

TN CM visits Apple, Microsoft offices in US; inks pact with Google for AI lab

STATE TIMES NEWS

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin visited the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft and discussed opportunities for investment and partnerships with them.

Day 2 of his US visit led to the signing of a pact to skill two million youngsters in the state in AI under the 'Naam Mudhalvan' scheme, in partnership with Google.

The Chief Minister, currently on a visit to the USA to attract investments to Tamil Nadu, on Saturday described the visit to the offices of Apple, Google and Microsoft as "awe-inspiring."

"Discussed various opportunities and exciting partnerships. Determined to strengthen these partnerships and make Tamil Nadu one of the foremost growth engines of Asia!"

@ T R B R a j a a @ G u i d a n c e _ T N @TNIndMin #InvestInTN # T h r i v e I n T N # L e a d W i t h T N #DravidianModel," Stalin said in a post on the social



media platform X.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in the presence of the Chief Minister, with Google for setting up Tamil Nadu AI (Artificial Intelligence) labs in Tamil Nadu.

The initiative will help to collaborate with startups, MSMEs, and the rural economy besides making the youth a future-ready force.

The signing of the pact was the outcome of a discussion initiated by the CM with officials at Google on August 30, a government release here said.

"The Chief Minister met top officials of Google at Mountain View campus and discussed the further expansion of production of Pixel 8 phones manufactured in

Tamil Nadu and the launch of other Google products and technology facilities in Tamil Nadu," the release said.

Stalin also spoke about boosting growth through AI innovations in start-ups, industrial ecosystem mobility and capacity for the future.

The Chief Minister visited the office of Apple Inc, which manufactures and markets smartphones, personal computers, portable computers and accessories such as smart watches, headphones, AirPods and various related services.

It is headquartered in Cupertino, California, and is one of the Fortune 500 companies operating in 27 countries with 530 global outlets. Stalin thanked the compa-

ny officials for ensuring Tamil Nadu a place in the global electronics manufacturing map. He outlined the various initiatives of the Tamil Nadu government to improve the manufacturing environment of the state and highlighted that Tamil Nadu is a leading state in terms of industry, housing and transport logistics facilities, as well as the education and skills development of youth and women.

"The state will be further strengthened and transformed into the manufacturing hub of Asia," the Chief Minister said and invited Apple to invest in Tamil Nadu. Industries Minister T R B Rajaa and other officials were present.

The Chief Minister and Minister expressed their appreciation for Apple's contributions and listed various government initiatives designed to enhance the state's manufacturing ecosystem.

Discussions also highlighted ongoing efforts in women empowerment and improve-

ments in industrial housing and logistics, further solidifying Tamil Nadu's position as a manufacturing hub in Asia.

At Microsoft, the delegation met with Ryan Roslansky, CEO of LinkedIn, and the senior leadership team.

The discussions explored several key opportunities, including the expansion of data centre infrastructure in Tamil Nadu and the establishment of a Global Capability Centre.

Additionally, collaborative efforts on AI skilling initiatives were examined to develop a future-ready workforce.

"This landmark visit and the signing of the MoU with Google highlights Tamil Nadu's commitment to leveraging strategic partnerships with global tech leaders to drive growth and innovation. The state remains determined to capitalise on these opportunities, reinforcing its position as a leading hub for technology and manufacturing in Asia and is determined to become AI leader of the country," the release added.

Drones hovering over Himachal LoP's official residence were deployed for mapping houses: Officials

STATE TIMES NEWS

SHIMLA: The drones hovering over the official residence of Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur were not for surveillance but deployed by the Shimla Jal Prabandhan Nigam Limited for mapping the houses under 24x7 water supply scheme, officials said on Saturday.

Thakur had created a commotion in the Vidhan Sabha on Friday alleging that his residence was under drone surveillance operated from the local SP's residence, but the SJPNL set the record straight, saying a survey for mapping of houses was being done through drones by the company with due permission from the government.

"Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping is a part of the work awarded for the 24x7 water supply project for Shimla city for data collection and planning, SJPNL Managing Director Devender Thakur told PTI.

The SJPNL had got permission from the state government to fly drones in the municipal corporation area for GIS mapping of all the



properties from August 5 to September 9, 2024, he added.

The drone survey is an effective mapping exercise for designing and laying a water pipeline network for the state capital, said officials, adding that a survey of every ward is being done and pictures are also being taken, besides taking a record of water consumption of every household.

Jai Ram Thakur, the then chief minister in 2022, had laid the foundation stone of the first phase of this project and the SJPNL gave the responsibility of the Rs 872 crore second phase of the project to Suez India company.

The leader of opposition (LoP) had alleged in the Vidhan Sabha that his official residence here was under

surveillance and said a drone took four rounds and almost reached his doors and windows. Raising a point of order during the Question Hour, the LoP said that when he enquired about the drone, it came to his notice that the drone was being operated from the residence of Shimla SP located nearby.

Refuting the allegations, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu had asserted that no surveillance was being done by drone and said he would write to central agencies, ED and CBI to get the information whether they were doing it and get the matter investigated.

Sukhu had said his government did not believe in spying but was concerned about the security of the LoP and if required, security would be provided by police.

Govt should listen to protesting farmers, address their issues: Phogat at 'kisan mahapanchayat'

STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: Olympic wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Saturday joined protesting farmers at the Shambhu border between Punjab and Haryana and said the central government should pay heed to their demands and make it a priority to address their issues.

The Samyukt Kisan Moreha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Moreha held a 'kisan mahapanchayat' during the day to mark the completion of 200 days of their 'Delhi Chalo' agitation to press for their demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP.

The farmers have been protesting at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13, when their march was stopped by security forces.

Phogat, who was disqualified from the 50-kg final match in the recent Olympic Games held in Paris, was felicitated by the protesting farmers.

In her address, the wrestler lent her support to the farmers, saying, "I want to tell you that your daughter is with you." She also asserted that farmers' demands were not "illegitimate".

Speaking to reporters, Phogat said the farmers are holding the protest as their



demands have still not been accepted. "It hurts to see them," she added.

"Sometimes we feel helpless at not being able to do anything for them. We represent the country at international levels but we could not do anything for our own family. It is a request that the government should listen to them," she said.

Replying to a question, the wrestler said it was sad that although 200 days have passed, the protesting farmers continue to sit on the roads as their demands have not been accepted.

"If the farmers do not feed us, how will we be able to compete? Despite so much happening, they are feeding the nation with open hearts. They have a big heart and the government should also show a big heart in the matter," Phogat added.

"To a question on the upcoming assembly elections in Haryana, the wrestler from Charkhi Dadri district said, "I do not

know about politics. I do not have any knowledge about it."

Asked if she would support farmers in Haryana should they launch an agitation, she replied, "Why not?"

"Farmers of the country are upset and their problems need to be addressed. It should be the government's priority to address their problems. Their struggle will not go in vain, I am sure about this," Phogat said.

Phogat, who hails from Haryana's Balali, faced a heartbreaking exit after being disqualified on the day of her 50-kg final match at the Paris Olympics.

She was part of the agitation with wrestlers, mostly from Haryana, against the then Wrestling Federation of India chief and BJP leader Brijbhushan Sharan Singh over allegations of sexual harassment last year.

A few days ago, she was honoured with a gold medal by the Sarvkhap Panchayat in Haryana's Rohtak.

Amid setbacks in Project Cheetah, Centre approves web series to 'showcase efforts to world'

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Amid concerns about the wellbeing of the cheetahs translocated from Africa, the Centre has approved a proposal for the filming of a four-part web series on Project Cheetah to "showcase the efforts of the country to the world", official records show.

It is learned that the filming is likely to start in September, around the second anniversary of Project Cheetah on September 17.

In a letter to the chief wildlife warden of Madhya Pradesh on July 21, Vaibhav Chandra Mathur, Deputy Inspector General of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), wrote that the eighth technical committee of the authority accorded approval to the proposal for a web series on the world's first intercontinental translocation of a large carnivore -- Project Cheetah.

"In this regard, it is requested to kindly facilitate M/s Shen Films and Planting Productions to undertake and complete filming at the Kuno National Park and the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary as per standard terms and conditions, so that efforts of the country can be showcased to the world," the letter read.

The state's chief wildlife warden recommended the proposal on August 6. "It is requested to grant permission to M/s Shen Films and Planting Productions for filming as per the terms and conditions and also ensure necessary support to the crew members also during the documentation of Project Cheetah,"

the letter read. "Please also ensure that during the filming of cheetahs, the minimum number of crew members carry out their work under the supervision of officials/veterinarians in the bomas," it added.

According to the proposal, seen by PTI, the web series will be aired on Discovery Network in 170 countries in different languages.

The film aims to highlight the conceptualisation of the project, the struggles faced in bringing the animal back to India, the status of the cheetahs and the expectations for the future.

The goal is to make people "understand the nuances of this mammoth project", the proposal said.



The creators, who have previously collaborated with the NTCA and the Wildlife Institute of India, have also approached 'Madhya Pradesh Tourism' and the MP Tiger Foundation for securing financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh for the project's execution.

"Although financial assistance isn't possible, we will give full support for the filming of the web series as directed," an official said, requesting anonymity.

Bhopal-based wildlife activist Ajay Dubey questioned the rush to film the "documentary", saying that the project faces "several challenges that should be addressed first".

He also questioned the process for granting permission to film the web series, noting that records indicate the Cheetah Project Steering Committee -- formed in May last year to monitor and review the progress of the project and advise the MP forest department and the NTCA on its execution -- "never discussed the issue".

PTI has learned that negotiations are also ongoing with Kenya, and an MoU is being finalised.

The 'Action Plan for Reintroduction of Cheetah in India' talks about bringing around 12-14 cheetahs each year from South Africa, Namibia and other African countries for five years to establish a founder stock.

The next batch of cheetahs will be brought to Gandhi Sagar, selected as the second site for introduction, as Kuno has already exceeded its cheetah carrying capacity of 20.

PTI has also learned that Kuno, the first home to translocated cheetahs in India, continues to struggle with a high leopard population and a low prey base, which has delayed preparations at Gandhi Sagar.

Summary records of steering committee meetings also reveal that prey augmentation and leopard management are among the major challenges facing the initiative.

As an interim solution, authorities have been introducing prey into both Kuno and Gandhi Sagar. The high leopard population in both areas also prompted the initiation of a leopard translocation drive.

Cheetahs have coexisted with leopards and lions in Africa, but some officials in India consider the high leopard population in Kuno and Gandhi Sagar problematic as it would "reduce the prey biomass for cheetahs".

Statue collapse: Simply apologising won't do, Maharashtra's pride hurt, says Patole

STATE TIMES NEWS

PUNE: Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole has said that simply apologising for the collapse of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will not suffice as the episode has "hurt the pride of Maharashtra".

He made the remarks on Friday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi apologised to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and those hurt by the collapse of the warrior king's statue in Maharashtra's Sindhadurg district.

The statue of the 17th century Maratha warrior king at Rajkot fort in Sindhadurg district's Malvan tehsil, which fell on August 26, was unveiled by



the PM on December 4, 2023, on the occasion of Navy Day.

During his address in Palghar on Friday, PM Modi said, "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is not just a name or a king. For us, he is our deity. Today, I bow my head at his feet and apologise to my deity."

Talking to reporters in

cate from the cultural director was sought or not."

"The issue cannot be addressed with just a simple apology. Be it the PM, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde or Deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, they have hurt the pride of Maharashtra. They should step down from power or people of the state will oust them," he said.

The people of Maharashtra who worship Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj will not forget the insult to their deity, the Congress leader said, and alleged that the statue was hastily installed by the state government for unveiling by the PM.

The work was entrusted to an inexperienced individual and instructions given by the cultural department regarding the statue were ignored, resulting in substandard work and its collapse, he alleged.

Responding to Shinde and Fadnis's appeal that the opposition should not politicise the statue issue, Patole alleged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has consistently insulted Shivaji Maharaj and used his name just to get votes.

"Despite the disgrace that Maharashtra faced due to corruption in the construction of the Shivaji Maharaj's statue, the extremely corrupt BJP alliance government felt no remorse," Patole said.

switch towards organic farming. The use of chemical fertilisers is affecting the soil. If there is uninterrupted use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, the soil will turn infertile.

It is also bad for human health," Chouhan said while hailing the state government for providing thrust on organic farming by giving various subsidies.

The 'Swayampurna (self sufficient) Goa' initiative is an example of how the government can use available resources and encourage officials to explore the maximum potential available, Chouhan said, adding other states must also emulate it.

Chouhan said when he was Madhya Pradesh CM, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken about the 'Swayampurna Goa' move and had urged states to adopt it.

"PM Modi does not think just about the present but has a vision for the country. He has given everyone a target to work for Viksit Bharat by 2047. The PM presented the roadmap of Viksit Bharat before the Union cabinet in a recent meeting," Chouhan said.

"The roadmap for the farmers is clear: We have to double the income of farmers, which can be done only by increasing production," he added.

Use organic fertilisers to ensure soil does not turn infertile, Chouhan urges farmers

STATE TIMES NEWS

PANAJI: Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday urged farmers to switch to organic fertilisers to save the soil from turning infertile and also for the betterment of human health.

The Union minister for agriculture and farmers welfare was interacting virtually with farmers and 'Swayampurna Mitras' (officials assigned to deliver government schemes) of Goa. Chief minister Pramod Sawant joined the interaction from here. It was aired across panchayats, municipalities and zonal agricultural offices in the coastal state.

"Gradually, we have to

becomes a more serious problem when taking recourse to such an action, "police indulges in excesses and crosses the limit by using excessive force, thereby becoming barbaric or by not halting even after controlling the situation and continuing its tirade". This results in violation of human rights and human dignity, the commission has said.

"Therefore, issue notice to the Commissioner of Police, Kolkata, calling for an action-taken report in the matter within two weeks," it has added.

A trainee doctor was allegedly raped and killed in a seminar hall of the state-run hospital, where she had gone to rest during her graveyard shift in the early hours of August 9. Her body with severe injury marks was found inside the hall by a doctor who was on rounds. On August 13, the Calcutta High Court ordered the probe to be transferred from the Kolkata Police to the CBI, which took over the case on August 14.

The incident has triggered nationwide protests.

Administrative officer of college held for taking Rs 50,000 bribe for admission

STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has arrested an administrative officer of a city-based college for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 50,000 from a man for his daughter's admission to an academic course, an official said here on Saturday.

The accused was identified as Ravindranath Singh (56), working in Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College of Arts, Science and Commerce

located in Ghatkopar, he said. The complainant's daughter was seeking an admission in Class 11 of commerce stream at the college. But her name did not figure in the list of shortlisted students.

Therefore, the girl and her father went to the college and met Singh requesting him to help them in the process, the ACB official said.

The victim later also met the local legislator, who gave a recommendation letter addressed to the college to

help him in securing admission for his daughter, he added.

When the victim met Singh again, he initially demanded Rs 1.50 lakh from him, but later reduced the amount to Rs 50,000. The complainant then approached the anti-graft agency, which verified his complaint. It laid a trap and caught Singh while accepting the bribe. He was arrested under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The notice was issued on

NHRC issues notice to Kolkata Police chief over 'brutal force' used during protests

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Kolkata Police commissioner over the alleged use of excessive and brutal force on August 27 on protesters, who were demonstrating to demand justice for the victim in the RG Kar Medical College rape-murder case. The NHRC has sought an action-taken report from the police commissioner in two weeks.

Thursday following a complaint from one O P Vyas from the Bharatiya Human Rights Initiative (BHIM). In his complaint, Vyas has alleged that on August 27, during the "Nabanna Abhijan" protests in Kolkata organised by students demanding justice in the RG Kar Medical College case, "police used excessive and brutal force" on the protesters during their peaceful demonstration. "Over 200 students were arrested and subjected to brutal physical assaults, many

sustaining serious injuries. This action violated their right to peaceful assembly and reflected a grave disregard for human rights. The complainant requests that steps be taken to ensure the protection of the students' rights and to provide compensation to the victims," the complaint reads.

Perusing the complaint, the NHRC has said the allegations, if true, raise a serious issue of violation of the right to peaceful assembly. Further, the Supreme Court has also observed that it

becomes a more serious problem when taking recourse to such an action, "police indulges in excesses and crosses the limit by using excessive force, thereby becoming barbaric or by not halting even after controlling the situation and continuing its tirade". This results in violation of human rights and human dignity, the commission has said.

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