stations have been advised to conserve water during solar hours and dispatch maximum generation during non-solar hours to ensure power adequacy at all times.

Gas-based power plants have been directed to provide grid support.

Additionally, around 860 MW of additional gas-based capacity (non-NTPC) has been tied up through competitive bidding specifically for this summer.

Furthermore, approximately 5000 MW of NTPC gas-based capacity has been instructed to be

ready for immediate operation as per system requirements, the statement added.

Any un-requisitioned or surplus power available with generating stations is to be offered in the market.

States can also tie up with other states having surplus capacity via the PUSH portal.

According to the IMD forecast, heat wave conditions in North-West India are expected to abate from June 20.

## Accept if any mistake, take action: SC to Centre, NTA on NEET row

New Delhi, June 18 (UNI) The Supreme Court on Tuesday told the Centre and National Testing Agency (NTA) that even if there is 0.001 per cent chance of negligence on anyone's part in the conduction of the NEET-UG 2024 exams held in May, "accept it, and deal with it by taking appropriate action on time to instil confidence among students."

A Vacation Bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice SVN Bhatti made these remarks while hearing a petition seeking cancellation and re-conduct of NEET UG 2024, amid allegations of serious irregularities in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test which is conducted for entry into medical colleges.

The Bench issued notice to the Centre and NTA and asked them to put forth their stand on the petition seeking cancellation of NEET UG 2024 due to alleged leaking of question paper before the exam and other irregularities in the preparation of the exam. The bench will hear the matter next on July 8 along with other related petitions.

## PM to lead Yoga celebrations in Srinagar

New Delhi, June 18 (IANS) The tenth edition of the International Day of Yoga (IDY) will be organised in Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) Srinagar on June 21.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, much like every year, will lead the gathering in performing various yoga asanas. Addressing a media briefing in the national Capital, Union Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav on Tuesday emphasised this year's theme 'Yoga for Self and Society' and highlighted yoga's dual role in fostering individual and societal well-being.

"The enthusiastic participation of millions in recent years reflects the profound impact of yoga on communities," the Ayush Minister said.

He also informed that the Prime Minister has

written to each Gram Pradhan, encouraging grassroots participation and the spread of yoga in rural areas. This year's IDY celebrations will be held in Srinagar with PM Modi again at the helm. Notably, PM Modi has been a pivotal figure in promoting yoga globally. Since 2015, PM Modi has led the IDY celebrations at various iconic locations, including Kartavya Path in Delhi, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Ranchi, Jabalpur, and even the United Nations Headquarters in New York. His leadership has significantly boosted yoga's global popularity and recognition. In the last 10 years, IDY has set four Guinness Book of World Records. In 2015, a total of 35,985 Indians performed yoga at Rajpath along with PM Modi. In

2023, a total of around 23.4 crore people from across the world participated in the IDY event.

The Union Ayush Minister also launched a 'Common Yoga Protocol Book in Braille' to enable visually-impaired people to learn yoga with ease.

He also unveiled a Professor Ayushman comic on yoga which will help children learn and practice yoga with interest in an entertaining manner.

As a special initiative, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning a unique initiative 'Yoga for Space' to mark the IDY.

All scientists and officials of ISRO will perform yoga together as per the Common Yoga Protocol guidelines. The team from the Gaganyaan project will also join the global cam-

aign of IDY by doing asanas on the occasion.

The ministry has organised Yoga Tech Challenge on MyGov portal and MyBharat Portal with an aim to identify and promote those startups or individuals who have developed yoga-related tools, software and accessories. The Ayush Ministry has also launched several contests and activities. One notable initiative is the 'Yoga with Family' Video Contest, organised in partnership with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on the MyGov and MyBharat platform. This contest encourages families worldwide to participate in the IDY 2024 celebrations, showcasing the joy of yoga and reinforcing family bonds. The submission deadline is June 30.



NEW DELHI, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge meeting with Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee President Y S Sharmila at his residence, in New Delhi on Tuesday. UNI

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