





# Indian Chronicle

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An ageless entertainer  
and enduring fashion icon

Hindi film aficionados cannot forget her sultry and sensuous presence, with a love-struck Rajendra Kumar crooning 'Teri Pyari Pyari Surat Ko, Kisi Ki Nazar Na Lege'. The year was 1961 and the film 'Sasural', a remake of a Telugu film 'Ilarikam'. Irrespective of the strong overhang of the Madras- style narration, Bangalore Saroja Devi, who made her debut in three Dravidian languages in the 1950s, (apart from Hindi with 'Paigham' in 1959) made a notable impact across the borders with this L V Prasad-produced, T Prakash Rao directed movie in Bombay. With this, she also became one of the earliest south-based heroines who managed to hit the bull's eye in Hindi, without losing out on her base back home. A striking aspect of this Kannadiga-origin star was that she managed to act in 100 films exclusively in Tamil (out of a total of around 200), accepted and appreciated for her parrot-like tone of the ancient language, which earned her the sobriquet 'Kannadathu Paingili'....A career which began when she was barely an adult in 1955 went on to last till 2019, a record 64 years overall. Of course, the spotlight had shifted from her in the mid-1960s, when younger heroines caught the attention of the then middle-aged heroes of Madras – MGR and Sivaji Ganesan. Even then, till another Karnataka counterpart J Jayalalithaa overtook her in the southern film industry (of having acted in the maximum number of films with these two titans), Saroja Devi had acted in 45+ films with both of them, many of them enduring entertainers till date, noted for their storytelling, histrionics and evergreen songs. Having begun with Akkineni Nageswara Rao in 1959 ('Pelli Sandhadi'), she had a good run in her hometown when she was successfully paired with the matchless matinee idol Dr Rajkumar in many films in the same decade.

## On World Youth Skills Day, DIKSHa Celebrates Transformative Power of Skilling in Rural India



Kadapa:Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF), the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of Dalmia Bharat Ltd., is transforming lives in rural India through its flagship skill development initiative, DIKSHa (Dalmia Institute of Knowledge and Skill Harnessing). At its Kadapa Centre, DIKSHa is empowering local youth by equipping them with industry-relevant skills, helping them access sustainable livelihoods, dignity, and self-reliance. One shining example is Pokula Prasanna, a married woman from a modest farming family, who transformed her life after enrolling in the General Duty Assistant (GDA) course at the DIKSHa Training Center in Kadapa. Equipped with essential healthcare skills, she secured employment at Gayatri Gynaecology Hospital, earning ₹15000 per month. Her success not only brought financial stability to her family but also earned her respect within the community, inspiring other women to pursue similar opportunities.

Pokula's story is one of many success stories created by DIKSHa. Till date it has trained youth in fields such as healthcare, retail, electrical, hospitality, and beauty & over wellness at its Kadapa centre. Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta,

CEO of Dalmia Bharat Foundation, said, "On World Youth Skills Day, we are reminded that building an Atmanirbhar India begins with empowering our youth at the grassroots with the right skills. At Dalmia Bharat, we are committed to creating real opportunities through practical training to build a stronger and more self-reliant nation. Stories like Pokula's show how skill development can truly transform lives. We are proud to support India's youth and will continue to invest in their growth." DIKSHa's skill training programme stands out for its holistic approach, combining practical training, career counselling, and placement support. Courses industry-aligned, certified by NSDC and sector skill councils, and strengthened through strategic partnerships with other organisations like NABARD, BOSCH, and Schneider Electric. Many graduates have also launched their own ventures, boosting incomes and confidence in underserved communities. In FY25 alone, 15709 youth were trained across 20 centres, with many securing jobs or starting businesses within three months. With over 50% women trainees, DIKSHa continues to advance gender equity through economic empowerment.

## SBI Conducts Statewide Cyber Fraud Awareness Drive Across Telangana



State Bank of India (SBI) organized a massive Cyber Fraud Awareness Drive across Telangana, during the weekend, marking one of the largest initiatives of its kind by India's largest bank. The campaign was held at more than 40 public locations—including parks, metro stations, indoor stadiums, supermarkets, panchayat offices, schools, and pensioners' associations—reaching citizens from all walks of life.

More than 1,000 SBI staff actively participated in the drive to educate the public about the rising threat of cyber fraud and the importance of safeguarding personal and financial information. The initiative saw enthusiastic engagement from diverse sections of society and was widely appreciated for its timely relevance in today's digital landscape.

The awareness sessions featured a range of engaging and informative activities, including the display of educational audio and video content on large screens to capture public attention and effectively convey key messages.



Informative pamphlets were distributed to provide easy-to-understand tips and reminders for staying safe in the digital space. Live demonstrations showcased common fraud techniques, helping attendees recognize and respond to suspicious behavior. Additionally, practical guidance was offered throughout the sessions to equip people with knowledge and tools to avoid falling prey to scams. Attendees openly shared personal experiences of receiving fraudulent messages and calls, making the sessions relatable and informative. Leading the drive were General Manager Sri Sateesh Kumar and Deputy General Manager Sri Bipin K Singh, along with Regional Managers, Assistant General Managers and Branch Managers. In their interactions with the public, the leadership team explained prevalent fraud tactics and shared essential tips to help customers protect themselves from cyber threats.

Regards (G Ramakrishna)

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER (M, C & CSR)

## Mahila Shakti Model CSC Poster Unveiled in Khammam District



Khammam Bureau, July 14, Indian Chronicle. "Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, SERP CEO D. Divya (IAS) and District Collector Anudeep Durishetty launched the Mahila Shakti Model CSC Poster today in Khammam. As part of the event, they distributed 153 biometric devices to SHG women managing Model CSCs and participated in a training session for the second batch of SHG VLEs at the IT Hub in Khammam. Y N Reddy, Direc-



tor of Financial Inclusion at SERP, encouraged SHG women to offer digital and banking services in rural areas, empowering them to earn a livelihood while serving their communities.

The event also saw participation from Hari Krishna CSC State Head, Benthaju Suresh, District Manager CSC, Fayaz District Coordinator CSC Khammam and various Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs).

## Potharaveni Kranti Kumar Meets Fisheries Commissioner to Address Pending Membership Issues in Manthani

"Seeks swift approval of memberships and direct cash support for fishermen in place of free fish seed.

"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, July 15. "Today, Potharaveni Kranti Kumar — Director of Peddapalli District Fisheries Department and President of the Manthani Fisheries Society — paid a courtesy visit to the Hon'ble Commissioner of the Telangana State Fisheries Department, Ms. Nikhila, IPS, at the department's head office in Hyderabad. "During the meeting, Mr. Kranti Kumar submitted a formal representation regarding the long-pending new memberships of the Manthani (K-8) Fisheries Society, which have remained unresolved for the past two years. He earnestly requested the Commissioner to expedite the approval process to enable new members to access the department's schemes and benefits. "He also highlighted the practical difficulties being faced by fishermen in the distribution of free fish seed, and proposed a direct cash transfer system as an alternative to better support their livelihood. Such a step, he emphasized, would bring timely relief to the fishermen community and help strengthen their economic stability. "Mr. Kranti assured that the Manthani



Fisheries Society would continue to work in close coordination with the department to ensure the welfare of the fishermen and uphold the objectives of the state's fisheries development programs.

## Bright Minds from Manthani Shine Bright — Three Students of ZPHS Boys Secure Coveted Seats at RGUKT Basara.



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani | July 15, 2025: "In a remarkable display of academic brilliance and perseverance, three students from Zilla Parishad High School (Boys), Manthani have earned admission into the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), Basara, for the six-year Integrated B.Tech program. "The selected achievers are: "?? Sutari Sathvik Raju, S/o Ramesh"?? Bera Aditya Teja, S/o Bera Suresh"?? Gajavelli Anil Kumar, S/o Bhaskar "These exceptional students have secured their place solely based on their meritorious performance in the Class X examinations, reflecting the school's unwavering commitment to nurturing rural talent. "The Headmaster of ZPHS Boys, Manthani, expressed immense pride and joy, stating: " "This is a proud moment not just for our school, but for the entire Manthani region. The success of our students is a shining example of what determination, dedicated mentorship, and parental support can accomplish. I wish these young achievers continued success in their future academic endeavors. "This achievement underscores the rising educational standards in government schools and reaffirms the potential of rural students to compete at the highest levels.

## An Extraordinary Call to All Alumni — Reunite to Rekindle Memories and Reinforce Bonds



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, July 15. "Kondela Maruthi, a proud alumnus and convener, has extended a heartfelt invitation to all former students to participate in the 45th Anniversary Celebrations of the Government Degree College, Manthani, and to make it a memorable milestone in the institution's illustrious journey. "Established 45 years ago, the college has been a beacon of learning and transformation in the region. In commemoration of this remarkable legacy, an exceptional alumni summit is being organized in Manthani. "As the chief guest, Principal Sri O. Jha unveiled the alumni meet invitations and pledged his full cooperation and support toward the success of the event. "To mark the occasion, a series of literary, cultural, sports, and scientific competitions are planned. The organizing committee aims to reconnect with 1,111 alumni who once walked the hallowed corridors of this institution. "Speaking on the occasion, Maruthi emphasized the need for collective contribution toward the academic and infrastructural advancement of the college. He further announced that distinguished alumni and faculty members who served between 1981 and 2025 will be formally felicitated as part of the celebrations. "The event gained momentum and inspiration through the eloquent addresses of lecturers Parshayya, Karnati Krishna, Adep Satish, Adep Lakshmi Narayana, and Tirupati, who urged all alumni to come together in unity and pride. "Adding artistic flair to the proceedings, noted poet and singer Vaanavaamala Arunadevi, one of the core organizers, enchanted the gathering with her soulful words and melodious renditions. "The spontaneous and enthusiastic participation of local youth and student volunteers from Manthani in organizing this event has been truly commendable. "This historic alumni reunion is not just a celebration, but a tribute to shared memories, enduring friendships, and a collective vision for the future. "Let us come together to honor the past, celebrate the present, and inspire the future!

## BJP Chief Ramchandra Rao sends legal notice to deputy CM Vikramarka

Hyderabad, July 15 BJP state Chief Ramchandra Rao has sent legal notices to Deputy CM of Telangana Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka . Rao has issued the legal notice to Vikramarka by accusing him of making inappropriate comments about him while referring to the Rohith Vemula suicide case. Speaking at a media conference in Delhi, Bhatti said that the BJP was giving promotions to those responsible for Rohith Vemula's suicide and that the BJP has no respect for Dalits and Adivasis.

Ramchandra Rao, who considered these comments made against him to be defamatory, has issued



the notices. In the notice, Bhatti has been asked to withdraw his comments and apologize. Rao warned that he would take legal action against the deputy CM if he failed to apologize to him .



pay for the ticket, he discovered that the cash kept in his pant pocket was missing. He immediately alerted the authorities, suspecting that the theft occurred amid a large crowd during boarding. "Based on his complaint, a prompt investigation was launched by the Manthani Police, under the supervision of local officers. The team identified and apprehended the suspect — Kota Rajayya, son of Sammayya, a native of \*\*Peddampeta village



# Orientation training classes for Munnur Kapus are a joy““



Chandanagar July Indian Chronicle 15 Government Whip Vemulawada Aadi Srinivas said that political survival is possible only if we move forward with unity beyond caste and religion. He said that organizing orientation training classes for Munnur Kapus on the lines of political parties is a good development. He said that there is a need for the weaker sections of badugu to come together. Aadi Srinivas addressed the one-day orientation training class conference for Munnur Kapus on Tuesday at Supraja Gardens in Chandanagar as the chief guest. The program was presided over by Munnur Kapu Sangam Telangana State President Sardar Putam Purushottam Rao Patel. "Speaking on the occasion, Aadi Srinivas said that similar training classes were organized in the past under the auspices of the Congress Party. He suggested that the leadership of Munnur Kapus should be strengthened at the village level. Aadi

Srinivas assured that he would work to ensure that the five crore rupees sanctioned by the previous government for the self-respect building are again sanctioned for the construction of the Munnur Kapu building, and that he would also work to ensure that the names of the Munnur Kapus are registered in the gazette with the word Patel at the end. Speaking, the state president of the Munnur Kapu Sangam, Sardar Putam Purushottam Rao Patel, said that there will be a society building program for the welfare of the Munnur Kapus beyond politics. He said that it is a matter of pride for the Munnur Kapu Sangam to organize one-day training classes for the Munnur Kapus on the lines of the Left parties and other parties. Former TSC PC members Vital, former chairman of the Jalmandal Corporation V. Prakash, Routhu Kanakaiah, and state president of the Munnur Kapu Vidyavantula Vedika Mallikarjun Sasala taught various topics in the orientation training classes. District Library Association Chairman Sathu Mallesh, Apex Committee members Meesala Chandraiah and Thudi Praveen, State General Secretary of the association Peddi Pentaiah, Working Presidents Dr. Bukka Venugopal, Dr. JN Venkat, Challa Harishankar, Women's Wing President Bandi Padma, Treasurer Satyanarayana addressed the program, while Vice President Vasala Venkateswarlu, Constituency Coordinators in the state, District Presidents and representatives participated in large numbers.

## BC Leaders from Yellandu Participate in Hyderabad BC Maha Dharna.“



Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, July 15, Indian Chronicle: "BC leaders from Yellandu including Dindigala Rajender, Sudarshanam Ranganath, Siluveri Satyanarayana, Derangula Posham, Gaus Miya, and others participated in the Telangana BC Public Representatives Forum protest held at Indira Park, Hyderabad. "During this statewide BC Maha Dharna, MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, former ministers Gangula Kamalakar, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, and former BRS ministers and BC leaders addressed the gathering. They demanded that the Congress Party fulfill the promise it made in the presence of Rahul Gandhi, when Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah declared the Kamareddy BC Declaration

pledging 42% reservations for BCs. "They insisted that this 42% reservation should be implemented for BCs in all local body elections as well as in education and employment opportunities. They criticized the Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Congress state government, calling it regrettable that they were now talking about issuing an ordinance to mislead the BC community. They asserted that if the government truly intended to grant reservations to BCs sincerely, it should be included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution and passed as a Cabinet Bill in Parliament, without which no legal validity would be established. "They further stated that in several states, attempts to bring such ordinances had failed, and despite this history being clearly visible, the Congress Party was trying once again to deceive BCs and gain advantage in the upcoming local body elections. "The BC Forum of Public Representatives explained this deceit to BCs across the state. They said the event was organized to pressure the Congress Party to honor its promise. "They warned that if the Congress state government failed to uphold its commitment, BC youth and the public would be mobilized on a large scale for strong protests in the future. "Among those who participated in this event were Yellandu BC leaders Samala Raviteja, Gaus Miya, Derangula Posham, Hariprasad Yadav, Ghazi Baba, Chand Pasha, Vara Ramesh, Ravikanth, Srinu Pasi, and several others.

## Surprise Inspection at Kataram Government Junior College – Emphasis on Quality Education and Accountability

"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, July 15. "In a proactive move to ensure academic standards and institutional accountability, Bhupalpal District Intermediate Education Officer Mr. B. Venkanna conducted a surprise inspection at the Government Junior College, Kataram, on Tuesday. "During the visit, the officer meticulously examined admission registers, staff attendance records, and student attendance data, with detailed inputs provided by the in-charge Principal Mr. Burra Rajababu Goud. "Mr. Venkanna interacted directly with students inside classrooms to assess the quality of instruction, availability of safe drinking water, and sanitation facilities. He advised the students to maintain consistent attendance and strive for academic excellence, urging them to secure commendable results that would enhance the reputation of the institution. "Following this, a staff review meeting was convened, where he stressed the urgent need to improve student attendance ratios and strengthen academic discipline. He thoroughly reviewed the institutional records and expressed satisfaction with the overall documentation and administrative practices. "The officer further instructed the staff to focus on enhancing enrollment rates and ensuring



the delivery of holistic and high-quality education to all students. He emphasized that academic institutions must evolve as centers of excellence by prioritizing both infrastructure and pedagogy. "The inspection was attended by the college faculty and staff, including Reddy Mall Yakub, Bokka Swamy, Barigela Sampath, Potu Tirupati, Gugguloth Devoji, Librarian Rachakatta Vijaya, and Junior Assistant Md. Shafi, among others.

## Task Force Police Attack - Task Force Police arrested four people playing poker, case registered at Asifabad Police Station“

"-SP Kantilal Patil IPS "Kumrambheem, (Asifabad) "Indian Chronicle". J a d e Srinivas, July, 16. "Based on specific information about the playing of poker near Bundal Ghat Bridge in Asifabad mandal, the task force police conducted a lightning raid. The task force police detained four people in this raid and a case has been registered at the Asifabad Town Police Station, said District SP Kantilal Patil IPS. 26,800 in cash, 52 poker cards, three smart mobiles and 1 coma mobile were seized from the accused. "Details of the accused"1. Bottupalli Purushottam" (Father: Bapu, Age: 35 years. "Motuguda, Asifabad.)"2. Uduatala Bheemaya (Father: Bangari, Age: 56 years. Kamana, Wankidi)"3. Imran Khan



(Father: Ashraf Khan, Age: 30, Kasab Wada, Asifabad)"4. Ghaus Siddiqui (Father: Ali Baba, Age: 22 years, Sandeep Nagar Asifabad)"Task Force Inspector Rana Pratap, Task Force staff Constables

Devender, Sanjeev, Special Party Police personnel participated in this task. The District SP warned that strict action will be taken against those involved in illegal activities like poker. Anyone involved in illegal activities

like poker, matka, gambling, consuming prohibited intoxicants, drugs should report to the local police station or dial 100 ? ? 8712670551 30 and provide information, the SP said. The details of those who provide details will be kept confidential."

## Donate Blood and Save Lives: Collector Jitesh V. Patil““



""Rayala Kishore, Bhadradi Kothagudem, July 15, Indian Chronicle:""District Collector Jitesh V. Patil called

upon the youth to take inspiration from blood donation and save lives by donating blood. "On Tuesday, as part of a Road Safety Education program organized by the District Transport Department and Traffic Police under the leadership of District Collector Jitesh V. Patil and District SP Rohit Raju, with the support of the Indian Youth Secured Organization, a free blood testing camp was set up in the premises of the railway station in Kothagudem town. The camp was inaugurated by District Collector Jitesh V. Patil. "Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that through this free blood testing camp, people can easily know their blood group.

He emphasized that knowing one's blood group makes it easier to donate blood in emergency situations, and that this can be extremely useful when urgent need arises. He appealed to the public and workers to make the most of this free blood testing camp and find out their blood group details. "The Collector especially urged the youth to set an example by participating in blood donation drives and to save lives by donating blood in times of need. He also shared that he himself had undergone a blood test at this camp and that he is ready to donate blood whenever necessary.

"He further noted that everyone should be aware of their own blood group through such free blood testing camps, as this not only enables them to help others but also benefits their own self-care by having this awareness. Therefore, the Collector requested that everyone should definitely learn the details of their blood group. "Among those who participated in the program were RTO Venkataramana, Manohar, Venkata Pullaiah, DSP Rehman, Traffic SI Naresh, auto drivers, cab drivers, and many others.

## Police raid Gudumba settlement - two arrested“

"Kumrambheem, (Asifabad) "Indian Chronicle" Jade Srinivas, July, 15 "On Tuesday morning, based on reliable information, Tiryan Police Station SII Srikanth along with his team conducted a surprise raid on a Gudumba manufacturing base on the outskirts of Irkapalli.

During the investigation, two persons named Darwajala Mahesh and Kanuntla Srikanth were found to be manufacturing Gudumba illegally. Approximately five liters of Gudumba were seized during the raid. Approximately 800 liters of jaggery solution



used for making Gudumba were also destroyed. The police said that the two accused have been arrested and a case has been registered under the relevant provisions and the investigation is going. "investigation. The SI said that the police department will take proactive steps as part of measures

to curb the illegal liquor trade and such raids will continue in the future. He also asked the public to inform the police if they have any such information..

## Telangana refuses to discuss Banakacherla project in Delhi

Hyderabad, July 15 : Ahead of the important meeting at the Chief Minister level between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, set to occur in Delhi on Wednesday with Union Jai Shakti Minister CR Patil present, the Telangana government has declined to engage in discussions regarding the Banakacherla project. Expressing objections to Andhra Pradesh's request to make the Banakacherla project in the Krishna basin the sole agenda item for the July 16 meeting, the Telangana government submitted a letter to the Centre on Tuesday morning, merely 24 hours before the scheduled meeting between Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The Telangana government has stated that discussion of the Banakacherla project is unnecessary, labeling it as irrelevant and not authorised. The correspondence emphasised that the project has yet to obtain approvals from crucial regulatory authorities, including the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB), the Central Water Commis-

sion (CWC), and the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC). Moreover, the State government cautioned that considering such proposals could jeopardize the integrity of the regulatory bodies of the Central Government, as well as that of the Centre itself. Furthermore, the State government reiterated that there is no requirement to address the Banakacherla project during the upcoming meeting led by Union Minister CR Patil. Instead, the proposal has put forward approvals for ongoing projects on the Krishna river. The government has included in its agenda the request for national status for the Palamuru and Dindi initiatives. Additionally, it has called on the Centre to take control of the Ichchamally project and to allocate 80 TMC for the Pranahita project at Thummadihetti. The Telangana government has also suggested a new project designed to utilise 200 TMC of flood water. It emphasised that these matters are longstanding, legitimate, and essential for the fair distribution of water resources between the two States.

## CPI leader Chandu Naik shot dead

Hyderabad, July 15 Senior CPI leader Chandu Naik (43) was fatally shot by unknown persons while he was taking his regular morning walk at Shalivahana Nagar Park in Malakpet on Tuesday morning. Chandu, originally from Narsaipalli in the Balmoor mandal of Nagarkurnool district, had been residing in the Malakpet area and was visiting the park as part of his routine when the tragedy occurred. Upon learning of the incident, South East Deputy Commissioner of Police Chaitanya Kumar promptly arrived at the scene to investigate. Following the inspection, he informed the media that the shooting happened around 7:30 AM and the deceased was identified as Chandu. At the time of the attack, Chandu was reportedly walking on the track with his wife and daughter when a group of four unidentified men arrived in a white Swift Dzire car. They confronted the CPI leader and initially threw chili powder at him.

As Chandu Naik tried to escape the area, they opened fire at him, discharging six shots from close range. He sustained serious gunshot injuries, fell to the ground, and died instantly, according to the police. The police suspect that Chandu's murder is connected to disputes over land. "It

has come to our attention that he was implicated in a murder case registered within the jurisdiction of the LB Nagar police station. We are currently verifying the specifics of that case," the police said. Seven bullets were recovered from the scene. Ten teams have been formed to locate the suspects. The forensic team gathered evidence at the site, and DCP Chaitanya Kumar indicated that the bullets found appeared to have been fired from the same firearm. A forensic unit has arrived at the location to gather further evidence.

They are reviewing CCTV footage from both the crime scene and nearby areas in an effort to identify and apprehend the perpetrators as quickly as possible. Police believe that a prior rivalry involving property disagreements and financial dealings may have contributed to the murder. Chandu's wife has claimed that he had a longstanding conflict with a man named Rajesh, who is also associated with the CPI (ML) party and hails from Devaruppal. In addition, reports indicate that four individuals have turned themselves in to the police regarding the incident, though officials have not yet verified this information.

## Ex-irrigation chief engineer Muralidhar Rao arrested in DA case

Hyderabad, July 15 Muralidhar Rao, a retired engineer-in-chief of the irrigation department, was arrested by ACB officials in Jubilee Hills on Tuesday on charges of possessing disproportionate assets.

According to ACB officials, a case has been filed against Muralidhar Rao under the Prevention of Corruption Act, following preliminary evidence that indicates he has amassed wealth significantly beyond his recognised income sources during his time in office. He is currently in ACB custody and is being interrogated. Ongoing ACB searches are taking place at the residences of Muralidhar Rao's relatives and close associates in Hyderabad, Karimnagar and Zaheerabad. Muralidhar retired in 2013 in undivided Andhra

Pradesh but got multiple extensions. Following the formation of Telangana State, Muralidhar Rao's service was extended for an additional 13 years. He continued to work for a period after the Congress government took office. However, the state government has recently removed Muralidhar Rao following a vigilance report related to the Medigadda project. Recently, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has investigated officials involved in the Kaleshwaram irrigation project. It has been reported that the ACB has already apprehended former Kaleshwaram Engineer-in-Chief Hari Ram and Executive Engineer Nune Sridhar. Currently, the ACB is conducting raids at the residence of former Engineer-in-Chief Muralidhar Rao,







## Bag of marijuana worth Rs 63,000 recovered from Howrah-Puri train



GNS News Agency, July 15

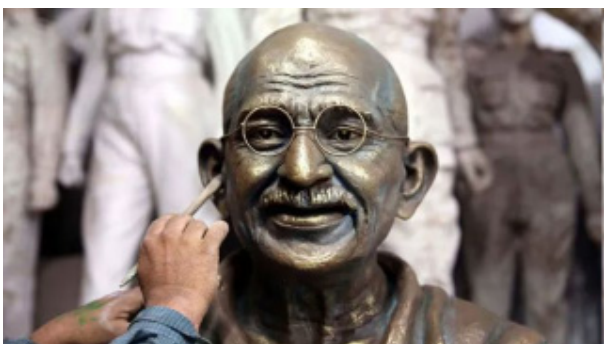
drug bustA total of 6.3 kg of the drug, valued at approximately Rs 63,000, was found in the bag (Representational Photo)A bag containing around 6 kg of marijuana was recovered from the Howrah-Puri Superfast Express at the

Kalupur Railway Station on Saturday, prompting the Railway Protection Force (RPF) to register a narcotics case against an unidentified individual. According to officials, Raman Kumar Yadav, an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) with the RPF, was on duty as the sector in-charge for platforms 4 to 7 when the train arrived at platform number 6. Railway staff alerted the ASI about an unattended “college-style bag” lying beneath three seats in a coach. A State Reserve Police (SRP) team reached the spot and conducted a check. A total of 6.3 kg of the drug, valued at approximately Rs 63,000, was found in the bag. To confirm the nature of the substance, the railway police sought assistance from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), a team from which came to conduct an on-spot analysis that confirmed the substance. Following the seizure, a case was registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at the Kalupur Railway police station. Further investigation is underway.

## Congress performs milk ablation of Gandhi statue in Pune after vandalism attempt, NCP (SP) seeks stern action against accused

GNS News Agency, July 15

Mahatma GandhiA prima facie probe by the police revealed that Shukla allegedly climbed onto the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and attacked it with a sharp weapon he carried. The Nationalist Congress Party (SP) Monday condemned the attempt to desecrate a Mahatma Gandhi statue at the Pune railway station and raised this issue in the Legislative Assembly. Meanwhile, the local Congress unit performed a milk ablation of the Gandhi statue and called for strict legal measures to prevent similar acts in the future. “A shocking incident of an attempt to desecrate the statue of Mahatma Gandhi took place in Pune. The state government should take strict action against the accused,” said NCP (SP) leader Jitendra Avhad in the Assembly. Speaker Rahul Narvekar directed the state government to take necessary action in the case. The Pune police arrested a man who allegedly tried to desecrate the Mahatma Gandhi statue at the Pune railway station Sunday night. Suraj Shukla, a native of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and currently residing in the Vishrantwadi area of Pune city, allegedly climbed onto the statue and attacked it with a sharp weapon he carried. The city Congress unit, led by its in-charge, Arvind Shinde, held a protest near the Gandhi statue at the Pune railway station. Shinde said, “Pune city and Mahatma Gandhi have a historical and deep connection. His 21-month detention in the Aga Khan Palace in Pune during the freedom movement, as well as the fast and agitation he conducted here,



are part of the memories of Gandhian thoughts in the city.” “The statue of Gandhi at the railway station area is the centre of faith and national identity for lakhs of citizens. This incident is not only a desecration of the statue, but it is an attack on the progressive ideological heritage of Pune and social harmony,” he added. Noting that such incidents are happening frequently, he said, “We demand that the accused not be declared mentally ill and released without consequences. He should receive the strictest punishment.” State Congress general secretary Abhay Chhajed said, “The person who tried to desecrate the statue of Mahatma Gandhi came from Varanasi and brought a weapon with him. We will find out his political affiliation and decide on further strategy of protest.”

## ‘We will approach court to bring them back’: Families of migrants pushed into Bangladesh lodge missing diary with Bengal police

GNS News Agency, July 15

calcutta high court, union rooms, law college rape case, The Migrant Labour Welfare Board in West Bengal said it would help the family move the Calcutta High Court with a habeas corpus plea. Family members of a husband, wife, and son who were allegedly pushed into Bangladesh after they were detained in Delhi for “being illegal immigrants” have lodged a missing diary with the Paikar police in West Bengal’s Birbhum. They plan to approach the Calcutta High Court, seeking the residents’ return.

Danish Sheikh, his wife Sunali Khatun, and their eight-year-old son — natives of Paikar village — were allegedly deported to Bangladesh on June 26, days after being picked up by the Delhi Police. The family said they had been working as ragpickers in Delhi for the past 20 years. According to the family, the deportation was carried out despite them allegedly submitting documents to prove their nativity of Bengal.

On Sunday, Sunali’s father, Bhodu Sheikh, lodged a missing diary at the local police station. He said Danish, Sunali, and their two children had left for Delhi from Paikar on May 5. “Since July 4, we have not been able to contact them,” he said. The Migrant Labour Welfare Board in West Bengal said it would help the family move the Calcutta High Court with a habeas corpus plea. “This is happening every day. Our migrant labourers and their families are being targeted as illegal Bangladeshis simply because they speak Bengali... We will appeal to the court to intervene, bring the family back to India and present them before the court,” said Samirul Islam, chairman of the board. “I have filed a missing diary at the local police station. Tomorrow we plan to go to Calcutta High Court. My daughter, her husband and their eight-year-old son were detained by Delhi Police and pushed into Bangladesh. My daughter has made fran-



tic calls from Bangladesh,” said Bhodu Sheikh, speaking to The Indian Express from Birbhum. Family members claimed Danish, Sunali and their minor son were detained on June 18 by the police and taken to the K N Katju Marg police station in Delhi. “All documents, including land deeds, were provided to the police. But they didn’t budge,” said Sunali’s cousin Roshni Bibi, speaking over the phone from Delhi. “Their second child, a girl, was not detained as she was staying with a relative.” However, the Delhi Police maintained that the family was deported after due process. “They were deported to Bangladesh on June 26 after proper verification at the local police level and a thorough interrogation by the Foreigners Regional Registration Office. They hail from Bagerhat, Bangladesh,” Rajeev Ranjan, DCP (Rohini), told The Indian Express earlier. The case comes amid a spate of similar incidents in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh. On June 14, seven persons from West Bengal were allegedly detained by Mumbai Police and deported by the BSF at around 3:30 am. Following intervention by the Bengal government, four youths from Murshidabad, one from Purba Bardhaman, and a married couple from North 24 Parganas were brought back from Bangladesh and sent home.

## Influencer Rajshree More files police complaint after MNS leader’s ‘drunk’ son rams his car into

GNS News Agency, July 15

rajashreeThe video, which has since gone viral, shows a partially unclothed man speaking aggressively and refusing to cooperate with the police personnel present at the scene. Social media influencer Rajshree More has filed a police complaint against Raheel Shaikh, son of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Javed Shaikh, alleging that the man rammed his car into her vehicle in Mumbai’s Andheri area on Sunday night. In a video posted on social media, More claimed that the accident occurred when Raheel was reportedly driving under the influence of alcohol. She further said that following the incident, Raheel behaved aggressively, used abusive language, and issued threats. More also recorded parts of their exchange and shared it on Instagram. The video, which has since gone viral, shows a partially unclothed man speaking aggressively and refusing to cooperate with the police personnel present at the scene.

In the clip, More is seen confronting the man, alleging that he was abusing and threatening her, besides driving the vehicle under the influence of alcohol. The man was also seen apologising to her and offering compensation, but More asks him why drove a car when he was drunk. Earlier this week, Rajshree More had posted a video on social media criticising Maharashtra people and commenting on



Social media influencer Rajshree More has filed a police complaint against Raheel Shaikh, son of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Javed Shaikh, alleging that the man rammed his car into her vehicle in Mumbai’s Andheri area

the work ethic of Marathi individuals. The video drew much criticism online, following which the MNS filed a complaint against her. She removed the post after the complaint and issued a clarification along with an apology.

## Sushant Lok RWA funds borewell pump repair amid ‘neglect’ by municipal corporation



GNS News Agency, July 15

A resident welfare association in Gurgaon Sector 55 has used its funds to repair a water pump after the municipal corporation allegedly failed to address an acute water shortage that affected over 1,000 families for days. Members of the RWA of Sushant Lok Blocks A and A1 have accused the civic body of neglect and poor contractor oversight. “We have been highlighting our water problem for two years now, but there has been no help. Last month, the contractor installed a pump that failed in just two weeks, used substandard motors and wires, and the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram did nothing. Why hire such contrac-

tors? For five days, families suffered without water. Even now we are struggling and get water only once a day, another pump being maintained by the civic body is also in need of urgent repair,” said RWA president Vinita Sinha, adding that the repair, undertaken at a cost of Rs 5,000, was at best a “band-aid” solution.

Adding to the residents’ woes, the Department of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) issued notices threatening to cut water and sewer lines in the area—a move Sinha described as ironic given the non-functional water supply and overflowing sewers. Residents also face challenges in contacting officials of the municipal corporation, Sinha said. “We do not know who is responsible for our area. The numbers on the website yield no response; for everything we cannot go to the commissioner or a higher official,” she added. When contacted, Executive Engineer Sandeep Sihag said he was not aware of the issue as the RWA had not complained to him. “We have resolved such issues fully when concerned RWAs/sectors have recently come forward,” he said.

The Indian Express tried reaching out to Subdivisional Officer Kuldeep Kumar for comment. This report will be updated if Kumar comments. Last month, the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) directed the municipal corporation to disconnect illegal and direct connections made on master water supply pipelines of the GMDA and the civic body. The move, once implemented, will mean that there will be no direct water supply to households without it being rerouted through the designated boosting stations that regulate pressure and flow. The decision was taken following reports that certain housing societies were installing water pipelines routed from the master water supply lines of the GMDA and the municipal corporation.

## Kerala chit fund couple accused cheating depositors of Rs 50 crore in Bengaluru and Mangaluru

GNS News Agency, July 15

crime “They have collected Rs 70 lakh from me and my family and several crores from others. When we visited the office of the company, we found it closed and the couple were missing. Their phones were also switched off,” reads one police complaint. A couple from Kerala have been accused of cheating hundreds of depositors of over Rs 50 crore through a chit fund and finance business they operated in Bengaluru and Mangaluru, where people from Kerala were the majority of depositors.

Over the last two days, dozens of investors have approached the Ramamurthy Nagar police station in east Bengaluru with complaints against A&A Chit Funds, operated by A V Tomy and Shini Tomy. The investors approached the police after finding the chit fund firm’s Ramamurthy Nagar office locked and the couple inaccessible on their mobile phones. In one of the cases, the police registered an FIR on July 5 on the basis of a complaint lodged by P T Savio, 64, a Ramamurthy Nagar resident and an investor in the chit fund firm. He alleges that he was defrauded out of Rs 70 lakh by the couple. According to Savio’s complaint, the Tomy couple had run the chit fund and finance business in Bengaluru since 2005, attracting hundreds of small and large investors with the promise of



high returns. The funds deposited by the investors were allegedly being collected in the bank accounts of the firm and the private accounts of the couple. “They have collected Rs 70 lakh from me and my family and several crores from others. When we visited the office of the company, we found it closed and the couple were missing. Their phones were also switched off,” reads Savio’s police complaint. The Ramamurthy Nagar police have registered a case under section 4 of the Chit Funds Act 1982, section 21 of the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance 2019, and under sections 318 and 316 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for cheating and criminal breach of trust.

## Delhi HC dismisses Turkey-based firm’s plea seeking to set aside order revoking its security clearance

GNS News Agency, July 15

Setback for Celebi: Delhi HC dismisses Turkey-based firm’s plea seeking to set aside order revoking its security clearance. At least seven airports in the country cancelled the services of Celebi and its subsidiaries.

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a plea by Turkey-based ground handling services provider Celebi Airport Services India Private Limited seeking to set aside the Centre’s order revoking its security clearance in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor. While the detailed judgment is yet to be made public, Justice Sachin Datta pronounced in open court that the petition stands dismissed. The Centre, through the Ministry of Civil Aviation, had revoked the security clearance granted to the firm on May 15 “with immediate effect in the interest of National Security”. The decision came following the backlash in India over Turkey’s support to Pakistan during the India-Pakistan conflict.

At least seven airports in the country cancelled the services of Celebi and its subsidiaries. The firm has challenged the contract cancellations before the high courts of Madras, Bombay and Gujarat, besides challenging the security revocation before the Delhi High Court. While the pleas are pending in the Gujarat and Bombay high courts, in light of the orders reserved at the Delhi High Court in May, the Madras High Court had in June granted interim protection to Celebi Ground Services Chennai Pvt Ltd under section 9 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The firm was



incorporated in India in 2009 as Celebi Ground Handling Delhi Private Limited and subsequently changed its incorporated name to Celebi Airport Services India Private Limited in 2018. The company was granted security clearance in 2022 which was to be valid for five years. The firm, in a communication to several authorities, including the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) as well as the Ministry of Home Affairs on May 14, had stated that while its ultimate parent holding company — Celebi Aviation Holding — is incorporated in Turkey, over 65 per cent of its ownership rests with international institutional investors, adding that in India, it is “very much a domestic operation”. It also stated that it has invested over \$250 million in India and has been operating in the country for 17 years.

## Gangster part of Kapil Sangwan’s Punjab ‘module’ arrested for orchestrating shooting of hotelier in Haridwar: Delhi Police

GNS News Agency, July 15

delhi policeOn June 30, the Northern Range of the Special Cell received an input regarding Sunny’s presence in the Narela area of Outer Delhi and arrested him. The Delhi Police Sunday said they arrested an 18-year-old man, who is part of gangster Kapil Sangwan’s Punjab ‘module’, for allegedly orchestrating a firing at a hotelier in Haridwar as he was too “close” to members of incarcerated gangster Manjeet Mahal’s gang. According to the police, the accused, Sami Khan alias Sunny, was one of the shooters who fired at hotelier Arun alias Sukha, whose cousin is a henchman of Mahal, near Haridwar on June 2. “An incident of firing on a hotelier near Sukhi Nadi, Khadkhadi, Haridwar was reported at Kotwali police station in Haridwar. It was found to be the handiwork of gangster Kapil Sangwan aka Nandu, who sent his shooters to eliminate Arun aka Sukha of Rohtak, for being in touch with a key member of rival Manjit Mahal gang,” said Amit Kaushik, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell). The Special Cell was working on the case after the links of the shooter to Kapil Sangwan emerged. The Haryana-Punjab module of UK-based Sangwan is often used to eliminate targets in the Delhi-NCR

and neighbouring states, the police said. “Sources were deployed in Outer Delhi, Haryana and Uttarakhand, which revealed that Sangwan used a Punjab-based module to eliminate targets in Haryana or Delhi. Once Arun was spotted at Haridwar, Sangwan redirected his shooters to reach Haridwar and neutralise the target,” DCP Kaushik said. On June 30, the Northern Range of the Special Cell received an input regarding Sunny’s presence in the Narela area of Outer Delhi and arrested him. During interrogation, Sunny revealed that he fled to Nepal immediately after the incident and only returned on June 28, ready to take his second assignment. The police said Sunny and another accused Himanshu, both residents of Phagwara village, had enmity with a local resident, and wanted Sangwan’s assistance in taking him out. Sangwan agreed, but only if they agreed to do a killing for him first, the police said. “During the daytime on June 2, the assailants allegedly followed Arun and, at around 5.30 pm, attacked him with firearms. Arun sustained bullet injuries and was rushed to a hospital, where doctors were able to save his life. After the shooting, all the attackers fled back to Punjab, from where Sunny went to his native Nepal,” DCP Kaushik said. Sangwan,



# Delhi man with cybercrime history tries to access Baba Siddique’s mobile number, arrested



GNS News Agency, July 15

Baba SiddiqueA police officer said that in the last week of June, Siddique’s wife Shehzeen received an email from the mobile service provider that it had received an application to transfer Siddique’s number to another SIM card. (Source: FileThe Mumbai police on Monday arrested a Delhi man who has two cyber fraud cases against him after he allegedly tried to access the mobile number of Baba Siddique, the NCP leader who was shot dead in Bandra last year.

His family had kept the mobile number of Siddique active as it was linked to certain business accounts. The police are investigating why the arrested accused, Vivek

Sabharwal from Burari in Delhi, tried to access Siddique’s number. “On Monday, he was placed under arrest and will be produced before the court to seek his custody,” a police officer said.

The officer said that Sabharwal was out on bail in a cybercrime case registered in Borivali.Explaining how the crime came to light, a police officer said that in the last week of June, Siddique’s wife Shehzeen received an email from the mobile service provider that it had received an application to transfer Siddique’s number to another SIM card. The email also had some fake copies of Shehzeen’s personal documents.The email also had Siddiqui’s daughter Dr Arshia among the recipients. Realising that something was amiss, his family members approached the Bandra police station, where an FIR was registered against Sabharwal.The police tracked Sabharwal down to Burari and sought Delhi Police’s help to detain him on Sunday. After getting his transit remand, the Bandra police team brought him to Mumbai on Monday.An officer said the police suspected Sabharwal was trying to use Baba Siddique’s mobile number to commit cybercrime.“He did not realise that in the case of such applications, mobile service providers also notify the applicants by email, due to which the fraud came to light,” the officer added.Siddique was gunned down on October 12, 2024, allegedly by the Anmol Bishnoi gang. The Mumbai crime branch has filed a chargesheet against 26 people arrested in the case.

# Sudden deaths to be declared notifiable disease in Karnataka amid scare over Covid-19 vaccines

GNS News Agency, July 15

Covid-19“Sudden deaths will be a notifiable disease. If someone dies outside a hospital suddenly, it should be reported to the government. Autopsy will also be compulsory to ascertain the cause of death,” Rao said. To ascertain the cause of sudden deaths among individuals below 45 years, the Karnataka government has decided to declare such deaths as a notifiable disease. The decision comes in the wake of speculations over Covid-19 vaccines being responsible for such deaths in the state.Addressing a news conference on Monday, Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the government would start monitoring sudden deaths reported among those below the age of 45.The decision has been taken based on the recommendations submitted by an expert committee formed under Dr C N Ravindranath, Director, Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, to investigate sudden cardiovascular events, including heart attacks and cardiac deaths, and their possible links to Covid-19 vaccines. The committee, however, found no causal link between the vaccines and cardiac deaths among the youth.

“Sudden deaths will be a notifiable disease. If someone dies outside a hospital suddenly, it should be reported to the government. Autopsy will also be compulsory to ascertain the cause of death,” Rao said, adding that the Health and Family Welfare Department would issue directions for the same.On speculation that the vaccines were linked to cardiac deaths, he said that there were complaints about



mRNA vaccines causing myocarditis in some cases. “However, none from the country was administered with it,” the minister said, adding that the Covid-19 vaccines helped save lives.Dr Ravindranath, who was also present at the news conference, said that there was a five to six per cent increase in cardiac deaths post-Covid, which he attributed to a change in risk factors for cardiac diseases due to altered lifestyle since the pandemic. “Cardiac deaths are not caused by just one reason. It is multifactorial,” he said, adding that more than 50 per cent of the cases were caused due to smoking.Referring to a meta-analysis carried out by scientists on those affected by Covid-19, he said that 20 per cent of the patients who recovered continued to face fatigue, insomnia, depression, anxiety, and breathing problems. “But there were no heart attacks or cardiac-related diseases,” he added.

# Renowned Abohar businessman Sanjay Verma shot dead outside his store, businesses shut down in protest

GNS News Agency, July 15

Reputed businessman Sanjay Verma, co-founder of men’s tailoring showroom New Wear Well, was shot dead by three masked assailants near Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chowk in Abohar under Punjab’s Fazilka district on Monday morning.The incident occurred at around 10 am when Verma, in his early 50s, arrived at his store in his car. CCTV footage reveals that as he stepped out of the vehicle, three armed men on a motorcycle – who were waiting nearby – opened fire on him at point-blank range before fleeing the scene. In their haste to escape, their motorcycle reportedly slipped, forcing them to snatch another bike from a passerby to continue their escape.

Verma was rushed to the Civil Hospital, but doctors declared him brought dead. His death sparked panic among local residents and traders, leading to the immediate shut-down of markets across Abohar in protest and grief. Traders and local associations have demanded immediate action and a crackdown on organised crime to restore confidence among professionals and entrepreneurs in the region.The slain businessman, known for his impeccable fashion sense, was the creative mind behind New Wear Well, a brand popular not only in North India but among international clients as well.Sanjay Verma’s elder brother and founder of the New Wear Well brand, Jagat Verma, was in Chandigarh undergoing treatment for health issues at the time of the incident. He is reported to have rushed back to Abohar upon receiving the news of Sanjay Verma’s death.The Fazilka police have appealed to the public to come forward with any information that may help identify the assailants. A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered with murder charges against unknown persons, and further investigations are underway.Senior police officials, Gurpreet Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police, Fazilka, reached the spot to investigate. Police teams are scanning CCTV footage from surrounding areas and have launched a massive hunt to nab the culprits, said police sources.



Meanwhile, one Aarzo Bishnoi has claimed responsibility for the murder through a social media post written in Hindi.The post, when translated, reads, “We, Goldy Dhillon, Aarzo Bishnoi, and Shubham Lonker from Maharashtra, take responsibility for the murder that happened at New Wear Well, Abohar.We had called him regarding a matter, but he refused to recognise us, so we shot him dead to make it clear who we are.He used to support our enemies – whoever goes against us will be crushed to dust.Whatever we do, we take full responsibility for it – whether it’s a 302 (murder) or a 307 (attempt to murder).Keep watching – we will make fake gangsters bite their fingers in fear.”However, the police were yet to comment on this post.Following the shooting, Punjab BJP president Sunil Jakhar – a native of Abohar – strongly criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. “The daylight murder in Abohar is yet another eerie reminder that Punjab’s law and order has totally collapsed. The deafening silence of the AAP government after each such killing only emboldens the gangsters. CM Bhagwant Mann must tell Punjabis who is responsible for this blot on Punjab’s name,” Jakhar said.Echoing similar concerns, Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal termed the murder “a reflection of the prevailing jungle

raj” in the state. “Law and order in Punjab has plummeted to its lowest point. Businessmen, doctors, artists, and athletes are facing grave threats from extortionists. I strongly condemn this brutal killing and offer my heartfelt condolences to the Verma family. The perpetrators must be arrested and brought to justice immediately,” Badal added.Amandeep Singh Goldy Musafir, AAP MLA from Balluana constituency, also visited the bereaved family to express his condolences.

## Dr Sajja inducted into Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society

Hyderabad: Dr Lokeswara Rao Sajja, senior cardiothoracic surgeon, STAR Hospitals and Chairman of the Sajja Heart Foundation, has been inducted as an Associate Member of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society that is dedicated to the advancement of science and research.Dr Sajja was invited for membership of Sigma Xi in recognition of his work in cardiovascular surgery, his role in conducting India’s first multi-centre randomized trial in cardiac surgery and designing a mechanical heart valve that does not require long-term anticoagulation, which holds both US and Indian patents, a press release said.Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sajja said, “I am honoured to be invited into Sigma Xi, which represents the highest ideals of scientific inquiry and ethical research.”Founded in 1886 at Cornell University, USA, Sigma Xi has a legacy of supporting excellence in scientific research and over 200 Nobel Laureates among its past and present members, including eminent scientists like Albert Einstein, Richard Feynman, Barbara McClintock.

# Rename New Delhi railway station after Vajpayee, BJP MP Praveen Khandelwal urges minister Ashwini Vaishnaw



GNS News Agency, July 15

Railway Station“Renaming the New Delhi Railway Station in his memory would be a fitting tribute to his lifelong service to the nation and a gesture that resonates with public sentiment” the MP saidBJP MP Praveen Khandelwal on Sunday requested that the New Delhi railway station be renamed as Atal Bihari Vajpayee railway station “in honour of one of India’s most revered statesmen and former Prime Minister”.In a letter to Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, Khandelwal, the MP for Chandni Chowk, wrote that the New Delhi railway station’s central location and prominence “make it a suitable site to be named after a national figure

whose life and legacy continue to inspire millions”. The letter came a week after Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta wrote to Vaishnaw requesting him to rename the Old Delhi railway station as the Maharaja Agrasen railway station.

Khandelwal wrote that major public institutions and transport hubs across the country are named after national icons, citing the examples of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai and the Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna metro station in Bengaluru. “Similarly, New Delhi — the heart of the nation — deserves to honour a leader of Vajpayee ji’s stature,” he wrote.“Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee ji was a visionary leader who steered India into a new era of economic reform, infrastructure development, and global standing. His inclusive politics, dignified leadership, and commitment to democratic values earned him immense respect across the political spectrum and among the people of India,” Khandelwal wrote.In the letter, the MP wrote that “Delhi was not only his political workplace but also a city that held deep emotional and cultural significance for him”. “Renaming the New Delhi Railway Station in his memory would be a fitting tribute to his lifelong service to the nation and a gesture that resonates with public sentiment” and that “this renaming would not only pay homage to his immense contributions but also serve as a source of inspiration for future generations who pass through the capital,” Khandelwal further wrote.

# Karnataka proposes to amend child marriage law, extend punishment for even engagement

GNS News Agency, July 15

The Karnataka government plans to amend the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act to criminalise not only child marriages but also attempts and preparations for child engagements.A draft of the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Karnataka Amendment) Bill, 2025, proposes to insert new sections into the existing Act. “Punishment for attempt and preparation to make child marriage or attempt and preparation to make engagement of a child,” reads Section 9A in the draft Bill.As per the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, enacted by Parliament, the maximum imprisonment of two years and a fine of Rs 1 lakh are only applicable in cases of child marriage. The proposed Karnataka amendment extends the same provisions to child engagements, too.

“Whoever, make(s) an attempt and preparation to make child marriage, or attempt and preparation to make engagement of a child shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees or both,” the draft Bill says.While section 10 of the existing Act relates to “punishment for solemnising a child marriage”, the amendments propose to change it to “punishment for preparation and solemnising a child marriage”.The draft Bill was based on the directions issued during a meeting of Chief Minister



Siddaramaiah with deputy commissioners and chief executive officers of all districts on May 31. Noting the recurrence of child marriages in Karnataka, as around 700 cases were reported last year, more stringent regulations were proposed during the meeting, according to sources.Other changes include the insertion of section 12A in the parent law, which will render the engagement of a minor child null and void. Section 13(A), another proposed amendment, empowers courts to “issue injunction prohibiting child engagement” to “any person including a member of an organisation or an association of persons prohibiting such engagement”.

# Bombay High Court asks BMC to reconsider limiting slaughterhouses’ closure to a day during Paryushan Parv

GNS News Agency, July 15

The Bombay High Court on Monday directed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to reconsider its decision to close slaughterhouses in Mumbai for only a day during Paryushan Parv, and not for the entire period of nine days of the prominent Jain festival.A division bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Sandeep V Marne was hearing Public Interest Litigations (PILs) filed by Sheth Motishaw Lalbaug Jain Charities and Sheth Bherulalji Kanaiyalalji Kothari Religious Trust. They challenged the August 30, 2024, order of the BMC commissioner, which directed slaughterhouses to remain closed for a day during Paryushan Parv instead of all nine days.

The court directed BMC to reconsider its decision after examining representation by the petitioners belonging to the Jain community by August 18, before the commencement of Paryushan Parv on August 20.The court said the Nashik and Pune Municipal Corporations were required to take a reasoned decision on the closure of slaughterhouses during Paryushan Parv. The petitioner claimed that the two civic bodies did not give any reasons for refusing to ban the slaughter of animals during the entire period of the festival.Representing the petitioners, Senior Advocate Darius Khambata and Advocate Abhinav Chandrachud relied on the Supreme Court judgement of March 2008 in Hinsa Virodhak Sangh vs Mirzapur Moti Kuresh Jamat, which noted that the state and every citizen must have compassion for living creatures.Khambata argued that the SC



had found the closure of slaughterhouses for nine days to be a reasonable restriction, and could not be said to be violative of the fundamental rights of persons engaged in the slaughtering of animals. The petitioners claimed BMC misinterpreted the SC decision, and failed to consider that the population of Jains in Maharashtra was greater than that of Gujarat, which was not the case.The lawyers submitted that the Jain community constitutes 1.24 per cent of Maharashtra’s population, while they represent 0.95 per cent of Gujarat’s population. Chandrachud said that as per the 2011 Census, there were over 14 lakh Jains in Maharashtra, compared to over 5.7 lakh Jains in Gujarat. He also submitted that Mumbai has 5.38 per cent of Jain population compared to 3.64 per cent in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, therefore, the impugned decision was arbitrary.

# How a probe into dating app scam led police to mule accounts, cybercriminals with China links

GNS News Agency, July 15

A Pune-based IT professional in his 40s signed up on a dating platform last year, and he connected with the profile of a woman named Anamika, ironically, a word that means “anonymous”.Their online conversations quickly grew into what seemed like a genuine relationship, and soon, talks of marriage followed.But the connection, which appeared to promise a shared future, turned out to be an elaborate cyber scam in which he was allegedly duped of a staggering Rs 1.55 crore over eight months.The investigation revealed that the cybercriminals, operating behind the profile of ‘Anamika,’ gradually gained the complainant’s trust and allegedly requested large sums of money. On the pretence of building a future together, ‘Anamika’ allegedly convinced him to transfer funds to purchase a house without ever having met.Over time, the scammers further manipulated him into investing in various trading apps, luring him with promises of exceptionally high returns, said the police.After spending nearly all his life savings and facing further demands for more money, he realised he had been deceived. When he tried to recover his funds, ‘Anamika’ allegedly abruptly stopped all communication with him. The police filed an FIR in March based on his complaint.

The investigation by the cybercrime police station in Pimpri Chinchwad unearthed an elaborate network of mule account handlers allegedly operating from Solapur and with links to cybercriminals masterminding these scams from China.The police zeroed in on one particular mule account registered in Solapur in June. As the account holder was questioned, he spilled the beans on three others from Solapur who had allegedly told him that his bank account would be used for taking funds obtained from gaming appli-



cations. As the investigation dug deeper into these three suspects, the police established their identities and roles in the racket.The mule account handlers from Solapur have been identified as Shubham Chandrakant Mantha, 25, a resident of Ashok Chowk; Swapnil Chandulal Baheti, 35, a resident of Hotgi Road; and Prashik Uttam Navghare, 26, a resident of Juna Kumbhani Naka. “Our investigation revealed that Mantha worked for a China-headquartered payment application company, and he and Baheti were in direct contact with the masterminds based out of China. A coordinated search operation was launched for the trio as their roles were confirmed in the probe,” an officer who was part of the probe said.In the second week of June, Mantha and Navghare were arrested from Pune International Airport when they were about to flee to Nepal via Patna. Baheti, too, was placed under arrest.“Investigation revealed an elaborate mule handling and fund siphoning operation with direct links to China,” said an officer. All three suspects are currently in judicial custody.



# India’s diplomacy is measured, not mute



On June 13, Israel struck Iranian targets in several provinces, even as it continued its war against Hamas. Its conflict with Iran in an already unstable West Asia lasted 12 days.India’s response to the Israel-Iran conflict was cautious. India called for restraint and de-escalation to maintain peace in the region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly expressed concern for humanitarian losses and has reiterated that this cannot be an era of war. Under his leadership, the Indian government has been quick to provide humanitarian aid when requested; voted in favour of a permanent ceasefire in Gaza at the United Nations General Assembly; and swiftly evacuated its citizens from conflict zones. Most recently, as part of Operation Sindhu, India evacuated citizens, mostly medical students, from Israel and Iran.

The world recognises India’s growing credibility and diplomatic weight. India’s strategic silence is a sign of its growing stature — it speaks when it matters most, acts when it counts, and leads when it is required to. India has strategic interests in West Asia, including close defence co-operation with Israel, energy and trade ties with Iran, and a large diaspora spread across many Gulf countries. One of Prime Minister Modi’s diplomatic successes has been to overhaul ties with Arab nations so much so that some of them have become India’s largest foreign investors and trading partners. For India, the fourth largest global economy, economic ties have to take centre stage in diplomatic calculations. To unnecessarily intervene in a war which is not ours is against national interests and irresponsible. Being able to maintain an independent stance doesn’t betray India’s values; rather, it allows the country to engage with all sides and assert its interests more deliberately.

Today’s international diplomacy prioritises protecting national interests. The recent Pakistan-led terror attacks in Pahalgam, India’s retaliative Operation Sindoor, and the subsequent global response to the India-Pakistan conflict were telling of the changing geopolitical times we live in. Over the years, several nations, particularly western powers and multilateral bodies, which are seemingly against terror, have extended funds and other military support to embolden Pa-

kistan, a known sanctuary to terror groups. The western world, a large part of which has worked overtime to build strategic relationships with India, once again re-hyphenated Pakistan and India, which the Indian government had managed to de-hyphenate in its past two terms. Several countries remain oblivious to Pakistan’s official role in sponsoring terror activities, many of which are directed towards India, so that they can obtain access to ports and airbases in Pakistan, which will provide an edge to them in their own conflicts with Iran and China. Pakistan’s loyalty, which seems to be on sale to the highest bidder, is being courted with loans from the International Monetary Fund, state-of-the-art military equipment, and lunches with its leaders. The irony is that the same countries which are often quick to give lectures on democracy and invade nations to “protect democratic values” are eager to engage with Pakistan’s unelected military regime because it suits their interests. The Arab world, despite growing ties with India, is also quick to side with Pakistan as it is bound by religious brotherhood with the country. India’s foreign policy calculations take into account all these nuances. India’s diplomatic position also prioritises its own national interests, security, value system, and growth story. West Asia is one of the most politically unstable regions in the world. There are multiple ongoing and recurring conflicts and a network of non-state actors in the region. In such a highly volatile environment, to be in possession of nuclear weapons would dramatically increase the risk of escalation and unauthorised use. Nuclear weapons could lead to prolonged conflicts and have disastrous consequences on civilians. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is already under pressure. A nuclearised West Asia will embolden other conflict regions such as in parts of Africa and South America to pursue more aggressive nuclear weapons acquisition programmes. A stable West Asia requires arms control, de-escalation, and regional cooperation.

Often, ill-informed preaching, which is often politically motivated, demonstrates a limited understanding of today’s evolving global dynamics. India cannot selectively ignore the role of Iran in destabilising the region. Indian diplomats cannot ignore the horrific October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel or its use of civilian Palestinian infrastructure as a shield in diplomatic response calculations. Selective outrage and heated opinions often disguised as moralistic views run a dangerous undercurrent against the core interests of the country. Many people hold views that are passionate but under-informed. If their opinions are taken seriously, it could lead to dire diplomatic consequences and stall India’s strong economic progress.India’s strategic autonomy reflects its quiet confidence, conviction, and clarity. We live in an India that is confident of its growth story. This is also an India that is capable of maintaining its own opinions and upholding the ability to engage with both warring sides instead of getting swayed into making public statements due to pressure from any one side during global conflicts.

# How safe do women in Kolkata feel?

On a cloudy gloomy Friday morning of June 27, Kolkata woke up to the horror of another rape and the arrest of three youths for their involvement in the crime. As the monsoon clouds cleared by the afternoon, more details of the crime emerged. What shook the residents of the metropolis was that the assault was carried out within the protected walls of the West Bengal government-run South Calcutta Law College. For the city still coming to terms with the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor inside the State-run R.G. Kar Hospital and Medical College on August 9, 2024, another Friday, the allegations of gang rape inside an educational institution only 11 km south of the medical college, in an upscale south Kolkata neighbourhood, came as nothing short of a nightmare.

Over the past 10 months, the city and its people have spent many sleepless nights converging on the streets and raising their voices demanding the safety of women in public places. Unlike the large campus of R.G. Kar MCH, which attracts thousands of patients and hundreds of doctors every day, the ‘new campus’ of the South Calcutta Law College stands eight storeys tall in Kasba on Rashbehari Avenue, an arterial east-west connector of the city.

Not far from the college, which was closed after the sexual assault, a crowd of thousands of regular people, unaffiliated with any political party, gathered on July 29, a Sunday evening. They converged near the Rashbehari crossing and started to march in protest of the city increasingly turning unsafe for women. Among the crowd were supporters of Abhaya Mancha and Reclaim the Night, groups that came together after the R.G. Kar rape and murder. Many still remember the rape of a woman in a moving car at Park Street in 2012.A nurse who uses public transport says, “There are no street lights in many pockets of the city. The metro train services stop after 10.30 p.m. There is close to no public transport at night. If I must go out at night, I must have a lot of money and privileges just to feel safe. As a single woman travelling at night in the city, I have never felt safe.”In 2023, the annual publication of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2022 showed that the number of crimes against women in Kolkata was the lowest in India. Now, women are speaking up about Kolkata’s infrastructure and other safety issues, including the dominance of politically-affiliated ‘dadas’.

A few hours into the afternoon of June 27, students associated with the Left parties stormed the gates of the law college and tore posters of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee hanging in front of the building. However, they could not wipe away the wall graffiti inside the college on the blue boundary wall: ‘Monojit Dada is in our hearts’ signed off by ‘Team MM’ with a heart sign. This is a reference to Monojit Mishra, a 31- year-old former student of the college and the prime accused in the gang rape of the student.A wall at the south kolkata law college heartfelt mural in a quiet alley pays tribute to “Monojit Dada,” with a message from Team MM: “Monojit Dada is in our hearts.”

A wall at the south kolkata law college heartfelt mural in a quiet alley pays tribute to “Monojit Dada,” with a message from Team MM: “Monojit Dada is in our hearts.” Credit: Debasish BhaduriIn the four-page complaint filed at Kasba police station a day after the rape, the survivor refers to Mishra as ‘J’. The complaint stated that she had come to campus around noon on June 25 and was about to leave at around 6.10 p.m. “...but ‘J’ stopped me and told ‘I’ and ‘M’ (two other accused) by eye contact to go outside and locked the door from outside.” At one point, she alleged, she had a panic attack, after which the accused arranged for an inhaler, but when she tried to escape, she found that they had locked the main gate. The security guard did not help. She describes the violence against her, also saying that ‘J’ was the head of the Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad (TMCP), the student wing of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), West Bengal’s ruling party. “Everyone listens to him. He was giving everyone a post for TMCP. I was also given a post for the girls’ secretary,” the complaint said. The rape allegedly took place in the students’ union room. Based on the complaint of the survivor, the Kolkata Police has charged Monojit Mishra and two others, 19-year-old Zaib Ahmed and

kistan, a known sanctuary to terror groups. The western world, a large part of which has worked overtime to build strategic relationships with India, once again re-hyphenated Pakistan and India, which the Indian government had managed to de-hyphenate in its past two terms. Several countries remain oblivious to Pakistan’s official role in sponsoring terror activities, many of which are directed towards India, so that they can obtain access to ports and airbases in Pakistan, which will provide an edge to them in their own conflicts with Iran and China. Pakistan’s loyalty, which seems to be on sale to the highest bidder, is being courted with loans from the International Monetary Fund, state-of-the-art military equipment, and lunches with its leaders. The irony is that the same countries which are often quick to give lectures on democracy and invade nations to “protect democratic values” are eager to engage with Pakistan’s unelected military regime because it suits their interests. The Arab world, despite growing ties with India, is also quick to side with Pakistan as it is bound by religious brotherhood with the country. India’s foreign policy calculations take into account all these nuances. India’s diplomatic position also prioritises its own national interests, security, value system, and growth story. West Asia is one of the most politically unstable regions in the world. There are multiple ongoing and recurring conflicts and a network of non-state actors in the region. In such a highly volatile environment, to be in possession of nuclear weapons would dramatically increase the risk of escalation and unauthorised use. Nuclear weapons could lead to prolonged conflicts and have disastrous consequences on civilians. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is already under pressure. A nuclearised West Asia will embolden other conflict regions such as in parts of Africa and South America to pursue more aggressive nuclear weapons acquisition programmes. A stable West Asia requires arms control, de-escalation, and regional cooperation.



20-year-old Pramit Mukhopadhyay, with gang rape and wrongful detention among other charges. The security guard of the college was also arrested.Power sans elections

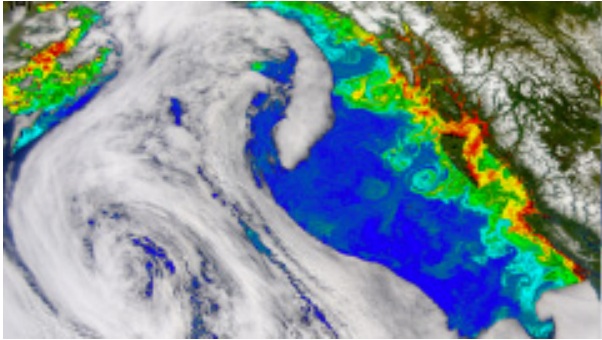
A week after his arrest, it has come to light that there are at least 11 cases against Mishra. Photographs of him with several TMC leaders surfaced, but MPs and MLAs of the party were quick to dissociate themselves from him, saying there was no unit of the party’s students’ union at the college after 2022. Student union elections are pending in colleges and universities in West Bengal for the past 5-10 years.A Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court, while hearing a public interest litigation after the sexual assault, directed that union rooms — in colleges and universities where there is no recognised student body or where no election had taken place in the recent past — be put under lock and key.Communist Party of India (Marxist) State Secretary Mohammed Salim says that by not allowing the union elections to take place, the TMC runs a ‘nexus’ of criminal elements inside college campuses. “This rape and the previous rape and murder of the female doctor is a sad commentary on the condition of our State under Mamata Banerjee. Here, if you work with TMC, you can get away with anything,” Salim says.Politics and processions

The parents of the doctor from R.G. Kar MCH have lost faith in the investigation process. The woman’s father says in despair that nothing has changed in the past one year. “After what happened to my daughter, so many people came out onto the streets to protest. But even now, similar gruesome crimes are happening inside educational institutions. When will this end,” he asks.At the July 29 protest, the police stopped the crowd from marching. An artist took to his paints and brush, and with the streets as canvas, painted an image of a woman with the slogan Ar koto? (How many more?). During R.G. Kar protests, a song by Arijit Singh Ar Kobe (When will it stop?) had rallied thousands of protesters on the streets of Kolkata. The supporters of Reclaim the Night were assaulted outside the South Calcutta Law College, when a team of Bharatiya Janata Party members, including MPs and former Union Ministers visited the college on a fact-finding mission.BJP protestors clash with police at the Gariahath crossing while protesting against the rape of a law student inside the South Calcutta Law College premises.

# Overweight may influence breast cancer risk in women with heart disease: WHO study

New Delhi: Excess weight may increase the risk of developing breast cancer among postmenopausal women with cardiovascular disease, according to a study by the World Health Organisation (WHO), published on Monday.Higher body mass index (BMI) is a known risk factor for breast cancer in postmenopausal women. The study, published in the peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society CANCER, unravels how the risk differs among women with and without cardiovascular disease or type 2 diabetes.It showed that each 5 kg/m2 increase in BMI was associated with a 31 per cent higher risk of breast cancer in women who developed cardiovascular disease during follow-up and a 13 per cent higher risk in women without cardiovascular disease.

# How computers are changing our relationship with the ocean



The ocean has always spoken — in waves, in currents, in silent rhythms beneath its vast surface. For centuries, sailors, scientists, and philosophers have tried to understand its patterns, often relying on observation and instinct. Today, a new listener has emerged: the computer.Armed with data from satellites, ocean sensors, and remote platforms, computers are helping us decode the complex language of the sea. From identifying eddies to predicting ocean temperatures and storm surges, advances in artificial intelligence and computational modelling are transforming how we perceive and interact with marine environments.Becoming indispensable

When computers ‘listen’ to the ocean, they do more than measure; they reveal. The ocean is not a still body of water: it’s a living, breathing system in constant motion. Beneath its surface lie powerful forces: swirling currents, rising and sinking water masses, and temperature gradients that shift with the seasons and climate. These movements influence everything from regional weather patterns to global climate systems and even the migration of marine life.Among the most fascinating of these phenomena are mesoscale eddies: large, rotating bodies of water that can span hundreds of kilometres and persist for weeks or months. Eddies are like underwater storms: they redistribute heat, nutrients, and salinity across vast distances.All these features make the ocean very difficult to study with traditional methods alone. This is where computational tools powered by real-time data are becoming indispensable.AI and visualsTo say computers are ‘listening’ to the ocean is not a metaphor: it’s a shift in how we observe and interpret marine phenomena. The oceans today are monitored by a network of technologies: satellites scan sea surface temperatures and currents from space; floating buoys transmit data about salinity and pressure; and autonomous underwater vehicles glide quietly through deep waters, collecting measurements previously inaccessible to human researchers.

These instruments generate enormous amounts of data every second, a torrent that humans cannot process manually. Yet computers can detect subtle patterns that may go unnoticed to the human eye: a slightly warmer patch of water, a recurring spiral in current flow, a rapid shift in ocean colour indicating algal blooms. Computers effectively listen by translating physical signals like temperature, salinity, chlorophyll levels, wave height, etc. into structured information. From that information, they learn, predict, and even adapt. The ocean is no longer silent: it speaks in data and computers are the interpreters.As for making sense of

# Study links air pollution to preterm births, low birth weight in India

Air pollution, a hazard endured everyday by millions across India in varying degrees, has long been associated with a range of respiratory diseases, heart conditions, and a growing list of health issues. Now, a new study reveals the damaging effects of air pollution extend far beyond the lungs and heart, affecting people before they are even born. Published in PLoS Global Public Health, the study was carried out by researchers from institutions in India, Thailand, Ireland, and the UK, with data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) along with satellite data. The team assessed the influence of ambient air quality on birth outcomes, specifically preterm births (PTB) and low birth weight (LBW). The dataset included children aged 0 to 5 years; 52% were female and 48% male.

The results suggest that exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) during pregnancy significantly increases the likelihood of these adverse outcomes. PM2.5 consists of airborne particles less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter.According to the study, mothers exposed to increased levels of PM2.5 had a 70% higher chance of delivering prematurely compared to those who weren’t exposed. The odds of giving birth to a baby with low birth weight rose by 40% for mothers who faced higher air pollution levels.

A particularly significant finding in the study is the regional disparity: specifically, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar bear the brunt of the consequences of air pollution. These regions are known for being heavily industrialised with high vehicular emissions and the widespread use of solid fuels for cooking. This conclusion aligns with previous reports. Another recent study in The Lancet reported that the average PM2.5 concentration in Delhi was 13.8-times higher than that in Kerala.PTB was most prevalent in Himachal Pradesh (39%) and Delhi (17%) while LBW was most common in Punjab (22%) and Delhi (19%). Female children were more likely to be born with LBW (20%) compared to males (17%) — although both conditions were found to be more frequent among children of illiterate and poorer mothers.Households that used solid fuel to cook also reported higher rates of both LBW and PTB.Higher levels of PM2.5 during pregnancy significantly increased the likelihood of both LBW and PTB by 1.37x and 1.67x, respectively, with even a slight rise in temperature linked to an increase in LBW cases, though not PTB.Higher tempera-

it: artificial intelligence (AI) models, particularly using deep-learning models, are now being trained to recognise patterns in complex ocean datasets. These models can detect and classify eddies, upwelling zones, changes in ocean chemistry, etc. with remarkable accuracy. For instance, convolutional neural networks, originally developed to recognise images, are now used to identify ocean currents from satellite imagery, much like how facial recognition software can spot particular individuals in a photograph.But raw data and AI predictions alone don’t suffice: visualisation plays a crucial role in translating this information into knowledge that scientists, policymakers, and the public can grasp. Through interactive dashboards, animated maps, and 3D models, we can now see the ocean in motion: how a warm eddy moves across the Bay of Bengal or how salinity levels change during a monsoon, for example. These visual tools turn millions of data points into stories that humans can understand, investigate, and act on.The health of our oceans is deeply intertwined with the health of our planet. Ocean dynamics influence weather patterns, regulate global temperatures, and support ecosystems that sustain millions of people. As climate change accelerates, rising sea levels, ocean warming, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, and more dangerous. In this evolving scenario, the ability to understand and predict ocean behaviour isn’t just a scientific curiosity: it’s necessary.AI-driven analysis and real-time ocean monitoring can improve disaster preparedness by forecasting cyclones and storm surges more accurately. Fishers can receive timely insights into ocean conditions that affect fish migration. Coastal planners can anticipate erosion and flooding risk. Conservationists can track changes in coral reef health or identify zones of pollution. These aren’t futuristic goals: they are already being realised in projects around the world. When computers listen to the ocean, we gain knowledge and also foresight. And in an age of environmental uncertainty, foresight is critical.The ocean doesn’t recognise borders and neither should our efforts to understand and protect it. We need more interdisciplinary research: where marine scientists work alongside computer scientists, data engineers, and visualisation experts. We need investments in infrastructure that make ocean data more open, accessible, and usable. And we need to train the next generation of researchers who can bridge computer code with climate models.How we respondThe ocean speaks in waves, in winds, in unseen turbulence below the surface. When computers tune in, they don’t replace human curiosity: they amplify it. They help us see what was once invisible, understand what was once uncertain, and prepare for what is yet to come.But tuning in is only the first step. The real test lies in how we respond. In a world increasingly shaped by data and digital tools, we should never lose sight of the deep blue truth: that the ocean, vast and ancient, still has much to teach us, if we are willing to pay attention and to act.Preetha K.G. and Saritha S. are professors at Rajagiri School of Engineering & Technology, Kerala. They have actively contributed to interdisciplinary research at the intersection of computer science and environmental science. Their recent work includes the development of OCEANVIZIO, an interactive, dynamic and scalable ocean visualization platform, as part of a project funded by the Naval Research Board (NRB), Union Ministry of Defence.



tures have previously been linked to maternal dehydration, heat stress, and increased cardiovascular strain, all of which impair placental function and disrupt foetal growth. Conversely, excessive rainfall, especially during the monsoon, raises the risk of waterborne infections, which can further hinder foetal growth, the study suggests.Flooding and displacement associated with heavy rains can also disrupt healthcare access, leading to delayed medical interventions and increasing the likelihood of pregnancy complications.The study’s findings clarify that while India has made some progress in tackling air pollution with initiatives like the National Clean Air Programme, more needs to be done to mitigate the risks posed by poor air quality. The study’s results suggest the government’s target to reduce particulate matter concentrations by 20% by 2024 is a step in the right direction, although it may not be enough to address the public health crisis growing in tandem.The authors call for more comprehensive interventions to reduce exposure to air pollution, particularly in North India, which has been identified as the most vulnerable region. In addition to addressing outdoor air pollution, the study highlights the importance of tackling indoor pollution, particularly from the burning of solid fuels in households. Cleaner cooking technologies and better access to clean energy could significantly reduce the harmful effects of indoor air pollution, especially in rural areas.The research also calls for greater integration of air quality data with health surveillance systems to identify at-risk populations and implement targeted interventions.A more localised approach, focusing on the specific needs of high-risk regions.

menopausal women developed breast cancer.Further, the study noted that the combination of overweight (BMI=25 kg/m2) and cardiovascular disease was estimated to lead to 153 more cases of breast cancer per 100,000 people per year than expected. “This study should also inspire future research to include women with a history of cardiovascular diseases in weight loss trials for breast cancer prevention,” Freisling said.The link between excess weight and increased cancer risk is well established. Being overweight or obese increases your risk for 12 cancers, including uterine, kidney, liver, and colorectal cancer. A recent study, published in the journal Nature Communications, showed that that overweight and obese women are more likely to be diagnosed with larger tumours and more advanced-stage breast cancer.



# Indonesia’s Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki volcano erupts, sending ash cloud 18 kilometres in air



GNS News Agency, July 15

Indonesia’s rumbling Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki erupted on Monday sending a column of volcanic materials as high as 18 kilometres into the sky and depositing ash on villages. The volcano has been at the highest alert level since last month and no casualties were immediately reported. Indonesia’s Geology Agency recorded an avalanche of searing gas clouds mixed with rocks and lava travelling up to 5 kilometres down the volcano’s slopes during the eruption. Observations from drones showed lava filling the crater, indicating deep movement of magma that set off volcanic earthquakes.

The column of hot clouds that rose into the sky was the volcano’s highest since the major eruption in November 2024 that killed nine people and injured dozens, said Muhammad Wafid, the Geology Agency chief. It also erupted in March. “An eruption of that size certainly carries

a higher potential for danger, including its impact on aviation,” Wafid told The Associated Press from Switzerland where he was attending a seminar. “We shall reevaluate to enlarge its danger zone that must be cleared of villagers and tourist activities.”

In photo released by the Geological Agency (Badan Geologi) of the Indonesia’s Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki spews volcanic materials during an eruption in East Flores, Indonesia, In photo released by the Geological Agency (Badan Geologi) of the Indonesia’s Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki spews volcanic materials during an eruption in East Flores, Indonesia, The volcano monitoring agency had increased the alert status for Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki to the highest level after an eruption on June 18, and more than doubled an exclusion zone to a 7-kilometre radius since then as eruptions became more frequent. After an eruption early last year, about 6,500 people evacuated and the island’s Frans Seda Airport was closed. The airport has remained closed since then due to the continuing seismic activity. The 1,584-metre mountain is a twin volcano with Mount Lewotobi Perempuan in the district of Flores Timur. Monday’s eruption was one of Indonesia’s largest volcano eruptions since 2010 when Mount Merapi, the country’s most volatile volcano erupted on the densely populated island of Java. That eruption killed 353 people and forced over 350,000 people to evacuate affected areas. Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 280 million people with frequent seismic activity. It has 120 active volcanoes and sits along the “Ring of Fire,” a horseshoe-shaped series of seismic fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

# China’s Xi Jinping skips BRICS summit for first time, fuelling speculation about political future

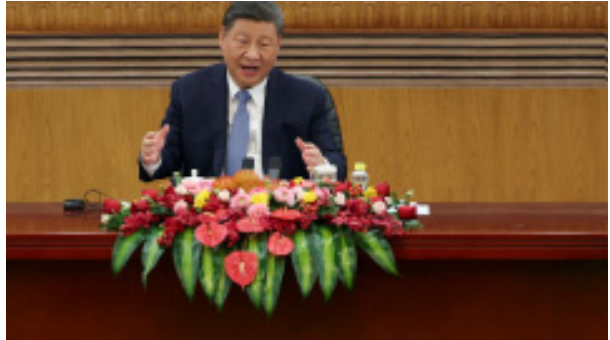
GNS News Agency, July 15

Chinese President Xi Jinping, widely regarded as a leader for life, is beginning to delegate authority to key organs of the ruling Communist Party, a first in his over 12-year rule. Mr. Xi’s move sparked speculation that he may be laying the groundwork for an orderly power transition or scaling back his role in preparation for possible retirement.

Speculation about Mr. Xi’s power transition was rife after state-run Xinhua news agency recently reported that the powerful 24-member Political Bureau of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) in its meeting on Jun 30 reviewed a set of new regulations on the work of the party’s institutions. The meeting presided over by Mr. Xi himself stressed that the regulations will further standardise the establishment, responsibilities, and operations of the CPC Central Committee’s decision-making, deliberative, and coordinating institutions. Such institutions should exercise more effective leadership and coordination over major tasks and focus on planning, discussing, and overseeing major tasks, the Xinhua report said. While the overseas Chinese dissident community in recent months was abuzz with speculation of a power struggle within the secretive and tightly controlled CPC, a China-based political analyst who spoke on condition of anonymity said the regulations on these party bodies could hint at preparations for Xi’s retirement.

“The rules may be set up to regulate the bodies because it’s a key time for power transition,” the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post on Sunday quoted the analyst as saying. Other experts, however, averred that Mr. Xi, regarded as the most powerful leader after CPC founder Mao Zedong, may be delegating some powers to focus on larger issues. “It does seem that Xi might pay less attention to day-to-day details, which necessitates a policing mechanism to ensure that his policy priorities are still being carried out by lower-level officials,” Victor Shih, a specialist in Chinese elite politics and finance at the University of California San Diego, told the Post.

Mr. Xi also skipped the BRICS summit being held in Rio de Janeiro from Sunday. This is the first time since he became President that he will be missing the summit of the emerging economies. Chinese Premier Li Qiang is heading China’s delegation at the summit. Mr. Xi’s move of delegating power comes amid U.S. President Donald Trump’s



tariff war disrupting China’s \$440 billion exports to America, besides major headwinds faced by the Chinese economy, with growth falling due to continued slowdown, and the collapse of the housing market, the mainstay of the economic growth. The crisis was exacerbated by the government’s attempts to rein in the corporate sector and the unsuccessful zero COVID policy of shutting down Chinese cities during the height of the pandemic, resulting in the industry and business coming to a grinding halt. Since he took over power, becoming the General Secretary of the CPC in 2012, Mr. Xi, who was previously the Vice President, rapidly consolidated his power hold in the key power centres — the party, the presidency, and the powerful military as the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) — the overall high command of Chinese armed forces. As he firmed up his grip over power structures, carrying out China’s biggest anti-corruption campaign in which over a million officials were punished and dozens of top generals purged, Mr. Xi was declared as “core leader” of the party, a designation that was conferred only on party founder Zedong. Later, the key rule of the President’s term of two five-year terms was amended by the legislature, paving the way for him to get elected for an unprecedented third five-year term as the General Secretary of the Party in 2022 and as President of the country in the following year. All of Mr. Xi’s predecessors retired after two five-year terms, while he continued in power with no term limits, earning him the label of President for life. Analysts say his plan to remain in power or share power was expected to unravel before or during the next five-year congress of the CPC to be held in 2027, by which time his third term will end.

# Why has Google’s ‘AI overviews’ sparked an antitrust firestorm in the EU? | Explained

Google’s AI-powered summaries, known as AI Overviews, are facing a formal antitrust complaint from a coalition of independent publishers in the European Union, as per a report by Reuters. Their complaint, lodged with the European Commission, alleges that Alphabet’s Google is abusing its market dominance, siphoning traffic and revenue from publishers, and threatening the viability of independent journalism. The feature, rolled out in over 100 countries, represents Google’s major strategic bet on integrating generative AI directly into its core search experience. However, this move has ignited fierce opposition from content creators who claim it undermines the very ecosystem that Google’s search engine relies on.

What is Google AI Overviews?

AI Overviews are AI-generated summaries that appear at the top of Google’s search results page, positioned above the traditional list of blue links. Their purpose is to provide users with a quick, synthesised answer to their query, drawing information from multiple web sources. These overviews can range from a few paragraphs to lists or tables and often include links to the source websites within the generated text. First introduced as an experiment called Search Generative Experience (SGE) in May 2023, the feature is now a core part of Google Search in many regions.

How do AI Overviews work?

When a user enters a search query, Google’s systems determine if generative AI could be particularly helpful in providing a comprehensive answer. If so, it employs a customised version of its advanced AI model, Gemini, to process the request. The system doesn’t rely solely on the AI’s pre-existing knowledge. Instead, it uses a technique called Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), where it actively fetches and analyses relevant information from its web index. The AI then synthesises this information into a coherent summary. Google states that these overviews are designed to be backed up by top web results, and include links to allow users to “dig deeper.”

Why are publishers accusing Google?

The crux of the dispute lies in how these AI-generated answers impact the businesses that create the original content. The Independent Publishers Alliance, alongside groups like the Movement for an Open Web and the legal advo-



cacy non-profit Foxglove, argues that this new feature hurts competition and is causing “serious irreparable harm,” as per the Reuters report citing documents it has seen. The publishers’ key complaints stem from the concern that their content will be disincentivised because of Google’s AI feature. By providing a direct summary at the top of the page, users have less incentive to click through to their websites. This leads to a significant drop in traffic, which in turn slashes advertising revenue and subscriber numbers, the lifeblood of many online publications. Their complaint alleges that Google is “misusing web content” by scraping information from publisher sites to train its AI models and generate summaries without fair compensation. Since May 2024, Google has also begun placing ads within these AI Overviews, meaning it is directly monetising content that publishers have invested in creating. The complaint highlights that there is no way to opt out of having their content used for AI Overviews without also being removed from Google’s main search results. Given Google’s dominance in search, becoming invisible on the platform is not a feasible option for any publisher.

How are regulators getting involved?

The formal complaint, per the report, was filed with both the European Commission and the U.K.’s Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The publishers are asking for “interim measures” to stop Google from using the feature while the case is investigated, to prevent further damage.

# Sheikh Hasina to face tribunal decision on charges in Bangladesh



GNS News Agency, July 15 Bangladesh’s International Crimes Tribunal on Monday to determine whether charges will be framed against ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and two of her top aides. Ms. Hasina, former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun are accused in the case over alleged crimes against humanity committed during the July uprising last year. Bangladesh wanted good ties with India, but ‘something always went wrong’: Yunus

“The International Crimes Tribunal-1 (ICT-1) set July 10, 2025 to decide whether charges will be framed against Ms. Hasina, Mr. Kamal and Mr. Al-Mamun,” The Daily Star newspaper reported. “On that day, the three-member tribunal will hear the petitions filed by the defence counsels, who argued that the charges against their clients are baseless and should be dropped,” it said. Ms. Hasina, Mr. Kamal and

Mr. Al-Mamun were charged with five counts of crimes against humanity on June 1. Bangladesh’s International Crimes Tribunal indicts Sheikh Hasina, orders her to be produced in Dhaka on June 16. The prosecution pressed formal charges against the deposed Prime Minister, the former Home Minister, and the former top cop for murder, attempted murder, torture, and use of lethal weapons, among others. On Wednesday last week, Ms. Hasina was sentenced to six months in prison in absentia in a contempt of court case by the ICT. It marks the first time that the 77-year-old Awami League leader has been sentenced in any case since she left office in August last year. According to a UN rights office report, up to 1,400 people were killed between July 15 and August 15 last year as Ms. Hasina’s government ordered a security crackdown on protesters. Most leaders of the Awami League and Ministers and several officials of the past regime were arrested or were on the run at home and abroad as the interim government initiated their trial for brutal actions to tame the uprising last year, which led to the toppling of the nearly 16-year Awami League regime on August 5 and forced Ms. Hasina to leave the country for India. Meanwhile, a Dhaka court has summoned Ms. Hasina, her family members, and several former officials of her administration to appear in six cases over alleged corruption involving plot allocations, news portal bdnews24.com reported on Sunday (July 6, 2025). Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Prosecutor Mir Ahmed Ali Salam said the court had earlier instructed the publication of the gazette notices, which have now been issued. The gazette was signed by Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge Md Zakir Hossain Galib.

“The court has scheduled July 20 for a hearing in these six cases. If the accused fail to appear before the court by then, the trial will proceed in their absence,” Mr. Salam said. The gazette underlines that arrest warrants have been issued against the accused, that the court has reasonable grounds to believe that they have gone into hiding to evade arrest and trial, and that there is no likelihood of their apprehension. If the accused fail to appear by the next scheduled date, the trial will proceed in their absence. Besides Hasina, the gazette includes the names of her children Sajeeb Wazed Joy and Saima Wazed Putul, her sister Sheikh Rehana, and Rehana’s children British MP Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, Azmina Siddiq Ruponti, and Radwan Mujiib Siddiq.

# Why is Maharashtra debating over Hindi? | Explained

GNS News Agency, July 15

The story so far: The linguistic debate in Maharashtra continues days after the Maharashtra government withdrew two orders introducing Hindi as the third language in primary education across Marathi and English medium State Board schools. The government has appointed a committee under renowned economist Dr. Narendra Jadhav to study the three-language policy.

What is the language debate in Maharashtra?

On April 16, the Maharashtra government issued an order making Hindi mandatory as the third language in all English and Marathi medium schools of the State Board in Maharashtra. The government said that it was as per the provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. “At present, two languages are being taught from Grade 1 to Grade 4 in all the English and Marathi medium schools in the State. As per the State Education Framework, 2024, Hindi will be mandatory as the third language in all the English and Marathi medium schools from Grade 1 to Grade 5,” the order stated. Till now, third language was introduced only in Grade 5 in English and Marathi medium State Board schools. The other medium schools already have a three-language policy in primary education.

What was the reaction?

There was widespread opposition to the government’s decision on two grounds — first, that a third language should not be imposed in primary school from Grade 1 to Grade 5. The second ground was about the imposition of Hindi. Regional linguistic groups, academics, civil society members, and prominent literary figures raised their voice against the move which was dubbed as an effort to ‘force Hindi’, and a move towards ‘cultural hegemony’. The Maharashtra government’s own language committee wrote to the government seeking its immediate revocation. Experts argued that the NEP, 2020 focussed on R1 and R2, which is the mother-tongue, and an additional second language for primary education. They said that children should not be burdened with learning three languages in primary school. “Why should there be an imposition of Hindi? This is a concerted effort for cultural hegemony. This is in line with the RSS’ plan of ‘Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan’. In Maharashtra, the Marathi manooos will stand for his linguistic, cultural identity. This is a historic moment since the movement for the reorganisation of States on linguistic basis. The entire State has stood against the government’s imposition of Hindi,” Deepak Pawar of Marathi Abhyas Kendra said.

How did the government respond?

After a severe backlash, Maharashtra education minister Dada Bhuse promised to revise the government resolution (GR). “Hindi will not be mandatory,” he announced. On June 17, the government revised the GR, making Hindi a ‘general’ third language in schools. It stated that the students had the option to learn any other Indian language as the third language, but that it was mandatory for at least 20 students to come together to make the demand. “The government will make a teacher available or will make provi-



sion for online learning if at least 20 students come together to learn any other Indian language apart from Hindi,” the revised GR stated. However, this drew further backlash as academics and regional linguistic political parties called it an effort to impose Hindi through the backdoor. “The whole exercise of the meeting of the steering committee was carried out in secrecy by the government. The language committee of the government itself was never consulted on the move. The decision is illogical. It has no scientific backing by educationists, child psychologists. It has been taken without any consultation with the stakeholders and experts. At a time when the Marathi culture and language is not being respected by its own government, this is an assault on the linguistic identity of the State,” said Laxmikant Deshmukh, head of Maharashtra’s language committee.

What about political realignments?

The issue provided a fillip to Raj Thackeray’s Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, which counts ‘Marathi asmita’ or linguistic chauvinism as its core ideology. “We are Hindus, not Hindis,” he said. It paved the path for the reunification of the Thackeray cousins after two decades. Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray joined hands against the government’s move, even holding a joint rally. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar too openly expressed his displeasure with the government’s decision and said that Hindi should not be imposed till Grade 4. This has led to an unease within the Mahayuti with Eknath Shinde not wanting to be seen as standing against the cause. In the face of upcoming local body elections, the language debate has led to changed political dynamics.

What is the way ahead?

The government has announced the scrapping of the two controversial GRs issued on April 16 and June 17. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis announced the formation of a committee under Dr. Narendra Jadhav to look into the three-language policy, and said the government will accept his report. Academics have raised questions on Dr. Jadhav’s expertise in school education, and have demanded the scrapping of the committee as well as the decision to impose the three-language policy in primary education. Opposition parties have said the government should scrap the three-language policy altogether. “We will not accept the three-language policy,” Sanjay Raut, Shiv Sena UBT leader, said.

# Typhoon Danas crosses Taiwan, killing 2, injuring over 300

Taipei: Typhoon Danas brought heavy winds and torrential rains to parts of Taiwan early on Monday, killing two people and injuring more than 300 on the island’s densely populated west coast. The typhoon lost intensity and was downgraded to a tropical storm as it moved into the Taiwan Strait on a forecast path to China. Danas knocked out power for more than 580,000 households, and schools and offices were closed across southern and central parts of Taiwan. The typhoon made landfall on the west coast late Sunday with maximum sustained winds of 144 kph (89 mph). It dumped more than 60 centimeters (24 inches) of rain in places, causing landslides and flooding.

Two deaths were reported in the southwestern city of Tainan, according to the National Fire Agency. One person died when their vehicle was struck by a falling tree, while another died after his respirator malfunctioned due to losing

power. At least 334 people suffered injuries, while more than 3,400 people were forced to evacuate — mostly from mountainous areas around the southern port city of Kaohsiung. Thousands of tourists were stranded on Taiwan’s outlying islands of Penghu, Matsu and Green due to the cancellations of ferry services and flights. Areas of southern and eastern China made preparations ahead of the storm, which is expected to reach the mainland Tuesday afternoon. Authorities in southern Guangdong province called hundreds of vessels to port and evacuated more than 2,000 people from offshore facilities. Two cities in the eastern Zhejiang province suspended ferry services and construction work. Danas earlier intensified seasonal monsoon rains in the Philippines’ northern mountains, flooding low-lying villages and forcing more than 3,000 people to flee to emergency shelters.



# Govt fears trade war may trigger import surge of US farm, Chinese factory goods



AMID ESCALATING global trade tensions, the Commerce and Industry Ministry is assessing the risks of significant trade diversion from other countries to India and is particularly concerned about the likely surge in imports of US farm produce and factory goods from China, Vietnam and Indonesia into the country, a government official said “A recent assessment highlighted the risk of merchandise dumping into India due to reciprocal tariffs amid global trade tensions. Rising US costs may prompt exporters from countries like China, Vietnam, and Indonesia — all facing US trade deficits — to divert goods to India, potentially triggering import surges. Additionally, Chinese retaliatory tariffs on US goods could further increase the inflow of US agricultural products into India,” the official said.Unlike other countries, China retaliated against US tariffs, which in turn has raised the risk of trade diversions globally. While the US has imposed a cumulative of 145 per cent tariffs on Chinese products apart from electronic items, Chinese tariffs on US items have also surged to a record 125 per cent. Notably, soybean and corn are the top US agri exports to China.

To support stakeholders amid shifting global trade conditions, including tariff hikes, import surges, and export-related disruptions, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Commerce Ministry launched the Global Tariff and Trade Helpdesk on April 11, 2025, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said.The Indian Express had reported earlier this month that a high-level meeting had taken place at the Commerce and Industry Ministry to assess possible import surge as a result of trade diversions in the backdrop of the reciprocal tariffs.“With a number of tariff announcements and subsequent pauses, things are in flux. But we are looking at import surges and have identified some countries for more intense monitoring. We have also picked commodities for closer watch because we are

# US has big advantages on services, but projects deficits on goods trade; talks will be based on ‘true picture’, says govt

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said Tuesday that the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) talks with the US are focused on the exchange of “right facts” and the “true picture” of trade between the two countries. This comes as US President Donald Trump has consistently sought to pressurise trade partners, accusing them of “ripping the US off” on goods trade, but overlooking the advantages that America enjoys in the services sector.“When we engage with the US team, all the facts are on the table, and the negotiations are based on the right facts and the data we exchange with them. That is completely rooted in the true picture which exists between the two countries. So, the BTA progresses on those lines,” Barthwal said.Multiple experts in India have also pointed out that the 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs announced by the US on India were based solely on goods trade, while ignoring services trade — an area where the US and other Western countries hold considerable advantages over developing nations.

According to data compiled by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, which falls under the country’s Department of Commerce, services exports from the US to India have consistently grown over the last three years. In 2022, such exports stood at \$26.53 billion, rising to \$33.99 billion in 2023, and \$40.26 billion in 2024.Notably, the US recorded a marginal trade deficit with India in terms of services imports from New Delhi during the same period — with imports recorded at \$33.03 billion in 2022, \$36.4 billion in 2023 and \$40.74 billion in 2024.

India is considered the largest market by user base for several major US tech companies — such as Meta’s Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, and Alphabet’s Google Search and YouTube — owing to its large population and some of the world’s lowest internet data rates.As such, beyond direct monetary value, Indian users provide hundreds of millions of eyeballs for American tech products, while also generating vast amounts of data to fine-tune their services.Incidentally, countering concerns over the selective use of goods trade deficit, China, in a white paper released last week, said that services and local sales of domestic enterprises’ branches in the other country (i.e., local sales generated through two-way investment) should also be taken into account when discussing trade.

# SEBI bans Gensol Engg, promoters from securities market in fund diversion case

The order came after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) received a complaint in June 2024 relating to the manipulation of share price and diversion of funds from GEL and thereafter started examining the matter. The order came after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) received a complaint in June 2024 relating to the manipulation of share price and diversion of funds from GEL and thereafter started examining the matter. Capital markets regulator SEBI on Tuesday barred Gensol Engineering and promoters — Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi — from the securities markets till further orders in a fund diversion and governance lapses case. The regulator has also debarred Anmol and Puneet Singh Jaggi from holding the position of a director or key managerial personnel in Gensol until further orders.Further, the markets watchdog directed Gensol Engineering Ltd (GEL) to put on hold the stock split announced by it.The order came after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) received a complaint in June 2024 relating to the manipulation of share price and diversion of funds from GEL and thereafter started examining the matter. In a 29-page interim order, SEBI said, “The prima facie findings have shown mis-utilisation and diversion of funds of the company (GEL) in a fraudulent manner by its promoter directors, Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi, who are also the direct beneficiaries of the di-

verted funds.” “The company has attempted to mislead SEBI, the CRAs (credit rating agencies), the lenders and the investors by submitting forged conduct letters purportedly issued by its lenders,” the regulator said.The noticees 1, 2 and 3 (GEL, Anmol and Puneet Singh Jaggi) are alleged to have violated the provisions of PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) rules, it added.SEBI noted that the promoters were running a listed public company as if it were a propriety firm. GEL’s funds were routed to related parties and used for unconnected expenses as if the company’s funds were promoters’ piggy banks.The result of these transactions would mean that the diversions at some time need to be written off from Gensol’s books, ultimately resulting in losses to the investors of the company.”...prima facie evidence of a blatant violation of rules of corporate governance is writ large over the workings of the company. The diversion of funds of the company (GEL) by promoter entities reflects a culture of weak internal control, where even ring-fenced borrowings from institutional creditors were rerouted at the total discretion of the promoters,” SEBI’s whole-time member Ashwani Bhatia said in the order.The internal controls at Gensol appear to be loose and through the quick layering of transactions, funds have seamlessly flowed to multiple related entities/individuals, Bhatia said.

Meanwhile, the Commerce Ministry said the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), the anti-dumping watchdog, has issued final findings on 13 trade remedy investigations on imports in March alone, particularly from China and other countries such as Japan, Taiwan, and the European Union. Items include Vitamin-A Palmitate, Insoluble Sulphur, and Aluminium Foil up to 80 microns, among others.Economists and trade experts have also raised concerns over a surge in exports from China. A research note by HDFC Bank on Friday stated that apart from the direct impact of US tariffs on Indian exports, India faces a “high risk” of oversupply from China, which could hurt domestic manufacturing.“With the tariff increase on Chinese goods now effectively exceeding 60 per cent, it is more likely that a greater share of China’s supply could flow into other markets. This makes domestic manufacturing in countries like India vulnerable to cheaper Chinese oversupply,” noted Sakshi Gupta, Principal Economist at HDFC Bank.According to Crisil Ratings, India faces a high risk of indirect impacts from US tariffs, particularly in electronics, machinery, and textiles, as Chinese exporters may divert their shipments to India as part of a geographical diversification strategy.“The top Chinese exports to the US, including electronics, machinery, and textiles, are particularly vulnerable to dumping, and their influx into the Indian market could impact domestic industries. However, the Indian government may impose anti-dumping duties to safeguard Indian exporters and mitigate any potential damage,” Crisil Ratings stated.International think tank the Lowy Institute, in a recent research paper, estimated that about 80 per cent of countries traded more with China than with the US in 2023. However, the US remains a key driver of global demand, particularly as it has increased imports from countries such as Vietnam and Mexico, shifting away from China following the first round of Trump-era tariff hikes.“This increase in imports from China is a combination of US tariffs prompting China to diversify into other markets and a redirection of its exports (parts and components) via other countries that ultimately serve the US market,” the think tank said.



“When the three components — trade in goods, trade in services, and local sales of domestic enterprises’ branches in the other country — are considered together, it becomes clear that the economic and trade benefits accrued by China and the US are roughly balanced,” the Chinese white paper stated.In India, revenues from major American companies’ operations here have been on a steady rise, particularly in online advertising, which has seen substantial growth due to increasing digital adoption in the country.For instance, Meta India’s revenue from operations in FY24 grew by 9.3 per cent to Rs 3,034.8 crore, up from Rs 2,775.7 crore in FY23, while its net profit rose by 43 per cent to nearly Rs 505 crore. Meta India also makes royalty payments to Meta USA for the commercialisation of intellectual property, along with infrastructure charges.Similarly, Google India saw its revenues increase by 26 per cent to Rs 5,921.1 crore in FY24, from Rs 4,700 crore in FY23. Microsoft India’s FY24 revenue grew by more than 18 per cent year-on-year to nearly Rs 23,000 crore.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that the US frequently misrepresents trade figures. “For example, Trump claimed that the US trade deficit with India is \$100 billion, whereas India’s official data places it at under \$45 billion. Similarly, the White House fact sheet inaccurately stated that India imposes a 100 per cent tariff on Harley-Davidson motorcycles, when the actual tariff was reduced from 50 per cent to 30 per cent on 1 February 2025,” the GTRI report stated.

# After reporting hair loss, Buldhana’s Shegaon residents are suddenly losing nails; We ask experts possible causes



Following an alarming trend of sudden hair loss, Shegaon in Maharashtra’s Buldhana district is again in the news for yet another health issue — shedding of nails. According to a recent PTI report, nearly 30 individuals in Shegaon have been reported with nail deformities, which may be linked to high selenium levels in their blood.Shegaon had made national headlines in December 2024 and early January this year, following complaints of people experiencing sudden baldness and hair loss, also due to an alleged link between high selenium content in wheat distributed through ration stores. However, the claims remained unconfirmed, with several experts disagreeing.

“Twenty-nine persons have been found with nail deformities in four villages in Shegaon taluka. In some cases, the nails have fallen off. They have been given primary treatment and will be sent to a hospital in Shegaon for further examination,” Dr Anil Bankar, Buldhana health officer, told PTI two days ago. As per preliminary information, he attributes this problem to the “presence of high selenium as those who suffered hair loss are also experiencing problems of nail loss,” Bankar added.To understand the link between selenium and hair and nail loss, indianexpress.com spoke to dermatologists who confirmed that excess selenium in the body disrupts the normal function of keratin, the key protein that makes up our hair and nails.According to

Dr Priyanka Kuri, dermatology consultant, Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru, high selenium levels in the body lead to a condition known as selenium toxicity or selenosis.

“Chronic intake of selenium above the tolerable limit of 400 mcg/day for adults can result in hair or nail loss, along with fatigue, stomach issues, and a garlic-like breath odour. Overuse of certain supplements or even environmental factors have been known to be the major contributor behind the development of this condition,” Dr Kuri explained.Concurring, Dr Seema Oberoi Lall, Consultant, Dermatology, CK Birla Hospital Gurugram said that individuals with selenosis may notice symptoms such as thinning hair, loss of hair in patches, and nails that become discolored, fragile, or detached.She warned that a lot of supplements people end up taking randomly without doctor’s advice can sometimes have high levels of selenium and other minerals which their body may not require. In such cases, they might end up hitting an excess. She urged patients to exercise caution and follow an expert’s medical advice.According to Dr Kuri, the condition is reversible by reducing selenium intake, but it is important to detect the issue early for a better outcome. “Treatment of selenium toxicity primarily involves reducing or eliminating excess selenium intake — this means stopping high-dose supplements, avoiding selenium-rich foods in excess, and managing environmental exposure. Usually, when people reduce exposure, hair and nail loss lessens gradually,” said Dr Kuri.Supportive care, including a balanced diet and adequate hydration, can aid recovery. However, in severe cases, medical supervision is necessary to monitor organ function and manage systemic symptoms.

What can you do to prevent it in the first place? Dr Kuri shared that prevention involves adhering to the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for selenium and avoiding unnecessary supplementation unless advised by a doctor. Regular blood tests may be recommended for individuals at risk, especially those using supplements for a long term.

# ‘Take patient history, keep your bedside manners as they are still the best medicine,’ says Mumbai doctor Farokh Udwadia

For years, Dr Farokh Udwadia has sat by the bedside of his patients at the intensive care unit (ICU) of Mumbai’s Breach Candy Hospital, holding hands, listening and talking to them. “That bond often wins battles because it is about the patient’s faith that the doctor will get him through and it is the doctor’s faith that the patient will use his will to fight back even when their body is broken,” says the 93-year-old doctor, who is known for his accurate diagnosis and relied upon by generations of patients.The true art of medicine, he believes, has been submerged by the “hubris of technology.” It was precisely to revive the human touch, which he sees fast receding among corporatised young doctors today, that he presented his play ‘Oganga’ (The Healer), based on the life of his idol Dr Albert Schweitzer (1875 – 1965), at the Ambedkar International Centre in Delhi on April 18. The play, featuring Jim Sarbh and directed by Sooni Taraporewala, was a soliloquy on the conflict between ethics and progress and how the twain can meet.

Schweitzer, a polymath who gave up a successful life in Europe to treat patients in the jungles of Africa, epitomizes the kind of ethical dedication Dr Udwadia admires. “You don’t have to be an evangelist,” he says, “but India needs doctors who are committed to public health.” He still keeps Schweitzer’s photo in his consultation room.Somewhat of a polymath himself, he wrote the play during the lockdown over four months. He continues to write books on public health, plays Bach on his violin, paints, reads classical literature and gets inspired by Victor Hugo, Somerset Maugham and Rabindranath Tagore. But it’s the poetry of TS Eliot that he loves, quoting verses from The Wasteland impromptu. “He talks about finding purpose in the wreckage of despair and as men of medicine, we can find that purpose. I ask doctors to develop many interests as a knowledge of humanities makes a good physician,” says the doctor, who reaches his hospital everyday by 8.45 am for his rounds and finishes by 7 pm.

As his students mill around, he educates them about the drill of history-taking, a thorough physical examination and making a clinical diagnosis rather than depending on technology and tests. “If you take a decent history of the patient, then listen to him carefully about his discomfort, read the signs, you will know the path to take,” he says. Recalling a case from his early days at KEM Hospital, he tells of an obese patient who suffered seizures. No test revealed the cause until a careful conversation revealed he had used uncertified herbal supplements for a long time. The supplements were laced with arsenic, leading to arsenic encephalopathy. “It was clinical observation and inquiry that solved the mystery,” he says.Dr Udwadia advocates for scientifically-backed medicine, including traditional and alternative therapies—so long as they’re tested for efficacy. “Nobody is against alternative medicine, but it must be empirically



validated. That benefits everyone.”Known to be a hard taskmaster of the basics, he insists how each hospital should keep an antibiogram, a study of bacteria in the laboratory and understanding how resistant it is to antibiotic medicines. As a critical care specialist, Dr Udwadia continues to study the mind-body effect, where the brain and body communicate through neural and hormone pathways. “Thoughts and emotions can trigger physiological responses like changes in heart rate, blood pressure, hormone release and immune function. If you look at the placebo effect of several clinical trials, you will find at least a small number of people getting better despite receiving an inactive treatment due to their belief in its effectiveness rather than its actual properties. This is something that as doctors we have to understand,” he says.Like Schweitzer, Udwadia recommends music therapy in calming patient anxieties, citing how studies have proven that Mozart’s clarinet concerto in A Major K622 increased muscle strength in stroke patients while undergoing physiotherapy in hospitals.Ramrod straight at 93, Dr Udwadia doesn’t use hospital lifts but climbs seven flights of stairs. He exercises thrice a week though he was a champion runner in his student years, breasting the winning tape in 500 m, 800 m and 5,000 m events. He has a frugal diet. “A bowl of porridge for breakfast, three small sandwiches and two tiny yellow bananas for lunch and boiled fish and vegetables for dinner. One scoop of ice cream though is my guilty pleasure. But then I have been moving my body since my youth,” he says.In fact, he recommends immediate lifestyle correction for anyone in their 20s. “Move your bodies. You may develop diabetes and high cholesterol because of lifestyle. But once you have them, they will pass to your progeny through your genes. That’s why heart attacks and diabetes among the young are increasing. Begin now to save generations after us,” he says. “All we need is a bit of mindfulness and a respect for life, not just money,” he says.

# When autism is a greater ability than disability: Bengaluru boy runs YouTube music channel. All he needed was encouragement

Syed Hyder Ali, 20, is a self-taught musician from Bengaluru with an extraordinary gift—he can memorise lyrics in multiple languages, sing verses from the Quran pitch-perfect and even run his own YouTube channel. He cleans leafy vegetables at one go in a manner that even his mother cannot emulate and manages household tasks independently. Better than most boys his age. And he does it from his little perch in a room, a quiet achiever under the shadow of his illustrious grandfather and cricketer, Syed Kirmani. As a grandson, he is just a different genius.

What many wouldn’t guess is that Hyder lives with autism—a neurodevelopmental disorder marked by restrictive, repetitive behaviours and difficulties in communication. His mother, Nishath Kirmani Ali, recognized the early signs — speech delays, lack of social interaction and hyper-anxiety on flights. Widowed early, she became Hyder’s sole caregiver and strongest advocate, even training as a therapist to better support him. “I did not have to teach Hyder life

skills. It is important not to focus on what an autistic child cannot do and instead focus on honing their existing potential. Of course, early intervention helps,” she says.

Through the Autism Society of India, Ali now guides other parents, sharing lessons from her journey. She also stays up-to-date on autism research, which remains inconclusive despite decades of study. “Scientists continue to investigate potential links to genetics, environmental toxins, maternal diabetes and hypertension, even exposure to toxins and air pollution,” she says. That’s why she remains sceptical of US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy’s claim that new research will pinpoint the cause of autism by September. Kennedy controversially blamed environmental factors and thimerosal, a preservative, in vaccines as triggers of this condition—claims widely rejected by scientific bodies and studies. Kennedy also said the condition might be preventable. Yet autism is not another disease.



# Trump labels BRICS ‘anti-American’, renews 10% tariff warning



In a fresh threat to the fast-growing BRICS coalition, which now includes 10 nations and was originally represented by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, US President Donald Trump said in a social media post that any country aligning itself with the “anti-American policies” of BRICS would face an additional 10 per cent tariff. Trump had threatened BRICS nations of a 100 per cent tariff “if they so much as even think” about reducing the use of the dollar in global trade. Ever since the US weaponised the global financial infrastructure by excluding Iran (in 2012) and Russia (in 2022) from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), countries around the world have sought to reduce their dependence on the US dollar and the US-led global financial system. Most notably, Russia and China began trading in domestic currency.

BRICS now accounts for 45 per cent of the global population and contributes over 35 per cent to the world’s GDP. At their summit held in Kazan, Russia, in October 2024, the founding five members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—formally admitted Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates as new members. Indonesia joined the grouping later in January 2025, bringing the total membership to ten. In June 2022, Russia proposed the creation of a new international reserve currency based on a basket of currencies from BRICS countries. However, according to a BRICS report, member nations said they “do not seek to replace the US dollar as a medium of exchange”. Instead, BRICS aims to “offer a viable alternative that will aid the market in its perpetual mission for efficiency” and foster greater prosperity, promoting universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation.

Trump’s threat coincides with the US dollar hitting a

three-year low this year, after declining by over 10 per cent against a basket of currencies such as the euro and yen, due to expected disruptions in the US economy stemming from proposed tariffs. India’s position and dealings in BRICS In October 2024, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar clarified that while US policies often complicate trade with certain countries, and India sought “workarounds” in pursuit of its trade interests, it did not “target” the dollar or seek to move away from it. “We have never actively targeted the dollar. That’s not part of our economic, political, or strategic policy. Some others may have done so. What I will say is that we have a natural concern. We often have trade partners who lack dollars for transactions. So, we must decide whether to forgo dealings with them or find alternative settlements that work. There’s no malicious intent towards the dollar,” Jaishankar said in response to a question at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an American think tank in Washington DC. In December 2024, then RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had said India was not pursuing “de-dollarisation”, and that recent measures such as allowing Vostro accounts and entering local currency trade agreements were intended to only “de-risk” Indian trade. While BRICS nations have discussed the possibility of a shared currency, they have reached no decision, Das said. “This is not about de-dollarisation; it is about de-risking our trade,” Das said. “The geographical spread of BRICS nations is a factor to consider. Unlike the Eurozone, with its geographical contiguity enabling a single currency, BRICS countries are spread across diverse regions, posing unique challenges,” he said. De-dollarisation not in India’s interest A key reason why India is not backing de-dollarisation is the rise of the Chinese yuan as a challenger to the US dollar. India has resisted using the yuan for Russian oil imports, even as the currency’s acceptance grows in Russia.

Following Western sanctions on Russia, including the freezing of \$300 billion in Russian foreign holdings, the yuan has become Russia’s most traded currency. According to the Russian government, more than 90 per cent of trade settlement between the two countries is now conducted in roubles. Ajay Sahai, Director General & CEO of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), the country’s top trade promotion body, told The Indian Express earlier that while supporting local currency initiatives, India should ensure the framework does not disproportionately favour China, given the asymmetry in economic power among BRICS nations.

# Is your brain health at risk from foil food boxes and your wet raincoat? Here’s all you need to know about forever chemicals



Is the food that you have from the cardboard/foil box delivered by a food app or the raincoat that’s shielding you from the rain affecting your brain health? Many of us may not know this but our everyday items may be leaching compounds into our gut and skin that’s insidiously triggering persistent health problems.

This is because most consumer goods contain PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), a group of chemicals that have a powerful ability to repel oil and water and resist heat. For long these have been widely used in various products like non-stick cookware, firefighting foam, water-resistant clothing and food packaging, making them pervasive in everyday life. “These do not get destroyed in the environment or the human body and tend to persist, earning the moniker forever chemicals. However, because of their persistence, they can cause significant health concerns. Many people are exposed to forever chemicals through drinking water, food and even dust,” says Dr Praveen Gupta, Chairman- Neurosciences, Marengo Asia Hospitals, Gurugram. The worst part, he says, is that they might be stuck in your body for years. A new study by the researchers from the Del Monte Institute for Neuroscience at the University of Rochester recently found that early life

exposure to forever chemicals may increase anxiety-related behaviors and memory deficits in male mice.

How do forever chemicals impact your health?

They can interfere with the endocrine system, which regulates hormones, potentially affecting reproductive health and development. Studies have shown associations between exposure to forever chemicals and liver damage and thyroid dysfunction. PFAS can weaken the immune system, potentially reducing the body’s ability to fight infections and respond to vaccines. Certain PFAs have been linked to an increased risk of kidney and testicular cancers, according to the National Cancer Institute. But now they are being studied for their impact on brain health?

How neurotoxic are forever chemicals?

This is a relevant concern now because of their ability to penetrate the blood brain barrier. This acts as a protective filter, regulating the movement of substances between the bloodstream and the brain, allowing essential nutrients in while keeping harmful substances out. But now the latest mice study has shown that they are permeating this barrier. This is significant because the damaging effects continued long after the exposure. Once the barrier is breached, these chemicals disrupt key neurotransmitters (chemical messengers that transmit signals across the nervous system) particularly dopamine, which impacts movement, motivation, mood and reward, as well as glutamate, which stimulates nerve cells so that they can pass on signals to each other. It’s essential for normal brain function, including learning and memory. Forever chemicals may also destroy nerve cells by interfering with genes. They can also stimulate neuroinflammation and damage brain cells. That’s why we have impaired sleep. All of this leads to neurodegenerative processes and impacts cognition and increases the risk of Alzheimer’s. They can also be related to behavioural disorders in children like ADHD or lower academic performance.

# Let’s talk about obesity: Why it’s not just a health risk but a mental health condition



Sometimes therapy room conversations are an eye-opener. That’s where a woman dealing with obesity told Dr Rituparna Ghosh, senior clinical psychologist, Apollo Hospitals, Navi Mumbai, “I know I need to take care of my health. But I just wish people could see me before they see my body.” It raised a pertinent point of eliminating stigma and creating a safe space for people just about to take the first step in their weight loss journey. “What most people forget is that obesity is not just a health condition — it’s also a deeply emotional experience, shaped not only by biology and environment, but by the way society talks about bodies. We must be honest about obesity as a chronic, complex medical issue. However, we must also discuss it with compassion, nuance and respect. Because words — casual or clinical — can either heal or harm,” she says.

How we speak about obesity and other diseases When we refer to someone as “an obese person,” it almost defines him from that one prism. “We don’t say ‘a cancerous person’ or ‘a diabetic person’, do we?”

At least say ‘a person living with obesity.’ These phrases acknowledge the person first — the human, not the health condition,” says Dr Ghosh. She feels that even seemingly politically correct labels like “plus-size” tend to be judgmental. “The goal is not to glorify obesity or pretend it’s without consequence — the goal is to replace judgment with support so that people can seek help without fear or shame,” says Dr Ghosh.

When language matters

Compliments about weight loss, like “You look so much

better now,” may seem encouraging but can sting as they allude to a past where you weren’t good enough. Similarly, “good for you, picking the salad,” can feel patronizing, especially when we wouldn’t say it to someone in a thinner body. In fact, Dr Ghosh lays down examples of what some of our words and phrases can mean to the obese person. For example, when we say, “Are you sure you need that second plate,” in a well-meaning manner, the person might feel shamed and policed.

Sometimes doctors themselves may unknowingly play the blame game. “When they focus only on weight (which no doubt is a risk factor for diseases) for all their health issues, their patient might feel dismissed. A good strategy would be to talk about the current health issue, then move to weight as a trigger,” says Dr Ghosh. She also cautions against normalising fat jokes, no matter how sporting overweight people might be. “Inside, they feel excluded and mocked,” she adds. In fact, she has seen many people dealing with obesity discontinue going to the gym only because the trainer pushes them to do more. Instead they should be saying, “Let’s do what works for you today.” Backhanded compliments, like “You have such a pretty face, only if you had lost some weight,” can be demotivating. Instead, saying, “It’s so great to see you” is affirmative without conditions. Or when you say, “you’re brave for wearing this dress,” it might imply that you’re making a judgment on a bold style statement and the person might feel cornered. Sometimes self-talk about guilt over eating an extra piece of cake or jalebi — “I’m being so bad today, I had an extra piece of cake/jalebi,” might just make a person struggling with weight issues uncomfortable with the idea of eating anything. Small gestures matter. “Don’t offer flimsy and slim chairs in a public setting to your guest. Comfortable seats reassure people dealing with obesity that they are welcome and included,” says Dr Ghosh. Fitness ads, too, should be size-inclusive, to create a realm of possibility.

Difficult conversations don’t have to be demeaning The whole idea is to build trust so that people dealing with obesity feel supported, not avoided. “Many people living with obesity already know the risks. What they lack is a safe space to talk about it without being judged, interrupted, or blamed. Praise their energy. Admire their resilience. Acknowledge their humanity,” says Dr Ghosh.

# Actor Mona Singh reveals her homemade protein powder — a mix of flaxseeds, chia, and walnuts. Here’s the science behind it

Protein powders have been dominating the market for so long that when it comes to fuelling up your body with clean, natural protein, most people immediately think of only them. But what if the secret to a better, more nourishing protein shake has been hiding in your kitchen all along? In a recent podcast with comedienne Bharat Singh, actor Mona Singh revealed that her home-made protein powder helped her in her weight loss journey. All she did was mix fox nuts with cashews, walnuts, flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds and chia seeds and powder them. This, she said, she had with coconut milk or by simply mixing it in water. Let’s explore some extraordinary and lesser-known reasons why nuts are the ultimate natural protein shake base.

Peanuts, almonds and pistachios are particularly high in protein compared to other nuts. In general, nuts provide all nine essential amino acids, though they are not considered complete proteins on their own. This means they don’t contain all the essential amino acids in sufficient quantities for the body’s needs. However, consuming a variety of nuts can help ensure you get all the amino acids you need. Nuts create a “slow-release” protein shake: Their natural fats and fibre slow down digestion, delivering a steady supply of energy and amino acids — keeping you full and energised for hours. Whole nuts mean a “micronutrient matrix”: Unlike processed powders, nut shakes bring vitamin E, magnesium, zinc and antioxidants that support muscle recovery, immunity and skin health. Natural fats boost absorption: The healthy fats in nuts help your body absorb fat-soluble vitamins and plant compounds more efficiently, enhancing the nutritional impact of your shake.

Customizable for your goals: Add pistachios for muscle repair, almonds for heart and energy, walnuts for brain power or blend in seeds for extra nutrients — nut



shakes are endlessly adaptable. Naturally rich in arginine: This amino acid, abundant in nuts, supports blood flow and workout recovery. Alkaline-forming and gut-friendly: Nut shakes help maintain a healthy pH balance and are free from the additives, gums and artificial sweeteners found in many protein powders. Blood sugar stability: The blend of protein, fat, and fibre in nuts slows sugar absorption, preventing energy crashes and supporting mental focus. Shelf-stable home-made mixes: Roasted, ground nut powders can be stored for weeks, making it easy to whip up a fresh, natural shake anytime. Heart health benefits: Regular nut-based shakes support healthy cholesterol and arterial function, offering advantages beyond muscle maintenance. They are a rich source of essential fatty acids which are actually heart and brain foods. Nuts aren’t just a substitute for protein powder — they’re a nutritional upgrade, something that commercial powders simply can’t match. Nuts can also be enjoyed on their own and had as they are. They can be added to salads, yogurt or baked goods, or used in various recipes, providing a versatile way of incorporating more protein into your diet.

# The new battlefield: AI-based warfare in the ‘agentic’ age, multi-domain ops and energy as a big constraining factor



Even before China’s DeepSeek model triggered a frenzy in the AI (artificial intelligence) world, its People’s Liberation Army had started to deploy AI across its major warfighting functions under a somewhat gawky banner called “intelligentised warfare”. Beijing is learnt to be taking a graded approach by starting with applying AI to improve the performance of battlefield equipment such as artillery systems by cutting the interval needed between each shot while improving accuracy, as well as integrating generative AI with military drones to automatically target opponents’ radars with better precision as soon as they come on. The DeepSeek advances could only help China build on its military AI diffusions.

Should that be a cause for worry for India? Yes, say experts, considering that the Chinese are actively aiding Pakistan with its Centre of Artificial Intelligence and Computing of the Pakistan Air Force that was established in 2020, which now has an elaborate Cognitive Electronic Warfare programme aiming to use AI and machine learning for “effective analytical and tactical decision-making”. During the Operation Sindoor, some of this could have been used by that country, given that it was backed by China behind the scenes, as testified to by Lt General Rahul R Singh, Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Capability Development and Sustainance). Pakistan, he said, was aware of vectors being primed on a real-time basis, which meant it was likely getting live satellite updates from China, with some data crunching likely happening at the backend to enable all of this. Gen Singh’s emphasis on the importance of C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) and the need for civil-military fusion translates into the need for a certain expertise on the virtual domains, including the electromagnetic spectrum, and the domains of space and cyberspace. China is clearly a leader here, and a lot to be done in this area by India to catch up. Lt Gen Amardeep Singh Aujla, the Army’s Master General Sustainance, said wars are becoming “increasingly intense and complex” due to evolving geopolitical dynamics and rapid technological advancements, which are transforming war-fighting practices and the control over new age technologies. This is being read as a recognition of the multi-domain approach being put into practice by China, and implemented in part by Pakistan.

“Modern armed forces must analyse large volumes of data from even more domains —land, air, sea, space and cyberspace—to decode enemy movements and devise deterrence strategies,” according to Alexandr Wang, Founder CEO at Scale AI. The volume of information is all but impossible to handle with current technologies, and the ability to harness data and AI could mean the big difference in the next engagement. And while AI advances are important, there is another limiting factor in all this: energy. Fields such as Big Data analysis, machine learning, predictive analysis, and natural language processing need a lot of energy, including vast spinning reserves of grid power. The electricity grid needs new electricity sources to support AI technologies and countries are increasingly turning to nuclear sources of energy to supply the electricity used by the huge data centres that drive AI.

“At this point, India is clearly short of nuclear power, with (an installed capacity of) only about seven and a half gigawatts... South Korea, a much smaller country that has around three times India’s installed nuclear capacity. So while opening up the sector to private participation is the

only way to bring in new technologies into sectors such as nuclear, I think that there is a defence dimension too. Ten years from now, think of the next war... If it were to occur, it will be fought by robots and AI... That means you must have AI; you must have data crunching capability, and the ability to run big data centres... So, the investment in AI data centres and robotics is going to underpin the future defence posture of the country. And for that, the single most important ingredient is enormous amounts of electricity generation. If you don’t generate power, all this would not be possible,” Kris P. Singh, the Indian-American promoter and CEO of Holtec International told The Indian Express. Camden, New Jersey-based Holtec, one of the world’s largest exporters of capital nuclear components and a frontrunner in the emerging small modular reactor (SMR) space, is in the running to set up proposed SMR-based projects in India. “Put the SMRs right next to data centers, and then you have defence capabilities right there. And from there, you can, can do missiles, drones, smart soldiers and robots. And you’re not too far away, maybe just 10 years. So, I am basically asking that the country become aware that it needs enormous amounts of energy to clean energy to support the future in defense of the country,” Singh said. India’s current energy woes have multiple triggers: a focus on rapid expansion of renewables in the absence of energy storage systems, especially over the last decade, that is now resulting in increasing instability in the country’s electricity grid. This issue is compounded by a policy decision from roughly ten years ago to scale down thermal expansion, which provides critical baseload support to the grid during evenings in summer months, when solar generation dips and demand remains high. SMR-based nuclear projects of the kind that Holtec International is proposing are now being viewed in India’s policy circles as solutions to scale up baseload capacity, alongside renewed efforts to draw the private sector back into thermal generation. On the battlefield use of AI, India’s defence establishment was notably an early mover, given that the Defence Research and Development Organisation’s (DRDO) Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR) came up in 1986 with the specific objective of developing autonomous technologies in the domains of combat, path planning, sensors, target identification, underwater mine detection, patrolling, logistics, and localisation etc. “They are making progress,” a senior government official said about the CAIR project. The problem for India, though, is the combination of China’s burgeoning AI prowess and its willingness to help out the PAF with its Centre of Artificial Intelligence and Computing and in possibly meeting that country’s energy needs at the backend. “In the fast-changing landscape of warfare, the first nation to fully incorporate AI into military decision-making will shape the history of the 21st century. Humanity is entering a new era of “agentic warfare”, in which we will see some of the world’s strongest armies beaten by rivals that are better at harnessing AI agents—autonomous intelligent systems that can perform a multitude of tasks,” Scale AI’s Wang said in a piece dated March 4 that he wrote for The Economist. The new AI systems, according to Wang, will allow the most technologically advanced armed forces “to outthink and outmanoeuvre” even very capable opponents by hooking up a military network of sensors, weapons and human decision-makers in a bid to sharply increase the speed at which tactical moves can be proposed, and allow battlefield advantages to be acted upon before humans are even able to survey the situation. AI is set to rapidly transform the landscape of warfare, with deep tech being deployed for tasks ranging from autonomous weapons systems to intelligence gathering and cybersecurity, according to a research report by Delhi-based Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, an autonomous think tank raised at the initiative of the Ministry of Defence in 2007. This includes the development of autonomous weapons systems that can select and engage targets without human intervention; analysing vast amounts of data to identify potential threats, tracking enemy movements, and forecasting future attacks; and creating realistic battlefield simulations to enable field evaluation trials as well as allowing soldiers to train in virtual environments to prepare for real-world combat scenarios.



# The ‘Khelo Bharat Niti’ as a beacon for Indian football



GNS News Agency, July 15

Sports, as a whole, has gained immense priority under the leadership and the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and it is with great hope that we look forward to the next 10 years, when India, under this vision, could become one of the world leaders in the sporting arena. India has successfully expressed its interest in hosting the 2036 Olympics, and in preparation and anticipation of this, the nation will undoubtedly have the honour of hosting various other prestigious international sporting events as well.

The Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 (National Sports Policy), which was passed by the Union Cabinet on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, marks a policy milestone in transforming the role of sports in building a Viksit Bharat. There are several aspects of the policy that, in my view, should result in much appreciation for Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, particularly from the perspective of football. There is the five-Pillar approach of the policy in the context of football. First, sports excellence — the importance of the national team’s standing in the global arena and the work needed on that front. Second, sports for social development — the role of football in sports for development and inclusion. Third, sports for economic development — how football can contribute to industry and growth through events, manufacturing and jobs. Fourth, sports as a people’s movement — community sports. Fifth, sports in education — football in schools. When it comes to the performance of the national team, there is one area in the policy which we have worked on actively — access to talent in India’s diaspora and I am happy that the policy has refer-

ence to the subject. This is a positive statement of intent and the All India Football Federation (AIFF) will continue to work with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the government to do everything possible to strengthen the national team. For some years there has been a vociferous demand for the inclusion of players with Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) cards in the national team. We have seen countries such as Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Middle Eastern Nations, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and those in Europe tap naturalised players with dual citizenship to strengthen their teams. Some clarifications in the Indian context might be helpful at this stage. As in the FIFA Statutes, a player must hold a passport of a nation he or she wishes to represent and must produce it on match day. While an OCI card grants certain social and economic rights to an individual, it is not equivalent to an Indian passport. Given that India’s laws do not provide for dual citizenship, it is for India to strategise how it could capitalise on the opportunity to access the talent within the diaspora and integrate these players into the national team according to FIFA regulations as well as Indian citizenship law. The policy direction provides a ray of hope and we are intent on exploring it to its logical conclusion.

At the grass-root level, the AIFF has plans in place to ensure the progress of talented individuals from eight years of age right up to the senior level. At the lowest age category (eight to 10 years) football has been made accessible for children. When they progress to the age group of 12 to 13 years, they are introduced to competitions. As they further move on to the U17 and U18 levels, they get high performance training and then on to the U18 and U20 levels, where the transition from youth to professional level. Such processes would not be possible without the help of facilities of schools, and we thank the Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, for having facilitated the alignment of the National Education Policy with the National Sports Policy. Through the FIFA Football for Schools (F4S) programme, we have successfully made that link logistically feasible, bringing the beautiful game to over 1,53,000 schools — over 9,26,000 footballs are being distributed. This is how football is being made accessible at the U8 level. I firmly believe that India’s National Sports Policy aligns with National Education Policy which will catalyse a new era of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in Indian sports.

# Laura Siegemund, who made Wimbledon QF at 37 – ‘I have game, boldness to take out big names on the other side. In a positive, respectful way I don’t care’

GNS News Agency, July 15

Wimbledon witnessed a novelty in a 37-year-old woman making the quarterfinals of the women’s singles, and rose in applause as German Laura Siegemund defeated Solana Sierra 6-3, 6-2, with a tricky game. The winner of three Grand Slam titles in doubles (one women’s, two mixed), Siegemund was a hoot in her post match after denying Sierra net approaches 15 times out of 19, and lobbying over her cheekily and with an array of passing shots that delighted for their angles. Making Last 8, she was surprised by the popularity coming her way. “It’s an honour. I want to say it’s not often that you get such a compliment for being old,” she chuckled, before slashing at giving undue importance to her academic record. She has a degree in psychology and the interviewer very naturally asked if it helped her in tight situations.

“Oh I’ve been saying in many, many interviews over many many years that a psychology degree in this kind of moment ... really it’s worth absolutely nothing,” she said as the Centre Court crowd guffawed. “Everyone that’s good at their job and is a pro in whatever they do, they know that knowing something and being able to perform are two completely different things. If not, everyone who knows how to play an amazing forehand would play an amazing forehand. So that’s two different things.” However, she insisted neither age, nor a formal degree had anything to do with her personality. “But obviously over time I just have that in me, even as a youngster, I am just mentally very tough. And I’m a fighter. And I learn better to stay in the moment. And I said earlier I’m just focussing on me. There’s not much more I have to prove but there are some moments where you want to win so bad you get greedy and it’s important to let go of that greed. If you are ready to accept the good matches to lose, then you are ready to win. That’s what I try to remember in big moments,” she said. Siegemund won 5/8 of her breakpoints and 6/9 net approaches, and will run into tournament favourite Aryna Sabalenka next. She told reporters reputations didn’t faze her. “I have this game and this maybe boldness—I don’t know if that’s the right word in English—to take out big names. I’ve always had that,” stated Siegemund. “Just maybe because I don’t care who is on the other side. In a positive, respectful way I don’t care.”

Her reactions post winning were an emoji scroll, the Korean heart, the ‘well, can’t help being cool’ shrug and the first pump as she became the oldest female left in the draw now. Her game is indescribable as much as it is unconventional. While the deep passing shots from baseline made highlights, while ending the Lucky Loser Cinderella story of Solana Sierra, Siegemund got 89 percent first serves in,



and won points off 69. As per tennisletter, Siegemund prefers clay a long time and has found success on it, and grass was always tough to negotiate. But here she was. “I felt like I never have really enough time to kind of get confidence from my grass game, and maybe the precision here and there and when to do what,” she said. “This time that I had already a few matches in Nottingham, and I felt that I had more matches, and I had more opportunity to get this confidence, and it’s showing, yeah.” What Siegemund is more known for are her frequent run-ins with opponents, though she asserts they are not of her making. One controversy involved a double-bounce against Kristina Mladenovic at 2020 French Open, and a 2023 US Open dustup with Coco Gauff. These concern the long time she takes between points, which saw Gauff complain to chair umpire Marijana Veljovic. Coming from Filderstadt, in South Germany near Stuttgart, Siegemund accepts she has always been “slow”, and cops time violations, which she realises annoys opponents though she defends it by saying her weirdness is consistent.

“I know that I have some very controversial, like, habits, let’s say. The only thing that I can say about them, they are really about me. I don’t try to disturb anyone, although that might be interpreted like that. I’m pretty consistent with my weirdness that I have, let’s say (laughing). It’s nothing. I do it for me and not against other ones, but it does lead to confrontation sometimes. Then I’m just, like, Well, that’s how I am,” she said. World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka got asked about her next opponent. “I’ll just show her that she doesn’t annoy me. I played against a lot of tricky players who is doing all of those slice shots, approaching the net, going for lobs. I think mentally I know how to approach these players,” the thrice Grand Slam champ said. “My focus going to be on myself. I really hope that I’m not going to waste my energy on focusing on another side,” she reiterated of not being spooked.



surface,” McCullum said. “Obviously growing up playing on those types of wickets, he hit his length and was able to utilise the surface where he could,” he added. “He was exceptional. Bumrah will more than likely come back in for the next one so we’ve just got to make sure we’re well planned and well prepared and ready for the next challenge. It will be quite different, I imagine, from this surface and that’s probably a good thing for us,” the England head coach said. “We ran second for five days

# Shubman Gill the captain: Not remote controlled but leading in his own way



GNS News Agency, July 15

On the final day of the second Test, when Shubman Gill ambled onto the field after the rain-delayed late lunch, India were four wickets away from their first-ever win at Edgbaston and a 1-1 series scoreline. There was heavy cloud cover and there was talk that rains had reached the city’s outskirts. After a few overs, 12th man Arshdeep Singh came sprinting onto the field. Was he carrying a message for the captain? No, it was just a warm jumper for Shubman as it was getting chilly. It was a cute moment that somewhat captured the captain-coach dynamics in Indian cricket’s new era. When Shubman showed the spark as the Gujarat Titans captain in IPL, there was the perennial presence of coach Ashish Nehra on the sidelines. It created doubts about who was calling the shots or making the crucial call. Here in England, the early indications show that the 25-year-old captain has a mind of his own. And the only remote control in the dressing room is the one that commands the television.

As for the coach Gautam Gambhir, he hasn’t been over-interfering in the proceedings on the field. For long periods of stand-offs where wickets have been hard to come by, the captain has been changing fields, bowlers and tactics without any obvious prompt from the dressing room. When Shubman is batting, the substitutes haven’t randomly run on the field with gloves or when the team is fielding, carrying unasked for water bottles. Shubman does his thing, the way he likes. He does have counsel available on the field. Vice-captain Pant, seniors KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, and even Mohammed Siraj, too chip in — when asked for and even offer unsolicited advice. As the pundits from the commentators box, especially while assessing the new captain during the first Test have said “Shubman is running the team by committee”. So if someone fumbles on field, Pant can be heard saying “kya yaar”. In the first Test, when a disappointed Bumrah was walking back after yet another brilliant over in which a catch was dropped, the wicket-keeper would walk with him almost till the boundary line. Team’s veteran spinner Jadeja would be seen explaining the pivot to Washington Sundar as the two would be walking to the central square after lunch break. And Siraj, while pointing to the mini-crater on the bowling crease, would be heard telling Akash Deep “isko dimag se nikal de, ab hai toh hai, kya kar satke hain. (Just wipe this thing out of your mind, if it’s there, what can one do?)”. The young captain individually, and the new team collectively, are negotiating the uncharted terrain they all find themselves

# Mohammed Siraj is Team India’s senior pacer, jester, cheerleader and neo-Jonty Rhodes, all rolled into one

GNS News Agency, July 15

While India’s new bowling star Akash Deep was busy giving an interview to broadcasters, talking about his 6/99 and the team’s historic 336-run win, his senior pace partner Mohammed Siraj walked in the frame unannounced. “Kuch mera bola, tune? (Did you say anything about me?),” he said, with that goofy smile pasted on his face. Akash Deep mumbled something about his press conference comment but Siraj wasn’t listening. “I kept telling him, don’t go for wickets, and just concentrate on line and length. After every over I would tell him this.”

Till a few months back, no one would have known India had so many leaders in its ranks. In a team with stalwarts like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, R Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah; there was always too much wisdom and ideas galore on the field. For the juniors, there was nothing much to do, except to loiter around between overs, also known as ‘garden mei ghuma’. This England series has been about the arrival of that ‘apna time aayega’ generation, not just for the new captain but also for new seniors — vice-captain Rishabh Pant and the leader of the bowling pack in Bumrah’s absence, Siraj. Now you can see them on the central square, hear them often on the stump mic — it’s their time to have a say in the way the team plays. The apprentices have become the decision-makers and they aren’t embarrassed to say that they are loving it. After getting the six wickets in the first innings and showing English bowlers the way to bowl on the pitch where they had conceded 587, Siraj was informed about his unique record by former India player turned commentator Deep Dasgupta. When bowling abroad in Bumrah’s absence, Siraj’s bowling average dips significantly. From taking a wicket after every 32 balls, he does so in just 23 when he is leading the attack. “I love responsibility, I love challenges. Life mei kaafi challenge dekha hu wahan se ubhar ke aaya hu toh pasand hai mujhko challenge (I have seen many challenges in life, I have emerged from that tough situation and I love challenges). Whenever there is responsibility on me, I fulfill them very well,” he said. Siraj’s father was a rickshaw driver and mother a house help. They lived on the other side of the track, struggling to make ends meet. Siraj took up cricket seriously because he wanted his parents to give up their arduous jobs and lead a peaceful retired life. He did so.

Festive offer India’s Mohammed Siraj celebrates the dismissal of England’s Josh Tongue on day three of the second cricket test match between England and India at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England, Friday, July 4, 2025. (AP Photo) India’s Mohammed Siraj celebrates the dismissal of England’s Josh Tongue on day three of the second cricket test match between England and India at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England, Friday, July 4, 2025. (AP Photo) For Siraj, the man of the house after his father’s death, what was hand-holding a couple of young pacers? “Akash Deep is playing just his third-fourth Test, same is with Prasidh. I have played 38 Tests, so I knew how to bowl. Since we had scored lots of runs in the first innings, I would have gotten carried away and tried things. But I bowled tight, bowled in partnership so the bowler at the other end also has a chance of getting wickets,” he said. Besides being a big-hearted senior, Siraj also wears the hat of the team’s on-field bowling coach, game-time mental guru and a strict school teacher. “I told Akash that I will give you 100 marks for the four balls you bowl in the middle of an over. But on the first and last balls he would concede a single or a four. But he bowled so well, happy for you,” Siraj said, giving Akash Deep a hug.

on. And credit to the coaches — Gautam Gambhir and Morne Morkel along with the chairman of the selection committee Ajit Agarkar who haven’t tried to micro-manage the team. It’s being said that it was the captain who had a big say in the team selection — keeping Kuldeep Yadav out for an all-rounder wasn’t a decision forced on the captain. It was his call. In the first Test at Headingley, the team’s only pace all-rounder Shardul Thakur was introduced in the attack pretty late. This despite the fact that others weren’t getting wickets. Coach Gambhir would later say that it was the captain’s call and he didn’t mind it. In the first inning of the second Test, Shubman, for a brief while, stuck to a very rigid ‘leg-side heavy field, short-ball’ play when Harry Brook and Jamie Smith were at the start of their partnership. It didn’t work, actually it helped them settle and score freely. Bowling coach, the former South African pacer Morne Morkel, hinted that he wasn’t on the same page as the captain. “I thought we moved slightly away from our plans in the first innings, and in a way also with runs on the board you want to take a couple of more risks ... For me personally on this sort of surface, you want to set a field where you can still have both options: using the short ball and try to nick a guy off,” he would say. But he did appreciate his captain’s thought to find his own solution to the problem at hand. “Credit to Shubman, he took a gamble for a couple of overs to potentially get a wicket.”

After getting his Man of the Match award for his aggregate of 430 runs in the second Test, Shubman spoke about his captaincy philosophy. Before the second Test, he had blamed his own casual dismissal after scoring 147 as the reason for the team’s loss in the first Test. “I should have scored more, a longer partnership with Pant would have made a difference,” he had said. In the very next Test, Shubman didn’t leave it for others. He stayed around to take the team to the total he wanted. He had his reasons to lead by example. “Sometimes, especially when you are the captain, I think you need to lead by example so that whenever there is another player in that situation, you can command that player,” he said. This was a captain subtly asserting himself, this was a skipper earning the right to be the “commander”. Former England captain Nasser Hussain, who had noted during the first Test that Gill “lacked aura” would reassess his verdict at the end of second Test: “He (Gill) is not going to be a Kohli-type character. He’s got a low heart-beat, but that can help. Look at this crowd here today. Look at all of India watching on. You may need someone just to calm the team.” While he has just led in two Tests, in IPL there are those who have seen him closely for the entire season. Former England captain, the seasoned Jos Butler is seen as the voice of reason. In a recent podcast he was asked to comment on the young man he played under. “He was my captain at Gujarat Titans, a really impressive player, an impressive young man. I think pretty calm and measured when he speaks. I think he’s got a bit of firepower, a bit of intensity, quite passionate ... He will do well and have some good people supporting him,” he said. Butler also said Shubman’s captaincy was a mix of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli — a quote that got picked by reel makers and went viral. But Shubman, it seems, is a mix of Shubman and Shubman.



Not just being there for his pace partners, the motor-mouth Siraj hasn’t given up his old role of being the team’s cheerleader. On the final day of the Test, there were periods of play when India needed energy on the field. The cloud cover was threatening rains, even a wash out, time was at a premium, India needed wickets and had to be on their toes

It was around that time that Karun Nair at covers came with a sharp one-handed save of what looked like a certain four. Pant would give his ‘shabash’ from behind the stumps, Siraj would run to pat his back from mid-on across the field. Ravindra Jadeja, manning the off-boundary as sweeper cover fielder, sprinted across to stop another sure-shot boundary with one hand and threw it perfectly to the keeper. Siraj was now waving frantically to draw Jadeja’s attention. Once he did, Siraj raised both his hands and gave a grand bow. Jadeja smiled, leaving the rest of the team in splits. But who puts an arm around Siraj when Bumrah isn’t there? It’s captain Shubman Gill at mid-on who calms down the emotional player prone to bouts of anger and frustration. It is also Pant. It was the vice-captain wicket-keeper who suggested to Siraj to test Ben Stokes with a first-ball bouncer in the first innings. Stokes got out for a golden duck and Pant and Siraj celebrated like co-conspirators celebrating a heist. The life of this team, Siraj is easily the Mr Congeniality of the Indian dressing room. On Day 5, with India on the threshold of the win the England tailenders were putting on a stubborn late-order partnership. They were getting on the nerves of the Indians. That’s when Siraj came up with a stunning full length dive to hold a one-handed catch dismissing England pacer Josh Tongue.

# Landmark day for USA cricket as big names join Super60

HYDERABAD: It was a landmark day for cricket in the USA as the teams assembled an exciting mix of international stars and emerging talents during the draft for the inaugural Super60 USA Tournament, held on Friday with prominent names like Martin Gupthill, Wayne Parnell, Varun Aaron and Lendl Simmons making the headlines.

Teams had already locked in eight players as part of their pre-signings. In the draft, they were allowed to choose between 7 to 10 more players. The LA Strikers had already secured big names like Aaron Finch, Isuru Udana, and Ben Dunk in their pre-signings.



# Trapped by Rocky Randhawa image, Ranveer Singh awaits his Animal moment



In 2019, Ranveer Singh's Murad stood up and screamed, "Apna Time Aayega". He had already delivered blockbusters like Dil Dhadakne Do, Bajirao Mastani, and Padmaavat and then came Gully Boy, a film that further cemented his place among the finest actors of his generation. At the time, it seemed like Ranveer's time had truly arrived. But just when things were soaring, the Covid-19 pandemic hit — and with it, a sharp pause hit his career momentum. In 2021, Ranveer Singh returned with 83 — a passion project that saw him transform into cricketing legend Kapil Dev. Ranveer delivered a career-defining performance, but unfortunately, the film was released amid pandemic restrictions and failed to make the kind of cultural or commercial impact it deserved. Despite his brilliance, the performance went largely under-recognised by audiences. If things were different, 83 could have been Ranveer's Chak De India moment. Post Gully Boy, Ranveer tried repeatedly to regain his footing — with films like Jayeshbhai Jordaar and Cirkus — both of which were box office flops. It wasn't until Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani (2023) that audiences once again embraced him. But even then, it was Alia Bhatt who took away most of the praise. Despite Ranveer delivering a fun and emotional performance as Rocky Randhawa, viewers saw the character as an extension of his real-life persona — flamboyant, flashy, and over-the-top. The effort he put into the role largely went unnoticed under the weight of his public image.

When it comes to Ranveer, this isn't a problem exclu-

sive to Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. Despite proving himself to be a versatile actor, he has to face the litmus test and the pressure of being seen as a 'serious' actor almost before every release. Initially, the problem was considered his 'loud outfits', which he admitted took the focus away from his acting skills. During his appearance on Koffee With Karan, he had said, "I felt like I wanted to not wear those clothes. I didn't want people to talk about what I'm wearing. I want you to talk about my films, my acting, I want you to talk about me." He admitted that it was Deepika who had pointed this out to him. He said, "It was Deepika who pointed this out to me. We were having a chat, and she was like, 'You know, you come across as this supremely confident person, but you're actually underconfident'. I was like, 'Acha?' She was like, 'You should stop distracting people from who you are with all these flashy clothes'. That resonated with me." Overexposure was also a key issue. At one point, Ranveer was everywhere — weddings, inaugurations, launches, cricket matches — and his persona became difficult to shake off when audiences saw him on the big screen. The infamous nude photoshoot also didn't help his cause.

And while this might have initially worked to build his "larger-than-life" brand — which is now helping him promote his snack label SuperU — it backfired when it came to his acting career. The mystery was gone. Even his most passionate performances — including Rocky

Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani and Simmba — were dismissed by many because they couldn't separate the artist from the star who got all the attention. Also, while Deepika and Ranveer became a brand — 'Bollywood royalty,' as Karan Johar called them — the over-imposition of them as a couple took some agency away from Ranveer. For a brief period, he was only seen as the ideal husband. If you closely examine the filmography of Ranveer Singh's contemporaries, there's no denying that he comes out with flying colours. Ranbir Kapoor may be at the top of his game now after delivering the massive hit Animal, but before Sandeep Reddy Vanga's film, he had a string of underwhelming performances. His last major hit before Animal was Sanju (2018), followed by major disappointments like Shamsher and Brahmastra. Moreover, despite the success of Animal, none of his recent performances have truly resonated with audiences — his last widely acclaimed roles remain Tamasha (2015) and Ae Dil Hai Mushkil (2016). However, the buzz around his upcoming films — Ramayana and Love And War — has certainly added to his growing clout. When it comes to Vicky Kaushal, he did have a major hit this year with Chhaava, but his other recent releases — Bad Newz, Dunki, The Great Indian Family, and Zara Hatke Zara Bachke — failed to make a lasting impact. Still, he has managed to cultivate the image of a 'serious' actor, despite these lukewarm performances. Ranveer, on the other hand, has also had his share of misses with films like Jayeshbhai Jordaar (2022) and Cirkus, but it's impossible to overlook his compelling performances in Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani (2023) and 83 (2021). While his peers are often granted the benefit of the doubt even after flops, Ranveer, in contrast, is repeatedly made to prove himself. After Farhan Akhtar announced Ranveer Singh as the next Don in Don 3, social media erupted with trolls, deeming Ranveer unworthy of stepping into Shah Rukh Khan's shoes. Farhan himself came out in his support, saying, "He is a really good actor. He has proven himself to be a versatile actor. I am not worried about him playing lead in Don 3 and he shouldn't be either. He is going to give a slamming performance." The backlash seemed to have affected Ranveer. But the actor humbly appealed to audiences to give him a chance, citing his solid body of work over the past decade. On Koffee With Karan, he said, "Ek chance dedo, 12-13 saal me thik thak hi kaam kiya hai maine, toh ek mauka toh banta hai (Give me one chance, I have worked decently for 12-13 years so I deserve one chance)." Recently, the actor has gone quiet, no flamboyant appearances, fewer public events — a visible pullback from the limelight. It's a move that has led to a slow build-up of curiosity around him once again. Apart from Don 3, he's also leading a massive action-thriller Dhurandhar, directed by Aditya Dhar, known for making Vicky Kaushal a star with Uri. Ranveer has proven himself to be a director's actor, a heartthrob,

## Amaal Mallik draws parallels between mistreatment he, AR Rahman faced; recalls family's financial crisis: 'Cars were sold, didn't know where next meal was coming from'

Pointing out that there are people in the industry who, for their own benefit, spread rumours about others, Amaal Mallik revealed that he too has been at the receiving end of such attacks. Amaal Mallik is the elder son of composer-singer Daboo Malik and the brother of Armaan Malik. Regardless of whether it's a wise decision or not, composer-singer Amaal Mallik says he has never made a conscious effort to constantly put himself out there or chase every opportunity around. Mentioning that he has never forced anyone to work with him, he recently shared that even when many around him were struggling with existential crises, he never experienced one himself, thanks to the unwavering love from his fans and a series of fortunate events.

Pointing out that there are people in the industry who, for their own benefit, spread rumours about others, Amaal revealed that he too has been at the receiving end of such attacks, with some even alleging that he is difficult to work with and charges Rs 50 lakh per song. "AR Rahman also faced a similar situation during his initial days. People couldn't decipher who he was and why was he not listening to anyone else. He had rights, contracts and royalties, and his demands too were different. So, many concluded that his career would end soon. Look now, Rahman remains Rahman," he pointed out during a chat with Mirchi Plus. Malayalam cinema 6-month report card | Disappointment of most hyped film, tables turning between superstars and more

"Back then, there were just five-six people in the business, but now there are 20,000 singers and composers around us. So, people feel like they have to go to extreme lengths, even die, for work. I'm no longer willing to do that. There was a time when I did, but not anymore," he added. During the conversation, Amaal also reflected on a time when his family went through a severe financial crisis that almost cost them their home. Things changed dramatically after he rose to fame with the success of the track "Sooraj Dooba Hain", composed for the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer Roy (2015). "There was a time when we had to worry about where our next meal would come from. Until 2014, that was our reality. We were on the

## AR Rahman to perform in Hyderabad with 'The Wonderment Tour'

New Delhi: Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman is set to return to Hyderabad after eight years as a part of his "The Wonderment Tour". The first show of the ongoing tour, which aims to celebrate Rahman's musical legacy, was held in Mumbai on May 3. The Hyderabad show will be a stand-alone stadium concert. It is scheduled to take place on November 8 at Ramoji Film City, according to a press release. He has previously performed in the city in 2017. "The Wonderment Tour" commemorates three decades of Rahman's profound influence on the music industry as a sonic odyssey through his most iconic homegrown and international film scores, cherished soundtracks and innovative new material. Rahman, whose credits include compositions such as "Jai Ho", "Dil Se" and "Chaiyya Chaiyya", said the upcoming concert is dedicated to those who "cher-



verge of selling our house; our cars were already gone. I had wanted to become a cricketer but chose to become a composer instead after seeing my father's pain and loss. He couldn't achieve what he had dreamed of, unlike his brother, Anu Malik. That sparked a fire in me. As a child, I told him not to worry and that I would take care of everything. And I did," he shared. Asserting that he has nothing left to prove to anyone, Amaal added, "Those trying to remove me from films, talking behind my back, labelling me etc... you can delay my progress, but you can't deny it. I recently learned that some fellow composers have also been involved in spreading labels about me. I didn't know this before. They are all scared of me and stressed that if I keep getting work, their factories will shut down. But no matter how hard you try to suppress a talented person, they'll bounce back like a spring." The elder son of composer-singer Daboo Malik and his wife Jyothi Malik, Amaal made his debut in 2014 by composing three songs for Salman Khan's Jai Ho. His younger brother Armaan Malik is also a well-known musician.

ish the experience of live music and the profound immersion it offers". "I aspire to merge tradition with innovation, bridging the past and the future in a grand celebration of music," he added. The concert is presented by Hyderabad Talkies in association with EVA Live and in partnership with Xora. Deepak Chaudhary, founder and managing director of EVA Live said, "We are thrilled to associate with A R Rahman and Hyderabad Talkies, continuing our commitment at EVA Live to deliver unparalleled live music experiences. This collaboration embodies our vision of creating unforgettable moments that resonate deeply with audiences as we ignite a new era of live entertainment where music, spectacle, and emotion collide to create pure magic that will redefine your concert experience." General ticket sales will begin on July 14.

## Smriti Irani returns as Tulsi Virani, says 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi gave me more than commercial success'



On Monday, Smriti Irani's first look as Tulsi Virani from Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 2 was officially shared by the makers. Adding to the excitement, the show's first promo will also be dropped tonight at 10:30 pm. With the buzz at its peak, Smriti has now opened up about returning to Ekta Kapoor's show after a quarter of a century. In an official statement, the actress said that she is not just returning as an actor, but as someone who believes in the power of storytelling.

'I believe in the power of storytelling to spark change'

Talking about her return, Smriti, who plays Tulsi Virani in the show, said, "Some journeys come full circle—not for nostalgia, but for purpose. Returning to Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi is not just a step back into a role, but a return to a story that redefined Indian television and reshaped my own life. It gave me more than commercial success—it gave me a connection with millions of homes, a place in the emotional fabric of a generation." "In the 25 years since, I've straddled two powerful platforms—media and public policy—each with its own impact, each demanding a different kind of commitment. Today, I stand at a crossroads where experience meets emotion, and creativity meets conviction. I return not just as an actor, but as someone who believes in the power of storytelling to spark change, preserve culture, and build empathy. In contributing to this next chapter, I hope to honour the legacy of Kyunki—and help shape a future where India's creative industries aren't just celebrated, but truly empowered," the statement further read. Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi 2 is going to air on Star Plus from July 28. Other than Smriti Irani, the show will also star Amar Upadhyay, Hiten Tejwani, and Gauri Pradhan. They will all be seen reprising their roles from the show's original version.

## Prosenjit Chatterjee calls himself, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Ajay Devgn 'producer-friendly actors': 'We have seen the hard times'

Prosenjit Chatterjee on Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Ajay Devgn Prosenjit Chatterjee lauds Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Ajay Devgn

Bengali superstar Prosenjit Chatterjee, fondly called Bumba Da by many, has taken on the producer's role for a Hindi show. His maiden production on Star Plus is called Kabhi Kabhi Neem Kabhi Shehad Shehad. In a recent conversation with SCREEN, Prosenjit shared how his experience as an actor has deepened his understanding of a producer's role. He also expressed gratitude for being fondly called "Bumba Da," calling it a blessing. Talking about how West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee also refers to him as "Bumba Da," Prosenjit shared, "You see the best part is not just in West Bengal, on all the sets when I was doing Jubilee and Khakee, after a certain time, everybody calls me Bumba Da. Even in Mumbai, Manoj, Rajkumar, they all call me Bumba Da. In West Bengal, nobody calls me Prosenjit, even our honorable Chief Minister, Mamta Banerjee, in official meetings also addresses me as Bumba. That's a blessing for me, I didn't change my name, my audience and fans over three generations made me Bumba Da, and I don't mind."

During the interview, Prosenjit Chatterjee also talked about how his experience as an actor helped him better understand the nuances of production. Prosenjit said, "I have been doing this for the last 40 years, so I understand the role of a producer better. When we started our careers, whether in Bangla or Hindi, the economy was not the same. Not just me, but even Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Ajay Devgn — when they started entire economy was very different, and as an actor, you need to understand the psyche of the producer. You need to understand the good and bad of the production; otherwise, you are not a producer-friendly actor. We always thought that the producer has to benefit; they should get money, only then will they come to produce the other two films." "That is the way we have grown. I completely understand production, and people in Kolkata say that I am the finest planner for shoots. If I hear a script, within 24 hours, I give them a breakdown on what they should do. We have seen the hard times, so we don't waste. I had produced a show for Star Jalsa, and it was directed by Rituporno Ghosh. Nobody else could bring a Rituporno Ghosh to direct a TV show. To date, it's a cult show that happened in Bengal. So, I always try to do something that I like creatively," he added.

On a parting note, Prosenjit Chatterjee said, "I always say, I am not a producer. I want to remain an actor, I am born to act, and I want to do so till my last breath. As a student of cinema, I have been doing lots of shows and films, mostly with newcomers. That's the way I want to produce. When I act, I try to do so for other producers. It's my psychology that till I don't sign a film, I cannot value myself. That's a habit I don't want to change."