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India's response to Trump's bombast must be strong

When politics or, worse, rhetoric eclipses prudence, the consequences are usually unpleasant. With his unconventional approach to politics and policy implementation, US President Donald Trump has embarked on a course that is sometimes charted more by bombast and impulse rather than facts and reason. His announcement of 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods a few days ago was a function of Trumpian peculiarity. And more peculiar was his announcement on Wednesday to double the tariff to 50 per cent, citing India's oil imports from Russia. Interestingly, the US tariff on Chinese imports was a lot less. While the initial 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports has come into effect on Thursday, the additional tariff will be levied three weeks later. These tariff announcements were rash because they did not take into account the multifarious nature of deep and growing ties between the world's two largest democracies. New Delhi's reaction has been measured. It was only when the Trump administration's statements and actions became intolerable that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) issued a strong statement, saying the targeting of India was "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable." It went on to say that India would take all actions necessary to protect its national interests. Recently, the MEA also exposed the hypocrisy of the US and the European Union over ties with Russia. The European Union in 2024 had a bilateral trade of Euro 67.5 billion in goods with Russia. In addition, it had trade in services estimated at Euro 17.2 billion in 2023. This is significantly more than India's total trade with Russia that year or subsequently," it said. Also, the US "continues to import from Russia uranium hexafluoride for its nuclear industry, palladium for its EV industry, fertilisers as well as chemicals."

Nehru Zoological Park to set up southern India's first in-house BSL-3 lab for animal disease research

GNS News Agency, August 9

Hyderabad: Nehru Zoological Park will soon have a Biosafety Level 3 (BSL3) lab, a high-security laboratory that could change the way diseases are detected, treated and prevented within its animal collection. The facility will also take up research on zoonotic diseases, which transmit between animals and humans, and vice versa. The lab will be developed by upgrading the zoo's existing mini-laboratory with state-of-art equipment and infrastructure, changing it into a sophisticated bio-safety research and diagnostic unit.

Discussions are underway with the Telangana Veterinary Biological and Research Institute, PV Narasimha Rao Telangana Veterinary University and other government research institutes for establishing the lab. According to officials, once set up, the city zoo will be the first of its kind in southern India to have such a facility in-house. "There is a proposal to establish a state-of-art BSL3 lab at NZP for disease diagnosis and studying zoonotic diseases," Telangana Zoo Parks Director, Dr. Sunil S Hiremath told 'Telangana Today'. Once operational, the lab will enable the zoo officials to conduct in-house, real-time testing for infectious diseases, post mortem diagnosis of deceased animals besides helping the zoo prepare long-term disease prevention strategies for its animal collection. Presently, the zoo is dependent on other research laboratories for diagnosis, which takes time.

"If the zoo has its own lab, it will be easy for quick disease diagnostics. This lab will enable the zoo to carry out spot post mortem to ascertain causes of the animal death. It will also aid in preparing strategies for preventing diseases among animals," a senior official said. Currently, the zoo collects fecal samples area wise to ascertain parasitic load in the sample for effective deworming and health care. The samples are sent to the BRI for diagnosis and confirmation. The zoo has a specialised animal hospital to treat sick and rescued animals. In addition, it has a quarantine facility for animals which are brought here from other zoos, to be kept and monitored before being releasing for display.

Uttam & Ponnamp inaugurate Southern Travels regional office



Hyderabad, Aug.9: "Tourism is one of the priority growth areas for Telangana," Irrigation, Food & Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Saturday and emphasised the Congress government's commitment to expanding the sector through strong partnerships with credible private operators. He was speaking after inaugurating the regional office of Southern Travels at Ayodhya Junction, Lakdikapul, along with Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar. Southern Travels Managing Director Krishna Mohan and other dignitaries were present.

The Minister explained that the Telangana Tourism Policy 2025-2030, which came into effect on March 17 this year, aims to position the State among the top five in domestic and international tourist arrivals, attract ₹15,000 crore in new investments over the next five years, create three lakh additional jobs, and raise tourism's contribution to at least 10% of the State GDP. He said the policy promotes spiritual, heritage, cultural, adventure, medical and wellness, and eco-tourism, with an emphasis on safe tourism, infrastructure development and the creation of 27 Special Tourism Areas covering waterfalls, Buddhist circuits, spiritual hubs, heritage sites, eco-tourism locations, wellness centres and craft villages. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government plans to develop iconic projects near Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, establish dry ports along the Regional Ring Road, promote river-based tourism on the Godavari and Krishna, create waterfront leisure hubs in urban areas, and encourage special attractions such as golf tourism, adventure activities and river festivals.

'Dimaag pe rakhe lagam': Center Fresh's New TVC with a funny take on Overthinking



Hyderabad: Center fresh, one of India's most loved chewing gum brands from the house of Perfetti Van Melle India, has launched a refreshing new campaign that taps into the consumer insight of overthinking. The idea is inspired by the Center fresh's "India Overthinking Report", developed in partnership with YouGov, which revealed that 81% of people spend over three hours a day caught up in overthinking. For a fun twist on the insight through its new advertisement "Dimaag pe rakhe lagam", the new campaign positions Center fresh as a refreshing pause in the day — a simple way to bring you back to the moment with a burst of freshness.

At the heart of the campaign is a simple but powerful insight: most people tend to overthink about small issues.

Center fresh brings to you two quirky new TVCs that blend humor with warmth, to spotlight everyday people overthinking about smallest of things. And when overthinking takes over, all it needs is a burst of freshness to quiet the mind, offering a fresh perspective and a moment of calm.

Speaking about the campaign, Gunjan Khetan, Director Marketing, Perfetti Van Melle India, said, "Center Fresh has always stood for freshness — and with the new campaign, the minty burst of freshness will help break the cycle of overthinking and bring moments of clarity. The TVC shines a light on those amusing moments of overthinking, inspired by insights from our recently released Center fresh India Overthinking Report. With the tagline 'Dimaag pe rakhe lagam', we're encouraging consumers to take a pause, stay present, and enjoy a fresh perspective when thoughts start to wander." At Perfetti Van Melle India, our brands have consistently stayed in step with culture—bringing joy, refreshment, and humour to every possible conceivable moment. With the 'Dimaag pe rakhe lagam' campaign, Center fresh steps into an interesting new space. The brand has presence in over 3 million outlets in India and that's why it aims to excite its consumers with new campaigns. The two TVCs directed by Nitesh Tiwari and conceptualised by our agency partner Ogilvy delivers, interesting look into overthinking spirals in our everyday lives," said Nikhil Sharma, Managing Director, Perfetti Van Melle India.

TUDA Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy Pledges Development for Vedurukuppam and Karvetinagaram Mandals



"August 9 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator""A delegation of coalition leaders from the Gangadhara Nellore constituency met with the newly appointed Chairman of the Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA) and TTD Board Member, Dollars Divakar Reddy, at his residence on Saturday. "The leaders extended a warm welcome and congratulations to Mr. Reddy on his appointment. They expressed their delight that a leader with a vision for development had been entrusted with the TUDA chairmanship. "During the meeting, the delegation specifi-

cally requested that TUDA funds be allocated for the development of Vedurukuppam and Karvetinagaram mandals, which are part of the Gangadhara Nellore constituency and fall within the TUDA jurisdiction. "In response, Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy assured the leaders that he would soon visit Vedurukuppam and Karvetinagaram to assess the needs and initiate the necessary infrastructure projects using TUDA funds. "The coalition leaders expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the chairman for his positive response and commitment to the development of their constituencies.

Ekam USA and SIRDS Empower Women with Tailoring Skills in Tirupati



"August 9 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator""The Social Integrated Rural Development Society (SIRDS), in collaboration with Ekam USA, successfully concluded a three-month tailoring training program for 25 women in Padmanagar, Renigunta Mandal. The program, aimed at fostering financial independence and self-reliance among women, culminated in a certificate distribution ceremony held today. "The event was attended by Ekam USA volunteers, Smt. Srilochana, Sri Vibhushan, and Chinari Divija. Smt. Srilochana, the chief guest, emphasized the importance of economic empowerment for women. "When a woman is financially stable, her entire family and community flourish," she stated. She also announced plans to expand the training to benefit more women in the coming

year. "Kumari Divija shared that Ekam USA's initiatives are funded by the contributions of its female members, who dedicate their earnings to support underprivileged women. She congratulated the participants on their achievement. "Marupuri Hemasekhar, General Secretary of SIRDS, highlighted that the training was a crucial step towards providing sustainable livelihood opportunities. He expressed his gratitude to Ekam USA for their support and affirmed that SIRDS would continue to work with them to train more women. "The ceremony concluded with Smt. Srilochana presenting certificates to the graduating women, who in turn honored her for her contributions. The event was also attended by SIRDS coordinator Tejovati, Haribabu, and the program's trainer, Manjula.

Congress pays tribute to freedom fighters on Quit India movement anniversary

Hyderabad, Aug.9 : On the 83rd anniversary of the Quit India movement, the Telangana Congress held a tribute on Saturday to honour those who took part in the movement and to acknowledge the sacrifices made by freedom fighters for the country's liberation.

At the party's headquarters, Gandhi Bhavan, TPCC chief Mahesh Kumar Goud hoisted the National Flag and offered sincere tributes to all the freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the nation's independence. Following this, a PowerPoint presentation on the Election Commission, shared recently by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, was shown.



TUDA Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy Celebrates Raksha Bandhan with Women



August 9 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator""Women from various parts of Tirupati district tied a rakhi on the wrist of Dollars Divakar Reddy, the Chairman of TUDA, TTD Board Member, and TDP State Executive Secretary. "They offered him sweets and wished that his kind and generous nature would be blessed by the graces of the gods.

Rakhi Purnima is a Symbol of Brother-Sister Bond: TUDA Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy



August 9 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator""TUDA Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy stated that Raksha Bandhan is a symbol of the bond, affection, and love between brothers and sisters. "The Raksha Bandhan celebrations were held with great fervor at the residence of Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy. His sisters, Shobharani and Tejovathi, tied rakhis on his wrist, offered him sweets, and gave him their blessings. "On this occasion, the TUDA Chairman extended his heartfelt greetings to all the sisters in the Tirupati district on behalf of their brothers. He emphasized that every brother should assure and support their sisters, letting them know that they are always there for them. "He added that a rakhi is not just a thread but an emotional symbol of the bond between a brother and sister.

Janagata Padayatra to launch again in Telangana after Aug 23: TPCC chief

Hyderabad, Aug.9 TPCC President and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud announced that the Janahita Padayatra will be commenced again in Telangana after August 23. During an informal discussion with reporters at Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday, he expressed that the Padayatra has received a positive reception from the public, significantly motivating the party's grassroots members. "The Padayatra is my initiative. However, there are individuals who have intentionally projected that it is under the leadership of AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan. She participated in the Padayatra, as did various Ministers, MLAs, and senior party leaders. Initially, we had planned a bus tour, but it was transformed into a padayatra. The way this Padayatra is being conducted reminds me of the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, which traveled from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. I am solely responsible for leading this Padayatra," stated Mahesh Kumar Goud.

He went on to mention that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, along with various ministers and other leaders, will participate in the forthcoming Padayatra, which aims to engage with the public across all regions. He expressed confidence that a BC candidate from the Congress party would eventually become the Chief Minister of Telangana. He responded to rumors about a rift between him and the Chief Minister, affirming their strong relationship. Mahesh Kumar Goud noted that a survey is currently underway to choose the party candidate for the Jubilee Hills by-election. The candidate will be selected promptly following the receipt of the notification. He also pointed out that BRS President K Chandrashekar Rao has deviated from the tradition of re-fraining from contesting elections after the death of a sitting MLA.

NTPC commits Rs. 80,000 crore investment in Telangana energy sector

Hyderabad, Aug.9 The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has announced its intention to increase investment in Telangana. NTPC Chairman and Managing Director Gurdeep Singh, along with his team, on Saturday visited Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at his residence in Jubilee Hills to share their significant investment plans for the state. Gurdeep Singh revealed that NTPC is prepared to invest about Rs. 80,000 crore in solar and wind energy projects in Telangana. The NTPC representatives described their commitment to investing in the state's renewable energy sector, highlighting the potential to generate 6,700 megawatts of power from a floating solar facility. During the meeting, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed the state government's readiness to support NTPC in all aspects of their investment in Telangana.

Bhadradri MLA Says Tribals Have a Special Place in the World for Preserving Their Culture and Traditions

CCI leaders urge statewide awareness campaigns on RERA Act

Hyderabad, Aug.9 : A high-level delegation from the Consumer Confederation of India (CCI) paid a courtesy call on N. Satyanarayana, Chairman of the Telangana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), to discuss the need for increased public awareness regarding the RERA Act across the state. The delegation included Sambarraju Chakrapani, National General Secretary of CCI; Mogilicherla Sudarshan, South Zone General Secretary of CCC (Consumer Coordination Committee); and the newly appointed Telangana State President of CCI, G. Rajani Reddy. During the meeting, the delegation emphasised the importance of conducting RERA awareness programmes at the district level to ensure that citizens are well-informed about their rights and responsibilities under the Act. They stressed that such initiatives would not only empower homebuyers and stakeholders in the real estate sector but also contribute to the more effective implementation of the Act throughout Telangana. In response, RERA Chairman N. Satyanarayana acknowledged the significance of public awareness in the regulatory framework and extended his warm congratulations to G. Rajani Reddy on her recent appointment as the Telangana State President of CCI. He appreciated the CCI's proactive approach in promoting transparency and accountability in the real estate sector. The meeting highlighted the growing collaboration between civil society organisations and regulatory bodies in ensuring citizen-centric governance in urban development and housing regulation.

'The August Fest' comes back at HITEX

Hyderabad, Aug.9 After a hiatus of seven years, The August Fest, India's largest celebration of startups, creators, dreamers, innovators, and disruptors, made a grand comeback at HITEX, Hyderabad. Originally focused on entrepreneurship, the festival now shifts its spotlight to technology — aligning with India's aspirations to become a \$30 trillion economy by 2047. The festival was inaugurated by Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary to Chief Minister & CEO – SPEED, Government of Telangana, alongside eminent personalities including J.A. Chowdary, Founding Director of Software Technology Parks of India; Ramana Gogula, Music Composer and Entrepreneur; and Kiran Maverick, Founder of August Fest. Speaking at the event, Jayesh Ranjan emphasised the importance of big ideas and technological disruption in helping India and Telangana achieve their long-term economic goals. He highlighted Telangana's Rising 2047 Vision Policy, aiming to elevate the state's GDP to \$1 trillion by 2035 and \$3 trillion by 2047, increasing its contribution to the national GDP from 5% to 10%. The event also saw the launch of the Telangana Culinary and Experiential Tourism Accelerator by TGIC, with representatives Meraj Faheem (CEO, TGIC) and Sohail Khan (Lead – Innovations, TGIC) joining the dignitaries.

The main objective of the district police is to bring the tribal people forward in all fields: SP Rohit Raju



“Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 9, Indian Chronicle: On the occasion of World Tribal Day, the Kothagudem Sub-Division Police organized the Tribal Day celebrations on a grand scale under the auspices of the District SP Rohit Raju. A huge rally was organized from the Kothagudem Railway Station premises to the Kothagudem Club. A large number of police officers, tribal leaders, people, and locals participated in this rally under the auspices of Kothagudem DSP Rahman. Later, a meeting was organized with the people who participated in this rally at the Kothagudem Club. District SP Rohit Raj participated as the chief guest in this meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the SP first extended his greetings to the people of the district on the occasion of World Tribal Day. He said that he was very happy to organize this program on the occasion of World Tribal Day. The SP said on this occasion that the main goal of the district police is to ensure that the tribal people living in Bhadradi district, which is known as the tribal district in the state of Telangana, are ahead in all fields. As part of this, the district police department will undertake many development programs on behalf of the government for the tribal people living in agency areas. He said that education, medical, and transport facilities will be provided to the tribal people in remote agency areas. He said that sports complexes will be set up for the youth living in agency areas, and training classes will also be organized to provide them with job opportunities. He said that two mobile hospitals have been constructed at a cost of about two crore rupees in the border villages of Chennapuram and Pusuguppa in Cherla mandal, a sports complex has been constructed at a cost of two crore rupees in Dummugudem, and a two-kilometer road from Pusuguppa to the Chhattisgarh border has been constructed at a cost of about three crore rupees. He said that libraries will be set up in every constituency center with the help of the police department to benefit the youth of the agency area. He said that more than 300 members of the banned Maoist party have surrendered during this year due to the rehabilitation policy of the Telangana government. He said that the district police department is constantly working for the welfare and development of the tribals in the agency areas of the district. Later, those from tribal families in the district who have shown excellence in jobs and studies were felicitated. A lunch program was organized for all those who participated in this meeting. Kothagudem DSP Rahman, SB Inspector Srinivas Kothagudem, Two Town Inspector Pratap, Chunchupalli CI Venkateshwarlu, Kothagudem One Town CI Karunakar, 3 Town CI Sivaprasad, and other police officers, staff, tribal leaders, and locals participated in this program.



schools and colleges have been established, and all kinds of basic facilities have been provided in every school. He said that in girls' schools, they are providing compound walls, and in Ashram schools, they are providing electricity, drinking water, and food according to the menu. He said that by introducing Workbook-1 and Workbook-2 to strengthen the foundation of tribal students' education, their education has improved by 92%. He noted that career guidance training is being provided to unemployed youth, degree, and postgraduate students, and as part of this, career guidance has been introduced in 141 schools. He said that steps will be taken to promote natural farming in all the mandals. He also mentioned that efforts have been made to encourage them to set up small-scale industries through the MSME unit to improve their livelihoods. He stated that the ITDA has collected information about the gods and goddesses of the Koya tribe and other gotras from old Koya leaders and children in a group from 120 villages, and the book will be released in September. He said that the ITDA is for the welfare of the tribals and that ITDA officials and staff are working for this. He requested that if the tribals have any problem, they should contact him directly. It is a Privilege to Have the Opportunity to Serve the Tribals: Sub-Collector Mrunal Shreshtha Sub-Collector Mrunal Shreshtha said that it is a great privilege to have the opportunity to serve the tribals and their children, who have pure hearts, in Bhadradi Kothagudem district. She said that if tribal families living in tribal villages have any problems regarding their lands, they should contact her directly and not meet any intermediaries. She promised that if the problems are brought to her notice in writing, she will do her part to solve them. She said that it is her duty to work for the development of the tribals. Later, the tribal museum's coffee table book was unveiled, and women from the Muthyalamma Joint Liability Group of Charla Sunnalagumpu unveiled new products made from millets, like Ippa Puvvu Barbie, Ippa Puvvu Chocolate, and Ippa Puvvu Laddus. The women who made the millet biscuits, which have become famous, were honored. Visam Jyothirmayi, Murali, Divya, Irba Jagapathi, Cheppale Kommireddy, Bathula Sanjana, Tellam Srithaja, Payam Ravivarma, Nagula Sriramulu, and Kondru Veeraswamy, who excelled in the fields of education, tribal service, sports, law, and culture, were felicitated and given mementos.



nizations reached Ambedkar Center in a lorry rally from ITDA, and there they paid homage to the statues of great tribal leaders and martyrs' memorials by garlanding them. Traditional dances like Kommu Nrityam, Dappu Vadyam, and Koya Nrityam were performed at the forefront of the rally. They then returned to the ITDA and inspected the stalls set up there along with the Collector, PO, and SP. It is a Pleasure to Have the Opportunity to Serve the Tribals: Collector Jitesh V. Patil District Collector Jitesh V. Patil said that he was happy to have the opportunity to participate in World Indigenous Peoples' Day and serve the tribals after coming to Bhadradi district. Before independence, when the British were plundering our forest wealth, indigenous leaders stopped them and protected the forests from being destroyed. As a result, today, tribals are able to collect forest produce and improve their livelihoods. He said that protecting our land, our forests, and our crops is our right as tribals under the law. He advised them to grow organic crops on their protected land to get higher profits with less investment and promised that he would do his part for the welfare of the tribals. He assured tribal farmers and unemployed youth that he would help them with any assistance they need. He specifically mentioned that farmers should cultivate fish ponds and fruit orchards to further increase their livelihoods. He asked the children to study with determination and achieve their goals, emphasizing that everyone has a responsibility to protect their language. He gave them the assurance that he is there for them if they need anything. He said he was happy that the tribals were celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day grandly. On this occasion, the Collector praised the women who are earning a living through the MSME unit and making millet biscuits. He said that when the prime minister praised them in his 'Mann Ki Baat' program, the district's name reached London and other continents. He also informed them that a special Aadhaar camp was set up at the district collectorate for remote tribals, and 8,000 people have registered for Aadhaar cards, which have been delivered to them. Special Measures for the Educational Development of Tribal Students: ITDA PO Rahul ITDA PO B. Rahul said that special measures have been taken through the ITDA for the educational development of tribal students. He urged them to protect their tribal culture, traditions, and language while showing special interest in education. He mentioned that Ashram, Gurukul, and EMR

Uttaraspalli Villagers Resolve to Shut Down Belt Shops

“SHADNAGAR, August 9”INDIAN CHRONICLE “The residents of Uttaraspalli village in Kondur mandal, Ranga Reddy district, have unanimously decided to close down belt shops in their village. The decision was made during a meeting held on Saturday at the panchayat office premises, attended by village leaders and residents. “The villagers announced that anyone found selling liquor through belt shops will face a fine of Rs. 10 lakh and 20 lashes as punishment. Additionally, they offered a reward of Rs. 10,000 for anyone who catches or provides information about illegal liquor sales. “Speaking on the occasion, village leaders highlighted that the easy availability of liquor in belt shops has led to local youth becoming addicted to alcohol. They noted that many individuals have fallen prey to illnesses and accidents due to excessive drinking. In light of these concerns and in accordance with the



community's aspirations, the decision to shut down

belt shops was taken. “The program saw active partici-

pation from the village youth and leaders.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University invites applications for Ph.D Admissions

Hyderabad, Aug.9 (NSS): Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) on Saturday announced admissions to its Ph.D. programmes for the academic year 2024–25 in ten disciplines: Commerce, English, Telugu, Economics, History, Public Administration, Sociology, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. Admissions will be based on a computer-based entrance test followed by an interview.

Jitendra Singh inaugurates Animal Stem Cell Biobank

Hyderabad, Aug.9 Union Minister of State for Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh on Saturday unveiled a set of breakthrough technologies developed by the National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB), Hyderabad, a premier institute under the Department of Biotechnology's Biotechnology Research Innovation Council (BRIC). On the occasion, the Union Minister also inaugurated the nation's first Animal Stem Cell Biobank, a state-of-the-art facility that will store and preserve high-quality stem cells from various animal species, and laid the foundation stone for a new hostel and residential block on the institute's campus to support its growing scientific community. Praising the NIAB research team, Minister said these field-ready and affordable innovations will play a crucial role in improving animal health, increasing livestock productivity, and securing farmers' livelihoods. He emphasised that such advances also strengthen India's ability to combat zoonotic diseases — illnesses that spread from animals to humans and account for nearly two-thirds of new and emerging diseases globally, including COVID-19.

NACS invites applications for online training

Hyderabad, Aug.9 : The National Academy of Cyber Security has invited online applications from all over Telangana State for its Government of India Certified Cyber Security & Ethical Hacking Courses Online Training. This is a fantastic chance for people with qualifications Inter, Diploma, Engineering, and PG to boost their skills in the exciting field of cyber security. Applicants can choose from various courses, including Cyber Security Officer, Diploma in Cyber Security & Ethical Hacking, PG Diploma in Cyber Security & Ethical Hacking, and Master Program in Cyber Security & Ethical Hacking.

Headlight fragments, CCTV footage: How cops traced vehicle that knocked down Fauja Singh



GNS News Agency, August 9

A Canada-based man, who was allegedly driving an SUV that knocked down Fauja Singh — regarded as the oldest person and the first centenarian marathoner — leading to his death, has been arrested and sent to judicial custody, police Wednesday said. “We took the case as a challenge and solved it within 30 hours,” SSP said, adding Dhillon was produced before a Jalandhar court, which remanded him to judicial custody for two weeks.

Dhillon was picked from his native Dasapur village in Kartarpur area of Jalandhar, the SSP said. “He had gone to Canada on a student visa but got a work permit there, which is valid till 2027. His three sisters and mother are in Canada while he came to Punjab on June 23–24. He bought the vehicle from a Kapurthala-based person. He holds a valid driver’s license,” the SSP said. Fauja Singh, 114, died Monday evening, hours after being struck by the speeding vehicle. The incident took place while was crossing the Jalandhar-Pathankot highway to reach an eatery, named after his deceased son, at his native Beas village in Jalandhar.

Festive offer Senior Superintendent of Police Harvinder Singh addresses a press conference regarding the death of Fauja Singh, in Jalandhar on Wednesday Senior Superintendent of Police Harvinder Singh addresses a press conference regarding the death of Fauja Singh, in Jalandhar on Wednesday. Virk said multiple teams were formed and CCTV camera footage from various locations was examined. “Nearly 35 vehicles were found to have crossed the accident site around the time (3.08 pm) the incident occurred. Eyewitnesses said that Fauja Singh was thrown nearly 6-7 feet into the air upon impact. They could not clearly identify the vehicle but suspected it could have been a Toyota Innova or Fortuner,” the SSP said, adding fragments of the vehicle’s broken headlight was recovered from the scene. “Our investigation led us to a Fortuner that matched the timeline. The fragments recovered from accident site matched the damage pattern on the SUV’s headlight,” the SSP added.

“In a CCTV footage, the registration number of the vehicle was readable, and we tracked that,” the SSP said, adding the vehicle’s registration number led police to Varinder Singh, a resident of Athouli village in Kapurthala. Upon questioning, Varinder revealed that he had sold the vehicle to Dhillon. Police then located Amritpal who, during interrogation, allegedly confessed to the hit-and-run. Dhillon was speeding when he hit Fauja Singh. He was going towards Jalandhar, but after the accident, he returned home by driving through villages. The accused also told police that he had got one of the tyres of the car changed on the day of the incident. “At that time, he was not aware of the identity of the man he had hit. He told us that he got scared (after the accident) and that is why he did not stop his vehicle there. It was his legal and moral responsibility to stop and take the victim to a hospital. He failed to do so,” SSP Virk added. To a question, the SSP said the accused did not have any criminal case registered against him. “It is possible that since Indian cars are left-hand drive while in Canada it is right-hand, one could not get a grip on the driving (conditions) here,” he said, adding the accused was alone in the vehicle at the time of the accident. A case has been registered against Dhillon under Sections 281 and 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the SSP said. Fauja Singh’s son Harvinder Singh told reporters in Jalandhar on Wednesday that Dhillon could have stopped his SUV and immediately rushed the marathoner to a hospital. “Maybe that could have saved his life. Had he not fled, we would not have taken any action against him (the erring driver),” he said. Born in 1911 into a family of farmers, Fauja’s tryst with marathons began when he was 89. Between 2000 and 2013, Fauja Singh completed nine full marathons. Even as tributes continue to pour in the marathoner, his 16-year-old granddaughter Japneet Kaur remembered the special bond she shared with her great-grandfather. “I used to teach Baba ji about several things. I used to read him from books and then ask him to repeat the same. He would sing for me, often making up funny songs on the spot,” said Japneet, a Class 11 student. She also recalled filming several of his playful moments. “He would tease me, and when I showed him the videos, he would laugh like a child,” she said. Japneet said Fauja Singh often demonstrated his pre-walk exercises in front of her. “He would say, ‘this is the exercise I do before every walk’. I once told him I’d take him to my school and ask the principal to appoint him as our PT teacher. He smiled and said, ‘I’d love to be one’.” On Monday, Japneet had returned home from school around 2 pm and met her grandfather. “He left for his walk at 3 pm, and then came the heartbreaking news,” she added. Her elder sister, Avneet Kaur, who is currently studying in Canada, recalled how she would video call her grandfather every other day. “His voice and energy never faded,” she said.

Free electricity for 1.67 crore families: Nitish Kumar’s latest big announcement ahead of Bihar election

GNS News Agency, August 9

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday announced that up to 125 units of electricity would be provided free of cost to domestic consumers, benefiting 1.67 crore households in the election-bound state. This comes weeks after the Bihar government announced its decision to nearly triple the social security pension from Rs 400 to Rs 1,100 per month for 1.1 crore beneficiaries. “We have been providing electricity to everyone at affordable rates from the beginning. Now, we have decided that from August 1, 2025, i.e., from the July bill onwards, all domestic consumers in the state will not have to pay for up to 125 units of electricity. This will benefit a total of 1.67 crore families in the state,” the CM said in a post on X. “We have also decided that over the next three years, we will install solar power plants on the rooftops of these domestic consumers, or nearby public spaces, with their consent. For extremely poor families under the Kutir Jyoti Yojana, the state government will bear the entire cost of installing solar power plants, and the government will also provide appropriate support to the rest. This means that domestic consumers will not have to pay for up to 125 units of electricity, and the state will also have an estimated 10,000 megawatts of solar energy available within the next three years,” Nitish Kumar’s post, which was in Hindi, said. Ever since Leader



of Opposition Tejashwi Prasad Yadav had announced a few months ago that his alliance would offer 200 units of power for free if it came to power after this year’s Assembly election, the NDA government had been working out its plans to offer free electricity. RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwari took a swipe at the CM over the free electricity announcement, calling it a “copycat” move. “It is not for nothing that our leader calls Nitish Kumar a copycat CM. It was Tejashwi ji who had first come up with ideas of raising social security pension and offering free power. It is time the NDA came up with some original ideas... Eventually, people will take a call on the NDA, which looks desperate to stay in power by offering sundry doles,” he said.

Village under scanner for ‘illegal’ apple trees also a symbol of prosperity the fruit brought

GNS News Agency, August 9

As one departs from the Shimla-Kotkhai road, bypassing Kotkhai town, to Chaithla, a narrow 16-km-long two-way tarmac leads us to the serene and picturesque Chaithla valley, where apple and pear trees flourish at an elevation of approximately 6,900 feet — bringing prosperity to locals. On the way to Chaithla, small hamlets of Pungrish, Koku and Kupad, each brimming with fruit-laden trees and beautiful houses nestled in apple orchards covered by protective nets, mesmerise visitors. Here, houses are custom-made, catering to the needs of the fruit trade, featuring a garage, a storeroom full of crates for transporting fruits and makeshift structures for workers and their families employed for the upkeep of orchards. Ironically, however, more than two dozen firearms were taken into possession from residents of this serene Chaithla village, home to around 34 households, under Section 164 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) to ensure peaceful execution of the Himachal Pradesh High Court’s order to clear forest land of encroached apple plantation, according to a senior police officer. Section 164 of the BNSS, effective from July 12 to 18, prohibits the carrying of arms in and around Chaithla and requires all licensed weapons to be deposited at the Kotkhai police station.

Chaithla is one of the first villages where the eviction drive was launched to clear encroached forest land by locals by felling apple trees, following the HC direction.

After the 1990s, people in Himachal truly began to see prosperity in cultivating apple orchards, and a handful of residents in Chaithla could not remain untouched by this wave,” said a member of Pandli Gram Panchayat, under which Chaithla falls. “A key contributing factor was the Timber Distribution (TD) Rights, which allowed locals residing in forested areas to use fallen trees, mainly deodar, for house construction and other purposes. Over time, people began exploiting these rights, clearing forest land adjacent to their holdings and planting apple trees. And, Chaithla made rapid strides forward due to its unique climatic conditions as it is located at the top of the Chaithla valley.” Apple trees in Chaithla are part of the first generation of plantations, and are now 35 to 40 years old, producing largely the Royal Delicious variety apples of the highest quality in large

quantities. “Some of the trees, now facing the axe, were planted on forest land and yield between 25 and 30 cartons per season, each weighing around 20 kg. The price of a single carton ranges from Rs 3,200 to Rs 4,800, especially for the Royal Delicious variety commonly grown in Chaithla,” said an orchard owner standing next to one of his ageing apple trees supported by wooden props embedded in the soil. “You can estimate that a fully grown tree, about 40 to 45 years old, produces apples worth around Rs 1.20 lakh annually. Some villagers enjoyed this income for years, but they have now lost more than 100 such trees in the eviction drive,” he said. Acknowledging the loss of his trees, he said, “As apple trees grow older, they need support to stand. Every season, the weight of fruits increases the strain on old and weaker branches. The older the tree, the more fruit it bears.” Explaining the reason behind the prosperity of apple growers in villages like Chaithla, Deepak Singha, a horticulturist and fruit grower in the Kotgarh region, said, “There are specific reasons why Chaithla witnessed success in recent decades. First, most of the apple trees here are of the first generation, planted in the 1910s or 1920s in Kotgarh and some parts of Kullu. As trees in those regions aged and ended their natural life, the first-generation trees attract more attention for their superior fruit quality.” “Second, the trees in Chaithla were grown from seedlings rather than rootstocks. Fruit trees grown from seedlings are more valuable and produce better quality apples than those grown from rootstocks, which have started arriving in the market in the past one decade,” he added. However, unlike others, who call for a delay in the eviction drive and urge the government to take over mature orchards instead of destroying them, Singha holds a stricter view: “I believe all illegal encroachments must be removed across the state. But I do have concerns for landless marginalised farmers cultivating apples in less than five bighas of forest land. The government should introduce a policy to support such farmers.” The ongoing eviction drive in Chaithla, where approximately 300 bighas of forest land, roughly 20 hectares, have been encroached upon, will continue till July 18. A forest officer says, “Chaithla is a far-flung village on the hilltop, making communication difficult, like many remote areas in Himachal. The road in this village was constructed in the 1990s.”

‘Won’t keep a single rupee’: Singer says earnings from music video with Radhika Yadav will go towards charity



GNS News Agency, August 9

A singer who appeared in a music video with tennis player Radhika Yadav, who was allegedly shot dead by her father at their home in Gurgaon, said Wednesday that he will not take a single rupee from the earnings generated by the video and instead use it to feed the hungry. The music video, Karwaan, came into the spotlight following Radhika Yadav’s murder on July 10. It had only 21,000 views on YouTube then, and as of Thursday morning, it has reached 1,29,000 views. Inamul Haq, who appeared along with Radhika Yadav, 25, in the video, put out a statement on Instagram, saying: “A lot of people say I’m gaining fame because of what happened to Radhika. That my song

Karwaan is trending, and I’ll earn from it. So let me say this clearly — I won’t keep a single rupee. Whatever I receive from Karwaan — whether monthly royalties from @iprsmusic or revenue from @songdewnetwork — will go towards helping the poor, feeding the hungry, supporting the helpless, and doing something meaningful.” “For as long as this song is played in the world, every payment, every month, for the rest of my life, will be donated,” he added. Haq, based in Dubai, said that using the money to help the poor and needy would bring peace to Radhika’s soul. He said that even if one sincere prayer comes from someone he has helped and brings peace to her soul, that is more than enough for him. “This isn’t about numbers. Not about fame. Just a small gesture in someone’s memory. I’ve always worked with honesty and respect. I never wanted attention this way. And I never will,” he said. “Rest in peace, Radhika. You’ll always be remembered,” he added in the message. Earlier, while speaking to The Indian Express from Dubai, Haq had said that he barely knew Radhika and they were “only professionally connected”. As he was targeted online with claims of “love jihad”, he said, “After watching the video, people assumed we were very close, but that’s simply not true... People are turning this into a Hindu-Muslim issue... there is no angle of ‘love jihad’.” According to the police, Radhika’s father Deepak Yadav confessed to the crime, stating that he was upset because people taunted him for living off his daughter’s earnings.

‘Never paid rent, occupied premises illegally’: High drama as Congress party’s Ludhiana office vacated on court orders



GNS News Agency, August 9

High drama prevailed at the Congress’s office near Clock Tower in the Old City area of Ludhiana on Wednesday when court bailiffs reached the premises, broke open locks, vacated the office of furniture and documents, and handed over the property’s possession to its owners, following a local court order. Property owner Vimmy Gogna had earlier moved the court, demanding possession of her property. Her husband Surinder Kumar alleged that the Congress “illegally” held to their property for years and “never paid rent”. On the other hand, Congress district president (Urban) Sanjay Talwar claimed that they were “completely unaware of any such dispute case ongoing in the court and never received any summons”. Talwar said that they were ready to pay if any rent was pending and would present their side before the court on Thursday. “The Congress has had its office on the premises for over 50-60 years, but even my predecessors did not receive any summons,” he said. Drama ensued minutes after bailiffs broke the locks and installed the new ones. Congress workers, led by Talwar, also reached there and allegedly removed the locks installed by bailiffs and put their own locks. Later, both sides submitted written applications to the local police station. In an order issued on July 11, Civil Judge Supinder Singh ordered bailiffs: “Whereas the under-mentioned property is in the occupancy of Ashwani Sharma, president of District Congress Committee (Rekhi building, near Clock Tower). You are hereby directed to put the said Vimmy Gogna in possession of the same, and hereby authorised to remove any person bound by the decree who may refuse to vacate the same.” The court further said: “Bailiff is directed to break open the lock of the premises in question and shall prepare the inventory of the items lying on the premises... If the stay order is produced by the other party, then warrants of possession should be returned back to this court.” Speaking with The Indian Express, Surinder Kumar said, “We have been owners of this property for nearly 25 years since we purchased it. The Congress had been illegally occupying

the premises and had never paid rent. The property is in shambles, and they do not even open the locks as the building is unsafe. Its roofs have caved in, and they have turned their so-called office into a dilapidated structure due to a lack of maintenance. Congress leaders do not even enter here for months as the rooms can collapse. We moved court around 8 years ago, demanding possession of our property. The court issued the possession orders in our favour after they never attended any hearing.” On Wednesday, the court bailiffs reached the premises to vacate it and broke open the locks as per the court order. They put new locks and gave us the keys. The entire procedure was videographed. As per the orders, we loaded one vehicle with the Congress’s belonging which were lying inside. We were loading the second vehicle when Congress workers reached there and started creating a nuisance. They broke open the locks put up by the court officials and installed their own locks, moving their stuff inside the office. We have submitted a written application to the local police station and will also be informing the court tomorrow (Thursday), demanding contempt of court proceedings against them,” Kumar added. Meanwhile, Talwar said, “We respect the court, but we never received any summons in this case. We were not even aware that any such case was ongoing. My predecessor Ashwani Sharma also never received any summons. Today, Congress workers reached the spot ahead of me, and they might have broken the locks, assuming that some anti-social elements were trying to grab our office space, as we were not shown any such court order. We have informed the local police that we did not mean to disrespect any court order, and we learned about it later. We are ready to pay the rent if pending, and will take this fight ahead legally. We will also move the court tomorrow and file an appeal that we should be heard first.” Division Number 1 police station SHO Inspector Rajinderpal Singh said, “The chaos during the implementation of the court order happened because the bailiffs did not inform us that they were here to take possession. Otherwise, we would have provided them the required support. Both sides have submitted applications. The Congress claimed that they did not mean to dishonour the court order and were unaware of the same, due to which they broke open the locks. The owners claimed that it was contempt of court. However, we will proceed as per the fresh court order.” Divya Goyal is a Principal Correspondent with The Indian Express, based in Punjab. Her interest lies in exploring both news and feature stories, with an effort to reflect human interest at the heart of each piece. She writes on gender issues, education, politics, Sikh diaspora, heritage, the Partition among other subjects. She

‘He was not required to be there...’: Month after bridge tragedy, Vadodara family rues loss of son whose body was never found

GNS News Agency, August 9

The morning of July 9 was meant to be a routine day for the family of Rameshsinh Padhiyar, a resident of Narsingpura village in Padra taluka of Vadodara district. Both his sons — Bhupendrasinh and Vikramsinh — were to leave for work in a magnetic component manufacturing company on the Luna-Ranu road shortly, and minor morning hustle ensued in their tinted hut, located on their one bigha farm in the far-end border that the village shares with the adjoining Sompura village. The 500-metre winding foot-long pathway through a cluster of farms, leading to their home, had been slippery and wet due to the incessant rains. The only way to cross the path would be their two-wheeler that both Bhupendrasinh and Vikramsinh were adept at riding. Since the two Padhiyar brothers and Chavda worked in the same company, Vikramsinh decided to make a quick dash to his cousin’s home in Devapura, across the Mahisagar river in Anand district, to allow Chavda to get a fresh pair of clothes to wear to work.

To get to Devapura, Vikramsinh took the usual route via the Mujpur-Gambhira bridge and was among the 25 people, who plunged into the swelling Mahisagar when a span of about 15 metres of the bridge collapsed along with a few vehicles. To get to Devapura, Vikramsinh took the usual route via the Mujpur-Gambhira bridge and was among the 25 people, who plunged into the swelling Mahisagar when a span of about 15 metres of the bridge collapsed along with a few vehicles. Vikramsinh and Chavda are among the 22 people who lost their lives in the tragedy.

Vikramsinh is the only one whose body has not been found yet. On August 6, almost a month later, Vikramsinh’s father Ramesh Padhiyar is seated on a worn-out charpai outside his hut, rolling beedis along with his octogenarian uncle, who lives in the same house. The mood in the family continues to be sombre as they attempt to come to terms with how their lives changed in an instant. Just three weeks before the July 9 tragedy, Vikramsinh and the entire family had celebrated the first birthday of his first-born, Nirali. Ramesh, 48, says: “We lost everything in a matter of minutes... It had only been about 15 minutes when Vikram had left with Rajesh to take him to Devapura so that he could change, and they could return and head to work. Otherwise, he didn’t need to travel through the bridge to get to work... I don’t know if we should call it fate or misfortune... Their commute to work did not require them to cross the Mujpur-Gambhira bridge ever.” Vikram’s older brother, Bhupendra (25), laments the moment his brothers decided to visit Devapura. He says: “We only ever travelled on the bridge when we had to visit our maternal aunt’s family... Vikram decided to take (Chavda) to Devapura just to get him a fresh pair of clothes as the night stay had been unplanned. I wish we had an extra pair of clothes to share with him... It would not have required Vikram and Rajesh to be on that bridge at that moment...” While Chavda’s body was found during the first 72 hours of the rescue operations, the bereaved family decided to perform the final rites of Vikram as well with the authorities being unable to retrieve the body even on the fifth day even as all other bodies — 20 at that time — had been found. Ramesh says: “I cannot deny that the administration tried its best to find the body. They called in experts and brought in underwater equipment and shared with me the images on the mobile phone to show that there was no body under the slab that had been stuck in the river.

Only 3 meetings in 2 years, no DPR yet, Centre tells MP Manish Tewari



GNS News Agency, August 9

The ambitious Chandigarh Metro project continues to languish in bureaucratic limbo with not even a Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared more than two years after the formation of the Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA), the Centre told MP Manish Tewari in response to a Parliament question. Responding to Tewari's unstarred question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu informed that UMTA, formed on April 28, 2023, has met only thrice so far—on July 18, 2023, December 13, 2023, and September 2, 2024.

However, the government clarified that as of now, no DPR for the Chandigarh Metro has been submitted to the Centre for consideration. The reply further stated that the responsibility for planning and developing urban transport infrastructure in Union Territories (UTs) lies with the respective UT administrations. The Centre, it said, can consider financial assistance for urban rail projects based on feasibility and availability of resources, but only once proposals are submitted by the concerned state or UT governments. Lashing out at the lack of progress, Tewari, the Congress MP from Chandigarh, called UMTA "utterly ineffective" and demanded clarity from the participating ad-

ministrations. "Despite now having been in existence for over two years, they have failed to even prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR)," he said in a statement.

He urged the Chandigarh administration and the governments of Punjab and Haryana to make their stand clear. "The time has come... to clearly say, do they want a Metro Project for the four cities of Chandigarh, Mohali, Panchkula and New Chandigarh or not. Procrastination, vacillation, obfuscation and dissimulation will no longer do," he said. "Bottom line—do you want Metro or not? Yes or No," Tewari said, calling for an unequivocal decision on a project first proposed over a decade ago but repeatedly stalled over cost-sharing and planning hurdles.

The long-delayed Chandigarh Metro project had received in-principle clearance from the governments of Punjab, Haryana and the Union Territory in 2023 following the submission of a fresh alignment report by RITES, the Rail India Technical and Economic Service. The revised plan, forming part of the Comprehensive Mobility Plan, proposed a 77-km Phase I network connecting Chandigarh, Mohali, New Chandigarh and Panchkula through three corridors. RITES had reworked earlier alignments to address concerns over heritage zones, commuter connectivity, and integration with inter-state transport hubs. The first corridor was to connect Paroul in New Chandigarh to Panchkula Sector 28 via PGI, Panjab University, the Chandigarh railway station and Housing Board Chowk, with a portion from PGI to Transport Chowk planned underground to protect heritage precincts. The second corridor was designed to run from Rock Garden/Sukhna Lake to ISBT Zirakpur, passing through Sector 17, Mohali ISBT and the Chandigarh international airport, with an underground segment from Sukhna to Sector 43. The third corridor was an entirely elevated stretch from Sector 39's Grain Market to Sector 26's Transport Chowk via Tribune Chowk. Together, the three lines aimed to decongest city roads and provide seamless intercity commuting within the Tricity.

Delhi HC seeks NIA response in Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid's plea challenging framing of terror funding, other charges against him

GNS News Agency, August 9

The Delhi High Court Thursday issued a notice to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), seeking its response to a petition filed by Independent Baramulla MP Abdul Rashid Sheikh alias Engineer Rashid challenging the framing of terror funding charges against him, including under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), among others. Meanwhile, a division bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Shalinder Kaur directed the transfer of two pleas by Rashid, wherein he is seeking modification of his custody parole that requires him to bear the travel and security costs for attending Parliament sessions.

Senior Advocate N Hariharan, representing Rashid, told the bench that he has no objections if the pleas are transferred to the bench comprising Justices C D Singh and Anup Bhambhani, which had imposed the condition. Justice Singh stands transferred and, upon directions from the Chief Justice, a new bench may be composed, including Justice Bhambhani. Justice Chaudhary, on July 29, had orally opined that the bench is inclined to transfer the plea to the earlier bench, reasoning that it cannot sit in appeal and rehear the same issue, in adherence to "judicial discipline". Rashid has filed the plea challenging the framing of charges with a delay of around three years (1,104 days), and a bench of the Delhi HC had earlier issued notice on the application seeking condonation of this delay on May 15. The NIA had earlier opposed the condonation of delay, submitting that delay beyond 90 days cannot be condoned. On the other hand, Rashid had argued that the limitation of 90 days is not sacrosanct, especially in matters of life and liberty.



Rashid, who defeated Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in the Baramulla seat by over 2 lakh votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail since 2019 in a case of alleged terror funding. Rashid was arrested in 2019 under the UAPA. According to the NIA, he used various public platforms to "propagate the ideology of separatism and secessionism", was closely associated with various terrorist organisations, and wanted to "legitimise" the United Jihad Council, a platform of anti-India militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir. On May 30, 2017, the NIA registered a case against Lashkar-e-Toiba founder Hafiz Saeed and other "secessionist and separatist" leaders who, according to the NIA, "received and collected" funds through hawala channels in "connivance with active militants of... terrorist organizations Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Dukhtaran-e-Millat, Lashkar-e-Toiba" to fund "terrorist activities" in Jammu and Kashmir. Rashid was booked as part of this case.

Mystery of African Mahogany G20 sapling at Delhi's Nehru Park solved — it's a substitute

GNS News Agency, August 9

The tree currently standing at the site marked for Nigeria in the G20 ceremonial plantation spot at Delhi's Nehru Park is a substitute sapling — and not the original African Mahogany — government sources told. According to sources, the original sapling, gifted by Nigeria during India's G20 presidency in 2023, failed after being planted. Following this, sources said, the Jamun, a common Indian species, was temporarily planted to maintain the aesthetics of the ceremonial zone. Sources added that a replacement African Mahogany sapling has now been sourced and is expected to arrive in the national capital shortly. It will be planted at the designated site, replacing the current one.

The clarification comes days after a post on social media platform X, by citizen-led handle DelhiTrees, flagged the tree labelled as African Mahogany as resembling a Jamun. The post received over 28 lakh views, prompting questions about how the mismatch occurred and whether due diligence was carried out. The Indian Express on July 31 had reported that officials in the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), which facilitated logistics for the plantation event, said that confirmation of plant species would require expert verification and that they had referred the matter to the Ministry of External Affairs, which had coordinated the drive. The ceremonial plantation, which took place in September 2023, involved planting live saplings received as gifts from G20 member countries and invited international organisations. As per government sources, some of these plants were sent to India by participating countries, while others were locally procured in mutual consultation. The selection of species was made with expert guidance to increase the survivability of saplings in Indian conditions. For plants brought from abroad, sources said, the required quarantine period was completed at the ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) in Pusa, Delhi, before plantation.

Following the Summit, the ambassadors and representatives from each country or organisation planted their respective saplings at a designated area in Nehru Park, which had been prepared in advance by horticulture officials. Sources said it was anticipated that some saplings might not survive after being planted in a new climate. To prepare for this, alternate saplings of local Indian varieties, such as mango or jamun, had been identified and kept ready. These were to be used in case of any losses, until the original species could be sourced again. According to the sources, the saplings presented by South Korea and



Government sources told The Indian Express that the tree is a substitute sapling. The clarification comes days after a post on social media platform X, by citizen-led handle DelhiTrees, flagged the tree labelled as African Mahogany as resembling a Jamun.

South Africa also did not survive post-plantation. This, they said, was within expected parameters. In such cases, embassies were approached to provide suitable replacements — either from their own country or procured locally with their approval. In the interim, substitute Indian tree saplings were planted to keep the plantation site visually consistent. The South Korean Embassy has already provided a replacement of the original species, and that tree was replanted before the onset of the monsoon, sources said. The South African High Commission is also in the process of securing its replacement sapling, which will be planted once available. The G20 ceremonial plantation featured 17 trees representing participating countries and organisations, selected for their symbolism and environmental significance. These included Olive trees from Turkey, Spain and Italy; Real Yellowwood from South Africa; Silver Tree from South Korea; Date Palm from Egypt and Saudi Arabia; Teak from Indonesia; Camphor Laurel from China; and the Sausage Tree and Red Frangipani from the African Union.

Mithi desilting scam: ED's second round of raids target 8 locations of BMC contractors in Mumbai



GNS News Agency, August 9

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is raiding eight locations in Mumbai related to the alleged Mithi river desilting scam on Thursday, targeting contractors accused of submitting false memoranda of understanding to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) about river silt dumping, sources in the agency told. The Indian Express. This is the second round of searches carried out by ED, which raided residences and offices of the 13 accused middlemen, BMC officers, and others at 15 places in Mumbai and Kerala in the first week of June. The agency had also raided the Bandra home of Bollywood actor Dino Morea.

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai police had booked 13 accused—five private contractors, three BMC officials, three middlemen, and two private company officials—in May for allegedly causing wrongful loss to the civic body worth more than Rs 65.54 crore in the al-

leged scam. Desilting work contracts worth nearly Rs 1,100 crore are under the scanner. Based on the EOW's predicate offence, ED registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) and began a money-laundering investigation. According to sources, the ED began investigating properties acquired by the accused during the scam period and the source of the money used to acquire the properties. The initial police inquiry revealed various financial irregularities related to contracts awarded between 2021-22 and 2022-23 for desilting the Mithi river. These irregularities relate to the transportation of sludge and its dumping on the ground. Later, EOW found that the contractors submitted nine fake memoranda of understanding. In the past few months, both the EOW and ED have questioned actor Dino Morea, who has not been named an accused in the case yet, and his brother. A close friend of Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray, Morea is reportedly close to Ketan Kadam, a key accused in the alleged scam and the alleged middleman of Vodar India Limited, with whom the actor has reportedly been acquainted for the past 25 years. EOW sources said there were five to seven monetary transactions worth Rs 14-18 lakh between Morea and Kadam. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the EOW is investigating these transactions. After the 2005 Mumbai floods, the authorities realised the issues with the Mithi river, an 18.64-km seasonal river, and the Government put in efforts to clean sludge from the riverbed to ensure uninterrupted water flow. It has been alleged that massive corruption occurred in the desilting work sanctioned and carried out by the BMC. The SIT has already arrested two middlemen—Ketan Kadam and Jay Joshi, owner of Virgo Specialities Private Limited.

2008 Malegaon blast case: NIA to decide on appeal after analysing verdict

GNS News Agency, August 9

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday said it would decide on whether to appeal the verdict in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, in which seven accused, including former BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur and Lieutenant Colonel Prasad Purohit, were acquitted, after analysing the detailed judgment copy. "So far, we have not received the judgment copy to find out the grounds on which the accused were acquitted. Once we peruse the order copy and analyse the reasons, we will decide on the next course of action," an NIA official said.

The NIA had taken over the investigation of the Malegaon blast, where six people were killed and several others were injured after a bomb placed inside a motorcycle exploded at Bhikhu Chowk on September 29, 2008, from the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) in 2011. Imtiaz Jaleel, a former All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen MLA from Maharashtra, said, "Like the state had earlier this month appealed the acquittal of the 12 accused in the train blasts in Mumbai promptly, they should similarly appeal against this acquittal as well." Earlier this month, the Maharashtra government had moved the Supreme Court against a Bombay High Court order acquitting 12 accused in the Mumbai train blasts case. After the NIA took over the probe, it dropped the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) sections that had been applied by the ATS, stating that the manner in which it was applied was "questionable". The NIA then



sought that Thakur be dropped as an accused, as there was no evidence against her and that it was inadmissible as MCOCA was dropped. Certain witness statements against her were also no longer admissible as evidence, the central agency pointed out. The special court, however, had said that prima facie there was enough evidence against her to put her on trial. The NIA had also said that of the 11 individuals arrested by the ATS, evidence existed against only seven, and the two wanted accused, Kalsangra and Sandeep Dange. Following this, the trial proceeded against seven people—Thakur, Purohit, Major (retired) Ramesh Upadhyay, Ajay Rahirkar, Sameer Kulkarni, Sudhakar Chaturvedi, and Sudhakar Dhardwivedi—based on the chargesheet filed by the NIA in May 2016.

Sardar Sarovar Dam gates opened as water level nears full reservoir mark

GNS News Agency, August 9

In a first for the current monsoon, the Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL) on Thursday opened five of the 30 radial gates of the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat's Narmada district, to allow for a safe rise to the Full Reservoir Level (FRL) of 138.68 metres. This comes as the dam level crossed 131 metres, with an increase of nearly four metres within 24 hours. On Wednesday morning, it had stood at 127.92 metres.

The decision to open the gates at 11 am was taken by the Flood Management Centre of the dam and conveyed by district authorities to talukas in Narmada district, placing riverbank villages on high alert. Officials told The Indian Express that while the dam's water level was rising at about seven centimetres per hour, "there is no reason to worry" as the release is being conducted in a controlled manner as per SSNNL protocol. With a steady inflow of about 4.01 lakh cusecs from the upstream Omkareshwar and Indirasagar dams in Madhya Pradesh, the Sardar Sarovar Dam began releasing 1.37 lakh cusecs downstream on Thursday. The SSNNL has also continued power generation through six functional units of the Riverbed Power House and one unit of the Canal Head Power House. The dam is currently at 74 percent of its capacity, holding a live storage of 3,500 million cubic metres (MCM).

The Narmada dam, considered Gujarat's lifeline, has



seen a rise of nearly seven metres over the last week. From 123.57 metres on July 24, it rose steadily to 127.92 metres on Wednesday. Officials said that Indirasagar dam had begun releasing water through 12 gates at a height of three metres, discharging 4.4 lakh cusecs, while Omkareshwar was releasing up to 4.75 lakh cusecs through 19 gates. As per standard protocol, the SSNNL began releasing a total of 1.37 lakh cusecs downstream to ensure a safe rise to FRL. Officials said the dam's Flood Control Centre is closely monitoring the situation, especially as catchment areas, including the Khandwa rain gauge station, continue to receive heavy rainfall.

‘Congress used the phrase ‘Hindu terror’ to serve its vote-bank politics’: Maharashtra Deputy CM Eknath Shinde after Malegaon verdict

Devendra Fadnavis Uddhav Thackeray bonhomie, Eknath Shinde accuses Uddhav, Uddhav Fadnavis 2019 betrayal, Maharashtra politics 2025, Shiv Sena BJP 2019 alliance, Shinde legislative council speech, Uddhav backstab claim, Fadnavis Uddhav closed-door meeting, Uddhav Thackeray Devendra Fadnavis reunion, Mumbai mayor 2017 Shiv Sena, Uddhav Modi award snub, Lata Mangeshkar award Modi, MNS Shiv Sena alliance, Raj Thackeray Uddhav ties, Maharashtra political drama, Fadnavis Uddhav Mahayuti offer, BJP Shiv Sena UBT rivalry, Shinde jibe at Uddhav, Uddhav Thackeray accusations, Maharashtra opposition motion Eknath Shinde accused the party of pushing a political narrative of "safran terror" and demanding a public apology for what he termed a "17-year-long injustice" against Hindus.

Following the acquittal of all accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast case by a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Congress. He accused the party of pushing a political narrative of "safran terror" and demanding a public apology for what he termed a "17-year-long injustice" against Hindus.

"The NIA court's verdict has finally cleared the stain

unfairly placed on the Hindu community. Those who labelled it as 'safran terrorism' must now apologise publicly," Shinde said, addressing reporters in Mumbai. "The slogan 'Garv se kaho hum Hindu hain (Say proudly that we are Hindus)' will now echo louder across the nation," he added.

Shinde referred specifically to Lieutenant Colonel (retd) Prasad Purohit and former BJP MP Pragya Singh Thakur (Sadhvi Pragya), who were acquitted along with five others after a prolonged legal battle. All seven had been accused in connection with the 2008 blasts in Malegaon, which killed six people and injured over 100.

"The accused were falsely implicated and subjected to immense physical and mental trauma. Despite this, Congress used the phrase 'Hindu terror' to serve its vote-bank politics," Shinde alleged. "This was not just a legal matter but an assault on the identity and patriotism of Hindus," he added. While the Shiv Sena leader hailed the verdict as "a long-overdue vindication," he criticised the Congress for what he described as "an orchestrated attempt to malign an entire community". He also asserted that his party had stood by the accused throughout the legal process, "because our fight was based on truth and justice."

DSP of UT Police alleges multiple fake profiles, case filed



GNS News Agency, August 9

chandigarh police, dsplt was alleged that the user of the fake profile was sending inappropriate and misleading messages, particularly to female users. The Cyber Crime Cell of Chandigarh Police has registered an FIR against an unknown person for allegedly creating multiple fake profiles of Chandigarh Police DSP Lakshay Panday.DSP A Venkatesh said that an FIR has been registered on the complaint of DSP Lakshay Panday.

In the complaint, the DSP has alleged misuse of his identity through multiple fake social media accounts that are impersonating his name, photographs, and even forged

his identity documents.The DSP was reported about the fake profiles by several students and members of the public that multiple fake accounts have been created in his name, and these accounts were misusing his photograph, professional details, and some of them have even obtained a verified blue tick, possibly through improper means or payment-based verification systems.The individuals operating these accounts have been found engaging in serious fraudulent and defamatory activities, including soliciting money from the public under false pretences such as claiming illness of a family member (eg mother) or sending gifts from abroad (eg UK).It was alleged that the user of the fake profile was sending inappropriate and misleading messages, particularly to female users, using his (DSP) identity, thereby causing embarrassment and harm to the DSP's professional reputation.Also, several students and individuals have been deceived into transferring money, thinking these accounts genuinely belonged to DSP Panday. The DSP alleged that some of these impersonators have created fake Aadhaar cards and forged police ID cards using his name and photograph to falsely legitimise their claims. "These acts are not only illegal but are also severely affecting my professional integrity and personal image, and causing harm to unsuspecting members of the public," said DSP Panday in his complaint, seeking legal action against the accused person.

These vehicles won't be allowed anymore on 2 Gurgaon highway stretches

GNS News Agency, August 9

The development comes close on the heels of at least two accidents on NH-48 this month.The development comes close on the heels of at least two accidents on NH-48 this month.The Gurgaon traffic police Wednesday evening announced restrictions on the movement of slow-moving vehicles on two major highways, effective immediately, to enhance road safety in high-speed corridors.

Two-wheelers, including motorcycles and scooters, three-wheelers, including e-rickshaws and E-carts, non-motorised vehicles, agricultural tractors, multi-axle hydraulic trailers, and quadricycles are prohibited from using the main lanes of the Delhi-Jaipur Highway or National Highway-48 stretch from the Sirhaul border to Kherki Daula, as well as the Dwarka Expressway from Kherki Daula to the Delhi border.Instead, drivers will have to use the designated service lanes to avoid potential accidents.To enforce compliance, the Gurgaon traffic police have warned that offenders will face action under the Motor Vehicles Act. They have also conducted awareness interactions at key junctions along these routes to educate the public.The development comes close on the heels of at least two accidents on NH-48 this month.On June 21, Delhi Police Head Constable Ashok Kumar, 39, was killed in an accident after the state transport bus he was travelling on overturned. The bus was on its way to Jaipur when the accident took place.According



to Birender Singh, Sub-Inspector, Bilaspur Police Station, the bus was ferrying several passengers when the driver applied brakes, and swerved to avoid a WagonR near Panchgaon Chowk.Earlier this month, a 24-year-old from Rajasthan lost his life in an accident on the same national highway.Sumit Meena and his four friends, all from Rajasthan, were travelling from Alwar to Delhi in a Hyundai i20 on June 11 when their vehicle met with an accident near Mannat Hotel at Sidhravali around 3.30 am.As per a complaint filed by Kamal Singh Meena, Sumit's father, at the Bilaspur Police Station, the vehicle was being driven by Sumit's friend when it collided with an unidentified large vehicle. Kamal, in his complaint, alleged that the friend was driving negligently.

SAD, Cong, BJP question raid; AAP says, 'vigilance has got enough proof'



GNS News Agency, August 9

Following the raid and the subsequent arrest at senior Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia's Amritsar residence, SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal said that the party firmly stands by Majithia.The former deputy CM also described the "action against him as a politically motivated move by the AAP government"."The SAD stands like a rock with Majithia. It is clear that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his government are deeply rattled by Majithia's bold and outspoken exposure of their corrupt and dark dealings," Badal said in a statement.

He accused the state government of misusing the state agencies to suppress the voices of Majithia and other Akali leaders who are raising public issues. "This is not the first time that the Akali leadership has faced politically motivated actions. Such incidents have been occurring repeatedly, and we have always faced them head-on and will continue to do so," he said.Calling the registration of false cases a criminal act, he warned officials that all such actions carried out during the AAP government's tenure would be subject to investigation at an appropriate time. "I appeal to police personnel to act within the framework of law, as only about a year and a half is left for this government," Badal added.

it."Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, meanwhile, said the state government is waging a war against drugs and no individual is above the law."Punjab is witnessing an unprecedented war against drugs. This government is fighting a battle against those who, for decades, profited from the drug trade under the Akali-BJP and Congress regimes. No matter how influential a person is, if they are involved in drug-related activities, they will face the law," Cheema said.Punjab Cabinet minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal added that the mobile phones, iPads and crucial documents seized were under investigation for potential links to a Rs 500-crore drug money scandal. "It is drug money. The VB has enough evidence to prove that. The AAP led government will not spare anyone. Action against big fish has just started."Dhaliwal stated, "Our government, led by CM Bhagwant Mann and guided by AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal, is determined to rid Punjab of drugs. This fight will continue until Punjab is completely drug-free."Dhaliwal also highlighted the deep-rooted issue of drug proliferation during the 10-year regime of the SAD-BJP alliance (2007–2017), describing it as a period when "sixth river of drugs" was said to flow in Punjab. He reminded the public of testimonies such as that of notorious drug smuggler Jagdish Bhola, who named Majithia in court in 2013. Despite these revelations, successive governments failed to take action, even as lives were devastated by the drug crisis.He further criticized the Congress government under former CM Captain Amarinder Singh, accusing it of inaction despite campaign promises. "Captain Amarinder Singh took an oath on the Gutka Sahib to eliminate drugs, but instead, the people of Punjab witnessed five years of a 'Chacha-Bhatija' (uncle-nephew) alliance between Captain Amarinder and Majithia," Dhaliwal remarked.

Robbers barge into businessman's house in Vasant Kunj, loot Rs 30 lakh: Police

GNS News Agency, August 9

Vasant Kunj, Vasant Kunj robbery, Vasant Kunj break in, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairsA case has been registered under sections 309 (4) (robbery), 331 (house trespass) and 351 (criminal intimidation) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at Vasant Kunj South police station, police said.On Monday night, four men allegedly barged into businessman Karan Chopra's Vasant Kunj house after he opened the door anticipating a delivery. Claiming that they had guns on them, they allegedly took him hostage and ended up robbing Rs 30 lakh in cash. When they left, Chopra immediately called the police, and a case was filed.Chopra, who allegedly owns several CNG pumps across Delhi-NCR, was at his farmhouse in Vasant Kunj when the incident happened."A person came to the door, claiming to be a delivery boy. As soon as the complainant (Chopra) opened the door, three more men barged inside and took him hostage. They told him that they have guns, asked him to stay calm and let them leave with the cash," a police officer said.

Developed by Pune's ARDE and Bharat Forge: Close Quarter Battle carbine ready for frontline ops



GNS News Agency, August 9

The lightweight, compact and effective weapon system has been designed by the Pune based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) which is a key facility of Armament and Combat Engineering Cluster of the DRDO.The lightweight, compact and effective weapon system has been designed by the Pune based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) which is a key facility of Armament and Combat Engineering Cluster of the DRDO. A FULLY indigenous and highly effective system for counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism (CI/CT) operations, the Close Quarter Battle (CQB) carbine developed by the Pune-based facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and manufactured by Pune-headquartered Bharat Forge as development partner — is ready to be inducted into the Indian Army for frontline operations.

The lightweight, compact and effective weapon system has been designed by the Pune based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) which is a key facility of Armament and Combat Engineering Cluster of the DRDO. A post on X by the DRDO read, "Significantly boosting Atma Nirbharta in critical technology, 5.56×45 mm CQB Carbine, designed and developed by Armament Research and Development Establishment and produced by Bharat Forge Ltd selected as L1 in Indian Army Request for Proposal (RFP)."An RFP was initiated by the

Ministry of Defence for procurement of more than 4.23 lakh units of the Close Quarter Battle carbines in November 2022. The CQB designed by ARDE and manufactured by the development partner, Bharat Forge Ltd was also fielded. Many other industries also fielded their respective products. After extensive performance evaluation and other quality and maintainability trials, five weapons were qualified. CQB carbine fielded by Bharat Forge Limited and designed by ARDE was the lowest bidder (L1), DRDO officials said.ARDE selected Bharat Forge Limited and Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) — which is a government of India enterprise — through a competitive bidding process for development contracts and established the technology with both industry partners in a span of two years. The CQB weapons manufactured by both the industry partners had qualified in the RFP trials and Bharat Forge manufactured system emerged as the lowest bidder.The 5.56×45 mm CQB carbine is a light weight, compact, effective weapon for use in close combat CI/CT operations. The design of CQB carbine is based on the high strength steel alloy based machined upper and lower bodies with bottom opening configuration. The CQB carbine is designed to fire in-service 5.56×45 mm ammunition.One of the unique features is it can fire both the NATO ammunition and INSAS ammunition. The weapon weighs less than 3.3kg with an effective range of 200 meters. ARDE-Bharat Forge CQB is a 100 percent Make in India weapon, DRDO officials said. The carbine uses forged steel technology and metal injection moulding technology which makes it highly reliable and accurate. The weapon is equipped with a 30 round magazine with a very high rate of fire.The weapon was tested in all terrains, operating conditions and in temperature ranges from subzero to scorching heat conditions. "It is a case of full synergy between the development agency and manufacturing agency which has led to the success of the product making the DRDO proud," an officer said.ARDE has already developed a 7.62×51 mm Assault Rifle named Ugram, which means ferocious. Ugram's design is based on the CQB Carbine platform and has an effective range of 500 meters. This weapon is being manufactured by Hyderabad based Dvipa Defence India Pvt Ltd as a development partner.

Four charred to death as Rohini building housing 3 plastic factories catches fire

GNS News Agency, August 9

At least four persons died and three others sustained injuries after a building housing three plastic item manufacturing units caught fire at Rithala in Delhi's Rohini Tuesday evening. The blaze was doused after a 15-hour operation on Wednesday.As per preliminary reports, the cause of the fire is suspected to be a short circuit.In a statement, the police said the owner of the building, Suresh Bansal, and his son Nitin Bansal, ran a factory on the ground and first floors. Nitin (31) is among the injured.Delhi Fire Service (DFS) officials, meanwhile, are also investigating the possibility of the fire being set off during a self-immolation bid by a factory worker. The deceased, all suspected to be migrant workers, are yet to be identified, police said.An officer attached to DFS said they received a call regarding the fire at 7.30 pm on Tuesday. "A blaze had started at a four-storey building near Rithala Metro Station in Rohini Sector 5. At least 16 fire tenders were pressed into service," the officer said.Around 1.30 am on Wednesday, three charred bodies were recovered from inside the premises, the police said. Later, one more charred body was retrieved."We will be conducting DNA tests if required. We are waiting for the family members of the victims to approach," a police officer said, adding that a case is being registered to probe the incident.



An official in the mortuary of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital said, "No family members of the deceased have approached us so far."Besides Nitin, the other two injured have been identified as Virender (25) and Rakesh (30), who has sustained 80% burns.The fire that started around 7 pm on Tuesday was eventually brought under control around 10 am on Wednesday.As thick plumes of smoke turned the sky grey when the fire started, some survivors leapt from the upper floors of the building to save themselves."I jumped from the first floor to save myself after the exit was blocked by the fire," said Geeta, one of those who worked in the building.Sitting near the charred building where she had been working for the last five years, she said, "When the fire started, we were inside. The owner, Bansal ji, began shouting for help. By the time we realised there was a

fire, it had already turned fatal. I started running, trying to find a way to leave the building. When I couldn't, I jumped from the first-floor balcony. Three others who were working with me ran upstairs, but I don't think they survived."Vinod Kumar, who was working on the ground floor when the fire started, said, "The fire broke out between 7 pm and 7.15 pm. We started running, raised an alarm to alert each other, and managed to escape within a minute or two... The owner's son and one of the workers were badly injured." He is the brother of Rakesh, who has sustained 80% burns.The police arrived at the scene around 7.20 pm, following which the fire brigade arrived.Vinod alleged that the number of rescue personnel who arrived was not sufficient. "We rushed the injured to BSA Hospital in an e-rickshaw," he said.Vinod and Rakesh, originally from Gonda in Uttar Pradesh, have been working at the factory for over five years.According to local residents, the 4-storey building produces carry bags on the ground and first floors, napkins on the second, and perfumes on the third floor — all inflammablesubstances. The terrace of the building is covered by tin sheds, which blocked a possible escape from the terrace.Approximately 6-7 workers were working on the ground floor, and another 4-5 on the first floor when the fire started. Those who worked on the second and third floors had already left as their shift had ended around 6 pm. Bharat Singh, an eyewitness, said, "I put up a ladder on the roof of my car to help 3-4 people out of the second-floor balcony."

'A double blow': Imports of dry fruits hit, traders in Khari Baoli tackle challenges

GNS News Agency, August 9

The traders in Khari Baoli in Old Delhi, one of India's oldest markets, stare at uncertain times. The imports of dry fruits from Iran have been hit amid escalating geopolitical conflict in West Asia. This latest blow comes at a time merchants are navigating a setback triggered by the closure of the Attari-Wagah border following tensions between India and Pakistan after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.Sharing his plight, Sudhir Jaggi, President of the Sarve Vyapar Mandal of the Khari Baoli market, said, "First, the Attari-Wagah border was shut down... so goods from Afghanistan completely stopped coming in. And on top of that, this issue with Iran has happened — it's like a double blow. We have no idea what's going to happen next. The Afghanistan route has been shut for a while, and there's still no clarity. "



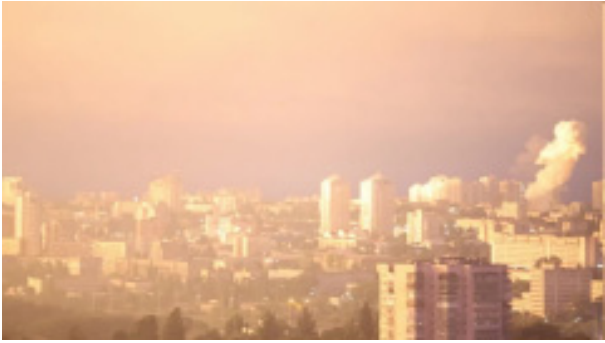
He added that the market is deprived of new foreign stock of dry fruits. "Abhi to maal nahi aa raha, jo maal India mein tha wahi bik raha hai. Iran se dry fruits container se maal aata hai sea se, seedhe ports aur phir humare godowns mein utarte hai, uske baad hum apni requirements ke hisaab se uska distribution karte hai. Abhi maal to kahi se bhi nahi aa raha (Right now, no new stock is coming in — only what's already in India is being sold. Dry fruits from Iran come by sea, directly to the ports, and then to our godowns. From there, we distribute it as per our requirements. At the moment, nothing is coming in from anywhere)," he said.The heightened tensions in West Asia have contributed to a surge in the prices of dry fruit imported from Iran. Jaggi highlighted that almond prices have increased by Rs 400-450 per kilo, whereas pistachio prices have increased by Rs 300 per kilo and now stand at over Rs 1,000 per kilo.

Hari Om, a trader, said, "Varieties of dates like Kimia, Mariam, Zahedi, Rabbi, and Irani, which are imported from Iran, are witnessing a surge in prices in the market." Kimia

"Even some medicinal herbs like Salam Mishri used in Ayurveda medicines are imported from Iran, and their price has also significantly increased," said Sunny Kashyap, a trader selling dry fruits and medicinal herbs.

Date boxes, which were earlier priced at Rs. 250 per kilo, are now being sold at Rs 400 per kilo, in the market."Even some medicinal herbs like Salam Mishri used in Ayurveda medicines are imported from Iran, and their price has also significantly increased," said Sunny Kashyap, a trader selling dry fruits and medicinal herbs.Commenting on the crisis, Chandni Chowk MP and BJP leader Praveen Khandelwal said, "The ongoing conflict between Iran and Israel has naturally had an impact on traders in the Khari Baoli market. Prices of dates, saffron, and other spices imported from Iran may likely rise due to disrupted supply chains and increased freight costs."He added that the government is taking all necessary steps to keep a check on the prices.Despite the setback, Rajan Bhargava, president, Khari Baoli Traders' Association, remains optimistic. "There was a slight impact on the goods that used to come directly from Iran, but there was already stock here. Now that the war is set to end, the supply will hopefully resume," he said.

Russian strikes pound Kyiv, 6-year-old boy listed among dead



KYIV, GNS News Agency, August 9- Russia launched waves of missile and drone attacks on Kyiv before dawn on Thursday, killing at least eight people including a six-year-old boy, and wounding 88 others, Ukrainian officials said.As the sun rose, emergency crews were putting out fires and cutting through concrete blocks in search for survivors across the capital. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russia launched more than 300 drones and eight missiles.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here."Today the world has once again seen Russia's response to our desire for peace with America and Europe. Therefore, peace without strength is impossible," Zelenskiy said on the Telegram app.Russia's Defence Ministry said it targeted and hit Ukrainian military airfields and ammunition depots as well as businesses linked to what it called Kyiv's military-industrial complex.Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said nine children were wounded, the largest number hurt in a single night in the city since Russia started its full-scale invasion almost three and a half years ago.Explosions rocked Kyiv from about midnight onwards and blazes lit up the night sky.

Trump tariffs face key test at US appeals court

GNS News Agency, August 9

A U.S. appeals court on Thursday will review President Donald Trump's power to impose tariffs, after a lower court said he exceeded his authority with sweeping levies on imported goods.The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, D.C., will consider the legality of "reciprocal" tariffs that Trump imposed on a broad range of U.S. trading partners in April, as well as tariffs imposed in February against China, Canada and Mexico.Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here.A panel of all of the court's active judges, eight appointed by Democratic presidents and three appointed by former Republican presidents, will hear arguments scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. ET in two cases brought by five small U.S. businesses and 12 Democratic-led U.S. states.

The arguments - one day before Trump plans to increase tariff rates on imported goods from nearly all U.S. trading partners - mark the first test before a U.S. appeals court of the scope of his tariff authority. The president has made tariffs a central instrument of his foreign policy, wielding them aggressively in his second term as leverage in trade negotiations and to push back against what he has called unfair practices.The states and businesses challenging the tariffs argued that they are not permissible under emergency presidential powers that Trump cited to justify them. They say the U.S. Constitution grants Congress, and not the president, authority over tariffs and other taxes.Trump claimed broad authority to set tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), a 1977 law historically used for sanctioning enemies or freezing their assets. Trump is the first president to use it to impose tariffs.

Trump has said the April tariffs were a response to persistent U.S. trade imbalances and declining U.S. manufacturing power.He said the tariffs against China, Canada and Mexico were appropriate because those countries were not doing enough to stop illegal fentanyl from crossing U.S. borders. The countries have denied that claim.On May 28, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of International Trade sided with the Democratic states and small businesses that challenged Trump. It said that the IEEPA, a law intended to

Macau democrat arrested for colluding with foreign forces, police say

HONG KONG, GNS News Agency, August 9A leading Macau democrat, Au Kam San, has been arrested for collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security, according to a police statement on Thursday in the China-ruled gambling hub.Au, 68, is one of Macau's most prominent democratic campaigners who served for nearly two decades as a lawmaker.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.Macau's police said in a statement that a suspect surnamed Au had been taken from his residence for investigation on Wednesday."The resident has allegedly been in contact with an anti-China organisation abroad since 2022, providing the group with large amounts of false and seditious information, for public exhibitions overseas and online," the statement said.The statement added Au had also sought to incite hatred against Beijing, disrupt a 2024 election for Macau's leader and to "provoke hostile actions by foreign countries against Macau".Au and his wife couldn't be immediately reached for comment.Through the years, Au had championed democratic reforms and helped foster civil society initiatives in the tiny enclave that returned from Portuguese to Chinese rule in 1999 -- two years after the neighbouring former British colony of Hong Kong was handed back to China.

Unlike Hong Kong which has seen big social movements challenge Chinese Communist Party rule in 2014 and 2019, the democratic opposition in the China-ruled former Portuguese colony has always existed on the fringes amid tight Chinese control.Macau's boom into one of the world's biggest gambling hubs, with gaming receipts exceeding Las Vegas, has also been tainted by public corruption cases involving senior officials such as Ao Man Long and Ho Chio Meng.

Through the years, Au had led protests and railed against opaque governance and rising social inequalities even as gambling revenues exploded in the city of around 680,000.Au was one of the founders of several pro-democracy groups including the New Macau Association, and had worked as a schoolteacher.This move in Macau comes as

Yurii Kravchuk, 62, stood wrapped in a blanket next to a damaged building, with a bandage around his head. He had heard the missile alert but did not get to a shelter in time, he told Reuters."I started waking up my wife and then there was an explosion. My daughter ended up in the hospital," he said.Russia, which denies targeting civilians, has stepped up air strikes on Ukrainian towns and cities far from the front line of the war in recent months.

At one location, rescuers spent more than three hours getting to a man trapped in rubble by cutting through the wall of a neighbouring apartment, the Ministry of Internal Affairs said. He talked to the emergency services during the operation and was pulled out alive, it added.A five-month-old baby was among the wounded, with five children hospitalized, the head of city military administration, Tymur Tkachenko, said on national television.

Schools and hospitals were among the buildings damaged across 27 locations in the city, officials said."The attack was extremely insidious and deliberately calculated to overload the air defence system," Zelenskiy wrote on X.He posted a video of burning ruins, saying people were still trapped under the rubble of one partially-ruined residential building as of the morning.The president said the attacks had killed a six-year-old and the boy's mother, but later edited the post to remove reference to the mother.U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that the United States would start imposing tariffs and other measures on Russia "10 days from today" if Moscow showed no progress toward ending the conflict."This is Putin's response to Trump's deadlines," Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said. "The world must respond with a tribunal and maximum pressure."The air force reported five direct missile hits and 21 drone hits in 12 locations.Ukrainian air defence units downed 288 drones and three cruise missiles, the air force added.



address "unusual and extraordinary" threats during national emergencies, did not authorize tariffs related to longstanding trade deficits.The Federal Circuit has allowed the tariffs to remain in place while it considers the administration's appeal. The timing of the court's decision is uncertain, and the losing side will likely appeal quickly to the U.S. Supreme Court.The case will have no impact on tariffs levied under more traditional legal authority, such as duties on steel and aluminum imports.Trump's on-again, off-again tariff threats have roiled financial markets and disrupted U.S. companies' ability to manage supply chains, production, staffing and prices.The president recently announced trade deals that set tariff rates on goods from the European Union and Japan, following smaller trade agreements with Britain, Indonesia and Vietnam. Trump's Department of Justice has argued that limiting the president's tariff authority could undermine ongoing trade negotiations, while other Trump officials have said that negotiations have continued with little change after the initial setback in court.

Trump has set an August 1 date for higher tariffs on countries that don't negotiate new trade deals.There are at least seven other lawsuits challenging Trump's invocation of IEEPA, including cases brought by other small businesses and California.A federal judge in Washington, D.C., ruled against Trump in one of those cases, and no judge has yet backed Trump's claim of unlimited emergency tariff authority.



"The resident has allegedly been in contact with an anti-China organisation abroad since 2022, providing the group with large amounts of false and seditious information, for public exhibitions overseas and online," the statement said.

authorities in neighbouring Hong Kong continue to crack-down on dissent under two sets of powerful national security laws that have been used to jail activists, shutter media outlets and civil society groups.

While Hong Kong's democrats had actively challenged Beijing's attempts to ratchet up control of the city since its return to Chinese rule, Macau's government has faced far less public scrutiny, with authorities able to enact a sweeping set of national security laws as early as 2009.This law was amended in 2023, to bring it in line with similar laws in Hong Kong and China and to bolster the prevention of foreign interference.

Trump's call broke deadlock in Thailand-Cambodia border crisis



BANGKOK, First came a push from the Malaysian premier, then China reached out, but it was only after U.S. President Donald Trump called Thailand's leader last week that Bangkok agreed to talks with Cambodia to end an escalating military conflict.A flurry of diplomatic efforts over a 20-hour window sealed Thailand's participation in ceasefire negotiations with Cambodia, hosted in Malaysia, halting the heaviest fighting between two Southeast Asian countries in over a decade.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Reuters interviewed four people on both sides of the border to piece together the most detailed account of how the truce was achieved, including previously unreported Thai conditions for joining the talks and the extent of Chinese involvement in the process.When Trump called Thai Acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai on Saturday, two days after fighting erupted along a 200-km-long stretch of the border, Bangkok had not responded to mediation offers from Malaysia and China, said a Thai government source with direct knowledge.

"We told him that we want bilateral talks first before declaring a ceasefire," the source said, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.Thailand had already made it clear that it favoured bilateral negotiation and initially did not want third-party mediation to resolve the conflict.On Sunday, a day after his initial call, Trump said that Thailand and Cambodia had agreed to meet to work out a ceasefire, and that Washington wouldn't move ahead with tariff negotiations with both until the conflict had ended.The source said as the Thai and Cambodian foreign ministries started talking, following Trump's call, Bangkok set out its terms: the meeting must be between the two prime ministers and at a neutral location."We proposed Malaysia because we want this to be a regional matter," the source said."The U.S. really pushed for the meeting," a second Thai source said, "We want a peaceful solution to

'If the baby could speak, she would scream': the risky measures to feed small babies in Gaza

GAZA/CAIRO/JERUSALEM, GNS News Agency, August 9In a makeshift tent on a Gazan beach, three-month-old Muntaha's grandmother grinds up chickpeas into the tiniest granules she can to form a paste to feed the infant, knowing it will cause her to cry in pain, in a desperate race to keep the baby from starving."If the baby could speak, she would scream at us, asking what we are putting into her stomach," her aunt, Abir Hamouda said.

Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here.Muntaha grimaced and squirmed as her grandmother fed her the paste with a syringe.Muntaha's family is one of many in Gaza facing dire choices to try to feed babies, especially those below the age of six months who cannot process solid food.

Infant formula is scarce after a plummet in aid access to Gaza. Many women cannot breastfeed due to malnourishment, while other babies are separated from their mothers due to displacement, injury or, in Muntaha's case, death.Her family says the baby's mother was hit by a bullet while pregnant, gave birth prematurely while unconscious in intensive care, and died a few weeks later. The director of the Shifa Hospital described such a case in a Facebook post on April 27, four days after Muntaha was born."I am terrified about the fate of the baby," said her grandmother, Nemah Hamouda. "We named her after her mother...hoping she can survive and live long, but we are so afraid, we hear children and adults die every day of hunger."Muntaha now weighs about 3.5 kilograms, her family said, barely more than half of what a full-term baby her age would normally weigh. She suffers stomach problems like vomiting and diarrhoea after feeding.

Health officials, aid workers and Gazan families told Reuters many families are feeding infants herbs and tea boiled in water, or grinding up bread or sesame. Humanitarian agencies also reported cases of parents boiling leaves in water, eating animal feed and grinding sand into flour.Feeding children solids too early can disrupt their nutrition, cause stomach problems, and risk choking, paediatric health experts say."It's a desperate move to compensate for the lack of food," said UNICEF spokesperson Salim Oweis. "When mothers can't breastfeed or provide proper infant formula they resort to grinding chickpeas, bread, rice, anything that they can get their hands on to feed their children... it is risking their health because these supplies are not made for infants to feed on."

Gaza's spiralling humanitarian crisis prompted the main world hunger monitoring body on Tuesday to say a worst-case scenario of famine is unfolding and immediate action is needed to avoid widespread death. Images of

the conflict so we had to show good faith and accept."A Thai government spokesperson did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters.Cambodia had accepted the initial Malaysian offer for talks but it was Thailand that did not move ahead until Trump's intervention, said Lim Menghour, a Cambodian government official working on foreign policy.Prime Minister Hun Manet's government also kept a channel open with China, which had shown interest in joining any peace talks between the neighbours, he said, reflecting Phnom Penh's close ties to Beijing.

"We exchanged regular communication," Lim Menghour said.On Monday, Phumtham and Hun Manet went to the Malaysian administrative capital of Putrajaya, where they were hosted by Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, also the current chair of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional bloc.

At the end of their talks, the two leaders stood on either side of Anwar, who read out a joint statement that said Thailand and Cambodia would enter into a ceasefire from midnight and continue dialogue.The rapid parleys echoed efforts to diffuse severe border clashes between Thailand and Cambodia in 2011, which took several months including mediation efforts by Indonesia, then chair of ASEAN.But those talks had not directly involved the U.S. and China.

The fragile ceasefire was holding as of Thursday, despite distrust on both sides, and neither military has scaled down troop deployment along the frontier.Thailand and Cambodia have, for decades, quarrelled over undemarcated parts of their 817 km (508 miles) land border, which was first mapped by France in 1907 when the latter was its colony.In recent months, tensions began building between the neighbours after the death of a Cambodian soldiers in a skirmish in May and escalated into both militaries bolstering border deployments, alongside a full-blown diplomatic crisis.After a second Thai soldier lost a limb last week to a landmine that Thailand alleged Cambodian troops had planted, Bangkok recalled its ambassador to Phnom Penh and expelled Cambodia's envoy. Cambodia has denied the charge.

Since the ceasefire deal, Hun Manet and Phumtham have been effusive in their praise for Trump, who had threatened 36% tariffs on goods from both countries coming to the U.S., their biggest export market.The Thai sources did not say whether tariff talks had been impacted by the border clashes. Lim Menghour said after the "positive talks, President Donald Trump also showed positive developments" regarding tariffs, without elaborating.Trump said tariff negotiations with both countries resumed after the ceasefire agreement. U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said on Wednesday that Washington has made trade deals with Cambodia and Thailand, but they are yet to be announced.



emaciated Palestinian children have shocked the world.Gazan health authorities have reported more and more people dying from hunger-related causes. The total so far stands at 154, among them 89 children, most of whom died in the last few weeks.With the international furore over Gaza's ordeal growing, Israel announced steps over the weekend to ease aid access. But the U.N. World Food Programme said on Tuesday it was still not getting the permissions it needed to deliver enough aid.

Israel and the U.S. accuse militant group Hamas of stealing aid - which the militants deny - and the U.N. of failing to prevent it. The U.N. says it has not seen evidence of Hamas diverting much aid. Hamas accuses Israel of causing starvation and using aid as a weapon, which the Israeli government denies.Humanitarian agencies say there is almost no infant formula left in Gaza. The cans available in the market cost over \$100 -- impossible to afford for families like Muntaha's, whose father has been jobless since the war closed his falafel business and displaced the family from their home.In the paediatric ward of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza city of Deir al-Balah, the infant formula supply is mostly depleted.One mother showed how she poured thick tahini sesame paste into a bottle and mixed it with water."I am using this instead of milk, to compensate her for milk, but she won't drink it," said Azhar Imad, 31, the mother of four-month-old Joury."I also make her fenugreek, anise, caraway, any kind of herbs (mixed with water)," she said, panicked as she described how instead of nourishing her child, these attempts were making her sick.

Medical staff at the hospital spoke of helplessness, watching on as children's health deteriorated with no way to safely feed them."Now, children are being fed either water or ground hard legumes, and this is harmful for children in Gaza," said doctor Khalil Dagran."If the hunger continues ... within three or four days, if the child doesn't get access to milk immediately, then they will die," he said.

Trump escalates trade war with Canada following Palestine stance

Trump is set to impose a 35% tariff on all Canadian goods not covered by the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement if the two countries do not reach an agreement by the deadline.The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here."Wow! Canada has just announced that it is backing statehood for Palestine. That will make it very hard for us to make a Trade Deal with them," Trump said on Truth Social.Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney previously said tariff negotiations with Washington had been constructive, but the talks may not conclude by the deadline. Talks between the two countries were at an intense phase, he added, but a deal that would remove all U.S. tariffs was unlikely.Canada is the second-largest U.S. trading partner after Mexico, and the largest buyer of U.S. exports. It bought \$349.4 billion of U.S. goods last year and exported \$412.7

billion to the U.S., according to U.S. Census Bureau data.Canada is also the top supplier of steel and aluminum to the United States, and faces tariffs on both metals as well as on vehicle exports.Last month, Carney's government scrapped a planned digital services tax targeting U.S. technology firms after Trump abruptly called off trade talks saying the tax was a "blatant attack."Carney followed France and Britain as he said on Wednesday that his country was planning to recognize the State of Palestine at a meeting of the United Nations in September.In announcing the decision, Carney spoke of the reality on the ground, including starvation in Gaza."Canada condemns the fact that the Israeli government has allowed a catastrophe to unfold in Gaza," he said.Israel and the United States, Israel's closest ally, both rejected Carney's comments.Carney's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Trump's post.

How a Pune engineer started growing this wonder mushroom, a perfect energy booster for wrestlers and fitness buffs



Every day, startup founder Shailesh Modak dresses like a scientist who deals with sensitive cultures that must not be contaminated. Only after he is gloved and masked does Modak cross the threshold to meet his new enterprise: a form of mushroom, called Cordyceps, which grows in the Himalayas and is believed to provide the kind of energy boost that the body demands after an intense workout. “An added advantage is that it is vegetarian,” says Modak, the founder of Pune-based 365Dfarms.

Modak is an IT engineer who transitioned into entrepreneurship, exploring various ventures including beekeeping, hydroponic farming of leafy vegetables, strawberries, and microgreens, as well as saffron agriculture. He considered growing Cordyceps as a solution to an issue he faced: he had empty shipping containers from his saffron business. Moreover, Cordyceps militaris has a market value of Rs 1 lakh per kg. “The shipping containers were of no use.

Woh pahle se aise pada rahata tha (These used to be just lying around). We needed to grow a different crop. We were searching for an idea when we came across Cordyceps mushrooms. This is a one-of-a-kind fungus. I trained from IISER Solan in growing this mushroom,” he says. Cordyceps seemed ideal for a farm business that was looking for quick production and high turnover. Unlike the button mushrooms that are ubiquitous in the markets and must be consumed within a couple of days, the Cordyceps can be dried and stocked for up to one-and-a-half years.

Though it has not been marketed well, especially in Maharashtra, Cordyceps is seeing a rise in awareness and market size. “The first clients that we are targeting is the wrestling hub near Warje. The wrestling community knows about this a lot because it is being used in Haryana. The Indian government has started promoting the Cordyceps because this is a natural dopamine,” says Modak. He has been researching, studying, failing and tweaking for 10 months. Only last month, he cracked it and got his first harvest. He is reaping his second harvest at present. “Our setup capacity is 12 to 14 kg per cycle, that is two-and-a-half months,” he says. At a modest estimate, Modak expects a revenue of Rs 12 lakh from the mushrooms per annum. “The main issue is marketing. The customer has to be made aware,” he says. The book Herbal Medicine: Biomolecular and Clinical Aspects, featured by the National Library of Medicine of the United States government, states, “Since 1964, only Cordyceps sinensis has been recorded officially as a herbal drug in Chinese pharmacopoeia.” Cordyceps sinensis, known as Dongchongxiacao (winter-worm summer-grass) in Chinese, is one of the most famous traditional Chinese medicines and medicinal mushrooms, the book says.

Can gut microbes help flush out forever chemicals in your body? Here is what experts have to say

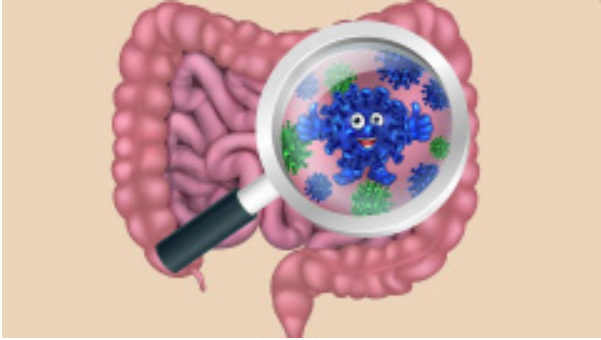
Scientists are beginning to explore the possibility that certain gut bacteria might help remove per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) - colloquially known as forever chemicals - a class of chemicals linked to cancer and other health harms from the body. A study published in Nature Microbiology found that certain gut bacteria were able to absorb PFAS, allowing mice with these microbes in their gut to excrete the chemicals through faeces. The findings add to growing interest in how gut microbes could influence the body’s handling of environmental pollutants.

What are PFAS and how do they accumulate in the body?

PFAS are a large class of synthetic chemicals often called “forever chemicals” due to their strong carbon-fluorine bonds, which make them highly resistant to degradation in the body or environment. “These chemicals have been used since the 1940s across everyday products, from non-stick cookware and food packaging to firefighting foams,” said Uday Nagesh Shivangi, senior consultant and clinical lead in medical gastroenterology at Narayana Health, Bengaluru. These chemicals primarily enter the body through ingestion of tainted water or contaminated food like fish, meat, or eggs. Inhalation of contaminated dust and skin contact with PFAS containing items are also possible, though less prominent. Once inside, PFAS bind to serum proteins like albumin and accumulate in organs like the liver and kidneys, as well as in the bile staying in the body for years, explained C. Kolandasamy, senior consultant, department of surgical gastroenterology, Rela Hospital, Chennai. The process of enterohepatic circulation in which substances excreted in bile re-enter the intestines and are reabsorbed into the bloodstream can further prolong their half-life in the body. “Some of these chemicals, like PFOS or PFOA, can remain with half-lives of over 8 years,” Dr. Shivangi explained.

Can gut bacteria help eliminate PFAS?

In the recent study, researchers observed that mice carrying specific types of gut bacteria were able to excrete PFAS more effectively through faeces, compared to germ-free mice. “This research gives us early clues about how the gut microbiome might influence PFAS elimination,” Dr. Kolandasamy said. “Certain bacteria appear to bind to PFAS molecules, preventing their absorption and helping excrete them via faeces.” The mechanism is not one of chemical breakdown, but rather of sequestration, where microbes like Lactobacillus or Bacteroides bind to PFAS in the gut and trap them for elimination. Some microbial metabolites, such as bile acid conjugates, may also play a role in promoting excretion. “Not all microbes do this,” cautioned Kayalavizhi Jayaraman, consultant gastroenterologist, Prashanth Hospitals, Chennai. “Animal studies have shown that strains like Bacteroides can accumulate PFAS within them. While it’s tempting to think of these microbes as filters, much more research is needed before recommending them for PFAS clearance.” The idea is scientifically compelling but still at a preclinical stage. “So far, the most convincing data comes



from lab and animal studies,” said Dr. Kolandasamy. “Mice with a diverse microbiome show reduced PFAS absorption compared to germ-free mice. However, no human clinical trials have conclusively demonstrated that boosting specific gut bacteria reduces PFAS levels.” Dr. Jayaraman added that human evidence is mostly observational at this point. “We do see associations between PFAS exposure and gut dysbiosis -- meaning changes in microbial diversity, but studies on actively changing the human microbiome to eliminate PFAS are still lacking.” While there is no specific diet proven to eliminate PFAS, certain dietary strategies could support the gut’s natural filtering functions. “Dietary fibre has shown potential,” said Dr. Kolandasamy. “Fiber can bind to bile acids, which also carry PFAS, promoting their excretion. Similarly, probiotics, particularly those containing Lactobacillus strains have shown reduced PFAS absorption in rodent models.” Pilot studies have also explored the use of bile acid sequestrants such as the cholesterol-lowering drug cholestyramine to lower serum PFAS levels. “These findings suggest gut-focused therapies could be promising in the future,” he added. Dr. Jayaraman emphasised a preventive approach. “While we don’t yet have a diet protocol to clear PFAS, eating wholesome foods, increasing fibre, and limiting processed and packaged food items may support overall gut health and resilience. It is also wise to avoid non-stick cookware and limit known PFAS exposures.” With growing awareness of chemical exposures in everyday life, researchers are exploring whether microbiome-based therapies such as designer probiotics or even faecal microbiota transplantation (FMT) could one day help detoxify environmental chemicals like PFAS. “There is already interest in engineering bacteria that express PFAS-binding proteins,” said Dr. Kolandasamy. “But these are still early-stage concepts, and there are regulatory and scientific challenges to overcome.” Dr. Jayaraman added “While it’s exciting to imagine a future where a probiotic capsule could help clear toxins, we need years, if not decades of research, to reach that point. Until then, the focus should remain on minimising exposure and supporting gut health naturally.” This is a field worth watching,” said Dr. Kolandasamy, “but for now, prevention and awareness remain the best defense.”

Is India firmly positioned to manage U.S. sanctions on Russian oil?

A day after having announced 25% tariffs on India alongside penalties, U.S. President Donald Trump sparked yet another outrage on Thursday (July 31, 2025) referring to Russia and India as “dead economies”. Mr. Trump’s remarks originate from an earlier observation that India has purchased a “vast majority” of its military equipment, alongside addressing its energy requirements through Russian imports. Notably, in March this year, the U.S. President had threatened Russia with sanctions on their oil imports should they not agree to “make a deal” to cease their actions in Ukraine. According to news agency Reuters, Russia is India’s top supplier, accounting for about 35% of its overall supplies. Top supplier According to an analysis from the Union Bank of India utilising sourced data, India’s oil imports from its present topmost supplier, Russia, declined 14.5% in February to 1.43 million barrels per day. This was its lowest since January 2023. Furthermore, Russia’s share in India’s imports too slid to about 30% in the mentioned period. This was much lower than the about 38% average observed in 2024. However, imports from other key West Asian suppliers like Saudi Arabia and UAE also declined sequentially. Should the Russian reversal continue, it would be a significant shift going ahead considering India spiked its purchase following their actions in Ukraine. India was guest to a favourable shift in the economics of this trade as Moscow was discounting the fuel to assert its attractiveness amidst sanctions from the West. Union Minister



Hardeep Singh Puri, back in September 2022, too had underlined that India would continue to buy oil from the sanctioned country. He held it as part of his “moral duty” to the nation. According to data from the International Energy Association (IEA), Russia supplied 0.1 mb/d crude oil in 2021 which spiked to 1.9 mb/d in 2024. In the years between, the same had peaked to 2 mb/d in 2023 from 0.9 mb/d in 2022. China was Russia’s top export destination in 2024 seeking 2.4 mb/d, followed by India, Turkey (0.8 mb/d) and European Union (0.4 mb/d), among others. India is the third largest oil importer in the world with consumption slated to continue the upward trajectory in the future. Mr. Puri had recently apprised the parliament that India is presently importing from 39 countries with another addition soon.

The Kerala paradox of 100% literacy but 42% graduate unemployment: A policy misalignment?



In a nation that celebrates rising literacy rates as markers of progress, Kerala has long stood out as a success story. With near-universal literacy, strong gender parity in education, and robust public schooling systems, it is often held as a model State in India’s educational discourse.

Yet, this very success reveals an uncomfortable truth. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23, Kerala reports a graduate unemployment rate of 42.3%, one of the highest in the country. For a State often viewed as educationally forward, this statistic raises troubling questions about the relationship between academic learning, employability, and the structural design of our higher education policy. At the heart of this paradox lies a systemic misalignment between what is taught and what the job market demands. Kerala’s educational model has traditionally emphasized formal academic pathways with relatively less focus on vocational or skill-based education. As per the Kerala State Planning Board’s Economic Review 2023, while higher education enrolment is robust, nearly 70% of courses offered are in general streams like humanities and pure sciences, with minimal alignment to industry-specific or emerging sectors. In contrast, countries like Germany, through their dual vocational education system, integrate apprenticeships with formal education, ensuring smooth school-to-work transitions. Kerala, and India more broadly, have yet to institutionalize such bridges. How other States are doing

The problem is not isolated to Kerala alone. Tamil Nadu, a southern peer, offers a revealing counter-example. While also boasting high literacy and educational attainment, Tamil Nadu has built a relatively stronger network of polytechnic institutions and vocational training centers. As per NSDC’s Tamil Nadu Skill Gap Report, the state’s industrial linkages and sector-focused skilling have helped reduce the incidence of graduate unemployment to 23.4% (NSDC, 2022). Karnataka, with its growing tech ecosystem, has similarly diversified its post-secondary offerings through public-private training collaborations that provide students with both soft and hard skills. These models highlight how the Southern states themselves offer diverse approaches, some more successful than others in linking education with employment. Turning to the North, the contrast is even more stark. States such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh continue to struggle with low school completion rates and poor employability indicators, even among graduates. In Bihar, the graduate unemployment rate stands at 33.9% (PLFS 2022-23), while only 25.7% of youth aged 18–23 are enrolled in any form of higher education (AISHE, 2021-22). The challenge

How the fair use clause is being applied to generative AI

Access to diverse kinds of materials is vital for building and fine-tuning Large Language Models (LLMs). These materials could include those that are available in the public domain (for example, works where the copyright has expired or works wherein copyright was relinquished by the authors) as well as those under copyright protection. Apart from gathering data through sources such as Common Crawl, AI firms often scan copies of books and other materials, and convert them into machine readable text from which data can be extracted for training purposes.

Whether the use of copyrighted materials for training purposes, without permission from the copyright holders, constitutes copyright infringement is a challenging legal question. Many litigations are happening across the globe around this issue. One of the key factors that could determine the outcome in these litigations is how the courts view whether the concerned activities fall within the scope of any of the exceptions to infringement under the relevant copyright laws. For litigations in the U.S., this means one of the primary determinants in the outcomes would be the application of the ‘fair use’ doctrine under U.S. copyright law. Two trial courts in the U.S. have recently delivered summary judgments on fair use, and they may be considered as the beginning of the adjudications on this complex issue. Factors considered The U.S. courts generally take into consideration four factors while assessing whether a use constitutes as ‘fair use’. They are — (i) purpose and character of the use, and the enquiry in this regard includes the extent to which the use can be considered ‘transformative’; (ii) nature of concerned copyrighted materials (there is a higher likelihood of the fair use clause being applicable when it is used for works that are factual in character as compared to works of fiction or fantasy); (iii) amount of the portion taken, and this includes both qualitative and quantitative analyses; and (iv) the effect of the use on the potential market of the plaintiff’s works or value of the plaintiff’s works. The questions of transformative use and the impact on the potential market/value of the plaintiffs works have historically played critical roles in determining the final outcomes in a fair use litigation. The Anthropic case Anthropic trained the LLMs underlying Claude, one of their popular GenAI agents, using books and other texts from a library compiled by them. The library consisted of works obtained from different sources, including books purchased and converted to digital form as well as books acquired from potentially illegal sources. The copyright infringement action was initiated by the plaintiffs as their works were used for training without any authorisation from them.

Based on the application of the four above factors to the specific facts of the case, specifically the highly transformative nature of the use of copyrighted materials, the court, in Andrea Bartz et al. versus Anthropic PBC, granted summary judgment in favour of Anthropic on the question of whether the training of the AI was fair use. The court was of the view that the print-to-digital format conversion of the books purchased by them constituted fair use. However, it denied the request of Anthropic that downloading and storing of the copies sourced from illegal sources must be treated as fair use. It remains to be seen how the infringement analysis and remedies would be handed down by the court with regard to those activities. The Meta judgment

In Richard Kadrey et al. versus Meta Platforms, Inc.,

here is dual: improving access to quality education while ensuring it meets market relevance.

The national policy backdrop complicates the situation further. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rightly emphasizes flexibility, multidisciplinary, and skill integration. Yet, its rollout on the ground remains uneven. In Kerala, the four-year undergraduate structure has not yet fully addressed the mismatch between degrees and employability. Moreover, as the NSDC (2022) points out, only 17% of Indian youth receive formal vocational training, compared to 52% in the United States and 75% in Germany. This gap reflects both cultural and institutional inertia against vocational pathways, often stigmatized as inferior to mainstream degrees. Another issue is the burgeoning private higher education sector, which has mushroomed without consistent quality benchmarks. As highlighted by the University Grants Commission (UGC), nearly 60% of private colleges in India operate without NAAC accreditation, raising concerns about faculty quality, infrastructure, and academic outcomes.

Kerala’s relatively strong public higher education system has shielded it from the worst of this crisis, but a lack of diversification persists even there. According to the Kerala Economic Review (2023), less than 10% of state-funded higher education institutions offer STEM-oriented vocational programs, despite rising job demand in such sectors. It is also worth noting that Kerala has one of the highest rates of outward migration of educated youth. The Centre for Development Studies reports that over 2.1 million Keralites live and work abroad, primarily in the Gulf, many of whom are graduates unable to find appropriate jobs at home. While remittances help the State’s economy, they also reflect a failure of domestic job creation and talent retention. A policy redirection is urgently needed. First, a fundamental overhaul of career counseling and academic advising is required at the secondary school level. As per the NCERT’s National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021, only 13% of students receive formal career guidance, leaving most to pursue degrees without understanding their employment prospects. Second, vocational education needs mainstreaming, not marginalization. Kerala can draw from Germany’s Berufsschule model or Singapore’s Institute of Technical Education, which blend classroom learning with real-world apprenticeships. Third, states must establish employment-linked metrics in evaluating higher education institutions.

Tamil Nadu’s recent move to integrate placement statistics into college rankings could be adapted across States. Fourth, central institutions such as the NSDC and the Ministry of Education must work in tandem to ensure that the skilling ecosystem is not divorced from formal higher education. Finally, a National Skills Registry that tracks student outcomes across degree programs, job sectors, and geographies can aid both planning and accountability. In sum, Kerala’s graduate unemployment is not merely a state-specific problem; it is a mirror reflecting the structural inefficiencies in India’s education-employment continuum. The nation must move beyond celebrating enrolment numbers and focus instead on educational utility. If we truly seek demographic dividends, we must stop equating degrees with success and start aligning education with capabilities, aspirations, and economic realities.

13 authors had sued Meta for downloading books from illegal sources and using them for training Llama, the LLM of Meta. Based on the specific facts and the specific averments made by the parties with regard to the four fair use factors, the court granted a summary judgment in favour of Meta. The court was of the view that use of the works for training purposes was highly transformative in character and in such instances the plaintiffs will have to bring in substantial evidence with regard to the fourth factor (whether such use has affected the plaintiff’s works market value) to avoid a summary judgment against them. But as the plaintiffs in the instant case couldn’t produce any meaningful evidence, the summary judgment was in favour of Meta with regard to the copying and use of the plaintiffs’ books as training data. However, the court will be continuing the proceedings against Meta with respect to the argument of the plaintiffs that Meta also unlawfully distributed their works during the torrenting process. Comparative analysis

One of the common dimensions of both the summary judgments is the recognition of the highly transformative character of the use of copyrighted works in training LLMs. This substantially influenced fair use analysis in both cases. There is an alignment on the third factor also, as both courts considered the extent of materials used reasonable in the broader context of training. But on the fourth factor, one can see substantial differences. Judge Chahabria, who authored the Meta summary judgment, rejected the argument of the plaintiffs that Meta harmed the potential licensing market of the plaintiffs, primarily on the ground that it is not a market that the plaintiff is legally entitled to monopolize. However, he also observed that in many cases, AI training on copyrighted materials may become illegal due to “market dilution”. According to him, the rapid generation of countless works that compete with the originals, even if those works aren’t themselves infringing, can result in market dilution through indirect substitution. But the inability of the plaintiffs in the case to produce sufficient empirical evidence in this regard illustrates the difficulty in proving this kind of harm.

On the other hand, Judge Alsup, who authored the judgment in the Anthropic case, categorically rejected the market dilution argument and observed that the “[a]uthors’ complaint is no different than it would be if they complained that training schoolchildren to write well would result in an explosion of competing works. This is not the kind of competitive or creative displacement that concerns the Copyright Act. The Act seeks to advance original works of authorship, not to protect authors against competition.” It is also worth highlighting here that the Judge in the Anthropic case considered downloading or building a permanent library of infringing works as a different use that warrants separate analysis and a different outcome. But the Meta summary judgement didn’t take that approach and focused just on the ultimate purpose, that is, the training of models.

Earlier this year, in Thomson Reuters versus Ross Intelligence, the court had reached the conclusion that the fair use exception was not applicable. However, this was not a GenAI case. The AI in question merely retrieved and shared judicial opinions based on queries from users. As this was not considered a transformative use by the court, and as the AI in question competed directly with the works of the plaintiff, the court concluded that the use of those materials without permission was not fair use.

Swiss glaciers show holes reminiscent of cheese

When cities have trees that don’t belong, the birds notice



Matthias Huss of the glacier monitoring group GLAMOS offered a glimpse of the Rhone Glacier, which feeds the eponymous river that flows through Switzerland and France to the Mediterranean, shared the observation with The Associated Press this month as he trekked up to the icy expanse for a first “maintenance mission” of the summer to monitor its health.The state of Switzerland’s glaciers came into stark and dramatic view of the international community last month when a mudslide from an Alpine mountain submerged the southwestern village of Blatten. The Birch Glacier on the mountain, which had been holding back a mass of rock near the peak, gave way — sending an avalanche into the valley village below.

Experts say geological shifts and, to a lesser extent global warming, played a role.Fortunately, the village had been largely evacuated beforehand, but Swiss authorities said a 64-year-old man had gone missing after the incident. Late Tuesday, regional Valais police said they had found and were examining human remains of a person who died in the mudslide.The Alps and Switzerland — home to the most glaciers in any European country by far — have seen them retreat for about 170 years, but with ups and downs over time until the 1980s, he said. Since then, the decline has been steady, with 2022 and 2023 the worst of all. Last year was a “bit better,” he said.“Now, this year also doesn’t look good, so we see we have a clear acceleration trend in the melting of glaciers,” said Huss, who also is a lecturer at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, ETHZ, said in beaming sunshine and with slushy ice dripping underfoot.The European Union’s Copernicus climate center said last month was the second-warmest May on record worldwide, although temperatures in Europe were below the running average for that month compared to the average from 1991 to 2020.Europe is not alone. In a report on Asia’s climate released Monday, the U.N.’s World Meteorological Organization said reduced winter snowfall and extreme summer heat last year “were punishing for glaciers” — with 23 out of 24 glaciers in the central Himalayas and the Tian Shan range suffering “mass loss” in 2024.A healthy glacier is considered “dynamic,” by generating new ice as snow falls on it at higher elevations while melting at lower altitudes: The losses in mass at lower levels are compensated by gains above.

As a warming climate pushes up the melting to higher altitudes, such flows will slow down or even stop altogether and the glacier will essentially become “an ice patch that is just lying there,” Huss said.“This is a situation we are seeing more and more often on our glaciers: That the ice is just

A picture of ‘Bharat Mata’ (Mother India) has triggered a confrontation between the Governor of Kerala and the State government. At a recent function, the Governor had placed a painting of Bharat Mata in the form of a female figure clad in a saffron colour sari with a spear in one hand and standing with a lion behind her against a backdrop of the map of India. The painting had been placed in a room where official functions are held at Raj Bhavan. A tall brass lamp was placed before this garlanded picture. Before any official function begins, the Governor bows before it, offers flowers and lights the lamp. The Chief Minister and other Ministers had raised objections on the grounds that this picture of Bharat Mata is not recognised by the Constitution or any law unlike the national anthem of India or the national flag or other national symbols. Therefore, the government seems to have taken a position that it will not participate in any official function organised by the Governor where this picture is displayed. The slogan, ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’, was the emotional cry of freedom fighters which would electrify the minds of people who were fighting for freedom from colonial rule. And, they used to raise this slogan at the highest pitch when they were subject to lathi blows. Thus, Bharat Mata is one that deeply resonated with the countless millions during India’s freedom struggle.

But the question in this issue in Kerala is not whether we should pay obeisance to this image of Bharat Mata. There is no doubt that Indians have a deep and emotional bond with the concept of Bharat Mata. However, in the Kerala episode, the issue is that the Governor has and uses a picture of what is claimed to be Bharat Mata at the venue where official functions organised by the government are held and offers floral tributes to it as a part of the official function. The conduct of the Governor

Since no picture of Bharat Mata in any form has been recognised by either the Constitution or any law or adopted like the national anthem, the national flag, the national emblem or even the national symbols, such a picture cannot be a part of any official function organised by the government. It may be noted here that this picture of Bharat Mata is used only by the Rashtraiya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party in their functions. The Governor, being the constitutional head of the state, is expected to conduct himself in accordance with the Constitution. The Governor cannot take independent decisions in the performance of his duties and functions but can act only in accordance with the advice of the elected government. So, if the government decides that such pictures should not be placed at the venue of official meetings organised by the government, the Governor is required to go by that decision. The personification of Bharat Mata as a mother figure was first done by renowned Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, in his late 19th century work, Anandamath. But the mother symbol he created was Banga Mata (Mother of Bengal) — and not Bharat Mata — and it became the powerful symbol of Bengali nationalism.But it was Abanindranath Tagore, the nephew of Rabindranath Tagore who first did a painting of the Banga Mata in 1905. This depiction, with four arms, in some ways resembled a Hindu goddess. It was sister Nivedita, a prominent disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who popularised this painting as Bharat Mata. Later, ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’ became the most powerful slogan of the national freedom movement but without any visual representation. The national movement never adopted any picture of the Bharat Mata.

not dynamic anymore,” he said. “It’s just resting there and melting down in place.”This lack of dynamic regeneration is the most likely process behind the emergence and persistence of holes, seemingly caused by water turbulence at the bottom of the glacier or air flows through the gaps that appear inside the blocks of ice, Huss said.“First the holes appear in the middle, and then they grow and grow, and suddenly the roof of these holes is starting to collapse,” he said. “Then these holes get visible from the surface. These holes weren’t known so well a few years ago, but now we are seeing them more often.”Such an affected glacier, he said, “is a Swiss cheese that is getting more holes everywhere, and these holes are collapsing — and it’s not good for the glacier.”Richard Alley, a geosciences professor and glaciologist at Penn State University, noted that glacier shrinkage has wide impacts on agriculture, fisheries, drinking water levels, and border tensions when it comes to cross-boundary rivers.“Biggest worries with mountain glaciers may be water issues — now, the shrinking glaciers are supporting summertime (often the dry season) flows that are anomalously higher than normal, but this will be replaced as glaciers disappear with anomalously low flows,” he said in an email.For Switzerland, another possible casualty is electricity: The Alpine country gets the vast majority of its power through hydroelectric plants driven from its lakes and rivers, and wide-scale glacier melt could jeopardize that.With a whirr of a spiral drill, Huss sends ice chips flying as he bores a hole into the glacier. Then with an assistant, he unfurls a jointed metal pole — similar to the basic glacier-monitoring technology that has existed for decades — and clicks it together to drive it deep down. This serves as a measuring stick for glacier depth.“We have a network of stakes that are drilled into the ice where we determine the melting of the mass loss of the glacier from year to year,” he said. “When the glacier will be melting, which is at the moment a speed of about 5 to 10 centimeters (2-4 inches) a day, this pole will re-emerge.”

Reaching up over his head — about 2.5 meters (8 feet) — he points out the height of a stake that had been drilled in in September, suggesting that an ice mass had shrunk by that much. In the super-hot year of 2022, nearly 10 meters of vertical ice were lost in a single year, he said.The planet is already running up against the target cap increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius in global temperatures set in the Paris Climate Accord of 2015. The concerns about global warming that led to that deal have lately been overshadowed by trade wars, conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and other geopolitical issues.

“If we manage to reduce or limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, we couldn’t save this glacier,” Huss said, acknowledging many Swiss glaciers are set to disappear in the future. As a person, Huss feels emotion. As a glaciologist, he is awestruck by the speed of change.“It’s always hard for me to see these glaciers melting, to even see them disappearing completely. Some of my monitoring sites I’ve been going to for 20 years have completely vanished in the last years,” he said. “It was very sad — if you just exchange this beautiful, shiny white with these brittle rocks that are lying around.”But on the other hand,” he added, “it’s also a very interesting time as a scientist to be witness to these very fast changes.”

A lofty conceptNo one has defined the concept of Bharat Mata as brilliantly as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He explains it in his inimitable style in his Discovery of India: "...sometimes as I reached a gathering a great roar of welcome would greet me: Bharat Mata ki Jai-Victory to Mother India. I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this Bharat Mata, whose victory they wanted..... The mountains and the rivers of India and the forest and the broad fields which gave us food were all dear to us, but what counted ultimately were the people of India, people like them and me who were spread out all over this vast land. Bharat Mata, Mother India, was essentially these millions of people and victory to her meant victory to these people."It is rather unfortunate that this lofty concept of Bharat Mata has triggered an unseemly controversy involving the Governor of Kerala. Obviously the picture of a female figure in a saffron sari, with a spear in hand and a lion behind her, cannot be a symbol of Bharat Mata. The display of such a picture is a throwback to 19th century nationalism which has no relevance in modern times. Indian nationalism under Gandhi had a strong secular core and was inclusive. Anthropomorphisation of a country is an outdated idea. The diversities, the divisions of Indian society, multiple religions, races, and different levels of cultural developments cannot be represented by such a figure.Governor versus the governmentThe country has witnessed too many unseemly fights between Governors and State governments. The Supreme Court of India has intervened in some cases and tried to set things right. Nevertheless the Governor-government spat continues to occur. The Constitution and the interpretations thereon by the Supreme Court have clearly laid down the limits of a Governor’s powers and functions. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had said emphatically in the Constituent Assembly, “the governor under the constitution has no functions which he can discharge by himself, no functions at all.”The Raj Bhavan Kerala controversy, deliberate or otherwise, was absolutely unnecessary. It sours the relationship between the Governor and the elected government. In official functions, symbols or logos or other visual representations used by private organisations cannot be used. Raj Bhavan does not merely consist of the private chambers of the Governor. There are rooms and halls where government functions are held such as a swearing-in ceremony as it is done in Rashtrapati Bhavan.The Governor is bound by the advice of the government on, for example, the placing of photographs, portraits in such places and also of performing various actions in an official function such as the lighting of the lamp as in protocol approved by the government. The Governor, for example, cannot order that the picture of Bharat Mata should be placed in all government offices.



Rapidly increasing heat due to climate change and the concomitant reduction in green cover have together significantly affected the lives and livelihoods of millions of people in tropical countries. These effects are more pronounced in rapidly urbanising cities. India’s cities are setting new temperature records with each passing year.In a study published recently in Ecological Applications, researchers Ravi Jambhekar, Dilip Naidu and Jagdish Krishnaswamy from the Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS), Bengaluru, studied the growing impact of heat and declining tree cover on birds. The study focused on the bird diversity of Bengaluru, a rapidly growing city. Nestled near the Western Ghats, the diverse habitats within the city include urban parks, open grasslands, wetlands, lakes, and forests. Together, they host more than 350 avian species.

Using publicly available bird records from the online community eBird, the researchers examined how growing urbanisation and the associated heat stress affected the occurrence and distribution of birds in the city. They also sourced satellite data to model the distribution of heat in the city and how that might correlate with green cover and bird occurrences.The team found that biodiversity is clustered more in areas with less heat, while heat islands had lower diversity. (Heat islands are parts of the city much warmer than their surroundings.)Older research has already found higher temperatures have multiple consequences for the natural history of birds. For example, controlled trials have found evidence that birds’ reproductive success drops because they lay eggs with thinner shells. “??Warming temperatures can also indirectly affect birds’ food resources, sometimes even more directly than they could affect the birds themselves,” Anusha Shankar, a physiological ecologist at the Tata institute of Fundamental Research, Hyderabad, said. “Imagine insects, plant nectar or other small prey that could be immediately susceptible to hot temperatures.”This said, the researchers found that not all species depend positively on green cover. Birds of open habitats like grasslands and savannahs as well as those that depend on human activity fared better when tree cover declined.This is contrary to the findings of studies in Dehradun, for one, where green cover was found to be a strong predictor of biodiversity. Monica Kaushik, an urban ecologist at Azim Premji University in Bengaluru, conducted long-term bird surveys across different green spaces in the city. The data revealed a positive relationship between bird species richness and the tree species richness. They also showed that larger green spaces hosted a greater diversity

By the time Nishant Narayanasamy joined Shashi Thutupalli’s lab at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in Bengaluru in 2019, the lab had a new guest: a yeast colony that had seemingly grown way beyond its expected size.The snowflake yeast had been shipped from William Ratcliff’s laboratory at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the U.S. Regular yeast — the same organism that makes bread fluffy — grows as a single cell. When it reaches a certain size, a small bump appears on its surface. The yeast’s nucleus, the compartment that holds its genetic material, splits into two and moves into this bud. The bud grows until it reaches a certain size and eventually falls off from the parent, making new yeast.

But a small change in snowflake yeast’s genetic composition prevents the bud from falling off. As newer buds appear, the yeast clusters in the shape of a snowflake. And as the cluster grows, in about 12 hours it becomes a large blob visible to the naked eye.Snowflake yeast has been used to study how lifeforms first became multicellular. Multicellular organisms can grow much larger than those with only one cell — as long as they can deal with the other effects of largeness. For example, how does the organism ensure all cells in its body receive the nutrients they need to grow?This is why most animals and plants evolved specific structures to transport nutrients. Blood and blood vessels do this job in humans.Snowflake yeast has no such facility, however, which means at some point the yeast should stop growing. Any further increase in size would cause at least some of its cells to not get enough nutrients. However, defying expectations, the snowflake yeast in Thutupalli’s lab continued to grow — that too at an exponential rate. How the yeast attained this feat was a mystery.Narayanasamy and Thutupalli, along with a team from Georgia Tech, reported in the June 2025 issue of Science Advances a mechanism by which the yeast can ensure all its cells receive nutrients, even when the cluster is big. In the absence of a biological structure, the yeast continue to grow thanks to a simple physical process, the authors wrote in their paper.The implications of the work go beyond how yeast grows. The work “offers support to an unconventional view of how major changes are initiated in evolution,” Vidyanand Nanjundiah, an evolutionary biologist and a professor at the Centre for Human Genetics, Bengaluru, said. He wasn’t associated with the study.The consensus among scientists is that multicellular organisms evolved billions of years ago when mutations accumulated over time. But Narayanasamy’s and Thutupalli’s work suggests physical and chemical phenomena alone could have helped unicellular organisms evolve into multicellular ones before genetic changes came into the picture.Flowing into multicellularityIn a lab, yeast can be grown in either a solution or a jelly-like substance that contains all its nutrients. Narayanasamy and Thutupalli observed that large clusters of snowflake yeast continue to grow exponentially only when kept in the solution. It seemed being surrounded by a fluid was crucial.

Diffusion is one way in which nutrients move through a fluid: the particles moving from a place in which their concentration is higher to one where it’s lower. But Narayanasamy and Thutupalli knew from previous work that diffusion alone couldn’t account for the size of large snowflake yeast clusters. Per their estimate, diffusion can explain the growth of these clusters only up to a size of about 50 micrometers (µm) whereas their clusters could grow up to 20x larger.So they hypothesised that a different process is at play: advection, when the fluid itself moves around, carrying with it the dissolved nutrients. To test their

of birds.So does this mean that the only way to protect urban biodiversity and reduce heat stress is to plant trees? The answer is complicated.

When trees aren’t the answerCities are being increasingly afforested as part of efforts to mitigate the effects of heat and for aesthetic purposes. But many cities in India have historically had alternative habitats, such as open ecosystems and wetlands, in addition to forests and tree cover.“Bengaluru originally had a mix of open habitats, agriculture, human made irrigation tanks and some gardens apart from the built areas,” Krishnaswamy, the senior author of the paper and dean of the School of Environment and Sustainability at IIHS, said. Considering the historical land-use type of a city is an important — but often ignored — aspect when planning restoration of habitat and biodiversity. Simplistic mitigation moves such as tree plantations, as the study finds, don’t always improve biodiversity. Unscientific tree plantations that aim to simply improve green cover often focus on non-native and invasive species of trees. Trees such as Jacaranda or Tabebuia, which often line the streets of cities with their beautiful blooms, are not native to the Indian subcontinent, are detrimental to local biodiversity, and affect human health. Currently, 77% of Bengaluru’s tree cover is exotic species.Habitats such as savannahs and wetlands are some of the worst hit in urban biodiversity planning. As cities expand, these non-forested habitats become refuges for species that depend on them. Further fragmentation and loss of such habitats finally lead to the local extirpation of species.“We need native grasses, herbs, shrubs and trees all to be part of ecological restoration and planting strategies in urban spaces,” Krishnaswamy said.“It’s high time that we plan the green cover for the entire city based on historical legacies,” Kaushik added. “Our first task should be to have biodiversity goals at the city levels, where separate land uses become important pieces to fulfil that goal.”Pune, a city nestled in the Western Ghats, once had forests with patches of savannah that still persist on hilltops around the city and are important for open habitat birds. “In the last couple of centuries, Pune district has been a mosaic of secondary regeneration forest, farmland, urban sprawl, and scrubland. An important question is: what is the most effective way to reclaim land back into photosynthetic capacity,” Gurudas Nulkar, director for the Center for Sustainable Development at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, asked. “And then the answer is not just afforestation but also reclaiming wetlands and grasslands.”Ecological and social inequity go hand in hand, especially in megacities like Bengaluru, with the poorest and most marginalised groups suffering the highest effects of increasing heat and decreasing tree cover. Biodiversity conservation in cities must reconcile with growing societal needs to reduce heat and heat-induced ailments that are increasing today.“Urban heat mitigation using green spaces may require a mix of approaches from small home gardens and individual trees in strategic locations to larger green spaces and constructed wetlands where grasses and wetland plants can also thrive,” Krishnaswamy said. Cities must also strive to improve access to available green spaces, which continue to decline as parks sometimes restrict access.

hypothesis, they added to the solution small particles coated with a dye that glows in blue light. Using a microscope to trace how these particles moved in the solution could help them visualise the flow of the fluid.They added a snowflake yeast cluster to this solution and let it grow. The duo observed that as the cluster expanded, the solution around it moved inside the cluster from its sides, then escaped from the top.A natural motor

Some unicellular organisms can make fluids flow using specialised hair- or whip-like structures called cilia or flagella. Snowflake yeast have neither. This is where physics becomes important.When snowflake yeast clusters grow, they consume glucose from the solution. This reduces the density of the solution in places where it surrounds the yeast. The cluster also produces alcohol and carbon dioxide, both of which are less dense than the solution, according to the paper.Fluids that are less dense — in this case the surrounding solution depleted of glucose and enriched with alcohol and carbon dioxide — rise above the rest of the solution. The team reasoned the flow it observed resulted from the same principle: as the cluster consumed the sugar and produced alcohol and carbon dioxide in the solution, the solution’s density dropped. This fraction spontaneously moved upward, generating the flow that kept the yeast cluster alive and growing.To confirm this, the duo checked whether flows were present around clusters that are dead and not actively consuming sugar. They didn’t find any, and concluded the living clusters metabolising sugar from the solution created the flows.Biologists have used snowflake yeast clusters as a model to study how multicellular organisms evolved from unicellular ones. Contrary to the view with genetic changes, the new study supports the idea that “multicellularity could originate and be maintained initially solely on the basis of physics and chemistry, with no genetic change,” Nanjundiah said. “A later genetic change could then have made multicellularity inevitable in the ... living beings of today,” he added.The next step for him is to check if such a change subsequently occurs in the yeast, rendering multicellularity a part of its biological blueprint.Gautam Menon, a professor of physics and biology at Ashoka University in Sonapat, called the study “fascinating” and the alternative model “temptingly attractive”.As researchers wait for more evidence of this model, the NCBS team is investigating whether these flows can account for other major evolutionary changes: the ability of organisms to move, for example.Experiments on snowflake yeast have something more to teach about the nature of biology, Thutupalli said. “There may not exist any organism in the wild that generates flows by such a mechanism,” he said, “but biology, in its much larger sense, can do it.”This is why, he added, our view of biology must extend beyond what we see in the natural world to novel phenomena that may occur only in the laboratory. “



The Russian ‘penalty’: India’s move to tank up on discounted oil from Russia faces fresh scrutiny from an unhappy Trump



With the West’s effort to target Russia’s oil revenue gathering steam over the past few weeks, India’s significant Russian oil imports are now being subjected to a more aggressive stance by Western powers. After threatening “biting” secondary tariffs of 100 per cent on buyers of Russian exports, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods from August 1, alongside an additional but unspecified “penalty” for India’s defence and oil imports from Russia.

Earlier in July, the European Union announced a sanctions package, widely seen as the most comprehensive effort yet by the EU to restrict Russia’s revenue stream, placing a ban on import of fuels into Europe if made from Russian oil in third countries like India. Among other steps, the EU also sanctioned Russian oil giant Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy that operates the 20-million-tonnes-per-anum Vadinar refinery in Gujarat. A few weeks ago, concerns surfaced in India over a controversial bill in the US that proposes 500 per cent tariffs on countries that continue to trade with Russia. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte had also said that countries like India, China, and Brazil could be hit very hard by secondary sanctions if they continued to do business with Russia. These renewed efforts from the West — exerting pressure on Russia’s top trade partners to cut down on imports from the country — are clearly targetted at forcing the Kremlin’s hand into ending the war in Ukraine. For Trump, who wants the three-year-old Russia-Ukraine war to end within days, this is an opportune time to pressurise countries like India and China over their Russian imports, given the sensitive trade negotiations that these countries are holding with the US.

How credible is Trump’s threat?

Over the past nearly three-and-a-half years, India has openly defended its higher purchases of Russian crude, arguing the primacy of its critical energy needs in its priority. India depends on imports to meet around 88 per cent of its crude oil needs, and Russia has been the mainstay of India’s oil imports for nearly three years now. Russian oil flows to India have so far remained robust, despite criticism from sections of the West and actions by US and its allies against Russia’s oil trade. India has, time and again, maintained that it is willing to buy oil from whoever offers a good price, as long as the oil is not under sanctions. Russia has been offering discounts on its oil, its crude is not technically under sanctions, and is only subject to a price cap imposed by the G7 countries and their allies. This time, however, with a mercurial Trump administration visibly frustrated with Moscow, the threat of an additional tariff component as a penalty for India’s booming trade with Russia could potentially lead to a dampening of Russian oil supplies to India.

“Everyone is scrambling to decode Trump’s latest tariff move, but let’s be clear, this is a tariff, not a sanction on India’s Russian oil purchases. The latest rhetoric from Trump also links to India’s defence imports from Russia, so the strategic landscape is shifting. This isn’t a sanctions regime yet, but the signalling is strong,” said an oil industry expert, adding that the extent of the impact would depend on how serious the Trump administration is in implementing the tariffs and the so-far unspecified so-called penalty. “It could just be a bargaining chip that he (Trump) wants to use for pressuring Russia and also extracting a more favourable trade deal from India. The next few days and weeks would be critical,” said the expert quoted above. Given how talks between Indian and US negotiators have proceeded so far, an interim trade deal still seems distant and is unlikely to be clinched before September, with October a possible outer deadline. There are indications a sixth round of talks between the two negotiating teams will take discussions forward in August.

It is no secret that Trump has been rather impulsive and unpredictable when it comes to trade tariffs; making

sweeping announcements, then pausing and negotiating. The hope in India’s oil sector is that the US won’t actually implement higher tariffs related to India’s oil imports from Russia, as it is in the interest of the US and the global economy that the international oil market remains well-supplied. If Russia is unable to supply its crude, global oil prices are bound to rise due to lower supply being available. However, the timing of Trump’s announcement — just a couple of days before US’s new tariffs are set to kick in — means the threat cannot be taken lightly. There are already indications that Indian refiners are stepping up efforts in diversifying their crude supply sources, and turning to other geographies to secure non-Russian oil supplies, according to industry sources. Refiners are understood to be awaiting word from the Indian government on the matter. If India indeed decides to cut down on its appetite for Russian crude under US pressure, industry insiders and experts expect New Delhi to negotiate a potential wind-down period for reducing supplies, as replacing nearly 2 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian oil supply overnight is impossible, and it would take at least three-four months to substantially cut down on Russian oil volumes. Moreover, while it is possible to move away from Russian oil, the same cannot be said for India’s imports of Russian-made military equipment as there are significant dependencies on that front. India’s trade negotiators surely have their task cut out. A three-year affair: India’s Russian oil imports

With much of the West shunning Russian crude following the country’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia began offering discounts on its oil to willing buyers. Indian refiners were quick to avail the opportunity, leading to Russia — earlier a peripheral supplier of oil to India — emerging as India’s biggest source of crude, displacing the traditional West Asian suppliers. While the discounts have varied over time, Russian oil flows to India so far have remained robust despite Western pressure and limited sanctions on Russia’s oil trading ecosystem. Booming oil trade with Russia has also catapulted the country to the list of India’s biggest trading partners. According to India’s official trade data, oil imports from Russia were at 87.4 million tonnes in the financial year 2024-25, accounting for almost 36 per cent of India’s total oil imports of 244 million tonnes. Prior to the war in Ukraine, Russia’s share in India’s oil import basket was less than 2 per cent. In 2024-25 The value of India’s oil imports from Russia was over \$50 billion, or 35 per cent of India’s total oil imports worth \$143 billion. India’s Russian oil imports rose to an 11-month high in June, further cementing Moscow’s continued dominance in New Delhi’s oil import basket. According to tanker data, Russian crude accounted for a massive 43.2 per cent of India’s total oil imports in June, outweighing the next three suppliers — West Asian majors Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates — put together. In June, India imported 2.08 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian crude, the highest since July 2024, and higher by 12.2 per cent on a month-on-month basis, according to vessel tracking data from global real-time data and analytics provider Kpler.

If the US indeed goes ahead with higher “penalty” tariffs, India would be pushed to cut down oil imports from Russia and increase imports from other suppliers, primarily its traditional West Asian suppliers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, which would push up the cost of imports by a few dollars a barrel. India is also expected to sustain its diversification efforts by tapping additional crude oil volumes from Africa, Latin America, and the US to optimise refinery economics, balance geopolitical exposure, and enhance energy security. Geopolitical shifts, freight economics, and refinery economics are expected to continue shaping India’s crude sourcing decisions and diversification strategy. According to Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, the massive market share of Russian crude in India’s oil imports doesn’t mean that India is dependent on Russia for oil, and other suppliers can quickly come in to replace Russian volumes if there is any major disruption. “I don’t feel any pressure in my mind. India has diversified the sources of supply... I’m not worried at all. If something happens, we’ll deal with it... there is sufficient supply available,” Puri had said at an event earlier in July. He added that India in recent years has expanded its crude sourcing slate from 27 countries to around 40 countries. So far, despite threats from the US, Indian refiners have adopted a wait-and-watch approach, while keeping Russian oil flows into India robust. All that might change, or not, depending on how far Trump is willing to go beyond his tariff rhetoric, and how India decides to respond, all in the midst of a tense trade deal negotiation.

US sanctions 8 Indian companies, 5 Indian nationals as part of latest action against Iran’s energy trade, shipping network

The US has sanctioned eight India-based companies and five Indian nationals as part of its latest Iran-related sanctions action targeting entities engaged in trade of Iranian oil, petroleum products, and petrochemicals, and those identified as part of a shipping empire controlled by Mohammad Hossein Shamkhani — the son of Ali Shamkhani, a top political advisor to the Supreme Leader of Iran.

In the latest action, announced Wednesday, the US Department of the State imposed sanctions on 20 entities and identified 10 vessels as blocked property. Simultaneously, the US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated more than 50 individuals and entities and identified more than 50 vessels that are part of Hossein Shamkhani’s network. Six Indian companies are part of the State Department as well as the OFAC sanctions lists. These include Chennai-based Kanchan Polymers and five Mumbai-based firms—Alchemical Solutions (also known as Chemform Trading), Ramniklal S Gosalia and Company, Jupiter Dye Chem, Global Industrial Chemicals, and Persistent Petrochem. According to the State Department, these companies imported Iranian-origin petrochemicals—which are under US sanctions—worth millions of dollars. Two more Indian companies—Mumbai-based Ensa Ship Management and Surat-based Shreeji Gems—feature in the OFAC’s designations over their alleged connections with Hossein Shamkhani’s network. The five Indian nationals designated by the OFAC are Mohamed Rafeek Habibullah, Jacob Kurian, Anil Kumar Panackal Narayanan Nair, Pankaj Nagjibhai Patel, and Elyas Jafer Tambe.

UAE-based Habibullah has been designated by the OFAC for “operating in the petroleum sector of the Iranian economy”, while Nigeria-based Kurian and India-based Nair were identified as shareholders and directors of Marshall

Islands-based Neo Shipping, which owned a vessel “managed on behalf of Hossein’s network”. According to the OFAC, UAE-based Patel “has served as an executive on several shipping companies in Hossein’s network”; Patel is a director of Shreeji Gems. Tambe—also based in the UAE—has been associated with several shipping companies “tied to Hossein’s network” and held various roles with multiple network companies. Meanwhile, the embassy of Iran in India hit out at the US, accusing it of weaponising the economy and using sanctions as tools to dictate its will on other countries. “The United States continues to weaponize the economy and use #sanctions as tools to dictate its will on independent nations such as Iran and India and impede their growth and development. These coercive discriminatory actions violate the principles of international law and national sovereignty, representing a modern form of economic imperialism. Resisting such policies is a stand for a more powerful emerging non Western-led multilateral world order and a stronger Global South,” the Iranian embassy in India said in a post on social media platform X. The United States continues to weaponize the economy and use #sanctions as tools to dictate its will on independent nations such as Iran and India and impede their growth and development. These coercive discriminatory actions violate the principles of international law and... The latest action by Washington is part of the Donald Trump administration’s “maximum pressure campaign” on Iran, which has now seen multiple rounds of sanctions against individuals and firms over the past few months. Indian nationals and firms have featured on the list of sanctioned individuals and entities in earlier rounds as well. For instance, a UAE-based Indian national Jugwinder Singh Brar and four of his firms were sanctioned by the US for operating “shadow fleet” vessels that transported “Iranian oil on behalf of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the Iranian military”,

32-year-old battled itchy skin, lesions, discoloured nails for 5 months: Why nobody could diagnose a fungal infection



A 32-year-old woman shuffled on her feet at the OPD of the National Skin Hospital, Panchkula. She had multiple itchy skin lesions over her abdomen, thighs and face as well as discoloured nails. When she developed them five months ago, she had tried several home remedies but there was no relief. She then used some topical creams containing steroids as advised by a local chemist. She got some respite from itching but her rash got redder and worse, her skin started thinning out and scarring.

“What she had was a routine fungal infection. You should not use steroid medication at all. While steroid creams can temporarily relieve inflammation and itching, they can actually worsen the infection by suppressing the immune system’s ability to fight the fungus. This can lead to the fungus spreading and the infection becoming more severe,” says Dr Vikas Sharma, HOD, Dermatology, National Skin Hospital. He gave routine antifungal medication and the patient’s skin cleared out in 45 days. “Fungi prefer a warm, moist environment. That’s why everybody becomes more infection-prone during the sweltering summer and monsoon. Increased sweating, combined with the inability to dry off quickly in the humid weather, creates ideal conditions for fungal growth,” he adds.

What are signs of fungal infection?

This infection can manifest in several ways — itchy skin, rashes, discoloured nails and cough. Dr Vikas Bhutani, director, Internal Medicine, Fortis Hospital, Mohali, says the most common fungal infection is athlete’s foot, where ringworm appears as a circular, red rash on the skin between toes. “We also see jock itch, which affects the groin area, and yeast infections, which occurs in moist areas like the

groin, underarms and under the breasts. Fungus doesn’t spare the nails, causing them to thicken and become discoloured,” he explains.

Why skin hygiene is most important during monsoon

Keeping the skin clean is the best form of prevention. “Taking a bath at least twice a day is beneficial. Change into dry clothes and shoes as soon as possible after getting wet. Dry your feet well, especially between the toes, after washing or being exposed to water. Wear loose cotton or linen clothes and avoid synthetic ones. Apply antifungal powders to areas prone to sweating and moisture. Use sunscreens while moving out. That’s because the rainy season washes away pollutants, making the ultraviolet rays more damaging for the skin,” explains Dr Bhutani. Dr Raghav Mehan, senior consultant, ENT, Paras Health, Panchkula, has seen a 20 per cent increase in fungal ear infections, nasal allergies and upper respiratory tract infections this monsoon. “Damp indoor environment and poor ventilation can aggravate ENT and respiratory issues like nasal blockage, throat irritation and fungal infections,” says Dr Mehan. Avoid spreading the infection from one family member to another via sharing of clothes, bed sheets and towels. Dr Sharma recommends a diet high in probiotics like yoghurt, fermented foods and kefir that can boost the immune system, while avoiding highly processed and sugary foods.

Can fungal infection pose a threat to lungs?

Dr Sonal, consultant, Pulmonary Medicine, Livasa Hospital, Mohali, says sustained humidity creates a favourable environment for fungal growth in the respiratory system. “While fungal pneumonia is less commonly diagnosed, conditions like pulmonary aspergillosis, which causes wheezing as an allergic reaction, become more prevalent, especially in individuals with weakened immunity or underlying lung diseases. It’s important to watch for persistent cough, fever, or difficulty breathing, blood in sputum and seek timely medical attention to prevent complications.”

When do you see a doctor?

If you notice any sign of fungal infection, seeking medical advice and proper adherence to the entire anti-fungal treatment regimen is crucial because of the rising incidence of resistance among fungal organisms to conventional antifungal drugs.

Do pumpkin seeds have more protein than meat in a single serving? A nutritionist explains the truth



In the conversation on equivalence between plant and animal protein sources, the commonest comparison happens to be the one between pumpkin seeds and meat and poultry. That’s because pumpkin seeds come closest to animal protein in terms of containing nine essential amino acids, although two of them are low. However, one cannot be a replacement for the other. What then do you need to do to achieve daily protein targets? “The problem with existing nutrition conversations online today is that they are just half-truths and do not look at the totality. Pumpkin seeds are no doubt a good source of plant protein but they are not the standalone complete protein superfood that meat, fish and poultry are,” says Dr Seema Gulati, Head, Nutrition Research Group Center for Nutrition and Metabolic Research (C-NET).

A 100-gm serving of pumpkin seeds is nutrient-rich, offering a good source of calories, healthy fats, protein and fibre. They also provide various vitamins and minerals. This 100 gm serving gives between 30 gm and 32 gm of protein. The total calories are 550 calories, about 120 calories from the protein it contains and 430 calories from the fat. “Pumpkin seeds are calorie-dense and have good fat, which is a mix of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. But they are fat nevertheless and you cannot have too much of them,” says Dr Gulati. Pumpkin seeds also have some carbohydrates. In comparison, 100 gm of meat or cooked

chicken provides 31 gm of protein. But the total calorie count comes to 250 calories, 120 calories from protein. It contains negligible carbohydrates and is low fat. There is a lot of difference in the PDCAAS, or Protein Digestibility-Corrected Amino Acid Score. This method considers both the amino acid composition of a protein and how well it is digested and absorbed by the body. The score for meat is 0.92 and that of pumpkin seeds is 0.7. “But the most important difference is in the portion size you eat for adequate amounts of protein. A 100 gm serving of any animal protein would not be more than a palmful and can be had in a single sitting. But 100 gm of pumpkin seeds cannot be had at one go because that would amount to three fistfuls. So no way can you say that 100 gm of pumpkin seeds can be had in a single meal as 100 gm of animal protein,” says Dr Gulati.

What happens when you have too many pumpkin seeds at one go?

Since they are rich in fibre, according to Dr Gulati, your digestive system may not be able to adjust to a sudden overload. “Increase your intake gradually to avoid gas and bloating,” she says. Besides, she warns, pumpkin seeds contain phytic acid, also known as phytate, which can bind to minerals like iron, zinc, calcium and magnesium, making them less available for the body to absorb. “That’s why you need to soak or sprout pumpkin seeds and reduce phytic acid content. That’s why having only pumpkin seeds in a single meal as concentrated plant protein is not recommended,” says Dr Gulati. Besides, not all pumpkin seeds provide the same benefits. “If you buy processed or packaged pumpkin seeds, you’re likely to get an extra dose of sodium and preservatives. And a packet of pumpkin seeds costs quite a bit,” she adds.

How to include pumpkin seeds with other plant proteins and ensure a better protein intake?

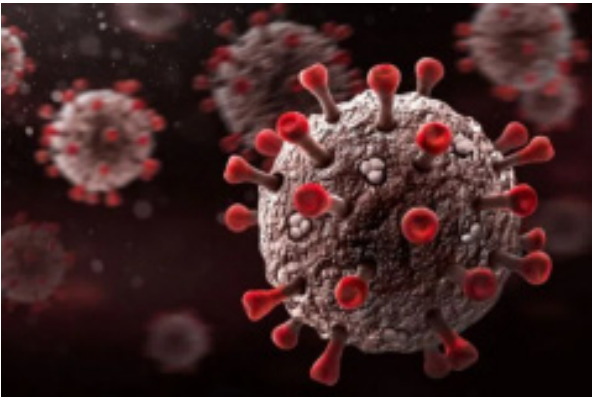
Dr Gulati recommends sprinkling pumpkin seeds over salads and using them with edamame beans, soyabean and peas. “These plant-based proteins complement pumpkin seeds, helping to create a more complete profile for muscle building and overall health,” she says.

COVID and flu may trigger relapse in breast cancer survivors: Study

New Delhi: Common respiratory infections, including Covid-19 and influenza, can awaken dormant breast cancer cells that have spread to the lungs, setting the stage for new metastatic tumours, according to a new study. The findings published in the journal Nature, based on mouse studies as well as meta-analysis of human patients, support research showing increases in death and metastatic lung disease among cancer survivors infected with SARS-CoV-2 — the virus that causes Covid. “Our findings indicate that individuals with a history of cancer may benefit from taking precautions against respiratory viruses, such as vaccination when available, and discussing any concerns with their health care providers,” said Julio Aguirre-Ghisso, from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, US.

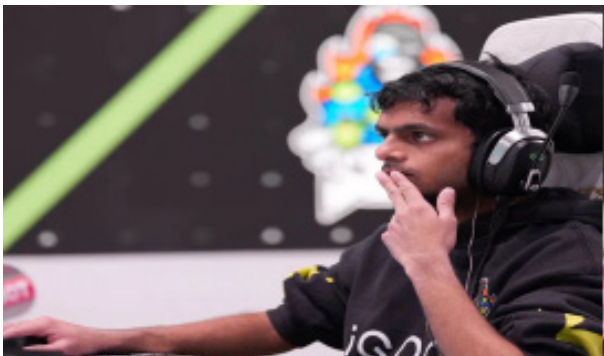
Previous evidence suggests that inflammatory processes can awaken disseminated cancer cells (DCCs) — cells that have broken away from a primary tumour and spread to distant organs, often lying dormant for extended periods. An increase in cancer death rates during the Covid pandemic bolstered the idea that severe inflammation may be waking up the dormant DCCs, Aguirre-Ghisso said.

The team tested the hypothesis on mice and exposed them to SARS-CoV-2 or the influenza virus — both triggered the awakening of dormant DCCs in the lungs, leading to a massive expansion of metastatic cells within days of infection and the appearance of metastatic lesions within two weeks. Molecular analyses revealed that the awakening of dormant DCCs is driven by interleukin-6 (IL-6), a protein that immune cells release in response to infections or



injuries. This suggested that using IL-6 inhibitors or other targeted immunotherapies might prevent or lessen the resurgence of metastasis. Further, to understand the implications in humans, the team analysed two large databases and found that respiratory infections in cancer patients in remission are linked to cancer metastasis. “The effect was most pronounced in the first year after infection,” said Roel Vermeulen, from Utrecht University, The Netherlands. The rapid progression to cancer mirrors the observed quick expansion of dormant cancer cells in animal models. “Our findings suggest that cancer survivors may be at increased risk of metastatic relapse after common respiratory viral infections,” said Vermeulen. “It is important to note that our study focused on the period before Covid-19 vaccines were available.”

Nihal Sarin qualifies for Esports World Cup play-offs



GNS News Agency, August 9

Hyderabad: Following a brilliant comeback run, Grandmaster Nihal Sarin, representing S8UL Esports, a global powerhouse in esports and gaming content, has qualified for the Chess playoffs at the ongoing Esports World Cup (EWC) 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. After a tough 0 – 2 loss to fellow Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi on Day 1 of the group stage, Nihal made a strong comeback on Day 2.

Showcasing his lightning-fast decision-making, he secured a 2 – 0 victory over Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri in the lower bracket semi-final. In the lower bracket final, the 21-year-old faced French Grandmaster Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. Despite being in a difficult position in the first game, he salvaged a draw through excellent positional awareness, before sealing the match 1.5 – 0.5 with a decisive win in the second game. With this, Nihal secured a coveted playoff spot from Group B, and will take on the five

I wanted a place with special atmosphere, says Walker

GNS News Agency, August 9

HYDERABAD: Kyle Walker said it was great to be part of Burnley and seeing what Burnley have achieved over the last couple of seasons has been fantastic to watch from the outside. "I already know some faces at the club, and I'm excited to get started this season," he said in a chat with JioHotstar ahead of the Premier League. "At this point in my career, I felt I needed something different — a real family club. After spending many years at a great club and a spell overseas, I wanted a place with that special atmosphere. My son trains at the Burnley training ground, and you can really sense the aura there and see the vision the owners have for the club. I wanted to be part of that success and the journey Burnley are on," Walker explained.



Burnley manager Scott Parker has been a massive influence. The style of football he's brought—not only here at Burnley but previously at Fulham—was something I admired. But above all, I value him as a person," he said. "I've had the pleasure of sharing a dressing room with him, both at Tottenham and for England, and when someone like that calls and asks you to join his team, it means a lot. I'm grateful for the opportunity he and everyone at the club have given me," Walker said. On the way ahead in his Premier League story, Walker said with 410 Premier League appearances, he had almost thought it might be time to move on, but football was a strange and wonderful game. "I hope I can add to that number and bring something to this dressing room and our style of play. I try to be a leader on the pitch, and I hope the younger players can look up to me and learn from my experience. I also want to support the gaffer, Scott, in every way I can," he said.

On mentoring the next generation after joining Burnley, Walker said he believed it was important to give back at this stage of his career. "You start out as the young one, then become the experienced player on the outside, and eventually, you're the oldest in the group. Do I feel old? No—I still feel young and there's definitely more life in the legs. But now, I want to give back, not just to my teammates, but also to everyone who has supported me throughout my career," Walker said. "It's vital to help educate the younger

How a mouse slip cost Gukesh's second Duda \$20,000 (Rs 17.5 lakh) and forced him to resign in 5 moves



Nodirbek Abdusattorov (left) and Jan-Krzysztof Duda react after the latter's mouse-slip in an Armageddon game at the Esports World Cup. (Screengrab via EWC)

Chess can be brutal at times. Especially when you are playing in an online tournament and have a technical issue like a mouse-slip. That's exactly what happened to Jan-Krzysztof Duda at the ongoing Esports World Cup in Riyadh. Duda, who had helped Gukesh become the youngest world champion in chess history last year, had to resign in the Armageddon game against Nodirbek Abdusattorov after the fifth move because he pushed his pawn to d6 instead of the d5 square. Both players had drawn their first two games, so the Armageddon was meant to be decisive for who would progress to the next round. The mouse-slip thus ended up being the difference between Duda taking home at least \$85,000 in the quarterfinals to taking home \$65,000 instead. "It was a very unfortunate moment. It was fatal. What to do it is a part of online chess. It happens," Duda told Take Take Take app in an interview afterwards. "It's kind of upsetting but also kind of funny. I will probably remember this for the rest of my life." He went on to add: "Most of all I was just kind of shocked, to be honest. For a second I thought I could play this, but there was really no point. Also, I wouldn't expect my opponent to play no move." The player also pointed out that he had experienced a mouse-slip in another game at the event, but this time the mouse-slip was "fatal". "I brought my own

mouse to the game today. and it probably wasn't the greatest idea," Duda added. He ended the interview by saying that next time there won't be any mouse-slips because he would be playing in over-the-board tournaments.

India's top order played a pivotal role in the visitors clinching the one-day series, with centuries from Suryavanshi and Vihaan helping them win the decisive fourth match in Worcester by posting a mammoth 363 after batting first. (Photo Credit: IPL) India's top order played a pivotal role in the visitors clinching the one-day series, with centuries from Suryavanshi and Vihaan helping them win the decisive fourth match in Worcester by posting a mammoth 363 after batting first. (Photo Credit: IPL)

India have retained several key players, including skipper Ayush Mhatre, vice-captain Vihaan Malhotra and charismatic opener Vaibhav Sooryavanshi — fresh from a successful tour of England — for the upcoming away Under-19 series against Australia later this year. India will play three one-dayers and two four-day games against the Australian U-19 side, beginning with the first limited-overs match on September 21. The tour will end on October 10.

“The Junior Selection Committee has picked India U19’s squad for the upcoming tour of Australia in September. The India U19 side will play three one-day games and two multi-day matches against Australia’s U19 side,” said BCCI secretary Devajot Saikia in a statement on Wednesday.

The India U-19 side recently returned from the tour of England, beating the hosts 3-2 in the Youth ODIs, while the two Youth Tests ended in draws.

India's top order played a pivotal role in the visitors clinching the one-day series, with centuries from Suryavanshi and Vihaan helping them win the decisive fourth match in Worcester by posting a mammoth 363 after batting first.

Aamir Khan's Talaash and Nawazuddin Siddiqui's Raat Akeli Hai are classic murder mysteries that reimagine the femme fatale



What defines a classic murder mystery? Is it the kind that refuses to be outsmarted? One that keeps disarming you, twist by twist, until its final breath? One that seduces you into certainty, only to undo it precisely when you're most convinced? The answers, I suppose, are varied, deeply personal, even. But if I were to distil them all, I'd say it comes down to one thing: perception. The essence of a great whodunit lies not in its resolution, but in how it manipulates what you think you know. It crafts a perception so carefully, so convincingly, that when it shifts, is when the story earns its place among the classics. For me, the mystery isn't solely linked to the text, to the "who" and "why" of the crime. In fact, the best ones let me forget there was a crime at all. The true gold standard lies in a narrative that transcends the scaffolding of genre, that rises above the bait of shock and delivers something more resonant. The murder, then becomes incidental, a catalyst for a deeper exploration. A larger story. A subtler thrill. In Hindi cinema, the last time I felt this emotional undercurrent disguised as crime — I found myself returning to Reema Kagti's Talaash, and Honey Trehan's Raat Akeli Hai.

On paper, both couldn't be more different in every which way. One is set in the maximum city of Mumbai, the other happens in the hinterlands of Uttar Pradesh. One is about the death of a film star, the other is about the death of the old patriarch of a family. One follows a cop clinging to the fraying threads of a broken marriage; the other about a cop eager to begin one. One slips into the supernatural by the time it ends, the other insists that the natural horrors of society are terrifying enough. One is led by what we call the superstars of a generation, Aamir Khan, Rani Mukerji, and Kareena Kapoor. The other is steered by actors of the generation, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Radhika Apte. Even in direction, one is helmed by the clinical Kagti, the other is led by the debuting Trehan. But still, whenever I watch one of

them, I think of the other. Whenever I mention one, I have to mention the other. It is because, somewhere subconsciously, both are mirroring each other. It is because in both, the crime is never the real horror. It is the world around it which is inherently sexist.

In that sense, one of the most striking similarities between the two lies in how both unfold as mood pieces, deeply linked with the image of the femme fatale. In each, the actresses embodying this archetype, Kapoor in Talaash and Apte in Raat Akeli Hai, continuously play with, and challenge, our traditional perceptions of what a femme fatale is. At first, they appear as mysterious, beautiful, seductive figures who captivate the investigating officers, Khan in Talaash, Siddiqui in Raat Akeli Hai. But what Kagti and Smita Singh (who wrote Raat Akeli Hai) do is give them the background, complexity and agency the genre has historically denied. They empower these women to move beyond the image, to step out of the frame that usually holds them. And in doing so, they become the driving force of both narratives.

What's remarkable is how Talaash gradually shifts into the story of Rosie. By the end, we realise it was hers all along. Like Suri, she too is searching for closure. But unlike him, her grief has never been centred. Her presence, though constant, was never prioritised. We never considered her the narrative's subject because we were never conditioned to view her that way. And when the film circles back to her, we're left re-evaluating not only what we saw, but how we saw it. The same holds for Raat Akeli Hai. We, like Jatil, observe Radha through a lens of suspicion. For most of the film, we are complicit in the assumption that she is hiding something, perhaps even the truth about the murder. But that gaze fractures when her real story emerges, and we come to understand that it was never hidden, it was simply never acknowledged. Her truth remained invisible, not by omission, but by design. Because neither the characters nor the audience was willing to see it. This is where these murder mysteries transcend their genre. They do not simply subvert expectations. But they indict the very mechanisms of perception that shape the genre. By foregrounding caste, class, and gender, and how they operate as forces of erasure, Kagti and Singh expose the genre's historical myopia. They remind us that what is missing from view is often not what is absent, but what has been systematically overlooked. The other significant leap that both films take in their subversion of the femme fatale is how, in each case, the woman becomes the route through which the man arrives at a deeper understanding of himself. It is through them that their male counterparts come of age. It is through them they begin to see, not just the case more clearly, but also the world around them. In that sense, the resolution is not only about solving the murder, but about uncovering parts of themselves they might never have confronted otherwise. Perhaps that's why even the titles of both films symbolise the journeys their characters undertake. An endless search for a sense of peace, for a fragment of themselves, in a night that offers neither comfort nor escape.

Dharmendra's mother walked out of his film when he threatened a character with sexual assault; he explained, 'You can slap me after the film'

Dharmendra was one of the most popular actors in the 1970s but as the 1980s rolled around and Hindi cinema went through one of its worst phases, and his career also took a huge hit. Like many of his peers, Dharmendra was also struggling to find a hit in this phase but he continued to work in the movies. It was during this phase that he ended up working in many films that would later be dubbed as B-films, and apart from those, he also appeared in many films that were extremely forgettable. One of those films, Qayamat, released in 1983, evoked quite a harsh reaction from Dharmendra's mother as she walked out of the theatre mid way through the film.

In the book, 'Dharmendra Not Just a He-man' by Rajiv Vijayakar, director Raj N Sippy recalled that one particular dialogue offended Dharmendra's mother so badly that she decided that she couldn't sit through the film. "Dharmendra was shown full of fury and the lines he said to Shatrughan appalled Dharam's mother, because her son was saying them on-screen," he said.

He further recalled, "This was when Dharmendra's character tells Shatrughan's, 'Rape kya cheez hai main tumhein sikhaunga (I will teach you what rape is)' and his mother came out in the interval, shocked." Dharmendra tried to pacify his mother and requested her that she should judge the film only after it was over, and if she was still dissatisfied, she could slap him at the end of the film. "Dharam



explained to her that this was a part of the script and that she should judge all this after the film was over. He told her that if she felt so, she could slap him at the end of the film," Sippy recalled. The film Qayamat also starred Shatrughan Sinha, Smita Patil, Poonam Dhillon, Jaya Prada, Shakti Kapoor and Bindu. In the same year, Dharmendra's son Sunny Deol made his debut in the movies with Betaab, also starring Amrita Singh. Betaab was one of the biggest hits of the year and turned Sunny into the next big star of Bollywood.

ence of going to the cinema and feeling something so deeply — I honestly can't remember the last time it happened." In a recent interview with SCREEN, Mohit Suri opened up about how YRF came on board as the producers of Saiyaara. "I don't think we make our films, our films make themselves. I had directed the sequel of an action franchise — Ek Villain Returns (2022) — and it had not done well. There were a bunch of big-budget, larger-than-life movies being made around then. I was halfway through writing an action movie when I realised that so many films are blowing up helicopters and buildings. I decided to make a romantic musical with newcomers instead. I asked my assistant Sankalp Sadanah to write this movie and got Rohan Shankar to write the dialogues. One day, I bumped into Sumanna Ghosh of YRF and she asked if I've the script of a love story. Within a week, they called me and Adi Sir told me that they were looking for a movie like this," he said.

In its 13 days of release, Saiyaara has earned Rs 413 crore worldwide. It marked debut of actor Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda.

Gauahar Khan lost 10 kgs after son's birth by eating only 'leaves and soups': 'I lost 10 kgs in 10 days'



Actor Gauahar Khan welcomed her first child, a baby boy named Zehaan, with husband Zaid Darbar in May 2023. Just a few months after giving birth, she returned to her co-hosting duties on the sets of Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa season 11. In a recent interaction, Gauahar revealed that she went on an only salad and soup diet six months after giving birth and lost 10kgs in 10 days, as she was eager to return to work and wanted to look her best on screen.

Speaking on The Debina Bonnerjee Show, she said, "I was conscious that I'm going to be on screen again, and I can't take that lightly. For six months, I breastfed but I

was not exclusively breastfeeding, I was also using formula. But for those six months, I didn't take care of my food that much as I was breastfeeding and I had that responsibility. I was eating normal food, keeping in mind the carbohydrates, fat and protein content needed for Zehaan."

Gauahar revealed that after six months of giving birth to Zehaan, she decided to wean him off breast milk and made drastic changes to her diet to quickly lose weight. She said, "Six months after his birth, I decided to wean him off breast milk and from that day I went on an only salad diet. My diet was only leaves and soup. I zipped my mouth. I literally did. I was not on a diet. I was eating things properly, but it used to be salads and soup form. I left non-veg. I left mutton. It is my most favourite thing to eat, but I left it because it is high in calories. I left all that because I wanted to work."

Earlier in 2023, Gauahar took to Instagram to share a photo of herself, revealing that she lost 10 kilos of postpartum weight in just 10 days after giving birth to Zehaan. She wrote, "Lost 10 kgs in 10 days postpartum! Alhamdulillah! Six more to go!" In an earlier interaction with Red FM, Gauahar admitted that she faced criticism on social media after she shared her weight loss journey. She said, "You know a lot of people actually told me 'Why are you showing that you've lost weight? Why are you showing that you've reduced so much? Think about other women. The things we can't do, you have so many gym trainers and you have so many'... comments like these also come." But Gauahar clarified that she doesn't have any expensive trainer or nutritionist. She said, "No, I don't have any expensive gym trainers, I don't have any diets being given to me. You need to zip your mouth for yourself, you need to do proper research, which I have done." Gauahar is currently pregnant with her second child.

How Kiara Advani achieved her bikini bod for War 2, reveals her nutritionist: Slept at 8 pm, had this protein treat for breakfast

Kiara Advani shot her first ever bikini scene for Aditya Chopra's War 2. A glimpse of which was shared both in the film's trailer and today in the song "Aavan Jaavan". Kiara's toned body became a highlight of the song. However, the actress followed a strict diet and workout regime to gain that body.

About two months ago, Kiara Advani's nutritionist shared her diet and workout routine with Pinkvilla. She revealed, "When Kiara spoke to me for her prep, the goal was clear: to be in the best shape of her life for her first-ever bikini shot on screen. She didn't want shortcuts. She wasn't looking for a crash diet or a quick fix. She wanted something sustainable, holistic—and something that made her feel strong." With the goal to tone and build lean muscle for the actress, Nicole and Kiara began to follow a strict diet that included measuring every ingredient she ate. "Every ingredient had to be measured, even down to the oil used in cooking or a few shavings of Parmesan on her Buddha bowl."

She explained, "Her mornings always started with her non-negotiable protein pancakes. The pancakes were made with oat flour, walnut flour, protein powder, maple syrup/monk fruit, and water, topped with fresh berries and homemade hazelnut butter. She loved them so much that we even shot a video before she left for her European schedule to ensure the entire team knew exactly how to make them right." Kiara's lunch and dinner mostly featured grilled chicken, chicken curries, asparagus, baby potatoes, avocado, edamame, pesto, hummus vegetable crudites. "We kept her meals light but high in protein and tailored them closely to her training and shoot schedule." She added, "For snacks or post-workout fuel, one of her favorites was good old sattv chaas—a blend of roasted Bengal gram flour seasoned lightly with Jeera powder and coriander leaves. It's a refreshing, natural Indian protein-rich drink that helped with hydration and recovery, especially after long workouts or outdoor shoots." Speaking about the bikini shoot, the nutritionist shared, "We didn't do anything drastic or unhealthy—no extreme cutting or water depletion. Instead, we planned it backwards—adjusting sodium, water, and fiber intake gradually while keeping energy levels high. While they were shooting in Tuscany and Rome, I coordinated with the local



chefs every night after dinner to plan the next day's meals. We shared allergen information, sourced local ingredients, and designed menus that aligned with her macros and the demands of the shoot."

Nicole shared that apart from her diet, sleep played a crucial role. "We were intentional about setting a circadian rhythm, ensuring she got adequate rest, which in turn allowed her metabolism, mood, and energy to stay regulated. Everything—her meal timings, training windows, and even caffeine intake—was structured around this rhythm. With her demanding shoot schedule and training simultaneously, her body needed recovery, and building a strong sleep-wake routine helped us optimize everything else. She was in bed by 8 pm. Her dedication and discipline was commendable."

Karisma Kapoor-Abhishek Bachchan had good chemistry, their engagement ended due to external reasons, says Suneel Darshan: 'A protective Babita...'

Abhishek Bachchan and Karisma Kapoor were among the most talked about couple in the early 2000s. After meeting each other at Nikhil Nanda and Shweta Bachchan's wedding in 1997, the couple dated for five years. In 2002, on the occasion of Amitabh Bachchan's 60th birthday, the Kapoor and Bachchan family announced their engagement. However, a few months later, the duo broke off their engagement. Both Kapoors and Bachchans refused to comment on the development, giving rise to several theories. One of which suggested that it was Karisma's mother who played a role in breaking up the couple.

Theories also speculated that it majorly had to do with Abhishek Bachchan's unstable career and the ABCL controversy that left Big B bankrupt. Now, filmmaker-producer Suneel Darshan has shared details about Abhishek Bachchan and Karisma Kapoor's broken relationship. In a conversation with Vicky Lalwani, the filmmaker said, "Destiny has brought a lot of turbulence in the lives of the Kapoor girls. That's how I would word it. A lot of turbulence and a lot of tumult. They are fortunate to have a protective mother like Babita, but maybe in the process of protecting them, she might have made some mistakes. She is human after all and not God. Everybody does mistake." He added, "These girls were brought up with lot of love, care and were supported for their careers. I don't want to delve deeper than this in this topic because I am not their immediate family." When asked about chemistry between Abhishek and Karisma, the filmmaker shared it was similar to their chemistry in his 2002 film Han Maine Bhi Pyaar Kiya (which was a box office disaster). In that film, Abhishek Bachchan and Karisma Kapoor play colleagues-turned-lovers, who get



married, but the former cheats on her only to be reunited at the end of the movie when she is about to marry the character of Akshay Kumar. He shared, "They did have a chemistry between them but it was more like the kind of chemistry they had in my film Haan Maine Bhi Pyaar Kiya." He explained, "Essentially, it is about trust and belief. Sometimes it is very well maintained, sometimes it's uncontrollable. It was good until issues from the outside world began to enter their lives. They created the problems and disturbed their relationship." Just a few months after breaking her relationship