

Lt Gen KS Brar, GOC Dakshin Bharat Area visits industries in Hyd

Hyderabad, July 8 : Lt Gen Karanbir Singh Brar, PVSM, AVSM General Officer Commanding, Dakshin Bharat Area (DBA) accompanied by Maj Gen Ajay Misra, General Officer Commanding Telangana & Andhra Sub Area(TASA), visited prominent industries and niche technology firms in Hyderabad. The visit aimed to foster synergy between the Indian Army and the industry, exploring opportunities for collaboration and leveraging cutting-edge technologies to enhance military capabilities. During the visit, the GOC interacted with industry leaders and innovators, discussing ways to harness technological advancements in areas such as defence, aerospace and cybersecurity.

India will give a ‘new form’ to BRICS grouping in 2026: PM Modi



GNS News Agency, July 8

India will attempt to give a “new form” to the BRICS next year, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his intervention at the grouping’s summit in Rio De Janeiro on Monday, as the Indian side prepared to take over the leadership of BRICS from current president Brazil. “Under India’s BRICS presidency, we will work to define BRICS in a new form. BRICS will mean Building Resilience and Innovation for Cooperation and Sustainability. Just as, during our G-20 chairmanship, we gave priority to the issues of the Global South in the agenda, similarly during our chairmanship of BRICS, we will take this forum forward in the spirit of people-centricity and humanity first,” said Mr. Modi speaking at the session on Environment, COP 30 and Global Health.

Mr. Modi dealt with a number of topics, including the post-pandemic recovery of the global economy and sought

global cooperation in combating common threats and said, “The COVID pandemic taught us that viruses do not come taking visas, and solutions, too are not chosen by looking at passports. The solution to common challenges is possible only through joint efforts.”Earlier, talking at a segment of the BRICS summit in Rio De Janeiro, Mr. Modi shared the Indian position on Artificial Intelligence and said, “We in India believe in AI as a tool to enhance human values and capabilities. Guided by the mantra of ‘AI for All’, India is actively using AI in many sectors. We believe that AI governance, addressing concerns and encouraging innovation should both receive equal priority.”Mr. Modi also held a number of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the BRICS summit. Among those who met the Indian Prime Minister were President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez of Cuba, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia, President Yamandu Orsi of Uruguay and President of Bolivia Luis Alberto Arce Catacora. “We talked about the need for improving and diversifying trade linkages on a priority basis. We discussed how we can collaborate in sectors such as digital technology, critical minerals, healthcare, space and more. Also conveyed my best wishes on the historic occasion of Bolivia’s 200 years of Independence,” said Mr. Modi.Mr. Modi’s participation in the closing day of the 17th BRICS summit will be followed by a state visit to Brazil that is scheduled to begin on 8 July at the Alvorado Palace. During his stay in Brasilia, Mr. Modi will hold restricted and delegation-level talks and attend a lunch hosted by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. India and Brazil are expected to sign agreements following official talks.

BRS will not even receive deposits in any elections in Telangana: Bhatti



Mahabubabad, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said that the BRS would lose its deposit not only in the upcoming local body elections, but also in the next Assembly elections.Addressing the public meeting at Somala Tanda in Mahabubabad district on Tuesday, the Deputy Chief Minister alleged that during the last 10 years, the BRS government spent Rs.1 to Rs.2 lakh crore on the irrigation, but couldn’t provide water even to 10 acres. Now that the truth about Kaleshwaram is being exposed, they’re trying to cover it up with lies, he pointed out. Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the Congress government under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is ready for a discussion in the Assembly on Krishna and Godavari river

waters, but Opposition leader K Chandrashekar Rao must come forward to debate.They’re saying whatever they like about CM Revanth Reddy, claiming he doesn’t understand river basins. But didn’t he clearly explain the need to use Krishna and Godavari basin waters through a PowerPoint presentation at Praja Bhavan?”He said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy exposed with evidence the injustice done to Telangana during the BRS regime in water issues.Bhatti Vikramarka reminded that KCR had publicly declared in Andhra Pradesh that the state could use Krishna-Godavari waters, ignoring basin priorities, and CM Revanth Reddy showed those video clips recently.Revanth Reddy declared that over Rs.1 lakh crore was spent on welfare schemes, but BRS leaders cannot digest this truth. If they truly care about people, they should come to the Assembly, bring their data, and debate. Let’s see who is right, who is wrong,” he said.The Deputy Chief Minister stated that KCR is dodging the debate, sending someone else in his place. “If you really want to respond to the challenge, come to the Assembly, not a press club,” Bhatti said.The Deputy Chief Minister also challenged BRS leaders who allege power cuts and transformer failures: “Are you ready to compare power demand during your rule and ours?” He explained that while peak demand during the previous government was 17,162 MW, in March this year, it rose by 2,000 MW. Even with the surge, there were no blackouts- 24x7 free power is being supplied to farmers, Bhatti added.

BJP slams Revanth-KTR Public Debate as Political Drama



Hyderabad, July 8 The Telangana BJP on Tuesday dismissed the verbal sparring and public debate challenge between BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy as a staged political drama meant to distract people from core issues plaguing the State. In a statement, BJP State chief spokesperson and Media in-charge N.V. Subash termed KTR’s challenge to Revanth Reddy for a public debate at the Press Club as “a frivolous stunt” staged at a time when the Chief Minister was away in New Delhi. “If this is not political drama by the BRS, then what is it?” he asked. “Debates on governance and performance belong in the Assembly, not on street corners or media platforms.”

Subash said both Congress and BRS are enacting theatrics to mislead the public, even as they are jointly responsible for the State’s financial crisis. “Revanth Reddy himself admitted that his government inherited a debt burden of over 74 lakh crore. While that’s no excuse for failing to deliver on poll promises, it exposes the BRS’s claims of good governance as hollow,” he said.

The BJP leader said BRS, after securing separate statehood in 2014, squandered Telangana’s resources through short-sighted policies, rampant corruption, and divisive appeasement politics. “No State has witnessed such caste and community-based appeasement as Telangana

did under the BRS regime,” Subash alleged. He also accused KTR of trying to divert public attention from ongoing investigations, including the phone tapping scandal and irregularities in the Kaleshwaram project. “These public debates are a smokescreen to escape scrutiny. Meanwhile, the Congress government seems content with mere media optics, despite ordering probes into BRS’s misrule. Subash demanded that both Congress and BRS stop indulging in headline-hunting drama. “If they are serious about accountability and governance, let them convene an emergency session of the Assembly. Let all parties place their facts on the table in front of the people’s representatives not cameras.” He also criticized successive governments for curtailing Assembly sessions to a few days. “Issues of public interest deserve in-depth debates, not token discussions squeezed between weekends. The people of Telangana deserve substance, not spectacle,” he added.

Bomb threat mails cause panic in city

Hyderabad, July 8 A bomb explosion threat mail caused panic in the State capital today. The bomb threat mails were received in four areas of Hyderabad city on Tuesday. These areas are City Civil Court complex, Judges Chambers, Gymkhana Club and Raj Bhavan.

In this context, the police conducted extensive checks for three hours. The court premises and other areas were thoroughly searched by the bomb squad and dog squads. No explosives were found during the search operation. These threats came through mails in the name of ‘Abida Abdullah’.When mails were received that RDX and IEDs had been placed in the City Civil Court, Judge Chambers, and Gymkhana Club and that they would explode in a while,

CM Revanth’s advisor Vem Narender escapes unhurt after car catches fire

Hyderabad, July 8 Chief Minister Revanth Reddy’s advisor and former MLA Vem Narender Reddy had a close call with a serious accident when the vehicle he was traveling in unexpectedly caught fire. During his visit to Mahabubabad district on Tuesday, Vem Narender Reddy was en route to the helipad in an Innova Crysta car in Sama thanda when the fire started. Fortunately, vigilant security personnel managed to extract him from the vehicle safely. Following the incident, onlookers promptly alerted the fire brigade, which arrived quickly to extinguish the flames. As a result, the people expressed their relief and happiness that Vem Narender Reddy emerged unharmed from the situation

CM Revanth requests JP Nadda for timely release of urea to Telangana



New Delhi, July 8 : Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has requested Union Minister for Fertilizers & Chemicals JP Nadda to supply urea allocated to Telangana State on time to meet the agricultural needs during the farming season.The Chief Minister met JP Nadda at the latter’s official residence in Delhi today. During the meeting, the

CM brought to the notice of the Union Minister that only 3.07 lakh metric tonnes of Urea was supplied between April and June as against the requirement of five lakh metric tonnes in the Kharif season. In view of the farming activity in full swing and the projects receiving abundant inflows in the State, CM Revanth Reddy appealed to the Union minister to ensure no disruption in the supply of urea.

The CM brought to the notice of the Union Minister that 63,000 metric tonnes of domestically produced urea and 97,000 metric tonnes of imported urea were to be supplied to the State for July. But, the Centre supplied only 29,000 metric tonnes of urea so far. The CM also requested Nadda to enhance the quota of domestically produced urea for Telangana and increase the number of rakes for urea supply in the wake of the reluctance of the Railways to consider the demand for more rakes. State government’s Sports Advisor AP Jitender Reddy, MPs Dr Mallu Ravi and Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, Special Secretary to the Chief Minister Ajith Reddy, State Agriculture Secretary Raghunandan Rao, Central Schemes Coordination Secretary Dr Gaurav Uppal and others were also present. .

First bring KCR to Assembly, Congress MLC tells KTR

Hyderabad, July 8 Congress MLC Addanki Dayakar has challenged BRS working president KT Rama Rao to bring his father, former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, to the Assembly to discuss issues concerning farmers.

During a media briefing at the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) office in the Assembly on Tuesday, Addanki Dayakar asserted that KT Rama Rao does not have the right to question Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on any matters, as the latter has been diligently dedicated to the development of Telangana since taking office.What is KTR’s actual status? You hold no real status; we are of greater significance to you. KTR needs to refrain from such trivial behavior; the people of Telangana can no longer place their

trust in you,” he stated. The MLC also commented that former chief minister KCR was assigned the role of Opposition leader to serve the people, yet he chooses to relax at his farmhouse instead of attending the Assembly.He criticised KCR for not respecting legislatures and stated that the government is open to discussing any concerns if KCR participates in the Assembly. Addanki Dayakar also raised the question of why the people of Telangana should have to suffer because of KTR’s personal issues. He pointed out that those who stayed away from the Assembly were akin to Assembly thieves. "

Had the phones of Opposition leaders not been monitored during the last elections, the Congress party would have secured 100 seats," Dayakar noted.

Congress leaders pay rich tributes to YSR on his birth anniversary



Hyderabad, July 8 (NSS): Telangana Congress leaders paid rich tributes to former chief minister of the erst-while Andhra Pradesh Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, on the occasion of his birth anniversary, in Hyderabad on

Tuesday.Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Ponnam Prabhakar and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud, MLAs, MLCs, senior Congress leaders, including K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao paid tributes to YSR at his statue in Panjagutta to honour his memory. The leaders offered floral tributes, celebrating YSR as a leader dedicated to the welfare of the people, and shared memories of their association with him and his contributions to society.

At Gandhi Bhavan, V. Narayana Swamy, the former chief minister of Pondicherry, along with AICC secretary Viswanathan, MLAs Danam Nagender and Sri Ganesh, MLCs Addanki Dayakar and Balamuri Venkat, former MP Anjan Kumar Yadav, and TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, paid heartfelt respects to the portrait of YSR. In celebration of the event, clothing and sweets were distributed to the people in the collaboration with the TPCC president.

Chandrababu visits Srisaillam dam, releases water from four gates

Kurnool, July 8 AP CM Chandrababu today inspected the Srisaillam project. First, the CM inspected the photo exhibition at the project site. Later, he performed puja to river Krishna and released water from gate numbers 6, 7, 8, and 11 of the dam. Earlier, the CM visited the Srisaillam Mahakshetra and performed special pujas. The CM was accompanied by Ministers Nimmala Ramanaidu, BC Janardhan Reddy, MP Byreddy Sabari, MLAs Bhuma Akhilapriya, Budda Rajasekhara Reddy and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Naidu said on Tuesday the filling up of the Srisaillam reservoir in the first week of July was an auspicious development for AP. "I performed special pujas to Srisaillam Mallanna. I prayed for Rayalaseema to be a jewel-rich region. With the blessings of Mallanna, Rayalaseema will be prosperous. Water is our wealth. With it, the hardships of farmers will be solved. Irrigation projects are modern temples. 200 TMC of water is in the Srisaillam reservoir with the water that comes from above. Many people said in the past that no one can save Rayalaseema. NTR has tightened his belt to change the status of the region. I am doing my best for the development of Rayalaseema and I have spent Rs 68,000 crore on the irrigation projects.

When the YSRCP government was in power, it did not care about the Rayalaseema region. Our government is responsible for bringing water to Jeedipally. I have set a target for the officials to bring water to that region by the 15th of this month. We will bring water to Kuppam and Madanapalle by the 30th of this month. Pothireddypadu. Galeru-Nagari, Gandikota. We brought everything our-



selves," he said.

He said his goal was to make the Telugu community as the number one in the world and added that the development he made was being continued in Hyderabad. Naidu opined that it would be good if the two Telugu States use the water, which was flowing into the sea as it would benefit the farmers of both the States. "If water is coming to Rayalaseema, it is because of Polavaram, I have a blueprint for what to do with Seema. This area has a road system that is unmatched anywhere in the country. In the past, people used to eat ragi, sajjja, jowar and korra. Many people are getting diabetes after eating polished rice. Now everyone is focusing on health. They are eating small grains. The consumption of vegetables and fruits is gradually increasing. The areas where all types of fruits grow in Rayalaseema, like Kopparthi and Orvakal, are becoming industrial hubs," Chandrababu said.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

JEE Advanced toppers felicitated

Ongole: Prakasam district Superintendent of Police AR Damodar honoured four outstanding students from Prakasam district who achieved exceptional results in the JEE Advanced examination during a special ceremony held at the District Police Office on Monday.

The SP felicitated K Shanmukha Sai Reddy (EWS 2nd rank), SV Sai Chakri (EWS 3rd rank), SK Abdurrahim (EWS 40th rank), and Saket Ram (EWS 587th rank) with shawls in recognition of their outstanding performance in securing seats at prestigious IIT institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Damodar praised the students' achievement, stating that securing seats in prestigious institutions like IIT is truly commendable. He advised that students should strive to reach the highest peaks in life through firm determination, proper planning, time management, and rigorous hard work. He urged them to set the right plans during their student years and pave the way for a golden future through higher education. He encouraged the students to bring good name not only to their parents and district but also to the state by showcasing their talent in academics. Bhashyam School Principal Venkataramana and the parents of the honoured students were present.

Manthani Resonatesh with Celebrations on the Birth Anniversary of Social Justice Icon Padma Shri Manda Krishna Madiga.



"PS Ashokan" Indian Chronicle "Manthani, July 7" "The Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS) Manthani Town Committee organized a grand and spirited celebration to mark the birth anniversary of the revered people's leader and social reformer, Padma Shri Manda Krishna Madiga. The event reflected the deep admiration and unwavering solidarity of the community towards a leader who has dedicated his life to uplifting the marginalized and championing Scheduled Caste categorization. "Widely hailed as the Voice of the Voiceless, Beacon of the Oppressed, and Commander of the Dandora Movement, Sri Manda Krishna Madiga's tireless fight for justice continues to inspire millions across the nation. "The celebration commenced with the hoisting of the MRPS flag at Ambedkar Nagar Kamaan by Town President Sri Neduri Ravi, setting a tone of pride and unity. This was followed by a colourful and electrifying rally from Sripada Chowk, with firecrackers lighting up the atmosphere and enthusiastic participation from youth and



supporters alike. "As part of the joyous occasion, a birthday cake-cutting ceremony was held, followed by the distribution of sweets and a spirit of camaraderie among attendees. "Several eminent leaders and dignitaries of the MRPS graced the event, including: "Sri Chandu Madiga – Peddapalli District President, MRPS "Sri Pallo Bapu Madiga – Manthani Mandal In-Charge "Sri Koyyala Mondli Madiga – Former Mandal President "Sri Velpula Sravan, Manthani Lingayya, Manthani Rajesham, Chippakurthi Chandu, Bejanki Anil, Budida Tirupati, Manthani Satyam, Gummanur Raju, Akkapaka Sampath, Kannuru Odhelu, Manthani Rakesh, Singarapu Sudhakar, Manthani Lakshman, and others. "Leaders from various affiliated organizations of MRPS also took part, reaffirming their collective commitment to social justice, equality, and empowerment — the ideals that Sri Manda Krishna Madiga embodies. "The event concluded with a renewed pledge to strengthen the movement for SC classification and continue the visionary leader's mission with unflinching dedication.

Former MLA Putta Madhukar Attends Bhagavata Saptaha Jnana Yajna in Manthani.



"PS Ashokan" Indian Chronicle "Manthani, July 7" "In a spiritually uplifting event, former Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Manthani, Sri Putta Madhukar, graciously participated in the Bhagavata Saptaha Jnana Yajna, a sacred week-long discourse based on the Srimad Bhagavatam, aimed at spreading divine knowledge and promoting moral values in society. "The yajna is being held with devotional fervour at the residence of Sri Mahavadi Sudheer, located in the Thammi Cheruvu Katta area of Manthani town. Devotees from various parts of the region have been attending the spiritual program, engaging in



prayer, reflection, and scriptural wisdom. "Sri Putta Madhukar, known for his deep reverence for spiritual traditions and cultural heritage, offered his respects to the presiding scholars and commended the organizers for conducting such a noble and enriching initiative. He emphasized the importance of such spiritual gatherings in fostering unity, righteousness, and cultural consciousness among the younger generation."

"The presence of the former MLA added immense value and inspiration to the event, which continues to draw enthusiastic participation from the local community.

We will bring back Bhadrachalam to its former glory. Minister Tummalapalli Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam,



July 7, Indian Chronicle: There was a delay in developing the temple due to land issues to bring back the Bhadrachalam Sri Taramachandra Swamy Temple, known as the Ayodhya of the South, to its former glory. The owners of the houses around the temple's Madaveedhu agreed to the project, and the funds were immediately released, and the process of expanding the Madaveedhu has begun, said Tummalapalli Nageswara Rao, Minister of Agriculture, Marketing Cooperation, and Handloom Textiles, Telangana State. On Monday, he inspected the expansion work of the Madaveedhu of the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the owners of the Mada Veedhu houses, who have been residing in the area for many years, have worked tirelessly to acquire land for the development of the Sri Seetharamachandraswamy Temple in Bhadrachalam. Therefore, he specially congratulated them and said that for the development of the temple, Telangana ministers from Khammam district Vikramarka and Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and the MLAs of the joint Khammam constituency all came together to bring it to the attention of the ministers and through them to the attention of the CM. Immediately, Rs. 33 crore was released as the first installment for the development of the Bhadrachalam Temple. There are still four families left. They will also be given funds, and the process of expanding the Mada Veedhu will be completed, and the related file will be brought to the attention of the CM. According to the Agama Pandits of the Endowment Department, work will begin on the development of the temple. The District Collector, ITDA PO, RDO, and Tahsildar collectively convinced the families residing there to expand the Madaveedhu for the development of the temple and thanked the families of that district for their cooperation in the development of the temple. He said that without causing any damage to the administration, the families residing in Madaveedhu will be provided with houses so that they can do well, and there is an opportunity to build a shopping



complex for livelihood. He said that it has come to his attention that the owners of Madaveedhu have requested to provide them, and that he will definitely make efforts to build a shopping complex and that efforts must be made to provide livelihood to those families who have contributed to the development of the temple. Earlier, he laid the foundation stone for the construction of central lighting and dividers at the Ambedkar Center in Bhadrachalam town up to Ambedkar Center Charla Road with special development funds at a cost of Rs. 15 crore. After inspecting the expansion work of the temple's Madaveedhu, they had tea with the district officials at a hotel next to the Madaveedhu. Bhadrachalam MLA Tellam Venkat Rao, Bhadradi Kothagudem District Collector Jitesh B Patil, ITDA PO B Rahul, SP Vikrant Kumar Singh, Training Collector Saurabh Sharma, ZP CEO Nagalakshmi, RDO Damodar Rao, Bhadrachalam Tahsildar Jagadish Prasad, Panchayat Raj EE Satyanarayana, DE Irfan, AE Sriram, Mission Bhagiratha AE Raja Rao, GP EO Srinivas, and other department officials were present at the event.

Bhadrachalam Ram temple EO attacked by villagers

Bhadrachalam, July 8 Bhadrachalam temple EO Ramadevi was attacked by Purushottapatnam villagers. The EO, who went to prevent encroachment of temple lands, was attacked by the villagers. In this context, a heated argument took place between the temple staff and the Purushottapatnam villagers. Bhadradi Ramalayam has 889.50 acres of land in Purushottapatnam village. The AP High Court has already issued orders to hand over the lands to the temple. Ignoring those orders, the encroachers have taken up constructions on the temple lands.

German team meets Vivek Venkatswamy to advance nursing placements

Hyderabad, July 8 German delegation met Minister for Labour, Employment, Training & Factories Dr Vivek Venkatswamy to Advance Nursing Placements Under Triple Win Project; Explores Future Collaborations for Telangana Youth at Secretariat on Tuesday. A delegation of placement officers representing the Government of Germany held a courtesy meeting with Dr Vivek Venkatswamy. M. Dana Kishore, IAS, Principal Secretary, Labour, Employment, Training & Factories Department, and Vice Chairperson, Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Ltd. (TOMCOM), were also present.

The visiting team comprised Bianca Maria Kunz, Dzejna Hurtic, and Abdulrhman Altaahle, accompanied by senior representatives from GIZ India. The delegation is in Hyderabad as part of the ongoing Triple Win Project (TWP) — a joint initiative between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of Telangana, implemented through TOMCOM. The programme aims to provide free German language training and placement opportunities for qualified nurses from Telangana in reputed healthcare institutions across Germany. During the discussions, the Minister emphasized the importance of expanding such international collaborations to benefit other sectors, particularly ITI students under Germany's Ausbildung Programme. He expressed keen interest in launching new avenues of co-operation and assured that TOMCOM would actively pursue and implement such projects in the near future. The delegation is currently conducting interviews of enrolled Telangana nurses from July 9 to 17, 2025 at Paryatak Bhavan, Begumpet, as part of the ongoing recruitment process. The nurses selected under the TWP 2024 batch interviewed in July 2024 and have successfully completed B1-level German language training and are expected to travel to Germany by October–November 2025, upon completion of visa and deployment formalities.

As part of their visit, the delegation also interacted with nursing students at TGRTC Nursing College, Tarnaka, where they elaborated on the vast career prospects for Indian nurses in Germany, including competitive salary packages, family visa sponsorship, and long-term settlement options. The interactive session received an enthusiastic response from the students and faculty. Dr Vasundhara, Principal of the college, encouraged students to utilize such international opportunities being facilitated by the Government. TOMCOM, under the guidance of the Government of Telangana, continues to play a pivotal role in promoting overseas career mobility and in opening global employment avenues for the skilled youth of the State through sustained international partnerships and ethical recruitment programmes.

Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show 2025 will be held in city on July 11

Hyderabad, July 8 The Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show (UPITS) 2025 Roadshow will be held in Hyderabad on July 11, at the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), Red Hills. This high-impact outreach event is being organised by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in collaboration with India Exposition Mart Ltd. (IEML) as part of a multi-city promotional campaign. The Roadshow will be presided over by Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary, MSME & Export Promotion, Government of Uttar Pradesh, and will also feature the presence of Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, India Expo Centre & Mart, along with other senior officials and sectoral experts.

Aimed at strengthening Uttar Pradesh's presence on the global trade and investment map, the Hyderabad Roadshow is expected to attract over 100 participants, including exporters, industry leaders, MSMEs, sourcing consultants, and trade associations from across Telangana and neighbouring states. MSME and Industrialists who are interested in participating are also welcome to attend the roadshow. This is the second in a series of nationwide road shows, following successful engagements in Delhi-NCR, with upcoming editions planned in Bengaluru, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

The Roadshow is a curtain-raiser to the third edition of UP International Trade Show (UPITS) 2025, which will take place from September 25 to 29, 2025, at the India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. With the central theme "Local to Global," the event will spotlight sectors such as MSMEs, Handloom & Textiles, Khadi & Village Industries, Sericulture, Food Processing, Automobiles, EVs, Infrastructure, Renewable Energy, and Traditional Crafts. Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, UPITS 2025 is a key initiative to propel Uttar Pradesh towards becoming a trillion-dollar economy by boosting exports, encouraging industrial participation, and showcasing the state's vibrant economic potential.

BIS conducts enforcement raid at Mobile Accessories shop at Sultan Bazar

Hyderabad, July 8 The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Hyderabad Branch office, conducted a Search and Seizure operation on Tuesday at Mobile Accessories and Electronics Shop at Sultan Bazaar, Koti, Hyderabad for violation of the provisions of the BIS Act, 2016. The enforcement operation was carried out under the direction of P V Srikanth, Director & Head, and led by T Sujatha, Director, Rakesh Tanneeru, Joint Director, along with SSA Shivaji.

During the raid, BIS officials seized stock of Mobile chargers bearing spurious BIS Registration Mark i.e without any valid BIS Registration number. These were found stored and offered for sale without the mandatory BIS Certification. These products fall under the purview of Quality Control Orders (QCOs) issued by the Government of India, making BIS certification compulsory.

This act constitutes a clear violation of Section 17 of the BIS Act, 2016, which prohibits the sale, storage, or distribution of goods covered under QCOs without appropriate BIS Certification. The Act provides for punishment including imprisonment of up to two years or a fine of not less than Rs. 2 lakh for the first contravention, and not less than Rs. 5 lakh for subsequent contraventions, which may extend up to ten times the value of the goods. The offence under this provision is cognizable in nature, and BIS will be initiating legal proceedings against the violators.

District Collector Jitesh Visits Moringa Farm.““Rayala Kishore,



Tekulapalli, July 8, Indian Chronicle:“Bhadradi Kothagudem District Collector Jitesh V. Patil visited the Moringa farm cultivated by farmer Gandhi in Rampuram Gram Panchayat of Tekulapalli Mandal. He observed the crop cultivation and expressed satisfaction, and also appreciated the efforts of the farmer. He encouraged all interested farmers in the mandal, especially those currently growing cotton, to take an interest in cultivating Moringa farms and expand the area under its cultivation.”The Collector informed that Moringa cultivation can provide farmers with higher income through leaves, pods, and dried seeds. He

also advised farmers to produce bio-charcoal using locally available wood from their farms by digging a pit at the edge of their fields, burning the wood, and mixing the resulting charcoal with cow urine to be used as fertilizer—thereby reducing the use of chemical fertilizers.”He instructed villagers and panchayat staff to immediately construct soak pits wherever water stagnates in every village and every household to prevent waterborne diseases during the rainy season. He explained that vegetable cultivation can also yield good income for farmers.”He urged everyone to enroll in the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana insurance schemes.”The Collector further suggested that every farmer who has a borewell should build a farm pond, which could then be used for activities like azolla cultivation, fish farming (korameenu), and duck rearing, helping to improve their families’ financial condition.”Accompanying the Collector in this program were Tekulapalli Mandal Parishad Development Officer Kumari B. Malleshwari, Tahsildar Veerabhadram, Mandal Panchayat Officer Jakkula Ganesh Gandhi, Mandal Agriculture Officer Smt. Annappurna, Additional Program Officer of Employment Guarantee Scheme Sri Kalangi Srinivas, Indira Kranthi Patham Assistant Project Officer Ganapavaram Ravikumar, Engineering Consultant Mogili Tirupathayya, Secretary Rajasekhara, and CCs Sripatha, Sunil, Technical Assistant Suresh, Field Assistants Sagar, Agricultural Extension Officer Bhagya Sri, and farmers Harijan, Gandhi, Balu, and other villagers

Road construction works in the city must be completed on time - Minister Tummala.“



“Khammam Bureau, July 08, Indian Chronicle. ““State Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation, Handlooms & Textiles Tummala Nageswara Rao emphasized that the ongoing road construction works in Khammam city should be completed on time with high quality. On Tuesday, the

Minister laid the foundation stones for two BT road construction projects within the 15th Division of Khammam Municipal Corporation. One from Kakatiya Hills to the main road, with an estimated cost of 23.75 lakhs from municipal general funds. Another from GRR Srinivasam to Puttakota BT Road, costing 24.5 lakhs. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Tummala stated that timely completion with quality is crucial. He urged citizens to cooperate in beautifying Khammam city, maintain cleanliness in their surroundings and plant trees on a large scale, ensuring their proper maintenance.

The minister also instructed concerned officials to resolve issues related to the water supply in the colony. The event was attended by State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao, Khammam Mayor Punukollu Neeraja, Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, Market Committee Chairman Hanumantha Rao, 15th Division Corporator Raavuri Karuna Saidubabu, Other corporators, public representatives, Khammam RDO Narasimha Rao, Khammam Urban Tahsildar Saidulu and various officials.“

42% Reservations Must Be Implemented in Local Body Elections - Rajyasabha MP Vaddiraju.



““Khammam Bureau, July 08, Indian Chronicle. ““Vaddiraju Ravichandra, Rajya Sabha MP and Deputy Leader of the BRS Parliamentary Party, demanded that elections to local bodies be held only after legal provision is made for 42% reservations for Backward Classes (BCs). He was speaking at a press conference held on Tuesday at Telangana Bhavan, accompanied by Legislative Council Deputy Chairman Dr Banda Prakash Mudiraj, BRS Legislative Council floor leader Sirikonda Madhusudhana Chary, former ministers Gangula Kamalakara, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, V Srinivas Goud, former BC Commission members Shubhaprada Patel, Kothi Kishore Goud, former TSPSC member Sumitra Anand, former ZP Chairperson Tula Uma, senior BRS leader Dudimetla Balaraju Yadav and others.”“MP Vaddiraju stressed that, as per the BRS’s commitments in public rallies, election campaigns, and manifestos especially in Kamareddy legal sanction through Parliament is essential to implement 42% reservations for BCs in local body elections, and also in education and employment sectors. He referenced how former Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa, with support from leaders across all parties in the state, successfully pressured the central government to enact legislation through Parliament allowing 69% reservations. A similar approach should be adopted for Telangana, he said. The BRS, he stated, would continue its struggle as a responsible opposition to ensure these reservations are realized and will increase pressure on both the central and state governments. Vaddiraju criticized the Congress for its unfair treatment of BCs, pointing out that despite BCs making up more than half of the population, only three ministerial



posts were given to them in the current cabinet. He decried the exclusion of communities like Munnurukapu, Yadav, Muslim, Lambadi, Kuruma and Chakali from cabinet positions, calling it unjust. He also pointed out that, based on population proportions, 12 ministerial berths should have been allocated to SCs, STs, BCs, and minorities. He accused the Congress of failing to fulfill its promises made in the Kamareddy Declaration, resorting instead to diversionary politics. Vaddiraju called on the Congress led government to intensify pressure on the Centre to legally enact the 42% reservations.

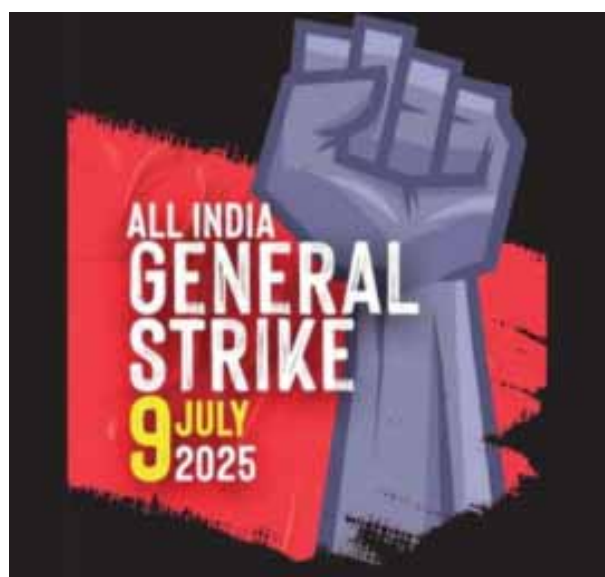
He urged all BC communities to unite and seize this crucial moment to fight for their rightful share in politics, education and employment. He concluded by expressing disappointment that, even after nearly 80 years of Independence, there is still no dedicated ministry for BCs at the central level.

Deputy state tax officer, Madhapur in ACB net

Hyderabad, July 8 Accused officer M. Sudha, Dy State Tax Officer, Madhapur, was caught on Tuesday by Telangana ACB, City Range 1 Unit when she demanded and accepted a bribe of Rs 8,000/-from the complainant for showing official favour i.e. "to process and get GST Registration of complainant's company.

Historic Strike.

““Khammam Bureau (Praneeth Kumar Pathakamudi),“July 08,“Indian Chronicle.”“In protest against the BJP led central government’s repeal of 44 labour laws and their replacement with four labour codes, the working class has initiated a nationwide strike on the 9th of this month. Ten central trade unions, independent all-India sectoral federations, and various associations under a joint platform have called for the strike. This is not just another strike like those in the past. It marks a united rebellion by the working class against the Modi government’s decade-long effort to strip workers of their bargaining power and hand them over to the mercy of capitalists. Since coming to power, the Modi government has consistently adopted corporate-friendly and anti-worker policies. As a result, the standard of living for working people has significantly declined. While workers real wages have been decreasing year after year, corporate wealth has skyrocketed.”“Between 2014–15 and 2020–21, the rate of wage growth in the organized sector dropped from 10.1% to 6%. Considering the steep rise in inflation, real wages have actually declined further. During the same period, corporate profits rose from 38.7% to 51.9%. According to the World Inequality Report, by 2022–23, the top 1% of the richest in India controlled 22.6% of the national income and held 40.1% of the total wealth, while the bottom 50% owned just 3% of the wealth. These figures and many other official statistics clearly show whose interests government policies are favoring. In this context, the Modi government should be working to increase minimum wages and incomes of the working class. Instead, in the name of international competition, it has launched ‘labour reforms’ that favor investors and work against labourers. The repeal of labour laws and introduction of labour codes is a major move in this direction. These labour codes undermine workers rights to form unions and go on strike basic rights that are essential for protecting wages and working conditions. Like in the United States, they pave the way for a ‘Hire and Fire’ model where employers can hire or dismiss workers at will.”“In short, these codes guarantee maximum profits for capitalists by eroding the minimum rights of workers. It’s worth recalling how business leaders like Infosys co-founder



Narayana Murthy recently demanded that IT workers should work 72 to 90 hours a week. Even as unorganized sector workers continue to fight for minimum wages, the government ignores them. At the same time, it seeks to strip away hard-won rights of organized sector workers through the new labour codes. If this continues, inequality, poverty and unemployment in the country will worsen. People’s purchasing power will further decline, slowing down the nation’s overall economic development. Thus, today’s workers struggle is not just for their rights, it is a fight for the development of the entire country. That’s why everyone from every factory, every organization, every town, and every village must support the strike. Many farmers organizations, agricultural labor unions, and other associations including the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, which achieved victory after over a year of heroic struggle in Delhi have already announced their support. Left parties have also stood in solidarity. Everyone must unite and make this strike a success to say ‘No’ to the policies of Narendra Modi.”

RPF Cyber Cell leads Mobile recovery efforts under ‘Operation Amanat’

Hyderabad, July 8 : In a significant boost to passenger services, the Railway Protection Force (RPF), South Central Railway (SCR) has intensified its efforts under ‘Operation Amanat’ by effectively leveraging digital tools to trace and recover lost mobile phones. After being granted access to the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal on April 3, 2025, RPF Cyber Cell promptly sprang into action, transforming technology into tangible outcomes. The RPF is authorized to facilitate the recovery of lost devices only when the incident is reported and registered through Rail Madad, and no FIR has been lodged by the complainant in the case.

The CEIR portal, developed by the Department of Telecommunications, enables IMEI-based tracking and blocking of lost or stolen devices. However, it is the RPF’s dedicated Cyber Cell that has been driving the recovery operations across the zone. During the month of June-2025, the RPF Cyber Cell has handled a total of 140 complaints received from Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Vijayawada,

Guntakal, Guntur and Nanded Divisions of South Central Railway. Out of these complaints, 123 mobile phones have been blocked by Cyber Cell, 41 devices traceability have been detected and 25 mobile phones have been successfully recovered, out of which 14 phone have already been returned to the rightful owners. The Cyber Cell is also coordinating with 06 individuals who are currently in possession of traced mobile phones; all of them have agreed to return the devices. These efforts are supported by structured follow-up and direct user engagement, reflecting the RPF’s proactive approach. Sandeep Mathur, General Manager, SCR, appreciated Railway Protection Force, South Central Railway for the efforts and dedication in serving the Rail passengers. He stated that the RPF Cyber Cell has become a key force in restoring stolen or misplaced property through digital intelligence, timely action, and inter-agency collaboration. This initiative continues to reinforce public trust in the RPF’s commitment towards the service of passengers, he said.

RAKEZ & WTITC ink strategic MoU at ExpandME Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 8 The inaugural ExpandME (Expand Middle East) event, hosted by TConsult, concluded with remarkable success at Trident Hotel, Hyderabad, drawing over 150 business leaders from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The event attracted companies across key sectors including IT, pharma, manufacturing, real estate, gold & jewelry, logistics, and startups—each exploring new opportunities to expand into the UAE.

The key highlight of the evening was the signing of a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between RAKEZ (Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone)—a UAE Government Authority—and the World Telugu Information Technology Council (WTITC). This MoU marks a milestone in enhancing cross-border collaboration, particularly aimed at empowering the Telugu business community to grow globally via Ras Al Khaimah. Ramy Jallad, Group CEO of

RAKEZ, and Sundeep Makthala, Chairman of TConsult and President of WTITC, formally signed the agreement. Supporting the RAKEZ delegation was Mohammed Haseeb, RAKEZ India Representative. From TConsult, the event was attended by Director Bhagya Lakshmi Vakiti, along with key team members Yamini Maddukuri, Shruthika, Manosai Bandaru, Bhuvana, Manasa, and Sai Shree, among others. This MoU reflects our vision to connect local talent to global opportunity. ExpandME is just the beginning,” said Mr. Sundeep Makthala, Chairman, TConsult. The event also featured expert talks, interactive networking, and a curated dinner with select industry leaders and global business enablers. Following this successful launch, ExpandME will expand to other Indian cities, including Pune and Mumbai, continuing its mission to be India’s gateway to the Middle East.

Bandi Sanjay to donate bicycles

Hyderabad, July 8 Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar has launched another grand program in Karimnagar. Sanjay will donate bicycles to all students studying in class 10 in government schools under Karimnagar parliamentary constituency from Wednesday. Bandi Sanjay has set a target of distributing a total of 20,000 bicycles. An order has also been given to a branded bicycle company to this extent. These bicycles were procured by paying CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds. Nowhere has a public representative distributed 20,000 bicycles in his constituency so far. Karimnagar Ambedkar Stadium will be the venue for the inaugural program of the distribution of these bicycles.

All arrangements are being made at the stadium for this event. First, Bandi Sanjay is going to hand over the bicycles to the students studying in X class in Karimnagar town. A total of 21 stalls have been set up and decorated with colourful balloons and shamianas. Along with the Union Minister, the District Collector Pamela Satpati, City Police

Commissioner Ghaus Alam and many other high officials and district education department officials will attend this program. On the other hand, the responsibility of distributing the bicycles has been entrusted to the District Collector with the intention of providing these bicycles to every student. The Collector has prepared a list of the number of the students in the district. The officials will distribute the bicycles to the respective assembly constituencies, mandals and villages accordingly. The Collector has been asked to complete the distribution of these bicycles within a month and to provide this bicycle to every student studying in the tenth class in the government schools. Recently, Bandi Sanjay, having learned that patients in Vemulawada, Huzurabad, Husnabad and Jammikunta area hospitals are suffering due to lack of advanced equipment and are unable to visit private hospitals for various tests due to lack of financial resources, has collected the CSR funds worth about Rs 5 crore and provided the necessary advanced medical equipment to the respective hospitals.

2020 Delhi riots larger conspiracy case: For how long can a person be kept in jail? asks Delhi HC as accused claims delay in trial

For how long can a person be kept in jail? A Delhi High Court bench orally remarked on Tuesday as it heard the bail plea of one of the accused in the 2020 Delhi riots larger conspiracy case. The High Court noted that “five years have gone by”, and yet the arguments on the charge remain to be completed. The court was hearing the plea by Tasleem Ahmed, the owner of a coaching centre and a resident of South Delhi’s Sangam Vihar. He was arrested by the Delhi Police Special Cell in June 2020 under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

A trial court had refused his bail plea last February, even as Ahmed had sought relief on the grounds of parity, given that three other accused in the same case — Natasha

Narwal, Devangana Kalita, and Asif Tanha Iqbal — were granted bail. Taken up by a bench of Justices Subramonium Prasad and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar on Tuesday, advocate Mehmood Pracha, appearing for Ahmed, cited a delay in trial for seeking bail. Ahmed has already spent five years in jail, the counsel highlighted. After Ahmed’s counsel pointed out that he has not delayed the trial and that he also completed his arguments on the charges in 10-15 minutes within a day, the bench, addressing Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad, inquired orally, “Five years have gone...even arguments on the charge is not completed..With 700 witnesses, (for) how much time can a person be kept inside?” Earlier in January, another two-judge division bench of the High Court,

4-year-old girl dangles from third-floor window in Pune for 15 minutes, rescued by off-duty firefighter



GNS News Agency, July 8

A four-year-old girl was dramatically rescued after she slipped through the window grille of her third-floor home and hung precariously for at least 15 minutes on Tuesday morning in the Katraj area, Pune City Fire Brigade said, adding that she was rescued by an off-duty firefighter who lives in the neighbourhood.As per the Pune City Fire Brigade, the girl, Bhavika Chandane, is a resident of the Sonavane Building in the Khopde Nagar residential society. Firefighter Yogesh Arjun Chavan, who rescued the girl, was getting

ready to take a bath when the incident occurred around 9.15 am in the Gujar Nimbalkarwadi locality.

Speaking to over the phone, Chavan, who has served the Pune fire brigade for the last 14 years and is posted at the Kothrud fire station, said, "I was home as Tuesday is my weekly off. I was getting ready for a bath when I heard the resident of our building, Umesh Sutar, raise the alarm. I went to my balcony and saw a girl hanging precariously from the window grilles of the third-floor apartment. I knew that every second was critical. I was in my underwear. Without wasting time, I grabbed a towel, wrapped it around my waist, and rushed to the building."According to Chavan, by the time he reached the apartment, the girl's mother had also arrived and unlocked the door. "We rushed to the bedroom and safely took in the girl through the grills. I got to know that her mother had left the home earlier to drop Bhavika's elder sister at school," he said. "When the mother left the home Bhavika was asleep. It seems that she got up when she was home alone and inadvertently came out of the window grill while playing by the window. As per my guess, she would have been hanging by the window grill for at least 15 minutes, which also shows immense grit on the part of a four-year-old."

Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University to be ready by September: V-C

GNS News Agency, July 8

The construction of the long-awaited Pune campus of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU), Nashik, is expected to be completed by September in a 30,000 square feet building campus, said vice-chancellor Sanjeev Sonawane. Land for the building was allotted by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to the YCMOU in Balewadi in 2013, but progress was stalled had been years after this allocation.The new campus will have an administrative building, a bookstore, library, reading room with capacity of 150, a computer centre with 50-100 machines, learning material for students, and other facilities, Sonawane said."The land was allotted many years ago but nothing had gone ahead. In my tenure I tried to tender it through the Public Works Department and now it is at the finishing stage. Within two months it will be ready. The civil work is completely completed, only the interior work and electrical work is remaining," he said.

Currently, the Pune regional centre operates out of the Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe School Library at PMC School number 5 on Kuntkekar Road. This space inside a school building was wholly inadequate for the operation of a regional centre of a University. According to the university website, only seven staff members were employed at the centre in 2020, the last year for which the data is available. Sonawane added, "We want to shift the centre to



our own building with more facilities for counsellors and students. There will be a computer centre with 50-100 computers which will facilitate our central assessment programme, which is an online on-screen evaluation, so Pune examiners can assess the on-screen evaluation at the new campus. Regular academic and counselling services will also be there."In a government resolution passed on July 3 by the Higher and Technical Education Department, the state government had approved Rs 4.12 crore for the "construction of the Divisional Center buildings of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik in Pune".

Fuel ban for overage vehicles deferred in Delhi until November 1

GNS News Agency, July 8

Delhi fuel banThe move to enforce a fuel ban on end-of-life vehicles in Delhi stems from long-standing orders of the SC and NGT which bar 10-year-old diesel and 15-year-old petrol vehicles from plying in the city.

Citing "technological" and "cross-border fuelling" concerns, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Tuesday deferred the implementation of its direction to deny fuel to end-of-life (EoL) vehicles in Delhi. The enforcement of the ban will now begin from November 1, said officials.According to sources at the CAQM, the ban will be enforced in the Capital along with five high vehicle density districts of Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Gautam Buddha Nagar, and Sonapat.The CAQM's decision came after a review meeting was held earlier in the day. The decision follows a written request from Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, who flagged "critical operational and infrastructural challenges" in rolling out the measures outlined in Direction No. 89, issued on April 23. The CAQM direction had initially mandated that the denial of fuel and legal action against old vehicles identified using ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras at fuel pumps would commence fromAs per the latest decision, the CAQM will enforce the ban in the rest of the NCR on April 1, 2026, sticking to its initial date. Earlier in his letter, Sirsa pointed to



widespread glitches in the ANPR systems, including faulty sensors, poor camera placement, and failure to detect vehicles lacking High Security Registration Plates (HSRP).He also flagged the lack of system integration with vehicle databases in neighbouring states, warning of fuel tourism and a potential illegal cross-border market. Sirsa said that "immediate implementation... may be premature and potentially counter-productive".The move to enforce a fuel ban on end-of-life vehicles (EoLVs) in Delhi stems from long-standing orders of the Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT), which bar 10-year-old diesel and 15-year-old petrol vehicles from plying in the city.

Mountaineer Umesh Zirpe conferred with Sahyadri Ratna award



GNS News Agency, July 8

Umesh Zirpe, Sahyadri Ratna award 2025, Sahyadri Ratna award winner, Guardian Giripremi Mountaineering Institute,Zirpe is the founder and director of Guardian Giripremi Mountaineering Institute. Veteran mountaineer Umesh Zirpe, known for his successful expeditions over more than three decades, was honoured with the Sahyadri Ratna award on Sunday in Nashik. The award was conferred in the presence of Milind Gunaji, Dr. Vijay Suryawanshi (IAS), and Advocate Nitin Thakare.

This award is given by the Sahyamitra Foundation in memory of the late Avinash Joshi. And the foundation has been organising the Sahyadri Mitra conference in Nashik for the past three years, which features photography exhibitions, expert lectures, interviews, panel discussions, and honours individuals and organisations that have made outstanding contributions in the fields of mountaineering and rock climbing.Enthusiasts who include mountaineers, adventure seekers, and admirers of Shivaji Maharaj, across the state, participate in the programme. This year, the Sahyadri Ratna 2025 award was conferred to Umesh Zirpe.Umesh Zirpe, Sahyadri Ratna award 2025, Sahyadri

Ratna award winner, Guardian Giripremi Mountaineering Institute, Umesh Zirpe (in purple) is also the recipient of the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2023 and the Shiv Chhatrapati Award 2014. Zirpe is the founder and director of Guardian Giripremi Mountaineering Institute, a Pune-based mountaineering club and Giripremi Adventure Foundation.He is also the recipient of the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2023 and the Shiv Chhatrapati Award 2014. Over the past 35 years, Zirpe has had vast experience of the adventures in the Sahyadri and Himalayan mountain ranges. And is also famously known to have scaled eight of the world's highest eight-thousanders, including Mount Everest.

BRS leader flays Congress over delays in irrigation operations

Hyderabad: Former Minister and BRS leader V. Srinivas Goud on Tuesday lashed out at the Congress government for delaying irrigation operations.He accused the government of ignoring timely suggestions from the Opposition to activate the pumps at the Kalwakurthy lift Irrigation Scheme and the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project.He questioned Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, asking him to explain the reasons for switching on the Kalwakurthy lift irrigation scheme pumps on Tuesday, despite earlier deferring it till July end.Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan, the BRS leader criticised the government's failure to operate the Jurala lifts on time.

MMRDA's mobilisation policy increases labour strength at Metro work sites



GNS News Agency, July 8

MMRDA labour mobilisation policy, Metro Line 2B construction update, Metro Line 4 labour strength, Metro Line 4A progress,Officials said prior to the policy initiative, several Metro building packages were reporting either flat or falling labour figures.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has claimed that the labour strength during the last two weeks at the under construction sections of

Metro Lines 2B, 4, 4A and 9 has seen an increase of 17 per cent to 37 per cent.Earlier, there had been shortage of manpower at these worksites. The MMRDA had subsequently launched a manpower mobilisation policy.

The authority introduced a policy requiring contractors to adhere to minimum labour deployment to counter delay and manpower shortages. According to the policy, contractors will incur a penalty of Rs 1 lakh per day when shortage levels are between 25 per cent and 50 per cent. A second penalty of Rs 2 lakh per day for shortfalls above 50 per cent will also be incurred. Contractors are also penalized for failure to adhere to a project's key dates."After the policy was adopted, high-priority sections along Metro Line 4 have witnessed noticeable changes. Contracting firm RAJV-MILAN has hired 60 migrant workers from Odisha and 40 others from Uttar Pradesh," an official stated. In the next week, another batch of 150 workers is to be brought from Uttar Pradesh.Officials said prior to the policy initiative, several Metro building packages were reporting either flat or falling labour figures. This led to concerns about timeline disruptions on corridors where trial runs and partial opening were expected soon.

Rising seas, shifting lives and a test of democratic values

GNS News Agency, July 8

The intensifying impacts of climate change are reshaping India's coastline resulting in an environmental phenomenon and also profound social and economic rupture. Across the eastern and western seaboard, communities that are historically dependent on agriculture, fishing, and coastal ecosystems are being displaced by rising seas, saltwater intrusion, and the cumulative effects of unregulated development. This has triggered migration, pushing displaced populations into precarious urban labour markets without legal protection or adequate state support.In Odisha, once thriving coastal settlements such as Satabhaya have been swallowed by the sea, forcing villagers to relocate to government resettlement colonies that often fail to provide sustainable livelihoods. In Karnataka's Honnavar taluk, traditional fishing communities face dispossession as ports, tourism projects, and mangrove destruction accelerate coastal degradation. Similar patterns are unfolding in Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam, Gujarat's Kutch region, and the flood-prone lowlands of Kerala.Projects and environmental degradation

Industrial and infrastructural expansion along coastal zones — from port development under the Sagarmala programme to energy projects and commercial aquaculture — have compounded ecological degradation. Mangrove forests, sand dunes and wetlands that historically buffered coastal communities have been systematically cleared.Environmental clearances for many projects have overlooked cumulative climate risks, leading to a development model that intensifies ecological and social vulnerabilities. The displaced populations are increasingly getting absorbed into the informal economy as construction workers, brick kiln labourers and domestic workers in urban centres such as Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai.These migration patterns often result in systemic labour exploitation, which include debt bondage (displaced families take wage advances to survive, tying them into exploitative labour conditions); lack of legal protections (informal workers have little or no access to rights under India's labour laws, such as the Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996) and gendered exploitation (displaced women entering domestic work face heightened risks of abuse, underpayment, and trafficking)Legal lacunae on climate displacement

The absence of a coherent legal framework on climate-induced migration exacerbates this crisis. While Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to life and dignity, there is no specific legislation that addresses the rights of those displaced by slow-onset climate disasters. Existing frameworks such as the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notifications, including the diluted CRZ 2019, are limited either to disaster response or environmental conservation, without adequately factoring in the socio-economic dimensions of displacement.

The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plans recognise vulnerability, but lack targeted strategies for the rehabilitation of displaced populations or integration into labour markets.The CRZ Notification, 2019, intended to streamline clearances and promote sustainable coastal management, has often been critiqued for prioritising tourism and industrial development over the rights of coastal communities. Across States, the dilution of zoning regulations has led to a surge in commercial



projects in fragile coastal belts, displacing traditional fishing communities without their informed consent — a principle enshrined in national law and international environmental standards. Even India's landmark Labour Codes are silent on extending specific protections to climate migrants.Environmental justice jurisprudence from the Supreme Court of India — in M.C. Mehta vs Union of India (1987) and Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action vs Union of India (1996) — has recognised the intrinsic link between the environment and fundamental human rights. Yet, the translation of these principles into robust, community-centric legal frameworks on climate displacement remains lacking.

The story of displacement is also the story of resilience. Coastal communities, particularly fisherfolk unions and indigenous groups, have resisted ecologically destructive projects with remarkable tenacity. The protests against the Adani ports expansion at Ennore Creek, Tamil Nadu, the Pattuvam Mangrove Protection Movement in Kerala, and the Save Satabhaya campaign in Odisha underscore how grass-roots mobilisations have challenged mainstream development narratives.However, environmental defenders face intimidation, surveillance and criminalisation which are antithetical to India's constitutional commitment to protect the rights to protest and association. New challenges also emerge as climate change is weaponised to justify "managed retreat" without participatory planning or safeguards for the displaced.Towards a rights-based frameworkRecognition of climate migrants within national migration and urban planning policies is essential. There is a need for a rights-based approach that guarantees decent work, housing, education and health care. Labour codes must be revised to explicitly extend protections to climate migrants, especially in sectors such as construction and domestic work where informality is rampant. Similarly, coastal zone management must be revisited to prioritise ecological sustainability and community rights over commercial interests. India's commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 — eliminating forced labour and ensuring decent work for all — is contingent upon addressing the new vulnerabilities created by climate displacement.If climate change is the defining challenge of our era, responding to climate-induced displacement must be at the core of India's adaptation strategy. Protecting the rights, dignity, and livelihoods of those most impacted is not just an environmental necessity. It is a test of India's democratic and constitutional values.Bhoomika Choudhury is an international lawyer and researcher specialising in business and human rights, corporate accountability, and labour rights

Chinese techies' exit from Foxconn India won't impact iPhone 17 production, say sources

GNS News Agency, July 8

New Delhi: The return of Chinese technology professionals from an Apple vendor's facility will have no impact on the production of the upcoming iPhone 17, sources aware of the development said on Tuesday.iPhone maker Apple continues to be on track to scale up production in India, sources said.According to the sources, Apple vendors in India, Foxconn and Tata Electronics, have also seen easing of capital goods sourcing from China. These capital goods are critical for the production of iPhones."The return of Chinese professionals from Foxconn has had no impact on iPhone production. The production of iPhone 17 in India will be as per schedule," a source aware of the development on iPhone production told PTI.A query sent to Apple, Foxconn and Tata Electronics did not elicit any response on the matter.Multiple sources have shared that hundreds of Chinese professionals working at Foxconn India units have returned to China in the last two months.According to sources, these engineers were handling assembly lines, factory design and also involved in training talents to handle tools and machines for iPhone production.Another source said that there has been an easing of the supply of capital goods from China as well for iPhones. "Apple partners have seen an easing of supply of capital goods. So there is no impact on iPhones' production in India," the source said.The person said that there is no change in Apple's plan to ramp up production in India. According to multiple sources, Apple plans to increase iPhone production to 60 million units this year from about 40 million units that it produced in 2024-25.Apple CEO Tim Cook, during the second-quarter earnings call had announced that all iPhones sold in the US in the June quarter will be shipped from India. India-made iPhones are assembled in Taiwanese contract manufac-



turer Foxconn's factory in Tamil Nadu.Tata Electronics, which runs Pegatron Corp's operations in India, is the other key manufacturer. Tata and Foxconn are building new plants and adding production capacity to increase iPhone production.Apple assembled 60 per cent more iPhones, worth an estimated USD 22 billion, in India in the year ended March 31, 2025.According to an analysis by S&P Global, iPhone sales in the US were 75.9 million units in 2024, with exports in March from India at 3.1 million units, suggesting a need to double shipments either through new capacity or redirecting shipments bound for the domestic market."

Apple's Indian exports already headed predominantly to the United States, which represented 81.9 per cent of phones exported by the firm in the three months to February 28, 2025. That increased to 97.6 per cent in March 2025 as a result of a 219 per cent jump in exports, likely reflecting the firm looking to preempt higher tariffs," S&P Global Market Intelligence report said.Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had in April announced that iPhones worth Rs 1.5 lakh crore were exported from India in fiscal year 2025.

Delhi court accepts CBI’s closure report in missing JNU student Najeeb Ahmed case



GNS News Agency, July 8

A Delhi court Monday accepted a closure report filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the case of former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Najeeb Ahmed, who has been missing since October 15, 2016. Najeeb, who was then 27 years old and an MSc student at the School of Biotechnology in JNU, allegedly got into a scuffle with some Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) members before he went missing.

Recently, the CBI informed Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Jyoti Maheshwari of Rouse Avenue Court, before whom the closure report was kept for consideration, that they were unable to record the statement of the doctor at Safdarjung Hospital. This hospital was where Najeeb was allegedly taken after being injured in the scuffle, but the CBI said no document pertaining to his hospital visit existed. The agency claimed that Najeeb returned to the hostel without getting a medico-legal case report prepared. After finding no evidence in the case despite multiple attempts, the

CBI filed a closure report in 2018. Before the CBI began investigating the case, the Delhi Police had attempted to locate the student. The Delhi Police had filed an FIR under Section 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine person) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and announced a reward of Rs 50,000 for any information on Najeeb. Nine people were identified as suspects and CCTV footage from nearby metro stations was examined. Wireless messages were sent to senior superintendents of Police (SSPs) of all districts in the country on the day he went missing. Four teams were sent along various routes, including Delhi-Agra, Delhi-Bulandshahr, Ghaziabad, Moradabad and Rampur.

On December 19 and 20, 2016, over 500 police officers searched the JNU campus, including academic blocks, hostel complexes, water tanks and septic tanks. All their efforts turned out to be futile. In late 2016, dissatisfied with the efforts of the police, Fatima Nafees, Najeeb’s mother, decided to approach the Delhi High Court with a habeas corpus writ petition seeking her son’s production. Six months later, on May 16, 2017, the high court passed the case to the CBI. A year later, on May 11, 2018, the CBI told the Delhi High Court that it had found no evidence of any crime committed against Najeeb. The CBI’s investigation involved questioning 26 people, including JNU officials, staff, friends, and colleagues. The agency also examined mortuaries in 12 cities and scrutinised railway records for a full year. Despite this, the CBI’s investigation could also not reach a conclusion. After Najeeb went missing, massive protests broke out outside the JNU vice chancellor’s office in 2016. Various student wings pinned the blame on the VC for allegedly failing to act decisively in the matter.

If North Indians need to come to Maharashtra for jobs, Marathi should be taught there: MNS chief Raj Thackeray

Launching a scathing attack on the state government over the three-language formula in the school curriculum which he said is an imposition of Hindi over Marathi, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray said Monday that Hindi is not the national language and cannot be imposed on states. “I don’t understand why there was such insistence on bringing in Hindi. Earlier, Hindi was taught from around Class 5 or 6, and that was acceptable. But why push it from Class 1 now? Hindi is not the national language. It is the language of one region. It cannot be imposed on other states,” Raj said while reacting strongly to the now-withdrawn three language policy of the Maharashtra government.

On Sunday, on the eve of the Monsoon Session of the state legislature, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced the withdrawal of government resolutions mandating the teaching of Hindi from Class 1 in schools. The move of introducing the three-language policy had drawn severe criticism from regional parties, civil society, and prominent Marathi figures. Following the announcement, both Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray cancelled the joint protest rally that was scheduled for July 5. “There was absolutely no need for all of this,” Raj said at the press conference in Mumbai. He also responded to the common justification that Hindi is necessary for migrant Hindi-speaking populations in Maharashtra. “Many people from North India come to Maharashtra for work. If this is the case, then Marathi should be taught in their states instead. Why imposing Hindi in Maharashtra, and over Marathi? This attempt to impose a 150–200-year-old language on 3,000-year-old Marathi is not acceptable to us,” he said. He said the matter has now been resolved, but the way it unfolded was avoidable. “Yesterday, the state government had no choice but to cancel both government resolutions related to Hindi imposition. I would like to congratulate the Marathi people for taking a firm stand. The issue was unnecessary to begin with,” he said. “Apart from the public, I also want to thank some writers, a few artists, and Marathi media journalists and editors who supported the cause.” “We (MNS) were the first to oppose the decision. As tensions rose, other



political parties joined us — including Uddhav Thackeray’s Shiv Sena, Sharad Pawar’s NCP (Nationalist Congress Party), and others. We had declared a protest on July 5. Had that rally taken place, it would have been unprecedented. It would have reminded people of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement. A united Marathi voice can have real impact — I hope the government has understood that,” he said.

Raj also recalled last week’s meeting with Shiv Sena minister Dada Bhuse. “When he came to meet me, he said, ‘At least hear us out.’ I told him, ‘I’ll hear you, but I won’t agree.’ There will be no compromise. This is slow poisoning — these ideas are planted gradually. They tried it, and it backfired. Now they are talking about forming committees. Let them. It does not concern us. But the government must make sure this does not happen again. We will never accept such things.” After the withdrawal, Sena (UBT) suggested replacing the cancelled protest with a victory gathering. Raj welcomed the move saying, “Sanjay Raut called me after the decision and asked, ‘What next?’ I told him we will now have to cancel the protest, but we could definitely organise a victory rally. We agreed to hold it on July 5, but we have not announced the venue yet. I will speak with my team, and they will coordinate. Let us be clear — this isn’t about party politics. It is a win for the Marathi people, and that is how it should be seen,” he said.

‘Under pretext of marriage’: Ghaziabad woman alleges 5-year abuse by IPL cricketer



GNS News Agency, July 8

cricketSpeaking to The Indian Express, Alok Priyadarshi, Additional Commissioner of Police, Ghaziabad, said the woman has recorded her statement but the police are yet to talk to the cricketer. A woman from Ghaziabad has alleged that she was emotionally, mentally and physically abused by an Indian Premier League (IPL) cricketer, claiming that he breached the promise to marry her after being in a relationship with her for five years. According to the police, they were informed of the allegations two days ago after the woman had filed a complaint with the Uttar Pradesh government’s grievance redressal portal. The woman said in her complaint filed on June 21 that she had been in a relationship with the cricketer for five years and that he “emotionally, mentally, and physically exploited” her “under the pretext of marriage”. Speaking to The Indian Express, Alok Priyadarshi, Additional Commissioner of Police, Ghaziabad, said the woman has recorded her statement but the police are yet to talk to the cricketer. “Once the investigation is complete and we know the facts of the case, we will proceed,” he said.

The woman’s complaint also says that during the relationship, she was “completely emotionally and financially dependent” on him and that he was involved with other women as well. According to her complaint, she dialled the women’s helpline (181) on June 14, but got no assistance. Seeking assistance from the Uttar Pradesh chief minister directly, the complainant claimed she is “socially and financially helpless”. The complaint says that she has “evidence,

including chats, screenshots, video calls, and photos” to back her allegations. She also sought “a fair and swift investigation” into the allegations so that other women can be stopped from falling “prey to a deceitful relationship”. The woman later took to X and shared a photo with the cricketer, along with a copy of the complaint. She also sought help from the UP Police and the National Commission for Women.

Faridabad woman booked for repeatedly slapping, abusing cook on casteist lines

The incident was captured on CCTV footage, which has since gone viral online, and occurred at around 10.30 am on June 17 in Sector 17. The incident was captured on CCTV footage, which has since gone viral online, and occurred at around 10.30 am on June 17 in Sector 17.

The Faridabad police Friday booked a woman for allegedly slapping her cook eight times, and verbally abusing her, including hurling casteist insults, earlier this month inside her house. The Faridabad police said a First Information Report (FIR) was registered in the evening last Friday at the Sector 17 Police Station against Deepali Jain for allegedly slapping her cook, Shyama Devi.

The FIR invoked Section 3 of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and sections 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 133 (assault or criminal force with intent to dishonour), 351(3) (criminal intimidation by threatening grievous hurt), and 79 (insulting the modesty of a woman) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Vinod Kumar, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Old Faridabad, said Monday, “The investigation is underway. We do not have any updates at this stage. We will take necessary action after going through the CCTV footage and other evidence.”

Multi-storey building collapses like a pack of cards in Shimla; locals blame four-lane NH work



GNS News Agency, July 8

A multi-storey building collapsed and cracks appeared in other residential structures in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, on Monday. The locals blamed the damage on the excavation and rock-cutting undertaken for a four-lane highway project. The house at Sanjay Van Colony in the Chamyana gram panchayat collapsed around 8 am. The house belonged to Ranjana Verma, 48, who vacated it the previous night. A viral video shows the building collapsing like a pack of cards. Later, Panchayati Raj Minister Anirudh Singh visited the site and assured the affected families of all possible assistance. A grieving Ranjana Verma told The Indian Express, “Minor cracks had been appearing in our house for about a month, but they deepened over the past three days with the onset of monsoon rain. We had complained to the NHAI, which had hired a private company for the highway construction, about how the unscientific cutting of rocks and insertion of massive iron rods into already fragile hills were weakening the slope. But nothing was done. The strong vibrations caused by the cutting and insertion of 15-20-m-long iron rods shook the entire hillside.”

The four-lane road between Kaithlighat and Dhalli is part of the Kalka-Shimla National Highway 5. Verma, a widow, added, “My husband, the late Rajesh Verma, was

an SDO-rank officer in Shimla. We had invested all our savings into building this house. Last night, I didn’t even have time to collect my belongings—let alone the furniture—before the collapse. I lost everything, including jewellery, cash, and other valuables.” When contacted, Neeraj Chahal, liaison officer of Gawar Construction Limited—the company contracted by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)—said, “We have been working according to the plan approved by NHAI. This was part of slope protection work involving iron mesh netting, standard drilling, and anchoring on the hillside where the houses were located. There may have been an invisible crack in the hill that loosened during the heavy rainfall over the past three days. Even the iron mesh and rods inserted into the hillside were destroyed in the landslide.” Several other buildings in Shimla are also at risk owing to landslides. In New Shimla, cracks have appeared in the electricity board’s office. A building in Krishna Nagar is also similarly endangered. Across multiple wards, landslides are threatening the structural integrity of homes. Officials reported that a landslide hit the Housing Board Colony in Mehli early on Monday. The retaining wall of two government quarters has completely sunk. Locals allege that construction activity on a private plot downhill destabilised the area during the rain. Tarpaulins have been placed temporarily, but the buildings remain at risk. A cloudburst was reported late on Sunday night in Sikaseri village under Sarpura gram panchayat in the Rampur subdivision. The incident caused significant damage, including the collapse of one house and at least three cow sheds. Two cows and two calves were washed away. Officials said the seasonal rivulet where the cloudburst occurred feeds into Samej Khad, which saw extensive devastation during last year’s monsoon. Samej Khad further joins the Satluj river. Separately, a car accident occurred about 4 km ahead of Jalog in the Jalog subdivision. Of the three people in the vehicle, two were confirmed dead while one remained missing at the time of reporting. Officials stated that search operations were underway to trace the missing person.

Siddaramaiah, DK Shivakumar present united front amid renewed buzz on change of guard in Karnataka

GNS News Agency, July 8

A day after Congress MLA Iqbal Hussain fuelled speculations about a change of guard in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar presented a united front in Mysuru Monday, ruling out a “revolution” in the government in the next two months. “This government will be secure as a bande (boulder) for five years,” the chief minister told reporters, before raising Shivakumar’s hand in front of TV cameras. Bande, incidentally, is a moniker for Shivakumar, who is referred to as ‘Kanakapurada Bande’ – Kanakapura being the constituency he represents.

The gesture came amid renewed speculations of Shivakumar replacing him in the top post. Responding to questions in this regard, Siddaramaiah said, “BJP leaders are experts in telling lies. He and I are on good terms.” The two leaders were in Mysuru to offer “Bagina” to the Krishnarajasagar (KRS) reservoir, located near Srirangapatna in Mandya district. The Bagina ritual involves offering a saree, flowers, fruits, bangles, turmeric-vermilion (arishina-kumkuma), and rice placed on a bamboo tray. As per a purported ‘seat-sharing’ formula, under which Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were to hold power for two and a half years each, the former is supposed to step down this year. There has, however, never been any official confirmation on this.

On Sunday, MLA Hussain had triggered speculations with his reaction to claims made by Cooperation Minister K N Rajanna last week that a “revolution” would take place in



Karnataka politics after September. Though Rajanna clarified later that he was referring to changes in all parties after September, Hussain said that it was in reference to the leadership transition in the Karnataka Congress government. “I am confident that the (Congress) high command will take the right decision at the right time and give him (Shivakumar) an opportunity.... The ‘revolution’ they are talking about is the same thing. Everything will be decided in two to three months,” he said. Speaking to reporters in Mangaluru on Monday, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao objected to Rajanna’s comment and the subsequent remarks by Hussain. “The use of words such as ‘revolution’ is not right. In the same way, such statements (by the MLA) only cause unnecessary confusion. This is neither good for our government, nor the party,” he said.

Despite rising revenue deficit, Maharashtra govt presents supplementary demands worth Rs 57,609 crore



GNS News Agency, July 8

Despite fears of rising fiscal and revenue deficits, the Maharashtra government tabled supplementary demands of Rs 57,509.71 crore in the Legislative Assembly Monday to allocate funds for various schemes and projects. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented these demands on the first day of the three-week Monsoon Session, with an eye on the upcoming civic body polls and infrastructure projects.

Supplementary demands refer to the additional funds required for various schemes, programmes, and projects beyond what is allocated in a budget. During the Maharashtra Budget session in March 2025, Pawar tabled supplementary demands worth Rs 6,480.20 crore. The Opposition questioned the move, citing the deteriorating financial condition. “The state already has a revenue deficit of Rs 45,890 crore. With the additional supplementary demands of Rs 57,609.71 crore, the total revenue deficit will rise above Rs 1 lakh crore. It speaks of financial mismanagement prevalent in the state,” said Nationalist Congress Party (SP) president and MLA Jayant Patil.

Out of the total demands, Rs 15,465.13 crore have been allocated to the Urban Development Department, headed by Pawar’s fellow Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, ahead of the elections in 29 civic bodies, including the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). The financial arrangement is made to undertake various development works within the jurisdiction of urban local bodies. Further, Rs 11,042.76 crore has been earmarked for various grants as per the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission. As road contractors across the state intensify their protests against the non-payment of dues worth Rs 80,000 crore, the state government has allocated Rs 9,068.49 crore for the Public Works Department (PWD) to clear the pending dues for carrying out road and bridge

works. The government has earmarked Rs 3,228.38 crore for the refund of stamp duty cess collected for Metro projects and other development works by municipal corporations, municipalities, municipal councils, and zilla parishads.

9 arrested, 60 kg of heroin seized from gang led by Pak-based smuggler: Punjab Police



GNS News Agency, July 8

9 arrested, 60 kg of heroin seized from gang led by Pak-based smuggler: Punjab PoliceThe operation was conducted simultaneously in all 28 police districts of the state on the DGP’s directions. A joint operation conducted by the Punjab Police, Border Security Force (BSF) and Rajasthan Police recovered 60 kg of heroin from a gang in Rajasthan’s Barmer with Pakistani and Canadian links, the Punjab police said. Nine people have been arrested in connection with the seizure. Gaurav Yadav, Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab, said on Monday that the gang was led by Pakistan-based smuggler Tanveer Shah and Canada-based Joban Kaler. “A big network of smugglers and hawala operators has been busted,” the DGP said. In a massive crackdown, #Amritsar Commissionerate Police, with the support of #BSF and #Rajasthan Police, dismantles a major international drug cartel operated by #Pak-based smuggler Tanveer Shah and #Canada based handler Joban Kaler and recovers a huge consignment of 60.302 Kg... Taking to X, Yadav stated that they recovered “a huge consignment of 60.302 Kg Heroin from near the International Border in Barmer, Rajasthan”. He added that raids are taking place in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir in connection with this seizure

Faridabad woman booked for repeatedly slapping, abusing cook on casteist lines



GNS News Agency, July 8

The incident was captured on CCTV footage, which has since gone viral online, and occurred at around 10.30 am on June 17 in Sector 17. The incident was captured on CCTV footage, which has since gone viral online, and occurred at around 10.30 am on June 17 in Sector 17. The Faridabad police Friday booked a woman for allegedly slapping her cook eight times, and verbally abusing her, including hurling casteist insults, earlier this month inside her house.

The Faridabad police said a First Information Report (FIR) was registered in the evening last Friday at the Sector 17 Police Station against Deepali Jain for allegedly slapping her cook, Shyama Devi. The FIR invoked Section 3 of

the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and sections 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 133 (assault or criminal force with intent to dishonour), 351(3) (criminal intimidation by threatening grievous hurt), and 79 (insulting the modesty of a woman) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Vinod Kumar, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Old Faridabad, said Monday, "The investigation is underway. We do not have any updates at this stage. We will take necessary action after going through the CCTV footage and other evidence." A spokesperson told The Indian Express Monday that the police have issued a notice to Jain to join the investigation, adding no arrests have been made so far. The incident was captured on CCTV footage, which has since gone viral online, and occurred at around 10.30 am on June 17 in Sector 17. CCTV footage shows Jain coming down a staircase, and slapping Delvi, who was speaking to a family member. Jain slaps her six more times as family members gather. She also attempts to hit Devi with a mop, but discards it after a family member intervenes. Jain then slaps her again before being led away. Devi, who has been working for the family for two-and-a-half years, claimed that Jain assaulted her "for no reason" after she opened the door for the driver, who had rung the bell repeatedly. She stated in her complaint that her nose started bleeding, her cheeks were swollen, and her head hurt even as she allegedly faced casteist insults.

Bengaluru woman's body found in garbage truck, live-in-partner arrested for murder

GNS News Agency, July 8

The Bengaluru police Sunday arrested a man from Assam for allegedly killing his live-in partner and disposing of her body in a municipal garbage truck following a domestic dispute. The police said the woman, Asha, 40, and the accused, Samshuddin, 32, worked for a housekeeping company, and had been in a relationship for the past 18 months. Asha was a widow from Bengaluru who had two adopted children living in a hostel, said the police. Samshuddin, who is married and has his wife and children in Assam, had been cohabiting with Asha for five to six months, they said.



According to the police, the couple frequently quarrelled over various domestic issues. On Saturday, tensions escalated when Asha returned home intoxicated, which investigators said was a recurring pattern that consistently triggered arguments between the pair. "This led to another round of argument, and it provoked Samshuddin, who, in a fit of rage, strangled the woman," said a police officer. The police suspect that Asha might have been in a relationship with another person, potentially adding to the tensions. Samshuddin allegedly wrapped Asha's body in a blue plastic bag, placed it inside a white plastic gunny bag, and transported it on his two-wheeler while searching for an appropriate disposal location.

Eventually, he allegedly dumped the body inside a parked garbage truck of the civic body beside the sports complex in the C K Achukattu area, hoping that it would be collected and disposed of without detection. The crime came to light around 1.45 am Sunday when Mohamad Mustaf, a software engineer, went there to dispose of his household trash. Mustaf typically took out the garbage late at night because his and his wife's work schedule prevented them from meeting the morning waste collection times. Upon approaching the garbage truck, Mustaf noticed hair and blood on the gunny bag and immediately alerted the CK Achukattu police station. The police registered a murder case and launched an investigation. Through technical analysis and examination of CCTV footage, the police identified Samshuddin as the prime suspect and arrested him in the Hulimavu area. Lokesh B Jagalasar, Deputy Commissioner of Police, South, confirmed that investigations revealed the couple had been presenting themselves as husband and wife to neighbours and acquaintances.

CM Siddaramaiah to meet farmers protesting against land acquisition near Devanahalli

GNS News Agency, July 8

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will on July 4 meet farmers protesting against the acquisition of 1,777 acres of land, spread across 13 villages in rural Bengaluru, by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB), and discuss the matter at a Cabinet meeting. Around 800 families from these villages in the Devanahalli-Channarayapatna region in rural Bengaluru have been protesting since 2022 against the acquisition of land by KIADB for a high-tech defence and aerospace sector park. The original decision for the land acquisition was taken in January 2022 by the BJP government headed by Basavaraj Bommai. Amid the protests, Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil said last week that "495 acres of land belonging to three villages in Channarayapatna Hobli have been excluded from acquisition for the proposed hi-tech Defence and Aerospace Park". "Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will hold a meeting with Devanahalli-Channarayapatna farmer activists and leaders of the struggle on July 4. He will hold a comprehensive meeting on the demands and problems of the farmers," the chief minister's office said after farmer leaders met him last week.



The issue reached a flash point on June 25 after the police dispersed a protest, and arrested some leaders. Several national farmers' unions, including the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and the Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, objected to the use of police force to disperse protesters on June 25. "KIADB had already acquired 6,000 acres from surrounding villages for the Haralur Industrial Area. Thousands of farmers and villagers were evicted in those earlier acquisitions, but no rightful compensation was awarded to them. In this context, the farmers firmly opposed the acquisition attempt for another 1,777 acres from the beginning under the banner of 'KIADB Land Acquisition Resistance Struggle Committee'," SKM said in a statement.

The farmer unions have accused the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government of following in the footsteps of the BJP government despite an assurance made ahead of the 2023 Assembly polls to withdraw the notification for the land acquisition if the Congress were to be voted to power. "This is a gross violation of the 'Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation Act -2013' brought by the UPAA govt led by Congress," SKM said in the statement last week. The Kisan Sangharsh Samiti has expressed confidence in a resolution emerging when Chief Minister Siddaramaiah meets the farmers on July 4, "by taking the Channarayapatna farmers into confidence and engaging in dialogue with the protesters". Large and Medium Industries Minister Patil and K H Muniyappa, the minister in charge of the Bengaluru rural region, said at a press briefing that the preliminary notification for acquiring 1,772.2 acres of land from 13 villages in Channarayapatna Hobli was issued on August 27, 2021, followed by a government order on February 15, 2022.

"However, it was observed that farmers from this region had already lost land twice earlier for industrial projects. Taking this into account, along with the fact that the land included irrigated farmland and human habitation, the government decided to exclude 231.23 acres in Channarayapatna, 185.18 acres in Mattibaru, and 78.21 acres in Shrotriya Tellohalli from the acquisition process," Patil said. The industries minister further said the KIADB acquisition of the remaining 1,232 acres across 10 villages

— Palya, Haraluru, Polanahalli, Gokare Bachchenahalli, Nalluru, Mallepura, Nallappanahalli, Cheemachanahalli, Muddenahalli, and Hadayala — would proceed. "Compensation for the acquired land will be determined by the district commissioner. Additionally, land losers will have the option to receive 10,771 sq ft of developed land per acre, which they can use for commercial purposes," the minister said. "With this decision, the government has honoured the demands of the farmers. The protest should now come to an end. We must strike a balance between industrial growth and agricultural welfare," he added. "There is no precedent for the exclusion of land once notified for acquisition for such a purpose. But in this case, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Patil have made a pro-farmer decision. This gesture should be acknowledged, and the protest should be stopped," Muniyappa said.

'We maintain parks well, can oversee sweeping': Gurgaon RWAs seek speedy handover of sanitation duties from civic body

The garbage issue in Gurgaon has become a topic of discussion at a time when the city is set to host the national conference on urban local bodies on July 3 and 4 at Manesar. The garbage issue in Gurgaon has become a topic of discussion at a time when the city is set to host the national conference on urban local bodies on July 3 and 4 at Manesar. Residents in Gurgaon have called for the municipal corporation to promptly transfer sanitation duties to Residents' Welfare Associations (RWAs) amid a rising garbage menace in the area. Despite a proposed agreement for RWAs to take over these responsibilities, no formal policy has been established, they said. In a meeting on May 18, more than 60 RWAs in Gurgaon resolved to take over sanitation duties from the municipal corporation. The decision received in-principle approval from the previous municipal commissioner Ashok Garg, but the handover of sanitation duties has not commenced formally. A corporation official also confirmed that no policy in this regard has been finalised and notified yet, despite the civic body having accepted the handover of sanitation duties to RWAs.

As hedging desk comes up for cotton and maize, soyabean farmers in Maharashtra ask: 'Why keep us away from futures market?'



GNS News Agency, July 8

SEBI imposed a ban on soyabean to prevent speculation in commodities, which the regulator believed was causing unusual price fluctuations in the physical markets. Market participants, however, have strongly denied this claim. SEBI imposed a ban on soyabean to prevent speculation in commodities, which the regulator believed was causing unusual price fluctuations in the physical markets. Market participants, however, have strongly denied this claim. (File photo) Last week, as Vilas Ufade and other members of Vikas Agro, a farmer producer company (FPC), watched Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis unveil the first hedging desk for cotton and maize in Pune, one question lingered in their minds: "Why has soyabean been banned from the futures markets for four long years?"

Located in the heart of Maharashtra's soyabean belt in Latur, Vikas Agro was one of the more than 700 FPCs which deal with the commodity in the futures market of the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX). However, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in December 2021 banned the trading of soyabean, along with six other agro commodities, on the futures platform. The hedging desk for cotton and maize was es-

tablished to provide training and guidance to farmers and FPOs on participating in the commodity futures market. Nevertheless, "it is going to be a bloodbath" for soyabean farmers, according to Ufade.

"Even before sowing, prices are far below the government-declared minimum support price (MSP). With no guidance on prices, it will be difficult to form any logical decision about offloading," said Ufade. SEBI imposed a ban on soyabean to prevent speculation in commodities, which the regulator believed was causing unusual price fluctuations in the physical markets. Market participants, however, have strongly denied this claim. The ban remains in force, with soyabean prices trading well below their MSP for most of 2023 and 2024. This year, as Ufade said, the prices are almost Rs 1,000/quintal less than the MSP of Rs 4,986/quintal even before the sowing has finished. For FPCs like Vikas Agro, the futures platform served as an alternative to traditional markets for offloading their produce. "Before the ban, we traded over 500 tonnes of soyabean on the platform. If anything, the price guidance available in the futures platform would have helped us to decide on whether to sell in the wholesale markets of Latur or hold on to the produce for more time," Ufade said.

The futures platform showed price movement three months in advance. "For our members, this was the biggest advantage of the platform. If the prices in September are below our expectations, instead of soybeans, they would go for some other crop. At least there was some price point to take the call. Now it is all up in the air," explained Ufade. According to agri commodity analyst Dipak Chavan, the SEBI's decision to ban futures trading was not in line with established norms or reasons. "Across the world, agri commodity exchanges have helped farmers and the agricultural community at large to develop price insights. This ban makes no sense," he said.

how 2 alert cops foiled an ATM robbery midway, caught accused red-handed with gas cutters

GNS News Agency, July 8

On March 23 this year, a gang of robbers targeted the ATM kiosk of a public sector bank on the Dehu-Alandi Road in Pune. Using gas cutters to breach the cash dispenser machine at around 2.20 am, they fled with cash amounting to Rs 16.8 lakh. A coordinated probe launched subsequently looked into multiple angles, but the police could not achieve any breakthrough. Patrolling was intensified in areas closer to the Pune-Mumbai highway and meticulous efforts were taken to cultivate ground-level intelligence on such gangs.

Around 1.50 am on May 26, a patrolling team from the Dehu Road police station zeroed in on a vehicle which was suspiciously parked close to some Automated Teller Machine (ATM) kiosks in the area, the police said. When beat marshals Samadhan Patavkar and Kiran Patil approached the car, the driver started the vehicle in haste and sped towards Alandi. The officers saw that two men were sitting in the car's front seats and a woman was in the back seat.

The next moment, the two officers heard a metallic thud from inside an ATM kiosk. They immediately called for back-up and waited for an opportunity to enter the kiosk. They saw that there were two men inside the kiosk who were about to breach the cash dispenser machine with a gas cutter. As they spotted the cops, the two men started pelting stones and came charging. Fortunately, within moments, Joheb Shaikh, Assistant Inspector, and constable Sopan Valekar reached the spot. After a fistfight, the four police officers finally managed to overpower the two robbers.



The suspects were identified as Mustafa Mobin Khan, 30, and Mustakim Mobin Khan, 25, residents of Pinangwan village in Haryana's Nuh district. The investigation revealed that they were members of a notorious gang of armed robbers led by one Yusuf Khan of Pinangwan. According to the police, preliminary probe revealed that the officers had caught the two just moments before they were about to breach the cash dispenser which had over Rs 15 lakh in it. Detailed investigation later revealed that the three accomplices who had fled in the car were Yusuf Khan's partner Seema Khan, 40, his brother Azad Khan, 45, and one Waris Khan, 20.

The same gang was behind the robbery on the Dehu-

Alandi road in March, the questioning of the suspects has revealed. A team of Dehu Road police is currently conducting a search to arrest the remaining gang members and their leader, who are said to have fled to their village in Haryana. Multiple incidents have been reported previously in Pune, Pimpri Chinchwad and surrounding areas where burglars have used gas cutters or explosives to breach ATM cash dispensers. Probe has revealed these incidents took place at kiosks with inadequate security measures. The series of such heists at ATMs, especially those located in the industrial areas in and around Pune, have revealed a pattern. Most of these heists have taken place in deserted areas during the night or early hours. Despite very clear guidelines from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and repeated communications from the police, banks and non-banking entities which manage ATMs kiosks fail to put adequate security cover in place, officers have observed.

Taking note of aspects like inadequate security cover at the kiosks, the police have also charged bank officials concerned for 'abetting' these crimes by failing to take necessary measures to secure the ATMs, in some of the cases. Officers added that directives issued to banks and ATM managing entities are very elaborate. They pertain to alarm systems linked to cell phones of the bank officials, security cameras and their specifications, armed security guard deployment, lighting arrangements, location of the kiosk, monitoring of CCTV footage, construction of the kiosks and so on. In the ATMs that have been targeted, these directives were blatantly flouted, probe into recent cases has revealed.

3 PILs filed at Calcutta High Court — 'Demand urgent hearing, probe led by retired judge'



GNS News Agency, July 8

On Monday, three PILs were filed at the Calcutta High Court on an alleged incident of rape in a law college in South Kolkata. Mentioned before the division bench of Justice Soumen Sen and Justice Smita Das De, the PILs have been permitted and the matter is likely to be heard on Thursday. In the pleas, the counsels moved for an urgent hearing and an investigation into the case under the monitoring of the Calcutta High Court, headed by a retired judge. Another plea was for the increase of security in various colleges of the state and regular status reports on such security. On June 27, two days after the alleged rape took place, a lawyer of the Calcutta High Court had urged Chief Justice T S Sivagnanam to take suo moto cognisance of the case, arguing that the "state machinery" will otherwise "continue its descent into callous inertia, and evidence may be destroyed, witnesses may be silenced, and justice will be permanently derailed".

In his letter, advocate Souma Subhra Ray asked the High Court to make five considerations. Firstly, he requested the Court to issue directions for a court-monitored, independent criminal investigation, preferably by the CBI, to ensure an "impartial probe". Secondly, he asked for the

constitution of a judicial commission headed by a retired judge of the court to investigate the "institutional, administrative, and security failures" that allowed the incident. The advocate also requested the court to direct the West Bengal government and the university authorities to undertake immediate audits of safety and surveillance systems across all law colleges and higher educational institutions, with special attention to the enforcement of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 and UGC safety guidelines. Advocate Ray also called for an explanation from the police and local administration on the use of force against peaceful protesters after the incident and the "denial of democratic expression". Finally, Ray asked the court to issue appropriate interim directions to safeguard evidence and ensure witness protection in the case. Meanwhile, at the Alipore Police Court, a request has been made for the recording of the statements of the victim's parents as the parents have given consent.

Unidentified miscreants attempt to rob Central Bank of India branch in Medak

Medak: Unidentified miscreants made a failed attempt to rob the Central Bank of India branch at Veludurthi mandal headquarters on Sunday night.

The miscreants broke through a wall of the bank and removed the locks of the store room. However, as they entered the locker room, the bank's automatic alarm system was triggered, prompting them to flee the scene.

Israel steps up Gaza bombardment ahead of White House talks on ceasefire



GNS News Agency, July 8

CAIRO/JERUSALEM, June 30 (Reuters) - Palestinians in northern Gaza reported one of the worst nights of Israeli bombardment in weeks after the military issued mass evacuation orders on Monday, while Israeli officials were due in Washington for a new ceasefire push by the Trump administration. A day after U.S. President Donald Trump urged an end to the 20-month-old war, a confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected at the White House for talks on a Gaza ceasefire, Iran, and possible wider regional diplomatic deals.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. But on the ground in the Palestinian enclave there was no sign of fighting letting up. "Explosions never stopped; they bombed schools and homes. It felt like earthquakes," said Salah, 60, a father of five children, from Gaza City. "In the news we hear a ceasefire is near, on the ground we see death and we hear explosions." Israeli tanks pushed into the eastern areas of Zeitoun suburb in Gaza City and shelled several areas in the north, while aircraft bombed at least four schools after ordering hundreds of families sheltering inside to leave, residents said.

At least 38 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Monday, health authorities said, including 10 people killed in Zeitoun and at least 13 killed southwest of Gaza City. Medics said most of the 13 were hit by gunfire, but residents also reported an airstrike. The Israeli military said it struck militant targets in northern Gaza, including command and control centers, after taking steps to mitigate the risk of harming civilians.

There was no immediate word from Israel on the reported casualties southwest of Gaza City. The heavy bombardment followed new evacuation orders to vast areas in the north, where Israeli forces had operated before and left behind wide-scale destruction. The military ordered people

there to head south, saying that it planned to fight Hamas militants operating in northern Gaza, including in the heart of Gaza City. A day after Trump called to "Make the deal in Gaza, get the hostages back", Israel's strategic affairs minister Ron Dermer, a confidant of Netanyahu's, was expected on Monday at the White House for talks on Iran and Gaza, an Israeli official said. In Israel, Netanyahu's security cabinet was expected to convene to discuss the next steps in Gaza. On Friday, Israel's military chief said the present ground operation was close to having achieved its goals, and on Sunday, Netanyahu said new opportunities had opened up for recovering the hostages, 20 of whom are believed to still be alive.

Palestinian and Egyptian sources with knowledge of the latest ceasefire efforts said that mediators Qatar and Egypt have stepped up their contacts with the two warring sides, but that no date has been set yet for a new round of truce talks. A Hamas official said that progress depends on Israel changing its position and agreeing to end the war and withdraw from Gaza. Israel says it can end the war only when Hamas is disarmed and dismantled. Hamas refuses to lay down its arms. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said that Israel has agreed to a U.S.-proposed 60-day ceasefire and hostage deal, and put the onus on Hamas. "Israel is serious in its will to reach a hostage deal and ceasefire in Gaza," Sa'ar told reporters in Jerusalem. Austrian Foreign Minister Beate Meisl-Reisinger, speaking in Jerusalem on Monday alongside her Israeli counterpart, told reporters that Vienna was very concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, which she described as "unbearable." "Let me be frank, the suffering of civilians is increasingly burdening Israel's relations with Europe. A ceasefire must be agreed upon," she said, calling for the unconditional release of hostages by Hamas and for Israel to allow the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Israel says it continues to allow aid into Gaza and accuses Hamas of stealing it. The group denies that accusation and says Israel uses hunger as a weapon against the Gaza population. The U.S. has proposed a 60-day ceasefire and the release of half the hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and the remains of other Palestinians. Hamas would release the remaining hostages as part of a deal that guarantees ending the war. The war began when Hamas fighters stormed into Israel on October 7, 2023, killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took 251 hostages back to Gaza in a surprise attack that led to Israel's single deadliest day. Israel's subsequent military assault has killed more than 56,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to the Gaza health ministry, displaced almost the whole 2.3 million population and plunged the enclave into a humanitarian crisis. More than 80% of the territory is now an Israeli-militarized zone or under displacement orders, according to the United Nations.

Ukraine F-16 pilot killed in large-scale Russian attack, Zelenskiy calls for US help

KYIV/LVIV, Ukraine, GNS News Agency, July 8A Ukrainian F-16 fighter pilot died in a crash while repelling a Russian air attack that involved hundreds of drones, cruise and ballistic missiles, authorities said on Sunday, as Moscow intensifies night-time air barrages in the fourth year of war. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy praised the pilot, Maksym Ustyomenko, and bestowed upon him posthumously the title of Hero of Ukraine, the country's highest decoration.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. He also called for more support from Washington and Western allies to bolster Ukraine's air defences after the attack, which damaged homes and infrastructure across the country and injured at least 12 people, according to local authorities.

In Kyiv, families huddled in metro stations for shelter after air raid sirens rung out. Machine-gun fire and explosions were heard across the capital and in the western city of Lviv, where such attacks are less common. The governor of the Lviv region, bordering Poland, said the raid targeted critical infrastructure. Ukraine has now lost three F-16s since it began operating the U.S.-made jets last year. Kyiv has not revealed the size of its F-16 fleet, but they have become a central and heavily used part of Ukraine's defences. The pilot flew the damaged jet away from a settlement but had no time to eject before it crashed, the Ukrainian Air Force said.

"The pilot used all of his onboard weapons and shot down seven air targets. While shooting down the last one, his aircraft was damaged and began to lose altitude," the Air Force said on Telegram. Ukrainian military expert Roman Svitan, speaking earlier this month, said the F-16 was not ideally suited to all tasks in the war, particularly repelling drones which swarm Ukrainian cities, as it is better used against higher-speed targets. Zelenskiy, speaking in his nightly video address, said Ustyomenko had been flying missions since the time of a campaign that began in 2014 against Russian-financed separatists who had seized parts of eastern Ukraine. "He mastered four types of aircraft and had important results to his name in defending Ukraine," he said. "It is painful to lose such people." The Ukrainian military said in total Russia launched 477 drones and 60 missiles of various types to Ukraine overnight. Ukrainian forces destroyed 211 of the drones and 38 missiles, it said, while 225 more drones were either lost due to electronic warfare or were decoys that carried no explosives. Writing earlier on X,

Jury in Sean 'Diddy' Combs' sex trafficking trial to start deliberating

NEW YORK, June 30 (Reuters) - The jury in Sean "Diddy" Combs' sex trafficking trial is expected to begin its deliberations on Monday, after hearing dueling narratives from prosecutors and defense lawyers last week about whether the music mogul forced his former girlfriends to take part in drug-fueled sexual performances. Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to racketeering conspiracy and two counts each of sex trafficking and transportation to engage in prostitution. A former billionaire known for elevating hip-hop in American culture, Combs could be sentenced to life behind bars if convicted on all five counts. Get a quick look at the days breaking legal news and analysis from The Afternoon Docket newsletter. Sign up here. Over more than six weeks of testimony in Manhattan federal court, two of Combs' former girlfriends -- the rhythm and blues singer Casandra "Cassie" Ventura and a woman known in court by the pseudonym Jane -- told the 12-member jury that he forced them to take part in the performances with paid male escorts, sometimes known as "Freak Offs," while he watched, masturbated and occasionally filmed.

Both women testified that Combs beat them, and jurors saw a hotel surveillance video showing Combs attacking Ventura in a hallway in 2016. "Cassie repeatedly told you that the defendant's violence was in the back of her mind whenever he proposed a Freak Off," prosecutor Christy Slavik said in her closing argument on Thursday. "The whole point was to control Cassie, to make her afraid to say no to the defendant. And it worked." "Combs' lawyers acknowledged that he was at times violent in domestic relationships, but argued Ventura and Jane took part consensually in the performances. During cross-examination, the defense highlighted tender and sexually explicit text messages the women sent Combs over the course of their years-long relationships with him." "If he was charged with domestic violence, we wouldn't all be here," defense lawyer Marc Agnifilo said during his closing argument on Friday. "He did not do the things he's charged with." The founder of Bad Boy Records, Combs lived a lavish lifestyle in his Miami and Los Angeles mansions and was feted for turning artists like Notorious B.I.G. and Usher into stars.

Dalai Lama set to reveal succession plan as China watches



DHARAMSHALA, India, GNS News Agency, July 8The Dalai Lama will address a major three-day gathering of Buddhist religious figures this week ahead of his 90th birthday, as his followers wait for the Tibetan spiritual leader to share details about his succession in a move that could irk China. Beijing views the Dalai Lama, who fled Tibet in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule, as a separatist and says it will choose his successor. The Dalai Lama has said his successor will be born outside China and urged his followers to reject anyone chosen by Beijing.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Tibetan Buddhists hold that enlightened monks are reborn to carry forward their spiritual legacy. The 14th Dalai Lama will turn 90 on Sunday and has said he would consult senior monks and others at this time to share possible clues on where his successor, a boy or a girl, could be found following his death. "The rest of my life I will dedicate for the benefit of others, as much as possible, as extensive as possible," the Dalai Lama told a gathering of his followers on Monday as they offered prayers for his long life. "There will be some kind of a framework within which we can talk about the continuation of the institution of the Dalai Lamas," he said, without elaborating on the framework.

He has previously said he could possibly reincarnate in India, where he lives in exile near the northern Himalayan town of Dharamshala. He was identified as the reincarnation of his predecessor when he was two. Dolma Tsering Teykhang, the deputy speaker of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile in Dharamshala, said it was important for the world to hear directly from the Dalai Lama on the issue

Pakistan, China working to establish new regional bloc with potential to replace SAARC: Report

GNS News Agency, July 8

Pakistan and China are working on a proposal to establish a new regional organisation that could potentially replace the now-defunct South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), according to a media report on Monday. Quoting diplomatic sources familiar with the development, the Express Tribune newspaper reported that talks between Islamabad and Beijing are now at an advanced stage as both sides are convinced that a new organisation is essential for regional integration and connectivity. Citing sources, the paper said that this new organisation could potentially replace the regional bloc SAARC, which comprises India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

A recent trilateral meeting between Pakistan, China and Bangladesh in Kunming, China, was part of those diplomatic manoeuvres, they said, adding that its goal was to invite other South Asian countries, which were part of SAARC, to join the new grouping. Bangladesh dismisses alliance talks. However, Bangladesh's interim government had dismissed the idea of any emerging alliance between Dhaka, Beijing and Islamabad, saying the meeting was not "political". "We are not forming any alliance," foreign affairs adviser M. Touhid Hossain had said. According to sources, India would be invited to the new proposed forum, while countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan are

because while China "tries to vilify him at every chance ... it is trying to frame rules and regulations on how to have the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama in their hand". "China is trying to grab this institution ... for its political purpose," she said. "We want the incarnation of the Dalai Lama to be born not only for the survival of Tibet as a distinct culture, religion and nation, but also for the well-being of the whole humanity." Thupten Ngodup, Tibet's chief state oracle, said typically such discussions on the reincarnation do not take place when a monk is still alive but things are different now mainly because the "Chinese government is interfering". Beijing said in March that the Dalai Lama was a political exile who had "no right to represent the Tibetan people at all". China has said it is open to discussing his future if he recognises that Tibet and Taiwan are inalienable parts of China, a proposal the Tibetan government in exile has rejected.

The religious conference this week, being held for the first time since 2019, will be attended by more than 100 Tibetan Buddhist leaders and will feature a video statement from the Dalai Lama. Hollywood star Richard Gere, a long-time follower of Tibetan Buddhism, will be among those attending, organisers have said. The Dalai Lama will attend prayers called by the Tibetan government in exile on July 5 and participate in his birthday celebrations a day later, according to a schedule shared by the organisers. He will speak at the celebrations for about half an hour. India's parliamentary affairs minister, Kiren Rijiju, and some other Indian officials are expected to attend. Tibetans have been praying for his long health, especially since knee surgery in the U.S. last year, although the Dalai Lama told Reuters in December that he could live until he was 110. The previous Dalai Lama died earlier than expected at 58. The Dalai Lama and Tibetan officials say there is a system in place for the government-in-exile to continue its political work while officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Foundation search and recognise the next Dalai Lama. The current Dalai Lama set up the foundation in 2015 and its senior officers include several of his aides. Teykhang and other Tibetan officials said the Dalai Lama has been preparing his people for the day when he is gone, especially through his 2011 decision to hand his political role to a democratically elected government, ending a 368-year-old tradition of being both spiritual and temporal head of Tibetans. "Since he has come in the form of a human, we have to agree that there will be a moment when he is not with us," said Teykhang. "His Holiness has really prepared us for that day, he made us act as if he's not there."



expected to be part of the grouping. The main purpose of the new organisation is to seek greater regional engagement through enhanced trade and connectivity, the newspaper said. It added that if the proposal is materialised, it would replace the SAARC, which has been suspended for a long time due to the India-Pakistan conflict. Its biennial summits have not taken place since the last one in Kathmandu in 2014. The 2016 SAARC Summit was to be held in Islamabad. But after the terrorist attack on an Indian Army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18 that year, India expressed its inability to participate in the summit due to "prevailing circumstances".

Munnar church takes Hindi route as migrant workers flock to Mass



GNS News Agency, July 8

The Mount Carmel Basilica in Munnar has begun holding a Mass in Hindi for migrant workers here. The first Hindi Mass was held An increasing number of Hindi-speaking migrant workers in the plantation sector has led to the decision, according to the church authorities. Munnar church takes Hindi route as migrant workers flock to Mass | Video Credit: special arrangement "Though the migrant workers were attending the weekly Malayalam and Tamil Mass, they could not fully participate in the prayers due to the language barrier. Hence, they requested for a Hindi Mass. We shared their request with the basilica rector Fr. Michael Valayinjil, who gave a positive response," says Fr. Christudas, assistant vicar of Ave Maria Church Devikulam. Increase in participants

"Initially, the Hindi Mass will be offered at the Mount Carmel Basilica on the last Sunday of every month. If more people turn up, the Mass will be held every Sunday," he says. "Over the years, Masses have been held in many languages in the churches in Munnar, including in Tamil, Malayalam, and English. But, a Hindi Mass is a first here. Through a Mass in their own language, we hope the faithful can fulfil their spiritual needs in a new place," says Fr. Christudas. Meanwhile, the church authorities are continuing their efforts to track Catholic migrant workers in Munnar. Mostly, Catholic workers from Jharkhand are working in tea plantations including Lakshmi, Kadalur, Kallar, Rajamala, Vaguvarai, Thenmala, Thalayar and Chenduvvara here. Nearly 100 Christian families are working in various tea plantations in Munnar, according to the authorities. Long-pending demand

Already, a large number of migrant workers are attending the Mass in the Mount Carmel Basilica every Sunday, says Richard Joseph, the church's sexton. "The Hindi Mass was a long-pending demand of the migrant workers," says Mr. Joseph. Fr. Christudas, who had worked in north India for many years, led the Hindi Mass on Sunday. After the Mass, Bishop of Vijayapuram Mar Sebastian Thekkethecheril blessed the faithful and interacted with the workers. Mount Carmel Basilica, the first Catholic church in the high ranges, was established by Spanish missionary Fr. Alfonso Maria De Los Angeles for plantation workers, mostly from Tamil Nadu, in 1890.

21-year-old Baloch student becomes another victim of extra-judicial killing by Pakistani forces

Quetta: Zeeshan Baloch, a 21-year-old student and resident of Khudabadan, Panjgur in Balochistan, was extra-judicially killed on Monday after his enforced disappearance by a "Pakistan-backed death squad," according to a human rights organisation.

"Tragically, today morning, around 9:00 a.m., the family received devastating news: Zeeshan's bullet-riddled body was discovered near Surdu Ghareeb Nawaz Hotel. His body bore multiple gunshot wounds," read a statement issued by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC). The BYC asserted that the "targeted killing of Zeeshan, who had already endured the trauma of growing up without his father due to enforced disappearance, illustrates the multigenerational cycle of violence and repression inflicted on Baloch families by Pakistani authorities." Earlier in the day, several human rights organisations called for the immediate release of Zeeshan after his abduction on Sunday late evening from Football Chowk, Panjgur. They said that Zeeshan was the victim of enforced disappearance by a "state-backed death squad." In the hours following Zeeshan's abduction, his family staged a sit-in protest across the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) road in Panjgur, demanding his immediate release and raising urgent alarm over his safety.

Ada Lovelace: the Enchantress of Numbers



Women in STEM is a popular term you would have heard, and it is well-celebrated in the modern age. However, what about the women who laid the stepping stones for the term? Women who not only broke gender barriers but also played an important role in laying the foundation in several modern fields. One such icon was Ada Lovelace. Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace, more commonly known as Ada Lovelace, was the daughter of the poet Lord Byron and his wife, Anne Isabella Milbanke. She did something most women deemed impossible then. She became the world's first computer programmer. Even though recognised much later, her visionary notes on Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine included what is recognised as the first computer algorithm, earning her that title.

Being a single mother, Lady Byron was sceptical of several skills thought to be irrational — specifically subjects like the arts — which she associated with Lord Byron. In order to prevent Ada from having any poetic tendencies, Lady Byron made sure that her daughter received a rigorous education in science and mathematics, which were very uncommon for girls in her era. Ada had a natural aptitude for numbers and reasoning from a young age. Among her tutors were renowned mathematicians like Augustus De Morgan, a well-known logician, and Mary Somerville, one of the first female members of the Royal Astronomical Society. Ada's life changed dramatically when she met Charles Babbage, the inventor and mathematician who is

frequently referred to as the “father of the computer”, when she was just 17 years old. Babbage was then developing the Difference Engine, a mechanical device used to perform mathematical calculations. Ada was fascinated by his ideas and demonstrated a thorough understanding of his work.

They developed a strong intellectual bond, and Babbage was impressed by her perceptions and critical abilities. He affectionately referred to her as “The Enchantress of Numbers”. Babbage and Lovelace's friendship and collaboration would become one of the most significant intellectual partnerships of the 19th Century. Babbage later started working on the Analytical Engine, a general-purpose computing machine. It contained many features that we see and use in modern computers, including an arithmetic logic unit and integrated memory. In 1842, based on a lecture Babbage gave in Turin, Italian engineer Luigi Federico Menabrea wrote a paper in French about the Analytical Engine. Lovelace was commissioned to translate this paper into English. But she went far beyond a mere translation.

Her notes were three times longer than the original text and offered profound insights into the potential of the machine. She described how the engine could be programmed to perform tasks beyond pure number-crunching—such as composing music—highlighting her prescient understanding of computing as a universal machine. Lovelace most famously included a technique for using the Analytical Engine to calculate a series of Bernoulli numbers. This is widely regarded as the first algorithm ever intended to be executed by a machine, making her the first computer programmer in history. Ada Lovelace Day, celebrated annually in October, promotes the achievements of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The U.S. Department of Defence named a programming language “Ada” in her honour in the 1980s. She was also aware of machines' limitations and emphasised the difference between human creativity and machine processing, which is still relevant in discussions about automation and artificial intelligence today. But in the late 1840s, her health began to decline, and in 1852, she passed away from uterine cancer. She was buried next to her father, Lord Byron, in Nottinghamshire's Church of St Mary Magdalene, as she requested. For many years after her death, Ada Lovelace's contributions were largely forgotten. It wasn't until the mid-20th Century, with the rise of computer science as a discipline, that her work was rediscovered and properly recognised. In a field where women have been traditionally discriminated against and not taken seriously, Ada Lovelace shines bright as a pioneer in not just STEM but also feminism!

‘Disclose PEDs to insurers’

For now, hiding a pre-existing disease (PED) from an insurer before buying a health policy might seem to be an advantage with a lower cost premium. However, the reality is that it can lead to rejection of the claim or even policy cancellation. In both cases, the policyholder must pay exorbitant medical bills from his/her pocket. When one buys cover, he/she is entering into a contract with the insurer. All the medical insurance policies are developed on a legally-binding principle – ‘utmost good faith’ so the insurer and the policyholder must be transparent and honest. While buying the policy, the policyholder has an obligation to disclose all relevant details regarding his/her health conditions, including PEDs. If even a small piece of information on PEDs is not disclosed, it means the policyholder has violated the fundamental legal principle, thereby forcing the insurer to reject claim or even cancel the policy itself. The premium the policyholder has paid till then will go down the drain.

What are PEDs?

A PED is a disease/medical condition existing in an individual even before buying a policy. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) guidelines say illness/disease is treated as a PED if it was diagnosed within three years (36 months) prior to the purchase of the policy by a recognised doctor. (Previously it was 48 months but IRDAI brought it down to 36 months, effective from April 1, 2024.) In common insurance parlance, if an individual knows he has a health issue before buying the policy, it is considered a PED and must be disclosed. V. Mangala, senior subject-matter executive, Aionion Insurance Marketing Pvt. Ltd., says, “It must be noted not every visit to a doctor is treated as a PED. For instance, if you consult a doctor for normal fever, cold, cough, etc. you need not reveal these details. PEDs are those ailments that have a major impact on your general health in the long run. Say, for instance, BP, cholesterol, thyroid, asthma, piles, diabetes, lumbar issues, previous surgery or heart attacks, epilepsy etc., these must necessarily be divulged to the insurer.”

Waiting period

Another concept while buying health



insurance policy is the waiting period. Most insurers in India cover pre-existing diseases but only after the waiting period gets over. If any medical emergency occurs during the waiting period, especially related to the PED, then in almost all cases, the claim would naturally be rejected by the insurer. Though the concept of wait period is there in all insurers, the wait time might differ across insurers. Generally, majority of the insurance companies provide coverage to PEDs after a waiting period of two to three years.

Ms. Mangala says, “In some insurance companies, riders are sold separately at an additional premium. These riders reduce the waiting period, and some insurance companies also cover PEDs from Day 1 with or without a rider, of course, the premium will be high. Therefore, before buying a policy, whether an individual health insurance policy or a family floater policy, the policyholder must choose a policy that has no/lower waiting period.”

Co-payment

Some insurers might offer PED coverage with a ‘co-payment’ clause. Based on the co-payment agreement, the policyholder must pay an agreed portion of the total claim amount; only then will the insurance company settle the remaining claim amount. Ms. Mangala says that it is always advisable and cost-effective to choose a policy without the ‘co-payment’ condition so that the entire claim amount would be settled by the insurance company.”

Global warming changing cloud patterns. That means more global warming

Melbourne: At any given time, about two-thirds of Earth's surface is covered by clouds. Overall, they make the planet much cooler than it would be without them. But as Earth gets warmer, mostly due to the rise in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from humans burning fossil fuels, clouds are changing too.

And that might already be causing more warming – adding to the greenhouse heat boost, and changing clouds even more. Over the past few years, the world's average temperature has increased more than climate scientists were expecting. In our latest research, led by NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, we show that changes in clouds have made a significant contribution to turning up the thermostat. Clouds and climate

Clouds help to keep Earth cool by reflecting sunlight back out to space before it can reach the ground. But not all clouds are equal. Shiny, white clouds reflect away more sunlight – especially when they are closer to the equator, in the parts of Earth that receive the most sun. Grey, broken clouds reflect less sunlight, as do clouds closer to the poles where less light falls.

Research published last year showed that Earth has been absorbing more sunlight than the greenhouse effect alone can explain. Clouds were involved, but it wasn't clear exactly how. Bright cloud zones are shrinking, a new study shows what is happening. The areas covered by highly reflective clouds are shrinking. At the same time, the areas containing broken, less reflective clouds are growing. The net effect is that additional energy from sunlight is reaching Earth's surface. Here it is absorbed, leading to extra heat-

ing. The effect of changes in the properties of the highly reflective clouds, caused by things such as changes in the amount of aerosol pollution in the atmosphere, were found much smaller than the effect of the change in area.

In the big picture, Earth's wind patterns are driven by hot air rising near the equator and the rotation of the planet. This creates huge, looping currents of atmospheric circulation around the globe. Local weather systems – the kind that determine the location and type of clouds – depend on these major, large-scale wind systems.

The major circulation patterns in the atmosphere are changing as a result of global warming. We found much of the cloud action is taking place at the edges of these major wind systems. Highly reflective clouds are on the decline in a region near the equator called the intertropical convergence zone, and also two other bands called the storm tracks, which lie between 30 and 40 degrees of latitude. At the same time the subtropical trade-wind regions, home to ever-present but less reflective broken clouds, are expanding. A feedback loop

In short, the global warming induced by increased greenhouse gases changes the major wind systems on Earth. This in turn reduces the area of highly reflective clouds, leading to additional warming. Warming changes wind patterns, which changes cloud patterns, which results in more warming. This is what we call a “positive feedback” in the climate system: warming leads to more warming. We still have a lot to learn about the details of this feedback loop. Our research will use ongoing satellite-based observations of clouds and how much energy Earth receives and radiates back out to space.

Endocrine disruptors in plastic waste: a new public health threat



Plastics have revolutionised modern living with their convenience and affordability, but this same ubiquity is spawning an invisible, long-term health crisis. Beyond choking oceans and clogging landfills, plastics are now infiltrating our bodies through microplastic particles and a cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs). The evidence is clear and deeply concerning: these substances are interfering with our hormonal systems, damaging reproductive health and increasing our susceptibility to chronic diseases, including cancer. India, now the world's largest generator of plastic waste, stands at the epicenter of this escalating public health emergency. Microplastics in the human body: from the environment to the bloodstream

Once considered inert pollutants, microplastics—plastic particles smaller than 5 mm—are now recognised as biologically active. A 2022 study by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam detected microplastics in the blood of 80% of human participants. Further, a 2024 study published in Nature Scientific Reports reported the presence of microplastics in nearly 89% of blood samples in India, with an average concentration of 4.2 particles per milliliter. These particles have also been found in human lungs, hearts, placentas, breast milk, ovarian follicular fluid, and semen. Alarmingly, testicular tissue in Indian men was found to contain three times more microplastics than that in dogs.

The plastics in our lives are not chemically neutral. They often contain EDCs such as: Bisphenol A (BPA) and BPS: Used in water bottles, food containers, and thermal paper. - Phthalates (e.g., DEHP, DBP): Used to soften plastics and found in cosmetics, toys and IV tubing. - PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances): Found in food packaging and non-stick cookware. These chemicals mimic or block natural hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, thyroid hormones, and cortisol. They interfere with receptor binding, disrupt gene expression in reproductive organs, and induce oxidative stress, inflammation, and apoptosis (cell death). Animal studies published in Food and Chemical Toxicology (2023) showed that even low doses of polystyrene microplastics (20 µg/L) disrupted testosterone levels, impaired sperm production, and damaged the blood-testis barrier. Similar effects were observed in ovaries, where microplastics reduced anti-Müllerian hormone levels, triggered oxidative stress pathways, and induced cell death. Recent clinical studies from China and India have linked the presence of microplastics in semen to reduced sperm count, concentration and motility. Exposure to BPA and phthalates has been associated with lower testosterone levels and elevated luteinizing hormone (LH) levels—both indicators of endocrine disruption. A global review published in Science of the Total Environment further supports the connection between microplastics and male subfertility. Notably, a 2023 study in Environmental Science & Technology Letters reported a strong correlation between microplastic levels in semen and decreased sperm count, motility, and abnormal morphology in Chinese men. In India, studies have documented a 30% decline in average sperm count over the past two decades.

A study published in Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety (2025) found microplastics in 14 out of 18 follicular fluid samples collected from women undergoing fertility treatment in Italy. These particles, along with their associated endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), were found to compromise egg quality and were linked to menstrual irregularities, reduced estradiol levels, and an increased risk

of miscarriage. Epidemiological studies have also linked exposure to phthalates and BPA with conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and spontaneous abortions. These associations have been further supported by findings published in Advances in Pharmacology (2021) and Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology (2023). The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) now classifies several plastic additives as probable human carcinogens. Case-control studies from India have shown that women with elevated levels of DEHP in their urine face nearly a threefold increased risk of breast cancer (odds ratio = 2.97). Exposure to BPA and phthalates has also been linked to higher incidences of prostate, uterine, and testicular cancers.

In addition to their carcinogenic potential, these endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) have been implicated in metabolic disorders. By mimicking cortisol, altering insulin sensitivity, and promoting fat storage, EDCs contribute to the development of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Moreover, PFAS exposure has been associated with metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, and thyroid dysfunction, as reported in a 2024 study published in Frontiers in Public Health. India generates over 9.3 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. Of this, approximately 5.8 million tonnes are incinerated, releasing toxic gases, while 3.5 million tonnes end up polluting the environment. Studies have shown that residents in cities like Mumbai are exposed to between 382 and 2,012 microplastic particles daily through air, food, and water. In Nagpur, doctors are reporting an increase in cases of early puberty, respiratory problems, obesity, and learning disorders in children—conditions increasingly linked to plastic pollution. Recent testing by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) detected phthalate concentrations in drinking water samples from Delhi, Jabalpur, and Chennai that exceeded European Union safety limits. Despite progressive policies like the Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016, updated in 2022 and 2024), enforcement remains inconsistent. Current regulations do not account for low-dose effects or the complex interactions of EDCs, nor do they address the specific vulnerabilities of children and pregnant women.

The health burden associated with EDCs in India is staggering, costing over ₹25,000 crore annually due to increased healthcare spending and lost productivity. The poorest populations, often living near waste dumps or working in the informal recycling sector, bear the brunt of this crisis. Globally, the U.S. reports healthcare costs of \$250 billion annually linked to plastic-related chemicals, according to the Endocrine Society. Biomonitoring and surveillance are crucial for establishing national programmes that measure endocrine-disrupting chemical (EDC) levels in blood, urine, and breast milk. Longitudinal studies must be funded to assess the health impacts of EDC exposure on fertility, neurodevelopment, and chronic diseases. In addition, public awareness needs to be improved, and behaviour changes should be encouraged, such as educating people on the risks of microwaving food in plastic containers and promoting the use of glass, stainless steel, and EDC-free alternatives. It is also important to advocate for antioxidant-rich diets to help counteract oxidative stress.

Further actions should include enforcing plastic segregation, recycling, and safe disposal, while investing in microplastic filtration systems for water treatment plants. Additionally, incentivising the development of biodegradable, non-toxic materials is essential to reduce EDC exposure. Plastic pollution is no longer a distant environmental concern; it is a biological invasion with profound implications for human health. The infiltration of microplastics and plastic-derived EDCs into our bodies is triggering hormonal disruption, reproductive dysfunction and chronic diseases. The science is undeniable, and the time for action is now. For India, the world's most exposed population, this is more than a policy issue—it is a generational imperative. We must address this silent epidemic through science-driven regulation, robust monitoring, public education, and systemic change. The health of our people, especially our children, depends on it.

Revisit digital search powers under the I-T Bill 2025

The Finance Minister recently introduced a proposal in Parliament to allow tax authorities to access, under the Income-Tax Bill, 2025, an individual's “virtual digital space” during search and seizure operations. The justification is straightforward: as financial activity moves online, so must enforcement. However, this glosses over the far-reaching implications of such a shift, which raises significant concerns about privacy, overreach, and surveillance.

A blurring, open-ended

Currently, India's tax law already provides for search and seizure under Section 132 of the Income-Tax Act, 1961. But those powers are limited to physical space such as a house, office, and locker. Since such operations are based on suspicion of undisclosed income or assets, there is a connection between the objective, which is finding undisclosed income and getting access to physical assets.

The new Bill, however, blurs this link by including an individual's digital presence which is not only vast but often contains much more than what is relevant to a tax investigation. Without clear limits, such access can lead to disproportionate intrusion. For example, under the existing regime, what could be searched was what concerned only the individual under investigation. In contrast, digital spaces involve multiple stakeholders. Accessing a social media account also exposes friends, family, and professional contacts, through photographs and posts.

The proposed definition of ‘virtual digital space’ includes access to emails, personal cloud drives, social media accounts, digital application platforms, and more. Crucially, the phrase “any other space of similar nature” makes the list open-ended, potentially covering a wide range of digital platforms. Additionally, the proposed provision empowers tax authorities to override access codes to gain entry into electronic devices or virtual digital spaces. It still remains unclear though how this power will be operationalised in practice particularly in cases involving encrypted messaging apps such as WhatsApp, as explicitly cited by the Finance Minister in Parliament. The problem becomes even more of a concern when the individual involved is a professional whose work requires confidentiality. For instance, journalists whose devices and emails hold sensitive information, including confidential sources, unpublished material, and protected communications. If a search is conducted on flimsy or overly broad grounds, it not only violates their privacy but also endangers their ability to undertake reporting. Recognising the risks, the Supreme Court of India, in 2023, circulated interim guidelines on the seizure of digital devices and directed the Union Government to contemplate



formulating necessary protocols. Moreover, the judicial interpretation of “reason to believe” emphasises the need for tangible material beyond mere suspicion. Even under existing law, courts have construed that the provision ought to be exercised strictly, acknowledging that search and seizure is a serious invasion of privacy. A violation of transparency, accountability

Yet, the proposed provision goes against these principles and is devoid of guardrails, judicial oversight, and has a lack of understanding of the stakes. It fails to acknowledge, let alone address, the sheer breadth and layered sensitivity of information stored on electronic devices. In line with the current law, the proposed provision prohibits disclosure of the “reason to believe” clearly violating principles of transparency and accountability. Globally, privacy and transparency standards in search and seizure, especially where digital devices are involved, are grounded in statutory protections and procedural safeguards. In Canada, Section 8 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the right to be secure against “unreasonable search or seizure”. It is designed to prevent unjustified searches and sets a three-part default standard: prior authorisation; approval by a neutral and impartial judicial authority; and reasonable and probable grounds. In the United States, the Taxpayer Bill of Rights, adopted by the Internal Revenue Service, affirms that taxpayers have the right to expect that any inquiry or enforcement action will be legally compliant and will not be more intrusive than necessary following due process rights, including search and seizure protections. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Riley vs California also necessitated a warrant before accessing digital data, given the deeply personal nature of information stored on phones and devices. Contradiction of proportionality

test

In contrast, India's proposed Income Tax provision grants sweeping access to digital personal data without warrants, relevance thresholds, or any distinction between financial and non-financial information.

Access to libraries as critical element of social justice



It's a Saturday. The midmorning sun beats down on the 40-odd people alighting from a bus and fanning across the quiet interiors of the Mythic Society library housed in the Daly Memorial Hall on Nrupathunga Road, a gorgeous heritage building constructed in 1917.

We walk past glass-shuttered shelves holding books about India's prehistory, a translation of A.R. Krishna Shastri's Vachana Bharatha and the library's enviable collection of rare manuscripts and books. We flip open one, The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot into the Levant by the French traveller, botanist and linguist Jean de Thévenot, to find ourselves stumbling across an unfamiliar, now-forgotten letter — the archaic long 's' written as 'l' — catapulting us to a time before it was discarded by most printers in the latter half of the 18th century. The Mythic Society library is one of the five we visit as part of the recently-held Bengaluru Public Libraries, an initiative by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan. The other four covered include the Goethe-Institut Library, the State Central Library in Cubbon Park, the Alliance Francaise de Bangalore Library and finally, the IIHS Library. Preedip Balaji, the founding librarian at IIHS, Sadashivanagar, who curated the walk, expands on why these specific libraries were chosen. According to him, institutions, even public-funded ones, often make it hard for people to just walk into their libraries to use them. The publicness of a library, therefore, became a central aspect of this walk. While at first glance, all these libraries are different from each other, aesthetically and thematically, one thing ties them all together: they are accessible to everyone who wants to use them. "Of course, there are membership plans and other things if you want to check out. But there is no cost for walk-ins, and many services are free. That was one major factor that we looked at," he says. "I see the library door as a critical element of social justice."

The idea for a walk of this sort emerged in 2019 as part of IIHS's City Scripts, the institute's annual urban writing festival. "We could conceptualise it and make public libraries be just a part of the festival," says Balaji, pointing out that they could add to the narrative around promoting literature and writing in this case. While many literature festivals occur nationwide, public libraries don't get spoken about often enough at these festivals. "That was the idea, and we thought we could do it," he says. "The idea is to voice the concerns of building public institutions like libraries, which would be more heard, seen and participated in as they manifest time and space in our cultural memory and crucially safeguard our democracy through principles of freedom, access, and inclusion."

The initial two iterations of the walk, in 2019 and 2020, took place on a smaller scale, with only three libraries covered: the Mythic Society Library, the State Central Library in Cubbon Park, and the IIHS Library. Then, the pandemic happened, and everything came to a standstill for two years, including these walks. "We've been meaning to pick this up

for a while and have been looking for sponsors who could help us to scale it up from the original conceptualisation we had," says Balaji. "In the Goethe-Institut, we found a good partner who understood and provided the means." Sheshagiri Kulkarni, who heads the library at the Goethe-Institut, believes that this recent partnership also helped create the "wow" factor. "The walk was on a smaller scale before," he says. "But in our case, we brought buses, added more libraries and included lunch, breakfast and all that," he says. Public institutions like libraries and archives, which hold the nation's memory, help build narratives which collectively speak for the truth, making them "a crucial asset for the nation," believes Balaji. Unfortunately, he thinks libraries aren't discussed enough in the national media. "Many stories are happening with libraries at the centre, state, and local levels, but it doesn't go mainstream," he says. He feels that the GLAM sector, which includes libraries, archives, museums, and galleries, needs more government spending and must be more integrated. For instance, the One Nation, One Subscription, under implementation, should include providing access to science information to the tax-paying public to build an inclusive library ecosystem with strong public library laws. "Libraries are not... cannot be a siloed institution," he argues. As someone who himself didn't have access to books but textbooks while growing up, Balaji is also fully aware of the need to create a library culture in the country and cultivate a reading habit in children. "Much of our public doesn't have access to different kinds of books," he says, adding that reading plays a vital role in kindling the imagination. Merely looking at books as something used to prepare for competitive exams is restrictive, in his opinion. "Reading as a pleasurable activity should be part of our growing up." Even though India has a fairly robust library system, especially in the South Indian states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, their full potential has not been explored, adds Kulkarni. "In Western countries, they organise events in libraries. That is missing here," he says, pointing out that people mostly flock to libraries to study for competitive entrance exams. "Our libraries are full, but they are not always used meaningfully. I would say." Having said that, there have been some positive attempts to strengthen Karnataka's rural public library system, thanks to the efforts of Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Govt of Karnataka, he adds. "They have taken so much interest, and there has been a drastic change in a very positive way." Every year, between November 14 and 20, the Indian Library Association (ILA) celebrates National Library Week in honour of the public library activist Padmashri Iyyanki (Ayyanki) Venkata Ramanayya. "We were waiting for the right opportunity," says Kulkarni, adding that library week was a perfect occasion to kickstart the walk. At first, they were not sure if they would get enough participants, says Kulkarni, who credits Dr. Michael Heintz, the Director of the Goethe-Institut, Bengaluru, with buoying the initiative. "He comes from Germany, which has a good book-reading culture, and he told us to go ahead with it." Though expectations were kept relatively low, they soon found themselves overwhelmed by the public response to the walk: there were over 200 registrations, which led to them to do the same walk on two separate Saturdays, the originally-planned November 16 and again, on November 30. He recalls how many people were surprised by the public library system in Bengaluru, with many wanting to register at these libraries right away. This, of course, is a desired outcome of a walk that was intended to be "not touristy, but exposure to public libraries." Libraries are not a one-time affair. People need to come back to them, feels Kulkarni. He also believes that initiatives like this can help draw more people into libraries. The intention, he says, is to keep doing walks like this regularly and add more libraries to the network. "I think people are interested. The only thing is we need to promote libraries more."

11 districts at very high risk of flood, drought: Study

Around 51 districts in India are at a "very high" risk of floods and another 118 are at "high" risk, whereas 91 districts are at a "very high" risk of drought and 188 are at "high" risk, according to a new study by the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Guwahati and Mandi.

The study, supported by the Centre's department of science and technology as well as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, has found that 11 districts are at "very high" risk of both flood and drought, including Patna in Bihar; Alappuzha in Kerala; Charaideo, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, South Salmara-Mankachar, and Golaghat in Assam; Kendrapara in Odisha, and Murshidabad, Nadia, and Uttar Dinajpur in West Bengal. "This study is an effort to integrate vulnerability assessment with proneness to two hazards: flood and drought, and exposure to these hazards, to gain a comprehensive understanding of risk, using the framework proposed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change," said the study report, titled District-Level Climate Risk Assessment for India: Mapping Flood and Drought Risks Using IPCC Framework.

Unlike the concentrated flood hazard, the drought risk is spread more evenly across the country. Sixty-five districts under the very high drought-hazard category are located in 22 states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Assam, Kerala, Nagaland and Chhattisgarh. The report not only considered the probability of occurrence of extreme weather events in these districts but also laid down what indices may be making them particularly vulnerable. The study's findings underline two clear patterns: First, that flood and drought hazards are one of the driving forces behind the overall risk and two, such risk can be amplified even when the likelihood of such a hazard impacting is low, but there are chances of high exposure and the district is vulnerable. "For example, in some districts if the population is too low then the exposure will be lower and if the district has better coping mechanisms such as say irrigation (in case of drought hazard), crop insurance for farmers, more people taking up the 100 day work programme (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme) then those districts will be less vulnerable and hence not at high risk," explained professor NH Ravindranath from the Indian Institute of Science who was advisor for the risk mapping project. The core team prepared indices for hazard, exposure and vulnerability to arrive at risk indices. The team consulted state level climate change cells to arrive at very localised information. "Unfortunately for many districts the team used census 2011 data which is old but a lot of more recent information between 2019 and 2021 was also used by the team to develop these indices," added Ravindranath.

An area is considered under the risk of drought hazard if precipitation systematically falls below the long-term



Around 51 districts in India are at a "very high" risk of floods, whereas 91 districts are at a "very high" risk of drought and 188 are at "high" risk.

average. The indicators of flood exposure are population density and the proportion of area under agriculture. Drought exposure is calculated based on population density and area under rainfed agriculture. Vulnerability is a system property. Its indicators are MPI, the proportion of marginal and small landholdings, yield variability of food grains, the composite MGNREGA index, the female literacy rate, forest area per 100 square kilometres, the livestock-to-human ratio, the proportion of area under crop insurance, the proportion of net sown area under horticulture, and road density. For example, Patna (Bihar) and Majuli's (Assam) flood risk indices are comparable. However, the profiles of these two districts are completely different in terms of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. While the flood hazard index is very high in Majuli, it is much lower in Patna. But Patna has very high exposure owing to dense population and high vulnerability. "The advice to districts at high risk of floods and droughts is to reduce their vulnerability. For example, Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh which is at high risk of drought should focus on agro-forestry, irrigation, organic or natural farming to improve soil health," said Ravindranath. HT reported in January that more than half of India's administrative units (or tehsils) saw an increase in monsoon rainfall in the 2012-22 decade over the 30-year, 1982-2011 baseline; 11%, all key agricultural hotspots saw a decline; and almost two-thirds witnessed an increase in the frequency of heavy rainfall. The results of the large-scale study, "Decoding India's Changing Monsoon Patterns", by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEV), provide a granular picture of the changing and erratic monsoon patterns in India. According to the study, around 55% of India's 4000-plus tehsils have witnessed an increase in monsoon rainfall in the past decade (2012-22) by at least 10%, compared to the climatic baseline (1982-2011). Most of this increase was recorded in the traditionally drier regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, central Maharashtra, and parts of Tamil Nadu.

Political vendetta or zero tolerance to corruption? TDP actions ignite debate

On December 6, the Nara Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP government constituted a special investigation team (SIT) headed by inspector general of police Vineet Brij Lal to look into the alleged illegal transport of rice meant for public distribution system (PDS) from Kakinada port to African countries.

TDP official spokesperson Anam Venkataramana Reddy said: "This is not vengeance. The government is probing the illegal acquisition of the Kakinada seaport and SEZ at a throwaway price. Can anyone transfer 4,000 acres of land for just ₹12 crore, if not under coercion?" But analysts say that Naidu may also be paying back Reddy in the same currency. Between 2019 and 2024, the Reddy regime targeted TDP leaders and Naidu, who was arrested on September 2, 2023, and spent 53 days in jail before securing bail. The Telugu Desam returned to power in the state on June 4, 2024, and Naidu was sworn in on June 12. On June 22, municipal authorities demolished the central office of the YSRCP under construction at Tadepalli, describing it as an illegal structure.

The demolition was reminiscent of a similar move undertaken by Jagan Mohan Reddy on June 1, 2019, within hours of assuming charge as the chief minister. Back then, he ordered the demolition of "Praja Vedika" a hall constructed adjacent to Naidu's residence at Undavalli, on the grounds that it was an illegal structure. "There is no surprise in Naidu ordering demolition of YSRCP buildings, as he faced a similar situation soon after losing power in 2019. Taking revenge on political rivals has become order of the day in present-day politics," observed political analyst Telakapalli Ravi. On the day of demolition, the TDP issued a statement saying the authorities carried out the action after issuing proper notices. "Jagan 'misused' his power as the chief minister to allot the land for the construction of his party's office," the statement said. During the YSRCP regime, the TDP complained about alleged attacks and murders of the party activists by YSRCP leaders across the state, particularly in rural areas in the Rayalaseema and Palnadu regions. In recent months it has been the turn of YSRCP leaders to make similar allegations. In July, Jagan staged a demonstration in New Delhi, alleging that there had been systematic attacks on the YSRCP workers, as Naidu was "trying to take personal vengeance at every level". He alleged that within the first 45 days of coming to power, there were 36 cases of murder, over 300 attempted murders, and destruction of more than 590 properties belonging to the YSRCP. "Obviously, Naidu must also be under tremendous pressure from local TDP leaders to act tough against the YSRCP leaders, because they had suffered similar witch-

hunt and assaults during the previous regime of Jagan," added Ravi. Following the murder of a YSRCP activist Sheik Rasheed in Palnadu district in July, TDP general secretary and state minister Nara Lokesh accused the YSRCP of "blatant lies". Jagan is desperately trying to link every incident to TDP. We are responsible for the safety and security of people and our government will not spare any criminal," he said. The state police has also launched a massive crackdown on social media activists affiliated with the YSRCP, for allegedly posting derogatory and vulgar content on social media against Naidu, his son Nara Lokesh, and deputy chief minister Pawan Kalyan, besides their wives and daughters and even home minister Vangalapudi Anitha. According to the police, in the first week of November itself, the state police issued 680 notices, registered 147 cases, and arrested 49 individuals. YSRCP legal cell president M Manohar Reddy claimed more than 300 party workers have been arrested. At a public meeting at Amaravati on November 7, Naidu said people who used vulgar language on social media, particularly against women, would "face its consequences". "The language on social media is reckless. They are making objectionable comments about women. Should we not take action? Should I ignore it? They have become criminals," he said. And while Naidu and Kalyan's charge about adulterated ghee being used in Tirumala is still being investigated, and may eventually amount to naught, the charges in a US court against the Adani Group for allegedly paying bribes to the YSRCP government for a solar power deal has provided fresh ammunition to the TDP. The issue came up for a discussion in the state assembly with the TDP members targeting Jagan for tarnishing the brand image of Andhra. Naidu declared that he would take a call on ordering a probe into the deal after examining the US charge sheets.

The government has also said it would explore the legality of scrapping the deal. To be sure, the TDP and Naidu will have to tread cautiously given that its ally the Bharatiya Janata Party is being targeted by opposition parties for furthering the Adani Group's interests. "Irrespective of whether the case makes any progress, it has given a scope for Naidu to project Jagan in a bad light," Ravi said. When the TDP was in the opposition, Naidu was highly critical of IAS and IPS officers who were allegedly toeing the line of Jagan Mohan Reddy and targeting the TDP leaders. Back then, Naidu's son Nara Lokesh always used to carry a "red book" and say that he was noting down the names of all the officers. That book may be coming in of use now. Since June several IAS and IPS officers have been shifted from their posts and kept waiting for some time without any new posting.

Jaladam Valley, home to the Konda Reddi tribe, offers a glimpse into a centuries-old way of life

Hidden in the rugged hills of Jaladam Valley in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district lies Gillaram village, home to the Konda Reddi tribe, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). Isolated from the modern world, the Konda Reddis rely on age-old traditions to sustain their livelihoods. Their survival strategies reflect a vanishing way of life. The Konda Reddi tribe's way of life largely revolves around the cow, which is a source of sustenance for them. The traditional houses of the Konda Reddis have retained their unique architectural look over the centuries. Reaching Gillaram is an arduous journey, involving a four-km trek over weather-beaten trails and crossing two hills. Located 15 km from the temple town of Annavaram, the village's remoteness leaves its 30 families — around 130 people — dependent on makeshift solutions for emergencies, such as being carried on 'dolis' during health crises. Cow dung banks

In Gillaram village, the cow is central to survival. Every family owns a yoke and at least one pair of oxen for agriculture, as well as cows to augment their income. "Our family owns 30 cents of land, and we use oxen to plow it," says Gomu Venkata Lakshmi, a mother of two. "The dung serves as manure for our crops and keeps our farming costs low. It is used as an alternative to fertilizer for all our crops," she says. In the village, every family maintains a 'dung bank' by storing the dung in a designated place to be used for agricultural purposes. "Our dependence on pesticides and fertilizers is minimal due to the availability of cow dung manure," says Ms. Venkata Lakshmi. The cow dung manure improves soil fertility. In the rural pockets of Andhra Pradesh, use of cow dung manure is rare except for organic farmers.

The Konda Reddi tribals of Gillaram village would grow paddy only in the Kharif season as streams would run dry by the middle of the Rabi season, precisely by March. All of them are small farmers who own a maximum of half an acre that supports crops, primarily paddy. Another Konda Reddi tribal farmer Gomu Malleswara Rao and his three brothers hold 1.2 acres of land which they have distributed among themselves to grow paddy. "All the families in our village grow paddy only to meet the requirement of the family in a year. The maximum paddy yield per holding (below half an acre) is barely eight bags, each weighing 75 kg. The prime purpose of paddy cultivation is to feed the family," said Mr. Malleswara Rao, a tribesman at his field in the village. Due to lack of irrigation facility, paddy is grown once a year, only to meet the requirements of the family. A tribesman at his field in the village. Due to lack of irrigation facility, paddy is grown once a year, only to meet the requirements of the family. | Photo Credit: T. Appala Naidu

However, the Konda Reddi tribals are aggressive in the cultivation of commercial crops such as cashew, niger, chilli and cotton under Podu cultivation method, in which the forest is cleared to make way for the cultivation. Cashew requires less input cost while cotton demands huge input costs. The extent of land of a family depends on the number of years dedicated by it to clear the forest for the Podu cultivation. In the Eastern Ghats, the size of the Konda Reddi tribal family is arguably the biggest compared to any forest-dwelling tribe. In the Godavari Valley, the Konda Reddi tribals still prefer to have more than ten children as per the available official records. 'Bhunga'-style houses The tribe has adopted a unique circular-shaped architecture for housing. The houses, built with circular mud walls and thatched roofs, resemble the Bhunga architecture of Gujarat's Kachchh region.

In Gillaram village, families typically build two houses. "One house serves as the permanent residence. The second one, locally called as Seni Paaka, is built at the field, where farm implements are stored, apart from serving as a watch room for guarding the paddy fields during the day against monkeys and wild boars," says Chellayamma Satta. The thatched Seni Paaka is built with mud walls as its base. Accompanied by her two children, Ms. Chellayamma spends most of her time at the Seni Paaka during the Kharif season to guard the paddy field. The tribals also erect fences with used sarees to protect the paddy from monkeys and wild boars. Conservation The Konda



Reddi tribe conserves their traditional mud-walled houses by applying cow dung paste which keeps the house warm during winter and cool during summer, a practice that has been handed down for generations. "It is a mandatory practice for every family to apply cow dung paste on the mud walls of our houses to keep them clean and withstand the rain. The cow dung gives the walls a unique colour, and it also keeps the house free of insects and mosquitoes," says 35-year-old Chadda Balamani, a young mother. This simple yet effective technique ensures the longevity of their mud-walled homes, which can last up to a decade. "Cow dung is available in our village itself. We have been applying cow dung on our traditional house walls for generations and it requires no further investment in conservation and maintenance. A mud-walled house can last for at least a decade", sas Ms. Balamani. Scheduled Area The Gillaram village (Routhulapudi Mandal) is one of the 56 tribal habitations that have been fighting to include them in the '5th Schedule Area' to be eligible to be brought under the administrative purview of the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA-Rampachodavaram). Only 'Scheduled Area' (5th Schedule of the Constitution) comes under the jurisdiction of the ITDA.

The 56 tribals habitations in the 10 Gram Panchayats of Shankavaram, Prathipadu and Routhulapudi Mandals in Kakinada district were earlier part of erstwhile East Godavari district. All of them are now falling in the Kakinada district. An estimated population of the tribes of Konda Reddi (PVTG), Manne Dora, Konda Dora and Konda Kammara in the 56 habitations is around 25,000. According to Kakinada District Panchayat authorities, Grama Sabhas have been scheduled in 2019 and cancelled in many panchayats due to various administrative hurdles. The ITDA-Rampachodavaram has proposed to recommend these 56 habitations to be included in the 'Scheduled Area' based on the resolutions passed by the Grama Sabhas. The hill range, in which the group of tribal pockets including Jilaram village is located, is home to laterite deposits. On December 23, 2024, Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Tribes Commission Member Vadithya Sankar Naik conducted a meeting in Jilaram village to identify their challenges. This Correspondent was present in the meeting. The Konda Reddis of Jilaram village have shared their woes to get access to safe drinking water, power, road connectivity, and basic medical and health care.

"The revenue and other officials are preparing a proposal for road connectivity, solar-based water tank and ensure the arrival of medical and health staff once a month given the challenges to reach the Valley", said Mr. Sankar Naik. The Jilaram village does not have a designated burial ground, forcing the Konda Reddi tribals to bury in the forest. Gomu Venkata Lakshmi and Chadda Balamani have stated; "Access to safe drinking water during summer and timely access to medical and health services are our primary needs. Our lives are more challenging during the monsoon". The village is yet to see the school but the government is running a mini Anganwadi centre. No suffix The irony is that the Konda Reddis of Jilaram village have abandoned 'Reddi' as a suffix to their name as they came in contact with the non-tribals over the decades. In the Godavari Valley, the Konda Reddis are known by their name which has Reddi in their suffix. The village has also lost contact with their fellow tribals in the Godavari Valley as they never attend any gatherings due to cut-off by road and terrains.

Need to address statistical issues in entrance, recruitment exams: NSC Chairman to government



The government has been called on to form a comprehensive policy on certain statistical issues related to entrance and recruitment exams by Rajeeva Laxman Karandikar, Chairman of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), who argued on Sunday that different agencies conducting their own exams have their own methods that can lead to dissatisfaction among candidates and legal proceedings. Speaking at the 19th Statistics Day organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Karandikar said statistical issues such as negative marking and normalisation of marks in examinations that are being conducted online and see lakhs of candidates should be addressed “appropriately.” “The fact that when such a large number (of candidates) appear (for exams), we don’t have computer systems which simultaneously 27 lakh candidates can write,” Karandikar said, referring to an earlier recruitment exam held by the railways. “So we have parallel exams, or exams in phases, different question papers. Then the question comes: how do we compare them? This is a strictly statistical question.”

“Somehow, each agency goes on its own way to define the policy: there is a question of negative marking, normalisation. And each agency declares its own formula which is different. That leads to dissatisfaction, especially from the candidates that don’t make it, some of them making it to the court system,” the NSC Chairman added. In 2019, Karandikar was part of an expert committee constituted by the Supreme Court to suggest ways to deal with fraud in online examinations. The committee – led by retired Su-

preme Court justice GS Singhvi – was formed after the alleged leak of the Staff Selection Commission’s Combined Graduate Level 2017 question papers, which led to massive protests. On Sunday, Karandikar said the expert committee had written a report just before COVID “and perhaps that report is lying somewhere”.

“The point is that normalisation and negative marking, both are statistical questions. And perhaps – which body in government, I don’t know, because there are multiple stakeholders – comprehensive effort should be made to create one group which gives thought to all this, brings in all the stakeholders, and comes out with one policy,” Karandikar added. Moderating a panel discussion at the Statistics Day event – held to commemorate the birth anniversary of famed statistician PC Mahalanobis – Shamika Ravi, member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, said India was moving into an era of “precision policymaking”. According to Ravi, given the size of the country, indicators such as the infant mortality rate and even the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) don’t mean much at an all-India level, although such measures are needed for comparisons. “But the reality is, policymaking largely depends on highly localised estimates, which is the effort we are now doing. We are moving towards district-level estimates because a lot of policymaking requires local, unbiased, as precise or as close to the truth – that’s what an unbiased estimate is...”

We are moving into the realm of what is called precision policymaking. And precision policymaking, then and therefore, requires data which is representative at the local level, whatever local we define. We have now moved beyond aspirational districts to aspirational blocks,” Ravi said. Also speaking at the same event, MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg said it was essential the statistics ministry produces data which is “machine readable” given the advent of artificial intelligence and machine learning and follows basic standards and norms so that data can be more effectively used for decision making. Towards this, the ministry is looking at data and statistics at a much broader level, Garg said, with a focus on ensuring that the data produced by different departments and ministries within the government – or administrative data – is focused and usable.

Nirmala Sitharaman: ‘Economic buoyancy can’t be overstated; else, we wouldn’t have been where we are’

How difficult is it for a sovereign country like India to put up with President Donald Trump’s unilateral statement that the US will “open up” our economy, when the trade talks are just underway? In fact, I would like to see it also from the Indian side. The US is one of our leading trade partners, topmost, if anything. At the junction we are in, and given our growth goals and ambition to reach Viksit Bharat by 2047, the sooner we have such agreements with strong economies, the better they will serve us. So, I’d rather put my own statement on (Trump’s): “Yes, I’d love to have an agreement, a big, good, beautiful one; why not?”

But, what are the red lines India has drawn?

The negotiating team ensured that industry’s concerns were all taken on board before they sat at the table for talks. Agriculture and dairy have been among the very big red lines, where a high degree of caution has been exercised. There are some areas where one can always look at, seek greater market access for us, and also open up. Even in agriculture, there’re areas with little or no domestic vulnerabilities... Possibly. But that (opening them up) is only with the consent of the department agriculture. There’s no way we could do anything that which would weaken our agriculture, our farmers’ positions. You had reiterated recently that, “tariff king” tag doesn’t befit us. Our applied tariffs are mostly low...

We have only eight duties, inclusive of zero tariff. There have been drastic cuts of tariffs in the July (main) and February (interim) budgets. The effective tariff rates are (lower than the limits) announced in the gazette with Parliament approval, which is itself far below the WTO boundary. So, for India to be called a tariff king and so on is absolutely unjustified. Yet, there’s scope for further lowering of tariffs, without causing any harm to domestic industry...

Those are the points on which the negotiators will have to work with the country concerned. So, (our) tariff being a consideration is being addressed. Sector-specific considerations on agriculture, dairy etc. are being addressed too. Other concerns of the industry – automobile units, etc. – are also being addressed with deep consultations. I will credit the Commerce Minister (Piyush Goyal) for having had consultation prior to, during, and after the completion of the negotiations. The US tariffs are already very low. Do you see any further reduction for us? For reducing duties, the US President has to go to the Congress, a time-consuming process. So they may pitch in for it (duty cut), but it has to be done after the agreement.

Could it be part of the broader deal, if not the interim one? Could India offer any major relaxations to the US on the non-tariff front – IPR, data localisation, government procurement and such? Our approach has always been that the trade negotiations should not get initiated by non-tariff concerns. Issues such as environment, gender, sustainability, carbon tax, government procurement, industrial relations, haven’t been strictly part of trade negotiations. But it’s now become a part and parcel of the whole thing, and we therefore take well-considered discrete positions.

We just can’t walk into it, because India is an emerging market, with our own market requirements. On government procurement, a lot of carve-outs have to be made, to ensure purchases from MSMEs, start-ups etc. Our domestic procurement itself is very considerate towards those sections that need hand-holding. We can’t open it up for someone without these concerns addressed.

Manufacturing has ceded some share in GDP

It’s clear from the policy we announced that labor-intensive units will be given support. We have been specific that handicrafts, handmade goods etc. will get succour. So there is no way in which we are choosing between one (labour) and the other (capital/tech). Manufacturing, whether it is employment-intensive, or requires automation, policy support will be given. But these lines are becoming thin. Textiles & apparels, for instance, has conventionally been a labour-intensive sector, but it is being rapidly automated. A large knitwear unit in Tirupur, which used to employ, say, over 30,000 people, has now brought in AI to aid the production process, leading to increased productivity. A third of its workforce may now not be required to do what they were doing earlier. You cannot grudge that. But such units aren’t retrenching people; rather they try to upskill them



The Finance Minister emphasised that entering agreements with strong economies sooner will better serve India’s goal of becoming a developed nation (“Viksit Bharat”) by 2047.

for gainful employment.

A complete recast is happening even in labor-intensive industries, to the extent that traditional labels don’t hold. Of course, despite this, there are some sectors where automation doesn’t come in so quickly; even among a section of manufacturing units and MSMEs, automation may not be an alternative they would want at this juncture. We have to have a policy for them, to facilitate credit access to them. So the long and short of it is there is no longer the old watertight areas, the old silos are now opening up horizontally. Everybody has to be updating on their skills, and everywhere. There is fluidity in the labour market; some are becoming movable, fungible, and others, going upwards.

The RBI monetary policy has gone in for not just a sharp cut in policy repo rate, but a CRR cut also. This has taken many sections by surprise, because the liquidity was already there. Some would say this showed that the RBI had a sense of foreboding, and was in a desperate move to stave off a slowdown. Now, the RBI’s front-loading in the interest of growth cannot be imputed for a knee-jerk reaction. Nor is it correct to say that the RBI is doing this, as it probably sees something which we are not. Institutions such as the RBI, which have a record of good documentation don’t do things that way. RBI doesn’t simply undertake interest rate reduction or increase, but explains its moves in the minutes of (monetary policy meeting) in detail, and these are put out in their entirety. Investment-driven growth is inordinately delayed. Gross fixed capital formation fell to a 3-year low of 30 per cent of the GDP in FY25, whereas the aspired rate is 35 per cent-plus. How feasible is a broad-based investment cycle, which includes the MSMEs and other segments, rather than just the big corporates?

There is a buoyancy in the economy, which cannot be overstated. Had it been absent, you wouldn’t have remained where you are (in terms of growth), with institutions periodically updating their forecasts (S&P has recently revised India’s FY26 growth estimate upward to 6.5per cent). Or you would not have generated (consistently high) GST revenues. In fact, today, people are using the GST to indicate how strongly the economy is moving forward. (GST receipts at over 7 per cent of GDP seem to have crossed VAT/excise-era levels). In GST, the data is very clearly, openly laid. You see the states and sectors where it is getting collected from. So the economy in its multifarious indicators is showing vibrancy. Of course, we would like to have higher growth, even 10 per cent, and we are only at 6.4 per cent (gross value added in FY25). But it’s still 6.4 per cent and not 2-2.5 per cent, which is where Europe, and even some of the Southeast Asian countries are. So I’m not gloating at this number, but to repeatedly lamenting it is (uncharitable) given the global scenario. If Indians are working and moving the needle despite heavy odds, we should recognise it. Countries which are known for exports are no longer able to grow with such strategy. At this time, Indian exports are doing well.—FE

Pets and Animals in games: Showing the furrries some love



It happens right out of Tennoji Temple in Assassin’s Creed: Shadows. When playing as Naoe in the early game stages, you encounter a quest titled “thrown to the dogs,” and to begin, it is essential to pet a wounded, distraught dog guarding the gravestone of his deceased master. Similarly, in Hogwarts Legacy, your journey with Poppy Sweeting, a fellow 5th year Hufflepuff student begins with the quest “The High Keep” where you save a hippogriff from poachers and unlock an eight-mission long side quest journey where you engage with a variety of magic beasts ranging from a dragon and its egg to finding the once extinct Golden Snidget. Over the last decade, open-world and narrative-driven games have increasingly turned to animals, electronic companions, and mythical creatures to offer players solace and connection on otherwise perilous journeys. In The Witcher 3: Blood and Wine DLC, a memorable side quest titled “Equine Phantoms” briefly shifts the perspective from Geralt to Roach, his loyal steed, across hundreds of hours. This week’s column is a nostalgic look at these digital companions – how they’ve shaped our most cherished gaming memories, and how, in the years to come, they are likely to become even more central to the games we play.

We need to begin this journey by mentioning Chop, Franklin’s Rottweiler from GTA V, who, once unlocked after completing a mission, allows players to take him for walks or play “fetch.” The interactions with Chop were an

elaborate part of the GTA V experience, as it was possible to teach him tricks and keep him happy through the game’s now-defunct companion app, iFruit. In 2018’s Red Dead Redemption 2, horses are integral not only to transportation in the Wild West but also as partners and key allies. The game requires players to build bonds and relationships with their steeds, and its mechanics rely on a simple pet system—where you can groom, pet, feed, and ride your horse—to make them more reliable and attuned to Arthur’s outlaw ways.

If you have played Metal Gear Solid V, you are bound to remember the one-eyed wolf, D-Dog, and the horse, D-Horse. D-Dog can attack and surprise enemies and is also useful for extraction of prisoners and foraging for medicinal herbs, while D-Horse proves useful for stealth and distraction. Then there’s 2016 Far Cry Primal, a game with one of the most elaborate animal recruiting and training systems, as its mechanics revolve around the protagonist’s abilities as an animal tamer. However, in recent years, games have begun to view animals and pets as more than just functional necessities. Through elaborate non-core gameplay elements, developers have found ways to give players opportunities to spend more time in-game that are less about skill or constant grinding. In Horizon Forbidden West and The Witcher 3, developers use mount races to offer players a welcome diversion from the games’ core narratives. Pokémon Sword and Shield introduced the Pokémon Camp feature, where players could picnic with their Pokémon, cook food, and play with toys. And in 2022’s Stray, the game adds a unique twist as the companion to the cat protagonist is the sapient drone B-12, which carries a human consciousness. The use of non-human characters as essential contributors to a game’s journey gives players compelling reasons to keep returning. While the ability to pet cats and dogs in open worlds can serve as a welcome virtual break for players, I believe there’s still room to push the envelope when it comes to narrative engagement and story-building, particularly by developing perspectives that aren’t necessarily human.

Hyderabad’s Bibi Ka Alam: A 200-Year-Old Muharram tradition

Hyderabad: A somber atmosphere prevails at the Alaw e Bibi at Dabeerpura with thousands of people, mostly dressed in black attire, thronging the place to offer prayers at the Bibi ka Alam (standard of Bibi Fatima) installed here. The Bibi Ka Alam is installed every year on the first day of the Muharram month at the historic Ashoorkhana (place for holding mourning sessions) for almost a century. A host of dignitaries, cutting across religious and political affiliation, visit the place to make offerings to the alam.

The practice of installing the standards dates back to Qutb Shahi period when Muhammad Qutb Shah’s wife installed an alam in the memory of Bibi Fatima at Golconda. Later, during the Asaf Jahi era, the alam was moved over to Alaw e Bibi at Dabeerpura specially built for the purpose. A plate affixed on the main door mentions the year of construction as the year 1784. The room in which the alam is installed is a strong room and the alam is kept in a safe made on the design of a sarcophagus.

Syed Hamed Hussain Jaffery of Telangana Shia Youth Conference explains that the alam contains a piece of the wooden plank on which Bibi Fatima was given her final abtution before burial. “The relic is believed to have reached



Golconda all the way from Karbala in Iraq during the reign of Golconda king Abdullah Qutub Shah,” said Jaffery. The ‘alam’ has six diamonds and other jewels donated by the builder of Azakhana-e-Madar-e-Deccan, Mir Osman Ali Khan. The jewellery is kept in six black pouches and tied to the standard, he explains. On the tenth day, the alam is carried on a caparisoned elephant on ‘Yaum-e-Ashura’, the 10th day of Muharram month.

Why learning the Japanese philosophy Gaman is important to endure ups and downs in life



In life, adversity is inevitable. Whether it’s personal struggles, professional setbacks, or unforeseen hardships, resilience plays a crucial role in how we navigate these challenges. In Japanese culture, Gaman (??) is a deeply rooted philosophy that emphasises patience, perseverance, and inner strength in facing difficulties. More than just endurance, Gaman is about maintaining dignity, self-discipline, and grace under pressure.

What is Gaman?

Gaman translates to “perseverance” or “enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity.” It is derived from Buddhist teachings and is a fundamental aspect of Japanese culture. The idea encourages individuals to suppress negative emotions, stay composed in adversity, and maintain a strong sense of duty. This principle has shaped Japan’s collective mindset, particularly in times of crisis, from natural disasters to economic recessions. Historically, Gaman was evident in the aftermath of World War II when the Japanese people displayed remarkable resilience in rebuilding their country. More recently, during the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, the world witnessed the Japanese people’s collective patience, restraint, and calm response—hallmarks of Gaman in action.

Discover how Mono no Aware, the Japanese concept of impermanence, applies to work and career growth. Learn how it fosters mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and resilience in the workplace. In Japanese culture, the concept of Gaman is a deeply rooted philosophy that emphasises patience, perseverance, and inner strength in the face of difficulties. Life is unpredictable, and setbacks are inevitable. Gaman teaches individuals to endure difficulties without being overwhelmed by emotions. By fostering patience and self-discipline, people develop a stronger mindset to tackle

challenges effectively. Encourages Emotional Strength In many cultures, openly expressing frustration or anger is common when faced with difficulties. However, Gaman suggests that self-control and emotional restraint can prevent negativity from escalating, helping individuals remain composed and solution-focused.

Strengthens Social Harmony

Japanese society places great importance on maintaining group harmony (wa). Gaman teaches individuals to prioritise collective well-being over personal grievances. This approach fosters stronger relationships, both personally and professionally, by reducing unnecessary conflicts. Inspires Perseverance in Goals Whether pursuing career ambitions, fitness goals, or personal growth, success requires long-term commitment and effort. Gaman encourages people to persist even when progress seems slow, instilling a sense of discipline that leads to long-term achievements. Aids in Overcoming Crisis The ability to endure hardships with patience is vital during major life crises. By practising Gaman, individuals can face difficulties with a calm mind and make rational decisions rather than reacting impulsively to problems. How to cultivate Gaman in daily life Practice Mindfulness – Develop awareness of emotions and focus on responding rather than reacting. Stay Composed in Difficult Situations – Instead of expressing frustration, take a deep breath and handle challenges gracefully. Focus on the Bigger Picture – Remember that setbacks are temporary and that perseverance leads to growth. Embrace Self-Discipline – Develop the habit of patience in everyday life, whether waiting in long queues or dealing with workplace stress. Learn from Japanese Culture – Observe how Gaman is reflected in Japanese traditions, such as martial arts, tea ceremonies, and Zen practices.

Neeraj Chopra: ‘Would like to try javelin with Jasprit Bumrah... think Brett Lee could throw the javelin well’



GNS News Agency, July 8

Neeraj Chopra has named Brett Lee as a cricketer who he feels could have been a good javelin thrower had they not been a cricketer and expressed his desire to try his hand at javelin throw with India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. After winning the Paris Diamond League meet and the Ostrava Golden Spike event in consecutive weeks, Neeraj Chopra is back home in India, preparing for one of the most significant events of his season, the Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025. The standalone javelin throw tournament bears his name, and he will be star attraction when the event starts on July 5th, Saturday at 7 pm. Before the event, Neeraj sat down with the official broadcasters of the event to talk about his sport. Neeraj was asked which cricketer he believed would be best suited to take up the javelin. Neeraj said: "I have heard that Brett Lee was a javelin thrower. I think he could throw the javelin well, especially when he was in his peak years. I would like to try javelin with Jasprit Bumrah too, and hope he teaches me some bowling skills.

While bowling and javelin are both throws, they are very different. I would like to learn from Bumrah."

Recently, after winning the Paris Diamond League meet, he was asked by an American media company if he had tried cricket bowling since the delivery strides are similar. Neeraj had explained that while in javelin the release point of the throw is aimed skywards, in cricket the ball is released in a downwards direction. But he had expressed his desire to try his hands at baseball pitching someday when he was in the USA. Asked which cricketer's superpower would he love to borrow for the perfect javelin throw, Neeraj said: "Sachin Tendulkar. He represented our country so well for so many years and made so many records for us. The way he faced challenges from many great bowlers and still performed exceptionally — I would want that superpower and try to do the same. It would help me handle challenges that come my way with a calm mindset." Asked if he was superstitious, Neeraj said: "I try to stay calm on the day of my event. I don't think too much about it. I just focus on giving my 100%. I try to stay relaxed, eat good food, and rest well." In the interview, while talking about the best advice he has received, both on and off the field, Neeraj said: "It came from my coach Jan Železný, who also holds the world record in javelin with a throw of 98.48 metres. Whenever I throw, I stay very energetic, but he tells me that I need to run in a flow. It shouldn't feel tight — I should run like an 18-year-old kid without any tension. I'm slowly understanding the concept of flow. I think that in any sport, flow is very important. For example, Roger Federer — he played with such grace and rhythm that it never seemed like he was putting in too much effort. I'm trying to bring that into my training."

How ‘baseball cage’ assisted Steve Smith’s quick recovery from finger injury

GNS News Agency, July 8

Steve Smith WTC final record Australia's Steve Smith celebrates after scoring fifty runs during the World Test Championship final between South Africa and Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London. Australian batter Steve Smith said that his quick recovery from a "compound dislocation" in the little finger of his right hand which he sustained in the World Test Championship final against South Africa earlier this month, was because of the practice he got in a 'baseball cage' in New York. After suffering the injury, the former Aussie skipper left London with his finger stitched and placed in a splint. But instead of waiting for the injury to heal by itself, he decided to hit the "baseball cage" in New York, where he owns an apartment. There, he began by facing tennis balls and other soft balls in the nets before facing the hard cricket ball.

"My mate actually told me about it, which was ideal because it was pretty warm there (in New York). Underneath this bridge there was a batting cage, and he was able to throw me a few balls there, so it was good to be in the shade, it was pretty hot there," Smith was quoted as saying in ESPNcricinfo. A baseball cage is a netted enclosure, quite similar to the cricket nets, used by baseball players to practice hitting. It provides a contained area where batters can safely swing and hit baseballs, without the risk of stray balls leaving the hitting area. "For me, it'll just feel like training as



normal, I think. I don't really feel any pain or anything. (I'm) just getting used to the splint on and the slight limited movement. It's not too bad, I've got a lot of movement there now, so that feels good. Hitting the ball felt completely fine. Fielding some balls in front of the wicket will probably be the strangest thing for me, I don't think I've ever done that in a Test match. Fielding at either probably mid-on or mid-off or fine leg, is a bit different to standing at the second or first slip," Smith said. The injury forced Smith to miss the opening game of the three-Test series against the Windies in Barbados from June 25 to 27, which Australia won by 159 runs. Now, he is expected to take part in the second Test, set to start from July 3.

‘Most of India’s problems were self-inflicted’: Greg Chappell on why lack of variety in bowling lost IND match against ENG at Leeds

GNS News Agency, July 8

Greg Chappell India England India's captain Shubman Gill, third left, celebrates with teammates after the dismissal of England captain Ben Stokes on day five of the first cricket test match between England and India at Headingley in Leeds, England. Former Australia batter Greg Chappell said that the lack of variety in India's bowling attack was one of the main reasons for the Shubman Gill side conceding the 1st Test match against England at Leeds. To counter that, Chappell opines that India should bring in Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav for the second Test at Birmingham.

"As disappointing as the fielding in Headingley was, it was not the main reason India lost the Test. Most of India's problems were self-inflicted. Perhaps the most expensive error was the no-ball that gave Harry Brook an early life in the second innings," Chappell wrote in his column for 'ESPNcricinfo'. "More concerning to me, though, is the lack of variety in the bowling attack. Apart from Jasprit Bumrah, India's seamers are too similar — all right-arm, medium-fast, operating at comparable angles. There is a reason why wickets often fall after a change of bowling. It forces the batter to recalibrate. That variability isn't available to Shubman Gill with his current crop. Without Bumrah, I'd like to see left-armer Arshdeep Singh added to the mix and Kuldeep Yadav, possibly the best wrist spinner since Shane Warne, included in the attack," he wrote further. Bumrah, India's most potent attacking force, is expected to sit out



the next match against England. "Even with Bumrah in the mix, the rest of the attack has to be more disciplined. I didn't see two consecutive balls land in a dangerous place. They were either too full, too short or too wide. Bowlers have to work in partnerships as much as batters. All England have to do at present is to see off Bumrah and they know the pressure will go with him," Chappell wrote. The former India coach also criticised the Indian team management's preference for batting depth over a balanced bowling attack. "I don't agree that an extra batter who bowls should be selected as insurance against top-order collapses. The top six must be trusted to deliver the runs and that the best combination to secure the requisite 20 wickets is available to the captain," he said.

Azhar Mahmood appointed Pakistan’s acting red-ball coach till end of current contract

GNS News Agency, July 8

Former Pakistan all rounder Azhar Mahmood, who had signed a two-year contract in 2024 as the national team's assistant coach across formats along with Australia's Jason Gillespie (Tests) and South Africa's Gary Kirsten (limited overs), was on Monday elevated to the Men in Green's acting red-ball coach till the conclusion of his contract. "The Pakistan Cricket Board today announces Azhar Mahmood as the acting red-ball head coach of the Pakistan men's team. Azhar will serve in this role until the conclusion of his current contract," the PCB said in a statement. "A seasoned cricketing mind, Azhar Mahmood steps into the role with an impressive portfolio of experience. Having served as the assistant head coach of the national side, Azhar has long been a pivotal part of the team's strategic core. His deep knowledge of the game, combined with hands-on international exposure and proven success in the English county circuit, make him exceptionally well-suited for this position," the PCB added. The 50-year-old Mahmood has played 21 Tests and 143 ODIs for Pakistan between 1997

and 2007. "His red-ball pedigree is underscored by two County Championship titles — an achievement that speaks volumes about his leadership, tactical acumen and unwavering commitment to excellence. The PCB is confident that under Azhar's guidance, the red-ball squad will continue to grow in strength, discipline and performance on the global stage," the board said. Meanwhile, earlier this month, both Kirsten and Gillespie had reflected on their tenure as Pakistan coaches, saying that it was a pretty tough time. Gillespie, the former Australia fast bowler, has said that the experience had "soured" his love for coaching and Kirsten, who had stepped down before the former, said that he understood pretty early on that he wouldn't have too much authority on selection. "It was a tumultuous few months," Kirsten was quoted as saying by Wisden. "I realised quite quickly I wasn't going to have much of an influence. Once I was taken off selection and asked to take a team and not be able to shape the team, it became very difficult as a coach then to have any sort of positive influence on the group."

When a 17-year-old Sachin Tendulkar took his 10th standard school text books on 1st England tour



GNS News Agency, July 8

A first-time series against England in England can be a daunting tour for any cricketer, the kind that can forge a career or shatter confidence. But for Sachin Tendulkar, it was the first tour of England at the tender age of 17 where he gave the world a glimpse of what the next decades were going to look like. Cricket fans might recollect that Tendulkar scored a match-saving century at Old Trafford in the second Test of the 1990 Tour of England. In fact, Tendulkar had scored 68 in the first innings before an unbeaten knock of 119 in the second innings had helped the visitors stave off defeat. This was Tendulkar's maiden Test century, one which made him the second youngest player back then to score a Test hundred. But what was even more remarkable was that the teenaged Tendulkar had reportedly carried his school textbooks to England to study for his class X exams.

"He (Tendulkar) was very quiet. On that first tour he

was carrying his school books to study in tenth grade. He was shy, did not talk too much and he was just a normal kid. He did not involve himself in topics. He used to observe," cricket legend Kapil Dev had revealed in a 2013 interview with the BBC Radio 5 Live show. A young Sachin Tendulkar poses with Sanjay Manjrekar and Mohammad Azharuddin. Kapil went on to add how he was also surprised by a few aspects of Tendulkar's batting and his personality on that tour. "Two things were very different about him at that age. His balance was so good... unbelievable! And he did not hit the ball, he pushed the ball! He had a heavy bat. During that period I had never seen someone using that heavy bat and he held the bat low down," Kapil added. "With his left hand, he did writing and eating. But batting, bowling was with right hand. Later on, I realised he must be a genius who has power in both hands. That is the future of cricket. If you can have balanced power you can control the ball and balance of your body."

Farokh Engineer explains why he thinks ECB decision to introduce Pataudi medal was an afterthought

GNS News Agency, July 8

Former India player Farokh Engineer was left disappointed by the ECB's handling of renaming the India vs England Test series and its subsequent decision to introduce the winning captain's medal named after the late Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi. The ECB had instituted the Pataudi Trophy for the India-England series in 2007 until renaming it to the Anderson-Tendulkar trophy before the start of the ongoing five-match series. "Well Tiger Pataudi was a great friend of mine. Great colleague of mine. We played a lot of Test cricket. Great heritage, great family. I was most happy when the trophy was named after him back in 2007," Engineer told PTI.

"On one hand I was very disappointed that the Pataudi name was removed, I would love Tiger's name to go on but instead powers that be decided with Anderson and Sachin who are legends of the game. It (introducing Pataudi medal) was obviously an afterthought, they should have announced it in the beginning that would have more credibility but at least they have done something. Common sense has prevailed and hope the Pataudi name always remains." ... the achievements of Tendulkar and Anderson can't be argued against. There are two sides to the story. They have named the medal after Pataudis which is a very thoughtful thing. That must be a second choice to appease a lot of Pataudi supporters of which I am one but you can't blame them for naming the trophy after Sachin and Anderson."

"The whole issue is debatable but they have kept the name. I hope they invite Sharmila Tagore (Mansur's wife) and his son Saif Ali Khan to present the medal. Last series they didn't do that. Fingers were pointed at ECB for that.



Hopefully they give them due credit," he said. Last week, Sunil Gavaskar had lamented the ECB's decision to retain the Pataudi sentiment by rewarding the winning captain of the five-match series the Pataudi medal in honour of the royal Pataudi family. The former India captain questioned what would happen to the medal if the series ended in a draw."

The announcement of the Tendulkar-Anderson Trophy also said that respect would be given to the Pataudis by having a medallion for the captain of the team winning the series. Why the captain and what if the series is drawn? That's why it would have been better to have had a Pataudi medal for the Man Of The Match for every Test, culminating in the Pataudi Trophy for the Player Of The Series. This way, the Pataudis will be remembered after every Test match played as well as after the series is finished in England. It would be interesting to hear what Indian cricket lovers feel on this subject," Gavaskar wrote in his Mid-Day column.

Science behind Headingley’s ‘perfectly prepared’ pitch: How wetting agent and plastic sheets helped retain moisture through five days

GNS News Agency, July 8

The pitch for the first India-England Test at Headingley is being praised to the skies. The Yorkshire and England great Geoff Boycott, in Telegraph column, called it a dream wicket for batsmen where "good bowlers who bent their back with pace and aggression took wickets ... and ordinary straight-up-and-down bowlers were severely punished." Richard Robinson, the man responsible for keeping both bowlers and batsman in the game till the final session of the 5th day, has a good old trusted sauce and a delicate recipe that keeps the pitch mildly spiced but not boringly bland all through the course of the match. It is a combination of science and art in how Robinson first stores water in the pitch and through the Test pulls it out each day. "It is a fine balance. It can easily go wrong and there could have been 70 all out on the first day You never know you could get it wrong. If there was more moisture, it would have seamed around more on the first day," says Robinson, a couple of days after the Test that went to the wire with England winning. First the sauce that is actually easily available at any gardening shop. It is called 'wetting agent', scientific name 'surfactant'. The primary function of this solution — it can also be in granular form — is to decrease the surface tension of the liquid it is added to. It is commonly used in paints so that it spreads evenly on the wall, in pesticides helping it to cover the plant, in detergents to get to each thread of the fabric. So when a 'wetting agent' is added to the water that showers the pitch, it penetrates the soil deeper and stays there. The heavy roller being used on the pitch for the first Test in Headingley. (Special Arrangement) The heavy roller being used on the pitch for the first Test in Headingley. (Special Arrangement) Dealing with a long dry summer and unusually sweltering sun, curator Robinson stepped up the watering and got 'wetting agent' in the mix. "I put a lot of moisture into the surface about two weeks before the game. I probably flooded the pitch about six times. So it was quite a green pitch a couple of days before the game," he says. "I also used a little bit of 'wetting agent' which helps the moisture go into the soil. Water seeps in deeper as the wetting agent breaks the surface tension. Rather than just rolling it off and making it disappear this

helps the water to seep in." The watering agent triggers a chemical reaction by which the water molecules that are close to each other spread. Use of heavy roller Once the water gets retained in the pitch, comes the difficult task of bringing the water droplets, rather moisture, to the top surface of the pitch on all days of the Test. This process isn't done in one go but through the five days of the Test. There are two ways in which this can be achieved. "I gradually started bringing the moisture out but because it was quite a hot forecast I had to leave quite a lot of moisture inside so that the pitch remains green for the last couple of days of the game," he says. "Like it is done at other places as well we use plastic sheets or big rollers to get the moisture out, depending on how you want to do it. Plastic sheets make the pitch sweat." Meanwhile, the heavy roller uses its weight to squeeze the moisture out and settle on the top of the soil surface. Boycott had the attention to detail as he appreciated the efforts of the Headingley curator. "Too many groundsmen leave some moisture or a bit of grass on the surface to make sure the pitch lasts four or five days. They are frightened that if the pitch gets too dry, it may break up with too much spin and too much uneven bounce. Headingley did not break up because it was perfectly prepared," he wrote. England beat India by five wickets in the first Anderson-Tendulkar Test at Headingley in Leeds. (AP) England beat India by five wickets in the first Anderson-Tendulkar Test at Headingley in Leeds. (AP) Robinson says that pitches in Headingley don't crumble but it was heartening to see the catches carry to the slips and ball turning from the rough even on the final day of Test. But what surprised him was the lack of swing when there was heavy cover of dark clouds over Headingley. "It was surprising but this has been a dry summer and it has been dry since March so there isn't much humidity. I thought it will swing but there was a bit of wind to that some doest allow the ball to swing," he says. The curator says the Headingley pitch was fair even though batsmen scored heavily. "England didn't bowl very well on the first day of the Test, if they had they would have got a few more wickets," he said. As for the Indians, they too could have bowled well and held their catches too. Pitches can help bowlers but only if the fielders hold on to the catches that come their way.



Bollywood Golden Era star earned more than Dilip Kumar, said no to becoming Dev Anand's wife, received Jawaharlal Nehru's praise; only to quit films at 34



Much before pay parity became a topic of discussion among leading female actors, the Hindi film industry witnessed the rise of superstar Suraiya, who left legendary stars like Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, and Ashok Kumar behind when it came to remuneration. Suraiya's rise in the film industry as a singer and actor While Suraiya was known for her roles in films like Omar Khayyam (1946), Pyar Ki Jeet (1948), Badi Behan (1949), and Dillagi (1949), which took her career to new heights, she didn't initially enter the film industry to become an actor. Instead, she was first recognised by music director Naushad for her beautiful voice, which led to many playback singing offers.

It all started when Suraiya was just 12 years old and would frequently visit film sets with her uncle. During one such visit to the set of Taj Mahal, she was picked by the director to play the role of young Mumtaz Mahal. After starring in several children's programmes for All India Radio, Suraiya's singing talent was discovered by Naushad, who gave her a chance to sing in the film Sharda (1942) for the legendary actor Mehtab. She soon became synonymous with musicals like Phool, Samarat Chandragupta, Aaj Ki Raat, Dard, Dillagi, Natak, Afsar, Kajal, Dastan, Sanam, and Char Din.

Suraiya was a huge admirer of Hollywood heartthrob Gregory Peck and got a chance to meet him when he visited India. It all began in 1952 when Suraiya gave her autographed photo to Hollywood director Frank Capra—who

was visiting India during the first International Film Festival of India—to pass on to Gregory Peck. The Hollywood actor received the photo and made it a point to visit Suraiya when he came to India. He went to Suraiya's home in Mumbai and the two chatted for an hour. Speaking about the meeting, she had said, "We spoke for an hour. I didn't sleep at all that night. Nobody believed I'd met him. For two months newspapers carried our 'love stories'. I enjoyed it!" Suraiya Suraiya had given her autographed photo to Hollywood director Frank Capra at the first International Film Festival of India in 1952, to give to Gregory Peck of whom she was a huge fan.

At the peak of her professional career, Suraiya fell in love with Dev Anand, with whom she starred in seven films. He even borrowed money to buy her a diamond ring. At that time, Suraiya was a bigger star than Dev Anand, and since he was also a Hindu, Suraiya's maternal grandmother didn't approve of their relationship. Suraiya's grandmother controlled her life and her career. She even threw the ring Dev Anand bought for her into the sea and instructed filmmakers to cut the romantic scenes between them. Dev Anand wanted to marry Suraiya and even quit acting, which wasn't acceptable to her, so they eventually parted ways. However, the relationship had such a deep impact on Suraiya that she never married. Dev Anand, meanwhile, married Kalpana Kartik in 1954. "When I refused to marry Dev, he called me a coward. Maybe I was one. I admit I didn't have the courage to take a step I was not absolutely sure of. Perhaps it was a folly, perhaps a mistake or perhaps destiny?" Suraiya told Stardust. Suraiya's downfall and retirement After her breakup with Dev Anand, Suraiya's professional career also took a hit. Her films in the 1950s didn't perform well. However, she did experience a brief resurgence with her Mirza Ghalib in 1954, which was a huge hit. She even earned praise from Jawaharlal Nehru, who told her, "Tumne Mirza Ghalib kii ruuh ko zindaa kar diya (You brought Mirza Ghalib's soul alive)". But her 1964 film Rustam Sohrab, co-starring Prithviraj Kapoor, turned out to be a major flop. Witnessing the curtain fall on her career, Suraiya took voluntary retirement in 1963 and stepped away from the limelight. S

Naseeruddin Shah stands firmly with Diljit Dosanjh amid Sardaar Ji 3 row, says 'Jumla Party was waiting to attack him': 'These goons want to put an end to...'

Diljit Dosanjh has received support from veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah amid his Sardaar Ji 3 controversy. The actor took to his Facebook account to post a strong message, accusing political parties of creating this situation against the actor-singer. He said people were just waiting to attack him and now they have found their chance as his latest film stars a Pakistani actor. Naseeruddin Shah wrote, "I STAND FIRMLY WITH DILJIT. The dirty tricks dept of Jumla Party has been awaiting a chance to attack him. They think they've got it at last. He was not responsible for the casting of the film, the director was. But no one knows who he is whereas Diljit is known the world over, and he agreed to the cast because his mind is not poisoned."

He claimed people who are opposing Diljit simply want every Indian to cut ties with their Pakistani friends and family members situated in the country. "What these goons want is to put an end to personal interaction between the people of India and Pakistan. I have close relatives and some dear friends there and no one can stop me from meeting them or sending them love whenever I feel like it. And my response to those who will say "Go to Pakistan" is "GO TO KAILASA" Diljit Dosanjh received severe backlash for starring Pakistani actress Hania Aamir in his film Sardaar Ji 3. The backlash took a serious turn when Diljit shared a trailer of the film on his social media handle, followed by a song teaser featuring Hania Aamir. This didn't go down well with many including cine bodies AICWA and FWICE, who wrote



letters to the makers of Border 2 as well as Prime Minister and Home Minister of India to take strict actions against the Punjabi actor-singer. They also requested the makers of Border 2 to remove the actor from the film. Meanwhile, Diljit told in an interview with BBC Asian Network that he signed the film in February, much before the Pahalgam attack. "The producers have invested a lot of money in the film and when they decided to release it in other countries sans India, I have to support them," told the singer.



retaliated. To which, he responded, "Character actor bol na, mujhe acha lagta hai. Maine yeh kaam ke liye nahi kia, I did it for my health. Maine socha hua tha that I'll do it at 50 (Call me a character actor, I like it. I did this for my health and not work. I had decided I will do it once I reach 50)." He also showed the viewers his coffin-shaped table in the bar. Ram's wife Gautami took Farah to show her a big portrait of the actor's picture in an older character from his film, which Farah likened to drug lord Pablo Escobar style painting. "That was gifted to me by one of my producers from Neeyat film. It reminds me who I am, who I was. I was lucky that I was accepted like this," he said. "You are a good actor that's why, Humshakals nahi dekhi kya," she laughed it off. After entering their AC modular kitchen to make a mango papaya salad, the Bade Ache Lagte Hain actor elaborated the details about Farah Khan's lavish house. "Unka ghar shuru hota hai, building khatam hoti hai, par ghar khatam nahi hota. You go till the top in the lift, then there's another lift, which is her private one, jo aur 3-4 floors upar jaati hai. Then, there's a private terrace and swimming pool on the third floor. She owns a mini building on top of a massive building." Towards the end of the vlog, Gautami Kapoor gifted Dilip a t-shirt which read,

Inside Sridevi's Chennai Home: First property she ever bought, was redesigned by Boney Kapoor, has a rare photo of their secret wedding in Shirdi



After making a name for herself in the film industry, Sridevi bought her first property in her hometown of Chennai. Now, the property is a cherished family home where her husband Boney Kapoor and daughters Janhvi Kapoor and Khushi Kapoor often return to spend time together. Earlier, Janhvi had given a tour of their Chennai home, which holds many memories of the late legendary actor. Let's take a detailed look at the house.

Two spacious living rooms adorned with artifacts collected from all over the world In the house tour that Janhvi gave to Vogue, she was seen entering the house from the side door, which opened into a beautiful living space. Right after entering, the vintage vibe of the home is immediately apparent, as the house is heavily decorated with large paintings and artifacts collected over time from around the world. The rooms are completed with vintage chandeliers that set the lighting and mood of the space. Alongside the maximalist aesthetic used to decorate the home, cozy corners have been thoughtfully created. The house features giant sofas that take up most of the living area. Janhvi also offers a peek inside her father's part of the house, which she says

is adorned with "10,000 photos of us."

Janhvi then takes us into the second living room of the house, which also has giant sofas. The background wall is all white with gold detailing. She also shows a painting by artist Subhash Awchat and an artifact that Sridevi brought from Bali. The house also decorated by paintings crafted by Sridevi herself. Talking about the property, Janhvi shared that the house had to be remodeled after Sridevi's death due to leakage and disrepair. She said, "It was the first property that mom ever bought. It was very different when she bought it. She decided to do it up after she got married to dad and travelled all over the world and found these interesting art pieces, paintings, and textiles, and it. Then after couple of years, the house because of leakage and other complicated things started disintegrating and then we had to redo it after she passed. Dad made it like his mission to redo it in her memory so that we could come here and spend time in the house." Janhvi shared that Boney didn't let Khushi and her see the house while he was remodeling it and only unveiled it on Khushi's birthday. She said, "It was big moment because we grew up here and we hadn't been here since mom had passed.

Memorabilia wall adorned with multiple family photographs Janhvi then takes the interviewer to the first floor of the house. The wall along the staircase is adorned with numerous photographs of their family and extended family. Janhvi shared that it was Sridevi's idea to create a memorabilia wall. It also has a rare photo of Boney and Sridevi's secret wedding that took place in Shirdi. The couple kept it quiet for some time, revealing it only when Sridevi was pregnant. Janhvi then takes us to the first floor where she shows a glimpse of the huge terrace, which is decorated with plants and offers a welcome break from the concrete jungle. She also shows her spacious gym, which she called her sanctuary. She then offers a peek inside a beautifully cozy bathroom that features a glass ceiling and stone sinks, adorned with stunning paintings and lamps.

Aamir Khan says Reena Dutta's family cut ties with her after their secret inter-faith wedding: 'Her father suffered heart attack, ladies started to cry'

Aamir Khan and Reena Dutta's love story is no less than a Bollywood film. There was love, complications, drama and an emotional acceptance. They fell in love when they were teenagers living opposite each other's house, communicating through their windows. However, when Reena's parents found out about their affair, they made her promise to never meet him. This caused stress and fear of losing each other between the couple, who came up with the idea of getting secretly married to secure their relationship. However, this decision, when came in open brought a huge storm in their life with Reena's family cutting all ties with her and her father even suffering a heart attack. Recalling those days, Aamir Khan shared that he first read the special marriage act to understand the legalities of it. "I first read the special marriage act to understand if what Reena and I were planning to do was politically sound. I was not yet 21 when I decided to marry. In 1986, when I turned 21 in April, on the 18th of that month we legally got married." His friend Satya (creator of Satyameva Jayate), his wife Swati and cousin Anand were the witnesses for the court marriage.

He added, "We got married on April 18, two days after me turning 21. Those two days we waited because it was a weekend. We got married and went to our respective houses." Their secret marriage went on for some time when a situation created by Reena's sister Anu made her reveal her marriage with Aamir Khan. Aamir recalled, "Reena ended up revealing about our marriage to her sister Anu. She was shocked. Her parents didn't react too well. Now that Reena's parents knew this, I thought it was time my parents know it too. I called her to meet my parents. I assembled all my family members to break the news. My parents thought she was my girlfriend. They were blushing. My father was a dynamite. Unka gussa kabhi bhi phat sakta tha (He was short tempered). But once I started to tell them the details of our love story, all the ladies in the house started to cry.



Surprisingly, my dad got up and hugged me. I didn't expect this. He said, 'Now you are both married, now what's bothering you?' I said, 'Reena's parents are returning from Chennai in 30 minutes and that's bothering me.'" After the chat with Aamir's family, they all decided to head to Reena's family to convince her parents. Aamir Khan shared, "Reena's mother denied her from coming home. She spoke to her and said, 'You don't come here. We don't want to meet you.' This left Reena shattered. 'You are married now. You must be happy. We don't want to meet you.' It took them four months to cool down. One time, I remember Reena's mom secretly called us in the absence of her dad. Four months later, Reena's dad suffered a heart attack and we rushed to the hospital. I went to see him in the ICU along with Reena. She was very close to her father. They got emotional and cried a lot. I touched his feet and he didn't react but later nodded at me." He added, "They eventually accepted me after I spent some time with him. He said, 'I should have met

Aamir Khan threatened to leave Taare Zameen Par over Amole Gupte's direction; lost confidence after watching 'amateurish' rushes: 'No second chance'

Aamir Khan has often been accused of taking over projects from directors or dominating them to the point of sidelining the filmmaker. These speculations gained momentum after the actor took over the direction of Taare Zameen Par from the film's writer, Amole Gupte. In a recent interaction, Aamir broke down the entire incident and shared what went on behind the scenes that compelled him to take over the film's direction. Amole Gupte wanted to cast Akshaye Khanna in Taare Zameen Par. Speaking to Lallantop, Aamir revealed that he had known Amole since their school days and the two were good friends, having done theatre together. He shared that Amole had mentioned he wanted to approach Akshaye Khanna for his film. Curiously, Aamir asked Amole about the project and offered to recommend Amole's film to the Chhaava actor. Aamir heard the script of the film and liked it so much that he expressed his willingness to produce and star in it. He said, "I really liked the story and I cried while hearing it. I promised Amole to call Akshaye and recommend it to him, but I questioned Amole, 'Why are you not offering this film to me?' and Amole said he thought I wouldn't be interested." Aamir wasn't convinced by Amole's skills as a director but gave him a chance. After this, the first discussion Amole and Aamir had was about direction. Aamir revealed that Amole expressed his wish to direct the film, but the Sarfarosh actor wasn't convinced about his skills as a director and told him so upfront. Aamir said, "I told Amole, if you want me to produce the film then you won't be able to direct it because I don't have the confidence in you as a director." After Aamir refused, Amole asked for one chance to direct the film, but the superstar again refused point-blank. So, Amole agreed to step back from direction, and they began searching for another director. Meanwhile, Aamir wasn't satisfied with the



last portion of the film's script and sat with Amole for a week to rework it. During this time, while they were rewriting the script, Aamir had a change of heart and decided to give Amole a chance at direction, seeing his conviction and emotional connection to the story. Aamir found Amole's work amateurish and decided to replace him—or walk out. Amole took the reins as director and started shooting the film with the child actors. While Aamir wasn't involved during the first week of filming, his team raised an alarm over Amole's direction and asked Aamir to view the rushes. After watching the footage, Aamir found the direction amateurish and decided to replace him. Sharing the same, he said, "Rushes were amateurish, according to me. I didn't like the rushes at all." Aamir recalled confronting Amole and even offering to back out of the film both as an actor and producer, willing to bear all the expenses incurred during the first week of shooting as he wasn't convinced with Amole's direction. Hwork on this as an actor or producer.