

## Andhra sets 70% renewable energy rule for data centres, addresses water concerns: Lokesh

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 25:** Andhra Pradesh is adopting a sustainability-focused approach to its planned data-centre expansion, including a requirement that at least 70 per cent of the energy used by data centres come from renewable sources, IT Minister Nara Lokesh said.

The state is positioning Visakhapatnam as a major data-centre hub as it seeks to attract large technology investments and build out its digital infrastructure. Data centres, however, are typically energy- and water-intensive facilities, making access to reliable power and water as well as environmental sustainability key considerations for large-scale expansion.

Speaking at a fireside chat organised by the Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI) here, Lokesh said the state was addressing the environmental implications of data-



centre growth by focusing on energy, water and other resource requirements together.

"The first thumb rule is that a minimum 70 per cent of the energy used by data centres must come from renewable sources," Lokesh said, referring to sources including solar, wind, pumped storage and battery-based

energy.

The state is developing a data-centre cluster in Visakhapatnam and is also planning to address its water requirements through the Polavaram Left Bank Canal, he said. Lokesh said the Polavaram project would help utilise water that would otherwise flow into the Bay of Bengal, with supplies be-

ing moved towards Visakhapatnam to meet the requirements of data centres.

The state is also incentivising data-centre companies to establish desalination plants, Lokesh said, adding that one company is already setting up such a facility.

Data centres can require significant quantities of water for cooling, raising concerns about their impact on local water resources as the state seeks to attract large-scale investments in the sector. He said Andhra Pradesh was seeking to take a "holistic approach" to data-centre development by addressing energy, water and other environmental requirements together.

Such an approach would be critical for states seeking to attract and develop large-scale data-centre investments while addressing sustainability concerns, Lokesh said. (PTI)

## Railway Board extends retired staff re-engagement schemes till October 2028

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 25:** The Railway Board has extended until October 15, 2028, schemes for the engagement and re-engagement of retired railway employees against vacant posts, including arrangements covering non-gazetted staff, para-medical personnel and instructors at railway training institutes.

schemes, which were due to remain valid until October 15, 2026, have been extended for another two years on the existing terms and conditions, according to a Railway Board order.

"The validity of the same" has been extended "for a further period of two years beyond 15.10.2026 i.e. upto 15.10.2028," the Board said.

The order covers the scheme permitting engagement of retired railway staff against vacant non-gazetted posts; provisions governing engagement of retired and



hiring of para-medical staff on contract; and the re-engagement of retired railway personnel against vacant posts of Instructors and Senior Instructors in Centralised Training Institutes (CTIs).

Under the existing general scheme, Railways had been authorised to re-engage retired non-gazetted employees against vacancies. A June 2025 Railway Board order allowed vacant non-gazetted

posts from Pay Level 1 to Level 9 to be filled through re-engagement of eligible retired employees, subject to prescribed conditions.

The latest order also lays down separate provisions governing remuneration and service conditions depending on the pension system applicable to a retired employee.

For re-engaged employees covered under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), remu-

neration, allowances and leave will be regulated under the Department of Expenditure's December 9, 2020 instructions. For those covered under the National Pension System (NPS), remuneration and other service conditions will be governed by the Finance Ministry's Department of Expenditure instructions dated October 18, 2023.

The Board clarified that past re-engagement cases where remuneration, leave or related matters were settled differently from these instructions need not be reopened until the normal tenure of such cases ends or October 15, 2026, whichever is earlier.

It also reiterated that "re-engagement should be done only in exigencies, after observing due diligence."

All other terms and conditions contained in the earlier Railway Board orders will remain unchanged. (UNI)

## 'One PM gave Gen Z vote, the other determined to snatch it': Cong's dig at Modi

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 25:** The Congress on Friday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi by recalling how Rajiv Gandhi in 1988 reduced the minimum age for voting from 21 years to 18 years, and said one PM gave Gen Z the vote, the other is determined to "snatch it away through underhand means".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh claimed that PM Modi fears the youth having dashed their hopes and aspirations.

"This is a Tale of Two PMs. One PM got Parliament in its regular Winter Session in Dec 1988 to amend Article 326 of the Constitution to reduce the minimum age for voting from 21 years to 18 years. This was a PM who empowered the youth," Ramesh said in an obvious reference to Rajiv Gandhi.

"There is another PM who has ensured that the Special Summary Revisions of electoral rolls has been stopped since 2024 to ensure that Gen Z voters are not enrolled. This is a PM who fears the youth having dashed



their hopes and aspirations," he said, taking a jibe at Modi.

"One PM gave Gen Z the vote, the other is determined to snatch it away through underhand means," Ramesh said.

The Congress on Thursday had alleged that Gen Z is being targeted for exclusion and pressed for its demand that Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar must resign immediately.

The opposition party had also said Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah will be held accountable for their "diabolical designs".

Ramesh had alleged, "It is clear that a mortified PM is hellbent on ensuring Gen Z voters do not have their names on the electoral roll.

Seeing that Gen Z has hit the streets and is satirising him mercilessly but justifiably, he has deployed the CEC Gyanesh Kumar to keep them off the rolls."

The Special Summary Revision (SSR) through which the electoral rolls are revised every year has been kept frozen, he had said.

"This is the pathway for addition of new voters especially for Gen Zs who have just turned 18 to be added. Despite the other two ECs strongly urging that SSR be resumed, no revision has happened for two years now since youth disenchantment with Mr. Modi became evident," Ramesh had said.

Ramesh's remarks come after an Indian Express report said Election Commis-

sioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had objected on record at least 14 times over the last 10 months to decisions and orders they said were issued without their knowledge, even as the national rollout of the SIR was under the supervision of the full commission.

Their objections covered the manner in which the statutory voter registration Form 6 was amended, the handling of additions and deletions from voter lists, and centralised control over the electoral roll database, according to the report.

Under fire over the red flags raised by two of its commissioners over the SIR process, the EC has asserted that differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberations in any institution and all its orders carry full legal sanction and follow established statutory procedures. In a statement, the poll panel also said that not only the three commissioners, but every officer of the EC is fully authorised to give his suggestions to the commission for improving the electoral system. (PTI)

## SC seeks Goa's response on Tarun Tejpal's plea against conviction in 2013 rape case

**NEW DELHI, SEPT 25:** The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice to Goa Police on an appeal filed by journalist Tarun Tejpal against a Bombay High Court order that sentenced him to 10 years in prison in a 2013 rape case.

A bench comprising Justices M M Sundresh and P B Varale also issued notice to Tejpal on a Goa government plea seeking enhancement of his sentence.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Tejpal, submitted that it was a case where the acquittal was reversed by the high court and urged that his bail plea be heard in the matter.

"This is a case of reversal, there is a right of appeal, I have surrendered. The High Court itself has suspended the sentence for four weeks," Sibal said.

The bench said it will give a specific date for hearing the



matter.

On August 25, the top court had directed Tejpal to surrender within three weeks to undergo his 10-year prison sentence and had dismissed his plea seeking exemption from surrendering.

Subsequently, Tejpal surrendered before the trial court in the matter.

Tejpal was convicted under several sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including 376(2)(f) (rape committed by a person in a

position of trust or authority), 354(a) (sexual harassment) and 354(b) (assault or use of criminal force with intent to disrobe).

Under Section 376(2)(f), the maximum punishment is life imprisonment. (PTI)

## R G Kar rape-murder conspiracy probe: CBI submits report to Cal HC

**KOLKATA, Sep 25 :** The CBI on Thursday submitted a report to the Calcutta High Court on its investigation into an alleged conspiracy in the rape and murder of an on-duty doctor at the West Bengal government-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital here in August, 2024.

A division bench, comprising justices Shampa Sarkar and Tirthankar Ghosh, directed that the matter, which is being heard in-camera, will be taken up for arguments again on November 20.

The central agency sub-



mitted the report in a sealed cover to the court as per its direction during the previous hearing.

The division bench had on August 28 directed the CBI

to submit a report to it, indicating the path through which the probe agency has been able to locate the involvement of certain persons in its investigation into the

alleged conspiracy in the rape and murder of the medic at the state-run hospital in north Kolkata.

The court had on May 21 ordered setting up a three-member special investigation team of the CBI, headed by its joint director, east, to probe the developments from the time the RG Kar Medical College's trainee doctor had dinner on the ill-fated night of August 9, 2024 to her cremation.

The deceased doctor's parents had moved the court, alleging that evidence was destroyed and attempts were made to downplay the inci-

**SILIGURI, SEP 25 :** Floodwaters have started receding from several parts of Bhutni island in Malda's Manikchak in West Bengal, but the crisis for the flood-hit people is far from over.

With several important roads badly damaged or virtually washed away, large parts of Bhutni continue to remain cut off from Manikchak by road.

Residents of North Chandipur said nearly 10 km of road has been severely damaged by the strong currents of floodwater, with several stretches having almost disappeared. A similar situation has been reported from Dakshin Chandipur and Hiranandapur.

Large potholes, craters

and damaged road surfaces have made movement extremely difficult. In several places, even walking has become a challenge, while regular vehicular movement remains almost impossible. As a result, road communication between Bhutni and Manikchak continues to remain severely disrupted.

Following demands and agitation by the affected villagers, Manikchak MLA Gour Chandra Mondal on Thursday visited several damaged roads in Bhutni. He said that many roads had been almost completely destroyed by the flood and assured the residents that repair work had already started on an urgent basis.

"The administration is try-

ing to make the roads usable within the next few days," the MLA said.

He also said that water was still stagnant in several low-lying areas of Bhutni and steps were being taken to drain out the water with pumps.

Meanwhile, the flood-hit people of Bhutni have also received help from an unexpected quarter. A group of teachers and students of Malda Polytechnic recently travelled to Samiruddiatola in Uttar Chandipur, one of the worst-affected and most remote areas of Bhutni, to distribute relief materials among the flood victims.

The team, led by teacher Arindam Biswas and under the guidance of Professor

Shubha Das, included 14 students. Three girl students, in particular, took an active part in the relief operation. The students not only travelled through the difficult route without complaint but also worked alongside their male classmates. They separately distributed sanitary napkins among local women.

The relief materials were first taken by boat to Uttar Chandipur and then shifted from the boat to a tractor for the onward journey. The condition of the roads and the surrounding areas was so difficult that Zahidul helped guide the tractor through the flooded and damaged stretches to prevent an accident.

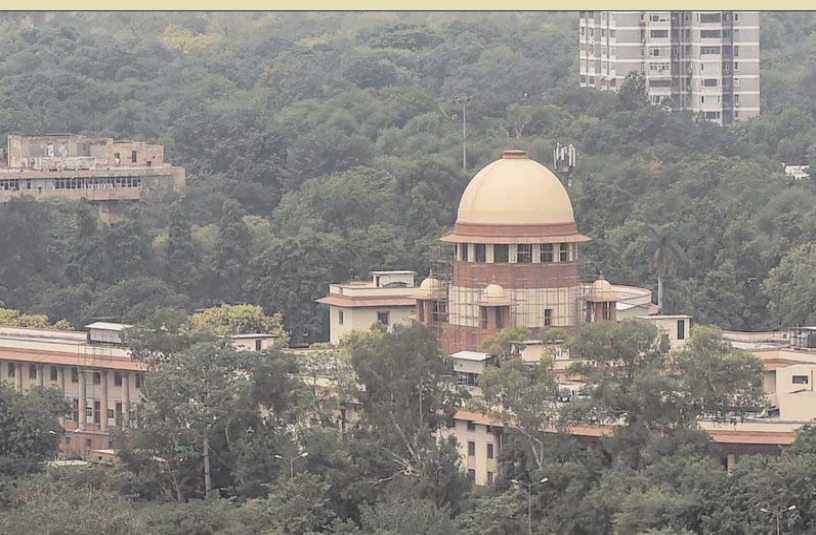
## Sessions Court Can't Impose 'Till Rest Of Life' Sentence For Murder: SC

**NEW DELHI, SEP 25:** In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that a sessions court, while convicting an accused for murder, cannot direct that the convict will remain in prison for the remainder of the natural life.

The verdict dealt with a vexatious legal question as to whether a trial court, while awarding the life imprisonment to a convict in a murder case under section 302 of the IPC, can hand down the sentence specifying that the convict will remain in jail for remainder of his life without the benefits of statutory regime of remission and commutation.

A bench comprising Justices Arvind Kumar and Vipul M Pandoli, referring to verdicts, said, "Although life imprisonment denotes imprisonment for the remainder of the life of convict, the statutory powers of remission and commutation cannot be curtailed by a Sessions Court and thus, the power to impose a special category sentence of life imprisonment without remission belongs to the Constitutional Courts and not to the Sessions Court."

The bench also said that the power to grant remission and commutation under the Code of Criminal Procedure cannot be curtailed by the sessions court.



It said that a direction by "the sessions court that imprisonment for life shall continue till the end of the natural life of the convict is in conflict with the statutory scheme".

Dealing with the facts of the case, the bench upheld the conviction of a man and another convict in a triple-murder case and substituted the sentence of imprisonment for remainder of life with rigorous imprisonment for 25 years without the benefit of statutory remission.

We are of the view that there is no doubt that the Trial Court was competent to impose the punishment of imprisonment for life

upon the appellants for the offence under Section 302 read with Section 34 IPC. However, at the same time, the Trial Court was not competent to impose a special category sentence that the appellants 'to remain in prison till rest of their life', which in substance and effect, excludes the statutory power of remission or commutation," the verdict said. Criminal Law

The judgment was delivered in the criminal appeal filed by Naval Kishore and co-convict, arising from the killing of a woman and her two minor daughters in Ludhiana, Punjab in December 2009.

The case arose from the murder of Pinki alias Simran, her eight-