

Govt sanctions Rs.150 crore for Medaram Sammakka Saralamma Maha Jatara

Hyderabad, Aug.20 (The State government has approved a budget of Rs.150 crore for the Medaram Sammakka Saralamma Maha Jatara. The Tribal Welfare department has issued the necessary orders for this allocation. Scheduled for January 2026, the funds will be utilised for permanent construction projects in Medaram, located in the Mulugu district. During this announcement, Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka expressed gratitude to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, and Tribal Welfare Minister Adluru Laxman Kumar for their support in securing Rs.150 crore to ensure the Maha Jatara is organised effectively.

CM vows to make Hyderabad a global city and as "Global Competitor"

Hyderabad, Aug.20 Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy today announced that the state government is preparing an ambitious roadmap under its flagship vision plan "Telangana Rising 2047" to ensure comprehensive development of the state, with Hyderabad at the center of transformation. "Hyderabad will be the most sought after city in the entire world by 2035 and will compete with Tokyo and New York cities. Will bring the Old City's glory back by Musi Rejuvenation project. Forces who obstruct Hyderabad development are our enemies", he noted.

Addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Integrated Sub-Registrar and District Registrar Office at Gachibowli here today, the Chief Minister said that the government's long-term objective is to elevate Hyderabad to the rank of "World's most sought-after city by 2035", capable of competing with Tokyo and New York, not merely Bengaluru and Chennai. Hyderabad already enjoys international recognition, but future development must be on par with the world's leading urban centers. "Our goal is to make Hyderabad to compete with the world's top cities, not just Bengaluru and Chennai," Revanth Reddy said and warned that political forces attempting to obstruct developmental projects are enemies of the city. CM reminded that similar opposition was faced during the establishment of Hitech City, yet Hyderabad had emerged as a global IT hub. "We will give a befitting reply to those who try to create hurdles in projects like the "Musi Rejuvenation" and "Bharat Future City". Former PM late Rajiv Gandhi was the brain behind the IT revolution in the country and the Congress government laid the foundation for Hitech City in Hyderabad. Several global IT companies have set up their firms in the city because of the foresight of the then Chief Ministers, he asserted.



On this occasion, he called the old city as the "soul of Hyderabad" and asserted that the government will restore its historic glory through Musi Rejuvenation Project. Plans included bringing "Godavari river water into the Musi" ensuring water flows throughout the year and enabling the development of a "Musi Riverfront".As part of modernization, the CM said 11 new Integrated Sub-Registrar Offices will be made ready by Telangana Formation Day i.e. June 2, 2026. These offices will be built with state-of-the-art facilities, designed to match 5-star ambience and international airport standards. The integrated Registrar Offices, which contribute significant revenues, will ensure efficient service delivery and permanent solutions to citizens' problems, he added.Revanth Reddy underlined that Hyderabad's expansion and integrated development are crucial for generating employment and livelihood opportunities. "Telangana Rising 2047" vision would act as a comprehensive framework for balanced urban growth, industrial advancement and social development across the state, he noted.

India successfully test-fires Agni-5 ballistic missile from Odisha

GNS News Agency, August 20

India on Wednesday (August 20, 2025) successfully test-fired its intermediate-range ballistic missile Agni-5 from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha.In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said the launch validated all operational and technical parameters and was conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command."The intermediate-range ballistic missile Agni-5 was successfully test-fired from Chandipur on August 20. The launch validated all operational and technical parameters," the Ministry said.The missile tested on Wednesday was a variant of Agni-5, India's indigenously developed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) with a range of 5,000 km. Designed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the system has been developed keeping in view the country's long-term security requirements.The previous trial of Agni-5 was



conducted on March 11, 2024, when the DRDO successfully tested the missile equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology, allowing it to strike multiple targets with a single launch.

KTR blames Congress govt for fertiliser crisis in Telangana, demands white paper



GNS News Agency, August 20

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday said the Congress government was pushing farmers in Telangana into unprecedented distress due to the prolonged shortage of urea and fertilisers. He held Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy responsible for lack of planning and sincerity in addressing the issue.He demanded that the Chief Minister release a white paper on urea stocks, pointing out that both the Congress government in the State and the BJP government at the Centre were making contradictory claims.

Speaking to the media at his Nandinagar residence, Rama Rao said farmers had been suffering for the past two months across villages and towns, standing in long queues for fertilisers and urea. He said the Chief Minister was neglecting the farming sector due to gross incompetence and petty politics."Never in Telangana's history have police been deployed to distribute fertilisers. Why has this situation come after the Congress came to power? Farmers are being forced to fall at the feet of officials just for a bag of urea," he charged, citing an incident at the Thorru PACS in Mahabubabad.The BRS working president contrasted the current situation with the previous BRS government, stating that it had built buffer stocks, expanded warehouse capacity from 4 lakh to 24 lakh metric tonnes, and ensured advance supplies before every cropping season."During the BRS rule, fertilisers were procured from across India in advance and delivered without delay. Farmers never stood

Rs 54,000cr investments and two lakh jobs in Telangana's life sciences sector - Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Aug.20 Announcing that the Telangana's Life Sciences sector is witnessing unprecedented growth, attracting massive investments and generating large-scale employment opportunities, minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu today said that since December 2023, the state has secured Rs 54,000 crore investments in life sciences, resulting in creation of over two lakh new jobs in the sector.

Participating as the chief guest at the 6th Board Meeting of Telangana Life Sciences Foundation here on Wednesday, Sridhar Babu said that this growth reflects the vision of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to position Telangana as a global hub for innovation in pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and medical technologies. Hyderabad now ranks among the world's top seven life sciences clusters, and it is the only Indian city to achieve this distinction, he claimed and noted that the state's proactive policies and robust infrastructure have attracted several global giants such as Lilly, Amgen, MSD, Zoetis, Evernorth and Olympus.On this occasion, the minister announced that Telangana will soon launch its "Next-Gen Life Sciences Policy", which he described as a cutting-edge framework to attract large-scale investments and accelerate innovation.

Police Commissioner Conducted "Executive Court" To Address Disputes

Hyderabad, Aug.20 City police commissioner CV Anand today conducted an 'Executive Court' at the Hyderabad Police Commissionerate in Banjara Hills to address the disputes between "rowdy sheeters" and "criminal gangs" operating in the South, South East, and South West zones.

Reports revealed that the gangs were involved in "murders, attempted murders, and mutual attacks". A total of 101 members from 11 gangs under 10 police stations limits were interrogated. While six gangs claimed to have resolved their disputes through elders, others assured the court they would maintain peace.

India to lead next wave of 5G, AI and IoT: PM Modi

GNS News Agency, August 20

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday lauded India's achievements in expanding affordable broadband, revolutionising digital payments through UPI, and leveraging technology for governance, noting that these milestones have now become global case studies.PM Modi underscored that the country is poised to lead the next wave of digital transformation in 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and cybersecurity, setting benchmarks for the world.Resharing a post by Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, the Prime Minister's Office said India's progress in digital infrastructure is not only empowering citizens but also shaping the global digital economy."Union Minister @JM_Scindia highlights that India's progress in affordable broadband, UPI and digital governance is now a global case study. He underscores that in the next wave of 5G, AI, IoT and cybersecurity, India will lead and set benchmarks," PMO India wrote on social media platform X.Scindia, in his post, highlighted Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited's (BSNL) collaborations with four global technology leaders -- Ericsson, Qualcomm, Cisco and Nokia -- as a crucial step in preparing India's youth to command the frontiers of digital innovation.According to Scindia, these partnerships are aligned with flagship initiatives such as Digital India, Skill India, Make in India and Startup India, and are expected to position India as a global hub for telecom innovation and expertise.At the core of this effort is BSNL's apex training institute, Bharat Ratna Bhim Rao Ambedkar Institute of



Telecom Training (BRBRAITT) in Jabalpur, which will serve as the nodal centre for rolling out advanced skilling and research programmes.Under the collaboration, Ericsson will establish a 5G Centre of Excellence at BRBRAITT, offering hands-on training supported by global best practices.Qualcomm will provide advanced courses in 5G and AI, sponsoring training for the first 100 students and creating new employability avenues.Cisco will extend its Networking Academy to deepen access to world-class training in networking and cybersecurity, while Nokia will set up a 5G and AI-ML Lab with joint certifications that will bolster graduates' industry readiness.Scindia emphasised that this initiative is designed to benefit students, working professionals and public sector employees through training modules ranging from two-week intensives to 84-hour comprehensive programmes.

Revanth Reddy hails Naidu's IT vision, sidesteps KCR's role in Hyderabad's growth

GNS News Agency, August 20

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Wednesday credited successive Congress and TDP governments, particularly N Chandrababu Naidu, for shaping Hyderabad into an IT hub. Strikingly, he omitted any reference to former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, under whose tenure Hyderabad saw major infrastructural expansion in the past decade.Speaking after laying the foundation for an integrated sub-registrar office at Gachibowli on Wednesday, Revanth Reddy lauded the Nizams, Congress leaders, and particularly Naidu and YS Rajasekhara Reddy for their 'visionary leadership.' He described Naidu as the architect of Hyderabad's IT revolution, citing his role in establishing HITEC City, the Gachibowli stadium, Emaar Boulder Hills, and attracting MNCs."Naidu's vision not only brought crores in revenue but also created thousands of jobs. But for the last 15 years, there has been no progress," he alleged.At the same time, the Chief Minister lamented that Hyderabad had become 'murky' with traffic woes and inundation even after small spells of rain. He promised to transform the city through the Musi Riverfront Project and the Future City project.



Notably, Revanth Reddy refrained from mentioning Chandrashekhar Rao, under whose tenure Hyderabad consolidated its position as a global IT hub and water pipelines from Kaleshwaram lifted Godavari waters to the capital. Ironically, he announced an ambitious plan to bring 20 TMCit of Godavari water to rejuvenate the Musi River, without acknowledging its dependence on Kaleshwaram project infrastructure.Around 11 integrated sub-registrar offices would be constructed over the next one year, he said.

‘We are going back to the medieval times,’ says Rahul Gandhi on new Bills



GNS News Agency, August 20

Referring the constitutional Bills aimed at removing persons from office if they are jailed for any offence for more than 30 days, Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday (August 20, 2025) said these legislation take one back to "the medieval times when the king could just remove anybody at his will." Mr. Gandhi was speaking at the felicitation programme for the Opposition's joint candidate for the Vice-Presidential polls, Justice (retired) B. Sudershan Reddy. "We are going back to the medieval times when the king could just remove anybody at his will," Mr. Gandhi said. There was no concept of what an elected person was, he said, adding, "If he doesn't like your face, he tells ED [Enforcement Directorate] to put a case, and then a democratically elected person is wiped out within 30 days... this is new." The Opposition parliamentary leaders met on Wednesday (August 20, 2025) to discuss their strategy to oppose the Bills. As per sources, it was suggested by a few leaders at the meeting that the Opposition should not nominate any of its members to the Parliament's Joint Committee which would be constituted to review the legislation. "Any kind of participation will be equal to legitimising these Bills," a senior leader opined. However, the Opposition has not taken a final call on this.West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin too played the Bills. Ms. Banerjee, in a long post on X, said these legislation aimed to "finish the independence of our

judiciary." The Bills are "nothing short of a Hitlerian assault on the very soul of Indian democracy," she said.Ms. Banerjee claimed that the Bills were to "empower" the Union government "to intrude upon the mandate of the people, handing sweeping powers to unelected authorities like the ED and the CBI to interfere in the functioning of elected State governments". "

Phase-wise construction of integrated registration buildings: Ponguleti

Hyderabad, Aug.20 Minister for Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy announced that all sub-registrar offices in Telangana will gradually be incorporated into integrated registration facilities.He made this announcement while addressing the people during the foundation stone laying ceremony for the integrated registration building in Talim, Gachibowli, on Wednesday. The Minister also highlighted that the Dharani portal, which was implemented unlawfully by the previous administration, has been thrown into the Bay of Bengal as part of the Congress party's electoral commitment. He further mentioned that the Bhu Bharati-2025 Act has been developed after analysing practices from 18 states across the country.About 8.60 lakh applications were submitted during meetings aimed at addressing the concerns of farmers and the public in accordance with the Bhu Bharati Land Act. Out of these applications, 2 lakh have been resolved, while around 4 lakh pertaining to Sadabai Nama are still pending, the Minister said.Ponguleti mentioned that since the State High Court lifted the stay on Sada Bainama on Tuesday, valid and eligible applications will be processed promptlyDespite the challenging economic climate in the state, we continue to advance under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's leadership, focusing on both development and welfare.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Will Radhakrishnan be the game-changer for BJP?

After intense speculation over the potential candidate of NDA over the past few weeks after the sudden exit of the incumbent Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar, the name of C P Radhakrishnan, presently Governor of Maharashtra has been officially announced. While his ascension to the vacant slot is almost certain, what is interesting is in how the BJP has moved in once again to focus its attention on the southern state of Tamil Nadu, albeit treading a different route and employing a new strategy. While the obvious answer is that it is eyeing the impending Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu in the coming summer, the known-unknown is why a relatively low-profile Radhakrishnan has been selected to hold the Vice-President post. As far as credentials go, the media has already sketched profiles of the impending V-P tracing his roots from Jan Sangh days to how over the years he has been a silent, efficient and effective party man for BJP despite the party itself failing to create a significant impact in the Dravidian heartland. Firstly, over the past few years, in Chennai, call it Delhi's daring gambit or ineffective posturing, the party headquarters had reposed its faith on a set of newcomers, defectors and a few who came in from apolitical backgrounds (read Annamalai) to lead the state unit. Barring manufactured hype and a feel good among the English-speaking media moguls, none of them managed to create a lasting impact to deliver what the saffron party bosses expected, some thing which they managed in erstwhile hostile terrains across the country, smashing rivals who had held power for long in their respective domains. In the case of C P Radhakrishnan, he has had a direct hotline to Delhi over the years as he has been MP from Coimbatore twice, during the Vajpayee era, when he was a very valued leader or the previous BJP bosses.

Godrej Agrovet launches Ashitaka, a new herbicide for maize crop



Hyderabad: Godrej Agrovet Limited (Godrej Agrovet), one of India's leading diversified agri-businesses, has announced the launch of a new herbicide specifically for Maize crop. Ashitaka, developed in collaboration with ISK Japan, is an innovative solution that provides effective control over grasses and broad-leaved weeds which is a major challenge faced by maize farmers in India. With weed infestation being a major issue for maize crop, primarily at the initial growth stages, Ashitaka, if applied at 2 to 4 leaf weed stage, can provide good weed control.

Speaking on the launch, Rajavelu NK, CEO, Crop Protection Business, Godrej Agrovet said, "At Godrej Agrovet, our mission is to deliver innovative, research-driven solutions that empower Indian farmers and uplift farming families by future-proofing agriculture against environmental and market challenges. Effective weed management during the early stages of crop growth is crucial for maize farmers to achieve better productivity. The launch of Ashitaka is a step towards providing farmers in the region a powerful solution to improve yields and enhance profitability." Ashitaka's effective weed control in maize reduces crop-weed competition, enabling better use of limited soil moisture and nutrients, and supporting plant health during critical stages like flowering and grain filling. The recommended dosage – 50 ml/acre with 400 ml/acre of surfactant at the 2 – 4 weed leaf stage, helps in controlling the weeds early and also aids in the reduction of weed-related yield losses, which are known to worsen under weather stress. This results in more consistent output, better grain quality, and a strong hedge against income volatility, particularly in rain-fed areas. As demand for maize grows for livestock feed, industry, and biofuel, Godrej Agrovet has launched Ashitaka to help farmers tackle varied agro-climatic conditions. This will support round-the-year supply and reduce raw material gaps during lean months.

"Mismanagement of Congress govt led to artificial shortage of urea": Allege TBJP Chief

Hyderabad, Aug.20 : Accusing the ruling Congress for spreading falsehoods and misleading farmers, Telangana BJP chief N. Ramchander Rao today squarely blamed the state government's "mismanagement" for the artificial shortage of urea in the state.

Addressing a press conference at the state party office, Rao alleged that the Revanthy Reddy government is creating panic among the farmers by propagating that the Centre has failed to supply adequate urea. "The truth is that the Centre had supplied surplus urea to Telangana, but the state government is hiding facts and blaming the Modi government for political mileage. False propaganda and mismanagement are pushing the farmers into hoarding stocks unnecessarily", Rao noted and challenged Agriculture minister Tummalala Nageshwar Rao for a debate, and said that "If my figures are wrong, I will resign. If I am right, you should resign."

Sanjeevani 2025 Mobilizes Communities, Creates Momentum for Early Cancer Screening Across India



Hyderabad: The third edition of the Sanjeevani National Convention, jointly organized by Federal Bank Hormis Memorial Foundation, News18 Network, and knowledge partner Tata Trusts, brought together key voices from healthcare, government, civil society, and the private sector to confront India's escalating cancer burden. With annual cancer cases projected to reach 1.57 million by the end of 2025, and over 70% of these still diagnosed at late stages, the convention focused on shifting the national response from awareness to timely action. Over 700 days, the Sanjeevani campaign has evolved into a high-impact, multi-platform initiative, reaching more than 600 million people through News18's TV network and generating over 13 million digital engagements. Ground-level interventions have included cancer screening camps, school workshops, corporate health programs, and storytelling that centers the lived experiences of survivors.

For Vidya Balan, Renowned actor and Sanjeevani ambassador, the mission is deeply personal. "We must stop waiting for a crisis to prioritise ourselves," she said on stage, standing beside survivors of all ages. "Cancer doesn't just affect the body - it shakes identity, confidence, and family. But early detection gives us power. It gives us time. And it

gives us hope." She spoke of the transformative power that comes from self-acceptance and community.

"Through Sanjeevani, we have been blessed with the opportunity to touch over 20,000 lives in the past few years, and we are determined to reach another 20,000 this year. What began as an awareness and action campaign which supported patients and their families, has continually grown by adding more hospitals, oncology departments, mental health practitioners, etc. to support patients and push back onset by early detection amongst the healthy. We are also wanting to work on offering not just medical support but easing the unseen burdens of travel, stay, and daily survival. At Federal Bank Hormis Foundation, we believe health is not an expense but an investment in the nation's balance sheet. The Bank through its CSR Foundation is humbled to see its tagline Rishita Aap Se Hai. Sirf App Se Nahi.™? live through so many families we attempt to impact. It is actually our promise to blend innovation with compassion, partnerships with impact, and optimism with action for a healthier, stronger India. I am deeply optimistic, because when a nation commits to both growth and compassion, there is no limit to the lives we can save and the futures we can protect." Said KVS Manian, CEO, Federal Bank.

Cellbay Unveils the All-New vivo V60 in Hyderabad



Hyderabad: Cellbay, Telangana's fastest growing mobile retail chain, unveiled the much-awaited vivo V60, co-engineered with ZEISS, at its flagship store in Gachibowli, Hyderabad on 19th August, 2025. The grand launch event was graced by Film Actress Ms. Subhashree Rayaguru as the Special Guest, who unveiled the premium smartphone in the presence of Cellbay's leadership team Mr. Soma Nagaraju - Managing Director, Mr. Suhas Nallacheru - Director strategy and planning, Mr. Sudeep Nallacheru - Director Marketing and Mr. Atish Bhargava, General Manager, AP & Telangana, V-DREAM Technology & Communication Pvt. Ltd.

The new smartphone, available in Auspicious Gold, Moonlit Blue, and Mist Gray, redefines design excellence with the slimmest body in the 6500mAh battery category and a stunning Ultra Slim Quad Curve Display with HDR10+ for cinematic viewing. Its pro camera system, featuring ZEISS Optics with the Sony IMX882 sensor, ensures sharper and brighter photos, while the advanced telephoto camera with 85mm and 100mm focal lengths, Stage Mode with clear shots up to 10x zoom, and an incredible 100x

zoom deliver detailed close-ups and a best-in-class portrait experience powered by ZEISS. For powerful performance, it runs on the latest Snapdragon 7 Gen 4 processor with Ultra Large Vapor Chamber Cooling to prevent heating, boasts an industry-leading 6500mAh battery with the fastest charging technology, and is IP68 & IP69 certified for water immersion up to 120 minutes, with platinum-coated ports offering 20x durability.

On this occasion Ms. Subhashree Rayaguru said that "This vivo V60 phone gives a super premium feel. In this segment, it's the first time I'm seeing such a slim smartphone with a 6500mAh battery - it's really impressive. The Zeiss-powered camera and AI Photography Suite make it a must-have for anyone who loves capturing perfect moments." The vivo V60 is designed to redefine premium smartphones with its sleek aesthetics, cutting-edge technology, and powerful performance. On the occasion, Mr. Soma Nagaraju, Managing Director, Cellbay, said that "At Cellbay, we are committed to bringing world-class innovations to our customers. The vivo V60 is a perfect blend of design and performance, and we are delighted to launch it exclusively at our Gachibowli store."

Srinivas recognized for Groundbreaking Work in Next-Generation Vaccine Strategies

Hyderabad, Aug.20 Srinivas Duvvada, Doctoral Researcher at the School of Life Sciences, University of Hyderabad (UoH), has been conferred the prestigious Dr. Yellapragada Subbarow FABA Award for Doctoral Students – 2025 by the Federation of Asian Biotech Associations (FABA). This recognition by the Federation of Asian Biotech Associations (FABA) honours his outstanding research on Next-Generation Vaccine Strategies using Extracellular Vesicles. The award includes a cash prize of ₹1,00,000 and will be formally presented at the FABA Innovation Awards Ceremony on August 23, 2025, during the Pune-Mumbai Innovation Cluster Meeting hosted at DYPIU, Pune.

Srinivas, an emerging researcher in vaccine and extracellular vesicle engineering research with prior industry

experience at Sanofi, is a member of the International Society of Extracellular Vesicles. He was also awarded Best Oral Presentation award at VESICON 2025, "Where Vesicle Science Meets Clinical Innovations" organized by Indian Extracellular Vesicles Society, at Mahindra University, Hyderabad, March 1-13. His award-winning PhD work on next-generation vaccine strategies under the guidance of Dr. Nooruddin Khan, Professor, Department of Animal Biology at UoH; leverages engineered probiotic-derived Outer Membrane Vesicles for needle-free, oral immunization—offering innovative solutions to global health challenges. Srinivas's achievements not only reflect his commitment to advancing science for societal well-being but also bring pride to the University of Hyderabad.

A Grand Freshmen Orientation Day at CMR Engineering College

CMR Engineering College organized Orientation Day–2K25 for B.Tech first-year students and their parents on Tuesday, 20th August 2025, at the CMR Group Auditorium. The event welcomed over 2000 students along with their parents and marked the beginning of their academic journey at CMREC. The program began with registration, brief presentations on academic rules by Prof. Dr. S. P. Singh, examination guidelines by Dr. M. Amru, COE, and training & placements by Dr. M. Vijay Karthik, TPO. A cultural performance by the Prajwala Cultural Club and an audio-visual presentation by the Photography Club set an enthusiastic tone for the ceremony.

The formal session was led by the lighting of the lamp and invocation. Dr. A. Srinivasula Reddy, Principal, in his welcome address, urged students to uphold discipline, strive for academic excellence, and focus on holistic development to shape their futures.

Shri Ch. Srisailem Reddy, Secretary & Correspondent, inspired the gathering by emphasizing the importance of perseverance and dedication, encouraging students to dream big and utilize the college's resources effectively. He highlighted the institution's commitment to nurturing both academic growth and personal values. Shri Ch. Bhoopal Reddy, Vice Chairman, further motivated students to aim high and adopt innovative thinking, stressing that the coming four years would be a foundation for their careers and character. He reminded them that CMREC provides ample opportunities to transform their ideas into reality. The Chief Guest, Shri Sricharan Lakkaraju, CEO of Student Tribe, delivered an impactful address, sharing his insights on career readiness, skill development, and the need to stay adaptable in an ever-changing job market. His words left the students inspired to take responsibility for their growth and future success. The program concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. K. V. Reddy, Convener and HoD of H&S, followed by the national anthem and a group photo session. The Orientation Day–2K25 was a memorable and motivating start, leaving both students and parents with a sense of pride, confidence, and excitement as they joined the CMREC family.

Honda Establishes New Subsidiary in India for Retail Financing Services



Hyderabad: Honda Motor Co., Ltd. (Honda) today announced the recent establishment of a new company in India, Honda Finance India Private Ltd., ("Honda Finance India") that will offer customers retail sales financing services including loans and lease sales options for Honda products in India. In India, where further growth of the motorcycle and automobile markets is expected, the number of customers using loans to purchase motorcycles and cars is also expected to increase. Until now, retail sales financing services in the Indian market have mainly been provided by local financial institutions. However, in light of market trends, Honda will further strengthen its business in India by offering its own sales financing services through a local subsidiary in India. Honda Finance India Private Ltd. will apply for a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) license to conduct financial services business in India. After obtaining the license, the company will begin offering retail sales financing services to help customers finance their purchase of motorcycles, automobiles and services provided by Honda.

Financial services business has been one of the main business areas of Honda, and the company has established local subsidiaries specializing in retail sales financing services in Japan and various countries in key regions such as North America, and Europe. With the establishment of the new company, India became the ninth country where Honda has a local subsidiary to offer financial services.

Honda will work to establish long-term relationships with customers by offering flexible financial services tailored to the specific needs of customers in each region. Moreover, in anticipation of the global expansion of soft-ware-defined vehicle (SDV) sales in the future, Honda is looking into opportunities to offer new financial services designed to increase customer satisfaction and the value of the customer experience using various data from Honda SDVs. With such new services, Honda will further strengthen its financial services business not only in India but across the globe.

CBI arrests NHA Project Director in Telangana while accepting Rs. 60,000 Bribe

Hyderabad, Aug.20 (NSS): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested Project Director, PIU, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Warangal, Telangana and a private person while accepting bribe of Rs. 60,000/- from the Complainant.

CBI, registered the instant case on 19.08.2025 against the Project Director, PIU, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Warangal, Telangana and a private person on allegations that the accused demanded an undue advantage of Rs. 1,00,000/- for not causing any hindrance for the operation of Complainant's Restaurant situated adjacent to the Highway near Gudur Toll Plaza, Hyderabad – Warangal Highway, Bibinagar, Telangana. The demand of undue advantage was initiated through the accused private person. After negotiation, the accused Project Director agreed to receive Rs.60,000/- promising that during his tenure of five years as Project Director, PIU, NHAI, Warangal, there would not be any use problem for the Complainant. CBI laid a trap and caught both the accused red-handed on 19.08.2025 while demanding and accepting undue advantage amount of Rs.60,000/- from the Complainant. Both the accused have been arrested and are being produced before the Court. Searches were conducted at 3 places at Hyderabad, Warangal and Sadashivpet, Telangana and incriminating documents have been seized.

First warning issued in Bhadrachalam “Minister Ponguleti orders authorities to be alert.



departmental officials to be alert. The minister made it clear that there should be no lapse in protecting the lives of the people. He ordered that the revenue, police, municipal, panchayat raj, electricity, health, and other departments should work in coordination under the leadership of the district collector. He suggested that steps be taken to provide information in advance to the people living in the river basin villages and to evacuate them to safe places if necessary. He instructed the officials to keep the relief teams ready in case of emergencies and to closely monitor the situation at the village level. "The situation in every village should be monitored minute by minute. No negligence will be tolerated in solving the problems of the people," the minister clarified. - The minister appealed to the people to take precautions, keeping in mind the flood situation. - Do not go to the riverbanks. - Do not travel in floodwaters. - Children and the elderly should be kept safe. - Instructions issued by the authorities should be followed. - If necessary, go to the rehabilitation centers set up by the government. The government is with you. "Every life is precious to us. Protection of the people is our first duty. No one should worry. The government is with you," Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy clarified in his statement.

District Collector SP inspecting the road diversion point at Turubaka



"The district authorities should cooperate: Collector Jitesh V. Patil" "If there is an emergency, call 100 immediately. SP Rohit Raju" "Bhukya Ranjithnaik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 20, Indian Chronicle: Due to the heavy rains in the upper reaches, the water level of the Godavari River is gradually rising and flowing rapidly. Therefore, the people of the Godavari River catchment areas and low-lying areas should be alert, said District Collector Jitesh V. Patil and SP Rohit Raju. The district authorities will take precautionary measures to prevent any untoward incident, the Collector said. He urged all the people to cooperate with the district authorities. SP Rohit Raju said that the district police department will stand by the people of low-lying ar-

reas in coordination with the officials of other departments. On this occasion, the District Collector and SP inspected the bridge point under construction on the road at Thurubaka in Dummugudem mandal and made several suggestions to the officials on the precautions to be taken if the Godavari river rises further. Later, the flood level of the Godavari River was observed from the embankment at Bhadrachalam. He advised the residents of Bhadrachalam town as well as the people of the surrounding low-lying areas to be alert at all times and to be ready to move to the rehabilitation centers set up by the government if necessary. He also made several suggestions to the officials of the NDRF and DDRF teams on duty there. Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar and officials of other departments participated in this program.

Proposal to remove Bharat Labor Praja Party, which is not contesting in the elections. District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.

"Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 20, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil said in a statement that it is proposed to remove the political party that is not contesting in the elections from the list of registered parties.

He said that the Bharat Labor Praja Party has not fielded its candidates in the Lok Sabha elections, state assembly elections, or by-elections held in the last six years. In this context, the Collector explained that it is clear that the party has not implemented the procedures as per Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act-1951. He stated that the Election Commission, exercising its powers under Article 324, Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act-1951, has proposed to remove the above party from the list of registered parties. If there is any representation, the president or general secretary of the party should submit an affidavit to the Chief Electoral Officer of Telangana State by the 25th of this month. He ordered that the party president or general secretary must be present, as the inquiry will be held on the 29th of this month. The District Col-



lector clarified that if no response is received, the Election Commission will consider that there is no objection on behalf of the party and issue a cancellation order.

Shabbir Ali criticises KCR on Kaleshwaram irregularities

Hyderabad, Aug.20 (NSS): Senior Congress leader and Advisor to Telangana Government Mohammed Ali Shabbir on Wednesday severely criticised former Chief Minister and BRS supremo K Chandrashekar Rao for allegedly covering up massive irregularities in the Kaleshwaram project. KCR rushed to the high court even before Justice PC Ghose commission report was tabled in the Assembly, and this clearly shows the scale of irregularities, he remarked.

Talking to newsmen at Gandhi Bhavan after the "Face to Face with People - Prajavani" programme, Shabbir Ali said that the commission had conducted a 15-month inquiry by questioning politicians, engineers, experts, bureaucrats and the Central agencies. The Commission, in its report, confirmed that the project had no Cabinet approval, no Central Water Commission clearance and no permission from the National Dam Safety Authority. Yet, KCR went ahead with 'Farmaan'-style orders, wasting over Rs 1.10 lakh crore of public money. Even in the Nizam era, such



mismangement was unheard of, he added. Further, the senior Congress leader said that the report would soon be debated in the Assembly. Once the discussion is held, KCR will have to face the consequences. The Congress Government will not spare anyone responsible for this scam, he asserted.

MLA Koram Kanakayya Leads Vanamahotsavam Plantation Drive at Tekulapalli



"Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, Aug 20 Indian Chronicle: Yellandu Constituency MLA Koram Kanakayya took part in Vanamahotsavam celebrations by planting saplings in the cattle market premises of Golya Thanda Panchayat, Tekulapalli Mandal. "Addressing the gathering, the MLA said the government has been implementing several programmes to protect the environment. He urged every individual to plant at least one sapling and emphasized that safeguarding nature is the responsibility of all citizens. "Tree plantation and conservation must become a people's movement," he added. "The event witnessed the participation of District Congress leader Koram Surender, MPDO Malleshwari, MPO Gandhi, APO Srinivas, EC Tirupati, PACS Chairman Lakkineni Surender Rao, ATMA Committee Chairman Boda Mangilal, Banoth Ravi, Ramakrishna, Hanumanth, TAs, besides representatives from the print and electronic media.

School students and villagers are worried about a series of accidents on the Maddukur National Highway



"Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Aswaraopeta constituency, August 20, Indian Chronicle: Locals are worried about a series of accidents on the Maddukur National Highway in the Chandrugonda mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district. Recently, four vehicles were involved in accidents in a

week. Another lorry hit the school's boundary wall in the early hours of Wednesday. School students and villagers on the bend had earlier taken to the road to protest. However, they could not prevent the accidents and have urged the authorities to prevent these accidents now.

MLA Koram Kanakayya Reviews Flood Relief and Development Works in Tekulapalli

"Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, Aug 20, Indian Chronicle: Yellandu Constituency MLA Koram Kanakayya conducted a review meeting with officials of various departments on Wednesday. "The MLA directed officials to ensure proper sanitation in villages affected by continuous rains and to immediately repair damaged internal roads. He urged citizens to avoid unnecessary travel during heavy rains and advised farmers to remain cautious of live electric wires in fields. "Health officials were instructed to prevent seasonal diseases through sanitation drives, bleaching, and mosquito control. People were warned against crossing overflowing streams and tanks to avoid accidents. "The MLA stressed strict cleanliness in government schools and proper implementation of the midday meal scheme, warning of stern action against negligence. Panchayat secretaries were told to ensure sanitation works without fail, while agriculture officials were asked to prevent urea shortages for farmers. "The meeting was attended by MRO Veerabhadram, MPDO Malleshwari, officials from various departments, police officers, Market Chairman Rambabu, Yellandu Congress leader Koram Surender, Bethampudi Society Chairman Lakkineni Surender, and several others.



Shad Nagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar Pays Tribute to Rajiv Gandhi on His Birth Anniversary

"INDIAN CHRONICLE
"Shad Nagar, August 20, "On the occasion of the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna recipient, the late Rajiv Gandhi, Shad Nagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar garlanded the statue of Rajiv Gandhi at Farookh Nagar Cross Road within the Shad Nagar Municipal limits and offered heartfelt tributes. "Speaking at the event, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar emphasized that the services rendered by the late former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the nation remain eternally memorable. He highlighted that Rajiv Gandhi's entire family has been dedicated to serving the country and its people. As Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi introduced nu-



merous reforms that propelled the nation's development, the MLA added. "The program was attended by a host of dignitaries and party members, including Market Committee Vice Chairman Babar Ali Khan, Town President Konkalla Chennayya,

and leaders such as Agganoor Baswa, Chendi Tirupati Reddy, Ibrahim, Raghu Nayak, Srinivas Yadav, Ande Mohan Mudiraj, Baba Ali, Balaraju Goud, Srikanth Reddy, Srinu Nayak, Suresh Reddy, Veersham, Neerati Vasu,

Jagadish, Seetaram, Srinivas, Mubarak Ali Khan, Khadeer, Bachali Naresh, Tupakula Shekhar, Shekhar, Masood Khan, Shafuddin, Sai Kiran, Rajesh Goud, along with other party leaders, workers, and supporters.

Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar, TTD member narsireddy Attends Grand Maha Kumbha Prokshana Ceremony at Sri Lakshmi Venkateswara Temple“



“INDIAN CHRONICLE ““Shadnagar, August 20““In a magnificent display of devotion and grandeur, the Maha Kumbha Prokshana ceremony at the Sri Lakshmi Venkateswara Swami Temple in Shadnagar, Ranga Reddy district, concluded with great fervor. The event, organized under the auspices of former Shadnagar MLA Bakkani Narsimhulu, featured the participation of prominent dignitaries, including Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar and TTD Board member Narsireddy. ““As part of the ongoing Maha Kumbha Prokshana and Pavitrotsavams, the final day’s Maha Purnahuti program drew a large gathering of devotees and local leaders. MLA Veerlapalli Shankar and TTD Board member Narsireddy graced the occasion, adding to the spiritual significance of the rituals. Following the ceremonies, the temple priests, along with former MLA Bakkani Narsimhulu, honored the visiting dignitaries with traditional felicitations, acknowledging their support for the temple’s activities. ““The program saw active involvement from various community leaders and political figures, highlighting the unity and cultural importance of the event. Among

the notable participants were Town President Konkalla Chennayya, former Municipal Chairman Agganoor Vishwam, and other leaders including Agganoor Baswa, Chendi Tirupati Reddy, Ibrahim, Raghu Nayak, Srinivas Yadav, Ande Mohan Mudiraj, Baba Ali, Balaraju Goud, Srikanth Reddy, Srinu Nayak, Suresh Reddy, Kumaraswamy Goud, Narsimhulu Veersham, Neerati Vasu, Jagadish, Seetaram, Srinivas, Mubarak Ali Khan, Khadeer, Bachali Naresh, Tupakula Shekhar, Shekhar Jangari Ravi. ““Town prominents such as Ande Babayya, Sai Eshwar Reddy, Pratap Reddy, Palabattla Balaraj, Kishore, Kanugu Ram Bhupal, Anthayya, Damodar Reddy, along with party leaders, workers, and others, also took part in the celebrations, making it a memorable communal gathering. ““The ceremony not only reinforced the temple’s role as a spiritual hub but also showcased the collaborative efforts of local representatives in preserving and promoting religious traditions in the region. Devotees expressed their joy at the successful completion of the rituals, which are believed to bring prosperity and divine blessings to the community.

Guru Nanak Institutions Hosts Grand Orientation for Incoming Students



““INDIAN CHRONICLE ““August 20 ““Guru Nanak Institutions kicked off the 2025-26 academic year with a vibrant orientation programme, welcoming its new batch of students and introducing them to the institution’s core values, vision, and academic ethos. ““The event featured distinguished guests of honour, including Mr. Unnikrishnan, a Scientist at RCI/DRDO; Mr. Krithivasan S, Chief Human Resources Officer at Prayag Consumer Care; and Mr. Suresh Perugu, General Manager of Nobl ‘Q’ Company. Drawing from their extensive industry expertise, the guests delivered motivational speeches, urging students to set ambitious goals, embrace lifelong learning, and foster innovation. ““Sardar Gagandeep Singh Kohli, Vice Chairman of Guru Nanak Institutions and Chancellor of Guru Nanak University, presided over the programme. In his address, he warmly greeted the freshers and highlighted the institution’s dedication to holistic education and developing responsible global citizens. ““Dr. H.S. Saini, Managing Director of Guru Nanak Institutions and Vice Chancellor of

Guru Nanak University, provided an in-depth overview of the academic journey ahead, including research opportunities and student-focused initiatives designed to support their growth. ““The gathering was further enriched by the presence of several senior leaders, such as Dr. Steenatha Reddy (Director, GNITC), Dr. Sanjeev Srivastava (Director, GNIT), Dr. P. Parthasaradhy (Joint Director), Dr. K. Venkata Rao (Principal), Dr. Rishi Sayal (Associate Director), Dr. S.V. Ranganayakulu (Dean – R&D), Asst. Director Dr. Kedarnath, Dr. Bhasker, Smt. Vijaya Laxmi (1st Year Coordinators), Mr. Vinay Chopra (Director – Placements and Head – Corporate Relations), and Col. (Retd.) Joyanta Sarkar (GM Admin). Their insights and encouragement offered valuable guidance to the newcomers. ““The orientation wrapped up with engaging interactive sessions, lively cultural performances, and a comprehensive campus tour, fostering a sense of community and excitement among the students as they embark on their educational journey at Guru Nanak Institutions.

MLC Naveen Reddy Attends Special Pooja at Sri Venkateswara Swami Temple's Maha Kumbha Prokshana“



“INDIAN CHRONICLE ““SHADNAGAR, August 20““MLC Naveen Reddy participated in the Maha Kumbha Prokshana pooja program, part of the sacred Maha Kumbha Prokshana and Pavitra Mahotsavalu at the Sri Venkateswara Swami Temple in Janampet, Shadnagar. He also had darshan of Lord Venkateswara Swami. ““The festivities are being organized under the leadership of former MLA Bakkani Narsimhulu. Other notable

attendees included TTD Board Member Narsi Reddy, Ande Babayya, Vankayala Narayana Reddy, Venkateshwar Reddy, former Councillor Kanuga Ananthayya, Chintu Pratap Reddy, Venkatarami Reddy, and several leaders such as Oggu Kishore, Jayanthi Reddy, Pathuri Venkata Rao, Sai Eshwar, Nandigama Srinivas, Bhaskar Goud, Mohan Reddy, Dinesh Sagar, Pandu, Gnaneshwar, among others.

Contribute to make India globally competitive, says R. Ravi Kumar



Hyderabad, Aug.20 : The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FTCCI), in collaboration with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), organised a half-day seminar on Empowering MSMEs through Strategic Finance and Marketing Excellence at Federation House on Wednesday.

Delivering the keynote address, V.V.R. Prasad, DGM, SIDBI, Hyderabad, said MSMEs play a pivotal role in the national economy by significantly contributing to exports and employment. He elaborated on several sector-specific SIDBI schemes: TUF Scheme – for the textile sector; Green Financing – for sustainable business practices; AHIDF Scheme – for the food sector; SHWAS Scheme – for healthcare enterprises; SMILE (SIDBI Make in India Soft Loan Fund for MSMEs); Ubharte Sitaare – for export-oriented MSMEs with high potential; STHAPAN – for greenfield manufacturing/service units; SAATH – supports MSMEs promoted by SC/ST entrepreneurs and ARJANA – dedicated to women-led MSMEs. He also spoke about general schemes on technology upgradation, working capital, credit guarantee support, and SIDBI’s digital initiatives, such as

PSB Loans in 59 Minutes and the Jan Samarth portal, designed to enhance credit access for MSMEs. Welcoming the participants, R. Ravi Kumar, President, FTCCI, said “The road ahead for MSMEs is challenging. They need the right tools and strategies to withstand global pressures like tariff threats. MSMEs are critical in making India stronger and globally competitive. Ravi Kumar further said that, in the current era, Trump’s Tariff threats can only be withstood by a strong nation like India. MSMEs play a huge role in making India even stronger and more future-ready. Together, we make India stronger and the Trump Tariff threat-free. Knowledge must be shared democratically—seminars like this are an important step.” Premchand Kankaria, Chairman, Banking, Finance & Insurance Committee, FTCCI, in his introductory remarks, said MSMEs—while being the backbone of the Indian economy—face challenges in accessing affordable capital and becoming digital-ready. “They need cost-effective digital marketing strategies and easy credit facilities for survival and growth. FTCCI has always been at the forefront in equipping MSMEs with the required ammunition for progress,” he said.

SCR GM conducts Inspection of Guntakal Division

Hyderabad, Aug.20 Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway (SCR) undertook detailed inspection of Guntakal Division on Wednesday. He was accompanied by Chandra Shekhar Gupta, Divisional Railway Manager, Guntakal Division and other senior officials throughout the inspection. Sanjay Kumar carried out rear window inspection in Secunderabad – Mahbubnagar; Renigunta – Guntakal section, during which he reviewed the safety aspects of tracks, signaling systems and bridges. The General Manager was accompanied by Santosh Kumar Verma, DRM, Hyderabad up to Mahbubnagar section and later by Chandra Shekhar Gupta, DRM, Guntakal Division from Tirupati onwards. The General Manager conducted a detailed inspection of the on-going redevelopment works at Tirupati Railway station undertaken as part of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. He reviewed the progress of works and observed the safety precautions being followed at the

worksite. The General Manager also held a meeting with officials of construction organization at Tirupati, wherein he reviewed the current status of the project and further action plans. He appreciated the progress of works and advised the officials to further expedite the works so as to complete the project as targeted. Further, the General Manager also inspected the on-going redevelopment works at Kadapa Railway station as part of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. He examined the progress of works and inspected the safe working practices at the construction site. Later, Sanjay held a detailed performance review meeting at Guntakal Divisional Headquarters. During the meeting, the General Manager reviewed the progress of various infrastructures projects, station redevelopment works, provision of passenger amenities, traffic facility works etc., undertaken by the division. During the course of inspection, General Manager received representations from members of various trade unions.

Centre’s decision to ban betting apps is historic : TGSRTC MD VC Sajjanar

: The “SayNoToBettingApps” movement has been a success with the Centre deciding to ban online betting apps, said TGSRTC MD VC Sajjanar on Wednesday . He expressed his happiness over the introduction of the bill to ban the online betting. The decision of the Central Government to ban the online betting, which is destroying countless young lives, is very welcome. It is historic. This move will not only save many lives but also save the social fabric of our society from the dangerous consequences of gambling addiction. For the last few months, I have been raising my voice tirelessly against the impact of the betting apps on the youth. It is a matter of pride that the

#SayNoToBettingApps movement has been launched by lakhs of concerned citizens from all over India and abroad. This collective struggle has finally paid off,” he said. He also said that This decision would benefit the youth of India immensely and added that It would allow them to focus on building a golden future through education, career and creativity, rather than falling into the trap of mental and financial slavery. “This is a major step towards leading the society in a healthier, more progressive direction. Young friends, I once again urge youngsters to stay away from the betting apps! Use your energy, talent and time to achieve your goals. By doing so, you will not only shape your own future, but also contribute to a strong, bright India,” he said .

Breakfast scheme for Anganwadi children soon: Minister Seethakka

Hyderabad, Aug.20 : State Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya Seethakka on Wednesday held a review meeting on the activities of the Women and Child Welfare Department at the Mission Bhagiratha office in Erra Manzil of the city . The meeting was attended by the Department Secretary Anitha Ramachandran, Joint Directors, Regional Joint Directors and HODs of all departments. The meeting reviewed the progress made in the construction of new Anganwadi buildings, creation of infrastructure in the Anganwadi centers, Saksham Anganwadi, Arogya Lakshmi, Mission Vatsalya, Mission Shakti, distribution of uniforms to children, distribution of uniform sarees to the Anganwadi teachers and helpers, strengthening of working women hostels, supply of Vijaya milk to children, breakfast program, administrative centers, Poshan Abhiyan and other issues. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Seethakka said that the construction of the Anganwadi buildings should be accelerated and added that free sand would be supplied to the Anganwadi centers on the lines of Indiramma Indlu scheme . She directed the district collectors to take action in this regard. She said that Out of the 1025 Anganwadi buildings sanctioned, sites had been identified in only 625 areas so far. She suggested that the site identification should be completed immediately in the remaining areas. She reminded that Rs. 12 lakhs had been allocated for the construction of each Anganwadi building. Seethakka said that As part of the works fair program , foundation stones of new buildings should be laid and 22 Anganwadi buildings that have already been completed should be inaugurated by local MLAs. She said that the uniform sarees of the Anganwadi teachers and helpers had been procured and had reached the district centers and added that their distribution should start immediately. She said that a breakfast scheme was being started soon for the Anganwadi centre children and added that due to this scheme, which has already been implemented on an experimental basis in 139 Anganwadi centers in Hyderabad, the attendance of children had increased by 30 percent. She revealed that the

breakfast scheme would soon be expanded in many districts with this experience. To improve the nutrition of children, she said that a proposal to provide 100 ml of milk in the morning was being considered and added that steps were being taken to serve egg biryani and vegetable khichdi one day every week. She ordered that the height of the long tables distributed in the Anganwadi centers for pregnant and lactating women should be increased and changes should be made as per the opinions of the beneficiaries. Minister Seethakka said that currently nine working women hostels were providing services under the auspices of the Women and Child Welfare Department and added that five more hostels were under construction. She suggested that the department should work towards providing more facilities in the working women hostels as per the current needs. She instructed the officials not to compromise anywhere in providing the Anganwadi services. Minister Seethakka congratulated the staff for making Telangana as being the first among the states providing nutrition through the face recognition system. She said that the Anganwadi centers should be made exemplary for the country.

CBI arrests NHAI Project Director in Telangana while accepting Rs. 60,000 Bribe

Hyderabad, Aug.20 (NSS):The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested Project Director, PIU, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Warangal, Telangana and a private person while accepting bribe of Rs. 60,000/- from the Complainant. CBI, registered the instant case on 19.08.2025 against the Project Director, PIU, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Kalyan-Dombivli civic body bans meat sale, slaughter on Independence Day; NCP(SP) leader Jitendra Awhad plans ‘mutton party’



GNS News Agency, August 20

The order comes at a time when the KDMC is under administrative rule, with the commissioner functioning as the state government’s representative. The order comes at a time when the KDMC is under administrative rule, with the commissioner functioning as the state government’s representative. The Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) has ordered the closure of all slaughterhouses and meat shops in its jurisdiction for 24 hours on August 15, Independence Day. The civic body said the restriction will apply to all licensed butchers dealing in goats, sheep, chicken, and large animals, and will remain in force from midnight on August 14.

The notice, signed by Kanchan Gaikwad, Deputy Commissioner, Licensing, warns that action will be taken under sections 334, 336 and 394(A) of the Maharashtra Municipal Corporation Act, 1949, if any meat is sold or animals

are slaughtered during the period. The order comes at a time when the KDMC is under administrative rule, with the commissioner functioning as the state government’s representative.

The Opposition has sharply criticised the move, terming it “food policing”. Nationalist Congress Party (SP) leader Dr Jitendra Awhad alleged that the government was “fueling a vegetarian–non-vegetarian divide” after having “exhausted other social controversies”. He questioned whether residents were now being told what to eat on Independence Day and argued that such a directive could not have been issued without state-level approval. “My plan is to host a mutton party at the spot. The Maharashtra Government should just announce the date,” Awhad said, adding that he will eat mutton in Kalyan-Dombivli on Friday to defy the order. Terming the decision “unacceptable”, NCP (SP) parliamentarian Suresh Mhatre said food choices are deeply rooted in cultural traditions, particularly in the coastal Agri-Koli community, which consumes both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food. “Such a ban cannot be imposed,” he stated. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray too joined the criticism, calling for the KDMC commissioner’s suspension. “Who is the commissioner to tell us what to eat and what not to? Bridges are collapsing, roads are in terrible shape, and instead of fixing them, the administration is busy banning food,” Thackeray said. Defending the order, Shiv Sena MLA from Kalyan, Vishwanath Bhoir, said there was no public objection and that being vegetarian for one day should not be an issue. “If people follow become vegetarian for one day, what is the harm? Criticism is the job of the Opposition,” he added.

‘Inhumane, unscientific’: Animal advocates slam Supreme Court directive to relocate stray dogs in Delhi-NCR

GNS News Agency, August 20

Animal protection organisations have strongly opposed the Supreme Court’s directive for Delhi-NCR civic authorities to pick up stray dogs and relocate them to shelters, calling the move “impractical and inhumane” for healthy, vaccinated animals. “The recent Supreme Court order... is a shocking judgment that runs contrary to global public health guidance, India’s own laws, and humane, evidence-based practice,” said Bharati Ramachandran, CEO of Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations (FIAPO), a federation of more than 200 animal protection organisations across India. She called the mass sheltering of healthy, vaccinated dogs “impractical and inhumane”. “The proper and responsible response to such tragedies is... declaring a massive sterilisation and vaccination campaign. India has philanthropists who would be glad to invest in this, should money be the issue,” she added. According to Bharati, the solution lies in scaling up Delhi’s sterilisation and vaccination programmes and running public awareness campaigns on co-existence.

According to India’s Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, sterilised and vaccinated community dogs are to be returned to their original territories after treatment. Earlier today, a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan asked the authorities to build shelters and report about the creation of infrastructure to the court within eight weeks. The bench also stated that the shelters must have sufficient personnel for sterilisation and immunisation of the stray dogs. It also directed monitoring of the shelters by CCTV cameras to ensure that no dogs are taken out.

“There should not be any compromise in undertaking any exercise. If any individual or organisation comes in the way of picking stray dogs or rounding them up, we will proceed to take action against any such resistance,” it



said. Reacting to this development, Dr Mini Aravindan, Senior Director of Veterinary Affairs, PETA India, said: “Had the Delhi government implemented an effective dog sterilisation programme, there would hardly be any dogs on the road today. But it would not be too late to start implementing an effective sterilisation programme now.” She also said that the displacement of dogs on such a large scale is not scientific and has never shown results. “As per a population survey conducted in 2022-23, Delhi has around 10 lakh community dogs, with less than half sterilised. Forced removal of some 10 lakh community dogs from Delhi’s streets will cause uproar in communities that care deeply for them and chaos and suffering for the dogs on a large scale. It will also ultimately do nothing to curb the dog population, reduce rabies or prevent dog bite incidents,” she said, stating that it was infeasible to build enough dog shelters to house all stray dogs. “Displacing dogs also causes fights over territory and problems like starvation,” she said, adding that the government has required that community dogs be sterilised since 2001, a procedure which calms them. These dogs are also vaccinated against rabies in the process.

HC dismisses plea to switch MBBS admission from Punjab quota to Chandigarh pool



GNS News Agency, August 20

HC dismisses plea to switch MBBS admission from Punjab quota to Chandigarh pool The court noted that MBBS prospectus required all candidates to give an undertaking that they had not opted and claimed benefit of residence in any other State or UT other than Chandigarh. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has rejected a writ petition seeking permission for a medical aspirant to withdraw from the Punjab state quota and apply instead under the Chandigarh pool for MBBS admissions in the 2025 session.

A bench of Justices Ashwani Kumar Mishra and Rohit Kapoor dismissed the plea filed by Nikunj Bansal, who had sought directions to reopen the online application portal of Government Medical College and Hospital, Sector 32, Chandigarh, and extend the deadline for submission. Bansal had already applied for admission to Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot, under the Punjab quota, showing his place of residence as Punjab. He now wanted to switch to Chandigarh’s pool. Prospectus clause decisive

The court noted that Clause 6 of the Chandigarh MBBS prospectus required all candidates to give an undertaking that they had “not opted and claimed benefit of residence in any other State/U.T. other than Chandigarh after the declaration of NEET result”. “Undisputedly, the petitioner has already made an application for admission to the MBBS Course in Baba Farid University... showing his residence at Punjab,” the bench observed, adding that this made him ineligible under the clause.

The judges held that the prospectus condition was not challenged, nor was any illegality shown in its inclusion. “Perusal of the prospectus of both respondents No.5 and 6 makes it abundantly clear that one person cannot claim for State quota in two different States,” they wrote. “Cannot blow

hot and cold” Rejecting the plea, the court said, “The petitioner cannot be permitted to blow hot and cold in one breath. Having taken a conscious decision to claim his residence as the State of Punjab and having applied for admission in such category, the petitioner would clearly be stopped from taking a contrary stand now.” It emphasised that the last date for applying in Chandigarh was July 24, 2025, and that “there was nothing to stop the petitioner to make such an application if he so intended”. Bansal’s lawyers relied on Supreme Court orders in a pending matter regarding the introduction of OBC reservation in Chandigarh’s admissions. The apex court, on July 22 and July 30, had directed the Union Territory to provide 3 per cent OBC reservation in 2025–26, to be raised to 27 per cent in a staggered manner over six years. However, the bench said the petitioner was from the general category, so “what orders are passed in respect of reservation for OBC category... would not constitute any cause for the petitioner to approach this Court” seeking alteration of the admission process. Finding “no reason to interfere,” the bench dismissed the writ petition and disposed of pending applications.

Hyderabad-based GMR Aero Technic’s Aviation Programme receives official recognition from Airbus

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based GMR Aero Technic on Monday announced that its GMR School of Aviation and its Basic Aircraft Maintenance Engineering Training Programme have been officially recognised by Airbus Maintenance Training Central MTO.

“The recognition affirms that the School’s EASA Part 147 and DGCA CAR 147 approved Basic Maintenance Training Organisation and its associated basic maintenance training programme comply with the standards set by Airbus. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with Airbus’ internal quality and compliance requirements,” a press release said. The recognition is a significant milestone in GMR Aero Technic’s aim to build a sustainable aviation training ecosystem that meets international benchmarks.

‘Not scientific, never worked’: PETA opposes Supreme Court order to move Delhi NCR stray dogs to shelters



GNS News Agency, August 20

Communities think of neighbourhood dogs as family, and displacement and jailing of dogs is not scientific and has never worked, said PETA India, after the Supreme Court Monday directed the Delhi Government, civic bodies, and authorities of Noida, Gurgaon, and Ghaziabad to pick up stray dogs and move them to shelters. “According to a population survey conducted in 2022–23, Delhi has around 10 lakh community dogs, with less than half sterilised. Forced removal ... will cause uproar in communities that care deeply for them. It will also ultimately do nothing to curb the dog population, reduce rabies or prevent dog bite incidents,” PETA added.

In UP school, headmaster absent, his driver ‘teaching’ in classroom

GNS News Agency, August 20

The incident came to light at a time when the state government is facing criticism from various political parties and others over its decision to pair primary schools across the state. The incident came to light at a time when the state government is facing criticism from various political parties and others over its decision to pair primary schools across the state.

After his driver was allegedly found teaching students in the classroom, the headmaster of a primary school in Uttar Pradesh’s Hamirpur has been suspended and is facing a formal inquiry. The incident came to light during an inspection of the school, following which immediate action was taken, said officials. The school has a total of 79 students but only three teachers, including headmaster Veeru Singh. “It was found that the headmaster was absent from the school, while his driver was present and looking after the children,” said Hamirpur Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Alok Singh.

Responding to allegations that Singh’s driver was taking classes, the BSA said the driver was present at the school when checked, and the inquiry will determine whether he was actually teaching. “I have suspended the headmaster and ordered an inquiry into the matter,” he said, adding that the probe will determine the circumstances and responsibility in the case. The incident came to light at a time when the state government is facing criticism from various political parties and others over its decision to pair primary schools across the state. Under this system, schools with fewer than 50 students are linked with nearby larger schools. According to an official, a complaint was received alleging that the headmaster’s driver was conducting classes at the primary school in the Kapsa area, under the Maudaha locality.

Acting on the tip-off, an education department official



was sent to carry out a surprise inspection of the school. During the inspection, it was found that out of the three teachers posted at the school — including headmaster Singh — only one teacher was present. Another teacher was on leave, while the headmaster himself was absent. In his place, the headmaster’s driver, Ram Sahay, was allegedly present inside a classroom. There are about 1.32 lakh primary schools, with nearly 1.48 crore students, across the state. Under the state government’s school pairing policy, 10,784 schools have been identified for pairing. While many have already been paired, the process is still underway for several others. According to the government, the objective is to improve the quality of education, reduce dropouts, and provide students with facilities such as smart classes and libraries. The government further stated that pairing will benefit both students and teachers, offering students greater opportunities for healthy competition and peer learning, as well as enabling group discussions, project work, and large-scale cultural and sports activities. While instructions are awaited on the deployment of teachers and other staff from the paired schools, most of them are reporting to the newly assigned schools.

Dharmasthala secret burials case: woman approaches SIT, seeks fresh probe into her sister’s ‘rape-murder’ in 1986

GNS News Agency, August 20

A woman approached the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Dharmasthala secret burial case Monday, seeking a reinvestigation into the alleged rape and murder of her sister in the Karnataka temple town in 1986. CPI(M) leader B M Bhat was among those present with the woman who filed the complaint as she visited the SIT office in Belthangady in the Dakshina Kannada district. Though the Karnataka Police filed a case after the death of the 17-year-old girl, a Class 12 student, they arrested no one and later filed a closure report.

The SIT was formed after a whistleblower filed a police complaint claiming that he had been forced to bury several bodies of alleged sexual assault and murder victims in Dharmasthala. The investigation team recently opened a dedicated SIT office, with police station status, in Belthangady to facilitate their ongoing investigations into historical criminal allegations. The SIT deferred inspection of the 13th site mentioned by the whistleblower after a tense situation prevailed around Dharmasthala following a clash involving a few YouTubers and some residents of the town on August 6. In the eight days of inspections before that, the SIT had recovered fragments of two skeletons. Meanwhile, the



Dakshina Kannada police arrested six people in connection with the clash last week: Padmaprasad, 32, from Dharmasthala; Suhas, 22, from Dharmasthala; Khalarand Puttunonu, 42, from Ujire; Chetan, 21, from Kalenja; Shashidhar, 30, from Dharmasthala; and Guruprasad, 19, from Kalmanka. The police filed seven FIRs hours after clashes that took place over alleged partisan media coverage of the Dharmasthala secret burial case. The police used mild lathi charge to disperse the crowd during the clashes. Several YouTubers, camerapersons, and a private Kannada channel reporter were among those injured in the skirmish.

Nagpur woman killed in highway accident, husband ties her body to bike after no one stops to help him

GNS News Agency, August 20

A man tied his wife’s body to his bike after she was killed in a road accident, as his cries for help were allegedly ignored by passersby on the Nagpur-Jabalpur National Highway Sunday. Gyarshi, 35, was travelling with her husband, Amit Yadav, 36, on their motorcycle, from Lonara in Maharashtra’s Nagpur district to their native village in Madhya Pradesh for Raksha Bandhan. The accident happened near Deolapur between 2.30 and 3 pm, when a speeding truck allegedly hit their bike, and Gyarshi died on the spot. Amid heavy rain and busy traffic, Amit reportedly tried to stop passing vehicles for help, but no one stopped. Finally, he tied his wife’s body to the back of his motorcycle and started riding back to his house, a video of which has gone viral on social media. Meanwhile, the police received information about the accident on the highway. However, when they arrived at the scene, they could not find Amit or the vehicle. As Amit proceeded with his wife’s corpse, the police at the Khumari toll plaza attempted to stop him, but



he did not pull over.

Then the highway police, along with Nagpur rural and Nagpur city police, set up a roadblock and stopped Amit. He told police that he and his wife, Gyarshi Amit Yadav, were on their way to her home in Karanpur in Madhya Pradesh when the accident happened.

‘Duped’ with CM’s forged letter, fake RERA approvals, Gurugram residents lodge FIRs against real-estate developers, Sohna tehsildar and patwari; probe on



GNS News Agency, August 20

A tehsildar and a patwari posted in Gurugram and six others, including a real-estate developer company, were booked on Thursday on charges of corruption, cheating and forgery, besides various other provisions punishable under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for allegedly duping people on the pretext of selling parcels of land in the name of the Haryana government’s policy of promoting “organic farming”. The parcels of land are located in Kamki and Tolni villages in Sohna tehsil of Gurugram district — around 11 km from the district headquarters. The matter dates back to 2020-2021 when the accused allegedly started publicising these parcels of land in the name of developing farmhouses/ residential colonies. The complainants in the two FIRs, Survina Bhalla (80) and Amit Banga (58), alleged that they were duped by the accused, who showed them forged letters of “Hon’ble Haryana CM, forged approvals by the Town and Country Planning Department and the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)”. The complainants alleged that “the accused appeared very wealthy, always used to come in Mercedes cars with PSO [Personal Security Officer], and mostly used to call on WhatsApp, stating they have meetings with ministers/ senior officials”.

The FIRs have been registered against real-estate developer company M/s Goldkist Developers Pvt Ltd, its director Raj Bala and her husband Hari Das Gupta, its other director Braham Parkash Aggarwal, tehsildar Shikha Garg, patwari Asgar and others, including Balwan Singh and Rajesh Kumar Gupta. The two FIRs, No. 133 and 134, were registered on Thursday at Gurugram’s DLF-II police station, following the orders by Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate (Gurugram) Ramesh Chander, and are currently under investigation. “Orders were received from the Hon’ble ACJM’s court on July 8, and we registered FIRs. Further investigation is going on,” one of the investigating police officers said. According to both FIRs, which contents are similar, the complainants alleged that they were shown parcels of land for constructing farmhouses/ houses by the accused, who claimed to have got all the requisite approvals of “Haryana’s Director (Town and Country Planning), RERA, and Hon’ble Chief Minister of Haryana”. While Bhalla alleged that she “paid Rs 1.30 crore initially, spent over Rs 2 crore on levelling the land and construction, but the accused subsequently demanded another Rs 5 crore and then Rs 25 crore for getting her all the requisite approvals”. Banga alleged that he had paid Rs 2.94 crore to the accused. The complainants alleged that it was only after they had made the payments and got the sale deeds registered in their names, which were signed by the tehsildar and the patwari, that they started construction work on their respective parcels of land. However, they were left shocked when, in July 2021, officials of the District Town Planner (Enforcement) came to their sites and started demolishing their structures with JCB machines.

After the registry of the land, for which he also took possession and constructed the boundary walls, Banga said in his complaint, which also forms part of the FIR, “I started making plans for our dream house to be built and also engaged an architect and construction company for the same. However, on July 6, 2021, officials of the District Town Planner (Enforcement) came to the project with JCBs and demolished the boundary walls of all the farm lands. When we tried to stop the government authorities, we were told by them [officials] that the accused persons did not have any approvals from the DTCP or the RERA and that we had been cheated of our hard-earned money. When I showed the printed Brochures, papers and FAQ to the enforcement authorities, they informed me that all these documents were forged and fabricated, and we became victims of a planned cheating scheme floated by the accused persons in conspiracy with each other.” When the complainants approached the tehsildar and patwari, both told them that they registered the sale deeds as per the norms. However, the complainants allege that both revenue department officials acted in connivance with the other accused persons.

Among 10 GLs, the size of four lakes ranged between 60 and 70 hectares (Category 2, i.e., S > 60–70), four were between 50 and 60 hectares (Category 3, S > 50–60), and two were smaller than 50 hectares (Category 4, S = 50). The CWC said it monitors GLs larger than 10 hectares in size only. The six expanding glacial lakes in Himachal are among 34 such lakes identified in the Himalayan region, including Uttarakhand (1 GL), Ladakh (4 GLs), Jammu & Kashmir (5 GLs), Sikkim (15 GLs), and Arunachal Pradesh (3 GLs). Meanwhile, 19 hydroelectric projects built in the state—mostly downstream on the 23 dams along the flow paths of these lakes — have been studied under the Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) risk assessment between 2009 and 2024.

6 of 10 Glacial Lakes in Indus Basin in Himachal, each with a size of 10 ha, are expanding, CWC informs NGT

GNS News Agency, August 20

Six out of ten Glacial Lakes (GLs) in the Indus Basin in Himachal Pradesh expanded in size over the past year, one has decreased, while three remained stable. These ten GLs have 23 dams, with each having a surface area of more than 10 hectares. In addition, there are also five large Water Bodies (WBs), each exceeding 10 hectares, located in the Indus Basin in the state. In a detailed affidavit submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on July 8, the Central Water Commission (CWC) informed that as per the Criteria for Risk Indexing of Glacial Lakes (CRIGL), four GLs fall under Category 2, four others under Category 3 and two under Category 4, while no GL in Himachal falls under Category 1 — a lake having size of 70 ha or more.



The affidavit was filed in response to a 2024 study conducted by the Himachal Pradesh Council for Science, Technology and Environment (HIMCOSTE), which reported the formation of around 500 new GLs between 2019 and 2023, bringing the total number of GLs in the Indus and Sutlej basins to 1,048. Notably, the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) has also prepared glacial lake inventories for Uttarakhand (2015) and Himachal Pradesh (2018), identifying 1,266 lakes with a total area of 7.6 km² in Uttarakhand and 958 lakes with a total area of 9.6 km² in Himachal Pradesh. The tribunal was further informed that the Triloki Glacier in the Bhaga River Basin, a tributary of the Chenab in Lahaul & Spiti, has been identified for long-term monitoring. For the same, a meteorological (AWS) and hydrological (AWLR) observatory was established near Yotse village last year. Three major glaciers — Triloki, Mulkila and one unnamed glacier — contribute to the discharge measured at this observatory. Geodetic mass balance studies, snow cover assessments, and seasonal melt analysis will be conducted to understand temporal changes and the contribution of snowmelt, glacier melt, and rainfall to river discharge in the basin. In situ measurements of glacier melt will also be taken to validate the results of geodetic mass balance studies. These observations will support validation of glaciological and hydrological models such as HIGTHIM, VOLTA, GLabTop2, SNOWMOD, SPHY, and VIC. The CWC further informed the tribunal that it has finalised the Criteria for Risk Indexing of Glacial Lakes, providing a structured approach for identifying and ranking lakes based on their likelihood of failure and potential downstream damage in the event of a GLOF. This methodology considers key parameters such as lake size, rate of expansion, slope stability, proximity to other lakes and downstream vulnerabilities such as human settlements and infrastructure, including dams and bridges. Currently, the CWC monitors 902 Glacial Lakes and Water Bodies (GL&WBs) larger than 10 hectares, based on the Glacial Lake Inventory 2011 prepared by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC). These lakes span the Indian Himalayan Region, covering Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, and are observed using remote sensing techniques from June to October each year.

In dry state Bihar, district officer arrested after ‘arriving drunk’ to event attended by minister

GNS News Agency, August 20

Bihar district officer arrested, Bihar district officer drunk, Bihar district officer drunk arrested, Indian express news, current affairsA source said the accused officer denied consuming alcohol and said he had taken some homeopathic medicine, which might have been mistaken for alcohol intake. He gave the same explanation for his previous detention as well, said the source. A senior fisheries officer posted in Supaul district of Bihar was arrested for allegedly arriving in an inebriated state at a public event, which was attended by a state minister, said officials.



The event, organised on National Fish Farmers Day Thursday, was attended by state Minister for Public Health and Engineering Neeraj Kumar Singh, District Magistrate Sawan Kumar and several other senior officials, including the accused, District Fisheries Officer Shambhu Kumar. Sources said, during the event the DM received complaints about irregularities in distribution of fisheries kits and called Shambhu Kumar to inquire about the same. During the interaction, the DM felt the officer was slurring and behaving in an erratic manner, said the sources. He directed Shambhu Kumar to report to Circuit House and alerted the Excise Department. “Yesterday, about 1 pm, the DM called to report that an officer appeared to be under the influence of alcohol and asked us to reach the Circuit House with a breath analyser. The breath analyser test was done and the officer was found to be intoxicated,” said Ashok Kumar, Inspector, Excise and Prohibition. The Inspector said the officer’s breath analyser report showed “10 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood”, and he was arrested. The Excise Department learnt that it was the officer’s last working day in Supaul and he was to join another posting next day. “We found that he had previously been apprehended for intoxication at Bhimnagar checkpoint on March 9, 2024. The officer, being a first-time offender, was fined between ‘2,000 and ‘5,000 as per the court order,”

Varsha Deshpande from Satara wins 2025 UN Population award for championing gender equality in India



GNS News Agency, August 20

Varsha Deshpande, a Satara-based advocate whose commitment towards ‘saving the girl child’ led her to launch ambitious campaigns and conduct sting operations to prevent sex-selective abortions, has been awarded the 2025 UN Population Award for championing gender equality in India. “I am deeply honoured to receive the prestigious UN Population Award in recognition of my efforts to address gender-biased sex selection and the declining sex ratio. This award is not a personal accolade, but a tribute to the collective work of countless individuals and institutions who engage with communities to drive meaningful change and empower them,” Deshpande, who was felicitated on the occasion of World Population Day at an event in New York, told

According to an official statement, the laureate of the fortieth edition of the United Nations Population Award in the individual category is Varsha Deshpande, Secretary, Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal of India. At the helm of Dalit Mahila Vikas Mandal that she set up in 1990, Deshpande has spearheaded numerous programmes, including ones addressing child marriage through the empowerment of adolescent girls and engagement with men and boys; safeguarding the rights of women in the informal sector; and promoting joint property registration to boost women’s access to assets. She is a member of several statutory bodies constituted under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal

When Maya Angelou’s words found a way to Kerala courtroom: Political murder, a wedding, and parole

GNS News Agency, August 20

Kerala High Court, life imprisonment, Maya Angelou, Maya Angelou words in Kerala courtroom, Indian express news, current affairsThe prosecution had listed ten persons as accused, and a trial court had acquitted all of them. Subsequently, Deepak’s wife Varsha appealed in the High Court, which on April 8 this year awarded life imprisonment to five among them. Prasanth’s marriage was fixed before the verdict. The Kerala High Court Friday granted parole to a person serving life imprisonment, saying that “the court was looking at this case from the angle of that girl who decided to marry the convict”.

Granting 15-day parole to Prasanth alias Kochi, a native of Thrissur, for his wedding slated to be held on July 13, Justice P V Kunhikrishnan said, “This court cannot neglect the brave stand of that girl who is ready to marry the convict, even though she knows that her partner is in jail and is undergoing life imprisonment.” Prasanth has been convicted of a political murder that rocked Kerala in 2015. His mother, Sathy, had approached the high court after the jail authorities rejected her plea for parole. According to the prison rules, there is no provision for granting emergency leave to a convict for his wedding. The judge said he was exercising his extraordinary jurisdiction to grant parole for 15 days, looking not at Prasanth but towards the woman who is ready to marry because of her love and affection for him. She did not change her stand even after her partner was convicted, the court noted. “Let that girl be happy, and this court shower all blessings upon her,” it said. “Even after the convict was sentenced to undergo life imprisonment,



her love continued. In other words, she says that ‘you are my today, my tomorrow, and my forever.’ She says that ‘you are my soulmate, my partner, my best friend’,” the court said.

The judge quoted American poet Maya Angelou in his order: “Love recognises no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.” Prasanth is among five RSS-BJP workers who were found guilty of murdering P G Deepak, who had left the party to join the RJD, in 2015. The incident was reported at Cherpu police limits in Thrissur. The prosecution had listed ten persons as accused, and a trial court had acquitted all of them. Subsequently, Deepak’s wife Varsha appealed in the High Court, which on April 8 this year awarded life imprisonment to five among them. Prasanth’s marriage was fixed before the verdict.

‘Killed elderly couple, accused then hid in old age home’: Police chargesheet in Northwest Delhi murders

GNS News Agency, August 20

To hide from the police after he allegedly robbed and murdered an elderly couple at Northwest Delhi’s Kohat Enclave in March, the main accused posed as a caregiver with a diploma in medical care and joined an old age home-cum-medical centre in Dwarka as an employee, police have said. The accused, Deepak, made a fake Aadhaar card and posed as one Pankaj, said an officer. “He posed as a caregiver, claiming to hold a diploma in medical care, and was allowed inside the old age home under the false identity of Pankaj.”

A chargesheet in the case was filed by the police before the court on June 13. On March 18, the decomposing bodies of Mohinder Singh Talwar (72) and his wife Daljeet Kaur (70) were found at their flat. While Mohinder was strangled to death, Daljeet had injuries on her head and strangulation marks on her neck. Later that day, the couple’s former attendant, Ravi Kishore (37), was arrested. Deepak, the main suspect and the couple’s current attendant — who had joined work only a few days before the deaths — was arrested from the old age



home on March 22. According to police, Ravi, who had recommended Deepak’s name to the couple, planned to rob them — he knew where the safe was, along with the other jewels and cash — and divide the proceeds between him and Deepak without the two having the meet. Police, citing the chargesheet, alleged that Deepak was to drop off half the share of the stolen goods at the residence of Ravi’s in-laws. An officer, citing the chargesheet, said Ravi’s plan went awry when he learnt that Deepak did not deposit the money as planned. “Deepak felt he didn’t find as much money in the flat as was promised by Ravi. So, he kept it all for himself,” the officer added. Ravi had told the police

that he used to work for the couple till January, before he was asked to leave as Mohinder, who was diagnosed with Parkinson’s, was showing signs of improvement. However, in March, the couple reached out to him, asking him to return to work. Police have claimed in the chargesheet that Ravi then decided to plan the robbery, and recommended Deepak’s name instead of returning to work. “The chargesheet mentions that Ravi was aware that the police would reach out to him initially. He planned to deflect their attention till Deepak found a safe hideout,” said an officer. Further, police said, the chargesheet has alleged that Deepak didn’t kill the couple impulsively, but had planned the

murder. “His actions were not impulsive... it was a calculated and cold-blooded decision to eliminate risk,” the officer said. Deepak was arrested when the driver of the autorickshaw he had boarded heard him talking on the phone, discussing his plan to flee to Patna after hiding in the old age home for a few days. “The owner of the autorickshaw had dropped the accused at Dwarka Mor. He had overheard the accused saying he was going to stay at a nearby old age home,” a police officer had said earlier. The Talwars owned readymade garment shops in Paschim Vihar and Kamla Nagar. They are now being handled by their sons, Charanpreet and Manpreet. They also have a daughter, Gurleen Kaur.

Israel strike kills Al Jazeera journalists in Gaza



CAIRO/JERUSALEM,- GNS News Agency, August 20A prominent Al Jazeera journalist, who had previously been threatened by Israel, was killed along with four colleagues in an Israeli airstrike on Sunday in an attack condemned by journalists and rights groups.Israel's military said it targeted and killed Anas Al Sharif, alleging he had headed a Hamas militant cell and was involved in rocket attacks on Israel.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.Al Jazeera, which is funded by the Qatari government, rejected the assertion, and before his death, Al Sharif had also rejected such claims by Israel."Anas Al Sharif and his colleagues were among the last remaining voices in Gaza conveying the tragic reality to the world," Al Jazeera said.

Al Sharif, 28, was among a group of four Al Jazeera journalists and an assistant who died in an airstrike on a tent near Al Shifa Hospital in eastern Gaza City, Gaza officials and Al Jazeera said. An official at the hospital said two other people were killed in the strike.A sixth journalist, Mohammad Al-Khaldi, a local freelance reporter, was also killed in the strike, medics at Al Shifa Hospital said on Monday.Calling Al Sharif "one of Gaza's bravest journalists," Al Jazeera said the attack was a "desperate attempt to silence voices in anticipation of the occupation of Gaza."The other journalists killed were Mohammed Qreiqeh, Ibrahim Zaher and Mohammed Noufal, Al Jazeera said."The deliberate targeting of journalists by Israel in the Gaza Strip reveals how these crimes are beyond imagination," Qatari Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, said on X.

The U.N. human rights office condemned the killing of the journalists, saying the actions by Israel's military represented a "grave breach of international humanitarian law" as Palestinians reported the heaviest bombardments in weeks.Its post on social media platform X was accompanied by a photograph of flattened blue tents next to a bullet-ridden wall in Gaza City.British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is "gravely concerned" about the repeated targeting of journalists in Gaza, his spokesperson said.

The Israeli military said in a statement that Al Sharif headed a Hamas cell and "was responsible for advancing rocket attacks against Israeli civilians and IDF (Israeli) troops," citing intelligence and documents found in Gaza as evidence. It has not made these public.Israel denies deliberately targeting journalists. It says many of those killed in Israeli airstrikes were members of Islamist militant groups, working under the guise of the press.

Bar chart showing the number of journalists and media workers killed from 1992 to 2025.Item 1 of 10 Al Jazeera staff members gather at the network's studios, to remem-

Colombian presidential hopeful Uribe dies two months after shooting

BOGOTA,GNS News Agency, August 20 - Colombian Senator and presidential hopeful Miguel Uribe, who was shot in the head at a campaign event two months ago, died in the early hours of Monday, his family and the hospital treating him said. He was 39.Uribe, from the right-wing opposition, was shot in Bogota on June 7 as he was giving a speech at a rally, in an attack that shocked the nation.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.His wife, Maria Claudia Tarazona, announced his death on social media. "I ask God to show me the way to learn to live without you," she wrote. "Rest in peace, love of my life, I will take care of our children."The capital's Santa Fe Foundation hospital - where supporters held regular vigils during his treatment - said over the weekend his condition had worsened because of a hemorrhage in his central nervous system.Former President Alvaro Uribe, the leader of the senator's Democratic Center party and no relation to the deceased lawmaker, wrote on X that "evil destroys everything; they killed hope".

"May Miguel's fight be a light that illuminates Colombia's right path," added the former president, who was sentenced by a judge earlier this month to 12 years of house arrest for abuse of process and bribery of a public official.U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio wrote on X he was deeply saddened by the news. "The United States stands in solidarity with his family, the Colombian people, both in mourning and demanding justice for those responsible."Six people are under arrest over the shooting, including two men that the attorney general's office says met in Medellin to plan the assassination.A 15-year-old accused of carrying out the shooting was arrested within hours of the crime, but police have said they are pursuing the "intellectual authors" of the attack.In a video of the boy's June arrest, independently verified by Reuters, he can be heard shouting that he had been hired by a local drug dealer. There is reward of up to 3 billion pesos (about \$740,000) for information leading to the identification and capture of those responsible, the defense minister has said. The United States, Britain and the United Arab Emirates are helping with the investigation. The death of Senator Uribe, a father and stepfather, adds further tragedy to his family's fraught history.His mother, journalist Diana Turbay, was killed in 1991 during a botched rescue mission after she was kidnapped by the Medellin Cartel, headed by drug lord Pablo Escobar.Uribe himself enjoyed a rapid political rise, becoming a recognized lawmaker for the right-wing Democratic Center party and presidential hopeful known for his sharp criticism of leftist President Gustavo Petro's administration.At 25, he was elected to Bogota's city council, where he was a prominent opponent of Petro, then the capital's mayor, criticizing his handling of waste management and social programs.In the 2022 legislative elections, Uribe led the Senate slate for the Democratic Center party with the slogan "Colombia First," winning a seat in the chamber.His maternal grandfather, Julio Cesar Turbay, was Colombia's president from 1978 to 1982, while his paternal grandfather, Rodrigo Uribe Echavarria, headed the Liberal Party and supported Virgilio

ber their colleagues Anas Al Sharif, Mohammed Qreiqeh, Ibrahim Zaher, Mohammed Noufal and another colleague, who were killed in Gaza City by an Israeli strike, in Doha, Qatar, A

[1/10]Al Jazeera staff members gather at the network's studios, to remember their colleagues Anas Al Sharif, Mohammed Qreiqeh, Ibrahim Zaher, Mohammed Noufal and another colleague, who were killed in Gaza City by an Israeli strike, in Doha, Qatar, Ibraheem Abu Mustafa Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabOn Monday, people gathered at Sheikh Radwan Cemetery in the heart of the Gaza Strip to mourn the journalists. Friends, colleagues and relatives embraced and consoled one another, many wiping away tears as they bid farewell.Al Sharif was previously part of a Reuters team which in 2024 won a Pulitzer Prize in the category of Breaking News Photography for coverage of the Israel-Hamas war.The war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza is the deadliest on record for journalists, according to the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs' Costs of War project.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said 238 journalists have been killed since the war started on October 7, 2023. The Committee to Protect Journalists said at least 186 journalists have been killed in the Gaza conflict.A press freedom group and a United Nations expert previously warned that Al Sharif's life was in danger due to his reporting from Gaza. U.N. Special Rapporteur Irene Khan said last month that Israel's claims against him were unsubstantiated.

Al Jazeera said Al Sharif had left a social media message to be posted in the event of his death that read, "...I never hesitated to convey the truth as it is, without distortion or misrepresentation, hoping that God would witness those who remained silent."Last October, Israel's military had named Al Sharif as one of six Gaza journalists it alleged were members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, citing documents it said showed lists of people who completed training courses and salaries."Al Jazeera categorically rejects the Israeli occupation forces' portrayal of our journalists as terrorists and denounces their use of fabricated evidence," the network said in a statement at the time.Bar chart ranking the top 10 countries by the number of journalists and media workers kill from 1992 to 2025. Iraq ranks highest with 286 death, followed by 205 in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Committee to Protect Journalists, which in July urged the international community to protect Al Sharif, said in a statement that Israel had failed to provide any evidence to back up its allegations against him.Al Sharif, whose X account showed more than 500,000 followers, posted on the platform minutes before his death that Israel had been intensely bombarding Gaza City for more than two hours.Palestinian militant group Hamas, which runs Gaza, said the killing may signal the start of an Israeli offensive.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he will launch a new offensive to dismantle Hamas strongholds in Gaza, where a hunger crisis is escalating after 22 months of war.

"The assassination of journalists and the intimidation of those who remain paves the way for a major crime that the occupation is planning to commit in Gaza City," Hamas said in a statement.Reporting by Hatem Maher, Nidal Al-Mughrabi and Ahmed Tolba; Additional reporting by Joseph Ax in New York and Emma Farge in Geneva and Alistair Smout in London; Editing by Cynthia Osterman, Diane Craft, Lincoln Feast, Michael Perry, Sharon Singleton, Michael Georgy, Alexandra Hudson



Barco's successful 1986 presidential campaign.Besides his wife, son and stepdaughters, Uribe is also survived by his father and sister.Reporting by Luis Jaime Acosta, Gabriel Araujo and Julia Symmes Cobb; Editing by Julia Symmes Cobb, Bernadette Baum and Andrew HeavensOur Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tabLuis Jaime has worked at Reuters for more than 30 years. While he chiefly covers Colombia's armed conflict and the fight against drug trafficking from capital Bogotá, he also reports on politics, human rights, corruption, sports and the coffee industry, as well as companies in the energy and mining sectors. Before joining Reuters, he worked for Colombia's Caracol Radio network for five years. Contact: +573102107084Gabriel is a Sao Paulo, Brazil-based reporter covering Latin America's financial and breaking news from the region's largest economy. A graduate of the University of Sao Paulo, joined Reuters while in college as a Commodities & Energy intern and has been with the firm ever since. Previously covered sports - including soccer and Formula One - for Brazilian radios and websites.

Andhra hostel warden sacked, two students expelled over ragging assault

Amaravati: Taking serious note of alleged ragging and assault on two students by a group of seniors and their friends at a government hostel in Andhra Pradesh's Palnadu district, the officials on Monday dismissed the hostel warden and expelled two students involved in the incident.Palnadu District Collector P Arun Babu on Monday issued orders, dismissing warden M Deepika. He has also ordered action against hostel watchman Sanjeshwara Rao. The Collector also issued orders to expel two students of the intermediate second year of a junior college who, with the help of their friends, allegedly ragged, assaulted.

Balochistan marks 78th Independence Day, defies Pakistan's crackdown



GNS News Agency, August 20

Quetta: Balochistan on Monday observed the 78th Independence Day, continuing an annual tradition that defies what Baloch human rights groups call Pakistan's "illegal occupation" of the region.The Baloch struggle for independence has significant historical origins, starting in 1947 when the princely state of Kalat made a short-lived declaration of independence following the partition of British India.

Nevertheless, in 1948, Pakistan forcibly annexed the region, a move that has continually been opposed by Baloch nationalists.In an attempt to suppress the Independence Day celebrations, the Pakistani forces have imposed Section 144 for fifteen days in Balochistan, which is rejected by the 60 million Baloch population.

Leading Baloch human rights defender Mir Yar Baloch has accused the Pakistani army of being stationed in Balochistan, during the celebrations, "without any legal mandate, driven not by law or justice but by greed, repression, and the hunger to erase Baloch identity."The human rights activist asserted that "Pakistan's crimes" against the Baloch are not isolated and also accused the rogue state of being "guilty of war crimes" in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Palestine.

Israel steps up Gaza City bombing after Netanyahu vow to expand offensive



CAIRO, - Palestinians reported the heaviest bombardments in weeks on Monday in areas east of Gaza City, just hours after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he expected to complete a new expanded offensive against Hamas "fairly quickly".

An airstrike also killed six journalists including prominent Al Jazeera correspondent Anas Al Sharif in a tent at Gaza City's Al Shifa Hospital compound, the deadliest strike against journalists during an Israeli campaign that has lasted more than 22 months.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.Witnesses said Israeli tanks and planes pounded Sabra, Zeitoun, and Shejaia, three eastern suburbs of Gaza City in the north of the territory, on Monday, pushing many families westwards from their homes.Some Gaza City residents said it was one of the worst nights in weeks, raising fears of military preparations for a deeper offensive into their city, which Hamas says is now sheltering about 1 million people after the displacement of residents from the enclave's northern edges.

The Israeli military said its forces fired artillery at Hamas militants in the area. There was no sign on the ground of forces moving deeper into Gaza City as part of the newly approved Israeli offensive, which was not expected to begin in the coming weeks."It sounded like the war was re-starting," said Amr Salah, 25. "Tanks fired shells at houses, and several houses were hit, and the planes carried out what we call fire rings, whereby several missiles landed on some roads in eastern Gaza," he told Reuters via a chat app.The Israeli military said its forces on Sunday dismantled a launch site east of Gaza City, which Hamas used to fire rockets towards Israeli communities across the border.Netanyahu on Sunday said he had instructed the Israeli military to speed up its plans for the new offensive.

"I want to end the war as quickly as possible, and that

Europe races to try to influence US position ahead of Trump-Putin talks

BRUSSELS, -GNS News Agency, August 20 Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that the U.S. had pledged to consult with Europe ahead of a summit with Russia's Vladimir Putin, as European ministers prepare for discussions amid fears Washington may dictate unfavourable peace terms to Ukraine.European Union foreign ministers were due to hold a video conference on Monday afternoon to discuss their support for Kyiv and the upcoming meeting.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.U.S. President Donald Trump announced last week he would meet Putin on Friday in Alaska to negotiate an end to the 3-1/2-year war, which began with Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour."The American side has promised that it will consult with European partners on its position before the meeting in Alaska," Poland's Tusk told a press conference."I will wait... for the effects of the meeting between Presidents Trump and Putin - I have many fears and a lot of hope," he said.Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday that concessions to Moscow would not persuade it to stop fighting in Ukraine and that there was a need to ramp up pressure on the Kremlin.European officials have sought to influence the White House's positioning ahead of the Alaska talks, emphasizing the need to safeguard Ukraine's sovereignty, provide security guarantees and allow Kyiv to choose its own path.U.S. Vice President JD Vance met European and Ukrainian officials over the weekend, and European leaders are expected to conduct more outreach to Washington

Terming Pakistan as the global godfather of terrorism, Mir alleged that it is "breeding extremists, training militants, harbouring war criminals," while using the nuclear threat as blackmail against the world.He also slammed Pakistani army chief, Asim Munir, for boasting that Pakistan could "take down half the world" and called the statement "reckless."Mir urged the world to remember that it was Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) that sheltered Osama Bin Laden in Abbottabad, under full state protection, even as thousands of innocents were being massacred.Instead of shaking hands with men like Munir, he stated the international community should be "placing them on trial for crimes against humanity."Recalling the struggle for freedom, Mir posted, "For thousands of years, our mountains, deserts, and seas have borne witness to the courage of the Baloch people, who stood as defenders of their land from the Mongol invasions to the grip of British colonial rule. Half a million Baloch martyrs have fallen in defence of our sovereignty, not for conquest, but for the right to live free on our own soil."Mir asserted that peace cannot bloom while the "boot of occupation" presses on Balochistan.Highlighting the human rights abuses in the region, he mentioned that Baloch people continue to be abducted, tortured, executed, and silenced, while their villages are bombed, resources are looted, and culture is targeted for destruction.He asserted that these are not just attacks on Balochistan, but crimes against the very principles on which the United Nations was founded.On the 78th Independence Day, Mir called on the world to recognise Balochistan as a free and sovereign nation and hold Pakistan accountable for its war crimes, nuclear blackmail, and state sponsorship of terrorism.Additionally, he urged the international community to stand with the Baloch people, not with an "occupying" army whose corruption and violence are a threat to global peace."The future will remember who stood with the oppressed and who stood with the oppressor. Choose justice. Choose peace. Choose Balochistan," Mir stated.

is why I have instructed the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) to shorten the schedule for seizing control of Gaza City," he said.Netanyahu said the new offensive would focus on Gaza City, which he described as Hamas' "capital of terrorism". He also indicated that the coastal area of central Gaza may be next, saying Hamas militants have been pushed there too.The new plans have raised alarm abroad, with French President Emmanuel Macron saying on Monday they heralded "a disaster of unprecedented gravity" and "a move towards a never-ending war".On Friday, Germany, a key European ally, announced it would halt exports of military equipment to Israel that could be used in Gaza. Britain and other European allies urged Israel to reconsider its decision to escalate the Gaza military campaign.Mike Huckabee, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, told Reuters that some countries appeared to be putting pressure on Israel rather than on Hamas, whose deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, ignited the war.Israel's planned offensive coincides with worsening hunger in Gaza. On Monday, the territory's health ministry said five more people had died of malnutrition and starvation in Gaza in the past 24 hours. That raised the number of deaths from such causes to 222, including 101 children, since the war began, the ministry said.

Israel says it has scaled up the entry of aid and commercial goods into Gaza in past weeks. Palestinian and U.N. officials say the aid is a fraction of what Gaza needs.Medics at Al Shifa Hospital said the airstrike that killed Al Jazeera's Al Sharif and four of his colleagues also killed local freelancer Mohammad Al-Khaldi, raising the number of dead journalists from the strike to six.Israel confirmed it had targeted and killed Al Sharif, alleging he had headed a Hamas cell and was involved in rocket attacks against Israel.Al Jazeera rejected the claim, and before his death Al Sharif had also dismissed Israeli allegations that he had links to Hamas.

Hamas, the militant group which has run Gaza since 2007, linked his killing to the new planned offensive.

The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said 238 journalists have been killed in almost two years of war. The Committee to Protect Journalists said at least 186 journalists have been killed.Hamas-led fighters triggered the war in October 2023, when they stormed into Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, by Israeli tallies. About 50 hostages are still in Gaza, but only around 20 are thought to be alive.More than 61,000 Palestinians have since been killed by Israel's campaign, according to Gaza health officials. Most of Gaza's population has been displaced multiple times and its residents are facing a humanitarian crisis, with swaths of the territory reduced to rubble.



in the coming days."Any deal between the U.S. and Russia must have Ukraine and the EU included, for it is a matter of Ukraine's and the whole of Europe's security," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said on Sunday.European leaders have also underscored their commitment to the idea that international borders cannot be changed by force, as EU capitals fear a deal forced on Kyiv could create a dangerous precedent."Regarding territorial issues, the Russian position is framed as a territorial swap, but it appears as a rather one-sided swap," a European Commission official said on Sunday."In the context of these talks, the U.S. administration has been very involved and has shown interest in aligning positioning with Europe," the official said."The most robust security guarantee would be that there are no limitations on Ukraine armed forces and third countries' support to Ukraine."

In Cuddalore, a tragedy on the tracks



Charumathy, 16 and Chezhiyan, 15, usually sat together in the school van. On the morning of July 8, as was routine, the siblings climbed into the van together, clutching their bags and water bottles. Their 55-year-old father, Dravidamani, stood in front of their house in Chinnakattusagai village and waved at them, says their aunt, S. Rani, 42. The bright yellow vehicle belonged to the private school where the two of them had studied since lower kindergarten — Krishnaswamy Vidyunikethan, located at S. Kumarapuram, in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu.

A few minutes later, at 7:45 a.m., as the van ferrying the siblings and two other children — V. Nimalesh, 12, and V. Viswesh, 16 — tried to edge past a gated level crossing at Semmankuppam village, a passenger train barrelled into it. Charumathy and Nimalesh died on the spot, while Chezhiyan died by the time he was wheeled into the emergency and trauma care ward of the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research in Puducherry, 44 kilometres from the site. V. Viswesh and the van driver, S. Sankar, 47, were rushed to the Cuddalore General Hospital. Doctors say their condition is stable. Among the first few people to rush to the scene to rescue the children and van driver was P. Annadurai, 55, a resident of Semmankuppam. He says he heard wails and ran out of his house. “I looked out across my compound wall and saw the mangled remains of the van on the side of the track. The gate was open and I rushed out. When I tried to rescue the children, I came in contact with an overhead power cable and suffered some burn injuries,” he says. Rangan, 50, an employee of a private company in Cuddalore SIPCOT, lives near the level crossing gate 170, a non-interlocked manned gate between Cuddalore and Alappakkam. He was getting ready for work when he heard a loud crash. Sensing that something was horribly wrong, he rushed to the level crossing and saw the mangled van. “The gate was open and the area was engulfed in smoke. I dialled the ambulance service and then went near the van. The van driver was bleeding profusely and I immediately carried him on my shoulders. There was one child inside the van. One child’s body had been dismembered. Another child’s body was lying near the tracks. Other locals attended to them,” he says. The residents rushed Sankar and Viswesh in an ambulance to the Cuddalore General Hospital. Viswesh, a resident of Thondamanatham, lies on a bed in the emergency ward with an intravenous drip inserted into his wrist and a cast on his left arm. “I was travelling with my brother Nimalesh and two other students apart from the van driver,” he recalls. “The gate was open. There was no whistled warning from the approaching train. There was no signal either. The train hit our van as we were crossing the tracks. I was thrown out of the van. Everything happened in a flash.”

The Villupuram–Mayiladuthurai passenger train hit the vehicle with such force that it dragged the van for about 50 metres before coming to a halt. By then, the van had been reduced to a mangled heap. Eyewitnesses say they saw blood on the tracks and school bags, water bottles, and shoes strewn around the area. The gatekeeper’s job According to eyewitnesses, the gatekeeper, Pankaj Sharma, had failed to close the gate when the train was passing. R. Sivanvel, a resident of Semmankuppam, a village near Cuddalore SIPCOT, says, “Another express train had crossed the same gate about 20 minutes before this incident. The gate was open then too.”

He also says the train did not give any warning and came thundering down the tracks. The Divisional Railway Manager, M.S. Anbalagan, told the media that the train was travelling at 95 kilometres per hour. Rangan says the van driver, Sankar, had been operating the school van for nearly 15 years and had taken the same route several times. He adds that more than 15 vans and buses belonging to various educational institutions in the vicinity pass through this level crossing daily. Residents of the area also allege that Sharma came out of his room only after they rushed to the accident spot. They contend that this was why an angry crowd pounced on him and manhandled him. Sharma has since been suspended and arrested. Following the usual route Southern Railway officials say their preliminary inquiries revealed that the gate was closed when the van arrived. They say the van driver insisted that he be allowed to cross the gate so that he could quickly pick up more children and take them to school on time. “Sharma allowed him to go through, which he should not have done,” says an official. A

statement issued by the Chief Public Relations Officer, Southern Railway, said that it had sanctioned a fully funded underpass at the level crossing gate where the accident occurred. However, it alleged that the Cuddalore collector has not given permission for it in the past year. The collector, Sibi Adhithya Senthil Kumar, did not respond to phone requests for a comment. Another Railway official says the road leading to the level crossing was curved. He believes that the trees on the side of the road may have obstructed Sankar’s view of the train. The trees mostly fall outside the boundary of the Railways. Workers were pressed into service to clear the trees the day after the accident. Residents say the driver of the school van took the usual route and tried to cross the tracks since the gate was open. The van had been fitted with speed governor and CCTVs but it had no attendant to ensure the safety of the students. “If an attendant had been present, he could have got down and checked both sides of the level crossing,” says an official from the School Education Department. “There has been negligence on the part of the school administration, and the department has served a notice on the school seeking an explanation. An outdated system The level crossing at Semmankuppam was a non-interlocked gate. This means that the gate’s position, whether open or closed, is not automatically linked to the status of signals and points, requiring manual operation and vigilance. There are at least two gatekeepers posted there and they work in shifts.

A Railway official explains what happens when a train passes a non-interlocked level crossing. “Normally, the station master at a non-interlocked section communicates the details of an approaching train, along with a private number, to the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper then closes the gate and confirms this to the station master. The gatekeeper provides another private number, enabling the station master to allow the train into the block section. The private number is different for each train and is entered into a register maintained for the purpose. A private number that has been used can be used again only after 24 hours,” he says. In this incident, the station master was at Cuddalore station. However, in non-integrated level crossing gates, there is no mechanism for the station master to confirm the claim of the gatekeeper that the gate has been closed, he says. “In this incident, they may have exchanged the private numbers, but the gatekeeper could have still failed to close the gate,” he says. Across India, as of October 2024, there were 11,053 manned level crossing gates. Though all the level crossings were to be upgraded to interlocked gates in 2019, Southern Railway still operates trains through 276 non-interlocked gates, mostly in the Madurai and Tiruchi divisions. In Cuddalore, nearly 40 trains on average cross the Semmankuppam level crossing daily. “The Railways should expedite the interlocking of gates on a priority basis,” says an official. Another official speaks of the drawbacks of this outdated system. “The non-interlocked system depends on verbal communication. If the gatekeeper says the gate is closed to road traffic, the station master takes that for granted and clears the train to run at sectional speed. The system is manual and runs on trust. On the other hand, at integrated level crossings, the gate is connected to the signalling system. The signal at the gate will turn red if the gate is open. The station master cannot clear a train to pass unless the gate is closed. And the gatekeeper cannot open the gate until the train passes,” he says. There are other issues with the non-interlocking system as well, and these may not necessarily be the fault of the Railway. Officials say sometimes, people in a tearing hurry even assault gatekeepers for their delay in opening the gate. “One such incident was reported in Mundiampakkam level crossing in Villupuram district in 2008-09. A closed gate should not be opened at any cost. The locomotive of a train weighs nearly 100 tonnes. If the train had derailed at Semmankuppam, more casualties could have occurred,” an official says. Officials say the records and statements of the station master, gatekeeper, loco pilot, and train manager will throw more light on the sequence of events that led to the tragedy.

Leaders of various political parties condoled the deaths. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced compensation of ₹5 lakh from the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund for the families of the deceased children, ₹1 lakh each for those severely injured, and ₹50,000 each for those with minor injuries. Southern Railway also announced ₹5 lakh compensation for the families of each of the deceased, ₹2.5 lakh for the kin of those grievously injured person, and ₹50,000 for other injured persons. Meanwhile, Dravidamani’s family is in shock, having lost both their children. Rani says Dravidamani, a farmer, had battled against all the odds to ensure that his two children were educated at a private English medium school. Charumathy and Chezhiyan shared a close bond. “Even after coming back from school, they would spend their time together. They rarely went out,” she says. She adds that the siblings were similar in many ways: they were studious, intelligent, and ambitious. “Charumathy stood first in class and won many medals in school. She wanted to pursue an MBBS degree. Chezhiyan wanted to write the civil services exam and become an IAS (Indian Administrative Service) officer,” she says.

Doctors with MBBS degree poorly paid in many parts of Tamil Nadu

In many parts of Tamil Nadu, MBBS-qualified doctors working in the private sector are being paid only between 30,000 and ₹45,000 a month. While their remuneration varies based on their place of work — cities, semi-urban or small towns — excessive workloads, unwritten rules restricting weekly offs or eligible leave, and financial stress are troubling many of them. Inquiries with a number of private sector doctors in different parts of the State reveal that many hospitals “underpaid” MBBS doctors, who mostly worked as duty doctors on a shift basis. This included regular night shifts, and periodic 24-hour duty.

In Chennai, the salary ranged from ₹40,000 to ₹50,000, with very few centres paying the latter amount. Some doctors noted that in places such as Tiruchi, Madurai and other areas of southern Tamil Nadu, the monthly salary was ₹40,000 for eight hours of duty per day. In places such as Ariyalur and the majority of towns, it is roughly ₹25,000 to ₹35,000. There are hospitals that pay doctors on an hourly basis too, while some pay additional allowances to work as casualty medical officers. A doctor from the central district said he was paid ₹30,000 a month for 10 to 12 hours a day, and not allowed to take weekly off. “We can take two days leave every month, but if we take more than that, our salary will be cut. Also, we must arrange a replacement, or else, the hospital management does not grant permission for leave,” he said. Despite having an experience of seven years, he has had no salary increments so far.

Many doctors take up these jobs due to their financial situation. A woman doctor, who worked for two years as a junior resident for ₹40,000 in a private medical college hospital, said, “With this salary, it is very hard to pay monthly loan instalment, that I had taken to manage my education as well as family expenses.” “We cannot manage with this

Mangalagiri handloom sarees and fabrics: woven in tradition, draped in legacy



At the foothills of the sacred hill temple of Panakala Narasimha Swamy in the heritage town of Mangalagiri, now a part of Amaravati the capital city of Andhra Pradesh, threads of faith, tradition, and craftsmanship converge into something truly timeless — Mangalagiri handloom saree. For centuries, devotees visiting the shrine would descend the hill not just spiritually enriched but also with a tangible token of cultural reverence — a handwoven saree — purchased from local artisans as a sacred ritual and a statement of elegance. Today, this rich tradition has blossomed into an iconic textile legacy that has earned the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag and global acclaim. The Mangalagiri handloom sector — based in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh — is not just about fabric. It is a living chronicle of India’s handloom heritage, a resilient community of artisans, and a testament to the cultural economy that weaves together identity and livelihood. Recognized under the Government of India’s ‘One District One Product’ (ODOP) initiative, the Mangalagiri saree and other textiles stand as a proud symbol of India’s craft-centric development model. The Legacy of the Loom The uniqueness of Mangalagiri textiles lies in their minimalist grandeur. Known for their fine cotton texture, striking borders and absence of embroidery in the body, these sarees exude a quiet sophistication. The hallmark of the weave is the Nizam border — a majestic zari-edged design marked by tiny temple gopurams — paired with elegant stripes or checks on the pallu. The designs speak volumes about the regional religious ethos, where devotion and design have long coexisted. It’s not just sarees that emerge from these looms. Mangalagiri weavers produce a versatile range of products like salwar suits, dupattas, shirting fabrics, towels, bed linens and even mosquito nets. Cotton remains the preferred medium, giving the fabric a lightweight, breathable quality — perfect for India’s climate. Guntur and Palnadu districts hosts 21 cooperative societies solely dedicated to Mangalagiri handlooms, supporting over 4,500 active weavers and nearly 5,000 ancillary workers. Assistant Director, Handlooms and Textiles, B. Udaya Kumar explains. The importance of these numbers is not just economic but deeply social — each loom supports families, preserves artistry, and upholds tradition. A Heritage Under Siege — and Rescued Despite their enduring appeal, the Mangalagiri weavers have faced numerous challenges over time. The proliferation of powerlooms, declining profits, and market competition had started to threaten the very survival of the handloom clusters and as a result the number of weavers also has been declining gradually.

Recognizing this, both the Government of India and the Government of Andhra Pradesh intervened with focused policy measures. The National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP) and Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS) have provided a much-needed lifeline. Now, the Small Cluster Development Programme (SCDP) under NHDP is also being implemented here. Covering 265 beneficiaries in Mangalagiri-1 cluster for their looms development under SCDP, government has sanctioned more than ₹91 lakh, with the GoI share as ₹87 lakh and GoAP contributing more than ₹4 lakh, Mr. Udaya Kumar explained. In fact, it is a part of the total amount of more than ₹2.09 crore sanctioned under the programme for five clusters in the State, including Trikoteswara in Bapatla district, Kalahasteeswara and Narayanavanam in Tirupati district, Chilakaluripet-1 in Palnadu district and the Mangalagiri-1 in Guntur district. The government is also providing special incentives for the female weavers. In addition to that the government is also ensured MUDRA loans

to 161 beneficiaries to a tune of about ₹1.3 crore in Mangalagiri, he added. Under these schemes, the district has seen the construction of over 190 individual workshops, distribution of hundreds of upgraded looms, and the creation of common facility centres. These physical spaces have not only improved productivity, but also restored dignity to the artisans who now work in safer, better-equipped environments near their homes. Design training has been another game-changer. The Andhra Pradesh government partnered with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Hyderabad and the National Institute of Design (NID), Guntur, to equip weavers with skills that blend traditional weaving with modern aesthetics. Over 400 individuals — weavers, designers, and cluster executives — have undergone this training, learning everything from colour theory and pattern drafting to marketing and e-commerce. “This training helped the individuals to enhance their skills in understanding the traditional wisdom using skills, materials, tools and marketing approaches. As part of the programme they have been learning the fundamentals of design, specific textile and apparel methods, textile fibres, weave structures, surface design, dyeing techniques, colouration, printing methods, pattern making, draping and sewing techniques,” according to an official of the Textiles department. Meagre Earnings is a Cause of Concern

Bitra Nageswara Rao, a 60-year-old handloom worker with an experience of about 45 years, said that they earn about ₹8,000 per month on an average in a year and the merchants pay ₹4,000 to ₹5,000 per four sarees. It takes a couple of days for each saree to be weaved. At the same time, the weavers have to spend more than ₹1,000 on other ancillary work like bundling the threads. After completing the four sarees, the worker will be left with only ₹3,000 for four sarees, he added. Mr. Nageswara Rao explained that they mix silk, cotton and zari to produce fine quality saree. He said that, even though the government provided some skill training in jacquard looms, many of the weavers could not adopt it due to the complexity involved. Meanwhile, Mr. Udaya Kumar said that to survive the weavers in Mangalagiri will have to adopt the jacquard looms and improve their skills like the weavers in Chirala, who have been producing the Kuppadam sarees, which command a higher price than Mangalagiri sarees because of their designs. Mangalagiri weavers also could produce more designs by going for the jacquard looms, he explained. Weaving into the Modern Economy What sets Mangalagiri apart is how it balances heritage with innovation. The sarees and fabrics are now being actively promoted at national and international exhibitions. From the Saamuhika Exhibition at A.P. Bhavan, New Delhi, to the Craft Bazaar in Navi Mumbai and the State Handloom Expo in Guntur, the district administration has ensured that these exquisite weaves get their rightful space in the spotlight. Retail channels too have undergone a revolution. Thanks to government-backed encouragement, many Mangalagiri weavers now market their products via e-commerce portals. This has opened up new revenue streams and eliminated exploitative middlemen from the equation. Financial inclusion has also been addressed. Schemes like MUDRA loans, Cash Credit, and DRDA/MEPMA loans have enabled more than 1,000 weavers to access capital for expanding operations or starting entrepreneurial ventures. From Local Threads to Global Recognition The district administration’s efforts have culminated in Mangalagiri Sarees being one of the most compelling contenders for the ODOP Award, a national-level recognition for excellence in indigenous products. The proposal argues not only on the merit of cultural significance and design excellence, but also on the strength of institutional support, community upliftment, and economic impact. The symbolism of a Mangalagiri saree today is multilayered — it is a cloth of worship, a flag of sustainability, a badge of indigenous pride, and a product of tireless human craftsmanship. As India seeks to reimagine its rural economies through the lens of tradition, the Mangalagiri handloom sector offers a luminous example of how to do it right. From temple rituals to international runways, the journey of the Mangalagiri saree is a tapestry of belief, resilience, and brilliance. And as long as these looms continue to hum their melodic rhythm, the legacy of Mangalagiri will remain woven into the very fabric of Indian identity.

Protein maxxng: how much protein is too much protein?



A spectre is haunting rich fitness enthusiasts in urban India — the spectre of protein maxxng. A stroll in the aisles of your neighbourhood supermarket or a scroll on your go-to quick commerce app will bring up a range of products with claims of high protein content, products I’d argue you can do well without. While I understand opting for whey protein powder or high-protein breakfast bars, why must one even consider looking for protein in popcorn? I do not want to worry about my protein intake while I am munching on popcorn to Hans Zimmer’s score in the theatre. This mania does not stop with bars, shakes, and popcorn, though. Today, you have the option to access products like cold coffee, wafers, pasta, ice cream, chips, lassi, buttermilk, and water that boast of unbelievable (and sometimes unreliable) grams of protein. Imagine introducing the concept of protein pasta to a nonna in Sicily. ... I would pay to watch you try. What began as a nutritional necessity has slowly turned into a performance. It is impossible to strike up a conversation with fitness bros without exchanging notes on protein intake, muscle recovery, BCAAs, whey isolates, and the betrayal that is “hidden sugar”. Whipping up protein des-

serts you watched on an Instagram reel, only to complain about the taste, but persist with a poker face, is definitely a choice. See, I am not against protein at all; in fact, I enjoy a good protein shake myself. But the struggle to hit your protein goals should not have you bookmarking threads on Reddit that give a cheat sheet to snag Amul’s protein lassis, which are always out of stock for some reason. In your quest for macros, you should not have to do a course in supply chain management. The WHO recommends that adults with minimal physical activity consume about 0.83 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. For individuals with moderate to intense physical activity, the protein needs to increase to 1.3-1.6 grams per kilogram of body weight. A scale that should just serve as a footnote in your daily life is being used to measure your life, an exercise that might tire you out before you even get to the barbells. I admit that life would be so much easier if protein water got all of us jacked like Hrithik Roshan. But the bitter truth is that consuming copious amounts of protein without lifting weights is only going to strain our kidneys and have serious implications for our cardiovascular health.

Realme P4 Series brings dual-chip performance, flagship gaming under Rs 30,000



New Delhi: The demands placed on modern smartphones are higher than ever before, pushing them far beyond their original role as simple communication tools.Today, users expect their devices to effortlessly handle a wide range of tasks, from managing work and powering through productivity apps to delivering high-quality entertainment, fuelling creativity, and keeping them constantly connected.

This all-in-one expectation has transformed the smartphone into a personal command centre, but it has also introduced new challenges. Often, a device optimised for gaming may overheat or drain its battery when tackling heavy productivity workloads, while those offering strong performance in day-to-day tasks sometimes fall short in the display department, an increasingly important factor as content consumption has become a central part of how people use their phones.This challenge has led to a growing interest in dual-chip solutions, where different processors handle specific workloads in parallel. By distributing the load, such systems can sustain performance without pushing one component to its limits.In smartphones, this means pairing a primary processor for heavy lifting like app performance and multitasking with a secondary chip dedicated to visual processing or AI-driven optimisations.

The result is a product that can seamlessly shift from editing a presentation to streaming high-frame-rate video or playing graphics-intensive games, without the usual bottlenecks. Bringing this concept to the mid-range space, the upcoming realme P4 Series adopts a dual chipset architecture designed to handle varied workloads more efficiently. The realme P4 Pro pairs the Snapdragon 7 Gen 4, scoring over 1.1 million on AnTuTu, with the HyperVision AI chipset co-developed with Pixelworks, and also delivers

performance similar to an 8 Gen level chipset.

This combination delivers both processing power and advanced display performance, supporting features such as 1.5K + 144FPS gaming and ultra-smooth 120FPS streaming. Making its debut in the P Series, the Hyper Vision AI Chip is the only dedicated graphics chip in the Rs 30,000 segment, engineered to elevate the viewing and gaming experience.It delivers up to a 300 per cent resolution boost, upgrading standard-definition content into sharp high-definition, and up to a 300 per cent frame rate improvement, allowing over a hundred games to run at 144FPS for fluid, lifelike motion.With Always-On HDR, SDR content is instantly transformed into HDR, enhancing brightness, contrast, and depth for a more three-dimensional look. AI Hyper Motion, and AI Always-On HDR — making the realme P4 Pro one of the most optimised and visually immersive gaming smartphones that is even comparable to 8 Gen flagships.

The realme P4 takes a similar path with the MediaTek Dimensity 7400 Ultra 5G, built on a 4nm process with a 4+4 octa-core architecture, offering up to 25 per cent better power efficiency than its predecessor and achieving over 790,000 on AnTuTu.Alongside it, the Hyper Vision AI Graphics Chip enhances visual quality with AI-driven features such as AI Hyper Clarity for increased detail, AI Hyper Motion for higher frame rates up to 144FPS, and AI Always-On HDR for balanced lighting. Gaming-focused capabilities, including AI Frame Stabilisation and an AI Gaming Coach for real-time insights, are designed to keep performance steady even under heavy loads.Complementing its performance credentials, the realme P4 Pro embraces a Living Nature Design that brings together warmth and strength. Its back panel utilises premium tech-wood material inspired by natural wood grain textures, meticulously polished to preserve tactile and visual dimensionality.This fusion of modern craftsmanship and organic aesthetics delivers a timeless yet contemporary feel, available in three sophisticated shades: Birch Wood, Dark Oak Wood, and Midnight Ivy. In terms of aesthetics, the realme P4 adopts a Metal Heart Design, inspired by industrial styling. It features sleek metallic lines and signature exposed screw elements that fuse durability with bold visual appeal.

The colour palette adds to its personality, with three striking shades: Steel Grey for a sleek, understated look, Engine Blue for a bold, dynamic touch, and Forge Red for a youthful, energetic vibe. The broader shift here is clear: as work and leisure increasingly overlap, smartphones are moving away from single-purpose performance and towards a more balanced approach.By separating workloads across two specialised processors, devices like the realme P4 Pro and realme P4 reflect a growing industry trend building hardware that adapts to varied user needs without forcing trade-offs.This evolution suggests that the mid-range market could see a wave of devices offering flagship-like versatility, reshaping user expectations in the years ahead. The realme P4 Pro and realme P4 will be launched in India on August 20 at noon on Flipkart and realme.com.

A review of Mafia: The Old Country, the latest entry in the Mafia franchise

The Old Country comes nearly a decade after Lincoln Clay's 1960s escapades in New Bordeaux. For this one, developer Hangar 13 chooses to go back to 1920s Sicily. The game begins in the Mediterranean island's Sulphur mines, where you experience the poverty and harsh circumstances of the time through the protagonist Enzo Favara. Surrounded by difficulty and excruciating challenges, Enzo sees working for "the family" as his way out of a hard life. However, as the game progresses, you, as Enzo, discover that the mafia life is one of constant action and anything but easy.

Hangar 13 has done a great job rendering 1920s Sicily as both a picturesque, visually appealing setting and a dangerous one where death and failure constantly loom. In my time with the game, I felt that while the visual elements were distinct in terms of locale, they often followed a similar blueprint to last year's excellent Indiana Jones and the Great Circle. The narrative is compelling – starting slowly but steadily gaining momentum as the story progresses and new characters are introduced. Much like the Indiana Jones game, its open world offers nothing to explore, and at times, venturing beyond the main landmarks isn't even possible. This restrictive design feels like a major step back from 2016's Mafia III and the trajectory the franchise seemed to be taking. The overall experience seems like a wasted opportunity, especially given how stunning 1920s Sicily is to look at. I found the "stealth-focused" missions particularly frustrating, as progress ended the moment I was spotted, and many in-game/NPC actions felt unpredictable and inconsistent.Despite its strong narrative, exceptional characters, and a detailed portrayal of the hard life in 1920s Sicily, The Old Country is a game that is let down by its limited



scope and outdated combat and stealth mechanics. A game I recommend you only play at launch if you are an absolute fan of the franchise. For everyone else, there will be plenty of opportunities during sales to grab it at a sizable discount.The return to roots for the Mafia franchise: a bold step, is executed quite well. 1920s Sicily is not only beautiful to look at but also rendered with great care.The narrative is slow but deliberate, carrying weight and purpose. I liked the game's slow start and how the game makers chose to have each character begin as a mafia caricature, gradually gaining depth and personality over time.The linear design and focused narrative are restrictive and leave little room for exploration. This game is more in line with Mafia 1 from 2002 than the more open-world approach of Mafia 3.The game's combat and stealth mechanisms come across as extremely dated. While the weapons are varied and differently powerful, the overall mechanics are inconsistent. Stealth, in particular, is sometimes enforced with little nuance.

IIT Roorkee develops breakthrough drug candidate to fight antibiotic resistance

New Delhi: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee have developed a new drug candidate that can restore the effectiveness of a potent antibiotic against deadly drug-resistant bacteria, according to officials.

The researchers' team has designed a novel molecule that works alongside the antibiotic — Meropenem — to treat infections caused by KPC-2-producing Klebsiella pneumoniae, a superbug listed among the World Health Organization's (WHO) top-priority threats, the officials said. The research has been published in the prestigious "Journal of Medicinal Chemistry" and is expected to contribute significantly to future drug-development efforts targeting superbugs.

"This breakthrough offers a promising solution to one of the world's most-urgent health challenges, antimicrobial resistance. Our compound neutralises the resistance mechanism and shows strong therapeutic results in pre-clinical models," said Ranjana Pathania, Principal Investigator, Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, IIT-Roorkee. The newly-discovered molecule belongs to a class of β -lactamase inhibitor drugs that prevent bacterial enzymes from breaking down life-saving antibiotics. Compound 3b is highly specific, safe to human cells and works synergistically with Meropenem to kill resistant bacteria. Lab and animal tests significantly reduced bacterial infection in the lungs."This innovation reflects IIT-Roorkee's commitment to developing impactful scientific solutions for global



"This breakthrough offers a promising solution to one of the world's most-urgent health challenges, antimicrobial resistance.

challenges. In the face of rising antibiotic resistance, such research provides critical hope for effective and accessible treatments," said K K Pant, Director, IIT-Roorkee.Pant said as antibiotic resistance threatens global healthcare systems, innovations like this bring renewed hope for effective treatments and reinforce India's contribution to frontline biomedical research.

The ECI's lack of transparency is worrying



On June 24, the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the commencement of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls of Bihar, entailing the verification of nearly 8 crore voters. This drastic step was taken in secrecy, with no prior public information or consultation. The ECI also declared that the SIR exercise would be extended to the entire country. Lack of transparency has continued to characterise the exercise on the ground, raising concerns about the credibility of the process.

Several concernsThe names of 65 lakh voters have been deleted in Bihar's draft voter list published after the first phase of the SIR — an average deletion of about 27,000 voters per constituency. In a State where most seats are won by a slender margin, this number exceeds the winning margin in two-thirds of seats in the 2020 elections. This scale of deletions could potentially swing the electoral outcome in most Assembly constituencies.

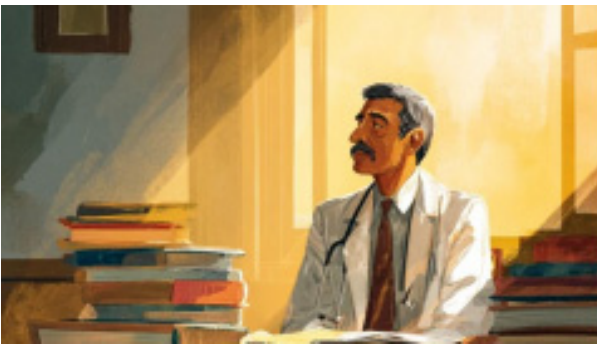
As per the ECI, 22 lakh voters were found to be dead, 36 lakh had permanently shifted from Bihar or were not found, and 7 lakh were enrolled in multiple places. If names are being deleted on this scale, they must be made public to enable meaningful oversight and safeguard electoral integrity. Unfortunately, the ECI has failed to provide the full list of deleted names along with the reasons. In its press release, the ECI has claimed that booth-level lists of deletions have been shared with political parties, but these do not indicate the reasons for deletion. This resistance to disclosure makes it impossible for parties and people to verify whether the deletions are justified or if eligible voters have been disenfranchised. Lack of relevant granular data is a cause for alarm in a context where deletion of names — often disproportionately affecting marginalised communities — can directly impact electoral outcomes and erode trust in the system.Undertaking an SIR across the country is not a routine administrative decision. People have a right to know what triggered the ECI to suddenly undertake this mammoth exercise involving nearly 100 crore voters of the country. Was there evidence of large-scale discrepancies or grave inaccuracies in the electoral rolls that could undermine the integrity of elections? What were the factors that prompted the ECI to begin the country-wide SIR from poll-bound Bihar in such a tearing hurry, during monsoons when many parts are flooded?

In its affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court, the ECI

Who should teach future doctors? The debate over non-MBBS Ph.D. faculty

The inclusion of non-MBBS distance Ph.D. degree holders to core teaching posts in medical colleges has now become a flashpoint among educators.While the section against the inclusion states that this method of filling perceived faculty shortages dilutes the clinical and ethical standards, those supporting the move state that distance or part-time Ph.D. programme educators are competent, trained, and well-equipped to provide education to medical students.

Those against add that a distance-mode doctoral program and M.Sc. by Non-MBBS teachers pursued parallel to unrelated full-time employment cannot replicate the crucible of supervised patient contact, procedural stewardship, morbidity–mortality analysis, ethical case discussions, real laboratory quality systems, and iterative assessment that shapes judgment in a medical graduate.Register now for free to ask questions and interact with the panellists. The three best questions will receive a free online subscription to Register now for free to ask questions and interact with the panellists. The three best questions will receive a free online subscription to The Hindu.To delve deeper into the topic, The Hindu will host a live webinar titled, 'Who should teach future doctors? The debate over non-MBBS Ph.D. faculty', on August 16, at 5:00 p.m. The panellists include: Dr. Anoop Singh Gurjar, Head of Anatomy, GMC, Pali; Dr. R. P. Parasher, National President, All India Doctors Association of ISM; Dr. Shashank Kambali, President, The M.Sc Medicine Association. The webinar will be moderated by Bindu Perappadan, Senior Assistant Editor, The Hindu.Register now for free to ask questions and interact with the panellists. The three best questions will receive a free online subscription to The Hindu.Dr. Anoop Singh Gurjar is the Head of the Department of Anatomy at Government Medical College, Pali, Rajasthan, India. He is also the Additional Principal of the college. Mr. Gurjar is a member of the Rajasthan Medical Council in Jaipur. He is part of the Medi-



cal Education Unit at Government Medical College, Pali. He serves on the Institutional Review Board of the college. He is also a member of the Foundation and AETCOM Committee.

Dr. R. P. Parasher is a medical professional with qualifications in both Ayurveda and psychology. He is currently the Chief Medical Officer (SAG) at the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and serves as the Centre In-charge of the Rohini Diabetic Centre, Sector-16, Rohini. He is also the National President of the All India Doctors Association of Indian System of Medicine (ISM). Dr. Parasher holds a BAMS degree, a Diploma in Pharmacy, and postgraduate qualifications in Psychology and in Guidance and Counselling. He has been working with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi since 1983.Dr. Shashank Kambali, President, The M.Sc Medicine AssociationShashank Kambali, MSc (Medicine), is a Ph.D. Scholar in Medicine and an Assistant Professor in Physiology. He is the President of The M.Sc. Medicine Association. He has been associated with medical education for 17 years and has over 11 years of experience as a medical teacher. He works for the rights and welfare of M.Sc. (Medicine) postgraduates.

In boost to quantum computing, AI makes atoms dance with lasers

Quantum computing holds the promise to revolutionise science and technology by solving problems currently beyond the limits of classical computers. A critical step to building practical quantum computers is assembling large arrays of qubits — or quantum bits — with no defects.On August 8, researchers from China reported significant progress on this front by developing a way to rapidly and reliably create large arrays of neutral atoms. Their findings were published in Physical Review Letters.

Neutral atoms, like rubidium atoms, can be trapped and controlled by small laser beams called optical tweezers. These atoms serve as qubits for quantum computing and simulations. Creating arrays with thousands of atoms positioned precisely is vital because it allows for complex quantum operations and error correction. However, placing atoms perfectly in large arrays is a major challenge because atoms are loaded randomly and often with missing sites.Traditionally, strategies to assemble defect-free arrays involve moving atoms one by one or row by row using movable optical tweezers. This process takes longer with the number of atoms.

The new work has reported overcoming this challenge using artificial intelligence (AI). The AI model quickly calculated the best way to move thousands of atoms simulta-

neously with precise control of their positions and phases using laser holograms.

The process began with an initially random array, where some sites were occupied by single atoms. Then, using an algorithm known as the Hungarian algorithm, the AI found the ideal pairing between loaded atoms and the target positions, minimising the total distance atoms needed to move while avoiding collisions.Instead of moving atoms directly in one step, each movement was split into about 20 small steps to prevent heating and atom loss. At each step, the AI model generated a hologram with the optical tweezers that moved all atoms simultaneously and smoothly. This hologram also precisely controlled both where each atom moved and the phase of the light, which is crucial to avoid disturbances.In this method, the total time to rearrange atoms was roughly the same no matter if the array had 1,000 atoms or 10,000 atoms. In their experiments, the scientists assembled two-dimensional arrays of up to 2,024 atoms free of any defects in about 60 milliseconds, substantially faster and more scalable than previous methods.The AI model was a convolutional neural network that had been trained on simulated laser holograms. It could quickly produce highly accurate holograms that guided the atoms in smooth movements with minimal loss.

Minimum balance requirement not under regulatory domain: RBI Governor



What RBI's decision to not cut rates says about India and Trump tariffsRBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra ahead of the monetary policy press conference in Mumbai on Wednesday.: Amit Chakravarty)Two days after ICICI Bank sharply hiked the minimum monthly average balance (MAB) requirement in customer accounts to Rs 50,000, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the MAB requirement is "not under regulatory domain". "The RBI has left it to the banks to decide on the minimum balance. Every bank has its own minimum balance requirement. This is not under any regulatory domain," Malhotra said on the sidelines of an event. This means each bank is free to fix any amount it desires as the minimum monthly average balance in accounts.

The ICICI move has come at a time when public sector banks were scrapping the MAB requirement.ICICI Bank,

the country's second-largest private lender, sharply increased the minimum monthly average balance from Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 for all accounts opened in metro and urban areas starting August 2025. For semi-urban branches, the new MAB requirement has increased to Rs 25,000 from Rs 5,000 earlier. In the case of rural branches, accounts will require a minimum balance of Rs 10,000, compared to the earlier Rs 2,500, according to the bank.

ICICI Bank has said if the minimum balance criteria is not met by the customer, there will be a penalty of 6 per cent of the shortfall in required MAB or Rs 500 whichever is lower. ICICI Bank is the first bank to go for a steep hike in MAB. The country's largest lender, State Bank of India, has not levied non-maintenance penalties since March 2020. According to data shared by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in response to a question in the Rajya Sabha late last month, state-owned lenders collected Rs 8,932.98 crore as penal charges on non-maintenance of minimum Average Monthly Balance in the five years starting 2020-21 and up to 2024-25. The data shared by the finance ministry came days after Union Bank of India joined a host of other PSBs in waiving off penalties on non-maintenance of minimum balances, an issue that has been a sensitive one for some time. Other PSBs that have ended these charges from the ongoing quarter include Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Indian Bank, Bank of India, and Central Bank of India, the finance ministry said on July 29.

The 'Turnberry system' – what the US' new global economic order looks like

Last week, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Sanjay Malhotra touted India's "bright prospects in the changing world order" in the medium term, adding that "opportunities are there for the taking". But will India be able to get its hands on any of these opportunities? On August 7, the New York Times published a column by Jamieson Greer, the US Trade Representative, titled 'Why we remade the global order'. In a rather telling illustration of the second Trump presidency's handling of the power it wields over the rest of the world, Greer termed the "current, nameless global order" as the 'Turnberry system'. Turnberry, of course, is a Trump-owned hotel and resort on the western coast of Scotland where in late July the US President and his European Commission counterpart, Ursula von der Leyen, announced their bilateral trade agreement. As part of the deal, goods from the European Union (EU) will face a tariff of 15 per cent when entering the US. However, it did not end there: by 2028, the EU will buy \$750 billion of American energy products and invest \$600 billion in the US.

The deal has been called a 'capitulation' and humiliating for the EU. According to Julian Hinz, head of Research Center Trade Policy at Berlin-based Kiel Institute for the World Economy, it was an "appeasement" and abandoned the World Trade Organization's (WTO) principles. "Under WTO rules, member countries must apply the same tariffs to all other members. Deviations are only permitted under free trade agreements in which both sides reduce their tariffs to zero. The current deal clearly violates these principles and sets a dangerous precedent," Hinz warned on July 28, adding that Trump's strategy of "pitting other economies against each other" had only been strengthened. According to Greer, the legacy of the Bretton Woods system lived on in the form of an arrangement dominated by the WTO he said was "untenable and unsustainable" – while the US lost industrial jobs and economic security, others did not undertake key reforms. China, meanwhile, was the winner. But now, "reform is at hand", with the US-EU deal "oriented toward serving concrete national interests rather than vague aspirations of multilateral institutions".

Multilateral institutions such as the WTO, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund have been criticised for decades for their policy suggestions, especially when it comes to debt-laden developing nations, as shown by the Asian financial crisis of 1997 and the European debt crisis. Momentum to meaningfully reform them has gathered pace in recent years. Greer, however, has a more US-centric world order in mind. "It took over 50 years from that first meeting at Bretton Woods until the creation of the WTO. It has been 30 years since. Fewer than 130 days from the beginning of the Trump Round, the Turnberry system is by no means complete, but its construction is well underway,"

No proposal to restore Old Pension Scheme for central government employees: FM

New Delhi: There is no proposal under consideration of the Government of India for restoration of Old Pension Scheme (OPS) in respect of central government employees covered under National Pension System (NPS), Parliament was informed on Monday. The government had moved away from OPS due to its unsustainable fiscal liability on the government exchequer, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a reply in the Lok Sabha. NPS is a defined contribution-based scheme which was introduced for central government employees (except armed forces) joining service on or after January 1, 2004. With a view to improving upon the pensionary benefits for such employees, a committee was constituted under the chairpersonship of the then Finance Secretary to suggest measures to modify the NPS, she said. Based on the deliberations of the committee with stakeholders, Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) has been introduced as an option under NPS with the objective of providing defined benefits after retirement to the central government employees covered under the NPS, she said. The features of UPS, including the definition of family, have been designed in such a way as to ensure payment of assured payouts while also maintaining fiscal sustainability of the fund, she said. Further, she said, the government employees who opt for UPS under NPS would also be eligible for option for availing benefits under the CCS (Pension) Rules, 2021 or the CCS (Extraordinary Pension) Rules, 2023, in the event of death of the government servant during service or his discharge on the ground of invalidation or disablement. UPS has been introduced through a notification by the government on January 24, 2025, as an option under NPS, she said. Under UPS, she said, assured payout is admissible on retirement at 50 per cent of the twelve-month average basic pay, immediately prior to retirement after a minimum 25 years of qualifying service. In case of a lesser qualifying service period, proportionate payout would be admissible, she said. Replying to another question, Sitharaman said the stock of household financial liabilities has increased by about 5.5



Greer concluded, calling the current round of global trade negotiations as the 'Trump Round' of discussions – a reference to the several rounds of talks held between countries that led to the formation of the WTO at the Uruguay Round in 1994.

Going by Greer's column, the Turnberry system involves nations aligning on economic and national security interests and rebalancing trade in a "more sustainable direction" such that the US' manufacturing sector is back on its feet. This, he said, warrants a "generational project to re-industrialize America". The era of the US getting other countries to lower their trade barriers by removing the tariffs that defended its own manufacturing sector is over; in its place, the removal of foreign trade barriers is being done "while ensuring sufficient tariff protection at home". This system also intends to enforce these new priorities in a far more telling manner than "drawn-out dispute settlement process". Should the US detect non-compliance, there will be swift retribution in the form of higher tariffs – the "formidable stick" to the "mighty carrot" that is the opportunity to sell your goods in the "world's most lucrative consumer market", Greer said. Clearly, the Turnberry system is one which serves only one country. The US gets its pound of flesh in the form of re-industrialisation, while foreign companies get the opportunity to have access to the world's richest consumers. Or at least that's what the US government thinks. Leading academics have repeatedly warned that Trump's tariff war will not solve the country's problems. For instance, Robert Z Lawrence of the Peterson Institute of International Economics and a professor of trade and investment at Harvard University has said it is a "fool's errand" to make the US economy go through a massive disruption just to create a relatively small number of manufacturing jobs. Moreover, dealing with bilateral deficits individually does not balance overall trade and without policies that cut American expenditure relative to its output, Trump's tariffs will only result in the shifting of its trade deficit from targeted countries to non-targeted ones, Lawrence has argued.



percentage points from March 2020 to March 2024, while the stock of household financial assets has increased by 20.7 percentage points during the same period. Thus, the net financial position of the households (stock of assets minus stock of liabilities) has improved as of 2023-24, she said. As per information received from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), she said, the penetration of retail loans of banks (retail loans as a per cent of gross loans and advances after adjusting for the merger of a non-bank with a bank) has increased moderately from 30.94 per cent in March 2024 to 31.48 per cent in March 2025. However, she said, the pace of year-on-year growth in the retail loans has moderated from 17.61 per cent in March 2024 to 14.05 per cent in March 2025. The asset quality in the retail loan segment of scheduled commercial banks is largely stable, with a Gross Non-Performing Assets ratio of 1.18 per cent as of March 2025, she said. Further, the share of unsecured retail loans is relatively low at 25 per cent of the retail loans and 8.3 per cent of aggregate gross advances. Moreover, she said, as per the latest data published by the National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the net household financial savings have increased from Rs 13.3 lakh crore in 2022-23 to Rs 15.5 lakh crore in 2023-24.

Reimagining osteoporosis care: from preventing loss to rebuilding strength



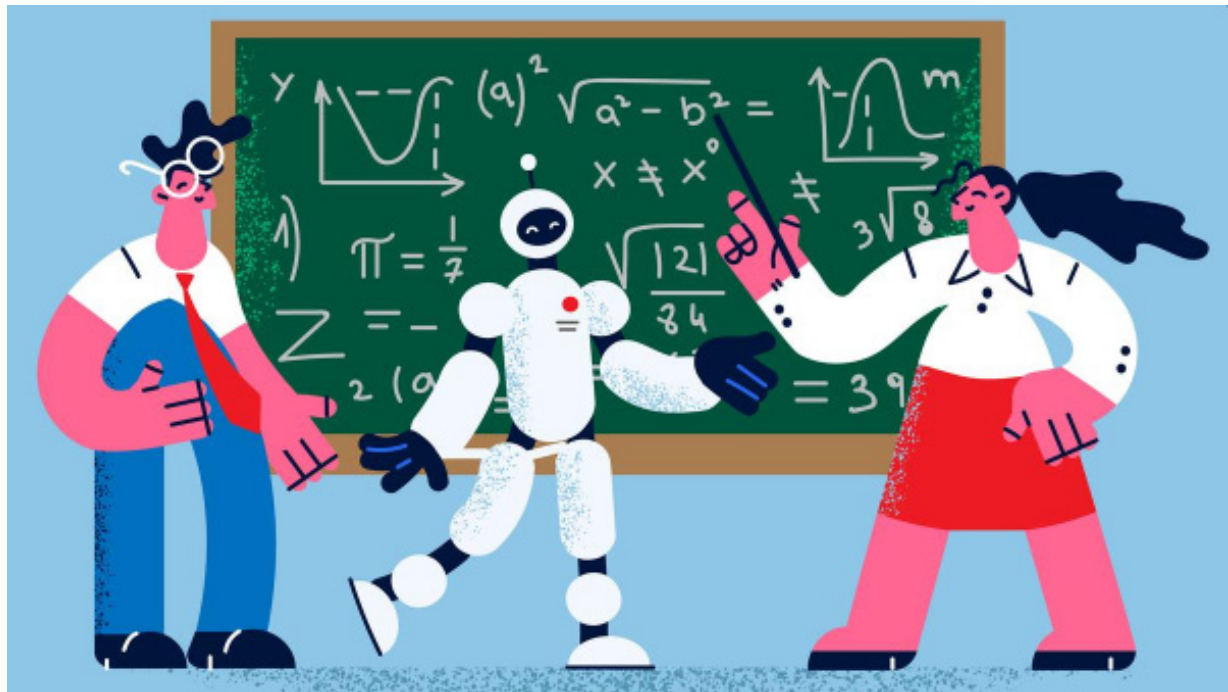
Osteoporosis, often described as a "silent disease," affects millions across India, predominantly postmenopausal women and the elderly. It is silent not only because it progresses without obvious symptoms, but also because it remains largely underdiagnosed and undertreated until a fracture occurs. For years, the emphasis in medical practice has been on slowing the pace of bone loss. Today, however, with evolving science and therapeutic innovation, the paradigm is shifting—towards rebuilding bone, restoring strength, and rethinking what osteoporosis care can truly achieve. At the heart of osteoporosis is an imbalance between bone formation and bone resorption. While the body continually breaks down and builds bone, in osteoporosis, bone resorption exceeds formation. The result is a reduc-

tion in bone mass and deterioration in bone architecture, which significantly increases the risk of fractures.

Traditionally, treatment has focused on antiresorptive agents such as bisphosphonates, which slow the rate at which bone is broken down. While these medications have undoubtedly prevented many fractures, they do not restore bone that has already been lost. In recent years, the focus has expanded to include anabolic therapies that actively promote bone formation. This marks a significant turning point in the clinical management of osteoporosis—particularly for patients at high risk of fracture or those who have already suffered one or more fragility fractures.

A multimodal and individualised approach is taken in deciding the appropriate drug of choice for the patient. This involves investigations to assess bone density and metabolic state of the patient, followed by a consultation with the orthopaedic surgeon and endocrinologist. Several new therapies such as anabolic, or bone-forming, therapies as well as monoclonal antibody medications are now available. Managing osteoporosis is not solely about prescribing medication. It requires a multi-dimensional strategy. Nutritional support, particularly adequate calcium and vitamin D intake, weight-bearing exercise, fall prevention, and regular monitoring of bone mineral density are all essential components of comprehensive care. Public awareness remains a key challenge. Symptoms such as chronic back pain, reduced height or a stooped posture are often dismissed as signs of ageing. Greater public education and proactive screening, especially among postmenopausal women and older adults, can help reverse this trend. At its core, osteoporosis is not only a disease of the skeleton but one that affects confidence, mobility and quality of life. Advances in bone-building therapies bring with them more than just improvements in bone mass. They offer individuals a chance to regain independence and lead fuller lives. The future of osteoporosis care lies not in merely preserving what is left, but in restoring what has been lost—with science, empathy and precision. As we embrace this new chapter in care, we must ensure that no fracture becomes a missed opportunity for intervention.

How artificial intelligence is tackling mathematical problem-solving



The International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) is arguably the leading mathematical problem-solving competition. Every year, high school students from around the world attempt six problems over the span of three hours. Students whose scores cross a threshold, roughly corresponding to solving five of the six problems, obtain Gold medals, with Silver and Bronze medals for those crossing other thresholds. The problems do not require advanced mathematical knowledge, but instead test for mathematical creativity. They are always new, and it is ensured that no similar problems are online or in the literature. IMO 2025 had some unusual participants. Even before the Olympiad closed, OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, announced that an experimental reasoning model of theirs had answered the Olympiad at the Gold medal level, following the same time limits as the human participants. Remarkably, this was not a model specifically trained or designed for the IMO, but a general-purpose reasoning model with reasoning powers good enough for an IMO Gold.

The OpenAI announcement raised some issues. Many felt that announcing an AI result while the IMO had not concluded overshadowed the achievements of the human participants. Also, the Gold medal score was graded and given by former IMO medalists hired by OpenAI, and some disputed whether the grading was correct. However, a couple of days later, another announcement came. Google-DeepMind attempted the IMO officially, with an advanced version of Gemini Deep Think. Three days after the Olympiad, with the permission of the IMO organisers, they announced that they had obtained a score at the level of a Gold medal. The IMO president Prof. Gregor Dolinar stated, "We can confirm that Google DeepMind has reached the much-desired milestone, earning 35 out of a possible 42 points — a gold medal score. Their solutions were astonishing in many respects. IMO graders found them to be clear, precise and most of them easy to follow." Even as it became a popular sensation, ChatGPT was infamous both for hallucinations (making up facts) and for simple arithmetic mistakes. Both these would make solving even modest mathematical problems mostly impossible.

The first advance that greatly reduced these errors, which came a few months after the launch of ChatGPT, was the use of so-called agents. Specifically, models were now able to use web searches to gather accurate information, and Python interpreters to run programs to perform calculations and check reasoning using numerical experiments. These made the models dramatically more accurate, and good enough to solve moderately hard mathematical problems. However, as a single error in a mathematical solution makes the solution invalid, these were not yet accurate enough to reach IMO (or research) level. Greater accuracy can be obtained by pairing language models with formal proof systems such as the Lean prover — a computer software that can understand and check proofs. Indeed, for IMO 2024 such a system from Google-DeepMind called AlphaProof obtained a silver medal score (but it ran for two days).

Finally, a breakthrough came with the so-called reasoning models, such as o3 from OpenAI and Google-

DeepMind's Gemini-2.5-pro. These models are perhaps better described as internal monologue models. Before answering a complex question, they generate a monologue considering approaches, carrying them out, revisiting their proposed solutions, sometimes dithering and starting all over again, before finally giving a solution with which they are satisfied. It were such models, with some additional advances, that got Olympiad Gold medal scores. Analogical reasoning and combining ingredients from different sources gives language models some originality, but probably not enough for hard and novel problems. However, verification either through the internal consistency of reasoning models or, better still, checking by the Lean prover, allows training by trying a large number of things and seeing what works, in the same way that AI systems became chess champions starting with just the rules. Such reinforcement learning has allowed recent models to go beyond training data by creating their own synthetic data.

Olympiad problems, for both humans and AIs, are not ends in themselves but tests of mathematical problem-solving ability. There are other aspects of research besides problem-solving. Growing anecdotal experiences suggest that AI systems have excellent capabilities in many of these too, such as suggesting approaches and related problems. However, the crucial difference between problem-solving and research/development is scale. Research involves working for months or years without errors creeping in, and without wandering off in fruitless directions. As mentioned earlier, coupling models with the Lean prover can prevent errors. Indications are that it is only a matter of time before this is successful. In the meantime, these models can act as powerful collaborators with human researchers, greatly accelerating research and development in all areas involving mathematics. The era of the super-scientist is here.

Two men publicly lashed in Aceh under Islamic Shariah law for sexual acts

Banda Aceh (Indonesia): An Islamic Shariah court in Indonesia's conservative Aceh province on Monday sentenced two men to public caning 80 times each after Islamic religious police caught them engaged in what the court deemed were sexual acts. The trial at the Islamic Shariah District Court in Banda Aceh, the provincial capital, was held behind closed doors. Judges have the authority to limit public access to a trial if the case relates to adultery and open it only for the verdict. The couple, aged 20 and 21, were arrested in April after residents saw them entering the same bathroom at Taman Sari city park in Banda Aceh and reported it to Sharia police, who were patrolling the area. The police broke into the toilet and caught the men kissing and hugging each other, which the court considered to be a sexual act.

How Gukesh was celebrated in Poland: Face on coffee foam, cheering fans holding his name, helicopter ride and adoring kids playing chess



GNS News Agency, August 20

Before he flew off to USA to compete in the St Louis Rapid and Blitz tournament, world chess champion Gukesh Dommaraju made a short pitstop in Poland, a country that became like a second home to him while he was preparing for last year's world chess championship battle against Ding Liren. Gukesh was a special guest in the country, where he played in six blitz games against Jan-Krzysztof Duda, who helped him become a world champion. And while Gukesh lost the six-game contest 5-1, the trip to Poland was made special by the local organisers' gestures. For one, he rode in a helicopter to the Polish town of Ustron, where the Ustron Chess Festival was held. There, he was greeted by hundreds of young fans, holding a banner reading 'Welcome Gukesh'. There were more surprises in store: at the coffee shop at one of the venues, the barista served him coffee

where the foam on top was shaped in his likeness.

"I am very glad to be here to see all of you. I have been in Ustron since yesterday, and I see the kind of chess enthusiasm that there is, and I am very glad to be part of this festival and hope you all had a great time over here and played some very interesting chess. Just keep loving chess, thank you for having me," said Gukesh, addressing a hall full of kids playing chess. Gukesh has a special connection with Poland, because his team for the world chess championship last year against Ding Liren was filled with more Polish members than Indians. This included his trainer since 2023 Grzegorz Gajewski and other Polish GMs like Radoslaw Wojtaszek, Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Jan Klimkowski. The team also had India's Pentala Harikrishna and Germany's Vincent Keymer. "At one point I was spending more time in Warsaw than my home in Chennai," Gukesh said at one point during his visit to Poland's Katowice, where he had gone to play in an exhibition blitz event against Duda. Gukesh lost 5-1 to Duda. During the trip, Gukesh was handed a 5-1 defeat — which included the teenager losing five games in a row — in an exhibition blitz event in Poland's Katowice by Duda, the man who helped the Indian teenager become the youngest world champion in chess history as a second (an aide) last year. The best-of-six games event saw Gukesh take a 1-0 lead in the start, but then lose five in a row. Gukesh rarely competes in blitz tournaments. He prefers the calmer waters of classical chess, than the turbulence of blitz — at Katowice both players had three minutes on their clocks and got two-second increments per move.

Ian Botham's six, a lifetime supply of multivitamins and two cans of cold lemonade Vodka: The story behind Harry Gill's Tim David catch

GNS News Agency, August 20

A lifetime supply of multivitamins, former Australian captain Mark Waugh getting reminded of a similar catch of the bat of Ian Botham in 1987, getting calls from people after years and a reminder of Australian Rugby Star Brisbane Broncos' Ben Hunt dropped chance against North Queensland Cowboys in the final minutes of the 2015 NRL Grand Final. That's what Aussie fan Harry Gill has experienced in the last 24 hours post his catch in the stands off the bat of Australian batsman Tim David in the opening T20I against South Africa at Darwin on Sunday. The 26-year-old pilot had taken the sensational catch following the six by David in the 12th over with his left hand with two cold cans of vodka lemonade in his right hand and the catch reminded Gill of the moments of Hunt dropping the rugby ball in the NRL final in 2015. "I had a bit of time, but it was just coming straight for me. I was praying I didn't drop it like (Broncos star) Ben Hunt did in the 2015 grand final. The lemonade ones are bloody good. I've got a bit of a hangover this morning. It just stuck. My hand is a bit sore this morning but, yeah, happy with it. My phone is blowing up. People I haven't spoken to in 10 years have been in contact," Gill, who is a pilot in Darwin, told The Age on Monday. With Australia playing at Darwin for the first time in 17 years, David had come to the crease with the Australian team losing three wickets for 30 runs in 3.1 overs. David, who would play a knock of 83 runs off 52 balls, was batting on 40 runs having hit four sixes and two boundaries before he launched a Corbin Bosch delivery into the stands with an alert Gill in the front row taking the catch in the stands meters away from the advertising boards in the 13th over. The catch would draw reactions from commentators with former Australian opener Mark Waugh talking about the famous catch taken by Channel Nine Cameraman Tony Fox off the six by England's Botham off the bowling of Australian bowler Simon O'Donnell in the World Series Cup Final at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in 1987. Fox had taken the catch two-handed near the sight-screen in the front row in the stands with a cigarette in his mouth and throwing the ball back to the field. "You just need a smoke and you'd be right at home," Waugh would say on Fox Sports post Gill's catch on Sunday. Waugh's fellow commentator Mark Howard too would praise the one-handed catch by Gill. "A nice snare in the crowd. Two cans in the right hand, the kookaburra in the left. Cool



and casual." Howards said on Fox Cricket.

Gill though would talk about Fox's catch as 'much cooler' but shared that the South African fielder Drewald Brewis too termed it as a 'good catch'. "His is so much cooler, bro. I wish I had a durr (cigarette) in my mouth so I could have done that. The South African cricketer that was in front of me said it was a pretty good catch," Gill told The Age.

At the time of the catch, Gill was wearing a cap bearing the name of the multivitamin brand Good Day. The brand was launched by Tom Birmingham and Eddy Simpson, hosts of Hello Sport podcast and Birmingham was quick to offer Gill a life-time supply of the Multivitamins. "We are dead serious about lifetime supply. Natural life, of course. Once he's dead, we will turn the subscription off. We're getting his address and he'll be getting whatever. We'll have something dropped off at his house every month. We're going to fly him down to Sydney at the end of the year for our Christmas party. It's like the multivitamin gods are smiling on us. The catch was phenomenal. Two cans in the hand means he's an alpha male. He looked excited and pleased with himself, but also, in a way, like he does it all the time. This will be shown forever, like that guy smoking the dart behind the sight screen," Birmingham told The Age. As for Gill, he just termed his holding of two cans as a 'lazy effort' and shared how he went home post the match and watched a horror movie. "It's just obviously easier to go and buy two drinks than one. The lines weren't even that bad. It was just me being lazy. I got a few more tins to celebrate after. It turned out to be a pretty good game. I then just went home and watched a horror movie," said Gill.

'Cool to see a young South African stand up to Australia in their backyard' – Ryan Rickelton on fast bowler Kwena Maphaka

GNS News Agency, August 20

Kwena Maphaka has taken his time to get going, but it took his first series against Australia to bring the fire out of the South African pace sensation. While Australia won the first T20 with Tim David deploying the 'all guns blazing' mode and secured the 17-run win, the slightly listless Proteas found their voice through their youngster, a teenage tyro from Johannesburg in the first BKT Tyres T20 on Sunday night.

Maphaka (4-20) confronted the batting onslaught unleashed by the well-oiled Aussie batting unit, and shared his first wicket on his fourth ball to send Mitch Owen's off stump cartwheeling. The Tassie batter was trying to make room to flick it over leg side, but Maphaka sent down a 144kph thunderbolt. The night belonged to Tim David (83 off 56), but Maphaka bowled 11 deliveries at the giant ceding only 14 runs, the best return from all the South African bowlers. He ultimately had his man, caught in the deep in the penultimate over. But the youngster properly got on David's nerves. Teammate Ryan Rickelton said it was expected from the teen tyro, as per

"He had a bit of a go at Tim (David) there, but he's very competitive. He backs his ability which is great. It's cool to see a young guy stand up to Australia in their backyard. It's very promising for South African cricket. He's quite a relaxed guy in the change room but when he crosses that line, he's got a bit of white-line fever, which is quite exciting for us." At 17, Maphaka was player of the tournament at the 2024 Under-19 World Cup despite being only 17 years old, and took 21 wickets at an average of 9.71 at that Cup. In his maiden ODI appearance, against Pakistan in December, he hit the 151kph mark and within a fortnight became the youngest Test debutant, at 18 years and 270 days for the WTC champions. Against Australia at the Marrara Stadium, the youngster showed tremendous outfielding with



Kwena Maphaka has taken his time to get going, but it took his first series against Australia to bring the fire out of the South African pace sensation.

two sharp catches in the Powerplay, helping senior quick Kagiso Rabada to two wickets. George Linde had just dropped Travis Head, but offered another one to short third next ball, where Maphaka sprinted quickly to latch onto a toughie. Later, Mitch Marsh's attempted swing to the leg side hung in the Darwin night sky for six seconds before Maphaka safely pouched it, as per cricket.com.au.

Nascar driver Connor Zilisch falls out of stationary Chevy while celebrating race victory on the window



GNS News Agency, August 20

A car race winning celebration turned painful when a Nascar driver attempting a hanging-out-the-window celebration slipped and fell out of his car in trying to pose on the perch for customary victory celebrations. 19-year-old Nascar driver Connor Zilisch had won at Watkins Glen International, but got his foot slipping and tangled in trying to get out of the window, getting stretchered and ended up with a broken collarbone and left hand in a sling. Zilisch said the next race on August 22 at Daytona might not be enough time to recover from the celebration-accident.

He was back at Watkins Glen International a day after his scary fall in victory lane, after the ecstasy and agony of Saturday's Nascar race and Trackhouse Racing withdrew the Chevy that he was scheduled to drive in the Cup race Sunday at Watkins Glen, after the sloppy tumble, accord-

ing to Guardian. "First of all, I'm doing OK," Zilisch told the broadcast of the Cup race. "Very grateful to be able to walk away from that, and I guess I didn't walk away, but I'm very grateful to be walking today and to just be all right. Thank you to all the medics who took care of me, and everybody who reached out and wished me well. I do appreciate it a lot," he said. It was a series-high sixth victory for Zilisch though he was in trouble straight away as he hit the victory lane. Beverages get tossed about and these ended up slimming up his window perch. "Yeah, I was climbing out of the car and obviously the window net was on the door, and as soon as they started spraying water, my foot slipped," Zilisch recalled. He remembered vivid details of the fall. "The last thing I remember was being halfway down and falling, so I'm glad it wasn't any worse, and that the collarbone is the extent of the injuries, but hate I couldn't make it to the race today." The August 22 at Daytona International Speedway race is obviously uncertain. "We're still working out with all the doctors to figure out what's going to be the next steps," Zilisch said. The bounce back driver has already logged another injury earlier and shown remarkable resilience to return. There was a one-race absence at Texas Motor Speedway because of a back injury from a crash at Talladega Superspeedway, but Zilisch had registered 11 consecutive top-five finishes and five wins since his return. The adrenaline shoot-off runs in the team. Zilisch had noted that Trackhouse teammate Shane van Gisbergen "had a plate put in once and raced the weekend after. So I don't know if I'll be that quick, but hopefully my young bones will heal fast, and I'll be able to get back in it as soon as possible," he said.

Praggnanandhaa on how success of Gukesh and Arjun Erigaisi have inspired him

GNS News Agency, August 20

Indian chess prodigy R. Praggnanandhaa recently spoke about how his contemporaries Arjun Erigaisi and D. Gukesh — and the success they've achieved — have pushed and inspired him to excel. Indian chess has seen unprecedented growth recently, with the country producing the youngest ever World Champion in Gukesh, the 18th player to cross the 2800 Elo rating mark in Arjun, and Praggnanandhaa becoming only the second Indian after five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand to reach a World Cup final. The trio also played a crucial role in leading India to its first-ever Olympiad gold, the toughest and most prestigious team event in chess.

When asked on Raj Shamani's Figuring Out podcast if other chess players make him insecure, Praggnanandhaa replied: "No, not right now. But I guess in the past (they did).""Just the players from my generation, whenever they were doing (well) it was putting some pressure on me, I mean I was putting pressure on myself, but I started seeing them as inspiration... now whenever they do well, I get this extra motivation. I want to push myself. It doesn't come as a pressure but as an inspiration and I want to do well," said Praggnanandhaa when asked which player had made him insecure in the past. Asked when was the last time he felt insecure, Praggnanandhaa replied: "I don't remember honestly." Praggnanandhaa interview with Raj Shamani When asked if there was a time when he looked at a player and thought that they were better than him, Praggnanandhaa replied: "Mostly (players) from my gen-



eration. Let's say Gukesh or Arjun (Erigaisi) do well. Or Nodirbek (Abdusattarov). When they do well, I feel like I can do it as well. So I tried to put pressure on myself which is not a good thing. I mean getting inspired from them is a different thing. Nowadays, I am better at it because last year I didn't have a great year while Gukesh won the world championship, Arjun crossed 2800. All these things just inspired me so much. I was seeing their games so closely, trying to understand. It inspired me and I think that's one of the reasons I feel that extra energy I have when I play games nowadays. That inspiration that comes from them." "When you just want to give your best and not worry about the results, I don't think there is anything to be worried about," replied Praggnanandhaa to the question of whether he gets scared by any player.

Annu Rani goes past 62m, Animesh Kujur takes 200m gold: Snippets from World Athletics Continental Tour event in Bhubaneswar

The highlight of India's first World Athletics Continental Tour event in Bhubaneswar was a dramatic last-ditch effort by the country's ace long jumper Sreeshankar Murali, who clinched his event with a last attempt of 8.13m to stave off the impressive teenager Shahnavaz Khan. The 17-year-old Khan was leading, on the verge of pulling off an upset with his fourth-round jump of 8.04m, while Sreeshankar was second with 7.95m. But the 26-year-old Sreeshankar saved the best for his last try to clinch top spot. The first event of the day started slowly with every eye on veteran Indian thrower Annu Rani. "Since I have got my rhythm back, I want to achieve the World Championships qualification," she had told The Indian Express on the eve of the competition. And staying true to her words, Annu came up with two big throws of 62.01m and 61.10m to further solidify her position in the World Championships qualification ranking. The 32-year-old was way clear of the rest of the field as second best thrower was NDL Lekamalage of Sri Lanka with 56.27m. "Despite fatigue, if I can cross 60m easily, then I guess I am ready for a medal at the Worlds," said Annu after her win. Probably the most competitive field of the day, men's javelin throw witnessed a stunning opening as Rumesh Pathirage threw 86.50m to record his personal best, set a new Sri Lankan national record, and qualify for the World Championships directly. However, it was a dull show after the starting high as only four Throwers crossed 80m. The latest Indian entrant to the 80m club, Shivam Lohakare denied a 1-2 Sri Lankan finish with 80.73m throw while former Sri Lanka NR holder Sumedha Ranasinghe finished third with 80.65m. World Championships bound Sachin Yadav and Yashvir Singh had poor outings with best throws of 79.80m and 78.53m.

One of the most sought-after race of the evening, the men's 100m had an anti-climactic finish as the winner Muhammad Azeem Fahemi of Malaysia went down immediately after the finish, calling for medical help. The Malaysian clocked 10.35s to win but was in pain after evidently pulling a muscle. Sri Lanka's Chamod Yodhasing finished second with 10.43s and 18-year-old Malaysian Danish Iftikhar came third with 10.50s. It was a disappointing race for the Indians as the fastest man in heats, Harsh Raut finished fifth with 10.56s. The last individual race of the day drew the most cheers as the local lad Animesh Kujur walked on to the track nonchalantly. However, after winning the race with a timing of 20.77s, Animesh said, "Honestly, for the first time I saw a crowd here for athletics and it put a bit pressure on me. I knew I had to perform for them." It was a special occasion for him as his parents were in attendance, watching him. This is the first time his parents have seen him running since 2022. "It was exciting to see so many people cheering for him. Never thought of this moment," his father Amrit Kujur told the media later on. With this win, Animesh has added more ranking points to his kitty, further



solidifying his position in the World Championships qualification race.

Disappointing day for twins Nithya & Vithya Two of the fastest Indian hurdlers, Vithya and Nithya Ramaraj had an unlucky outing at the event. Vithya was disqualified from the 400m event after a false start while her sister Nithya, competing in the 100m hurdles, crashed at the third-last hurdle and failed to finish the race. Nithya's fall was bad in particular as she fell while leading the race, getting herself into a tangle towards the latter stages. The crash left her reeling in pain on the track. Later, Vithya confirmed that it was a fracture on the left leg as the duo left for the hospital with their coach Nehpal Singh to get an MRI scan.

NSG conducts counter-terror drill at Uppal Stadium

Hyderabad: In a rare occurrence at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium (Uppal) here, the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) said it was honoured to facilitate a Bus and Building Intervention Exercise by the 28 Special Composite Group of the National Security Guard (NSG) in the last week of July, which was disclosed much later. This high-level counter-terrorism drill was conducted as part of the NSG's nationwide preparedness strategy to enhance response capabilities at sensitive public venues. The exercise was initiated following a formal request from NSG authorities via official correspondence, with permission and necessary coordination from the HCA. Advance reconnaissance was also successfully conducted in the third week of July. The HCA extended the required support to the NSG team while ensuring all internal safety protocols and access conditions were met, in accordance with mutually agreed terms and conditions. The NSG commandos, under the leadership of Major S Rohit, Squadron Commander, executed simulated real-time response operations with precision.

Shilpa Shetty's break up with Akshay Kumar had director making last minute casting calls so his film doesn't turn into Kaagaz Ke Phool: 25 years of Dhadkan



There's a time in one's life when even the most mundane memories start gaining a special status. For 90s kids, this time came a few years ago when they began romanticising landline phones, cassette tapes, and Nadeem-Shravan's music of the decade that was shamelessly copied. These parcels of the past are a reminder of simpler times – the times when life was largely about finding ways to skip school, sweating over exams, and calling teenage crushes over those same landline phones. These moments from the past are often reminisced with fondness, even if they weren't exactly lovely to experience at the time, and it is with this romantic lens that many movies from the past gain some sort of popularity, even if they have aged poorly; and are sometimes discussed as if they are a part of some cinematic history. One such film is Dharmesh Darshan's 2000 film Dhadkan, starring Shilpa Shetty, Suniel Shetty and Akshay Kumar, which released 25 years ago.

Shilpa, Suniel and Akshay, who started working in the movies in the early 1990s, have spoken at length about one of the most popular films of their careers, which has generated a ton of memes. This is the film where Suniel said his much-memed dialogue, 'Anjali tum sirf meri ho', and Akshay tried too hard to play a version of Lord Rama, years before Prabhas failed at it, and Ranbir Kapoor attempted it. This was also the film where Shilpa got her heart broken in real life, and supplied enough fodder to the film tabloids that 25 years later, eyebrows are raised when Akshay and Shilpa greet each other in public.

Dhadkan released in the same year as Mohabbatein and Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai, so clearly, the audience wasn't starved for romantic films. Yet, Dhadkan gained some popularity with its music, composed by Nadeem-Shravan. The film had been in the making for almost three years and by the year 2000, Nadeem-Shravan had stopped composing actively, as Nadeem was embroiled in the Gulshan Kumar murder case. It is now famously known that the songs 'Dil Ne Yeh Kaha Hai Dil Se', and 'Aksar Is Duniya Mein' were plagiarised but that was the era where no one would have found out anything about it. The film was a love

triangle, which was pretty much similar to Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam in spirit, but looked like a badly lit Balaji TV serial.

Dhadkan was also the film whose release opened a can of worms for its lead actors – Akshay and Shilpa. They had been famously dating for years and broke up while filming. It was after the film's release that Shilpa opened her heart and accused Akshay of cheating on her with Twinkle, whom he eventually married. In an interview with Indya.com in 2000, Shilpa said that she loved Akshay deeply, but he cheated on her. "When you love someone and all along don't realise that you are being taken for a ride, it can be very annoying. I never imagined that he could two-time me, and that too, all along our relationship," she said. Shilpa said that she had decided to stay quiet until the release of Dhadkan so the film wouldn't suffer, but immediately after that, she held nothing back. Shilpa was clearly asked if she blamed Twinkle for this ordeal, but she categorically refused to villainise her. "What's her fault if my man was cheating on me? There is no point blaming any other woman; it was entirely his fault. Akshay Kumar used me and conveniently dropped me after he found someone else. The only person I was upset with was him," she said.

Akshay acknowledged their break-up in another interview with Subhash K Jha and said, "So okay, we broke up. Heartbreaks are a part of life. I think she should get on with her life and let me get on with mine." He did not address her accusations of infidelity and implied that she was being misled by those around her. "Shilpa and I have separated... She has made sure that the world knows it. Now that she has beaten her drums loud enough, she should stop lashing out at me. I feel very sorry for the way she has been speaking. There's so much bitterness in her. My advice is, please go ahead with your life and let me go ahead with mine," he said. Dharmesh claimed that the filming of Dhadkan extended over three years because he was keeping busy with Aamir Khan's Mela but tabloids and film magazines of the time suggested that it had a lot to do with the growing discomfort between Shilpa and Akshay. Not just these two, even Akshay and Suniel were at odds with each other. In an interview with Bollywood Hungama, Dharmesh said, "Akshay ji and Suniel had a major problem, probably after working in Mohra. Nevertheless, I was fixated with Suniel Shetty. I saw him as Dev."

The casting that looked promising on paper proved to be a logistical challenge for the makers and to rescue their sinking ship, they brought in Mahima Chaudhary. In a chat with Lehren Retro, Dharmesh said that he wanted to sprinkle some life into the film's second half. "I was worried picture Kaagaz Ke Phool na ban jaye," he said as if Dhadkan could ever be compared to the Guru Dutt classic. In the years since, Dhadkan has had enough reruns on satellite television, and much like Sooryavansham, or any other film that's played enough number of times on TV, it has become a popular film, despite its quality. Dhadkan doesn't represent the best of its era, but perhaps it holds too much meaning to those who saved their pocket money and bought its cassette, and in trying to justify that memory, Dhadkan is still being celebrated in the books of nostalgia.

Ram Charan's wife Upasana Konidela says mother-in-law coached her through marriage, recalls father-in-law Chiranjeevi's first response to her: 'She's not a traditional girl but...'



It's not easy being married to a superstar — between managing time together, juggling family commitments, and dealing with endless rumours, a spouse has to learn to block out the noise. In a recent interaction, Upasana Kamineni Konidela shared that despite the challenges of being married to a star Ram Charan, her mother-in-law and Chiranjeevi's wife Surekha has been a huge support, guiding her on how to navigate life alongside a superstar husband.

During a conversation with Curly Tales, Upasana credited her mother-in-law and superstar Chiranjeevi's wife for coaching her through the journey. She said, "He always wanted to be an actor, and for me to deal with an actor throughout, the whole credit goes to my mother-in-law because she coached me through it all. That's when I realised that telling my mom couldn't help much. My mom has always supported me and respects Ram Charan a lot, but the thing is, this life was new to her as well. We are two people living in the same city, with similar friends, but once we got married, it was two worlds coming together. My mother-in-law told me, 'Seeing is believing, don't believe everything everybody says.'"

Upasana recalled that father-in-law Chiranjeevi already knew about her when she met him for the first time. "He knew about me, and said she is not a traditional girl, she is different. He encourages me, respects what I do and I have utmost respect for my in-laws. It is so important to have supportive in-laws." Upasana also opened up about her love story with Ram Charan, explaining how their friendship blossomed into love and a lifelong partnership. Speaking about how it wasn't love at first sight for them, she said, "We realised that we couldn't have found a better match for each other. We were friends for about two years, no, we didn't have a spark. It's not so filmy; it's not like Magadheera where we touched and felt the spark. We lived in reality."

When shown a photo from their wedding, Upasana recalled how overwhelming the day felt for both of them. "This day was a crazy day, oh God, so many people, and we didn't know what to do. It was so overwhelming for us, his family, and my family, both of us tying the knot, and it was just crazy," she shared. Earlier, in an interview with social media influencer Masoom Minawala,

Tiger Shroff, Sanjay Dutt serve gruesome bloodbath, fans call it, 'sasti Animal copy'.



The makers of Baaghi 4 have finally released the much-awaited teaser of the film. Actor Tiger Shroff has returned as Ronny, but this time, more ferocious and savage than ever. Sanjay Dutt, Sonam Bajwa, and debutant Harnaaz Sandhu will also be joining him on the violent ride. Baaghi 4 looks like the most violent instalment in the franchise's history, with many bloodbath-filled and ac-

tion-packed scenes. Tiger Shroff took to his social media handle and shared the Baaghi 4 teaser. He wrote in the caption, "Har Aashiq Ek Villain Hain... No escape. No mercy. Brace yourself — a Bloody, Violent Love Story begins." Fans get to see glimpses of limbs being cut off and blood flying everywhere.

Featuring Sanjay Dutt as the antagonist, the teaser started with Tiger delivering an emotional dialogue, indicating a tragedy that makes everyone become violent. The entire star cast - Tiger, Sanjay, Sonam, and Harnaaz, can be seen engaging in ruthless action sequences. They can be seen chopping off heads, make limbs fly and stabbing without mercy. The logline of the teaser read, "Tiger Shroff returns as Ronny in his most savage avatar yet. It is fueled by vengeance, armed, and driven by a rage that leaves no enemy breathing." In one of the scenes, Sanjay Dutt is seen lighting his cigar using fire from a chopped limb.

Many social media users are calling Baaghi 4 inspired by Ranbir Kapoor starrer Animal and Lakshya's Kill, because of the bloody and gory scenes. "They even copied the hallway scene from Animal," a person wrote. A user mentioned, "Sassti Animal copy". "Bhai bilkul Animal aur Kill jaisi h," another comment read. Netizens also compared it to the Malayalam thriller Marco, known as the most violent Indian film ever. "This looks like a Marco knock-off," a user commented. Directed by A Harsha and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, Baaghi 4 is set to hit the theatres on September 5, this year. The film's story and screenplay have also been written by Sajid Nadiadwala. The Baaghi franchise started in 2016, featuring Tiger Shroff and Shraddha Kapoor. Its sequel Baaghi 2 released in 2018, starring Tiger with Disha Patani. Lastly, Baaghi 3 brought Shraddha with Riteish Deshmukh in 2020.

Aamir Khan did this film despite realising it 'will not earn Rs 500 cr, or even Rs 300 cr': 'It finally earned Rs 95 cr, but...'

Aamir Khan says his loyalty is towards cinema over theatres. Aamir Khan says his loyalty is towards cinema over theatres. Aamir Khan claims he's never chased money as his primary priority over the years. Immediately after scoring Indian cinema's first Rs 100 crore club hit in AR Murugadoss' 2008 action thriller Ghajini, one of the films he signed after was Reema Kagti's 2012 thriller Talaash. Aamir knew the film wouldn't earn more than Rs 500 crore, or even more than Rs 200 crore like his previous hit, Rajkumar Hirani's 3 Idiots (2009), but he loved the story so much that he gave it a nod.

Talaash: The Answer Lies Within revolved around a Mumbai cop (Aamir), who's lost his son in an accident, and is still recovering from the grief until he finds himself gravitated towards a sex worker (Kareena Kapoor). The film, written by Kagti and Zoya Akhtar and produced by Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani's Excel Entertainment, also stars Rani Mukerji, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Shernaz Patel, and Rajkumar Rao among others. In an interview with the Times of India, Aamir predicted Talaash wouldn't even hit the Rs 100 crore mark, and would hover around Rs 70 crore. However, it went on to do Rs 90 crore at the domestic box office. In an interview with Radio Nasha earlier this year, filmmaker Kunal Kohli, who collaborated with Aamir on the 2006 hit romance Fanaa, claimed that when he watched Talaash at the premiere in 2012, he told Aamir and producers Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani (of Excel Entertainment) that the film would only do Rs 90 crore. While Aamir was surprised by Kohli's assessment, the producers appreciated his honest feedback.

A couple of weeks ago, Aamir Khan made a historic move when he announced that his latest hit film, RS Prasanna's coming-of-age sports comedy Sitaare Zameen Par, would skip a streaming release and premiere on his YouTube channel instead on a pay per view basis. However, this detour got flak because Aamir dropped the film on YouTube within six weeks of its theatrical release, after criticizing the short, standard eight-week gap between theatrical and OTT releases. Now, Aamir has addressed that criticism by claiming that with this new model, his only goal is to make Hindi cinema reach more people. He clarified that his loyalty is to cinemas primarily, instead of theatres, which are just a medium to help cinema reach the audience. Aamir argued cinema came first, and theatres came much later in order to serve that cinema. A cloth screen was put up to show cinema before brick-and mortar cinemas came about, Aamir added.

Aamir maintained he'd still support the theatrical experience as all the future films of his banner Aamir Khan



Productions will release in cinemas first, followed by a YouTube release on pay per view model. Aamir claimed while he may have gone the YouTube way, he still champions cinemas. He believes the collective cinema experience that a theatre offer is unparalleled and can't be replaced by any other model. He admitted that the theatrical experience can't be recreated at home while watching films on YouTube on television with one's family, but given the low theatre density and exorbitant ticket prices in cinemas today, the YouTube pay per view model seems to be the only feasible model to reach the Indian masses. Aamir lobbied for more theatres in the remotest parts of India, particularly in the districts where there's not even one theatre. However, he added that he wants those theatres to not just be physically accessible, but also be economical.

The audience can pay Rs 100 to watch old and new offerings of Aamir's production house on the recently launched YouTube channel Aamir Khan Talks that will also show old titles produced by his late father Tahir Hussain. "This is my private cinema chain. Think of it like Aamir Khan Productions has opened a new cinema chain, which is in everyone's house and in everyone's pocket," Aamir had told PTI. The actor-filmmaker said he was offered good money from streamers to release his film on their platform. But internet and UPI payments are increasing in India, even in rural pockets, and YouTube's accessibility could mean massive change in the way movies are distributed after their theatrical release. "I don't want those ₹100-125 crore from OTT channels. I want to earn ₹100 from my audience," Aamir added.

'Ranveer Allahabadia kuch bhi bol dete hai': Ashish Chanchalani on India's Got Latent row, says police came to him first as Samay Raina, Apoorva Mukhija couldn't be found

Samay Raina found himself at the centre of a major controversy after YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadia's inappropriate remark on India's Got Latent went viral, sparking widespread outrage and leading to multiple FIRs. In a recent interaction, Ashish Chanchalani, who was a panelist on the infamous episode, opened up about the aftermath of the controversy and revealed how he became the first person the police approached, as the other panelists were either out of town or could not be located.

Speaking to Faridoon Shahryar about that tumultuous period, Ashish recalled, "So many things happened, those two months were turmoil and it was like this for everyone who was on the show. At that time, Samay was in Vancouver, they were not able to find Apoorva and she was scared also, Ranveer (Ranveer Allahabadia) also vanished, so only I was left in Bandra and the police knew where I live, so they came to me first and I had to record my statements with the police." Ashish expressed his frustration while reflecting on how serious the matter was. "It might have been a clickbait, a reel for many people, but to be in front of the police and the government officials, it's very serious," he said. When asked why he was questioned despite not

making any controversial remarks, he explained, "People will say that you didn't do anything on the show, but when you sit in front of the police and every word that you say is converted into a transcript then you realise how careful you have to be. I didn't even say anything on the show. I just laughed in one part of the show, and even that was taken into account."

He further revealed that the authorities scrutinised every reaction, including his laughter, which he had to justify in detail. "I had to explain to them why I laughed because there were some inside jokes going on with Samay and also, I was laughing at Ranveer's stupidity, not at the comment that he made." Addressing Ranveer's controversial remark that triggered the outrage, Ashish said, "I know Ranveer from last seven years. I know that he says anything in fun and games." He added, "It was difficult for me, but it was very difficult for Samay, Apoorva and others." Following the controversy, all episodes of India's Got Latent were removed from YouTube. The Supreme Court, in a recent order, even banned Allahabadia from posting content on social media, before later revoking the ban.