

BJP calls upon its workers to help the rain affected people in Telangana

Hyderabad, Aug.13 (NSS): State BJP chief N Ramchander Rao today called upon his party workers to come forward and participate in relief and rescue operations in the wake of heavy rains across Telangana. The party has been prepared to assist with the relief operations, he added. Rao, in a statement here, said that the party is mobilizing its workers across the state to assist with the emergency relief operations. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued red, orange and yellow alerts for the Telangana districts and warned of potential flooding, power outages, traffic disruptions and overflowing sewage.

SC asks Telangana to restore green cover on Kancha Gachibowli land



GNS News Agency, August 13

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Telangana government to restore the lost green cover of the Kancha Gachibowli area near the Hyderabad Central University. A bench of Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai and Justice Vinod Chandran gave the state government six weeks to submit a revised plan for the development of 400-acre land with safeguards for forests, wildlife, and lakes. The apex court was hearing a suo moto case initiated in April in the wake of the large-scale felling of trees on the land near the university. As the state government said that all tree-cutting actions have been halted, the bench appreciated the Telangana government's submission, while making it clear that it is not against development, but development has to be sustainable.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing on behalf of the Telangana government, informed the apex court that, in compliance with earlier directives, all tree-cutting actions have been halted. The bench was also told that the government is looking into the larger picture of how to ensure that its forests and lakes are not harmed in the process of development. The state submitted that it is looking

at the matter in a holistic manner and is attempting to balance the interests of the environment and wildlife with development. When Singhvi urged the court to give the state six to eight weeks to place its proposal on record, the court agreed to the request. The Chief Justice told Singhvi that if the state comes up with a good proposal, the court will withdraw the proceedings against it. He, however, made it clear that the state should restore the destroyed forest. The bench also observed that while carrying out development activities, the interest of the environment and wildlife has to be taken care of by ensuring mitigating and compensatory measures. The Supreme Court had initiated suo moto proceedings while taking serious note of the felling of trees on the land in Kancha Gachibowli village. The Telangana government had undertaken tree-cutting as part of a plan to auction the land through the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIC) to develop IT infrastructure. Telangana tourism

Students of the adjoining Hyderabad Central University and green activists had staged protests, demanding a halt to the deforestation in an eco-sensitive zone, which serves as the "lungs" of Hyderabad city. On April 3, the Supreme Court passed an interim order staying further tree-felling. The state was also asked to clarify whether the requisite permission was obtained for felling the trees. The bench directed the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) constituted to assist the Supreme Court in complex environmental matters, to personally visit the site and submit a report. On April 16, the Court observed that the extent of destruction caused in 100 acres showed an alarming picture and ordered a status quo on the land. It also remarked that it would go out of its way to protect the environment and ecology. In May, the apex court gave Telangana a choice between restoring the destroyed forest or facing the prospect of its Chief Secretary and "half a dozen officials" being sent to a "temporary prison".

Red alert sounded for Telangana

Hyderabad, Aug.13 Hyderabad Meteorological Centre Director Nagaratna today said a red alert had been issued for the entire Telangana State for Wednesday and Thursday in view of the imminent heavy rains. She said a red colour warning had been issued for Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Medak, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Khammam, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Bhupalapally, Mulugu districts. She also said an orange colour warning had been issued for Hyderabad, Hanumakonda, Adilabad, Jangaon, Kamareddy, Kumuram Bheem, Asifabad, Mahabubabad, Mancheril, Nalgonda, Rangareddy, Siddipet, and Warangal districts.

She noted that there was a possibility of heavy to very heavy rains in Hyderabad and Rangareddy districts during the next two days. Nagaratna explained that the rains were likely to continue across the State on Thursday as well. "We have issued yellow alerts for Nirmal, Nizamabad, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Peddapalli and Karimnagar districts. There is a possibility of very heavy rain in Medak, Sangareddy and Vikarabad districts today.

The intensity of rain will be high in North Telangana



districts. Gusty winds at a speed of 40 to 50 kmph would blow in the State for five days. There is a possibility of heavy rain in North Telangana on August 17. A low pressure has formed in the west-central Bay of Bengal. Due to this, the heavy rains will fall in the State for four days," Nagaratna added.

SC verdict on Telangana MLC appointments a blow to BJP, Congress: KTR



GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday termed the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the appointments of Prof M Kodandaram and Amer Ali Khan as MLCs under the Governor's quota a slap in the face to both the BJP and the Congress. He alleged that both parties misused constitutional institutions and mocked democracy. In a statement, Rama Rao criticised the then Governor for rejecting the BRS government's nominees Dasoju Sravan and Kurra Satyanarayana, both from weaker sections, and instead recommending other names. He accused the Modi government of trying to control and obstruct the K Chandrashekhara Rao-led government by misusing the Governor's office.

He also attacked Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for allegedly displaying an anti-BC stance by recommending two new names while the BRS proposals were pending before the court. "The Supreme Court has made it clear that the actions of BJP and Congress were unconstitutional. Their double standards stand exposed," he said.

Commending the judiciary, Rama Rao said the ver-

dict revealed how political parties trample democratic values and constitutional institutions for power. "On behalf of the BRS, we bow our heads and salute the judiciary for protecting constitutional principles," he added.

Sridhar Babu recognised among top 100 influential figures in AI-2025

Hyderabad, Aug.13 Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu has been included in Analytics India Magazine's esteemed "India's 100 most influential people in AI-2025" list, published on August 11.

This annual list celebrates individuals whose leadership and innovation are shaping India's AI landscape. The listing is presented alphabetically within categories rather than as a ranking. In the policy makers category, Sridhar Babu's name appears alongside some of India's most influential figures driving AI policy and governance, including Aakrit Vaish, advisor of IndiaAI Mission, Abhishek Singh, CEO of the IndiaAI Mission & DG, NIC, Amitabh Kant, former CEO of the NITI Aayog, Ashwini Vaishnaw, union minister for Electronics & IT, Debjani Ghosh, former president of NASSCOM, Dilip Asbe, CEO of NPCL, Piyush Goyal of union commerce minister and Rajeev Chandrasekhar, former minister of state, (electronics & IT). Sridhar Babu's inclusion alongside these leaders underlines Telangana's emergence as a frontrunner in AI-driven governance.

This recognition is a testament to Telangana's bold vision of using AI to deliver inclusive development and better lives. We are building a future where innovation matches equity—ensuring every citizen benefits from technological progress," Minister Sridhar Babu said.

BRAOU UG/PG ADMISSIONS LAST DATE EXTENDED UPTO AUG. 30

Hyderabad, Aug.13 The Direct Admission through "Online" for Under Graduate (B.A/B.Com/B.Sc) and Post Graduate - M.A, M.Com, M.Sc, M.B.A, BLISc, MLISc, Diplomas Courses and Certificate programmes of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU) for the Academic year 2025-26 is extended up to August 30. Similarly old batches students (Year wise) and CBCS Second and Third year students, also P.G old batches students those who are missed the opportunity for payment of tuition fee can also utilize the same, batches from 2016 to 2024 also proceed for payment of tuition fee through Net Banking / Credit / Debit Card or TS Online before last date on August 30, 2025.

Prez Murmu condoles loss of lives in Dausa road accident



GNS News Agency, August 13

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday expressed grief over the tragic road accident in Rajasthan's Dausa, which killed 11 people, including women and children. Over half a dozen people were also injured in the accident, which happened at around 3.30 a.m. when a collision occurred between a pickup truck and a container near Bapi village in Dausa. The pickup truck was carrying more than 22 devotees at the time of the crash. According to the information, the deceased include four women and seven children. In a post on X, President Murmu posted, "The news of the death of many people, including women

and children, in a road accident in Dausa, Rajasthan, is very tragic. I express my deep condolences to the bereaved families. I pray for the speedy recovery of those injured in this accident." According to preliminary findings by the police, the container truck rammed the pickup from behind with considerable force, resulting in the immediate death of 10 people. Upon receiving the information, the police hurried to the location and transported the injured individuals to a nearby hospital, where another woman died from her injuries, raising the death toll to 11. Earlier in the day, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma also took to X and expressed his sadness over the accident. CM Bhajanlal said, "The news of the loss of life in a horrific road accident in Dausa is extremely tragic. The district administration has been directed to ensure prompt and proper treatment for the injured." "May God grant a place at His divine feet to the departed souls and provide speedy recovery to the injured," he added. The deceased have been identified as Poorvi (3), Priyanka (25), Daksh (12), Sheela (35), Seema (25), Anshu (26), and Saurabh (35). The identities of four other victims are yet to be identified. Several injured passengers are being treated at Dausa District Hospital, while those in critical condition were rushed to SMS Hospital in Jaipur for advanced care. Among the seriously injured are Lakshya (5), Naitik (6), Rita (30), Nilesh Kumar (22), Priyanka (19), Saurabh (28), Manoj (28), and another unidentified patient.

KTR urges BRS cadre to take part in flood relief operations

Hyderabad, Aug.13 In response to the severe rains and flooding affecting various parts of the Telangana State, BRS working president KT Rama Rao has called upon party leaders and members to offer active support to the impacted communities, especially in the erstwhile districts of Warangal, Khammam, and Mahabubabad, which are already facing significant challenges.

In a statement here on Wednesday, KT Rama Rao urged the BRS members to view relief efforts as a moral obligation, considering their role as the principal opposition party. Concerned about the situation for residents in low-lying areas, Rama Rao criticised the Congress government for its incompetence across various issues and stressed the importance of BRS members stepping in to help those in need. He instructed the party workers to promptly supply basic necessities such as drinking water, milk, food, medicines, and clothing to families affected by the floods. The BRS working president also called for collaboration with local officials to establish medical camps for emergency assistance and encouraged participation in relief and rescue operations. Referencing the Meteorological department's prediction of ongoing heavy rainfall for the next



three days, the BRS working president advised the public to remain indoors unless absolutely necessary and to relocate at-risk residents to safer areas. He warned against venturing into regions where floodwaters have accumulated. The BRS working president already spoke with party leaders in the most severely impacted districts, encouraging them to take charge of relief efforts on-site. "During this challenging period, BRS will steadfastly support the people," he stated, urging the people to stay alert and resilient.

Karnataka BJP lodges complaint with Guv against CM Siddaramaiah, DCM DK Shivakumar over alleged poll-time cash distribution



GNS News Agency, August 13

Bengaluru: A political debate erupted after BJP leader and advocate Devarajegowda submitted a formal complaint to Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot, seeking sanction to prosecute Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in connection with a viral audio clip allegedly involving former MLA K.M. Shivalingegowda. The clip purportedly reveals discussions about distributing cash to voters during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

According to the complaint, the viral audio, claimed to feature Shivalingegowda's voice, suggests that during the last general elections, a meeting was held in the presence of Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar, and Rajya Sabha member N. Chandrashekar. The alleged conversation indicates that the leaders decided to distribute ₹500 to each voter in the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency in favour of Congress candidate Shreyas M. Patel. The complaint further alleges that, following these directions, Shreyas Patel contributed ₹5 crore, Gopalaswamy ₹1 crore, and senior Congress leader B. Shivaram ₹1 crore, totalling ₹7 crore for voter inducement in the Belur assembly segment. The audio purportedly also includes instructions to the Belur Block Congress president to ensure that at least 70% of voters receive the money on the same night, or at the very least 68%.

Additionally, the complaint cites another part of the

conversation in which Shivalingegowda allegedly mentions spending ₹1.5 crore on a campaign programme in Belur. The complainant asserts that the voice in the audio has been clearly identified as Shivalingegowda's and claims it substantiates the involvement of top Congress leaders in electoral malpractice. Devarajegowda has urged the Governor to grant prosecution sanction under Sections 123 and 77 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, along with provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and other relevant laws, to enable criminal proceedings in a competent court or investigative agency. The allegations, if pursued, could have significant political ramifications for the Congress leadership in Karnataka, especially given the direct naming of the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister in a matter involving alleged cash-for-votes during a parliamentary election.

KTR slams Congress Govt for delaying Kothwalguda Eco Park project

Hyderabad, Aug.13 : BRS working president KT Rama Rao criticised the Congress government for delaying the eagerly anticipated Kothwalguda Eco Park, describing the project as a victim of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's poor administration. He accused the Revanth Reddy government of prioritising politics and publicity over public welfare.

Taking to X (previously Twitter) on Wednesday, KT Rama Rao noted that the BRS government had nearly completed most of the work almost two years prior. Nevertheless, the 125-acre project remains unopened to this day. "A world-class park designed for the people of Hyderabad is left in a state of uncertainty due to the government's ineptitude. The Congress regime is marked by incompetence and indifference," he stated, characterising it as "hopeless governance."

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

A golden-jubilee run for India's most enduring superstar

August 14 will mark a Red-letter day for millions of his fans all over the globe...social media, the barometer of a film's likely success in the first weekend of its release, has already closed its doors to naysayers and toxic critics. Shivaji Rao Gaekwad, known popularly as Superstar Rajinikanth in the country's leading celluloid centres has his 171st film – Coolie - awaiting release two days from now, a tribute to his 50 years saga in Indian cinema in which he was seen in all the four southern language films, apart from Hindi and Bengali. Love him or hate him, one cannot ignore him...that's the current niche of Rajinikanth in Indian cinema.

A filmi career, which began with a relatively insignificant role with the 1975 Independence Day release 'Apoorva Ragangal' in Tamil has, five decades later, attained an unmatched global recognition and fame: the stuff of legends, so to say. Unlike many before him and after, who arrived with a bang, shone for a while and went into oblivion, this ordinary-looking hero by conventional standards, started steadily, overtook all his competitors at breakneck speed and stayed put at the top, encountering challenges with a rare survival mantra of his own right from the 1980s.

Primarily anchored in the Tamil cinema field, with many of his hit flicks dubbed and remade into other languages, Rajinikanth is what the Tamil media hails 'the eternal entertainer for fans from the ages of six to sixty'; the 'Thalaivar' who reigns supreme. So much so, even after he turned a senior citizen, 15 years ago, his swagger and his solo hero stature continued to endure and was cashed in repeatedly by leading banners of south India.

BJP welcomes Apex court decision in lawyers' murder case

Hyderabad, Aug.13 : Welcoming the Supreme Court's decision for transfer of case investigation into murder of advocate couple Gattu Vaman Rao and his wife PV Nagamani to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Telangana state BJP chief N Ramchander Rao today urged for immediate introduction of "Advocate Protection Act" in the larger interest of the community. Yesterday, the Apex Court transferred the case probe to the CBI into the 2021 daylight murder of the couple.

The state BJP president, in a statement today, said that the SC decision is a clear indication of the growing public distrust in the state investigation agencies, and that the decision would strengthen public faith in the judicial system. Further, it has sent a strong warning to those who indulge in such attacks on lawyers. Murder of the advocate couple had raised questions about the safety of the lawyers in Telangana and that the CBI probe would bring out the facts of the case and ensures strict punishment to the perpetrators. "As a former MLC I had repeatedly demanded the state government to bring in the Advocate Protection Act to protect lawyers, but such demand was ignored by the previous government", he added. Ramachander Rao urged the Congress government to fulfill its promise made in the election manifesto by bringing in the Advocate Protection Act in the next assembly session as such a law is very important to prevent attacks on lawyers. In fact, it is the government's responsibility to protect the advocates' community and that the BJP would continue its fight for justice, dignity and security for advocates, he noted.

Record travel by women on Rakhi Pournami in RTC buses

Hyderabad, Aug.13 On the occasion of Rakhi Pournami, TGSRTC buses were used by women on a large scale. A total of 3.68 crore people travelled in six days. Out of which 2.51 crore were free journey travellers.

On the occasion of Rakhi festival, 45.62 lakh women travelled on August 9. The highest number of 45.94 lakh people travelled on the 11th of this month. This is the first time that so many women have travelled in a single day. Last year, 2.75 crore passengers were transported to their destinations on the Rakhi festival. This year 3.68 crore people travelled. Compared to the last year, 92.95 lakh more people travelled in the RTC buses. This year, the RTC buses covered 2.28 crore kilometres. The corporation has covered 53 lakh kilometres more than last year. Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar expressed happiness over the large-scale use of the Mahalaxmi scheme by the women on the Rakhi Pournami festival for the bond between siblings. He said these Rakhi statistics show how great the bond between brothers and sisters is in Telangana. He thanked the RTC officials and staff who used all the capacity of the company and transported passengers to their destinations at a record level for the Rakhi festival. He praised their services for sacrificing the Rakhi festival and working with commitment, dedication and discipline even in heavy rains. He also praised the successful implementation of the Mahalaxmi-Free Bus Travel Facility for Women scheme even in heavy traffic.TGSRTC MD VC Sajjanar said due to the advance planning and the commitment of the staff, lakhs of passengers were safely transported to their destinations for the Rakhi festival. He said this Rakhi festival operations had set new records in the organization, with the highest number of 68.45 lakh people travelling in a single day on the 11th of this month. He said the records of this Rakhi festival were proof of the people's love for the public transport system. He expressed his gratitude to all the passengers, who are supporting and encouraging the public transport system while cooperating with TGSRTC.

GHMC chief asks officials to be alert in view of rains

Hyderabad, Aug.13 In the wake of rains in Greater Hyderabad, GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan today asked all officials and ground level staff to be on high alert. Noting that moderate rains are currently lashing in the GHMC area, he said the people of the city should not come out of their homes unless it is an emergency as the city is likely to witness heavy rains during the next two days.

MG Windsor – India's best-selling EV for 10 months in a rowRegisters highest-ever sales in July 2025 with 4308 units



Hyderabad:JSW MG Motor India today announced that India's best-selling EV, the MG Windsor, has achieved another remarkable milestone. In July, the company set a new record for Windsor sales, selling 4,308 units in a single month. The carmaker has sold nearly 36,000 units of the MG Windsor since its launch. The robust sales performance has helped the company expand its market share in the EV Segment. In Q2 CY'25, the company recorded a 4% increase in market share, rising to 32% from 28% in Q1 CY'25. During the same period, average sales of MG Windsor grew by 17%. In addition, the company's EV wholesales increased by 28% from Q1 CY'25 to Q2 CY'25.

The MG Windsor has been leading the Indian 4W-EV segment since launch, solidifying its position as a disruptive offering in the industry. The MG Windsor has been recognised with more than 30 awards, including the most coveted Green Car Award 2025 by iCOTY. It is India's first intelligent CUV and has emerged as a modern marvel in the automotive industry, capturing the combined essence of comfort, style, and technology. Offered with a starting BaaS price of INR 9.99L + INR 3.9/kms+, this CUV combines the expanse of a sedan and the versatility of an SUV. The MG Windsor delivers 100 kW (136ps) of power and 200Nm of torque. The MG Windsor features a futuristic 'AeroGlide' design, transcending the traditional concept of segments. Inside, the car is offered with business-class comfort that features 'Aero Lounge' seats reclining to 135 degrees, providing utmost comfort. Additionally, the massive 15.6" GRANDVIEW Touch Display on the centre console provides an intuitive driving experience.

Wholesale Figures*

About JSW MG Motor IndiaSAIC Motor, a global Fortune 500 company with a presence in over 100 countries and JSW Group (India's leading conglomerate with interests across B2B and B2C sectors) formed a joint venture - JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. in 2023. The joint venture aims to build a smart and sustainable automotive ecosystem while staying focused on developing a diverse portfolio of vehicles to give car buyers better access to advanced technologies and futuristic products with attractive value propositions. JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. is committed to introducing world-class technology, strengthening the manufacturing landscape, bringing the best of innovation across its business operations, and generating significant employment opportunities through extensive localisation.

HDFC ERGO in partnership with PhonePe, to offer an affordable health insurance solution to India's 'Missing Middle'

Hyderabad:In a pivotal move to expand health insurance coverage across India, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, a leading private sector general insurer, has forged a strategic partnership with PhonePe, to launch an affordable health insurance solution designed to serve the 'Missing Middle'. The year 2025 marks the 79th glorious year of Indian Independence. One of the major drivers in shaping up the country's economy is the digital payment ecosystem. However, while India is making remarkable strides at these fronts, an alarming fact remains that 30% of Indians, which involves ~40 crore citizens1, are still neither covered under government-sponsored health schemes nor can afford any comprehensive health insurance plan. In fact, ~10 crore1 individuals within this group also slips into poverty due to health care related expenses. These uninsured citizens largely belong to lower and middle-income groups or workers in the unorganised, including gig economy workers, who remain exposed to costly out-of-pocket healthcare expenses.HDFC ERGO's partnership with PhonePe is a strategic move, as it brings together a trustworthy digital first insurer and a digital payment platform. By tapping into the digital infrastructure of PhonePe, the 'missing middle' of India now will have easy access to HDFC ERGO's comprehensive health insurance at an affordable premium. Commenting on the launch, Parthani Ghosh, Executive Director*, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, said, "As per the Niti Aayog report, ~40 crore Indians who are referred to as 'Missing Middle', lack any form of health insurance coverage. In order to bridge this gap, HDFC ERGO's Suraksha Sankalp aims to provide financial support through its cashless Health Insurance plan ranging from OPD to hospitalisation. In order to reach the citizens across the country, we needed a strong partner with a wide



distribution network across remote geographies. We are delighted to partner with PhonePe, who has helped to fulfil this purpose of insurance inclusion." Adding to this, Vishal Gupta, CEO at PhonePe Insurance Broking Services, said, "Inclusive health insurance is a fundamental need and at PhonePe, we are committed to making a real impact towards the financial future and wellbeing of every Indian. As a step towards this initiative, we are proud to partner with HDFC ERGO to launch this plan for 'Missing Middle'. The plan is priced to ensure affordability, while delivering meaningful coverage for individuals from the unorganised sector who can now have access to a health insurance plan.

Through this plan, we aim to provide access to quality healthcare for millions of underserved customers without the burden of high premiums. Our aim is to drive insurance adoption in the country by empowering users across various socio-economic strata with affordable, digital-first solutions that cater to their unique needs."

NSU Sanskrit Week Celebrations Concluded Grandly“



“August 13 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator”“The valedictory function of Sanskrit week celebration of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati organised by Vagvardhini Parishad at Chelikani Annarao New Class Room Complex. “”Prof. P Geervani - Pro Chancellor of Chinmay Vishwa Vidyapeetham - Kerala was the Chief Guest of the function and explained about Sanskrit greatness. “”Prof. G S R Krishna Murthy, Vice Chancellor of NSU was the president of the program and said about Indias Knowledge Destination is Sanskrit.Through Sanskrit only our Indian Culture will be protected.”“Prof. Rajanikant Sukla-Dean, Academic Affairs, Mr. K V Narayanrao -



Registrar, NSU, Dr. Bharat Bhushan Rath - Coordinator of Vagvardhini Parishad & Dr. Pradeep Kumar Bag - Coordinator of Vagvardhini Parishad were present . Faculty members, Non teaching staff members & students were participated. Prof. C Ranganathan - Proctor of NSU & Prof.S Dakshina Murthy Sharma - Dean Students Welfare were the guests of prize distribution function. Dr. Udayan Hegde - Addl. Coordinator of Vagvardhini Parishad was master of ceremony.

Gen S Life Presents 'Real Heroes': A Powerful Independence Day Tribute to India's Veterans and Freedom Fighters



Hyderabad:On the occasion of India's 78th Independence Day, Gen S Life, India's first lifestyle app dedicated to senior citizens, is proud to present 'Real Heroes'. A poignant feature film that brings to the screen extraordinary stories of the nation's armed forces veterans and freedom fighters.

Real Heroes is a cinematic tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and unwavering patriotism of India's greatest generation. Through a powerful narrative woven from firsthand accounts, the film offers an intimate portrayal of those who helped shape the nation's freedom struggle and protected its sovereignty in the years that followed.Meenakshi Menon, Founder, Gen S Life, said, "Our seniors are living custodians of India's legacy. With 'Real Heroes', we honour not only their service to the nation but their enduring spirit. These stories are both a tribute and a call to remember the foundations on which our freedom stands. It is our responsibility to ensure that these voices are not lost to time. We believe this film will move the nation and spark a deeper appreciation for those who paved the way for our future."Directed by acclaimed Producer/Director and best-selling author Anirban Bhattacharyya, the film will be available for streaming on August 15, 2025, at 11:00 AM, exclusively on Sony LIV's official YouTube channel.Stories of Service and Sacrifice

This film brings together the voices of national icons - heroes whose courage and convictions have shaped India's journey from the freedom struggle to modern-day military operations. Their stories span generations, bound by a common thread of duty, endurance, and unwavering love for the nation.Lt Gen Sanjay Kulkarni (PVSM, AVSM, SC, SM, VSM), who led troops during the historic Operation Meghdoot, reflected: "Siachen is one of the toughest postings. I remember the moment that our helicopter was hovering above the Bilafond Glacier and I locked my eyes with the Pakistani pilot in the enemy chopper! I compliment and laud this great initiative of GenS and Bhattacharyya for honouring our great soldiers for whom Naam Namak Nishan is a call worth sacrificing their lives for the Nation."Col DPK Pillay (Shaurya Chakra) recalled a moment of profound humanity during a 1994 operation in Manipur: "In the chaos of battle in Manipur, I learned the true meaning of soldiering: to be a saviour, not a killer. Shot in the chest and with my leg shattered during Operation Rakshak, I refused evacuation so the helicopter could rescue two injured children instead."Col Jasbir Singh, who sustained serious injuries during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, shared: "Losing a limb wasn't the end of my story. It was the beginning of a deeper understanding—that service to the nation continues beyond the battlefield."

Raja Narasimha directs health officials to enhance readiness amid heavy rains

Hyderabad, Aug.13 Minister for Health Damodara Raja Narasimha has directed the officials to remain attentive as the state is expecting heavy rainfall over the next three days, beginning Wednesday. In a teleconference with senior officials of the Health department, the Minister assessed the current situation. He emphasised that superintendents, Resident Medical Officers (RMOs), medical officers, doctors, and staff must remain at their hospitals during this period and that necessary arrangements should be made. Additionally, he instructed senior officials to cancel all leave for staff.Officials were also tasked with ensuring that prompt medical assistance is available for patients and pregnant women facing emergencies, and measures should be taken to prevent any hardships.Raja Narasimha emphasised that pregnant women nearing their due dates should be transferred to hospital birthing waiting areas where they can receive appropriate services. He instructed that ambulances and 102 vehicles be kept on standby, with drivers and EMTs available around the clock to respond to any emergencies and transport patients promptly.He also mandated that hospitals implement measures to prevent power outages, ensuring generators are activated immediately during any power interruptions, so that patient care remains uninterrupted. Moreover, the Minister requested that electricians be on duty in hospitals at all times. In light of the heavy rains, he called for precautions to be put in place to stop water from entering and pooling inside hospital facilities. The Minister requested that senior officials from the Health department conduct field visits over the next three days to assess the situation regularly and take appropriate actions as needed

Everyone must participate in fight against drugs: Metro MD NVS Reddy

Hyderabad, Aug.13 In response to the call given by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, "Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan" was organised at the Hyderabad Metro Rail office in Rasoolpura on Wednesday. HMRL Managing Director NVS Reddy administered a pledge to the officials and staff, urging a united fight against drug abuse. He emphasised that Hyderabad Metro Rail is actively participating in the battle against narcotic substances.

Jewelry shop owners should make strong security arrangements in their shops and surrounding areas:SP Rohit Raju



.....Bhukya Ranjit Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 13, Indian Chronicle: Jewelry shop owners should make strong security arrangements in their shops and surrounding areas, said District SP Rohit Raju. A meeting was organized with jewelry shop owners from across the district. The meeting was held at the IMA Function Hall in Kothagudem town. The owners of jewelry shops under the jurisdiction of all police stations in the district participated in this meeting. District SP Rohit, who participated in this meeting, made several suggestions to them. He said that the owners of gold jewelry shops can prevent thefts by installing CCTV cameras in their shops and surrounding areas. He said that jewelry should not be purchased from those accused of theft, and legal action will be taken against anyone who buys stolen property. He suggested that businesses should follow the instructions of the police and take precautionary measures to prevent thefts. He said that this meeting was organized keeping in mind the recent incidents happening across the state. He said that if gold jewelry traders see anyone suspicious around their shops, they should immediately inform the local police. He advised them to hire them only after knowing the complete details about the

people working in their shops and their behavior. He also said that they should have proper awareness about the movements of people living in the areas around their shops. He said that they should take proper precautions when they have to keep a large amount of gold jewelry in their shops. He wanted security guards to be deployed at their business complexes and patrolling at night. He said that in many theft cases that have occurred in the district so far, the accused have been caught based on CCTV cameras and the technology used by the police department, and justice has been delivered to the victims.

He asked everyone to take precautions to prevent thefts and cooperate with the police. Later, he inquired about the problems of the gold jewelry shop owners who participated in the meeting. Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh IPS, Illandu DSP Chandra Bhanu, Kothagudem DSP Rahman, Manuguru DSP Ravinder Reddy, Palvancha DSP Satish Kumar, CCS CI Ramakanth, Chunchupalli CI Venkateswarlu, Kothagudem 2nd Town Inspector Pratap, 1st Town Inspector Karunakar, 3rd Town Inspector Shiva Prasad, and other police officers and staff participated in this program.

‘Recognize electropathy in compliance with SC verdict’

Hyderabad, Aug.13 : Electropathy Practitioners Association State president M. A. Karim today said the State government should recognize electropathy in compliance with the Supreme Court of India's verdict.

Addressing media persons at Hyderguda on Wednesday, he said the electropathy was available in Ayurvedic, Allopathic, Unani and Homeopathic forms across the country. He said patients were being treated for various diseases, including cancer, heart disease and kidney diseases with this electropathy. He also said there were 5,000 electropathy clinics in the State and 10,000 doctors were providing services.

The Supreme Court had issued orders to the Union Ministry of Health, Medical and Family Welfare in 2011 to

recognize this electropathy, while the Rajasthan government recognized electropathy in 2018 and added that 80,000 doctors were providing treatment to the patients. He said the Telangana and AP State governments had not recognized electropathy so far. He expressed their concern that the medical and health department officials were raiding the electropathy clinics and harassing doctors without permission. He demanded that the Telangana government should recognize electropathy medical services otherwise the clinic establishment should be exempted from the Act. He said they had submitted a petition to the Hyderabad District Collector and medical and health department officials on this. The association's Chief Legal Advisor M. A. Rahim Khan, members Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, Dr Nisar Ahmed, Syed Riyaz Ahmed, Dr Zubair Ahmed and others participated in the meeting.

Telangana people should get chance to avail annual toll pass: Former MP Vinod Kumar

Hyderabad, Aug.13 : Former Karimnagar MP Boinapally Vinod Kumar today urged the Congress government to take necessary steps ensuring that the Telangana people get annual toll pass. As the database of private vehicles in the state were not uploaded in the Vahan portal which is under the control of Central government, the people of Telangana are in danger of losing the opportunity of getting annual toll pass of the FASTag. In order to get FASTag annual toll pass, the drivers of light motor vehicles (LMV) i.e. owners of cars and jeeps should upload their vehicle registration numbers and driving license details on Vahan and Sarathi portal managed by the Centre, he added.

“Through this scheme, the Central Government is

providing the facility to cross the toll gates 200 times (200 trips) in a year with a fee of just Rs. 3000. This will come into effect across the country from August 15. All the states in the country have already linked the vehicle numbers, driving license details etc. of private vehicles under their jurisdiction to the Vahan and Sarathi portal. Only Telangana state had kept it pending. Union Transport Secretary Umashankar has already wrote a letter to the Telangana Chief Secretary in this regard,” he pointed out and demanded the state government to pay special attention in this regard. He also demanded that the state government take immediate steps to link the details of all vehicles in the state to Vahan and Sarathi portals and ensure that the state people get the above facility.

GITAM Professor honoured with NWWA ‘Veerangana’ Award

Hyderabad, Aug.13 : Dr Pritee Ambarish Parwekar, Professor in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering at GITAM School of Technology, has been conferred with the prestigious ‘Veerangana’ Award by the Naval Wives Welfare Association (NWWA) of the Indian Navy. The award was presented today at the Zorawar Auditorium, Manekshaw Centre, Delhi, in recognition of her exceptional contributions to welfare activities and community development. The title ‘Veerangana’ is bestowed upon Naval wives who have made remarkable social contributions. Dr Pritee's impactful initiatives include founding the Youth Eco Club during COVID-19 to engage children from Navy, Army, and Air Force families in environmental awareness programs; conducting workshops for sailors and officers on AI-ML, cybersecurity, and social media; organizing eco-friendly street plays; leading tree plantation drives; and setting up free organic gardening classes for defence children.

Her community service extends to supporting old-age homes and orphanages, mentoring Naval Women Entrepreneurs, promoting eco-clothing brands by Naval wives, and participating in adventure expeditions to spread aware-



ness about the Indian Navy. She has also represented the Naval community at IDEX 2023, developed technology solutions for defence services, and supported startups by defence families. In addition to her social work, Dr Pritee is a software developer, full-time professor at GITAM, visiting professor at Singidunum University and Texas University, Subject Matter Expert for TCS, counsellor, yoga instructor, numerologist, astrologer, and certified Master Reiki instructor.

Sports Expo India 2025 will be held at Hitex Exhibition Centre on Aug. 22 & 23

Hyderabad, Aug.13 The 8th Edition of Sports Expo India 2025 will be held at Hitex Exhibition Centre on August 22 and 23. Announcing this at a press conference, T.G. Srikanth, Business Head, Hitex, said India's premier B2C expo for the Sports, Fitness, Wellness, and Nutrition sectors will witness the launch of eSportEx – an exclusive pavilion dedicated to the booming world of e-sports, gaming, and tech-driven sports experiences. The expo will feature 60 exhibitors from across the Sports, Fitness, Wellness, and Nutrition sectors. It will be open from 10 am to 8 pm on Day 1 and from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Day 2. Entry is free. Over 35,000 to 40,000 visitors are expected across the two days. Six power-packed activities, suitable for all age groups, will be a major draw. The curtain raiser Press Meet was addressed by T.G. Srikanth, Business Head, Hitex Business Centre; N. Narasimha Reddy, Regional Business Head, Bigbasket; Rajesh Vetcha, Race Director, NMDC Hyderabad Marathon; Aaryan Reddy, Co-Founder, Neo Athlos; Swathi Vasireddy, Director & Founder, Giggle Mug; Dr Saurabh Sureka, Founder & CEO, Celebration Makers; Vamsi Krishna V, Mentor, Telugu ESports Community, and Devaki Naga Vikram. Community Representative Narasimha Reddy of Bigbasket stated that their mission was to make healthy living more accessible.

Rajesh Vetcha announced that the Hyderabad Run-

ners Society will host 5K and 10K runs of NMDC Hyderabad Marathon in conjunction with the expo. The 5K will be held on August 23, starting and finishing at Hitex. The 10K will be held on August 24, starting from Hitex and ending at Gachibowli Stadium. Swathi Vasireddy of Giggle Mug shared that the Pedal Pulse family cycling event will be held on August 23 at 4 p.m. in three categories: 1.5 km, 3 km, and 6 km. John of Neo Athlos announced that 70+ participants will compete in this fast-growing Pickleball Tournament, which combines tennis, badminton, and table tennis. Hyderabad now boasts over 300 Pickleball courts, with the sport growing globally at a rate of 500%. Dr Saurabh Sureka (Celebration Makers) detailed a two-day event Grand Queen Women's Cricket League – encouraging non-professional women to participate in competitive cricket. On August 22, women will engage in skill challenges with a bowling machine. On August 23, four teams will compete in a T5 tennis ball knockout format.

Vamsi Krishna V highlighted that eSportEx will be India's first hybrid platform combining traditional sports with competitive gaming. About 2,500 players and YouTube celebrities are expected to participate. Other highlights of the expo include Calisthenics Demonstrations, MMA & Boxing Displays, and the Hydrox Fitness Challenge, offering something for every fitness and sports enthusiast.

Tejashwi claims Muzaffarpur Mayor has two EPIC numbers, days after allegation against Bihar Deputy CM

GNS News Agency, August 13

The Leader of the Opposition in Bihar, Tejashwi Yadav, on Wednesday (August 13, 2025) suggested that yet another high-profile name has two EPIC (Electoral Photo Identity Card) numbers, days after accusing Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha of the same. On August 10, Mr. Yadav stated that Mr. Sinha had two EPIC numbers, one as a voter for the Bankipur assembly constituency and another for the Lakhisarai assembly constituency. Mr. Yadav had also displayed it in front of the press. Similarly, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader, while addressing the press at his official residence, said that Muzaffarpur Mayor Nirmala Devi, who is likely to be the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) candidate, has two EPIC numbers and even her age is different. She is a voter of the Muzaffarpur assembly constituency. Mr. Yadav also claimed that even her two brothers-in-law Dilip Kumar and Manoj Kumar have two EPIC numbers. Following the allegation by Mr. Yadav, the ECI issued a notice to Muzaffarpur Mayor Nirmala Devi along with her two relatives and sought their reply by August 16, 2025. The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) Muzaffarpur sent them the notice. The former Deputy Chief Minister also asked why only the ERO (Electoral Registration Officer) of Bankipur assembly constituency sent a notice to Mr. Sinha in the two EPIC card matters. He added that Mr. Sinha should have gotten the notice from the Lakhisarai assembly constituency ERO as well.

Accompanied by RJD State unit president Mangani Lal Mandal and senior leader Abdul Bari Siddiqui, the RJD leader also claimed that Bihar BJP organisation General Secretary Bhikhubhai Dalsania, who was a voter of Gujarat till the last Lok Sabha election, has now become a voter of Patna district (Digha Assembly Constituency). Mr. Yadav, however, asserted that Mr. Dalsania has deleted his name from Gujarat. “Just see what is going on in the BJP; natives of other States are becoming the voters of Bihar, after the Bihar election, he will become a voter of some other States



and will keep casting votes for the BJP candidates,” Mr. Yadav said. He further alleged that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is removing those voters who are sympathisers of Opposition parties. “What I am wondering till today is that the Chief Election Commissioner of India, Gyanesh Kumar, has not briefed the media even once ever since the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) commenced in Bihar. In the evening, the ECI just issues a press note and does a fact-check by writing misleading news. What is going on in this country when the PM does not hold PC, the Bihar CM does not hold PC, nor even the Election Commissioner of India. What kind of democracy is it?” Mr. Yadav said. He also alleged that the BJP was earlier using the CBI, ED and I-T departments as tools to trouble the Opposition parties, and now the BJP was using the ECI. Bihar BJP countered Mr. Yadav's questioning of Dalsania's registration as voter in Bihar. BJP State Media In-charge Danish Egbal said that the RJD leader is issuing baseless statements in frustration after seeing his defeat in the upcoming assembly election. “Bhikhubhai Dalsania has been residing in Bihar for the past four years. Gujarat and Bihar are both integral parts of India and any citizen can register as a voter anywhere. Tejashwi Yadav should have this basic knowledge,” Mr. Iqbal said.

Aarambh libraries in Delhi give UPSC aspirants a glimmer of hope

GNS News Agency, August 13

In the heart of Delhi's bustling academic hubs, Aarambh libraries have emerged as safe, affordable spaces where thousands of UPSC aspirants, many from modest backgrounds, can focus on their ambition of serving the nation. For students battling long hours, financial strain, and isolation, these libraries offer more than desks and chairs – they promise dignity, security, and a sense of belonging. The initiative came in response to the death of three UPSC aspirants in a flooded basement library in Rajinder Nagar a year ago. The tragedy exposed the unsafe, cramped conditions in many private study facilities. Consequently, the Delhi government began converting underutilised DDA community centres into Aarambh libraries.

Three such libraries have been opened so far – two in Old Rajinder Nagar and Adchini, and the latest in Dwarka, by Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena in July. “While the grief can never be bridged, it's gratifying to have fulfilled a promise made,” the L-G had posted on X after inaugurating the library in Dwarka. Safety and comfort

Priced at a minimum of ₹1,000 per person monthly, each library accommodates 60 students per shift, allowing 180 students daily across three eight-hour shifts. The spaces are notably different from the cramped setups typical of education hubs and feature large glass windows, spacious desks, CCTV coverage, separate washrooms, and power-equipped study tables. “These libraries feel safer and more respectable than older private ones. Facilities like Wi-Fi, lockers, and even open-air gyms show real support for students,” says Piyush Kumar, a UPSC aspirant. Fostering collaboration The libraries not only cut costs but also nurture a sense of community. It is common to see students



helping each other with notes, discussing current affairs, or forming informal peer groups for mock interviews and answer-writing practice.

“There is a sense of shared struggle here. Even if you come alone, you end up finding people who push you to stay consistent. We motivate each other without even realising it,” says Shreya Kumar, another UPSC aspirant. In areas lacking quality study spaces, Aarambh libraries are a welcome alternative to poorly ventilated basement libraries. “In areas that aren't education hubs, students like us are still willing to risk studying in unsafe basements, not because we don't care about safety, but because we simply don't have better options. Aarambh gives us safety, dignity, and affordability. It finally feels like the Delhi government is listening,” says another UPSC aspirant Puneet Kumar Sharma. In view of the rising demand, the government has announced plans to expand Aarambh libraries to other major academic hubs like Mukherjee Nagar and Karol Bagh.

Prof. P. Venkatrao Appointed as Dean of School of Education

“August 13 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator” Professor P. Venkatrao from the Department of Education has been appointed as the Dean of the School of Education at the National Sanskrit University. “The University's Vice-Chancellor, Prof. G.S.R. Krishnamurthy, presented the official appointment order to Prof. Venkatrao in the VC's chamber. Faculty members from the Department of Education and other departments across the university congratulated him on his new role. They expressed their best wishes, hoping he would achieve greater positions and further advance Sanskrit education to new heights.



‘Snakes are our friends’: How Russian woman who overstayed her visa spent last 8 years hiding in forests



GNS News Agency, August 13

Nina Kutina, the Russian woman who was found in a remote cave near Gokarna in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, has told the police that she loves India, the forests, and meditation and is devastated about being sent back to her country. Gokarna police Sub Inspector Sridhar S R and his team found Kutina, 40, and her daughters, six and four years old, from a cave in the treacherous Ramatirtha hills of Kumta taluk Friday. The spiritually inclined Russian woman and her daughters were to be transported to Bengaluru Sunday to begin proceedings for deportation back to Russia after the police found that her visa expired in 2017.

Sridhar told that Kutina first arrived in India in 2016 on a business visa, and was drawn initially to the tourist and restaurant sectors in Goa and Gokarna. "But when her visa expired on April 17, 2017, instead of leaving, she chose to stay. Even after obtaining an exit permit in 2018 and briefly travelling to Nepal, she returned to India, disappearing into the coastal forests of Karnataka," he said. "She loved meditating and performing pooja for the gods in the forests. Fearing detection if she checked into any hotel, she chose to stay in the forests," said a police officer. The police said both of her daughters were born in India while she was in hiding. They, however, said she has refused to discuss their father, and authorities are still investigating whether she received any medical care during childbirth. Sridhar and his team found her during a routine patrol at the Ramatirtha hills. While checking for adventure enthusiasts who might have ventured dangerously into the landslide-prone forest,

they noticed footsteps leading to a cave. A plastic cover at the entrance and photographs of deities outside suggested that humans inhabited the area. Sridhar said they found some Russian books inside the cave. Upon entering, they found a child playing while Kutina and her other daughter slept peacefully. The police discovered that the trio had been residing there for the last two months, which later turned out to be the culmination of an eight-year journey in hiding. "We convinced her to come out, stating that there were chances of landslides in the area," Sridhar said, adding that when warned about snakes in the area, she replied that "the snakes are our friends and they don't harm us unless we trouble them". "She explained that during their regular visits to nearby waterfalls for bathing, snakes would roam around them peacefully without showing any aggression," he said. "During the rainy season, they lived in minimal clothing. Kutina had stockpiled enough groceries in the cave for their survival, and despite having candles, they rarely used artificial light, instead living by natural light," he said. Sridhar said this has been an unprecedented experience in his 18-year service. "I have seen some youth and sadhus venturing inside the forest, but never a mother with young children. They all look healthy and sane," he said. The police noted that when they arranged for the trio to spend Saturday night at an ashram, the children were thrilled by electric lights and beds, luxuries they had never experienced before. Sridhar said he received a WhatsApp message from Kutina in Russian Sunday morning, expressing her heartbreak at being separated from nature. "She wrote that she loved India, the forest, and meditation, but was devastated about being sent back to her country. She said that the police were the reason for separating her from nature," he said. Sridhar said that Kutina had taken care of her children very well during their stay. "In her mobile phone, there are a lot of photos where the children are seen happily posing. She had kept a schedule for kids which includes drawing, singing, chanting mantras, yoga and other exercises. Even on Sunday morning, she was teaching her kids yoga," he said. The police said they recovered her discarded passport near the cave and contacted the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), the agency responsible for registering, monitoring, and managing the stay of foreigners within the country.

IIM Calcutta rape case: 9-member SIT formed, Bengal women’s commission seeks report from police within 15 days



GNS News Agency, August 13

The West Bengal police Sunday formed a nine-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged rape of a woman inside a hostel of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta. The deputy commissioner of the South West Division constituted the SIT under the supervision of an assistant commissioner of police (ACP) rank officer. Meanwhile, the West Bengal Commission for Women has taken suo motu cognisance in the case and sought a report from the police within 15 days. "We have also contacted the family of the woman, and if they are comfortable, then we will speak to them and the woman. We have sought time from them," Leena Gangopadhyay, chairperson of the Commission,

The police had arrested Parmanand Toppanwar, a second-year student of IIM Calcutta and a resident of Karnataka, and charged him under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including rape, and seized his clothes and phone for forensic examination. This was after the woman, who is said to be a psychologist, alleged that Toppanwar called her to the campus on Friday on the pretext of counselling and then raped her after spiking her food and water and making her unconscious. The accused has been remanded to police custody until July 19. Police sources said they have collected CCTV footage from the traffic department showing that the woman had entered the campus. The police have requested the management of the institution to provide all CCTV footage from the gate to

the hostel, enabling the tracking of the accused's movement within the hostel. The police have requested detailed information from the management of IIM concerning campus security. This includes inquiries about the security protocols in place, the procedures followed for visitor entry, and the information that visitors must provide when signing the visitors' register. The police have seized the bill from the pizza delivery company that allegedly provided the accused with food on the day of the alleged rape. They have also recorded the statement of the delivery personnel. Sources indicate that the police plan to conduct a crime scene reconstruction at the hostel to recreate the sequence of events. Investigators have also been instructed to check if any photographs or videos of the survivor were taken or shared by the accused.

A senior police officer said, "Since the accused had met the victim on social media, the accused's social media account will be examined." Police sources have stated that the family members of the accused have been summoned to the police station. "This is important because the victim has been called for counselling, and it is essential to determine whether the accused has any prior history of mental illness," said a police source. Furthermore, the hostel room where the alleged rape occurred has been sealed and barricaded to avoid tampering with evidence. Forensic teams visited the premises and collected evidence such as glasses, bottles, and food packets. Meanwhile, IIM Calcutta issued a standard operating procedure (SOP) for students and professors. For the next few days, all deliveries will be restricted to the gate; no deliveries will be allowed to enter the premises. The SBI gate should be used for entering and exiting, it said. Students are advised to stay on campus for the next few days and should avoid communicating with external stakeholders, it added. According to an official at IIM Calcutta, the director in charge, Saibal Chattopadhyay, will address the students on Monday. Chattopadhyay has already met with the board of governors members, campus security officials, and student representatives following the alleged rape.

MLA Koram Kanakaiah Pays Tribute to Army Martyr.



Hyderabad, Aug. 13 Former minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao called for the prompt activation of the Kaleshwaram project's pumping motors to fill essential reservoirs and prevent an impending irrigation crisis for farmers. In an open letter addressed to Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Wednesday, Harish Rao expressed that farmers are suffering significantly due to insufficient rainfall and delays in water release. He pointed out that the government has not adequately filled various reservoirs on schedule during the ongoing monsoon crop season and urged that the Nandi Pump House at Package-6 be activated immediately to take advantage of the substantial inflows from the Godavari River. "Water must be pumped into reservoirs such as Mid Manair, Annapurana (Antantagiri),

Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, August 13, Indian Chronicle: "It is known that Army hero Banoth Anil Kumar, a native of Suryathanda in Karepalli Mandal, died in the line of duty after falling in the Kashmir Valley. On Wednesday, Yellandu MLA Koram Kanakaiah paid floral tributes to the martyr's mortal remains at the Karepalli Police Station.

The MLA expressed deep sorrow over the untimely death of Anil Kumar and prayed for his soul to rest in peace. He later took part in the funeral rites.

Ranganayaka Sagar, Mallanna Sagar, Konda Pochamma Sagar, and Baswapur, all of which are vital to the Kaleshwaram project and collectively have the capacity to irrigate around five lakh acres," Harish Rao said.

The BRS leader mentioned that the Sripada Yellampally reservoir, which has a total capacity of 20 TMCft, currently contains 14 TMCft and is experiencing an inflow of 22,300 cusecs. Meanwhile, the Sriram Sagar Project (SRSP) has 45 TMCft stored, out of its maximum capacity of 80 TMCft. Harish Rao emphasized the need to transfer water from Mid Manair to the Lower Manair Dam (LMD), which is currently at only 7 TMCft, well below its 24 TMCft capacity, to aid the SRSP Stage-II ayacut for both Vanakalam (Kharif) and Yasangi (Rabi) crops.

Violence of any kind in society should not be overlooked: Ambedkar University Delhi V-C amid unrest on campus



GNS News Agency, August 13

Amid growing campus unrest and allegations of a crackdown on dissent, Vice-Chancellor of Dr B R Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), Anu Singh Lather, has defended the administration's actions and her own controversial Republic Day speech, insisting that the university remains a democratic space that respects academic freedom. "Violence of any kind in any society should not be overlooked," Lather told, as she addressed the months-long tension triggered by a student's suspension, faculty disciplinary proceedings, and demonstrations over her speech that praised the Ram Mandir and urged that B R Ambedkar be seen as a national figure.

In her Republic Day speech, Lather had referred to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement as a 525-year-old issue, applauded the construction of the Ram Temple and called for Dr B R Ambedkar to be a recognised as a national figure instead of being seen only as a Dalit. It had drawn sharp criticism from student activists and some faculty members, who said it politicised an academic platform and undermined AUD's ethos. The unrest began in March after a final-year MA student was suspended for six months for allegedly criticising Lather's speech in an email sent through AUD's official internal system. The Proctorial Board, citing "indiscipline" and the use of "derogatory and disrespectful language against the Head of the Institution", had suspended and barred the student from the campus. "We

found out about the student's comments through an email that she had written," Lather said. "My only appeal to my students is to not distort anything I say. My comments on the Ram Janmabhoomi in my speech can be found in the video online. They should not be viewed with an agenda. AUD is a democratic space and all ideologies have a space on this campus. We do not punish students for sharing their views on campus as long it does not cross a line," she added. Lather further said, "Even in the case of the MA student, there is a certain policy and certain bodies take cognizance of actions by students on campus. The Proctorial Board had decided to take action against the student. I had intervened and later on written to the board to take a lenient view on the student's case." In April, protests had intensified after associate professor Kaustav Banerjee was issued a show-cause notice for allegedly "inciting disorder" during a student-led demonstration. The notice accused him of delivering a "provocative speech" that disrupted order and prompted police intervention. "Two issues had come up. First was the suspension of the MA student and the second was the protests that took place on campus in relation to an alleged suicide attempt at Karampura campus. They both happened one after the other. Violence of any kind in any society should not be overlooked," Lather said. The administration has since suspended several students after a protest in April allegedly turned confrontational. Registrar Navlendra Kumar Singh had earlier told The Indian Express that demonstrators surrounded his vehicle, causing damage, and refused to disperse until they were allowed to meet the V-C. "We have filed a police complaint. The FIR is yet to be registered. The students want to meet the V-C, but the V-C is not ready, as their approach is aggressive. We are ready to address the issues, but there needs to be a proper way to have a conversation," Singh said.

Lather defended the call to file a police complaint, saying that the move was to ensure safety on campus. She added that disciplinary actions were the result of institutional processes, not ad hoc calls. "The university decides on actions; it is never a reaction. The Proctorial Board has patiently handled the students' issues on this campus," she said. While Lather maintained that AUD upholds ideological plurality and due process, student groups alleged that the actions taken against them reflect an erosion of academic and democratic values. The suspended student, who is affiliated with the All India Students' Association (AISA), had earlier told "The action taken by the administration is representative of a larger and sustained attack on the academic and democratic spirit of AUD."

‘Indirect censorship’: Digipub moves Karnataka High Court supporting X Corp’s plea against takedown orders



GNS News Agency, August 13

The Digipub News India Foundation, a coalition of digital media organisations and independent journalists, Friday made submissions before the Karnataka High Court, supporting X Corp's petition against alleged subjective blocking orders on X issued by Central government officers across the country. A bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna was hearing the case challenging the blocking orders on X using Section 79 (3)(B) of the Information Technology (IT) Act. X Corp also raised issues with the Sahyog portal for intermediaries, which it has previously referred to as a censorship portal.

Previously, during Tuesday's hearing, X Corp's counsel, senior advocate K G Raghavan, argued that government officials were issuing the takedown orders for social media posts without applying any uniform standard. X Corp has been arguing that these takedown orders can be is-

sued only through the mechanism laid down by the Supreme Court in the case of Shreya Singhal vs Union of India, that is, through Section 69(A) of the Information Technology Act, and not Section 79 (3)(B). Raghavan previously argued that 69A had been upheld by the apex court on account of inherent safeguards, while 79(3)(b), which deals with the removal of protection from intermediaries like X, did not have such safeguards. Senior advocate Aditya Sondhi, representing Digipub, stated, "X is before the high court as an intermediary....the parties directly affected by the entire exercise that the government has come up with is us....these media organisations are in a dual capacity of providing and receiving content online." He pointed out that in the exercise of takedown of content by the intermediaries, the content creator in question did not get the chance to be heard. He also questioned the manner in which Rule (3)(1) (d) of the IT rules, which refers back to Section 79 (3) (b), is being applied, raising the issue of free speech implications. Referring to safe harbour protections of intermediaries being a free speech right, he said, "It is precisely this, the indirect censorship, that is now being played out through this mechanism. An officer unhappy with a news report etc not palatable to his personal politics, political master morality....sits in his office and says take it down. That is the chilling effect." Referring to the current takedown orders as well as the Sahyog platform, Sondhi stated that the situation was that of an "ad hoc executive regime". He added, "A judicial determination of an unlawful act by a duly constituted court of law on the one hand – and a cyclostyled form in the hands of an officer to fill in a couple of blanks, directly infringing Article 19 (1)(a) [freedom of speech]."

Police Tand by People In Distress - Tiryani SI Srikanth

“Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter. Jade eporter. Jade Srinivas. Indian Chronicle. August, 13. “The heavy rains that have been falling in Tiryani mandal ucsince last night have paralysed the life of the people in the mandal. As the streams in the mandal swelled, Tiryani SI Srikanth visited the nearby villages from time to time to find out the necessary measures for the people and took protective measures. Speaking at this time, he advised the people of the low-lying areas to be alert in the wake of heavy rains in the district and mandal as per the weather index. He advised that no one in the mandal should go near the dams where the waterfalls, streams and streams are swollen. Along with him, police personnel Rathod Srinivas, Gunman Srinivas police personnel and others participated in this program.



Flooded Rivers And Streams In Asifabad Mandal Bring Traffic To A Standstill

“Problems For Pregnant Women” Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter. Jade eporter. Jade Srinivas. Indian Chronicle. August, 13. “District officials who do not build bridges and roads are public representatives” Heavy rains are falling across the Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, the government has also declared a red alert, due to heavy rains in the Asifabad mandal center, the rivers and streams are overflowing, the movement of people has come to a standstill, the roads have turned into mud and potholes, the reason for this is the previous governments and the current government, why did the funds come for the Gundi bridge in the past, the contract tender was taken but the bridge cannot be built. A bridge should be built for the Orre to Appapelli village, a bridge should be built for the Thumpelli stream, a bridge should be built for the Orre to Ankusapur, similarly a bridge should be built for the Thumpelli stream, a bridge should be built for the Ansapur Orre, similarly, Mohada Venkatapur, Ada Dasnapur Vavudam Hirapur

Gundi Link Road Malanu Gondi Bridge If we keep saying this, people are facing serious difficulties due to the lack of proper road facilities and bridges for the Orre and the streams. The officials and public representatives have completely failed to sanction funds for these, and they are neglecting to build bridges and roads for the funds that have been sanctioned. If the government has sincerity towards the people and the public representatives are completely convinced by the votes of the people, then there is a great need to solve the problems of the people. Funds should be sanctioned for the bridges for the Thumpelli Gundi Stream, Appa Pelli, Ankusapur Orre, similarly, the Gundi Link Roads from Asifabad to Janakapur Main Road, Appa Pelli Hirapur Mohad, Venkatapur, Ganagaguda and other villages and roads should be sanctioned for them and roads and bridges should be provided to the villages in Asifabad Mandal Mandal.

‘Less than 10% of PMC’s goal achieved’: How cycle tracks fail cyclists in Pune city

GNS News Agency, August 13

In 2017, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) came out with a Comprehensive Bicycle Plan with an aim to create a 824- km cycle network and to increase the modal share of cycling from 3 per cent to 25 per cent by 2031. However, according to ground research by NGO Parisar based on the PMC data, only 83 kilometers of tracks have been built till date, and many of them have faded away or are not operational anymore. PMC’s plan envisioned 824 km of cycle network across the city with 531 km segregated cycle track, 154 km marked or painted cycle lanes, 75 km independent cycle ways/ greenways, 54 km or currently existing cycle tracks that are to be retrofitted, and 11 km of foot-path and cycle track merged. Tanzeel Allapur, Project Lead-Sustainable Mobility at Parisar, said, “The plan is very good. If some other city wants to do it, they should look at the Pune bicycle plan. But in implementation it has absolutely not met the goal that it set out to do. We have nowhere reached track length or increase in modal share envisioned. The cycling department at PMC was merged with the road department, so there is no dedicated authority to look after it as well.”

Ranajit Gadgil, avid cyclist and programme director at Parisar, said that comprehensive coverage of cycling tracks is really lacking in the city as some officials did not follow through on the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. “Cycle tracks need to be in really good condition and designed exceedingly well for cyclists to be able to use them. If there are problems with that cycle track—continuity, lack of ham, obstacles, host of other things—cyclists will just not use them. They will just start using the carriageway,” he explained. On roads like Fergusson College Road and Jungli Maharaj Road, where cycling paths exist along with the foot-paths, better marking and distinction could help pedestrians keep off the paths, said Gadgil. “If there are enough cyclists using that cycle track, then pedestrians sort of know that people are cycling on this. It is a chicken-and-egg problem,” Gadgil added. Kiran Wargale, a Pune-based cycling enthusiast, flagged safety concerns for cyclists in the city.



“Most roads in the city are extremely unsafe for cycling. It’s unfortunate, especially for a city that was once known for its vibrant cycling culture. Apart from a few exceptions like Aundh Road, Pashan–NDA Road, and some stretches in Pimpri-Chinchwad, the overall infrastructure is in a very bad state,” he said. “Poorly maintained cycle tracks, damaged roads where no tracks exist, and the constant threat from unruly traffic, especially heavy vehicles pose serious risks. As a result, many cyclists are forced to ride on the city’s outskirts, but even reaching those areas on a cycle involves significant danger,” he added. Another cyclist Ashwin said, “There’s no real thought given to integrating cycling into the city’s transport planning. Cycle lanes, where they exist, are mostly encroached and abruptly end. It feels like cyclists are invisible in the bigger mobility picture. Instead of being encouraged as a sustainable and healthy mode of transport, cycling is treated as an afterthought. Non-existent cycling infrastructure is a sign that the city is moving in the opposite direction of sustainable development.” He said that the focus should be on increasing awareness about cycling rather than focusing on building cycling tracks.

“Rented cycles with proper safety mechanisms need to be reintroduced so that more people are out on the roads and driving. Currently there is not enough demand for cycling tracks, they are empty when I drive on them. Only once there is more awareness and the demand is created, we can think of building cycling tracks,” he opines.

Despite CM’s warning, one Maharashtra minister threatens gramsevak, another says govt fund not from ‘our father’s pockets’

GNS News Agency, August 13

Days after Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis issued a stern warning to his cabinet colleagues against making controversial statements, two ministers have stirred fresh controversy with their public remarks — drawing fire from the Opposition. Social Justice Minister Sanjay Shirsat and Minister of State for Public Health Meghna Sakore-Bordikar, at two separate public events, made statements that went viral and sparked a political backlash.

At a public function in Bori village in her Jintur constituency (Parbhani district) on Saturday, Sakore-Bordikar was seen threatening a gramsevak: “Beware. This is my word. I will give you a tight slap if you don’t do the work... I will not tolerate favoritism. I will suspend you right away. Don’t I know what you do? If you can’t do the work honestly, submit your resignation.”

Opposition NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar posted the video online, taking a direct dig at Fadnavis. “After those who played rummy inside the legislative house, those who carried bags full of cash, those who ran dance bars, the state cabinet gets a minister who threatens the officials,” said Pawar. He alleged the minister was venting her anger because the gramsevak failed to bring enough people to her programme. “Devendra Fadnavis has found such ministers who not only defame his cabinet but also the state of Maharashtra,” he said. However, Sakore-Bordikar defended her remarks and said, “Rohit Pawar should not make allegations based on half-knowledge. The said gramsevak is known for harassing women beneficiaries and delaying their



rightful dues. I have received a number of complaints from him. My anger was to protect the interests of my dear sisters.” She also reminded Pawar of a past incident: “He should recollect how he had abused a police official inside the police station.” Meanwhile, in Akola on Saturday, Minister Sanjay Shirsat made light of accountability in handling public funds. “As for Rs 5, Rs 10, or even Rs 15 crore for hostels or social justice centres. I will approve it immediately. It’s government money... what’s going from our father’s pockets,” he said. Following criticism, Shirsat later clarified that his intention was to motivate people to come forward and demand funds. However, his own party senior and former minister Ramdas Kadam disapproved of the comment. “We are the government. We cannot be careless about government funds. Every single rupee of the government has to be used for noble work. I hope that he will change his position a bit,” said Kadam. This is not Shirsat’s first brush with controversy. He was previously in the spotlight after a video surfaced from his bedroom showing a bag allegedly filled with cash, an allegation he has denied.

Heavy rainfall, flooding feared in North Bengal, thunderstorms to continue in South Bengal

GNS News Agency, August 13

The weather office also issued a warning for heavy to extremely heavy rainfall over North Bengal for the next two days, raising concerns about the possibility of localised flooding. “The upper air cyclonic circulation over northeast Bihar & neighbourhood lay over northwest Bihar & adjoining northeast Uttar Pradesh and extended up to 4.5 km above mean sea level tilting southwards with height.

“The monsoon trough at mean sea level passed through Amritsar, Chandigarh, Shamli, Shahjahanpur, Lucknow, Chapra, Bankura, Canning, and thence south-eastwards to the northeast Bay of Bengal. Under the presence of the above meteorological conditions and strong moisture incursion, widespread light to moderate rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall activity with extremely heavy rainfall at one or two places very likely over North Bengal during the next two days,” reads the IMD bulletin. The IMD has issued a Red alert (Take Action) for Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts for Sunday, forecasting extremely heavy rainfall exceeding 20 cm at isolated places. Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Coochbehar are under an Orange alert (Be Prepared), with heavy to very heavy rain (7-20 cm) forecast at isolated locations. Meanwhile, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur, and Malda have been issued a Yellow alert (Be Aware), with heavy rainfall (7-11 cm) likely at one or two places. All North Bengal districts are expected to receive light to moderate rain or thundershowers at most places throughout the week. A moderate flash flood risk remains for watershed areas and hilly neighbourhoods in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri, and Alipurduar over the next 24 hours. IMD has also warned of landslide risks, localised flooding, traffic congestion, and possible damage to kutchha houses and roads. The public has been advised to avoid vulnerable areas, monitor river levels, and restrict movement in landslide-prone zones. In South Bengal, the IMD has issued a Yellow alert for most districts for Sunday. It said that Kolkata, Howrah, Hooghly, North and South 24 Parganas, East and West Midnapore, Nadia, Murshidabad, and Bankura districts might experience thunderstorms with gusty winds (30-40 kmph) at isolated places. Some South Bengal districts are expected to receive isolated heavy rainfall (7-11 cm) in the middle of the week. Kolkata is expected to have cloudy and humid weather, with light to moderate rain or thundershowers in the next 24 hours. The maximum temperature is expected to be around 32.2 degree Celsius, while the minimum temperature may remain close to 28.4 degree Celsius. Relative humidity will stay high, ranging



between 75 per cent and 96 per cent. The city recorded 009.0 mm of rainfall in the past 24 hours.

Girl from Mancherial dies by suicide in Hanamkonda, leaves note urging parental sensitivity

GNS News Agency, August 13

Hanamkonda: A 16-year-old girl from Mancherial district died by suicide at a private junior college in Nayeemnagar, Hanamkonda, on Sunday, reportedly distressed over her academic performance and lack of interest in the chosen course. Mittapalli Shivani was an MPC first-year student. According to police, she died by hanging in her hostel room.

In a suicide note allegedly written by her, Shivani expressed frustration over being forced into a course she did not wish to pursue. She said her poor academic performance had deepened her distress, and appealed to parents to consider their children’s interests and choices before enrolling them in academic programmes.

“I am unable to study this course. But you (parents) don’t understand it. I am crushed,” she wrote in the note. A case has been registered and an investigation is underway. Meanwhile, questions have been raised after the college management reportedly shifted Shivani’s body for post-mortem at MGM Hospital in Warangal without informing the family or police in advance.

Karnataka right-wing leader, 2 others arrested for poisoning school water tank; police say motive was to oust headmaster from minority faith

GNS News Agency, August 13

dri rama senaThe Karnataka Police recently arrested a Sri Rama Sene leader and his two accomplices for allegedly contaminating the drinking water at a government primary school. The Karnataka Police recently arrested a Sri Rama Sene leader and his two accomplices for allegedly contaminating the drinking water at a government primary school in Hulikatti village under Belagavi district. Eleven children had fallen ill after drinking contaminated water last month.

The trio had allegedly laced the drinking water with pesticides as part of a conspiracy against the headmaster of the school, who belongs to a minority faith. The three accused have been identified as Sagar Patil, president of the Savadatti taluk unit of Sri Ram Sene, Krishna Madar, and Magangouda Patil. Bheemashankar S Guled, Superintendent of Police, Belagavi, Saturday said, “Some students detected a foul smell (in the water) and informed the headmaster and another teacher, which prevented a larger tragedy. Some of the students who had consumed the water experienced nausea. They received immediate medical treatment and recovered.” According to a police officer, Sagar Patil was the mastermind behind the conspiracy. “He (Sagar Patil) wanted headmaster Suleman Gorenayak to be transferred or suspended. Gorenayak has served the school for 13 years and was on good terms with the villagers. After the incident was reported, the police began a probe.



A soft drink bottle was found near the water tank, and upon checking, it was found to contain pesticide,” the officer added. The police said they later found out that Madar had given a minor boy chocolates, condiments, and Rs 500 in lieu of emptying the bottle containing pesticides in the school water tank. During interrogation, Madar confessed that Sagar Patil had discovered his relationship with a woman from another caste, and he had threatened to ‘expose’ him if he did not participate in his conspiracy. Madar and Magangouda Patil had allegedly purchased the pesticide. A police officer said the minor will be a prosecution witness and receive protection from the law. “We utilised scientific evidence and student interactions to solve this case. This was a planned, deeply disturbing attempt motivated by communal hatred,” SP Guled remarked.

Ex-Armyman-turned-forest guard’s reforestation mission in Pune wins PM Modi’s praise

GNS News Agency, August 13

The barren slopes of the Khandoba hill at Dhamankhel near Pune district’s Junnar city tell a remarkable story of transformation. What was once a parched, lifeless land now thrives with over 1,200 trees, their roots drinking from trenches that store eight lakh litres of life-giving rainwater. Behind this green revolution stands Ramesh Kharmale, a former Armyman whose weekend hobby became a full-time mission and has caught the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. “Our family’s day starts at 5 am,” says Kharmale. “By 5.30 am, we’re in the field, watering, weeding, planting, digging. Three hours of work before the daily chores begin.”

This disciplined approach reflects Kharmale’s 17-year service in the Army’s Maratha Light Infantry. After retiring from the Army in 2012, the Pune native with a farming background briefly worked as a security guard at Union Bank’s Thergaon branch. But the air-conditioned comfort felt suffocating to a man accustomed to open fields. “I realised I couldn’t serve my country by sitting idle on a bank’s desk,” Kharmale says. The solution came naturally from thinking about environmental conservation. While he continued his job at the bank, weekends became mission time for Kharmale and his family, who would trek to barren hilltops with spades and seeds.

Before each monsoon, they dug trenches and small pits along slopes to trap rainwater, a traditional technique called continuous contour trenching. Seeds planted in these natural reservoirs had the moisture they needed to establish roots, while the captured water slowly recharged underground aquifers. This has resulted in over 400 m of trenches now dotting the landscape, capable of recharging groundwater by over 16 million litres annually during good rainfall years. Fig, neem, bamboo, peepal, and mahogany trees have created a micro-ecosystem where once nothing grew. “Recognising his work, Prime Minister Modi highlighted Kharmale’s work in his 123rd Mann Ki Baat broadcast, adding, “This recognition will inspire many others to become active agents of change.” That recognition was for his long-standing hard work. In 2013, Kharmale appeared



for a Maharashtra Public Service Commission exam, determined to make environmental work his full-time career. Appointed as a forest guard in 2014, he gained official support for his grassroots reforestation efforts. “PM Modi’s words have boosted our morale tremendously,” says Kharmale. His latest project, an “oxygen park” in Vadaj village near Dhamankhel, represents an evolution of his approach. The small forest patch is protected by trenches that serve dual purposes: water conservation and natural fencing against grazing animals. “This model can be replicated anywhere,” Kharmale explains. “And I believe that every forest department should try this approach across the country.”

Kharmale’s impact extends beyond physical transformation. Through school visits across the state and an active social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, he’s building a team of environmental conservationists. His message is: “Don’t just post statuses about environment conservation, get your hands dirty.” Army discipline, forest department guidance, family support, and community encouragement have all contributed to this success, which began as a weekend activity and evolved into a life’s mission,” Kharmale added. Recognising his conservation efforts, Kharmale has also been invited to the Independence Day celebrations in Delhi by the President Droupadi Murmu.

Two councillors among 5 BJP leaders booked for ‘misbehaving’ with Ludhiana Mayor Inderjit Kaur

GNS News Agency, August 13

Punjab BJP working president Ashwani Sharma addressing protesting councillors in Ludhiana MC office. (Express Photo) Punjab BJP working president Ashwani Sharma addressing protesting councillors in Ludhiana MC office.

The Ludhiana police booked five BJP leaders—two city councillors and spouses of three women councillors of the party—and 20 unidentified people late on Saturday on charges of “misbehaving” with Mayor Inderjit Kaur and “creating ruckus in her office”. The division number 5 police registered the FIR a day after high drama unfolded at the Ludhiana Municipal Corporation’s Zone D office in Sarabha Nagar, when a group of BJP councillors reached there to meet Kaur to “discuss pending civic issues” on Friday.

The accused are BJP councillors Gauravjeet Singh Gora (ward number 80) and Mukesh Khatri (ward number 76) as well as Kulwant Singh Kanti (husband of Kuldeep Kaur, councillor from ward number 33), Vishal Gulati (husband of Ruchi Gulati, councillor from ward number 73), and Jatinder Gorayan (husband of Ruby, councillor from ward number 17). However, the BJP councillors have alleged that Kaur “misbehaved” with them and that



they were forced out of her office. They had alleged that Kaur was “biased” in her approach and “doesn’t pay heed to the pending civic issues in the wards” represented by councillors from Opposition parties. On the other hand, Inderjit Kaur, a first-time mayor from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has alleged that the “reality was opposite”. She claimed that she did not misbehave with any BJP councillor and that it was them who had “started shouting during the peaceful meeting and created ruckus”. She has said that she listens and resolves pending issues of all councillors irrespective of their party. Demanding an “unconditional apology” from the mayor, BJP councillors and workers have started an indefinite protest against the mayor at the Zone D office. On Saturday, Congress and Shiromani Akali

Dal (SAD) councillors also supported the BJP councillors and joined their protest demanding an apology from the mayor. Punjab BJP working president Ashwani Sharma also joined the protest. The sit-in will continue till the “respect” of the councillors is restored and the mayor tenders an unconditional apology, he said.

Sharma, meanwhile, said the ruling AAP “cannot escape” from resolving civic issues of the common people and that it was the responsibility of the elected councillors to question the mayor if works were not being done. The FIR has been registered under the sections 221 (obstructing public servant in discharge of their duties), 132 (assault or using criminal force against public servant), 126 (4) (wrongful constraint), and 351 (2) (criminal intimidation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya

Sanhita on a complaint filed by Assistant Sub-Inspector Saudagar Singh. Singh said in his complaint that he was deputed at the Zone D office on August 1, when the BJP councillors who came to meet the mayor “created hooliganism” and “blocked her way when she tried to move out”. He further said that the “BJP councillors obstructed the mayor in performing her public duty”. Dr Satish Kumar, a spokesperson for the BJP’s Ludhiana unit, said, “The indefinite sit-in at Zone D will continue until the mayor tenders an apology for misbehaving with our councillors who had gone to her only to discuss pending works of the people. It is the mayor’s duty to answer why garbage piles aren’t being lifted or why roads are waterlogged. Such FIRs are not going to scare us. The Congress and SAD councillors are also supporting us.”

IVF and gender bias: Why are we still choosing boys?



GNS News Agency, August 13

A well-off, educated couple from Canada walked into my clinic last week, seeking consultation for in-vitro fertilization (IVF). “After ten years of marriage, we’ve been yearning for a child and would value your guidance,” the wife said. It was a standard conversation—until she quietly added, “I would like a male child.” Her husband, though slightly hesitant, nodded in agreement.As a gynecologist, such requests are, unfortunately, not rare. IVF, while a medical marvel offering hope to countless childless couples, has also opened the door to something far more problematic: sex selection.

It prompts a painful question—why this persistent preference for boys?

From the operating table to the boardroom, women have proved themselves over and over. Whether it is medicine, law, aviation, science, or governance, women are thriving. They run countries, lead corporations, and redefine success across every domain. Yet, a slice of society continues to believe that a male child holds higher value—a belief not just outdated but dangerous.In the Indian context, this preference has deep cultural roots. Traditionally, lineage and inheritance have been perceived as the domain of the male child. Whether it’s lighting the funeral pyre or passing down the family name and business, the responsibility has always been reserved for sons. “A father cannot exist without

out a mother,” I remind my patients, yet many still hesitate to envision a daughter performing these roles.Underpinning these decisions are centuries-old expectations and pressures. Indian women are often burdened—silently or overtly—with the expectation of giving birth to a boy. I’ve seen couples devastated by the birth of a second girl. I’ve met women emotionally blackmailed—threatened with abandonment or divorce—because they failed to provide a “male heir.” And I’ve had educated, affluent couples ask for male sex selection in IVF simply to appease family elders with ideas of inheritance and legacy.

To such couples, I ask: Why not a girl? Can’t she lead your legacy, inherit your business, care for aging parents, and bring the same joy, prosperity, and pride? Yet, most often, my questions are met with awkward chuckles and patronizing smiles. We remain shackled by beliefs that a male child is central to carrying forward the family line—beliefs that desperately need to change.Denied legal sex selection in India, many such couples head to international clinics in Dubai, Thailand, or Singapore, where the practice is not illegal, thus legitimizing their biased preferences. But regardless of venue or legality, the problematic sentiment remains the same.Here in India, our laws are clear. The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, amended in 2003, strictly prohibits sex selection before or after conception. While illegal centers do continue to operate, the government has intensified scrutiny to curb this menace. However, this vigilance, while necessary, often leads to undue pressure on ethical doctors and innocent couples navigating the IVF journey the right way.Beyond legal enforcement, however, we must shift mindsets. Education and public awareness campaigns should aim to dismantle these damaging beliefs. Legal reform alone won’t suffice; societal expectations, especially those that quietly coerce women into choosing male offspring, must be publicly challenged.IVF may be a gift of science, but how we choose to use it reveals who we are as a society. Until every child, regardless of gender, is equally welcomed and celebrated, the work remains unfinished.

28 Maharashtra sugar mills face action for non-payment of dues to farmers

GNS News Agency, August 13

sugar industryA report from the sugar commissionerate shows that mills in the state had crushed 854.50 lakh tonnes of cane and were expected to pay Rs 31,587 crore as the Fair Remunerative Price (FRP) to farmer The sugar commissionerate recently issued Revenue Recovery Code (RRC) against 28 sugar mills in Maharashtra for failing to clear their dues to cane farmers for the 2024-25 season.These mills now face the possibility of their sugar stocks being seized and auctioned to pay farmers their dues.A report from the sugar commissionerate shows that mills in the state had crushed 854.50 lakh tonnes of cane and were expected to pay Rs 31,587 crore as the Fair Remunerative Price (FRP) to farmers for cane purchased from them.Till July 15, Maharashtra reported 98.70 per cent of clearance of cane dues. A total of 135 mills have cleared 100 per cent of their FRP till date.Meanwhile, the Bombay High Court struck down the 2022 government resolution that allowed FRP to be paid in parts. FRP is linked with sugar recovery – which is the ratio between sugar produced and cane crushed – and the 2022 resolution had mandated that payment be done as per the recovery of the current season. This meant the first payment would be as



per the base recovery, and once the season is over, the rest would be paid as per the final recovery percentage of the mill. This was a break from the past, where the mills paid the FRP as per the recovery of the last season, and most mills paid FRP in one instalment.Farmer leader Raju Shetti had moved the Bombay High Court against this move, and the high court had struck down the 2022 government resolution.Yogesh Pande, Spokesperson, Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana, said, “We have already filed a caveat in the Supreme Court in this regard. We will pursue the matter to its logical end.”

Two EROs in Bengal face scrutiny as 102 ‘ghost voters’ discovered in Nandkumar and Rajarhat-Gopalpur

GNS News Agency, August 13

The EROs, who were summoned to the CEO's office on Saturday, reportedly admitted to making errors in the "quick disposal" of a recent surge in applications for voter registration.The EROs, who were summoned to the CEO's office on Saturday, reportedly admitted to making errors in the "quick disposal" of a recent surge in applications for voter registration. West Bengal's State Election Commission has taken a stern stance against administrative negligence after the discovery of numerous “ghost names” on the voter lists in two municipalities. The commission has summoned the electoral registration officers (EROs) of Nandakumar in the Purba Medinipur Assembly constituency and Rajarhat-Gopalpur in the North 24 Parganas constituency, citing serious lapses in the verification process for new voters.

The issue came to light during a sample survey conducted on the instructions of the Election Commission. The survey revealed that the minimum required documents were missing for the inclusion of 102 new voters. Of these, 59 were found in Rajarhat-Gopalpur and 43 in Nandakumar. These new entries were not verified by the respective booth-level officers (BLO), a mandatory step in the process.The EROs, who were summoned on Saturday, reportedly admitted to making errors in the “quick disposal” of a recent surge in applications for voter registration. This influx of applications is believed to be linked to the upcoming special intensive revision (SIR) of the voter list, a process recently launched in Bihar and set to begin in Bengal. According to sources, there have been instances of 40-50 online applications being submitted in a single hour, with a large number of these quickly approved.The Election Commission has also noted a disturbing trend of EROs allegedly sharing their login credentials with colleagues, a practice that is strictly illegal. While an OTP is required to access the portal, the commission maintains that the ERO, as the users of their registered mobile numbers, cannot evade responsibility for the inclusion of “ghost names”. Officials also believe that a lack of proper monitoring by district election officers is a contributing factor.Furthermore, the BJP has alleged that 49 deceased voters remain on the list for ward number 8 of the Midnapore municipality.A senior Election Commission official said there was “no need to rush” the process of including names, adding that EROs must take personal responsibility for the verification of each application, stating, “There will be no excuse for this. Otherwise, there is no way but to take legal action.”He also indicated the need for an investigation into who is applying online under “ghostly names”.This is not an isolated incident. The Election Commission has previously taken legal action against EROs in Moyna, Baruipur East, and Kakdwip for similar irregularities. A recent complaint against the ERO of Rajarhat Newtown was later found to be untrue.The commission has also highlighted a growing inconsistency between the reports submitted by BLOs and those of higher authorities. Sources within the commission claim that a sig-



nificant portion of the hundreds of online voter registrations being processed hourly in some constituencies are, in fact, fake.The commission official has stated that legal action will be taken against the two EROs for a “breach of discipline” after a full investigation is completed.

Sarpanch distributes booklets listing Congress’ unfulfilled promises in Mukhra village



Adilabad: Sarpanch Gadge Meenakshi on Sunday distributed booklets highlighting the Congress government's unfulfilled poll promises to residents of Mukhra (K) village in Echoda mandal. The booklets listed the six guarantees made by the party during the Assembly elections.

Meenakshi said the Congress had won public support under Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy by making what she called “false promises,” and alleged that none of them had been fulfilled even after 20 months in office. She pointed out that the party had pledged to implement its guarantees within 100 days of assuming power, but had failed to deliver on any.The sarpanch said that the Congress government had not extended the promised enhanced Rythu Bharosa support to farmers.

Home to at least 51 Kabutarkhanas, Mumbai shuts its doors to pigeons as citizens, bird lovers protest



GNS News Agency, August 13

Local residents and bird lovers who converged at Dadar’s iconic Kabutarkhana on Sunday morning found the nearly century-old pigeon feeding ground covered in thick sheets of grey tarpaulin.The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) informed that they have shut the grade-II heritage structure amid concerns of health hazards over pigeon feeding.“All citizens are hereby informed that it is strictly prohibited to offer and feed food items to birds and animals at this site. Feeding food to birds at places of public gathering like these can trigger fungal infection and respiratory diseases,” says a board at the Dadar Kabutarkhana. The notice also warns of a Rs 500 fine on those who violate the directive and feed pigeons at the site.

The move has drawn opposition across several quarters with members of the Jain community staging a peaceful “yatra” in Colaba to oppose the closure of the city’s pigeon-feeding spots. On Sunday, Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha also wrote to the Mumbai municipal commissioner Bhushan Gagrani, calling for alternative feeding spots for pigeons.Built in 1933, the site is managed by the Dadar Kabutarkhana Trust – whose trustees, along with animal rights activists, had filed writ petitions in the HC against the BMC’s drive. (Express Photo/Akash Patil) Built in 1933, the site is managed by the Dadar Kabutarkhana Trust – whose trustees, along with animal rights activists, had filed writ petitions in the HC against the BMC’s drive. The stringent BMC measures come on the heels of the Bombay High Court order issued on July 30, directing the civic body to lodge FIRs against persons “illegally” and in a “defiant” manner feeding pigeons at Dadar West, among other feeding areas in Mumbai, despite the policy prohibiting the feeding.

“Despite clear directives which are sought to be implemented very rigorously, and court refusing to grant any stay on such directives of the BMC, it appears to be rampant that the feeding of pigeons at these prohibited places has continued unabated,” the high court observed on July 30.According to records, the city is home to at least 51 kabutarkhanas, with the Dadar feeding ground being among the most iconic spots. Built in 1933, the site is managed by the Dadar Kabutarkhana Trust — whose trustees, along with animal rights activists, had filed writ petitions in the Bombay High Court against the BMC’s drive.Pointing to the illegal feeding of pigeons, the HC, while hearing the writ petition, said that the issue was paramount to public health.

While some animal welfare groups and trusts have opposed the drive, the move has been welcomed across quarters over the health hazards posed by pigeons. While

some animal welfare groups and trusts have opposed the drive, the move has been welcomed across quarters over the health hazards posed by pigeons. (Express Photo/Akash Patil)In light of the HC directives, the civic body on Saturday evening commenced its drive to install bamboo poles and lay out plastic sheets over the Dadar feeding ground to enforce the ban. On July 3, the state government had directed the BMC to immediately shut down all pigeon feeding grounds, following which the BMC had launched a crackdown by imposing penalties against those illegally feeding the birds.For the record, the BMC is entitled to levy a fine of Rs 500 upon anyone who is found feeding animals/ birds in non-designated areas, under the civic cleanliness and sanitation bylaws of 2006, framed under Section 461(ee) of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888.The closure of the city’s Kabutarkhanas have come amid several experts pointing out that pigeon droppings, feathers, and nesting material carry harmful pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi that can cause severe respiratory and systemic illnesses, particularly in busy areas like Dadar’s feeding grounds that host a bustling populations of pigeons.Besides concerns over pulmonary diseases, pigeon feeding and subsequent bird droppings have left citizens grappling with dirty and unhygienic premises, pushing them to incur huge costs in cleaning and maintaining their premises.Voices of protest

The move has drawn criticism among animal rights activists as well as members of the Jain community, for whom the act of feeding pigeons holds religious values. Appealing for the ban on pigeon feeding be lifted, over thousand members of the Jain community on Sunday morning carried out a “Shantidoot Yatra” from Colaba to the Gateway of India. During the course of the rally, which saw three Jain monks in attendance, members demanded that the Kaburkhanas remain open.Feeding pigeons in Mumbai is now banned, with fines for violators, and in light of the HC directives, the civic body on Saturday evening installed bamboo poles and covered out plastic sheets over the Dadar feeding ground to enforce the ban. (Express Photo/Akash Patil) Feeding pigeons in Mumbai is now banned, with fines for violators, and in light of the HC directives, the civic body on Saturday evening installed bamboo poles and covered out plastic sheets over the Dadar feeding ground to enforce the ban. (Express Photo/Akash Patil)

“Before taking such drastic steps, the government should have at least conducted studies around Kabutarkhanas to establish that people within 1 – 2 km radius of the feeding spots have been impacted. There is no such study to prove that pigeons are negatively affecting the health of citizens as all these diseases can also be caused owing to other factors. We will wait till August 7 to see what order is issued by the HC,” said Puran Doshi, a member of the Jain community and former corporator from Colaba, who joined the protest on Sunday.Meanwhile, minister Lodha appealed to the civic body to arrive at a balanced middle ground and offer alternative arrangements for feeding, in a letter to the civic chief on Sunday.“Was it appropriate for the MCGM (Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai) to abruptly halt a long-standing cultural and religious practice of animal feeding, without initiating dialogue with concerned stakeholders to explore alternatives,” wrote Lodha in the letter. Suggesting alternatives, Lodha recommended open spaces at BKC, Race Course, Aarey Colony and Sanjay Gandhi National Park as safe and regulated feeding spots.

SMEs in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad seek govt intervention to cushion blow of Trump’s tariffs on India

GNS News Agency, August 13

factory output growth in maySmall- and medium-scale industries in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad are mostly vendors and sub-vendors of the automotive industry in the district. In Pimpri-Chinchwad alone, more than 5,000 small and medium-scale industries employ over 3-4 lakh people in various engineering operations. Small-scale industries in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad have urged the Central and Maharashtra governments to take immediate steps to mitigate the negative effects of the 25 per cent tariffs on imports from India proposed by United States President Donald Trump.

Industrialist Arun Firodia has called for a drastic reduction in electricity charges as well as interest rates to ensure the sustainability of engineering exports. Firodia, who is the chairman of Kinetic Group, said drastic steps like a reduction in electricity rates have to be taken to keep up the competitiveness of Indian engineering goods in the US and world market.“Our industries should get electricity at Rs 2 per unit,” he said. At present, industrial units purchase electricity at Rs 8.32 per unit in the state, which is one of the highest in the country.“The government must take steps to increase the purchase power of the consumer by reducing domestic taxation,” he said.Last week, Trump announced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports from August 7, alongside an additional but unspecified “penalty” for India’s defence and energy imports from Russia.Small- and medium-scale industries in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad are mostly vendors and sub-vendors of the automotive industry in the district. In Pimpri-Chinchwad alone, more than 5,000 small



and medium-scale industries employ over 3-4 lakh people in various engineering operations. SMEs are also involved in exports directly or indirectly. Precious stones, engineering goods, pharmaceutical, textiles are some of the major exports from the country to the USA.Abhay Bhore, president of the Federation of Small Scale Industries Association in Pimpri-Chinchwad, urged both the state and Central government to take urgent steps to mitigate the effects of the tariff.“Engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, electronics and industrial packaging units are based on the US export markets for their survival. The tariff, Bhore said, will result in loss of jobs as well as closure of the industries.“Most industries are going through a rough patch with this tariff; it can really be a body blow to the industries,” he said. Bhore requested Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis to immediately interfere to ensure this crisis is resolved.“The sector requires handholding and the chief minister must take urgent steps to help the sector,” he said.

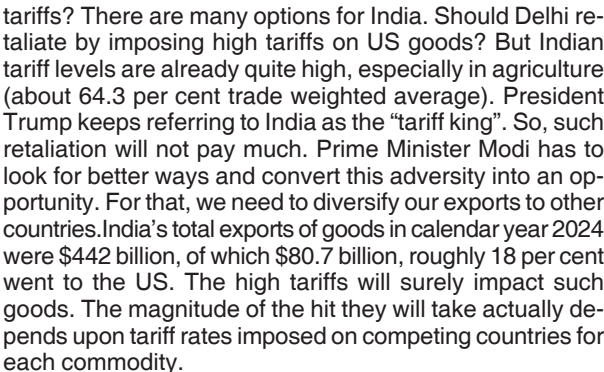
SMEs in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad seek govt intervention to cushion blow of Trump’s tariffs on India

factory output growth in maySmall- and medium-scale industries in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad are mostly vendors and sub-vendors of the automotive industry in the district. In Pimpri-Chinchwad alone, more than 5,000 small and medium-scale industries employ over 3-4 lakh people in various engineering operations. scale industries in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad have urged the Central and Maharashtra governments to take immediate steps to mitigate the negative effects of the 25 per cent tariffs on imports from India proposed by United States President Donald Trump.

Industrialist Arun Firodia has called for a drastic reduction in electricity charges as well as interest rates to ensure the sustainability of engineering exports. Firodia, who is the chairman of Kinetic Group, said drastic steps like a reduction in electricity rates have to be taken to keep up the competitiveness of Indian engineering goods in the US and world market.“Our industries should get electricity at Rs 2 per unit,” he said. At present, industrial units purchase elec-

tricity at Rs 8.32 per unit in the state, which is one of the highest in the country.“The government must take steps to increase the purchase power of the consumer by reducing domestic taxation,” he said.Last week, Trump announced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports from August 7, alongside an additional but unspecified “penalty” for India’s defence and energy imports from Russia.Small- and medium-scale industries in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad are mostly vendors and sub-vendors of the automotive industry in the district. In Pimpri-Chinchwad alone, more than 5,000 small and medium-scale industries employ over 3-4 lakh people in various engineering operations. SMEs are also involved in exports directly or indirectly. Precious stones, engineering goods, pharmaceutical, textiles are some of the major exports from the country to the USA.Abhay Bhore, president of the Federation of Small Scale Industries Association in Pimpri-Chinchwad, urged both the state and Central government to take urgent steps to mitigate the effects of the tariff.”

Inside India's first AI-powered anganwadi: How a rural classroom is bridging the digital divide



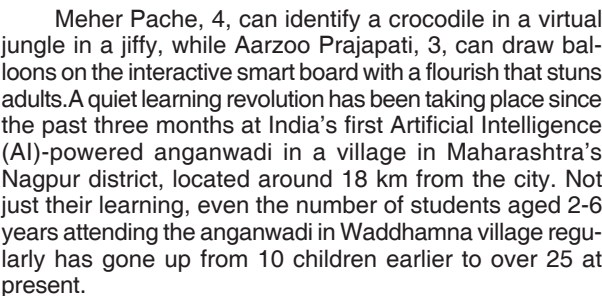
How does one navigate the challenge of Trump's high

This scenario seems probable only if India offers something substantial. It could be crude oil/gas purchases from the US, or defence items, or high-tech chips. Also, India can offer to lower duties on a wide variety of imports, from whiskey to luxury cars to even some agri-products such as walnuts and cranberries and put in place import quotas on other sensitive agri-products. The US's interest in agriculture is more in soya and corn, both GM crops. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had allowed GM cotton, traces of which are already in our food system. PM Modi has to take a stand, based on science, whether to allow GM food crops like rapeseed-mustard or BT brinjal, which are home-grown or to let in GM soya and corn through imports under tariff rate quotas. Reforming our own agriculture should remain a priority. Agri-R&D is the way forward, especially in the face of the high tariff duties. But the calibration to reduce duties on agri-products has to be done gradually and carefully. This is an overdue agenda, irrespective of Trump's tariff pressures today. Hope India can do it.

carefully. This is an overdue agenda, irrespective of Trump's tariff pressures today. Hope India can do it.

Chola naval ascendancy clubbed martial hegemony with mercantile collaboration, provisioning warships, recruiting mariners and amassing siege-equipment without democratic will. This was at odds with the dharmic ideal of righteous rule. Though 11th-century Chola navies realigned trade from the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean, their profits were not redistributed for the upkeep of coastal nagarams. The Cholas were not classical democrats. The real reason behind their return to public discourse is not democracy but the same political impulse that led Margaret Thatcher to turn to the Victorians, or the Victorians to turn to the Greeks. There is no need to shy away from marvelling at the fluid grace of a bronze dancing Shiva from Chola times. Indians, like the Greeks, Britons and Americans, too deserve to celebrate their antiquity's heritage. But an uncritical historicism marks the vanity of present-day ideologues when concealing past foibles. One cannot help but also ruminate on the fact that back in 1940, Vedic scholar Justice T Paramasiva Iyer revealed that in the 10th and 11th centuries, during the reign of Rajaraja-I, Rajendra-I and Kulottunga-I, the supposed location of the Ram Setu was shifted from the Korkai harbour to its currently famed site at Adam's Bridge. The consecration of the Rameswaram lingam at the Rameswaram temple officiated a new tradition of Vaishnavite and Shaivite synergism in southern India. Political pundits may feel tempted to join the dots keeping in mind that a 21st-century history of the Cholas is also a history of the present. The writer teaches at O P Jindal Global University and is the author of *The Great Indian Railways*, *Indians in London* and *Adam's Bridge*.

"If the BRS did nothing, how have several lakh acres come under cultivation? What has the Congress done in the last two years? The Palamuru-Ranga Reddy project is 90 per cent completed. What stopped the Congress government from completing the remaining 10 per cent works?" he asked. Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Monday, Srinivas Goud said Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy had failed to retrieve the bodies of workers stuck in the SI BC tunnel after the mishap.



Vinayak Mahamuni, a 2021-batch IAS officer and the Nagpur Zilla Parishad CEO, says, "We chose this particular anganwadi because of its accessibility, the seva's (Kukde's) enthusiasm and its proximity to other centres for training visits. It also offers a secure environment for safeguarding the equipment." To ensure transparency, the anganwadi was retrofitted with Wi-Fi-enabled CCTV cameras that can be accessed by key stakeholders, including Mahamuni, his deputy and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO). Though the Zilla Parishad initially faced challenges in finding the right tech partner for the mission, Mahamuni says they eventually roped in Qolaba, a firm working under the Centre's IndiaAI programme. www.indiaai.gov.in/

anganwadi From just 8-10 students earlier, nearly 25 students attend the Waddhamna village anganwadi regularly.

Stating that the anganwadi was refurbished recently to both meet the new technological requirements and attract more children, Mahamuni says, "These frontline educators (anganwadi workers) were trained to navigate this new world of smart learning to ensure that children even from the remotest of areas get a chance to learn in an engaging and modern environment." Aware that anganwadi workers already juggle multiple roles — from cooking meals to keeping records — Qolaba structured their training programme as a three-month module to ensure they did not get overwhelmed. Over the past two months, a team from the company started working on a user-friendly system built on the anganwadi workers' familiarity with smartphones. Trained by Qolaba, Kukde uses 10 VR sets and the interactive smart board for around one hour each day to teach the students, who spend five hours at the anganwadi (from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm) six days a week. Before its inauguration, despite the anganwadi giving the children breakfast and a mid-day meal, she said they had just 10 regular students, with most others enrolled only on paper. "Now, over 25 children come to anganwadi regularly, filling the classroom with fresh energy and curiosity," Zilla Parishad CEO Mahamuni said they took care while integrating the syllabus with the AI system. "The content was designed carefully to suit the needs of the children before being mapped to the tech platform," he says. Stating

robust relationship with the U.S. The Modi government has, in practice, followed the path of strategic autonomy. Both strategic autonomy and strategic subservience carry costs. India appears increasingly prepared to bear the cost of autonomy — rather than of subservience. Turning into a frontline of any U.S. strategy for containment of another country or expansion of its own interest can be fatal — ask Ukraine. Mr. Trump has done India a favour by silencing the call for abandoning strategic autonomy. If there was any doubt about strategic autonomy, the Trump moment has clarified it. Mr. Trump wants to restore manufacturing and jobs in the U.S. and has, in the process, unsettled global trade. Access to its market has been a lever of American power for long, and Mr. Trump is just blunt about it. A trade deal may resolve some immediate issues, but India cannot ignore the reality that in a world where every country has turned protectionist, export-driven growth is a narrow and difficult path. Mr. Trump has made it amply clear that he does not want China being replaced by any country in U.S. supply chains. It will be foolhardy to assume that any future U.S. President will be fine with that either.

It is as if no country wants to import anything other than plastic toys and T-shirts. India could pay more attention to leveraging its domestic market to build its economy and manufacturing. Considering the rapid automation and the consequent limits of job growth in manufacturing, 'making for the world' is not sustainable for India, economist Raghuram Rajan has pointed out. Mr. Modi on Sunday exhorted Indians to augment domestic consumption. A domestic market-driven development model needs to be articulated strongly. The priority and the emphasis need to shift. The Trump moment tells India two things — strategic autonomy is alive; and neoliberalism is dead. India has to navigate the path ahead, and the U.S. remains a key partner in that. It is reasonable to assume that the U.S. will remain the most powerful state on the planet for several decades to come. Relations with the U.S. will continue to be a major determinant of India's capacity to realise its ambitions and make progress. Getting this one relationship right will be critical for India. Neither obsequiousness nor confrontation can advance India's relations with the U.S. India should also learn that soft power is supposed to be soft, not loud and screeching.

Is India plumbing the depths of groundwater?



Of course, national trends obfuscate more worrisome regional ones. India's groundwater crisis becomes most apparent when we take a closer look at its use for agriculture and to quench the thirst of the country's burgeoning urban populace. The 2023 report found that 91% of the groundwater is extractable; the rest is natural discharge. And of the annual extraction, irrigation and domestic consumption divert 87% and 11% respectively. Only 2% is for industrial use. The bulk of India's groundwater-stressed areas lie in North and Central India, plus some parts of interior Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Punjab and Haryana: Satellite-based studies have found that between 2003 and 2020, Punjab and Haryana lost 64.6 BCM of groundwater. Between 2002 and 2021, groundwater levels dropped by 70% across all monitored wells in Punjab, with the water table plummeting by more than 4 metres. The tubewell is a common sight in the paddy fields of Punjab. It uses a motor to pump water up through a bore and into a temporary reservoir on the surface. From there, the water flows to the fields. Three-fourths (72%) of Punjab's irrigated area today bank on tubewells. The State also provides subsidised or free electricity to power these tubewells, among other appliances, in order to make farming in this region more profitable. But over the years, the pendulum of the region's water dependence has swung the other way. Rather than keep farming viable for farmers, as envisaged at the start of the Green Revolution, Punjab and Haryana have rendered water-intensive agriculture the norm.

Labour Minister C. Aranganayagam contended the AIADMK was following DMK founder C.N. Annadurai's policy of not discriminating against any community. But, it was the DMK, which professed to follow the path shown by Annadurai, that was following a wrong policy. "Buttressing the AIADMK stand, the Law Minister argued that there was a question whether the DMK, at the time of its formation, should be an organisation of Dravidians or for the welfare of Dravidians. It was Annadurai who decided that persons belonging to any single community should not be discriminated against because of their birth and said anyone could become a member of the organisation," a report in The Hindu said. Congress (I) MLA S. Peter Alphonse had then charged that a sustained and planned anti-Brahmin campaign had been going on for the last 15 days. It was undertaken to threaten the Chief Minister, frighten her and unseat her at a time she embarked on a programme of wiping out anti-national forces. It was aimed at creating an atmosphere of hatred in the State, he said, adding raising the issue in the House that day was the next stage of the

Uttar Pradesh: The upper Ganga-Yamuna doab and the surrounding areas of western Uttar Pradesh also practice water-intensive agriculture and experience groundwater stress. Uttar Pradesh as a whole is extracting 71 units of water for every 100 units recharged but there is a sharp contrast between its eastern and western regions. Almost all 'over-exploited' blocks in the State are in its west, per a 2020 report of the CGWB. In some districts in the region, the water table has dropped by more than 20 m in the last few decades. There are two sets of reasons. One is as in Punjab/Haryana: large areas under paddy and wheat, land being devoted to cultivating sugarcane (which is even more water-intensive), unchecked use of tubewells, and subsidised electricity for pumps. The other is region-specific: Uttar Pradesh's groundwater is also stressed to a significant degree by urbanisation (see next section). Together, in 2017, about 11% of the State's blocks were 'over-exploited'. Policies to conserve water and the occasionally strong monsoon have reversed trends for short periods but the long-term prognosis is clear: western Uttar Pradesh is on thin ice. Eastern Uttar Pradesh receives more rain and its rivers have more volume, so its aquifers often recharge faster than they are depleted. Rajasthan: Rajasthan presents

India's unique genetic legacy: implications for health and ancestry

India's genetic heritage stems from a single out-of-Africa migration roughly 50,000 years ago, followed by interbreeding with Neanderthals and Denisovans. Early mixing between Ancestral North Indians (ANI) and Ancestral South Indians (ASI) produced a distinct genetic signature. Subsequent contributions from Ancient South Asian hunter-gatherers, Early Iranian farmers, and Steppe pastoralists further enriched this diversity. While ancient admixture shaped the deep genetic framework, more recent practices of endogamy have preserved this variation within ~5,000 distinct ethnic groups (as represented in different coloured dots), essentially locking in the genetic landscape of earlier eras. This has led to the fixation and enrichment of founder mutations, offering valuable insights into gene function and disease biology. Illustration: Courtesy, Meghana

In July 2024, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rajbhushan Choudhary said in the Rajya Sabha: "In order to assess the long-term fluctuation in groundwater level in Tamil Nadu, the water-level data collected by CGWB in Tamil Nadu during November 2023 has been compared with the decadal mean water levels for the month of November from 2013 to 2022. ... Analysis of water level data indicated that about 72.6% of the wells monitored registered a rise in groundwater levels." But a longer long-term trend points the other way. In 2024, of 14.45 BCM of groundwater extracted every year in the State, 13.51 BCM was used for irrigation. Some urban pockets including Chennai are also overdrawing groundwater but as industrial needs are of late being met more by surface water and desalination, agriculture remains the principal concern. ry-season cropping is almost entirely watered by groundwater because, unlike in North India, the State receives the bulk of its rain in the winter. By the mid-2020s, 106 talukas out of 313 assessed were 'over-exploited'. There has been a gradual shift in cropping patterns: farmers in drier areas have been favouring less water-intensive crops such as millets, pulses, and maize while some others switched from sugarcane to cotton or horticulture watered by drip irrigation. But the bulk of agriculture in the State is focused on water-intensive cash crops.

By 2015, groundwater was the sole source of water for more than 630 urban local bodies in Uttar Pradesh. Apart from Meerut and Agra, Allahabad, Ghaziabad, Kanpur, Lucknow, Moradabad, Saharanpur, and Varanasi have been trending deeper into 'critical' or 'over-exploited' status in recent years. In Barmer, Jaisalmer, and Jodhpur of west Rajasthan, deep wells and stepwells are already overdrawn to support their growing populations.



country's rich genetic diversity. Importantly, this work laid the foundation for understanding genetic predispositions to diseases prevalent in India, informing personalized medicine and public health strategies. By integrating geographical and temporal contexts, the study also contributed to reconstructing India's population history.

India’s burden of malnutrition and obesity: where diet makes or breaks



For the past eight years or so Sobha, who is in her 50s and works as a domestic help, has been diabetic. Apart from religiously taking her metformin tablets, she did not think too much about her condition. Recently, however, constant fatigue, swollen ankles, and vision problems made her go back to her doctor. She was shocked when she was told that her blood sugar levels were too high, her haemoglobin and vitamin D levels were dangerously low, and that she was borderline obese. “But I eat a normal diet and I do not indulge in sweets often. I do not know why my sugar is high or why I seem to be putting on weight, despite not eating much. The doctor wants me to eat more vegetables and fruits and switch from rice to ragi. But I work as a domestic help and mostly eat the food provided by my employers. Also, I cannot afford to buy fruits and vegetables on my income. Even fish has become so expensive. We also do not get pulses or legumes at subsidised rates from ration shops anymore,” she says.Sobha’s story is being played out across the country. People like her are among the millions of malnourished, obese, persons with diabetes in the country, who will, over time, develop serious complications of diabeteses such as renal failure because basic lifestyle changes-- especially dietary changes -- that are required to keep non-communicable diseases (NCDs) under control are beyond their means.

“In a bid to ensure that people do not go hungry, the nation opted for food security, and for this calorie-dense grains and cereals are supplied at subsidised rates to people through the public distribution system. But it is the poor in the country who are now paying the price for the lack of nutritional content and dietary diversity in their food with their health. Healthy foods are expensive, and in the absence of any policy-level effort to make these accessible to the poor, the cycle of malnutrition, obesity, and NCDs will continue,” says T.S. Anish, Associate Professor of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Manjeri.The Global Food Policy Report 2024, ‘Food systems for healthy diets and nutrition’, released by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) last year, reported that 16.6 % of Indians suffered from malnutrition because of poor dietary habits. It said that at least 38 % of the Indian population ate unhealthy foods, while only 28 % ate all five recommended food groups, which included at least one starchy staple food, one vegetable, one fruit, one pulse, nut or seed, and one animal-source food.Yet another report, the United Nations’ State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report published in July last year said that 55.6% of Indians cannot afford a healthy, balanced, and diverse diet because eating healthy is a costly affair. This is however lower than the 2017 data, when the figure was 69.5 %. The report, published by five UN agencies, described a ‘healthy diet’ as comprising four key aspects: diversity (within and across food groups), adequacy (sufficiency of all essential nutrients compared to requirements), moderation (foods and nutrients that are related to poor health outcomes) and balance (energy and macronutrient intake).

Socio-economic and gender disparities have been fuelling India’s double burden of malnutrition -- a paradox wherein malnutrition co-exists with obesity. According to the WHO, “the double burden of malnutrition is characterised by the coexistence of undernutrition along with overweight and obesity, or diet-related noncommunicable diseases, within individuals, households, and populations, and across the life course.”Urbanisation seems to be one of the driving factors of this double burden, as the urban lifestyle encourages the easy availability of high-fat and ultra-processed food and beverages. The situation is exacerbated by additional factors such as low levels of physical activity and sedentary lifestyles.Maternal undernutrition compromises foetal growth and increases the risk of children who may be underweight, stunted, and micronutrient deficient. On the other hand, maternal obesity or overnutrition could lead to gestational weight gain (possibly complicated by gestational diabetes) and babies who run the risk of insulin resistance in later life.As per National Family Health Survey - 5 data, under-nutrition in children is rampant -- 36% stunted, 19% wasted, 32% underweight -- while among adults, 31.7% of women and 28.6% of men in urban areas and 19% of women and 18.8% men in rural areas were obese.The Dietary Guidelines for Indians (DGIs) developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN), Hyderabad, and released last year, said that 56.4% of total disease burden in India could be attributed to

unhealthy diets.

The report recommended that no more than 45% of calories in the daily diet should come from cereals and millets; 15% from pulses, and beans (protein sources), and the rest should come from nuts, vegetables, fruits, and milk. But the reality of the Indian diet is that it is highly deficient in protein, with nearly 70% of the caloric requirement met through carbohydrates and the intake of micronutrient-rich vegetables, and fruits much below recommended levels.In 2019, the EAT-Lancet Commission published recommendations about healthy diet patterns that can sustain 10 billion people in an environmentally friendly manner by 2050. In 2020, the International Food Policy Research Institute published a paper on how well the Indian dietary pattern fitted in with the EAT-Lancet reference diet.The study found that Indian households who spend the least on food show the greatest reliance on whole grains, starches, and processed foods, with little else. This pattern is maintained across the rural-urban divide. Protein makes up only 6-8% of the caloric intake, against the 30% in the reference diet. Fruits and vegetables make up about 8% of daily calories in the reference diet.The wealthiest city dwellers get almost a third of their calories from processed foods. Even among the poorest, 8% of calories come from these foods for urban and rural residents. In South India, processed foods make up 13% of diets, vs. 8% in North-east and North India.The study pointed towards “a lack of availability, accessibility, awareness, and acceptability” as other major causes for the poor quality of Indian diets and recommended that subsidies on healthy foods should be the norm. Large-scale awareness campaigns were needed to help people understand why their dietary diversity needed to improve.

Sreejith N. Kumar, a Thiruvananthapuram-based physician who has been at the forefront of Eat Right campaigns in Kerala, says that dietary diversity or the quality of one’s diet need not be a complicated affair.“One just needs to follow the “MyPlate” dietary guideline (from the U.S. Department of Agriculture) which says that half of your plate be filled with fruits and vegetables, a quarter each is filled with grains and protein. This roughly falls in line with the ICMR-NIN guidelines that no more than 45% of calories come from cereals,” he says.The heavy reliance on carbs in every meal and sedentary work has led to spiralling levels of abdominal obesity in both rural and urban India. This excessive carb and fructose (from sugary, processed foods) intake is the starting point of fatty liver disease, a phenomenon that has engulfed Kerala, Dr. Sreejith says.

Ensuring dietary diversity or the consumption from a wide range of food groups is key to achieving optimal nutrition and staving off micronutrient deficiencies and thus malnutrition.NFHS-5 data shows that only 28% of adults consume all five recommended food groups.Dr. Sreejith says that the first imperative to healthy eating should be awareness of the importance of dietary diversity and a change in mindset on what needs to be on one’s plate.

“For healthy eating to be affordable, the accent should be on encouraging people to eat vegetables and fruits which are locally and seasonally available. You do not need broccoli, spinach, and Greek yoghurt, but can opt for the innumerable varieties of leafy vegetables (amaranthus), moringa leaves, and other local vegetables (eg: banana stem and flower). Eggs are an affordable source of protein,” he says.The idea is to prioritise vegetables, include moderate amounts of protein and fat, and lower the amount of carbs.

In Kerala, local self-governments and Kudumbasree units have taken up several initiatives at the ward level to encourage household vegetable farming in grow bags so that fresh produce is available at least in a small way in every household. However, larger policy initiatives are needed to support the nutritional requirements of a huge section of the nation’s population, including the subsidised supply of healthy and diverse food options as well as the imposition of a fat tax or health tax on the sale of ultra-processed and high fatty foods to limit the consumption of these items.In this context, Arun Gupta, paediatrician, public health expert, and convener of the Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest, points out that weak and subjective labelling and advertising laws are letting junk food giants enjoy the freedom to make profits at the expense of public health.In an article in The Hindu, ‘Flawed food regulations fuel the obesity crisis’, Dr. Gupta says that the Economic Survey 2025 recommendation that a health tax be imposed on ultra-processed foods to curb their consumption is being derailed by the same “industry-friendly, subjective food marketing regulations”.“India should adopt a stringent front-of-pack marketing labelling system (to curb unrestricted advertisements of unhealthy processed foods); fix clear salt/sugar/fat limits for foods high in fat/salt and sugar and frame stringent advertising laws. Lastly, the government should consider launching a campaign on the risks of consuming ultra-processed food in all languages,” Dr. Gupta adds.At the State-level too, farming policies should be able to leverage local food systems which include a diverse variety of local vegetables, pulses, and millets, so that the nutritional content of diets can be improved.

Why does Delhi’s local train system lie in ruins? | Explained

The story so far: While the Delhi metro has recently announced a facility to buy QR tickets on 11 different apps, the Delhi suburban Railway, often referred to as the Delhi local, lies derelict.

When did the system start?

Delhi got its local train service in the first decade after Independence. On January 2, 1955, Delhi’s first local train ran from New Delhi station to Sarojini Nagar, then known as Vinay Nagar. The network then gradually expanded to connect Delhi with its neighbouring cities. Today, the suburban system links seven key hubs across the National Capital Region (NCR) — from Sonapat, Bhiwani, Rewari and Palwal in Haryana to Meerut, Ghaziabad, and Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh — with Delhi at its centre.

What is its current state?

Built to serve suburban commuters, this network was meant to ease traffic and support daily travel. But in reality, it’s overcrowded, unreliable, and neglected. According to Dr. Velmurugan Senathipati of the Central Road Research Institute, despite its wide reach — especially in NCR’s rural areas — the Delhi local carries just 0.5% to 3% of commuter traffic, far below the ideal 6-7%. Passengers report waiting over an hour, 15 times longer than the metro, only to board jam-packed coaches. Sarita Sethi, a government employee commuting from New Town, Faridabad to Okhla, states, “My commute should ideally be 25 minutes but it’s always nearly an hour long due to unscheduled halts as express trains are prioritised.” Nikhil, a railway employee, says, “There are too many passengers and too few trains.

Forget about sitting, during evenings, you can’t even stand in the train.” Unlike the Metro, enforcement of women-only coaches is lax in the local. Mrs. Sethi says, “Men often enter the ladies coach brazenly. Safety and theft are constant concerns. When the train’s late in the evenings, the journey from the station to home can easily become a nightmare.” Dr. Velmurugan’s study confirms this insecurity, as women make up just 14.6% of local train passengers.Is the metro a better alternative?The local train service in Delhi is much more affordable than the metro. Dr. Velmurugan’s research shows that nearly 40% of suburban rail passengers earn less than ₹5,000 a month. For them, the local train is not just a choice, it’s the only option they can afford.A local train ride from Greater Noida to Delhi costs just ₹15, compared to ₹90 by metro or ₹69 through a bus-metro combo, excluding last mile connection fares. Over a month, that’s ₹750 by the local versus a staggering ₹4,500 by metro. Moreover, a Monthly Season Ticket (MST) brings costs down to just ₹270 a month or ₹9 a day.Additionally, local trains have a dedicated vendors’ bogey, widely used by dairy farmers to transport produce to markets like Sadar Bazaar and Chandni Chowk. But even this advantage is fading. Amit, a dairy farmer from Ajayabpur village in Greater Noida, says, “We had to stop using the local because delays were spoiling the produce. My friends now either rely on road transport or have quit the trade altogether, it just isn’t profitable anymore.” These concerns have driven passengers to explore more reliable — though far costlier — alternatives, such as private buses or personal vehicles.What should be done?

Dementia — the urgent need for India to invest in elder care



India’s population is rapidly ageing. The share of individuals aged 60 or older is expected to touch 20 crore by 2031. Estimates indicate it is then projected to increase to nearly 20% of the total Indian population by 2050. With age being a major risk factor for dementia - an umbrella term for several diseases affecting memory, other cognitive abilities and behaviour that interfere significantly with a person’s ability to maintain their activities of daily living - India faces an alarming potential increase in the number of people with age-related cognitive decline. In 2023, the Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI) and LASI-Diagnostic Assessment for Dementia reported that the prevalence of dementia in India among individuals aged 60 and older was 7.4%, with higher rates in women and rural regions. The study estimated that by 2036, the number of cases would quadruple, touching 1.7 crore.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared dementia a public health priority in 2012 and launched a Global Action Plan on the public health response to dementia (2017 – 2025) which emphasises critical areas such as dementia awareness, risk reduction, diagnosis, treatment, caregiver support, and research. As India grapples with the challenges of a rapidly growing elderly demographic, the need for specialised elder care has never been more urgent, experts say. Currently, India has a severe shortage of resources, trained caregivers, and comprehensive healthcare systems to adequately address the needs of those suffering from dementia. Despite advances in drug development, risk reduction remains the only proven prevention tool, Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), the global federation of over 100 Alzheimer’s and dementia associations, has warned. Calling on governments around the world to urgently fund dementia risk-reduction research, education, and support services, ADI has said that nearly 40% of projected dementia cases can be delayed or potentially even avoided by addressing risk factors. While 40 governments worldwide have so far developed national dementia plans, the proposal is yet to gain momentum in India.

Asserting the importance of early detection, awareness and effective care systems, Thomas Gregor Issac, associate professor at the Centre for Brain Research (CBR) at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru, said there is a need for expanded healthcare infrastructure, professional training, and a national dementia policy. This will help address India’s growing dementia challenge, which includes early diagnosis and treatment gaps, he said. Pointing out that dementia is often misunderstood in India, he said this was due to a lack of awareness and cultural misconceptions, which led to delayed evaluations and diagnosis. This in turn considerably impairs the quality of care. “A large chunk of pre-dementia syndromes like mild cognitive impairment and subjective cognitive decline is often misdiagnosed, underdiagnosed and undiagnosed. While the thrust should be on better screening strategies at the community level, a national portal or dementia registry that is fully functional, ensuring patient and caregiver anonymity, but with proper medical data, blood test reports and neuroimaging data can be a wonderful resource for all researchers in the country working on different angles of this problem,” he said.

A previous global survey by ADI revealed that a shocking 80% of the public still incorrectly believes that dementia is a normal part of ageing rather than a medical condition. “In a value-driven society such as India, where intergenerational support and family ties are strongly embedded in cultural norms, help-seeking behaviour for dementia remains low. The idea of using care facilities or depending on care homes is often perceived as a failure to fulfil familial responsibilities and is associated with stigma. The absence of proper support networks for caregivers greatly increases the financial, emotional, and physical

strain, which frequently results in stress, burnout, and weakened health, all of which influence the standard of care given to people with disabilities or chronic illnesses,” Dr. Issac explained. P. T. Sivakumar, professor of psychiatry, and head of the Geriatric Psychiatry Unit at the Department of Psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru, said dementia care requires a holistic, public health approach with a focus on prevention, early diagnosis, comprehensive post-diagnostic support, daycare, long-term care and caregiver support. Promoting public awareness to facilitate timely diagnosis, and a dementia-friendly community with adequate resources to support care were essential, he said. Dementia care should be community-based through the development of a cadre of community-based health workers, with a primary focus on integrated health and social care for the elderly population, he said. “Increasing the investment to promote community-based healthcare of the elderly and long-term care systems is essential to prepare for the rapid growth of the elderly population in the next two decades. The development of the cadre of ASHA workers at the community level two decades ago was one of the biggest healthcare reforms for maternal and child healthcare. It is time to develop a similar cadre of health workers with a dedicated focus on the elderly population, including for dementia care,” he said. Asserting that training and capacity-building of health workers at all levels of the health system to promote dementia care was also essential, Dr. Sivakumar said there was an urgent need to develop programmes and services for dementia care under the existing policies and schemes relevant to the elderly. “The National Mental Health Programme and the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly should be strengthened adequately to support dementia care. States with high proportions of elderly population like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, etc. need to focus on this area,” he said. NIMHANS has launched a pilot study for Amyloid PET imaging to diagnose Alzheimer’s disease, the most common form of dementia which can impair memory and significantly lower quality of life.

Ramani Sundaram, executive director of Dementia India Alliance (DIA), said despite its impact, a majority of dementia cases are identified only in the advanced stages when intervention options are limited, care costs are high, and the quality of life for individuals and their families is severely compromised.

Pointing out that dementia is a public health and economic emergency, she said without early detection and intervention, India’s already stretched healthcare infrastructure will bear the brunt of rising hospitalisations, emergency admissions, and long-term institutional care. Late-stage dementia care is significantly more expensive than early interventions. DIA president Radha S. Murthy said public health systems would soon be overburdened due to a lack of community-based support. “Families suffer financially and emotionally with unplanned expenses and the demands of full-time care,” she added.

According to a study published in the Indian Journal of Public Health in 2013, the cost of dementia care in India in 2010 for 37 lakh people was ₹23,300 crore annually. It was estimated that at present, families of 88 lakh people with dementia would be spending about ₹1,18,902 crore annually to take care of their kin. Based on current projections, the economic burden on households to take care of 1.7 crore people with dementia by 2036, would be a staggering ₹3,08,395 crore annually, experts pointed out. Despite this growing crisis, India continues to lack adequate infrastructure, resources, and policies to support dementia patients and their families. A recent paper by researchers from CBR highlighted the need for a comprehensive dementia policy in India to address the needs of the older population and their caregivers on a national scale. This policy should prioritise effective dementia prevention strategies and equitable allocation of resources, incorporating evidence-based approaches. The policy should also integrate dementia care into both geriatric and mental health plans, stated the paper published in The Lancet Psychiatry in January this year.

Establishing such a policy, the paper noted, required extensive consultations among various stakeholders and organisations, including government bodies, healthcare professionals, researchers, and individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

The wait for judicial finality

In 2019, the Waqf Board in Kerala staked claim over more than 400 acres of land in Munambam, a coastal village in Ernakulam district. The inhabitants of Munambam are mostly Christian families numbering around 600. When several residents of the village began demanding restoration of the revenue rights of their holdings, the State BJP saw an opportunity. The party unleashed a campaign arguing that enactment of the new law would resolve the issue. It also hoped that this pitch would help it make some inroads into the Christian votes of the State. However, its hopes were dashed when it later emerged that the law would be of little help in solving the issue as there are no specific provisions in the 2025 amendment that will directly address the issue. BJP leaders have themselves clarified that they will have to wage a legal battle to get the issue solved.

The ruling LDF and the Opposition UDF are united in their opposition to the Waqf (Amendment) Act and wasted no time in campaigning against what they termed as “deceitful acts” of the BJP to communally polarise Kerala. Immediately, BJP leaders, including Union Ministers, went on a damage-control exercise. They tried to save the party from political embarrassment and from the possibility of losing the trust of the residents of Munambam residents and Christian voters by requesting them to wait for just three weeks. They contended that the Rules of the amended Act would be notified in this period. However, the Union government is yet to publish the Rules, even as the constitutional validity of the Act is being challenged in the Supreme Court. The intense legal battle may take time to conclude and could further delay the notification of the Rules.

To add to the BJP’s woes, legal experts have been cautioning the residents of Munambam against being too optimistic about the changes that the Rules could bring in to support their cause. They say no Rule can prescribe anything which has not already been mentioned in the parent law. Rules, they argue, are the enabling provisions of the parent law; they are nothing but specific instructions for the implementation of a law.Meanwhile, the new chairperson of the Waqf Tribunal, T.K. Minimol, who was a district and sessions judge serving in Thrissur, will have to consider afresh the litigation regarding Munambam, initiated two years ago.The constitutional challenges raised regarding the 2025 Act have left the Kerala Waqf Board, which is on an extended term, in a confused position. The term of the present Board, which is headed by a nominee of the CPI (M), ended on December 19, 2024. The Kerala High Court



To add to the BJP’s woes, legal experts have been cautioning the residents of Munambam against being too optimistic about the changes that the Rules could bring in to support their cause.

had asked the Board to continue in office for two more months or until the election for picking up members, whichever is earlier, was completed. Its order came before the legislation was enacted. The 2025 legislation, which has done away with the election process, has proposed that members be nominated to the Board. Also, it has made provisions for nominating non-Muslims to the Board, which has come under legal challenge before the Supreme Court. The Board has to put on hold the process of reconstitution even after the expiry of its term.The State government, which had earlier thought of reconstituting the Board as prescribed in the Waqf (Amendment) Act, appears to have decided not to act in haste and wait for the Court’s verdict as it had raised objections to several provisions of the Act. After hesitating for some time, the Kerala government decided to implead in the litigation before the top court challenging the constitutional validity of the 2025 legislation. The Board had acted in this direction much before the government took a call on challenging the new legislation. The post of the Chief Executive Officer for the Kerala Board will also have to be filled up shortly.

Much like the residents of Munambam, the Kerala government too is waiting for the legal battle to be over to decide its next steps, both legal and political. With the local body elections, considered the semi-finals to the Assembly polls to be held next year, around the corner, the State government is treading a careful path. It does not want to antagonise any sections of society.

To secure US trade deal, key ministries told to list what they can bring to talks table



FOLLOWING US President Donald Trump's tariff sledgehammer, the government has kicked off an exercise to thrash out concessions across sectors that can be offered in the tariff negotiations later this month. Key economic ministries have been asked to see what they can still afford to offer to sweeten New Delhi's deal when the US team is here on August 25.

To reach an agreement, the Trump administration has been demanding much more than what the government has offered in its market access commitments, including lowering of tariffs across the board and removal of non-tariff trade barriers.As policymakers grapple with Trump's announcement of a 25 per cent tariff on goods from August 7, alongside an additional but unspecified "penalty" for its defence and energy imports from Russia, economic ministries have started sending in sectoral tariff concessions in their jurisdictions.There are indications oil refiners have started reducing Russian oil purchases. Some of these concessions, if calibrated well, could ensure an opening up of the domestic economy, sources aware of discussions at the highest levels told The Indian Express. In fact, it was an external crisis that had forced the reforms of 1991.Most importantly, the sources said, an unnecessary show of bravado in countering some of Trump's assertions, however ridiculous they may be, should be avoided.

India was one of the first countries the Trump administration had expected to sign a deal with, but slow progress has been a source of frustration for Washington DC. Like countries around the world scrambling to deal with Trump's tariff threats, India had largely adopted a principled, but non-confrontational, stance in an attempt to balance selective concessions with caution to safeguard its economic growth, and circumvent a backlash from domestic producers.Sources closely tracking the US talks with others said a majority of the countries that rushed to sign deals with the world's biggest economy ended up with lopsided agreements that effectively extracted more than what it gave. This includes the UK and Australia that have a trade deficit with the US.On talks with New Delhi, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told CNBC Thursday: "Well, I don't know what's going to happen; it will be up to India. India came to the table early. They have been slow-rolling things, so I think that the President, the whole trade team is frustrated with them. And also, India has been a large buyer of sanctioned Russian oil, that they then resell as refined products. So, they have not been a great global actor". The assumption in New Delhi has always been that Washington DC will maintain a differential of 10-20 per cent in tariffs between China and India; and that the Americans would be cognizant of India's traditional redlines that have endured for decades, including concerns over GM food crops and the need to safeguard the interest of the vast subsistence-

Even before Trump's 'penalty' threat, Indian refiners began cutting down on Russian oil imports

Amid increasing pressure on India from the US and other Western powers over the past couple of months, Indian refiners — led by public sector players — began cutting down on Russian oil imports, much before US President Donald Trump's announcement earlier this week of an unspecified tariff "penalty" on New Delhi for its defence and energy imports from Moscow. Latest vessel tracking data shows that July deliveries of Russian crude — which would have been contracted May or early June — to Indian refiners fell significantly. Industry and trade sources also indicated that Indian public sector refiners have, for the time being, halted future contracting of Russian oil, the mainstay of India's oil imports for the better part of the past three years.

Trump has now said that he "heard" that India will no longer be buying oil from Russia, calling it a "good step", but also added that he is not sure if the information is "right or not". "Well, I understand India no longer is going to be buying oil from Russia. That's what I heard. I don't know if that's right or not, but that's a good step. We'll see what happens," Trump told reporters in the US on Friday.

Meanwhile, India — the world's third-largest consumer of crude oil with an import dependency level of over 85 per cent — continues to maintain that its oil purchases are commercial decisions. "We take decisions based on the price at which oil is available in the international market and depending on the global situation at that time," Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Friday in response to a question on whether Indian refiners have stopped buying Russian oil over the past few days.Industry insiders, experts, and trade sources indicate that renewed pressure and threats from the US and Europe over the past few weeks have cast a shadow on India's Russian oil imports, and could mark the beginning of Indian refiners pivoting away from Moscow's oil. So far, India had successfully managed to walk "the fine line between energy security and geopolitical pressure", but its options now appeared limited, one expert said, adding that Indian refiners "must now plan not just for commercial shifts, but for systemic geopolitical realignment".

Deliberations are on between the government and other stakeholders — primarily refiners — on managing the situation and assessing the choices on the table for India, sources said. With a pre-emptive reduction in Russian oil imports, some bit of signaling has already taken place. The next steps would most likely be decided on how the India-US dynamic evolves, and more importantly, whether or not Trump decides to further harden the American stance and rhetoric against Russia. Any breakthrough between the White House and Kremlin over the Russia-Ukraine war would most likely ease the pressure on buyers of Russian crude.This renewed pressure from the West — forcing Russia's top trade partners to cut down on imports from the country — are aimed 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.Pressure up, volumes downIndia's Russian oil imports in July were at 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd), down 24 per cent from

level manufacturing base that has an oversized contribution to labour-intensive exports.

The government is also keen to stay away from offering duty concessions on imports of agri items such as soybean, corn and dairy, in the interim deal. While the government has offered to cut tariffs on 55 per cent of US imports, this could be pushed up in the upcoming talks, given that in FTAs with Japan, Korea, and ASEAN, over 80 per cent of tariff lines were down to zero.Sources said the outer limit for a deal with the US, currently pegged at around October, could be brought forward, if fresh negotiations are positive. What complicates the equation for India is that the Chinese are at an advanced stage of negotiations towards a deal, which could have a favourable tariff rate and potential waivers on secondary tariffs, including possibly the tariff on account of Russian oil imports and the proposed 10 per cent BRICS tariff.

China is currently faced with a 30 per cent tariff. From New Delhi's perspective, a deal needs to be clinched precisely for ensuring the gap in tariffs between India and China is maintained, even with a limited early-harvest type of deal.There is, however, greater receptiveness now within the policy circles to cut tariffs on some industrial goods, especially intermediate goods where there is the twin problem of high duties and an inverted duty structure (duty being higher on inputs than on final products).Alongside, there is a willingness to grant concessions in sectors such as public procurement and agri provided these are matched by the other side, like in the case of the UK deal. Also, India is willing to import more from the US, especially in three big-ticket sectors — defence equipment, fossil fuels and nuclear — to manage Trump's constant references to the trade gap, the sources said.Tariff rebalancing, if done right, could potentially offer an impetus to the economy, given that the biggest beneficiaries of tariff protection, especially the non-tariff barriers such as an increasing array of QCOs (quality control orders), are the big players. MSME units have been calling for these QCOs to be removed, especially in areas such as steel and textiles.

Since 1991, New Delhi has gradually reduced its average tariff from nearly 79 per cent in 1990 to around 12 per cent in 2013, following which it has gone back up to 16-17 per cent by 2023. Sectors such as agriculture, dairy and automobiles, continue to be protected, even as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry maintains that its trade measures are WTO compliant.Unlike its response during Trump's first term, where retaliatory tariffs were imposed, New Delhi has desisted from retaliating and is working on strategic concessions in sectors that the US is keen to target, while adhering to its own broad red lines. This involves areas symbolic of trade openness, including nuclear energy, fossil fuels and defence procurement.Think tanks such as Delhi-based Global Trade Research Initiative have said that by refusing to cross its red lines, particularly on agriculture, India has helped avoid "the trap of a one-sided deal".Once the official level discussions wrap up, there is a sense that a final call on the deal could come down to a conversation between the two leaders, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump. This is especially so since it is Trump who is the trade negotiator-in-chief. For India, the best-case scenario would be to get a deal of some sort now, and then build on that in the future negotiations that could run into 2026, experts said. With Trump announcing the tariffs and penalties on India, that phone call could come in sooner, they said.

June levels, and 23.5 per cent from volumes delivered in July of last year, according to latest tanker data from global real-time data and analytics provider Kpler. The share of Russian crude in India's oil import basket in July contracted notably to around 33.8 per cent from June's 44.5 per cent. While the drop in oil imports from Russia is evidently more pronounced among Indian state-owned refiners, likely reflecting heightened compliance sensitivity amid mounting risks, private sector refiners—who account for over half of Russian crude imports, have also reduced exposure to Moscow's oil.The reduction in import volumes from Russia in July was offset by higher crude deliveries from other suppliers — mainly Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the US, Nigeria, and Kuwait — all of which expanded their share in India's oil imports vis-à-vis June levels.

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 largely remained robust despite Western pressure and limited sanctions on Russia's oil trading ecosystem. But the appears to be changing now, and fast."On one side, the EU's (European Union's) sanctions — effective from January 2026 — ban imports of refined products derived from Russian-origin crude, forcing Indian refiners to segment crude intake and product flows. On the other hand, the US tariff threat raises the possibility of secondary sanctions that would directly hit the shipping, insurance, and financing lifelines underpinning India's Russian oil trade. Together, these measures sharply curtail India's crude procurement flexibility, raise compliance risk, and introduce significant cost uncertainty...(it) represents a double whammy for Indian refiners," said Sumit Ritloia, Lead Research Analyst, Refining & Modeling at Kpler.Before this week's tariff announcement by Trump mentioning a "penalty" on India, India's significant Russian oil imports were being subjected to a more aggressive stance by Western powers for a few weeks. Trump himself had had threatened "biting" secondary tariffs of 100 per cent on buyers of Russian exports, and the European Union last month 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, and also sanctioning Indian refiner Nayara Energy, in which Russian oil giant Rosneft holds 49.13 per cent stake.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, and enough oil was available globally for India to buy and ensure energy security.

Combating the problem of late detection in lung cancer through awareness



World Lung Cancer Day is observed annually on August 1 across the globe. The day was first established in 2012, through the efforts of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC). This global initiative is mainly aimed at raising awareness and educating people about cancer affecting the lung, it's devastating impact on human life and the importance of preventive measures, early detection, and treatments. It also seeks to combat the stigma often associated with the illness.

Lung cancer remains one of the most common and lethal cancers worldwide, responsible for approximately one in five cancer-related deaths. According to recent health data, over 2 million people are diagnosed each year, and more than 1.8 million lose their lives to the disease. Unfortunately, a significant number of cases are not detected at an early stage, allowing it to progress to an advanced stage with limited and less effective treatment options. This late diagnosis is often due to a lack of public awareness about the risk factors, symptoms and the disease itself.World Lung Cancer Day helps us bridge these gaps in knowledge, underscore the importance of early detection and diagnosis, and create awareness and understanding of the disease.

What causes lung cancer?

Tobacco smoking remains the leading cause of lung cancer. The risk increases with both the intensity and duration of smoking. In addition to lung cancer, smoking also contributes to stroke, heart disease, other chronic lung dis-

An egg a day is good for the heart: New study cracks myth of eggs raising LDL cholesterol, flags saturated fats instead

In a world-first study, researchers at the University of South Australia showed that eating two eggs a day, as part of a low saturated fat diet, can even help reduce LDL cholesterol and lower the risk of heart disease. Lead researcher Prof Jon Buckley, said, "Eggs have long been unfairly cracked by outdated dietary advice. They're unique — high in cholesterol, yes, but low in saturated fat. Yet it's their cholesterol level that has often caused people to question their place in a healthy diet. In this study, we separated the effects of cholesterol and saturated fat, finding that high dietary cholesterol from eggs, when eaten as part of a low saturated fat diet, does not raise bad cholesterol levels. Instead, it was the saturated fat that was the real driver of cholesterol elevation."

What does this mean for a heart diet?

While cardiologists had already revised guidelines related to eggs following research that ruled out their potential to harm heart health, the real challenge is beating a mindset. "I always prescribe one whole egg daily for my patients because many studies have shown that dietary cholesterol does not impact the existing cholesterol levels in your blood. The liver produces cholesterol and even regulates its levels. When dietary intake increases, the liver responds by reducing its own production. But I am strict about cutting out saturated fats as the study says. I absolutely recommend cutting out red meat, coconut oil and palm oil from your diet if you have high cholesterol," says Dr Balbir Singh, group chairman, cardiac sciences, Pan Max.

Why dietary cholesterol in eggs is not related to LDL

An egg is full of nutrients, providing protein, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals, making it a key ingredient of your morning breakfast to kickstart the day. "An egg has 186 milligrams of cholesterol, all of which is concentrated around the yolk. It is a good source of HDL (high-density

eases and blocks in the blood vessels of the body. Smoking damages the inner lining cells of the air passages to the lungs, leading to changes that develop into cancer over time.However, non smokers are not immune either. Several other risk factors can contribute to the development of lung cancer including second hand smoke exposure also known as passive smoking, radon gas and asbestos exposure, air pollution in cities and industrial areas, occupational hazards (such as exposure to construction, mining or manufacturing industries) and genetic predisposition in people with a family history of lung cancer. Hence environmental health is also a crucial issue in the battle against this disease.

One of the greatest challenges with lung cancer is its asymptomatic nature in early stages. Often, symptoms do not appear until the disease has already progressed to an advanced stage. If diagnosed at an early stage the chances of successful treatment improve significantly.So what are the symptoms one should be aware of? Symptoms to watch for include: chest pain, a persistent cough, unexplained weight loss, breathing difficulties, tiredness, coughing up blood, and fatigue. CT scans are currently the most effective mode of early detection. Experts emphasise the importance of routine screenings - especially for high-risk individuals, such as long term smokers above the age of 50 years or those with a family history of the disease.Treatment of lung cancer is based on the type of cancer, stage or grade of the cancer and overall medical condition of the patient. Treatment options include chemotherapy, radiation therapy, removal of the tumour by surgery, immunotherapy to hike the immune response against cancer and targeted therapy that specifically targets the cancer cells blocking their ability to grow and spread.

Steps towards preventionHealth professionals stress the importance of quitting smoking, avoiding second-hand smoke, wearing protective gear when working around hazardous materials and advocating for cleaner air and healthier environments. We need stringent anti-tobacco policies to curb its use in the public.Public awareness campaigns, screening programmes and social media initiatives on World Lung Cancer Day have played a crucial role in identifying cases early and improving survival ratesOn this day, individuals and organisations are encouraged to support lung cancer research and patient care efforts. Donations help fund advancements in early detection, targeted therapy and immunotherapy — treatments that are giving new hope to patients every day.



lipoprotein), what we call good cholesterol. Elevated HDL levels are associated with a reduced risk of heart disease. Eggs have Omega-3 fatty acids, which can help lower triglyceride in the blood and are cardio-protective. They contain vitamins B6, B12, D and choline, all of which are good for the heart. Eggs have protein heft, which can help with weight management and prevent body fat, thereby keeping the heart healthy," says Dr Singh.Instead, according to him, genetics, the types of fats in diet (particularly trans fats and saturated fats) and overall lifestyle play a much larger role in determining blood cholesterol levels.

What should people with high cholesterol do?

"As I said, one egg a day is enough," says Dr Singh. But avoid an overload if you are having it with other sources of dietary cholesterol like meat, dairy and processed foods like sausages. "Keep to moderation and watch your animal protein combinations. Cut out all frozen and processed meats," he adds.Make eggs a part of a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, which provide fibre and antioxidants and ensure healthy cholesterol levels.

Eli Lilly's weight loss drug most effective at preventing heart attacks and strokes: What new study means for Mounjaro users

US pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly's weight-loss drug tirzepatide was found to be more effective in preventing heart attacks and strokes compared to its previous GLP-1 medication dulaglutide. The preliminary results from a yet-to-be published large trial showed that the risk of a major adverse cardiovascular event was eight per cent lower in people who were put on the new therapy. Tirzepatide is sold under the brand name Mounjaro.Belonging to a group of medicines called incretin mimetics — which mimic hormones that play a key role in regulating insulin levels, blood sugar levels and appetite — both the medicines were initially approved for the treatment of diabetes, with tirzepatide later receiving approval for the treatment of obesity and other related conditions such as obstructive sleep apnea. Dulaglutide mimics the action of the GLP1 hormone while tirzepatide mimics the combined action of GLP1 and GIP hormones.

What did the study find?

The trial found an eight per cent lower risk of major adverse cardiovascular events such as cardiovascular deaths, heart attacks and strokes in people who were on tirzepatide as compared to those on dulaglutide. Tirzepatide was found to reduce the risk of such events by 28 per cent against a placebo, by comparing the results of the current trial with a 2019 trial of dulaglutide against placebo.Another important finding of the trial was a 16 per cent lower risk of all-cause mortality in people who were on tirzepatide, compared to those on dulaglutide. The company said that the medicine reduced the risk of all-cause mortality by 39 per

cent against placebo — again by comparing data from the current trial with the 2019 dulaglutide trial.The current trial also demonstrated that tirzepatide was better at slowing the decline of kidney function in participants who were at a high risk of chronic kidney disease. Tirzepatide slowed the decline in the kidney's filtration rate by 3.54 mL/min/1.73 m2 as compared to dulaglutide.The trial also showed that tirzepatide was more effective at reducing three-month average blood glucose levels as well as weight when compared to dulaglutide. The use of tirzepatide led to a 1.73 per cent reduction in HbA1c levels at 36 months as compared to 0.9 per cent with dulaglutide. The participants on tirzepatide dropped 12 per cent of their body weight during the trial period as compared to 4.95 per cent with dulaglutide.

Why is this important?With the new generation weight-loss drugs gaining popularity across the globe, it is essential for these drugs to demonstrate protection against heart diseases, especially since it is a common comorbidity along with obesity and diabetes.While there is a link between uncontrolled blood glucose levels and heart disease, not all diabetes medicines protect the heart. In fact, a previous class of diabetes medicines called glitazones were found to increase the risk of heart failure. With the end-game of these medicines being saving lives — and not just controlling blood glucose levels or body weight — the US Food and Drug Administration now requires the medicines to demonstrate that they do not harm the heart or, better yet, they offer protection against cardiovascular events.The new classes of diabetes medicines such as GLP-1 and SGLT-2 were found to protect the heart as well.

Alexander Zverev on being coached by Toni, Rafa Nadal and what Grand Slam winning advice he got



GNS News Agency, August 13

Germany's Alexander Zverev looks dejected after losing to France's Alexandre Muller in round of 16 tennis match of the Hamburg Open. (AP)Germany's Alexander Zverev looks dejected after losing to France's Alexandre Muller in round of 16 tennis match of the Hamburg Open. Alexander Zverev spoke about a week he spent being coached by Toni Nadal and how Rafa Nadal couldn't help himself and joined in to help the German overcome himself in a bid to finally win a Grand Slam.

For long, Zverev has been the No. 3 player in the world, trailing both Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner. But the 28-year-old has now enlisted the services of Toni Nadal to cross the Grand Slam barrier. Zverev trained with Nadal senior for a week and said that next year onwards would see him take a more active role. It was during that week that Rafa

Nadal joined him for dinner and then on the court to help him out as well."I was so surprised. I had played Rafa for 10 years of my career and was going to have a nice dinner, just come there and be nice to me, but he was so into it, and he came on court with me and was showing me forehands, trying to improve. That day he came on court with me; I played my forehand like Ernest Gulbis to be honest because I was so nervous," Zverev said on the Nothing Major podcast.Zverev then said that one of the key bits of advice given by Rafa was that he needed to be a bit braver in the key moments of a match. Zverev has often been accused of being one-dimensional in a Grand Slam era of Sinner and Alcaraz."He told me during the week, I don't know how many times, that I need to be braver. He said I need to take it on myself in the most important moments. I know that as well, but hearing it from someone like him, said Zverev. "I played him in some of the big matches; I played him at Roland Garros a few times and we had big matches. He always told me when you are aggressive, it's so difficult to hurt you because I could always move quite well, so I could find the aggressive game from difficult positions. But it is when I hold back that I become vulnerable; it's when I become more one-dimensional as well.""I don't have the serve and volley like my brother, or a good drop shot and slice like Novak. So, for me, when I become passive, that is when I am more hurtable for the top guys, and he always told me he truly believes, and I think I believe him, that he believes I can win a Grand Slam. He told me that a million times. But if I become more brave and take it on myself to do that."

Carlos Alcaraz talks about relationship with Jannik Sinner, that French Open final



GNS News Agency, August 13

French Open winner Carlos Alcaraz opened up on his unique rivalry with fellow Slam winner Jannik Sinner and how he overcame the Italian at a Roland Garros final that ranks right up there with some of the greatest tennis matches of all time.Alcaraz said that he believed that closing a slam was going to be tough on Sinner and that he would get his chances to make his way back into the match."I simply thought about coming back little by little: one point, then another point, then another point, especially those three

points," he said in an interview to the Financial Times. "Closing a Grand Slam is very, very difficult, so I knew that I would have chances. That's why I stayed calm. I knew it wasn't going to be easy for him."Alcaraz also spoke about the mental warfare during a match of this significance that took place in this year's French Open. The Spaniard revealed that his confident demeanor was also one that he portrayed in order to not show any weakness."It was a bit the image I wanted to give as well," he said. "At no time did I doubt that I could come back, but obviously you have to show an image of self-confidence at all times. As soon as you show weakness to the other, that's it – you are lost."Alcaraz also spoke about his relationship with Sinner. While the initial years of a Roger Federer-Rafa Nadal rivalry was respectful yet distant, the same isn't necessarily true for this generation's greatest two tennis players."Jannik and I, who have had great battles on the court, see each other a lot off of it. We talk, we train together sometimes. And in the end you forge a good relationship, a beautiful relationship?... We want to win and beat each other, but then off court, being good people and getting along is another matter. For me that is one of the virtues and values of sport," said Alcaraz, who will next be a part of the US Open.

Yashasvi Jaiswal reveals Rohit Sharma's message on Day 3 of Oval Test

GNS News Agency, August 13

Rohit Sharma was present at the Oval on Day 3 of the fifth Test and he saw quite a show with the bat from India, with Akash Deep scoring a half-century, Yashasvi Jaiswal scoring his second ton of the series and Washington Sundar later taking the England bowlers to the cleaners. Jaiswal, who played a majority of his Test career as Rohit's opening partner, said that the former captain had a few words for him on Day 3.

"I saw Rohit bhai and I said hi to him. Unhone mujhe yehi message diya ki khelte rehna (He gave me a message to bat on), that was it," he told reporters after Stumps. Rohit had quite suddenly announced his retirement from Test cricket during the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL), just days before India set out on the ongoing tour of England for the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy.Jaiswal, who scored a masterful 118 off 164 balls on Day 3, said that he is relishing the challenges he has faced in the three five-match Test series he has played thus far. His first was when England toured India last year, in which he became just the second Indian after Sunil Gavaskar all the way back in 1971 to score more than 700 runs in a single Test series. This was followed by the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia earlier this year before the ongoing five-Test series in England."The challenges are different in different places. If



you are playing in India the challenges are different, you are going to spin a lot. There will be three spinners, when you play in England or Australia there will be four seamers. I need to plan my innings (accordingly), where my shots are and where I am going to score runs," said Jaiswal."I keep getting all these messages and playing with the seniors for as long as I have like Rohit bhai, Virat bhai helped me grow as a person a lot. Seeing what they have done in Test cricket, how they prepared themselves, it really helped me especially to improve. Also playing with all my mates now, KL (Rahul) bhai the way we chat, (Shubman) Gill bhai, how we think about the game, it's very interesting and I am really enjoying it."

Atalanta footballer Ademola Lookman announces transfer request in lengthy Instagram post: 'After many months of broken promises...'

GNS News Agency, August 13

Footballers wanting to move out of their current clubs is a pretty frequent event in the sport. Most times though, the affairs of a transfer happen behind the scenes. Even if the exit is not amicable, clubs and players tend to deal with transfers privately. But Atalanta forward Ademola Lookman has handed the club a formal transfer request, and explained how the Italian club has wronged him in a lengthy – and pretty scathing – Instagram post. The English-born Nigerian forward alleged that the club's treatment towards him was poor, as 'both a human being and as a professional footballer.'

"Despite now receiving an offer in alignment to what I believe had been discussed sadly the club are blocking the opportunity for reasons I do not understand," Lookman said in his post. "As a result and after many months of broken promises and what I feel has been poor treatment towards me as both a human being and as a professional footballer, sadly I feel I have no choice but to speak out for what I believe is right and I feel that enough is enough. I can confirm I have now handed in a formal transfer request."Lookman's career has been a rollercoaster but since moving to Atalanta, he had seen his fortunes flourish. In December 2024, he won the African Player of the Year award."Over the past three years at Atalanta, I've given absolutely everything. Not just as a footballer, but as a person. I've always worn the shirt with pride and tried to represent this club and the city of Bergamo with heart, passion and dedication. I came here with the hope of helping this special club grow and together, we've created memories that will stay with me forever. Winning the Europa League and standing shoulder to shoulder with my teammates that night in Dublin celebrating with our fans was one of the proudest moments of my career so far. It still gives me goosebumps thinking about it," he started the post.

"Atalanta, and especially its supporters, have become a part of me. This place has felt like home from the moment I arrived, and I've always tried to repay that love – even in moments where things haven't been easy behind the scenes. That's what makes writing this so hard. I have loved



every moment but feel that now, after three wonderful years in Bergamo, it is the right time to move on and experience a new adventure. There have been numerous clubs approach Atalanta in the past and I have previously always stayed loyal. However, myself and the ownership of the club have been in agreement that now is the right time and the club were clear with me that if a fair offer came in they would allow me to move."Lookman, born to Nigerian parents in London, started off playing for Charlton Athletic. His first big move was to Everton. And then in 2019, switched to RB Leipzig in Germany. However, he struggled there and was sent out on loan back to England. It was at Atalanta where he flourished. Lookman also changed national allegiance in 2021 to play for Nigeria after starting out for England at the Under-20 level."Even throughout the extremely difficult moments I've endured, many of which have remained private and confidential, I have always tried to put the club, the fans and the team first and hoped it would not get to this, but I unfortunately feel there is now little choice.""To the fans – the heartbeat of this club – I want to say this: I'm truly sorry it's come to this. I hope you can understand this incredibly difficult situation. It's simply about standing up for what I believe is fair and right. The support you have always given me has been incredible and the bond we have created together is special. I hope to work together with the club to find an amicable solution for all parties as soon as possible," he concluded.

Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap post a heartfelt picture after announcing separation

GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: In a turn of events that has caught the attention of sports fans and followers alike, badminton stars Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap have shared a new photograph together on social media just days after news of their separation came out.

The picture, taken against a scenic backdrop, shows the couple smiling side by side. Saina's caption read, "Sometimes distance teaches you the value of presence. Here we are—trying again," followed by two heart emojis. The post quickly drew attention, sparking discussions among their followers.Recently, Saina announced that she and Kashyap had decided to part ways after six years of marriage. The couple, who tied the knot in 2018, have been regarded as one of the most popular pairs in Indian badminton.The post hints at an attempt to reconnect despite their earlier decision to separate, with fans expressing support and curiosity in the comments section. Whether this marks a new chapter in their relationship remains to be seen, but the image has already created a buzz across social media.For many admirers of the duo, the moment offers a glimpse of hope and reconciliation after what has been a surprising development in their personal lives.



this marks a new chapter in their relationship remains to be seen, but the image has already created a buzz across social media.For many admirers of the duo, the moment offers a glimpse of hope and reconciliation after what has been a surprising development in their personal lives.

It was the series that Test cricket needed: Nasser Hussain on India vs England

GNS News Agency, August 13

Former England captain Nasser Hussain has said Test cricket needed a series like the "Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy". The five-match Test series has gone down to the wire with four of the matches ending in the final session of Day 5. Writing in the Daily Mail, Hussain said, "This series has been feisty and played with a bit of needle and I like that."

The inaugural edition of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy has lived up to the expectations it generated before the series. While many expected England to run away with the series, the Indian team, which is undergoing transition in both batting and bowling has put up an admirable fight. Apart from winning the second Test at Edgbaston, they pushed England in the first Test at Leeds as well as Lord's."In general, the fight between the teams has made it much more watchable. It has been great TV," Hussain wrote. "We talked at the start of the summer about two iconic series coming up for England, India at home and then Australia away. When you build a series up, sometimes it can be a bit one-sided and deflating. But this has not disappointed and I think Test cricket needed a series like this."While the first two Tests were played without much drama, beginning Lord's there were some heated battles in the middle which continued in the press conferences as well. "There have been so many memorable moments. There was that over at Zak Crawley on the last night at Lord's. You had Pant strolling down the stairs on one leg at Old Trafford, hobbling around as he batted with a broken foot. Here at the Oval, we saw Joe Root – the most mild-mannered, calm individual – going off at one after some verbals from Prasadh Krishna. Then there was Sai Sudharsan, another calm person, walking into the



England huddle and having words with Duckett. I have enjoyed every single minute of it," Hussain said.Hussain, though, said the scheduling and the conditions that were on offer in the previous four Tests could have been better. "The only downsides have been the pitches and the schedule. Make no mistake, this series needed this Oval pitch. Although every Test has gone to the last session, it has slightly been too much in favour of the bat. Here, ball has dominated bat just enough to make it an incredibly watchable match," Hussain wrote.Hussain then went on to agree with England captain Ben Stokes that the scheduling of the matches could have been better. While two Tests had a gap of more than week, there was just three-day gap between the fourth and fifth. "As for the schedule, five Tests in six weeks has been too tight and the dates have also been odd. I agreed with Ben Stokes when he questioned why there have been two long turnarounds between Tests, of eight or nine days, and then two short ones of three days. It would be better to have a five-day break between them all," he wrote.

The greatest achievement of my time, says former New Zealand coach Gary Stead on Test series win in India

GNS News Agency, August 13

India vs New Zealand Gary steadNew Zealand players after winning the 3rd Test Match between India and New Zealand held at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, India on the 3rd November 2024 New Zealand's former head coach Gary Stead, who recently parted ways with the team, has said winning the Test series in India in 2024 was his greatest achievement of his coaching tenure. Stead, who was in charge of the team that won the inaugural World Test Championship cycle, beating India in the final said the conditions favoured them in Southampton.

Last October-November, New Zealand scripted history by becoming the first team to whitewash India at home. The series loss for India, which was their first since 2012, came against all odds as New Zealand won three Tests in Bengaluru, Pune and Wankhede. It is a setback that India still haven't recovered from, as they have lost Test series in Australia and on the verge of another humbling in England.Speaking of the series, Stead said it was a blessing in disguise to lose the toss in the first Test at Bengaluru, where on a green top, the Kiwi attack dismissed India for 46. "We lost the toss in the first Test, which was a blessing in disguise because we would have batted as well," Stead was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "It did feel just a little bit damp on top, but it just took one session to put us right on the front foot. The way Matt Henry and Will O'Rourke bowled that day was fantastic. And then we just went over our play."That first Test in Bangalore was a little bit different because the wicket was pretty good. While it nipped early, it did flatten out, and we probably got the best of the batting conditions there. Then it was really a war of attrition after that when we bowled again just to stay in the game and make sure their lead wasn't too big, because cracks were opening on the pitch, and it could have been pretty difficult



in that last innings," Stead said.

Thereafter, despite India resorting to spin-friendly conditions in Pune and Mumbai, New Zealand spinners outbowled the hosts. Even on the batting front, the Black Caps batting unit showed better application as India failed to win a single Test in the series and were outplayed in all three departments. Stead believed a lot of it was down to their experience of playing in Sri Lanka before the tour, which came very handy in India. "I guess we looked at it and thought, you win one Test in India, it's as good as what most teams do over there at times. But then we really shifted our attention to Pune and that was a very, very different-looking wicket. We knew it would spin from the very start. But that and then the game in Mumbai is where I think the lessons from Sri Lanka really gave us the opportunity just to be really clear on the way we wanted to play. We won a couple of tosses, which helped. We got probably the best of the conditions. They're (India) obviously tough to beat over there, their record shows that. For me, it's probably the greatest achievement of my time from a results point of view that we had," Stead said.

Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap post a heartfelt picture after announcing separation

GNS News Agency, August 13

Hyderabad: In a turn of events that has caught the attention of sports fans and followers alike, badminton stars Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap have shared a new photograph together on social media just days after news of their separation came out.The picture, taken against a scenic backdrop, shows the couple smiling side by side. Saina's caption read, "Sometimes distance teaches you the value of presence. Here we are—trying again," followed by two heart emojis. The post quickly drew attention, sparking discussions among their followers.

Recently, Saina announced that she and Kashyap had decided to part ways after six years of marriage. The couple, who tied the knot in 2018, have been regarded as one of the most popular pairs in Indian badminton.The post hints at an attempt to reconnect despite their earlier decision to separate, with fans expressing support and curiosity in the comments section. Whether this marks a new chapter in their relationship remains to be seen, but the image has already created a buzz across social media.For many admirers of the duo, the moment offers a glimpse of hope and reconciliation after what has been a surprising development in their personal lives.

Rajinikanth recalls breaking down while working as a coolie: ‘A college friend gave me Rs 2 to load his luggage’



Superstar Rajinikanth knows how to entertain the audience both on and off the screen. Recently, during the trailer and audio launch of Coolie, ‘Thalaiva’ shared several anecdotes from his time shooting the highly anticipated film, his conversation about hair loss with Nagarjuna, and his first meeting with director Lokesh Kanagaraj.

Apart from Rajinikanth, Coolie stars Nagarjuna Akkineni and Shruti Haasan in key roles. During the event, Rajinikanth lauded his contemporary Nagarjuna’s hairline and compared it to his own look. He also asked him the secret behind his lush hair. He said, “I saw Nagarjuna during the shoot and he still looks the same. His hair is still intact. I’ve lost all my hair. When I asked him his secret, he

said exercise. Director Venkat Prabhu wrote a dialogue for Ajith Kumar, which goes, ‘Innum evlo naal dan nallavanave irukardhu (how long should I play a good guy).’ That’s how his character in Coolie is.”

Rajinikanth also recalled calling filmmaker Lokesh Kanagaraj after watching his acclaimed film Kaithi. The superstar shared that he knew Lokesh was going to become a much sought-after filmmaker and, before any other actors pitched in to work with him, he expressed his wish to collaborate with him. He said, “Before other actors line up for him, I wanted to meet him. I called him after Kaithi and asked if he had any stories for me.” Rajinikanth, however, remembered how Lokesh made it evident that he was a Kamal Haasan fan. He recalled, “He said yes and also added that he was a Kamal Haasan fan.” The Jailer actor jokingly took a dig at his own brand of films and said, “Did I ask you? Did I ask you whose fan you are? Then why? It’s his way of telling me that he has an intelligent story, which doesn’t have punch dialogues.” Rajinikanth went on to joke about himself and shared how he asked choreographer Sandy to go easy on him with the dance steps. He said, “He promised me that we’d kill it in the first song. I told him, ‘I am a 1950s model and have run lakhs of kilometers. My parts were used and changed. So, don’t pressure me and handle me with care.’” Before becoming one of the top actors in the country, Rajinikanth had worked several odd jobs. At one point, he also worked as a coolie. During the event, he spoke about that time and recalled how he actually cried for the first time in his life while working as a coolie. He said, “I got yelled at many times when I was a coolie. One day, a man gave me Rs 2 asking me to load his luggage in a tempo. His voice sounded familiar to me. I realised he was my college friend. I had mocked him a lot. He told me, ‘What a show you put on.’ That was the first-ever time in my life that I broke down and cried.”

When Amitabh Bachchan called Jaya Bachchan ‘embarrassingly straight’, said he was ‘fortunate’ to marry her: ‘Never tried to disturb that quality of hers’

Veteran actors Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan have been married for 52 years. Jaya and Big B first met on the sets of Hrishikesh Mukherjee’s Guddi, and while Jaya was immediately in awe of Big B, the Don star fell in love with Jaya on the sets of Ek Nazar (1972). They tied the knot in 1973. In an old interview, Jaya had said, “I was introduced to him on the sets of Guddi. I was impressed by him and somewhat in awe as he was Harivanshrai Bachchan’s son. I fell in love with him very soon.”

Speaking to Stardust magazine in an old interview, Amitabh Bachchan talked about his marriage with Jaya Bachchan and how, because both of them belonged to the film fraternity and were actors, it helped them understand each other better. He called himself “fortunate” for being married to Jaya. The actor said, “Jaya is a very spontaneous person. Not at all like me. And it’s just very fortunate for me that she’s from the same profession as me and so she understands. She was always familiar with the environment I was in. She knows what the film industry is all about, so in fact, it’s a boon to have her.” Amitabh said that, contrary to the belief that marriages in the film industry don’t last, his marriage with Jaya was for life. “I don’t know of course what the situation would have been had I married a lady outside my profession. You say that marriages in this industry don’t last. But with all due apologies and all due respect to others, how do you put me in the same category?” he said.

Amitabh Bachchan called Jaya Bachchan “embarrassingly straight” and shared how he has never asked her to be anything else but that. “In any marriage, there are ups and downs and areas where disagreements take place, but that’s all part of it. Jaya is extremely open and very straight. Sometimes embarrassingly straight but that’s how her nature is. I’ve never tried to disturb that quality of hers and



she’s not disturbed my quality of being to myself. When I want to be left alone, she leaves me alone. It’s very similar to the relationship between my parents.” When Amitabh and Jaya tied the knot, the Uphaar actor was already a well-known name in the industry, while Amitabh was still finding his footing. During the interaction, Big B emphasised that he doesn’t like the exchange of expensive gifts and extravagant outings — and Jaya Bachchan shares the same outlook towards life. “I’m sure that had I not been married to her and had I still had the kind of success that came my way, I would have still not encouraged a situation where expensive gifts, expensive outings were going to be the criterion for my association with a woman. I appreciate a more normal and simple relationship. That is what attracted me to Jaya. She’s very simple and very down-to-earth. Away from all this,” he said.

‘Dhadak 2 is a punch in the gut’: Anurag Kashyap hails Karan Johar’s film, compares it to works of Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Yash Chopra

After critics hailed Karan Johar’s Dhadak 2, filmmaker Anurag Kashyap took to Instagram to praise the film and debutant director Shazia Iqbal for helming a bold narrative that addresses the prominence of caste and class discrimination in the country. He compared the film to classics by legendary directors like Raj Kapoor and Bimal Roy and applauded Shazia for making a film that reflects “what mainstream cinema was meant to be.” The film stars Siddhant Chaturvedi and Tripti Dimri in lead roles.

In a long Instagram post, Anurag wrote, “The film captures the conversation that we avoid on a day to day basis. This is what mainstream cinema was meant to be, and this is what great filmmakers like Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, K A Abbas, B R Chopra, Yash Chopra and so many used to do. We forgot to make mainstream films of social relevance. They got relegated to independent art house cinema.” Anurag Kashyap also compared Dhadak 2 to the hard-hitting and compelling social cinema often pro-



In a long Instagram post, Anurag wrote, “The film captures the conversation that we avoid on a day to day basis. This is what mainstream cinema was meant to be, and this is what great filmmakers like Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt, K A Abbas, B R Chopra, Yash Chopra and so many used to do.

duced in the South Indian film industry. Dhadak 2 is a remake of the critically acclaimed Tamil film Pariyerum Perumal, which follows the story of Nilesh, a Dalit law student, and his relationship with Vidhi, a classmate from an upper-caste family. The film portrays how Vidhi’s family begins to harass Nilesh after discovering their affair. Lauding the

makers for retaining the essence of the original film in the remake, Anurag Kashyap wrote, “This is what Tamizh cinema and so much of cinema from South still does. A mainstream adaptation of Periyarum Perumal, without losing the essence of it, Dhadak 2 is a punch in the gut. My driver and old friend of 16 years Narayan ji who went with me

wept at the end of it and hasn’t stopped talking about it since. An extremely brave and powerful film from @dharmamovies. See it for yourself. I won’t say much. Congratulations to the whole team. Dhadak 2 opened at the box office on Friday with Rs 3.5 crore. It earned Rs 3.75 crore on Saturday, bringing its total domestic collection to Rs 7.25 crore.

Tamannaah Bhatia recalls working with Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan: ‘He rehearsed continuously for two and a half hours’



Tamannaah Bhatia recalls her meeting with Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan. Tamannaah Bhatia recalls her meeting with Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan. Actor Tamannaah Bhatia recently reflected on her collaborations with the Khan duo — Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan. While she once shared the stage with Salman, it was an ad shoot that brought her together with SRK. Recalling the experience, Tamannaah mentioned performing with Salman Khan during the Da-Bangg The

Tour Reloaded in Dubai, where they danced to the popular track “Munni Badnaam”. In an interview with The Lallantop, she was shown a photo from that memorable performance. Reacting to same, she said, “The one and only Salman. It’s a picture from Dubai. He is so inspiring. When I saw him on the tech rehearsal, he was on the stage without stopping for two and a half hours.”

Tamannaah added, “The music was on, other people were entering and leaving the act, he was continuously there, I don’t know how. To stand on the stage for so long, it needs a lot of energy. When he did the tech, I understood that it’s such a long process.” Tamannaah Bhatia collaborated with Shah Rukh Khan on an ad film for an online clothing brand, as well as a commercial for another brand’s ethnic wear collection. When displayed a picture of the duo, she instantly smiled and said, “The one who has made us know what love is. I remember that we shot an ad film and Shah Rukh took a photo with each and every person. There were around 200 people on the set on that day; he took a picture with everyone.”

The host was quick to ask why she called Ajay Devgn ‘sir’ but didn’t do the same for Shah Rukh Khan. “When I met Ajay, I have a memory from when I was young. Humesha uss age mein, vo point vahin par atak jaata hai (You get stuck in that particular time loop). I have a memory of him from there, that’s why I call him ‘sir’. I worked with Shah Rukh much later. On the professional front, Tamannaah Bhatia was last seen in Sikandar ka Muqaddar, opposite Avinash Tiwary and Jimmy Shergill. She has Odela 2, Amazon Prime Video’s Daring Partners, and director Jagan Shakti’s next in the pipeline.

Farah Khan slams fake Instagram account impersonating her cook Dilip: ‘You better take it down’

After becoming one of Bollywood’s most beloved directors, Farah Khan is now ruling the vlogging space on YouTube. As her vlogs gain popularity among fans, so has her cook, Dilip, who regularly features in her videos. However, Farah recently took to Instagram to complain about a fake Instagram profile impersonating Dilip.

According to the image shared by the Main Hoon Na director, the fake Instagram account had 57.9K followers and even mentioned Farah in the bio. The account had 244 posts and had shared several reels, each with over 100,000 views. Many of the videos posted on the page were repurposed clips taken from Farah’s YouTube channel. The filmmaker-choreographer shared a screenshot of the fake profile on her Instagram Stories and warned the impersonator, stating, “We are complaining. You better take it down.” Shortly after Farah Khan’s warning, the account’s username was quickly changed to A1 Blogger, and its display picture was also altered. All the posts on the account were removed.

Recently, on her YouTube vlog, Farah Khan had revealed how she met Dilip. Ajay Devgn and Mrunal Thakur appeared on her vlog to promote their film Son of Sardaar 2. While interacting with them, she recalled how she met Dilip outside Ajay’s house over a decade ago. She revealed that Dilip’s brother, Bhola, was working as a chef at Ajay’s house, and Dilip had developed a



friendly bond with Ajay’s mother. She said, “You know how I found him? Oh my God! I have to tell you this story. He was outside your house. How could I forget this? Yeh apke bungalow ke bahar ghoom raha tha, aur aapki mummy ne isse Son of Sardaar ki ticket di (He was loitering outside your house, and your mother gave him tickets for Son of Sardaar).” Dilip nodded excitedly and said, “Mummy ke saath achi jaan-pehchan thi. Mera chhota bhai kaam karta tha, Bhola (I shared a good bond with Ajay’s mother, my younger brother used to work there).” Farah then asked Dilip to check with his mother if she remembers Dilip.

Arjan Bajwa recalls losing his father just before Fashion; sensing Priyanka Chopra’s stress over her father’s cancer diagnosis: ‘Ashokji was a very nice man’

Actor Arjan Bajwa recently appeared on SCREEN’s Dear Me Season 2. Reflecting on his 25-year journey, he recalled being offered Fashion just three months after losing his father. Arjan also opened up about his bond with co-star Priyanka Chopra, sharing that he could sense the pressure she was under following her father’s cancer diagnosis.

Talking about working on the Madhur Bhandarkar film, Arjan Bajwa said, “In a very unfortunate accident, I had lost my father three months before (Fashion), and I was not sure if I wanted to come back to Mumbai and work in the movies again. Till then, I had done some work, but after some time, when things got a little normal at home, I decided to return. While I was in Delhi, I got a call from Madhur Bhandarkar’s office, and they asked me to come and meet with them whenever I was in Mumbai. Two writers on the film were my friends. Madhurji knew me from before, and by then, I knew that Priyanka Chopra was doing the film. So I went and met them.”

Arjan revealed that he was not in the right headspace at the time of Fashion. He said, “I knew Priyanka from much before the film. The first time we met for the film was when Madhur sir had organized a dinner for the entire team at a hotel in Juhu. That meeting was good, but honestly, I was in a confused state at that time. My conscience was stuck because I had gone through such a tragedy at home. I was meeting everybody nicely, but I couldn’t feel anything. Inside my heart, I was hurting; I was not in the right headspace. I was in my own space at that time.” During the interaction, Arjan Bajwa also spoke about his Fashion co-star Priyanka Chopra. “Priyanka Chopra had once told me that she was not aware who was being cast, and at some point I had given them my audition for Gulaal, and she told me the entire team was watching some film at a theater in Andheri. When she asked who was cast for Manav’s role, they showed her the Gulaal audition in the parking lot of the theater on a laptop. Later on, she told me she loved the audition, it was fantastic.” Arjan Bajwa lastly revisited the day he and Priyanka Chopra bonded over their respective dads. He recalled, “On set, Priyanka and I bonded over talking about our dads. Priyanka’s father had been diagnosed with cancer at that time. Just 3-4 months back, my father had passed away, and we were just sitting and chit-chatting on the set one day. We started discussing our respective fathers. I told her my story, she was telling me her



story, and I could feel the pressure she also had about her father’s health, and how things were going to be. What would happen? I used to meet her father, Ashokji; he was a very nice man and very cordial. He would be very nice to me, but destiny has its plans.”

Tom Holland begins filming for ‘Spider-Man: Brand New Day’

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Tom Holland has started shooting for his film “Spider-Man: Brand New Day”. Slated to release in theatres on July 31, 2026, the upcoming installment of the “Spider-Man” franchise is directed by Destin Daniel Cretton. It also stars Zendaya, Jacob Batalon, Sadie Sink, and Liza Colon-Zayas, among others.

The 29-year-old actor shared the news by uploading a video post on his Instagram handle on Saturday. The post featured Holland in the costume of his character walking towards the camera. “Are you ready? – 7.31.2026,” he wrote in the caption. Besides “Spider-Man: Brand New Day”, Holland will also feature in Christopher Nolan’s upcoming film “The Odyssey”. Based on the ancient Greek epic poem “Odyssey” by Homer, the film features a star-studded cast comprising Matt Damon, Zendaya, Robert Pattinson, Lupita Nyong’o, Anne Hathaway, and Charlize Theron. The film is set to hit the big screen on July 17, 2026.