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Three killed after private bus collides with lorry on Macharam bridge in Jadcharla

A serious road accident occurred early this morning on the Macharam Bridge in Jadcharla Municipality, Mahabubnagar district, resulting in the deaths of three individuals. At approximately 5:30 am, a private travel bus travelling from Kadapa to Hyderabad, carrying 35 passengers, collided with a lorry from behind.

The deceased have been identified as Lakshmi Devi, aged 65, and her daughter-in-law Radhika, aged 45, both from Kukatpally, Hyderabad. They were returning home with family members after attending a religious event in Kadapa when the tragic incident took place.

Desi semiconductors, jet engines among Modi's bold announcement for New India

GNS News Agency, August 15

New Delhi: From making India's first semiconductor chip to building jet engines and a 10-fold nuclear power expansion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bold announcements on the 79th Independence Day aim to put the country on the path of becoming a developed nation by 2047. Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort here, Modi recalled how attempts to set up semiconductor factories 50-60 years ago were "killed at birth" while other nations prospered.

"India is now on mission mode. By the end of this year, the country will roll out its first Made in India chip," the prime minister said. He said India's nuclear energy capacity is set to grow 10-fold by 2047. Modi said work is underway on building 10 new nuclear reactors as part of India's mission to increase atomic power generation capacity by more than 10 times in the next two decades. The prime minister also gave a challenge to scientists and youngsters to develop the country's own jet engines for "Made in India" fighter jets. "I urge the young scientists, talented youngsters, engineers, professionals and all departments of the government that we should have our jet engines for our own Made in India fighter jets," he said. The prime minister also announced big-ticket Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms and promised a Diwali bonanza for citizens. "Next-generation GST reforms will be unveiled on Diwali, reducing taxes on essential goods and providing relief to MSMEs, local vendors and consumers," he said. Modi also announced the creation of a dedicated Reform Task Force to drive next-generation



reforms to accelerate economic growth, cut red-tapism, modernise governance and prepare India for the demands of a USD 10 trillion economy by 2047. He also launched an employment scheme worth Rs 1 lakh crore, under which newly-employed youngsters will receive Rs 15,000 per month. The scheme aims to benefit three crore young Indians, strengthening the bridge from Swatantra Bharat to Samridhdha Bharat. Modi also highlighted the dangers of a demographic imbalance due to infiltration and illegal migration in border areas. He announced the launch of a high-powered Demography Mission to address this national-security challenge, ensuring that the unity and integrity of the country and the rights of its citizens are safeguarded. In a bid to achieve energy independence, the prime minister announced a Deepwater Exploration Mission to tap ocean resources, alongside major expansions in solar, hydrogen, hydro and nuclear power.

Pride of 'Op Sindoor' shines at Red Fort; Agniveers join national anthem band

GNS News Agency, August 15

New Delhi: The 79th Independence Day celebrations on Friday at the historic Red Fort this year saw a grand tribute to the success of 'Operation Sindoor', marking a moment of pride and unity for the nation. For the first time, the ceremony included 11 Agniveer musicians who joined the Air Force band in playing the national anthem — a symbolic gesture highlighting the new generation's role in national service. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the Tricolour from the ramparts of the Red Fort, two red Mi-17 helicopters of the Indian Air Force soared above the gathering. One proudly carried the national flag, while the other displayed the flag symbolising 'Operation Sindoor.' As they flew over the Red Fort, both helicopters showered flowers on the assembled crowd, igniting emotions of pride and patriotism among the thousands present. Adding to the grandeur, the logo of 'Operation Sindoor' was prominently featured throughout the venue — from the view cutter of Gyanpath in front of the Red Fort to the floral decorations and even on the official invitation cards for the event. A 21-gun salute echoed through the grounds as the national flag was raised. This ceremonial salute was delivered using indigenous 105 mm light field guns, fired by the 1721 Field Battery (Ceremonial) — a significant nod to India's self-reliance in Defence. The national flag was guarded by 128 personnel drawn from the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, and Delhi Police, while a Guard of Honour comprising 96 soldiers and officers stood in formation, showcasing the discipline and unity of the armed forces. During the hoisting of the flag and national salute, the Air Force band, led by a Junior Com-



missioned Officer and supported by 25 musicians, played the national anthem. The inclusion of the Agniveers in this prestigious performance marked a historic first. Approximately 5,000 special invitees attended the ceremony at the invitation of Prime Minister Modi.

These included members of India's Special Olympics 2025 team, international sports champions, outstanding farmers, top-performing sarpanches, young writers, entrepreneurs, beneficiaries of government schemes, sanitation workers, Anganwadi workers, rehabilitated labourers, volunteers, and tribal children. Adding to the colourful diversity, 1,500 attendees from across States and Union Territories arrived in traditional attire. In the lead-up to Independence Day, thousands across the country participated in essay competitions, painting contests, social media reels, and online quizzes related to 'Operation Sindoor' and national security — with 1,000 quiz winners also present at the ceremony.

Omar first elected CM in 8 years to unfurl tricolour in J&K



GNS News Agency, August 15

Srinagar: Omar Abdullah on Friday became the first elected Chief Minister in eight years to unfurl the national flag and preside over the main Independence Day function at Bakshi stadium in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar. PDP president Mehbooba Mufti was the last chief minister to preside over the Independence Day function here in 2017. The PDP-BJP coalition government fell after the saffron party withdrew support to its local partner in June 2018, leading to imposition of Governor's rule in the erstwhile state. There was no elected government till Jammu and Kashmir was reorganized into two union territories in August 2019 following reading down of Article 370 that gave special status to the erstwhile state within the Indian constitution.

While Governor unfurled the National flag on Independence Day and Republic Day functions in 2018 and 2019, the honours were done by the Lieutenant Governor from 2020 to 2024. Assembly elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir towards end of last year, leading to Abdullah be-

coming the first chief minister of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Abdullah unfurled the tricolour at the Bakshi stadium and was provided a guard of honour before he inspected the contingents taking part in the parade. He later took salute as contingents from various wings of Jammu and Kashmir police, Central Armed Paramilitary Forces and school children marched past the podium. The cabinet colleagues of Abdullah presided over the independence day functions at winter capital Jammu and other important district headquarters of the union territory.

Banakacherla project will not harm interests of any state, says Andhra Pradesh CM

GNS News Agency, August 15 Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu defended the Godavari-Banakacherla project, saying it will not harm the water interests of any state. Referring to Telangana's opposition to the project, he said that no one needs to worry. He was speaking after hoisting the national flag at the 79th Independence Day celebrations at the Indira Gandhi Stadium here. "We have decided to divert Godavari waste water from Polavaram to Banakacherla to transform Rayalaseema into an agrarian region. We will use the water that would otherwise be wasted by flowing into the sea," he said. Chandrababu Naidu said that as a lower-riparian state, Andhra Pradesh have to bear floods. "When floods occur, if the upstream states release water, we, as the downstream state, bear the losses and difficulties.

Student dies, five injured as auto-rickshaw overturns in Karimnagar

Karimnagar: A 10-year-old boy died and five other students were injured when an auto-rickshaw carrying school children overturned near Mannempalli in Thimmapur mandal on Thursday evening.

The victims were returning home from Srirama Vidyalaya, Thimmapur when the accident occurred. The auto, carrying 10 students, overturned after the driver lost control while trying to avoid hitting a dog. Nampalli Harshavardhan, who was seated beside the driver, sustained a severe head injury and succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at the district headquarters hospital. The other injured students were treated and later discharged.

Revanth Reddy blames BRS for Rs 8.21 lakh crore debt, vows to complete irrigation projects and protect Telangana's water share

GNS News Agency, August 15

Hyderabad: Four days after the Central Government disclosed in Parliament that Telangana's debts in 10 years were 3.5 lakh crore, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy continued his allegations that the past government had left Rs.8.21 lakh crore debt in inheritance to the Congress government. Of these, Rs.6.71 lakh crore were debts and Rs.40,154 crore were dues pertaining to employees benefits and other schemes. Likewise, the cumulative dues under SC, ST Sub plan, Singareni, electricity and other departments stand at Rs.1,09,740 crores, he said after hoisted the tricolour at Golconda Fort here on Friday. "Of the total debts, the Congress government cleared Rs.2.20 lakh crore in the last 20 months. This includes Rs.1.32 lakh crore principal and Rs.88,178 crore interest component," Revanth Reddy stressed. Had this debt burden not been imposed on the Congress government, the wealth would have been used for welfare and development of the State, he claimed.

As uncertainty looms large over the implementation of 42 percent reservations to BCs in the local body elections, the Chief Minister again demanded the Central government to take a quick decision on the pending Bills. The Congress government was committed to extend 42 percent reservations to BCs. Accordingly, the State Assembly had passed the Bills and sent the same to the Central government for approval, he said. He stressed that State government was committed in completing pending irrigation projects, including SLBC, PRLI and others to provide irrigation water to the last ayacut, he said. "We will not compromise in achieving our judicious share of water from Rivers Godavari and Krishna. All the plots to divert Telangana's rightful share will be thwarted," Revanth Reddy asserted.

Amidst rising unrest among different sections over the Congress government's failure in fulfilling its promises made to people, Chief Minister claimed there was clarity in government's thought process and transparency in imple-



mentation of development programmes. Apart from setting targets to compete with global cities, the State government was implementing welfare programmes as per the aspirations of the poor and downtrodden. The government was delivering governance by adopting these two strategies, he said. "Through our transparent governance, advanced development initiatives and scripting a new history in welfare, Telangana has emerged as a role model in just 20 months," Revanth Reddy maintained. Continuing his claims on farmers crop loan waiver scheme, the Chief Minister stated that crop loans of ryots were cleared in single installment by spending over Rs.20,000 crore. Likewise, he also maintained that Rythu Bharosa assistance was extended to the farmers in time this season. "We fulfilled our Warangal Declaration assured to farmers through this initiative," Revanth Reddy said. "Though there was no supply of water from Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project, farmers made Telangana ranked number one in paddy production in the country," the Chief Minister stressed. Stating that HYDRAA was winning the confidence of people, the Chief Minister said the organization had protected 13 parks and 20 lakes from encroachments. Government lands worth Rs.30,000 crore was protected by HYDRAA, he said.

Centre moots two-rate GST system as part of PM Modi's 'Diwali gift'

GNS News Agency, August 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Diwali gift" to the people of India, of reforms to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, will likely be across three pillars — structural reforms, rate rationalisation, and ease of living — and could entail a shift to a two-rate GST system from the current five-rate system. "The government will bring next generation GST reforms, which will bring down tax burden on the common man," Mr. Modi said during his speech at Red Fort in New Delhi on India's 79th Independence Day. "It will be a Diwali gift for you."

The Ministry of Finance, elaborating on the Prime Minister's announcement in a press release, said that the Central Government has sent its proposal on GST rate rationalisations and reforms to the Group of Ministers (GoM) that had been constituted by the GST Council to examine this issue. It added that the GST Council would in its next meeting — the date for which is yet to be announced — deliberate on the recommendations of the GoM and would strive to implement the bulk of the reforms within this financial year. "Key areas identified for next-generation reforms include the rationalisation of tax rates to benefit all sections of society, especially the common man, women, students, middle class, and farmers," the Finance Ministry said. "Reforms will also seek to reduce classification-related disputes, correcting inverted duty structures in specific sectors, ensuring greater rate stability, and further enhancing ease of doing business," it added. One of the most major changes it announced was to "essentially move towards simple tax with 2 slabs — standard and merit". It added that 'special rates' would apply only on "select few items". The second major change is an attempt to reduce taxes on "common-man items and aspirational goods". "This would enhance affordability, boost consumption, and make es-



sential and aspirational goods more accessible to a wider population," the Ministry added. Towards the 'Ease of Living', the Centre has proposed using technology to speed up and ease the GST registration process, implement pre-filled returns, thus reducing manual intervention and eliminating mismatches, and processing refunds in a faster and more automated manner. "In the true spirit of cooperative federalism, the Centre remains committed to working closely with the States," the Finance Ministry said. "It will be building a broad-based consensus with the States in the coming weeks, to implement the next generation of reforms as envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi." However, the release stopped short of stating the date of the next meeting of the GST Council. With the last meeting taking place in December 2024, the next meeting — supposed to take place once a quarter — is long overdue. "The GST Council, when it meets next, will deliberate on the recommendations of the GoM, and every effort will be made to facilitate early implementation so that the intended benefits are substantially realised within the current financial year," the release said.

KTR hoists Tricolour at Telangana Bhavan, Slams Congress for Undoing BRS's Progress

GNS News Agency, August 15

Hyderabad: Highlighting Telangana's remarkable progress in the 10-year BRS rule under the leadership of K Chandrashekar Rao, BRS working president, K T Rama Rao on Friday came down heavily on the Congress government for putting the state development on a backward streak. Unfurling the national flag at Telangana Bhavan as part of the 78th Independence Day Celebrations, he said "As India's youngest state, Telangana went from 14th in agriculture to the top in just a decade," He credited K. Chandrashekhara Rao's reforms in agriculture, irrigation, infrastructure, and welfare schemes for making Telangana a "beacon of development" that other states admire.

He accused the Congress of setting Telangana's progress back and said the farm sector ceased to enjoy the same support that was extended by K Chandrashekhara Rao. Pointing to the farmers Making beelines before the fertiliser outlets and PAS for urea, a scene that was unusual in the state during the BRS regime, he attributed it to the failures of the Congress government. Criticizing the Chief Minister's 51 Delhi visits in 20 months as a sign of giving up the state's independence to central parties like Congress and BJP. He also raised concerns about industries leaving



Telangana due to poor governance. Reaffirming BRS's commitment to Telangana's pride and self-rule, KTR called the BRS party and KCR the "Srirama Raksha" for the state. He urged people to stay united, saying, "Indianness is our greatest strength; we must not let divisive forces weaken it." The flag-hoisting ceremony was attended by senior BRS leaders, former ministers, and supporters, with patriotic songs and cultural programs adding to the festive spirit. Senior leaders of the party and elected representatives took part in the Independence Day celebrations in large numbers.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Challenges galore for Modi

This year's Independence Day will mark a personal milestone for Narendra Modi as it will be the first time that he will unfurl the national flag as the second longest continuously serving Prime Minister of the country. However, he may not bask in this glory in his I-Day speech given that it is not a national achievement, and the fact that there are more pressing issues that he and his administration would have to reckon with. Much to the chagrin of the opposition, he should be credited with the successful economic reforms and infrastructure development that he has brought about since assuming office for the first time way back in 2014, although falling short of his "achhe din" claims by several notches. When dwelling about the intervening 12 months between last and this I-Day, one can conclude that this was a mixed bag vis-à-vis promises and their delivery. Quite significantly, the two prominent developments make for an agony and ecstasy saga. The earlier surgical strikes seemed like a dress-rehearsal for the overwhelmingly successful 'Operation Sindoor'; it was an aggressive retaliation that stunned the world, particularly the precision with which it was executed. The operation drew global praise because it was to teach Pakistan's trigger-happy 'think tank' a befitting lesson. It was a time when New Delhi had to prove to the world that they will not turn a Nelson's Eye when its people are butchered by enemy forces from across the border. The brutal massacre of 26 innocent persons, including 25 tourists, in the Baisaran meadows of Pahalgam, in Jammu and Kashmir, on April 22, 2025, had to be dealt with a spade for a spade tactic and that is precisely what India did. The macabre by Islamabad-sponsored terrorists was too deadly for one to remain silent spectators. It was also an occasion for India to show that they would not forever follow Gandhian principles; when they strike, they would do so in such a way that civilians would not be targeted.

Tirupati Cloth & Readymade Merchants Association Celebrates 79th Independence Day



“August 15 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator”The Tirupati Cloth & Readymade Merchants Association today celebrated the 79th Independence Day with great patriotic fervor. As part of the celebration, the association's president, Prabhakar, paid tribute to the freedom fighters by garlanding their portraits and hoisting the national flag. “Following the main ceremony, a free dental check-up camp was organized in collaboration with Star Dental Hospital & Root Canal Center. Dr. Vamshi Krishna R. (MDS), a specialist in dental implants and root canals, educated the merchants on best practices for maintaining dental hygiene.”Dr. Vamshi Krishna Reddy also announced that, from August 15th to August 31st,



consultation and scanning fees at his hospital would be completely waived for all cloth and readymade merchants and their family members, providing them with free dental care.

“The event, which successfully blended national celebration with community service, was attended by the association's Secretary, Subramaniam (Mani), Treasurer Sagar, former president R.S. Rami Reddy, and Vamshi Krishna Reddy from Suraksha Developers, along with a large number of merchants from the town.

Such measures do not unite people...’: Raj Thackeray slams meat sale ban, backs HC’s pigeon-feeding order

GNS News Agency, August 15

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Thursday criticised the BJP-led state government over its decision to ban the sale of meat on Independence Day and also endorsed the Bombay High Court's order banning pigeon feeding, accusing the police of not acting during the recent protests at the Dadar Kabutarakhana. “On a day we celebrate freedom, people's freedom is being taken away. The government should not decide who should eat what. These rights are neither with the government nor the municipal corporation,” Thackeray said, reacting to the Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation order to close slaughterhouses and stop meat sales on August 15. Thackeray said he had instructed MNS workers to ensure that meat sales go ahead on Thursday. While KDMC Commissioner Abhinav Goyal clarified that the order applied only to the sale of meat, and not consumption, similar restrictions have been announced by civic bodies in Nagpur, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar and Ichalkaranji. Thackeray linked the meat ban to what he called divisive policies by the BJP, citing the state government's encouragement of pigeon feeding and its bid to introduce compulsory Hindi at the primary level. “Such measures do not unite people, they divide them,” he said. Jain monks must understand dangers posed by pigeons. On the closure of the Dadar Kabutarakhana following a high court directive, Thackeray said the order was binding on all communities. “Jain monks must also understand the dangers posed by pigeons. Doctors have explained the diseases they cause. If anyone violates the ban on feeding them, the police should take action. Those who protested against the closure at Dadar should also have faced police action,” he said. The MNS chief also targeted state minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha, who had suggested alternatives to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on the issue. “Lodha is not a minister for one community; he is a minister for the state. He must also respect the court's decision,” Thackeray said.

TUDA Celebrates 79th Independence Day with Grandeur



“August 15 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator”The Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA) office today celebrated the 79th Independence Day with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor. The event was graced by TUDA Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy, who, along with Vice-Chairman Shubham Bansal, paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi before hoisting the national flag.

“In his address, Chairman Reddy extended warm Independence Day wishes to all, emphasizing the immense sacrifices made by countless freedom fighters who dedicated their lives to liberate India. He reminded the audience of the contributions of national heroes and stressed the importance of upholding the values for which they fought.”Chairman Reddy highlighted that the new coalition government is giving top priority to key sectors such as education, healthcare, industries, and agriculture. He noted that under the leadership of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh, the government is working tirelessly to create a prosperous and poverty-free state. “Acknowledging that TUDA had been facing a severe financial crisis, the Chairman stated that the organization is now moving toward a path of development. He detailed several new initiatives, including improvements to the drainage system, road repairs, and better drinking water supply. He also introduced a new program, “A Day with TUDA Chairman,” aimed at direct citizen engagement. The first such program was recently launched in the Srikalahasti constituency with the local MLA. “Furthermore, to promote environmental sustainability, TUDA is distributing 10 lakh free saplings to communities across its jurisdiction. Concluding his speech, the Chairman called upon all TUDA officials and staff to work diligently to restore the organization's former glory and contribute to the state's overall progress. The



event was well-attended by TUDA officials and employees.

National Sanskrit University Celebrates 79th Independence Day



“August 15 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator”The National Sanskrit University in Tirupati today celebrated the 79th Independence Day with a sense of pride and patriotism. The Vice-Chancellor of the university, Professor G.S.R. Krishnamurthy, hoisted the national flag during a solemn ceremony. “In his address, Professor Krishnamurthy spoke about the university's commitment to advancing the welfare of its students and promoting the Sanskrit language. He urged everyone to embrace patriotism and work towards the nation's progress.”The event was successfully coordinated by the Academic Dean, Professor Rajanikant Shukla, and was attended by the university's Registrar, K. Venkatanarayana Rao, who extended his special greetings. The ceremony was smoothly managed by Assistant Physical Director V. Sethuram and Dr. C. Giri Kumar, who served as coordinators. “Faculty members from various



departments and students were present to pay their respects to the national flag.

5252 Offerings on the 5252nd Janmashtami – ISKCON Tellapur Gears Up for Grand Celebration

“ISKCON CDEC, Tellapur will host grand Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations on 16th August at the spacious PMG Farmhouse in Tellapur. The venue will feature Vrindavan-themed decorations with various lila sthalis, creating an ambience filled with Krishna katha and Krishna kirtan.

Marking Lord Krishna's 5252nd appearance day, 5,252 offerings will be made. Visiting devotees are encouraged to prepare and bring sattvik bhoga offerings and receive maha prasadam in return.”

“The celebrations will open at 2 p.m. with children's competitions in singing, dancing, colouring, fancy dress, and shloka recitation. Cultural performances will follow at 5:30 p.m., leading to the Katha and kirtan at 8 p.m., Maha Abhishek at 9 p.m. Special darshan will begin at 10 p.m., and at midnight, maha prasadam will be served to all attendees.”

“Entry is free. Valet parking and multiple tents will be provided to ensure uninterrupted festivities in case of rain. For registrations and enquiries, contact 7093116108, email iskconcdec@gmail.com “From... ISKCON CDEC, Tellapur



Shadnagar Celebrates Independence Day with Patriotic Zeal and a Vision for a Just Society



“INDIAN CHRONICLE “Shadnagar, August 15 “Shadnagar marked India's Independence Day with a spirited flag festival, as the tricolor fluttered proudly across government and private offices. Leading the charge, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar called for unity, equality, and a collective effort to build a just society, inspiring citizens to honor the sacrifices of the nation's freedom fighters. “The celebrations featured a series of flag-hoisting ceremonies at key offices throughout the town. MLA Veerlapalli Shankar raised the national flag at his camp office, while ACP Lakshmi Narayana, RDO Saritha, MPDO Bansilal, Municipal Commissioner Sunitha Reddy, and Market Committee Chairperson Sulochana Krishna Reddy led ceremonies at their respective offices. Other government departments joined in, with officials hoisting the tricolor in a display of national pride. “The events drew a diverse

crowd, including former MLAs Bhishwa Kishtaiyah and Pratap Reddy, movement leaders, local dignitaries, and prominent town figures who served as chief guests. Adding vibrancy to the celebrations, students from government schools dressed as iconic freedom fighters and participated in cultural programs. Many children joined in singing the national anthem after the flag-hoisting, filling the air with patriotic fervor. Leaders distributed notebooks, pens, and sweets to the children, spreading joy and encouraging their participation. At the Revenue, RDO, and ACP offices, police personnel presented a ceremonial guard of honor, enhancing the solemnity of the occasion. “Speaking to the media at the RDO office, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar reflected on the significance of Independence Day. “This is not just a day of celebration but a moment to recommit to the ideals of equality and justice,” he said. “The sacrifices of our freedom fighters laid the foundation for our nation, and it is our duty to carry forward their vision to strengthen India for future generations. “The celebrations saw enthusiastic participation from freedom fighters like Nagilla Gopal Gupta, Market Committee Vice Chairman Babar Khan, senior leaders Aganuru Vishwam, Chendi Tirupati Reddy, MD Ibrahim, Raghu, Baswam, former ZPTC Venktram Reddy, as well as officials, students, and citizens from all sections of society. The collective spirit underscored Shadnagar's commitment to unity and progress.

ICFAI Law School’s Legal Aid Society Marks 79th Independence Day with Street Play and Awareness Drive in Irrikunta Thanda

“INDIAN CHRONICLE “AUGUST 15 “The Legal Aid Society of ICFAI Law School, IFHE Hyderabad, celebrated India's 79th Independence Day with a vibrant outreach program at Irrikunta Thanda in Shankarpally Mandal, focusing on Fundamental Rights and the Right to Vote. The event, sponsored by the IFHE Management, aimed to educate and inspire the local community through a blend of awareness activities and community engagement. “The program featured an enlightening speech on the significance of Fundamental Rights, emphasizing their role in empowering citizens. A dedicated poster presentation highlighted these rights, with a special focus on the Right against Exploitation. Speakers stressed that this right must move beyond theory and be actively implemented in everyday life to ensure justice and equality. “A key highlight of the event was a dynamic street play performed by the Legal Aid Society members. The play powerfully showcased the importance of every vote, urging citizens to make informed choices based on a leader's ideology and integrity rather than falling for false promises. The performance resonated with the audience, who responded enthusiastically to slogans like



“Your vote is your weapon; use it to protect the nation” and “Don't waste your vote. “The event concluded with a sapling plantation drive, promoting environmental sustainability, and interactive sessions with villagers to foster a renewed sense of civic responsibility. The program successfully combined education, environmental action, and community engagement, leaving a lasting impact on the residents of Irrikunta Thanda. “Organized by the Legal Aid Members of ICFAI Law School, the initiative underscored the institution's commitment to raising awareness about constitutional rights and encouraging active participation in the democratic process.

Shadnagar CI Vijay Kumar Receives Best Service Award

“INDIAN CHRONICLE” SHADNAGAR, August 15 “Shadnagar Town Circle Inspector (CI) Vijay Kumar was honored with a certificate of appreciation by Telangana Government Advisor Vem Narender Reddy for his outstanding services in discharging his duties. On Friday, during the 79th Independence Day celebrations held at the Ranga Reddy District Collectorate, CI Vijay Kumar was presented with the Best Service Award by Government Advisor Vem Narender Reddy, Ranga Reddy District Collector Narayana Reddy, and Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar. They congratulated him and expressed their hope that he would continue to undertake many more such service initiatives to earn the appreciation of the public. They noted that in the year 2024-2025, CI Vijay Kumar resolved numerous issues and urged him to continue providing exemplary services to gain further public recognition. The dignitaries felicitated him with a



shawl and extended their heartfelt congratulations.

District SP Office Celebrates Independence Day with Grandeur: SP Rohit Raju Hoists National Flag



“Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 15, Indian Chronicle: To commemorate the 79th Independence Day, District SP Rohit Raju hoisted the national flag at the District SP's office at 8:30 AM today. He then joined officials and staff in singing the national anthem. On this occasion, the SP extended his wishes to the district's residents, police officials, and staff for the 79th Independence Day. He stated that India, which achieved independence after 78 years of struggle by countless great individuals who sacrificed their lives for the motherland, is celebrating another year of freedom. He emphasized the need to remember these great personalities on this special occasion. The SP added that national festivals like Independence Day remind us how



we can serve society. He urged police officials and staff to work with complete dedication, treat every person who comes to the police station equally, and ensure justice for every victim. He said that only then will the independence we have achieved be truly meaningful. He said that our country, India, is a confluence of different languages, races, and religions, and this harmony and unity among people of such diverse cultures and traditions signify 'unity in diversity.' He proudly said that we should all be proud to be born as Indians. He advised everyone to improve their work, meet the expectations that the public has of the police department, and perform their duties with devotion to earn the respect of the people. The event was attended by Additional SP (Operations) Narendra, Kothagudem DSP Rehman, DCRB DSP Mallaya Swamy, AR DSP Satyanarayana, SB Inspectors C.H. Srinivas, E. Srinivas, DCRB CI Srinivas, Office AO Manija Naik, as well as CIs, RIs, SIs, and other office staff.

Delhi's monsoon misery puts BJP's 'triple-engine' govt to the test, gives AAP fresh ammo



GNS News Agency, August 15

Every spell of rain in Delhi brings the same scenes — knee-deep water, stranded cars, fallen trees, and electrocutions. But this monsoon, the downpour comes with an unusually high dose of political voltage. That's because for the first time in 25 years in the national capital, the BJP controls both the Delhi government — after sweeping the 2025 Assembly polls — and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The Delhi L-G and his Office are also on board.

In the city, different agencies manage different drains — sometimes even different parts of the same drain — without any coordinated action. These include the Public Works Department (PWD), the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), and the Irrigation & Flood Control Department. With the BJP also in power at the Centre, the party has pushed the idea of a “triple-engine sarkaar” — that with all three “engines” aligned politically, there would finally be coordination among the six desilting agencies and an end to the city's chronic waterlogging. That pledge is exactly why this monsoon has become a test. Waterlogging was one of the key issues the BJP had relentlessly targeted the AAP over during its decade-long rule in Delhi. Dhaula Kuan on Thursday after rains. Waterlogging was one of the key issues the BJP had relentlessly targeted the AAP over during its decade-long rule in Delhi. (Express Photo by Abhinav Saha)

When it came to power, the BJP promised to “end decades of neglect” on the issue of flooding, vowing that, unlike the AAP, it would keep the capital dry. To be sure, waterlogging was one of the key issues the BJP had relentlessly targeted the AAP over during its decade-long rule in Delhi. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's administration had rolled out a city-wide anti-waterlogging plan in collaboration with PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh. The latter made numerous visits to the Capital's choke-points and inspected if the drains were desilted, pumps upgraded, and if real-time hotspot surveillance was being carried out. Interventions at the Minto Bridge, one of the city's most infamous flooding points, included building an alternative drain to divert stormwater to JLN Marg, automated pump upgrades, and re-engineered outlets, which have led to ‘visible results’. But in many other areas, where the drainage system hasn't been upgraded in decades, desilting has failed to show adequate results — an opportunity that the AAP is trying to seize on. The Opposition has turned every flooded street into a

political weapon, circulating images from Ring Road to Greater Kailash, sometimes with theatrical props — like an inflatable swimming pool being rowed down a submerged street.

Former Chief Ministers Arvind Kejriwal and Atishi attacked the BJP government over a man's death in Kalkaji after a tree collapsed on him and his daughter. Responding to a video of the aftermath of the incident, Kejriwal said: “What has the BJP turned Delhi into in just a few months?” Atishi, who is the Leader of Opposition, wrote to Gupta, calling it a “man-made disaster” and demanding Singh's removal. “This incident is not isolated. It is very shameful to note that after your government has taken over, many people have lost their lives in the national capital due to the rain. Last Saturday (on August 9), on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, when the entire country was celebrating the spirit of the festival, two separate tragedies rocked the city. In one incident, a small two-and-a-half-year-old toddler drowned to death in an open sewer in Khera Khurd on Phirni Road due to rain. In another incident on the same day, at least eight people, including two young children, died when a portion of a wall collapsed in Jaitpur,” she said.

Burari MLA Sanjeev Jha alleged that “half the drains” in his constituency were never cleaned and that officials allegedly told him super-sucker machines weren't used “because permission wasn't given”. “Toh in maut ka zimmedar kaun? (So who is responsible for these deaths?),” he asked. The only public statement from PWD minister Singh on the havoc in the city, however, was a pat on the back for managing to keep four locations waterlogging-free even as at least 50 complaints of clogged roads were received from areas that fall under his department. Where water used to accumulate every monsoon, now traffic passes through without stopping. This change didn't happen on its own — our government is continuously working to eliminate waterlogging, tirelessly striving day and night to improve the Delhi that was ruined by AAP's misgovernance and negligence.” Kapil Mishra, the only minister who has been part of both the AAP and BJP cabinets, however, laid the blame for the deaths and waterlogging on the AAP government's shoulders.

Responding to Kejriwal's post, he wrote, “Wow, what a shameless person. For 12 years, you looted and ruined Delhi, then fled to Punjab, and today you're blaming the BJP for a tree falling! Delhi will surely change, but this audacity to dance around with your own report card of failure is unique to AAP.” Dhaula Kuan Traffic congestion at Dhaula Kuan on Thursday after rains. Many of Delhi's major drains date back to the colonial era, designed for a fraction of today's population. (Express Photo by Abhinav Saha) But the real reason why Delhi has seen no end to its monsoon woes is that its drainage network is not just fragmented but also old. Many of its major drains date back to the colonial era, designed for a fraction of today's population. Delhi's last comprehensive Drainage Master Plan was drawn up in 1976 when the city's population was just 60 lakh. Today, that number has swelled to over 260 lakh.

India's Independence a Result of Sacrifices by Countless Freedom Fighters: Gudipalli Srinivas



“INDIAN CHRONICLE” SHADNAGAR, AUGUST 15 “Gudipalli Srinivas, State Convener of the TUWJ (IJU) official Journalist Committee, stated that India's independence was achieved through the sacrifices of numerous freedom fighters who fought for the nation, disregarding their own lives.

He described Independence Day as a festival for all, marking the moment when the shackles of British rule were broken, allowing the nation to breathe the air of freedom. He urged students to study diligently, excel aca-

demically, and bring pride to their teachers, parents, and schools. He also encouraged everyone to participate in social service activities. “He participated in Independence Day celebrations at Buragadda Thanda, near Rayikal village, under Farooqnagar Mandal in Shadnagar constituency, Ranga Reddy District.

On the occasion of Padma Vibhushan awardee and megastar Chiranjeevi's birthday on August 22, notebooks and pens were distributed to students under the leadership of Jarupula Raju Naik, Mahabubnagar District President of Akhil Bharata Chiranjeevi Yuvaatha and Shadnagar Constituency In-Charge of the Jana Sena Party. The distribution was carried out by Gudipalli Srinivas, followed by a tree plantation drive.

“The event saw participation from journalists, including TUWJ (IJU) Ranga Reddy District Electronic Media Secretary Raghavender Yadav (Raghu), Raju, school principal Ramakrishna, former sarpanch Bujji Raju Naik, Education Committee Chairman Moodavath Lingam Naik, M. Ravi Naik, M. Raju Naik, N. Devender Naik, villagers, teachers, students, Jana Sena Party leaders, mega fans, and others.

Former Councilor Garala Srinivas Goud Leads 79th Independence Day Celebrations in Pedda Amberpet



“PEDDA AMBERPET, AUGUST 15, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator “Independence Day was celebrated with great patriotic fervor in Ward 1 of the Pedda Amberpet Municipality, with former municipal councilor Garala Srinivas Goud as the chief guest. “Mr. Goud participated in flag-hoisting ceremonies across several local colonies, commemorating the day with residents and community leaders. During the celebrations, he honored the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters and called upon every citizen to contribute actively to the nation's progress and development.

“Independence Day is a time to reflect on the immense sacrifices made by our heroes and to renew our commitment to building a stronger, more prosperous India,” said Mr. Goud. “The responsibility of nation-building lies with each one of us. By working together, we can ensure a bright future for the generations to come.” The event saw enthusiastic participation from a large number of local residents, community representatives, and youth,



who joined in the celebrations to pay tribute to the spirit of freedom and unity.

From mule accounts to cryptocurrency, ED tracks how Parimatch routed users' funds, freezes Rs 110 crore

GNS News Agency, August 15

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen Rs 110 crore in various bank accounts as part of an ongoing probe into the Cyprus-based illegal online betting platform Parimatch, the central agency said on Thursday. The development comes after the ED conducted search operations at 17 locations, including Mumbai, Delhi, Noida, Jaipur, Surat, Madurai, Kanpur and Hyderabad, on Tuesday under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. In addition to the Rs 110 crore, various incriminating documents and digital devices were seized during the search, officials said.

The ED initiated its investigation into Parimatch on the basis of a First Information Report registered at a cyber police station in Mumbai for allegedly duping users through its online betting platform. As per the agency, the platform defrauded investors by luring them with promises of high returns, generating over Rs 3,000 crore in a year, as revealed by the investigation to date. According to the ED, the searches revealed that Parimatch routed users' funds through mule accounts using different strategies across the country. In one case, funds deposited by users into mule accounts were allegedly withdrawn in cash in a specific locality in Tamil Nadu. This cash was allegedly handed over to hawala operators, who used it to recharge virtual wallets of a UK-based company. These wallets, as per the ED, were then used to buy USDT cryptocurrency in the name of mule crypto accounts, which were operated by Parimatch agents.

In western India, Parimatch engaged the services of domestic money transfer (DMT) agents, according to the ED. Funds collected in mule accounts controlled by these DMT agents were allegedly sent to Parimatch agents through payments made by mule credit cards. More than 1,200 such credit cards were found and seized from a single location,



an official said. The ED investigation has also uncovered that payment companies, whose applications for payment aggregator licenses were rejected by the RBI, offered their services to Parimatch in the garb of technology service providers (TSPs) and offered their application programming interface (API) to facilitate user fund collections.

These TSPs allegedly offered the APIs to Parimatch agents who onboarded mule accounts opened in the name of e-commerce companies and payment solution provider companies for the collection of funds from users. This money was layered and transferred out in the garb of e-commerce refunds, chargebacks, vendor payments, etc., effectively concealing the actual flow and purpose of funds, the ED said. According to the agency, Parimatch gained visibility through aggressive marketing, including sponsorship of sports tournaments and partnerships with celebrities. They allegedly also set up Indian entities to run surrogate advertisements under the names ‘ParimatchSports’ and ‘Parimatch News’. Payments to these agencies were made via foreign inward remittances, the ED said.

‘Police had to show some action’: Father of arrested former JU student questions son's involvement in attack on Bratya Basu's convoy

GNS News Agency, August 15

The father of Hindol Majumdar, the former Jadavpur University (JU) student arrested at Delhi airport over an alleged attack on state Education Minister Bratya Basu's convoy, has strongly defended his son, saying he was in Spain at the time of the March incident. Kolkata Police are preparing to seek a transit remand to bring the PhD scholar to the city. Chandan Majumdar, a retired JU professor, said Hindol has been living in Spain since November 2023, pursuing a doctorate in Biomedicine and Clinical Science at the University of Granada.

Hindol had reportedly been served notices before a lookout notice was issued against him on March 16. He had sent an email that day, stating he had been living in Spain since November 2023, and therefore could not have been present at the university on the day of the attack. Police allege that he, along with two others abroad, funded those

involved in the attack, citing “incriminating WhatsApp chats and social media posts”. Majumdar questioned such evidence: “If on the basis of social media posts it is now being decided whether one would get a visa or not, then what can we say?” Hindol, who last visited Kolkata in November 2024, is expected to be produced in Patiala House Court, where Kolkata Police will seek his custody. Minister Bratya Basu has declined to comment on the ongoing investigation.

Hindol has completed his BE and ME in Pharma and is pursuing a PhD in the same specialisation. His father said, “There are two cases against him. In one, he had received a notice and replied via email from Spain. In the other, he is named and a lookout notice was issued. My son is not directly involved in any political party, but there are groups within the university, and he is part of one of them. My son follows a left-wing ideology.

‘Project Janam Shakti’: Drop in maternal deaths, home deliveries in Punjab’s Ferozepur



GNS News Agency, August 15

‘Project Janam Shakti’ — a comprehensive initiative in Punjab’s border district Ferozepur to check maternal mortality and provide natal care to pregnant women — is bearing fruits. With the maternal mortality rate (MMR) at an all-time high at 440 (deaths per 1 lakh live births) in 2024-25, following 238 in 2023-24, Ferozepur faced a challenge even as Punjab’s average MMR stood at 105, district Deputy Commissioner Deepshikha Sharma said. This medical intervention was rolled out to reduce preventable maternal deaths by strengthening healthcare delivery systems. According to data, maternal deaths reduced to 0-1 in the past five months from 2-5 per month earlier, while home deliveries (women giving birth at home instead of hospital, without any natal care) dropped to 4 in 2024-25 from 308 (2023-24), and just 1 until June 2025. Speaking to The Indian Express, Sharma said: “In 2024, the MMR in Ferozepur district was at an all-time high at 440. We were losing 3-5 mothers almost every month. With almost 75-80% vacancies in the medical side and demotivated accredited social health activists (ASHAs), the picture was very dismal. Since I took over in September 2024, we religiously sat with ASHA workers every week to sort out the issue. Now, we have maintained nearly zero maternal deaths for the past five months, and the MMR has reduced to 55.5 in 2025. The NITI Aayog’s award money has helped us to rope in JHPIEGO for Phase-2 interventions.”

The US-based organisation — JHPIEGO (Johns

Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics) — collaborates with national governments, local communities, and health experts “to build systems that guarantee healthier futures for women and their families”. Founded in 1973, according to its official website, Dr Theodore M King — an early innovator and champion for women’s health — “was the moving force behind the founding of JHPIEGO, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University”.

Explaining how the situation was improved, Sharma said: “Maternal death review (MDR) meetings had not been held for two years in the district. Each maternal death was analysed with frontline workers and doctors to understand the cause, and identify preventable lapses. Further, a dedicated WhatsApp group was created to track high-risk pregnancies and monitor them closely by linking staff nurses, medical officers, doctors, and enabling real-time coordination in time of need to refer them to bigger facilities. To improve early detection of complications, special camps under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) were also organised across blocks.”

The road ahead Ferozepur — among one of the two selected districts under the Centre government’s Aspirational District Programme (ADP) — received an award money of Rs 5 crore, of which Rs 1 crore will be utilised for Project Janam Shakti, in coordination with JHPIEGO, Sharma said. Over the next 18 months, JHPIEGO will work with authorities to develop a sustainable model for maternal mortality reduction in the district. “The quality of Maternal Death Surveillance and Response (MDSR) is a concern. At 59%, the ‘unspecified reasons’ is the major cause of maternal deaths, followed by obstetric haemorrhage (15.3%), and hypertensive disorders (8.5%). It indicates poor case documentation. Then there is limited or minimal community awareness — over 60% of deaths were linked to delays in seeking care. To address these challenges, JHPIEGO will work with the district administration to strengthen service delivery, build capacity around evidence-based practices, and support in improving data quality with special focus on MDSR strengthening and digitisation, to enable the availability of quality data for timely decision-making,” Sharma said.

Detention of Bengali migrants: Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury asks President Murmu to intervene



GNS News Agency, August 15

Flagging the detention and deportation of migrant workers from West Bengal during drives against illegal Bangladeshi nationals in several states of the country, senior Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Sunday urged President Droupadi Murmu to intervene. In a letter to

the President, the former Congress MP wrote: “It’s very sad and cruel fact that Bengali-speaking daily wage labourers, who are bonafide Indian citizens, are being targeted due to their physical appearance and accent, which is being mistaken for that of Bangladeshis. This similarity is being used as a pretext to harass, humiliate, physically assault, and hold these innocent people in detention.” Expressing concerns that “witch-hunting of Bangladeshis” is leading to large-scale repatriation of Bengali migrant workers, Chowdhury wrote: “I would like to reiterate that those lakhs of migrant workers who were compelled to venture into other states for their livelihoods also contribute significantly to the revenue kitty of the state government through their remittances. Now, those migrants are supposed to be rendered unemployed...” “The former state Congress chief said the President should intervene by taking appropriate measures to see that “innocent Bengali-speaking people, who are bonafide Indian nationals working as labourers in Odisha.

Faridabad Dalit youth assault: police say no threat perception as his family cries foul over rejection of gun licence

GNS News Agency, August 15

Faridabad Dalit youth assault, Sahil assault brain injury, Faridabad forced tonsuring case, police deny security cover Dalit family, Sahil, 18, suffered a fracture, internal bleeding, and injury to soft tissue in the occipital part of the brain in the alleged assault. The family of the Faridabad Dalit youth who was allegedly brutally assaulted and forcefully tonsured in June has said the police have not yet provided them with security cover and denied them a gun licence.

Sahil, 18, suffered a fracture, internal bleeding, and injury to soft tissue in the occipital part of the brain in the alleged assault, according to his discharge summary from a hospital. After his cousin Suraj, 32, lodged a complaint, the Faridabad police arrested the 19-year-old prime accused and apprehended two of his minor accomplices. “We still have not received any security. I had applied for a gun licence, but the file has been marked ‘not recommended’”. For a gun licence in Haryana, applications are now made and processed online. I went to the assistant commissioner of police in Ballabgarh and also lodged complaints at various places. They said they cannot provide us with a gunman,” Suraj told When contacted, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Ballabgarh) Jitesh Malhotra said they had not received any threat perception inputs to order security cover to the family.

“The Station House Officer’s report indicated no threats faced by them. Security cover is issued based on these inputs,” said Malhotra. Earlier, the family had claimed that Sahil was discharged from a private hospital despite hav-



ing serious injuries, including a fracture and internal bleeding, without surgery or additional treatment. After Sahil had returned home limping after the assault, the family alleged the accused had hurled casteist slurs at Sahil. In his complaint, Suraj alleged the four accused “kept the teenager hostage in a room... cut his hair, eyebrows, moustache and beard, turned him upside down and beat him with sticks and an iron rod”. The police had earlier said there was no caste angle. The FIR, though, invoked the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, among other charges. Sahil’s family is from the Jatav caste. The medico-legal report had found that he had sustained 12 wounds, 10 of which were blunt force impact ones needing orthopaedic assessment, and two ‘simple’ ones caused by a sharp object.

he said. Mohali Village Motor Market President Amandeep Singh Abhiyana called it “a historic and commendable step.” “For years, governments only gave promises, not space. MLA Kulwant Singh worked tirelessly with us to achieve what others never could. Today, our dreams stand on solid ground,” he said.

Kulwant Singh had raised the issue in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, pressing for resolution of the pending RERA number that had stalled the project. GMADA has now cleared it, paving the way for construction.

Addressing the gathering, the MLA assured that the new market would boost employment and ensure planned city growth. “Mechanics left out in the first survey will get their rightful place after a re-survey. Build your shops as per GMADA’s plan, and I will personally stand with you against any future obstacles,” he said, thanking CM Bhagwant Mann for personally intervening.

GNS News Agency, August 15

A long-pending dream of Mohali’s motor and scooter mechanics came true on Thursday when MLA Kulwant Singh handed over Letters of Intent (LOIs) for 224 newly sanctioned 14.22 sq yard shops in a dedicated Motor & Scooter Market — modelled on Chandigarh’s iconic motor markets. The new market, located near Kampli village in Sector 65, will house mechanics from Mohali village market and Phase 7, giving them a proper workplace after decades of working under tarpaulins, tin sheds, and make-shift boxes along the roadside.

“I applied for the GMADA survey years ago. Now, with our own shops in an open space, our happiness is unbounded. We’ve gone from roadside box owners to shop owners — thanks to God and to the MLA for giving us such a beautiful gift on the eve of Independence Day. God has rewarded more than 40 years of our hard work. This will benefit city residents and ease the problems of Phase 7,”

Poor infra, inadequate staff: Urdu-medium MCD schools in Old Delhi grapple with myriad issues



GNS News Agency, August 15

Walls with paint chipping off, wires hanging outside windows, sparking safety concerns, only two small classrooms for over 100 students and one teacher’s cabin — it does not take a hard look at this Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD)-run Urdu medium school in Bulbuli Khana in Old Delhi’s Sita Ram Bazar to gauge the poor infrastructure. It is one of the four Urdu-medium schools in the area, reeling under similar conditions. In one of the classrooms, students from different grades sit on their designated benches. Rows one and two are marked for first and second-grade students, while the third row is for nursery and kindergarten students. “I give the assignment to students from lower grades in their notebooks. I have to divide the blackboard and teach them,” said a staff member.

Apart from inadequate infrastructure, the school also suffers from staff shortage. There is no principal — a teacher and a special educator are compelled to cater to all the students and handle administrative tasks. “I’m teaching every subject from nursery to the third grade. I’m also responsible for maintaining attendance, preparing monthly status reports, managing mid-day meals, and handling the IT desk... and I don’t get paid for all that,” the staff member added. Poor pupil-to-teacher (PTR) ratio is an issue prevailing across schools in the Sita Ram Bazar ward. A few lanes away, in Lambi Gali, another school is grappling with a shortage of Urdu teachers. “The teachers for Urdu are hired on a contract basis. The last hiring for a permanent teacher was done in 2016, but that was for Hindi teachers, and they are unable to teach Urdu,” said a staff member. The lack of Urdu teachers has taken a toll on the performance of the students. “They can’t teach higher classes, because the books are in Urdu, and the overall result gets affected,” a source added. Parents, too, are unhappy. A mother of a boy enrolled in Class 3 said, “I teach him at home and can figure out that he is struggling to read and write Urdu.” While the textbooks are in Urdu, she said, the worksheets are in Hindi, because of which the student gets confused. “It’s hard to translate, neither is he getting fluent in Hindi nor Urdu.”

Responding to this, a teacher said, “We try and translate as much material into Urdu as possible, but due to a shortage of staff, it gets difficult.” The mother of another Class 3 student echoed similar concerns. “It becomes difficult to teach at home, since he is not learning much here.” Meanwhile, an Urdu teacher alleged that the MCD

ED arrests top executive of Sahara Group, broker in money laundering case

GNS News Agency, August 15

ED arrests top executive of Sahara Group, broker in money laundering case According to the ED, “incriminating documents” were recovered during the search operations. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday said that it has arrested Anil Vailaparampil Abraham, Executive Director of Sahara Group’s Chairman Core Management (CCM) Office, and Jitendra Prasad Verma, a long-time associate and property broker of the Sahara Group, from Kolkata in a case of money laundering involving Sahara India and its group entities. According to ED officials, Abraham played a “key role” in coordinating and facilitating the sale of Sahara Group properties, many of which involved substantial unaccounted cash components that were siphoned off. “Verma was actively involved in executing several of these property transactions and knowingly assisted in routing large cash proceeds generated from these sale transactions, thereby contributing to the concealment and dissipation of Proceeds of Crime (POC),” the ED official stated. According to the ED, “incriminating documents” were recovered during the search operations. “Such evidence suggested that the properties of the Sahara Group were being disposed of one by one in a clandestine manner. It was also found from the various digital evidence that these two persons — Abraham and Verma — had played a key role in the disposal of such properties and assisting the promoters of Sahara Group in siphoning off the funds,” said the official, adding the promoters were found to be involved



while remaining outside India. Abraham and Verma were produced before a court on Saturday and sent to ED custody till July 14. The ED began its probe after over 500 FIRs were registered against various Sahara Group entities, with more than 300 involving scheduled offences under the PMLA, alleging large-scale cheating of depositors through forced redeposits and denial of maturity payments. The ED found that Sahara Group was operating a Ponzi scheme through entities like HICCSL, SCCSL, SUMCS, SMCSL, SICCL, SIRECL, SHICL, and others by luring depositors and agents with promises of high returns and commissions. “Despite financial incapacity, the group continued to collect fresh deposits, part of which was siphoned off for benami assets and personal expenses,” the ED said.

Days after Audi injures 5 sleeping on a footpath in Vasant Vihar in South Delhi, driver granted bail

“I was sleeping when I heard the sound of a car engine. Within a minute, it drove in our direction, ran over us... and then halted. Moments later, it sped away,” recalled Sabami (45), who works as a labourer. His wife and step-daughter, and two friends, apart from him, were injured when a white Audi allegedly crashed into a footpath in South Delhi’s Vasant Vihar in the early hours on July 9.

Allegedly drunk while driving the car, the accused, Utsav Shekhar (40), was arrested soon after the incident. He has been granted bail, police said on Sunday. When the hit-and-run happened, a pedestrian came to their help, said Sabami, and noted down the vehicle’s number to report to the police.

While Sabami was discharged from the hospital last week, his wife, Ladhi (40), is still admitted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre. Ladhi’s daughter from a previous marriage, Bimla (11), and the couple’s friends — Narayani (35), and her husband Ram Chander (45) — were among the others injured in the incident. All three have been discharged from the hospital. All of them hail from Ajmer in Rajasthan and came to Delhi 10 years ago, said officers. It would still take Ladhi at least a week to recover, said the family. “My wife suffered injuries in the neck and back, among other parts of the body. I just turned out to be lucky. If I too had suffered such grave injuries, who would have earned for the family?” he asked. Ratan Lal, 35, Ladhi’s brother, who works as a labourer in Gurgaon, said that he got to know about the accident on July 10 and has been at AIIMS since then. “Ladhi’s treatment is still on. I hope that we will get some help with the hospital bill. We don’t have much to pay,” he said. The accident took place near a petrol pump in front



When the hit-and-run happened, a pedestrian came to their help, said Sabami, and noted down the vehicle’s number to report to the police

of Shiva Camp in Vasant Vihar. Around 1.45 am on July 9, a police control room call was made to report a crash in which five people were hit by an Audi car while they were sleeping on the footpath. “Statements of eyewitnesses were recorded, wherein they stated that a white Audi Car ran over them while they were sleeping on the footpath,” DCP (South West) Amit Goel said. According to the police, Utsav then allegedly went on to hit another truck, about 200 metres from the accident spot, before he was finally arrested by the Delhi Police. The accused, police said, is a property dealer based in Noida and was going towards his home in Dwarka.

Allegations fly thick and fast after Dharmasthala clashes: 7 FIRs filed against local residents, journalists



GNS News Agency, August 15 The Karnataka Police registered seven FIRs hours after clashes that took place over alleged partisan media coverage of the Dharmasthala secret burial case near the town and neighbouring Ujire in the Dakshina Kannada district Wednesday evening. While four FIRs are registered at the Dharmasthala police station in connection with the assault on YouTubers, three were registered at the Belthangady police station. The clashes took place amid inspections being carried out in Dharmasthala by a Special Investigation Team, formed after a whistleblower filed a police complaint claiming that he had been forced to bury several bodies of alleged sexual assault and murder victims in the temple town.

The first of the seven FIRs was based on a complaint filed by Ajay Anchan of the Kudla Rampage YouTube channel. He told The Indian Express that he was covering the visit of a TV personality to the house of a teenage college student who was allegedly raped and murdered in 2012. "TV personality Rajath had gone to her house, and we were there to meet him. He told us that he was getting late and would meet us midway. At Pangala Cross, we stopped and took his response. As soon as it was over, some people came there and complained that I was talking about (BJP MP and secretary of the Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Educational Society) D Veerendra Heggade and Dharmasthala," said Anchan.

"When I asked them to give details about the defamatory comments made by me, they turned irate. The members in the group said that their 'dhani' had asked them to break our hands and legs, and started assaulting me and others," he added. Meanwhile, the police in a release said, "Around 15-20 miscreants attacked the complainant, cam-

eraman Suhas, Santosh of Sanchari Studio and Abhishek of United Media." The police booked the accused under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for unlawful assembly and voluntarily causing hurt, among others. The second FIR was filed against residents of Dharmasthala for refusing to disperse from the spot despite directions from the police. The third was against the residents for staging a protest in front of the Dharmasthala police station without any prior permission from the authorities.

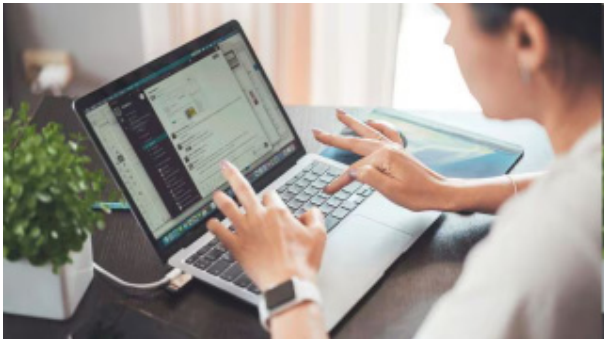
Another FIR was for the alleged attack on one Pramod Kumar Shetty by a group of 30-40 people claiming to be "supporters of Dharmasthala". The first of the three FIRs registered at the Belthangady police station was for an alleged assault on the reporter of a Kannada news channel by supporters of a group formed to seek justice in the 2012 rape-murder case. Harish R, a reporter of Asianet Suvarna News, claimed that activists Girish Mattannavar and Mahesh Shetty, YouTuber Sameer MD, Jayanth T and several other unidentified people attacked him when he went to a hospital to cover the attack on YouTubers. The group allegedly assaulted the reporter after recognising the logo of his channel. They punched him in the face and shoved him around, according to the FIR. A counter FIR at the station alleged that the reporter had hurled abuse at the activists and supporters of the YouTubers who were allegedly assaulted near Dharmasthala. The FIR named Asianet Suvarna News anchor Ajit Hanumakkanavar, accusing him of broadcasting false news claiming that Shetty had attacked the reporter. The last FIR was against the group seeking justice for the college student group for unlawful assembly in front of the hospital at Ujire. Responding to the clashes, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara told reporters at Bengaluru that he has sought a report from the police regarding the cause of the incident. Meanwhile, the police stepped up security at Ujire and Dharmasthala following the incident. The SIT probing allegations of secret burials in Dharmasthala Wednesday visited the grama panchayat office in the temple town, including those related to staff who worked there from 1998 to 2014, when the alleged murders and secret burials took place. Since July 29, SIT officials have dug up 12 of the 13 sites the whistleblower cited in his complaint. They found fragments of a skeleton on the third day of the inspection and portions of another skeleton on Monday. They were expected to inspect spot 13 Thursday.

‘Basket sneaking’, ‘false urgency’: How apps, websites lure consumers to click, buy, and subscribe

GNS News Agency, August 15

"Low in stock," "Only two pieces left," "Just two hours until the sale ends" — chances are, you've seen these messages flash across your screen while browsing shopping websites. But in many cases, it could simply be tactics to create a sense of "false urgency", even when plenty of stock remains. "False urgency" is an example of dark patterns used by digital platforms and apps to deceive, coerce, or influence consumers into making choices that are not in their best interest. While these practices might seem annoying and frustrating, they actually fall under the category of "unfair trade practices" as defined in Section 2(47) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and can attract a punishment of both imprisonment and fine. On November 30, 2023, the Central Consumer Protection Authority issued "Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023" and listed 13 identified dark patterns in the e-commerce sector. Inclusion of additional items in your shopping basket at the time of checkout from a platform without asking for your consent first. This inflates your final bill in relation to what you had initially decided to pay. Some platforms "force" users to take unwanted actions — such as buying additional products or subscribing to unrelated services — just to complete their original purchase. One example is bundling newsletter sign-ups with terms and conditions, leaving users with no option to go forward without signing up.

This is the practice of showing consumers an initial price for a product and then "dripping" additional fees. Under this practice, the prices of goods are not revealed upfront and are surreptitiously revealed as the consumer is about to make the final purchase. Ever thought that making subscriptions to platforms and apps was far easier than cancelling them? If yes, then it's likely you've encountered a "subscription trap" — a process which makes cancellation of a paid subscription or service lengthy, complex and cumbersome in the hope that customers would get exhausted and end up staying subscribed. This is a form of deception wherein one outcome is advertised and another is served. An example could be when discounts are offered, but terms that make the savings negligible are imposed simultaneously. • Disguised advertisement With this practice, platforms blend an advertisement with genuine interface elements to ensure engagement with the ad by subterfuge. Fake "download" buttons on websites that redirect you to malware or advertisements are an example. Poor design elements, such as low contrast or obscure placement, are often used by platforms to hide critical information. Hard-to-read text, which leaves users unaware of key terms or information, is an example. This involves using vague or misleading language to confuse users into unintended actions. Phrases such as "check this box to opt out" could lead users to believe they are opting out. Like a nagging loved



one, digital platforms could repeatedly interrupt users with prompts and pop-ups. This dark pattern involves an overload of requests, which is unrelated to the intended purchase of goods and services.

What is the government doing to prevent and regulate dark patterns?

In answer to the Rajya Sabha dated August 5, B L Verma, the Minister of State, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said all e-commerce platforms have been advised to take necessary steps to ensure their platforms "do not engage in such deceptive and unfair trade practices which are in the nature of dark patterns". "Further, all e-commerce platforms have been advised to conduct self-audits to identify dark patterns, within three months of the issue of the advisory, and take necessary steps to ensure their platforms are free from such dark patterns," he said.

Verma responded to a query posed by Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Mhalu Shet Tanavade on the outcome of various guidelines notified by the government for the prevention and regulation of manipulative dark patterns used by e-commerce companies and the actions that have been taken so far. Verma also stated that, based on self-audit reports, the e-commerce platforms should give self-declarations with the assertion that their platform is not indulging in any dark patterns. "A Joint Working Group, comprising representatives from Ministries, National Law Universities and Voluntary Consumer Organisations, has been constituted vide Office Memorandum dated June 5, 2025, for identifying dark patterns... stakeholders to work together in creating a transparent, ethical and user-centric online environment," the answer added. In 2024, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) analysed around 12,000 screens from 53 apps across nine industries, identifying an average of 2.7 deceptive patterns per app. The ASCI had also pointed out that 52 of the 53 top Indian applications and platforms use dark patterns to deceive their users, implying that it is extremely common for users to come across these.



The incident took place on Thursday morning in the crowded Jamalpur area of the city. Rahul Hareesh Parmar, who allegedly did not have a driver's license, allegedly drove the AMC's door-to-door waste collection van "negligently" at high speed, hitting several vehicles.

driving), 324(2) (mischief), as well as sections of the Motor Vehicles Act.

‘Those who sinned against Sambhal will face punishment’: Yogi targets Congress, SP



GNS News Agency, August 15

Declaring Sambhal a sacred symbol of Hindu faith, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Thursday targeted foreign invaders and the Opposition Congress and Samajwadi Party while warning that "those who sinned against Sambhal will face stern retribution". The Chief Minister was in the district, where he inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 222 development projects worth Rs 659 crore.

Addressing a public gathering, Yogi launched a sharp attack on foreign invaders, stating the town once boasted 68 pilgrimage sites, 19 sacred wells, and traditional 24- and 84-kos parikrama routes — all desecrated and destroyed by invaders. These holy sites were taken over, and a deliberate attempt was made to erase the truth, he claimed. Calling it a "malicious conspiracy," CM Adityanath vowed to restore all 68 shrines and 19 sacred wells in Sambhal. Citing Lokmata Ahilyabai Holkar's revival of Kashi Vishwanath and Somnath temples, he pledged a similar renaissance for Sambhal's heritage. "True development," he said, "lies in preserving legacy while shaping the golden dreams of today and tomorrow."

Emphasising Sambhal's spiritual significance, CM Adityanath said it is a sacred land of both Hari (Vishnu) and

Har (Shiva), and foretold in scriptures like the Shrimad Bhagavat, Skanda, and Vishnu Puranas as the birthplace of Lord Kalki in Kaliyug. Hitting out at those who label Hindu traditions as controversial, he said, "Their background is controversial, so they see our heritage the same way — but this is not up for dispute." He warned that all such malicious attempts to undermine Sanatan Dharma will be firmly crushed. Referencing the revival of Kashi and Ayodhya, the CM asked, "If they can be restored, why not Sambhal?" He reaffirmed his government's resolve to rejuvenate Lord Kalki's shrine and Harihar Dham. Attacking the Congress and SP, he claimed, "The Congress orchestrated mass killings here, and the SP, as its disciple, shielded the murderers. Never forget their sins against Sambhal." "They hid the truth of post-independence massacres out of fear of losing their vote bank," he further alleged. "We are not here for vote bank politics — we are here to preserve our heritage. Those who shame India and its values will be taught a lesson their future generations won't forget." He also claimed that past governments allowed riots, lawlessness, and exploitation to flourish. "Girls weren't safe, traders weren't safe. But today, every citizen in UP is secure — except rioters. Mahakal is delivering justice," he stated.

The Chief Minister also emphasised: "Those who sinned against Sambhal will face punishment. Those trying to hinder Sambhal's development will pay the price. Those who desecrate the holy sites of Sanatan Dharma will also pay the price." Taking another dig at previous governments, he claimed they nurtured one mafia per district, whereas his government is promoting the "One District, One Product" scheme. Praising the resilience of Sambhal's people, he said they faced riots with courage and never bowed down. He assured them that the double-engine government is firmly committed to both heritage preservation and development. The CM also inspected archaeological artifacts unearthed in Sambhal and planted saplings to promote environmental awareness.

Ganeshkhind, Sinhagad road flyovers to partially open for traffic soon

GNS News Agency, August 15

Ganeshkhind, Sinhagad road flyovers The long-awaited flyovers on Ganeshkhind and Sinhagad roads in Pune are set to partially open in the coming days, with the arm from Aundh to Shivajinagar ready for public use. The long-awaited flyovers that will improve traffic flow on Ganeshkhind and Sinhagad roads in Pune are set to open partially to the public in the coming days, according to civic officials.

"The work of the flyover on Ganeshkhind road is going on in full swing. The arm of the flyover enabling traffic flow from Aundh to Shivajinagar is ready and will be open for public use in the next few days. However, the other two arms of the flyover from Shivajinagar to Baner and Pashan will take two more months for completion," said Yogesh Mhase, Metropolitan Commissioner, Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA). He said the work on the arm of the flyover for the Aundh to Shivajinagar route is complete, and only the consultant's certifications are pending before it can be opened to the public. "I have informed Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Deputy Chief Ministers Ajit Pawar and Eknath Shinde on the status of the project while inviting them to inaugurate it. Hopefully, they will communicate their availability soon," said Mhase.

Siddhartha Shirole, the BJP legislator from Shivajinagar, said, "The work of one arm of the flyover on Ganeshkhind road is complete, so the administration has been asked to invite the chief minister to inaugurate it." PMRDA is constructing an 881 metre-long double-decker flyover with the elevated Metro rail route on top and a flyover



connecting three roads with Ganeshkhind Road. In the next phase of the integrated road infrastructure project on Ganeshkhind road, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) will construct a grade separator at Pune University Chowk and a connecting arm from Senapati Bapat Road to the double-decker bridge at University Chowk on Ganeshkhind Road. The 1,540-metre-long flyover from Sinhagad Road to the city, extending from the Indian Hume Pipe Company at Manikbaug to Inamdar Chowk near Hingane, is now complete. It crosses four junctions along the route. "The PMC first inaugurated the 495-metre-long flyover from Vithalwadi to Veer Baji Pasalkar Udyan, jumping the main junction of the Rajaram bridge. Later, one arm of the flyover from Vithalwadi to Fun Time theatre on Sinhagad road in Vadgaon Budruk was opened to the public. Now, the last stage of the project from Manikbaug to Hingane Khurd is complete, and the flyover will be open for public use in the next few days," said Dinkar Gojare, incharge of the civic traffic and transport department.

ED attaches Rs 29,000 from Mangaluru blast suspect's account, says bomb was supposed to be planted at Dharmasthala temple



GNS News Agency, August 15

The Bengaluru zonal office of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday provisionally attached Rs 29,176 kept in the bank account of Syed Yasin, one of the accused in the 2022 case in which a pressure-cooker bomb accidentally exploded in an autorickshaw in Mangaluru. The agency said the bomb was meant to be planted at the Dharmasthala Manjunatha Swamy Temple. "Investigations conducted revealed that the ISIS online handler named 'Colonel' had given training over Wicker app/ Telegram etc. to the main accused Mohammad Shariq alias Premraj and other accused persons, to make improvised explosive device (IED)/Bomb and also arranged funds through certain mule accounts and also through crypto currencies which were at times encashed by Syed Yasin and Mohammad Shariq, through PoS agents, for a commission and at some instances the encashed cryptocurrencies were routed through the fraudulently opened mule accounts in FINO Payments Bank," ED said in a statement on Wednesday, citing the investigation done by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The NIA, which took over the investigation from the Karnataka Police, has said in its chargesheet filed in the case that the blast was part of an ISIS terrorist plot. According to ED, Rs 2,86,008 was deposited by different cryptocurrency dealers in the mule accounts and Rs 41,680 was collected in cash from point-of-sale agents as part of the terror plot. The amounts were used for buying items online to assemble the improvised explosive device (IED), hiring hideouts in Mysuru city and other places, and also for conducting reconnaissance at various places in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. The bomb was supposed to be planted at the Dharmasthala Manjunatha Swamy Temple, the agency said in its statement. On November 19,

2022, Mohammed Shariq, 24, suffered 40 per cent burns after an IED he was carrying in a bag kept on his lap while travelling in an autorickshaw accidentally went off in Mangaluru. It exploded as the bomb timer was set for 09 seconds, instead of 90 minutes, according to the NIA. The police arrested Shariq after the blast. Another accused in the case, Maaz Munir, allegedly provided details of the mule accounts to Shariq to receive payments sent by the online handler, "Colonel".

India Post to merge registered post with speed post from September 1

Hyderabad: Come September 1, the once popular registered post service of the India Post is set to be merged and integrated with the speed post. Officials of Telangana Postal Circle confirmed the move and said the decision comes in response to the increasing digitisation of communication and the growing dominance of private courier firms in the parcel delivery sector.

As part of enhancing efficiency, India Post, across the country, is taking out registered post, the decades-old postal service, which is now to be merged into the speed post service. The initiative is expected to strengthen the postal service's competitiveness and cater to the evolving needs of consumers in the digital age, explained the official.

The Directorate of India Post, Delhi, instructed the Telangana Postal Circle to assess a proposal to merge registered post with speed post services. The directive includes collecting consumer feedback on various parameters, including the booking and delivery systems, user fee charges, and the handling of articles and letters, among other services.

"A marathon exercise has been taken up for the past three months, and the feedback has been forwarded to the Directorate. Overall, the majority of the postal customers are supporting the proposal of transforming registered post to speed post services, to provide better services. Some more customers have suggested continuing the registered post as the services are similar to speed post," according to the postal official.

Gujarat govt official convicted of demanding Rs 4,000 bribe



GNS News Agency, August 15

A sessions court in Gandhinagar has convicted a Class II rank official of the Gujarat government under the Prevention of Corruption Act for demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 4,000.Natvarbhai Patel, who was serving as Deputy Executive Engineer in the Kalpsar Mechanical Cell, was sentenced to one year and six months of imprisonment. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on him. The order was pronounced on Wednesday.

‘Ascetic’ hacks estranged wife to death in Delhi after she refused to accompany him to Bihar

GNS News Agency, August 15

delhi policeThe deceased, Kiran Jha, had left her husband 10 years ago and was staying with her son, Durgesh Jha, and his family in Delhi’s Neb Sarai area, the police said. A 60-year-old man, who has been leading the life of an ascetic, allegedly hacked his estranged wife to death at their son’s house in South Delhi on Wednesday after she rejected his request to live with him in Bihar, the Delhi Police said.

The deceased, Kiran Jha, had left her husband 10 years ago and was staying with her son, Durgesh Jha, and his family in Delhi’s Neb Sarai area, the police said.The police have circulated lookout posters across the capital to help nab the accused, Pramod Jha, who came to Delhi on August 1.Ever since his wife left him, Pramod had been living the life of a ‘sadhu’ in his Jamalpur village in Bihar and met

‘Capable of making our own decisions. No need for third person’: Uddhav Thackeray on alliance with Raj

GNS News Agency, August 15

Uddhav Thackeray’s remarks came in response to questions about whether Raj Thackeray would attend the INDIA bloc meeting or meet Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his stay in the capital.Uddhav Thackeray’s remarks came in response to questions about whether Raj Thackeray would attend the INDIA bloc meeting or meet Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his stay in the capital. Amid speculation over a possible alliance between the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray’s Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), Uddhav Thackeray said Thursday any decision about joining hands would be taken only by him and his cousin.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi during his ongoing visit for the INDIA bloc meeting, the former Maharashtra chief minister said, “We... are capable of making our own decisions. Whatever we have to do, we will do. There is no need for any third person.”Uddhav Thackeray’s remarks came in response to questions about whether Raj Thackeray would attend the INDIA bloc meeting or meet Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his stay in the capital. The comments have added fuel to the ongoing speculation about a Sena UBT-MNS alliance ahead of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections.This comes weeks after Uddhav and Raj Thackeray shared a platform – their first in nearly two decades – where both leaders targeted the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Maharashtra, particularly over issues related to the Marathi language.While no formal announcement has been made, the possibility of an alliance between the Thackeray cousins has triggered debate about the future composition of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and whether the MNS might be integrated into the broader INDIA alliance.

Uddhav Thackeray also used the occasion to criticise the Narendra Modi government on several fronts. Referring to former US President Donald Trump’s tariff hike on Indian goods, he said, “Trump mocks India and imposes

Yamuna breaches warning mark in Delhi for first time this monsoon

GNS News Agency, August 15

The Yamuna river breached the warning mark in Delhi for the first time this monsoon season early Thursday, prompting authorities to initiate preparations for possible evacuations in low-lying areas.According to officials from the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) Department, the water level at the Old Railway Bridge, where real-time monitoring takes place, rose to 204.88 metres since 5 am — breaching the warning mark of 204.5 metres. By noon, it had climbed further to 204.98 metres. The danger mark is 205.33 metres, and evacuations are triggered at 206 metres.“The river crossed the warning level for the first time this season early this morning. Our field staff and sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) will visit and verbally alert residents living in vulnerable areas. Evacuation will begin, if needed, as per standard procedure,” an official at the I&FC central control room told .Officials intensified on-ground response measures. Harish Kumar, in charge of the I&FC Department’s Boat Club unit, made public announcements urging people to immediately vacate the Yamuna floodplains, citing rising water levels and safety concerns.Earlier on Wednesday, Google’s real-time flood forecasting model, Google Hub — which uses data from the Central Water Commission (CWC) — had issued a flood alert for Delhi, predicting a 10-12 cm rise for Thursday.Yamuna Forecasts from CWC inputs showing 10-50 cm drop by tmrw afternoonAs of Thursday noon, it indicated a potential decline of 10-50 cm by Friday afternoon. Despite this, authorities have remained cautious, noting that the current level is the highest recorded since the 2023 floods.Officials from various agencies, including the I&FC Department, are on alert, tracking the Yamuna’s level following heavy rainfall in upstream states and high discharge from the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana.According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), several regions in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh — both critical to the Yamuna’s catchment — have

According to P D Vyas, the public prosecutor in the case, the complaint was filed by a man who used to run a taxi service. In November-December 2008, he had provided taxis on rent to Patel’s office. While he received partial payment for his services, an amount of Rs 24,276 remained pending. Before this, the complainant’s bills to the tune of Rs 1.29 lakh and Rs 54,000 were cleared and paid by Patel’s office.When the complainant followed up with Patel for the remaining dues, Patel allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 4,000 to clear the payment.Subsequently, based on the police complaint, a trap was laid. Patel was caught red-handed while accepting the bribe. Subsequently, a criminal offence was registered at the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Gandhinagar in 2009.The case proceeded under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, which criminalises public servants accepting gratification other than legal remuneration in respect of official acts.Patel, a mid-level officer in a department that comes under the state’s Water Resources wing, was convicted after the court found sufficient evidence of him having misused his position to demand and accept illegal gratification.

his expenses through small donations he received as a baba, the police said.“On Tuesday night, Pramod tried to convince Kiran to come back to Bihar. But, she refused, saying that she was happy in Delhi working as a caretaker for patients and being with her granddaughter. This led to an argument between the two. Around 4 am, Kiran’s daughter-in-law found her lying in a pool of blood with injuries on her head and body,” a police officer said.The police have found the axe used for the murder in the room beside the body.“CCTV footage showed Pramod leaving the building at about 5 am. Teams have been dispatched to railway and bus stations to nab the accused,” Ankit Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South, said.Forensic and crime teams have reached the spot, and an investigation is on.The couple’s son Durgesh Jha works in a micro-finance firm in Patna. He has been summoned, the police said.



50 per cent tariffs, yet Prime Minister Modi remains silent. Who is running the country?”He also questioned Modi’s upcoming visit to China, saying, “After the Galwan clash, there was a campaign to boycott Chinese goods. Now the PM is visiting China – is this for the benefit of his industrialist friends?”On ties with Pakistan, the Sena UBT chief took aim at continued cricket diplomacy, remarking, “As long as terrorism continues, there should be no relations with Pakistan. Watching cricket in Dubai is not patriotism.” The comment was seen as a veiled dig at ICC chairman Jay Shah, son of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.Responding to PM Modi’s recent remarks that he is willing to pay a personal price to protect farmers’ interests, Uddhav Thackeray said the statement was opportunistic. “When farmers marched to Delhi, they were labelled Naxals. Some even died. Now, with elections approaching, they are being remembered,” he said.He also recalled that his father, the late Bal Thackeray, was once stopped from coming to Delhi during a hunger strike. “He was met with barricades, bullets, and was called a Naxal too,” Uddhav Thackeray said. “But now the Centre’s lies are slowly being exposed.”Meanwhile, the INDIA bloc meeting, hosted at Rahul Gandhi’s residence, is expected to focus on key poll issues, coordination for upcoming elections, and the Vice Presidential race.

recorded significant rain in the past 24 hours (till 8.30 am on August 7).In Uttarakhand, Barkot in Uttarkashi received 10 cm of rain, and Roorkee in Haridwar received 5 cm.In Himachal Pradesh, Naina Devi in Bilaspur recorded 9 cm, while Pachhad in Sirmaur and the R L BBMB site in Bilaspur recorded 7 cm each.This rainfall contributes to increased discharge at the Hathnikund barrage, eventually impacting water levels in Delhi with a time lag of around 48 hours.“For the first time this monsoon, discharge from Hathnikund crossed 50,000 cusecs, peaking at 61,729 cusecs around 5 to 6 am today (Thursday),” the I&FC Department official said.“Since then, about 50,000 cusecs have been released every hour. This water takes around 36 to 48 hours to reach Delhi, entering first through Wazirabad and then flowing downstream to the ITO and Okhla barrages.”The Yamuna’s level had been gradually rising since July 30, when it stood at around 202 metres. A slight dip on Tuesday was followed by a fresh spike on Wednesday evening, when the river reached 204.14 metres.“The levels keep changing every hour depending on the discharge. But, on average, it stays at around 202-203 metres or 203-204 metres...,” the official said.With water levels continuously rising, the situation mirrors the crisis that struck Delhi in 2023. On July 12 of that year, despite six forecasts from the CWC predicting that levels would “remain steady,” the Yamuna surged the following day to a record high of 208.66 metres. This led to the displacement of over 25,000 residents.Given potential flood-like situations, the Delhi government last month cleared a proposal to formally approach the Haryana government seeking control of the ITO barrage, which plays a key role in managing the Yamuna’s flow through the city. The step was taken because, during the 2023 floods, jammed gates at the Haryana-controlled barrage were blamed for exacerbating the crisis. While the gates have since been repaired, Delhi officials have argued that full operational control is necessary for swift flood management.

50% tariff by Trump will have severe impact on India, says TMC’s Abhishek Banerjee; blames BJP govt’s ‘failed foreign policy’



TMC National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Wednesday hit out at the BJP-led central government over the recent imposition of a 50% tariff on Indian goods by former US President Donald Trump. Speaking at the Kolkata airport, Banerjee called it a direct fallout of the PM Modi government’s “failed foreign policy and diplomatic missteps.”

“In 2019, Modi campaigned for Trump in Texas. In 2020, Trump visited Gujarat and Modi called him ‘my friend and India’s friend, Donald Trump.’ Now the same Trump has imposed this tariff. Those who campaigned for him should answer why this has happened,” Banerjee said.“The onus is on the Prime Minister and the NDA government, not the Trinamool Congress, to answer for this diplomatic failure,” he added.Banerjee also condemned Trump’s reported remark that India’s economy is “dead,” but said the economy is in the ICU. “I do not agree that India’s economy is dead. No one has the power to kill the Indian economy. It is surviving on the love and affection of 140 crore Indians. I can say the Indian economy is in the ICU. From bad, it has become worse in the last ten years. And by imposing a 50% tariff, there will be substantial job loss. Exports will come down. And this is all because of the poor foreign policy of the Indian government,” he said.He warned that the tariff

would severely affect India’s IT, pharmaceutical and textile sectors.

“Exports will be affected, especially in three industries – IT, pharmaceuticals and textiles. The services around these sectors will also be impacted... India should respond firmly to this,” Banerjee said.Framing the issue as a broader diplomatic and strategic failure, he added: “Those who want to weaken India and create pressure—how did they suddenly become so powerful? The government that used to boast about its ‘56-inch chest’, despite being in power, has been snubbed by China, the US, and many other countries.”

Banerjee said he did not wish to speak about these matters publicly but felt compelled to do so. “I was part of the all-party delegation and visited five countries. A multi-lateral forum like ASEAN consists of 11 countries. It includes Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, among others. Let alone putting pressure on Pakistan, they did not even issue a statement condemning Pakistan’s actions,” he said.He also brought up national security concerns, citing incidents in Pulwama and Pahalgam, and questioned the government’s approach to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). “The Home Minister said on the floor of the House that PoK is part of India. But what action has been taken? If there’s no action, countries will continue to weaken India and create pressure,” Banerjee said.Turning to domestic issues, Banerjee accused the Election Commission of working in favour of the BJP and overstepping its mandate. “The ECI is working months ahead of the election, which is still 10-11 months away, only to prevent the elected state government from functioning,” he said. He alleged that the ECI was trying to disenfranchise “genuine Bengalis” and called its actions a “shameless role” for a supposedly impartial institution.He also accused the Central government of misusing investigative agencies and the judiciary to undermine the Bengal government, citing over 50 CBI cases since 2021.

Surat jeweller booked for duping South Mumbai diamond merchant of Rs 1.81 crore

GNS News Agency, August 15

The Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) police on Wednesday booked a Surat-based jeweller for allegedly cheating a South Mumbai-based diamond merchant of Rs 1.81 crore.The suspect has been identified as Rajeshkumar Sharma, 50, proprietor of Krishna Jewellers in Surat, and his firm has been in the diamond business for the past three years, the police said on Thursday.

According to the police, Sharma was the client of the complainant, Rajesh Vithani, who runs a company in Bharat Diamond Bourse in BKC, Bandra (East), dealing with the purchase and sale of diamonds. Vithani is in the business of giving the precious stones to traders, dealers, and brokers in the diamond market on a receipt. The suspect won the confidence of Vithani, since Sharma’s firm had bought diamonds from the complainant in the past, the police said.Sharma had contacted Vithani’s office in March and said that he had a reputed client interested in purchasing high-quality diamonds. Based on his previous business relation with Sharma, Vithani supplied him two consignments of cut and polished natural diamonds, weighing 444.86 carats worth Rs 1.31 crore, and a second consignment of 475.82 carats worth Rs 49.9 lakh.Sharma had signed the receipt in the presence of the complainant under the prom-



ise that he would make the payment in 15 days.In his complaint, Vithani stated that when he contacted Sharma after two weeks, he claimed that he had met with an accident and was undergoing an operation, and required more time to pay the amount.After a month, Sharma gave another excuse that his daughter had undergone a heart operation and that he would complete the payment soon, said an officer. Later, when the complainant tried to contact Sharma, his number was initially found switched off and then out of service, the police said.

How irregularly placed tiles in a Dahisar kitchen helped police crack a salesman’s murder



GNS News Agency, August 15

A routine missing person’s report filed in a police station on the outskirts of Mumbai in 2021 flummoxed the local police, until a brother’s suspicion led the investigators to uncover a tale of an affair, a murder, and a patchy cover-up. It was May 2021. Raees Shaikh’s wife, Shahida, a Dahisar resident, approached the police, saying that he had been missing for nearly 11 days, since May 21. The police

investigated the complaint and questioned a few people, but to no avail.Raees and Shahida got married in 2012 in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh, and moved to Dahisar, where he worked as a clothes salesman. The couple had two children, a daughter and a son. Till June, the police had no leads in the case. It was then that Shaikh’s brother, Anees, came to the city from UP and told the police that he suspected Shahida.

The police decided to focus the probe on Shahida and returned to the Shaikhs’ residence in a Dahisar chawl. It was here that an official noticed a fresh layer of cement and irregularly laid tiles in the kitchen. “When we questioned her, she got defensive. This made us suspicious,” the official added.The police began interrogating Shahida and also took her children into confidence with Anees’s help. Eventually, her six-year-old daughter started crying and allegedly told the police that Shahida and a neighbour had murdered Raees and buried him in the house.According to the police, she was having an affair with a neighbour, Amit Mishra alias Aniket. She allegedly told the police that on May 21, her husband had found her in a compromising position with Mishra, following which they slit his throat and buried him in the room.

No restriction on deploying school teachers for election duties as BLOs, ECI informs Delhi High Court

Opposing a plea by teachers in Delhi government schools objecting to their assignment as booth level officers (BLOs), the Election Commission of India (ECI) informed the Delhi High Court Wednesday that there is no restriction on deploying teachers as BLOs after the amendments to ECI guidelines in June.Justice Mini Pushkarna sought responses from the ECI and the Delhi government, “bringing forth all the facts on record”, while posting the matter for further consideration on September 25.The petitioners in the case are teachers in government schools aggrieved by office orders dated June 9 and 16, through which they were deployed as BLOs. Objecting to the appointment, the petitioners told the high court that their appointment as BLOs was in contravention of the ECI’s guidelines of November 3, 2010, and October 4, 2022. According to the petitioners, teachers can be deployed as BLOs only after exhausting all the categories of employees.They also pointed out that their appointment contradicted Section 27 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act), 2009. According to this section, teachers should not be assigned non-educational tasks. They argued that they are in the Group B category, while the Delhi government has



intentionally not deployed those in Group C category as BLOs.The Election Commission, however, pointed out that an amendment was carried out on June 5 to the earlier guidelines, modifying several clauses. Part of the amended clauses include that “any person can be appointed as a BLO from amongst any Group C and above regular serving employees of the state/local government, enrolled as elector in that part/area”.

Great Barrier Reef records largest annual coral loss in 39 years



The Great Barrier Reef has experienced its greatest annual loss of live coral across most of its expanse in four decades of record-keeping, Australian authorities say. But due to increasing coral cover since 2017, the coral deaths — caused mainly by bleaching last year associated with climate change — have left the area of living coral across the iconic reef system close to its long-term average, the Australian Institute of Marine Science said in its annual survey on Wednesday (August 6, 2025). The change underscores a new level of volatility on the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the report said. Mike Emslie, who heads the tropical marine research agency's long-term monitoring program, said the live coral cover measured in 2024 was the largest recorded in 39 years of surveys. The losses from such a high base of coral cover had partially cushioned the serious climate impacts on the world's largest reef ecosystem, which covers 344,000 square kilometers (133,000 square miles) off the northeast Australian coast, he said.

"These are substantial impacts and evidence that the increasing frequency of coral bleaching is really starting to have detrimental effects on the Great Barrier Reef," Emslie said on Thursday. "While there's still a lot of coral cover out there, these are record declines that we have seen in any one year of monitoring," he added. Mr. Emslie's agency divides the Great Barrier Reef, which extends 1,500 kilometres (900 miles) along the Queensland state coast, into three similarly-sized regions: northern, central and southern. Living coral cover shrunk by almost a third in the south in a year, a quarter in the north and by 14% in the central region, the

report said. Because of record global heat in 2023 and 2024, the world is still going through its biggest — and fourth ever recorded — mass coral bleaching event on record, with heat stress hurting nearly 84% of the world's coral reef area, including the Great Barrier Reef, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's coral reef watch. So far at least 83 countries have been impacted.

This bleaching event started in January 2023 and was declared a global crisis in April 2024. It easily eclipsed the previous biggest global coral bleaching event, from 2014 to 2017, when 68.2% had bleaching from heat stress. Large areas around Australia — but not the Great Barrier Reef — hit the maximum or near maximum of bleaching alert status during this latest event. Australia in March this year started aerial surveys of 281 reefs across the Torres Strait and the entire northern Great Barrier Reef and found widespread coral bleaching. Of the 281 reefs, 78 were more than 30% bleached. Coral has a hard time thriving and at times even surviving in prolonged hot water. They can survive short bursts, but once certain thresholds of weeks and high temperatures are passed, the coral is bleached, which means it turns white because it expels the algae that live in the tissue and give them their colors. Bleached corals are not dead, but they are weaker and more vulnerable to disease. Coral reefs often bounce back from these mass global bleaching events, but often they are not as strong as they were before. Coral reefs are considered a "unique and threatened system" due to climate change and are especially vulnerable to global warming beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change proclaimed in 2018. The world has now warmed 1.3 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times. That report said "tropical corals may be even more vulnerable to climate change than indicated in assessments made in 2014." The report said back-to-back big bleaching events at the Great Barrier Reef in the mid 2010s "suggest that the research community may have underestimated climate risks for coral reefs." "Warm water (tropical) coral reefs are projected to reach a very high risk of impact at 1.2°C, with most available evidence suggesting that coral-dominated ecosystems will be non-existent at this temperature or higher. At this point, coral abundance will be near zero at many locations," the report said.

Remembering Hiroshima: Why one city still echoes in history

Some events are etched so deeply in history that each time we recall them, we pause with a sigh. It's as though we're watching a silent film, one that aches, teaches, and lingers. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is one such moment. As time passes, the memory of what happened on those two days only grows heavier. It's not just a story of destruction, but one that teaches the world about peace, courage, and rebuilding. So why is Hiroshima remembered around the world, even today? It was a bright and ordinary Monday morning in Hiroshima, Japan. The streets were bustling. People were cycling to work. Children were heading to school. Soldiers were doing their morning exercises in an open parade ground. A short while earlier, an air raid warning had been issued, but it was lifted soon; it was just one lonely aircraft spotted in the sky. "Little Boy", as it was codenamed, fell silently for about 43 seconds... before the world below erupted.



What was Little Boy?

"Little Boy" was not an ordinary bomb; it was the first atomic bomb ever used in war. It was a gun-type bomb that fired one piece of uranium-235 into another, creating a powerful chain reaction. Its explosive force was equivalent to 15,000 tons of TNT. It detonated 1,900 feet above ground. A blinding white flash lit up the sky. A fireball formed, heating up to 7,000°C, hotter than the surface of the sun. The shockwaves from the blast, faster than the speed of sound, tore through the city. "Little Boy," the name given to the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in a loading pit before going into the B-29 bomber that was to drop it over Hiroshima, Japan, in a 1945 photo provided by the U.S. National Archives.

"Little Boy," the name given to the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in a loading pit before going into the B-29 bomber that was to drop it over Hiroshima, Japan, in a 1945 photo provided by the U.S. National Archives. Almost instantly, wooden houses turned to ashes, people disappeared in the blast, and birds burst into flames mid-air. The force knocked buildings flat, shattered glass miles away, and threw people across streets. Clothes burned off bodies. Shadows of people were scorched into the pavement. A black rain soon followed, carrying radioactive fallout, it soaked survivors and rescuers alike, unknowingly poisoning them. Within minutes, nearly 70,000 people were dead, and Hiroshima became a silent inferno.

Why does the world remember Hiroshima?

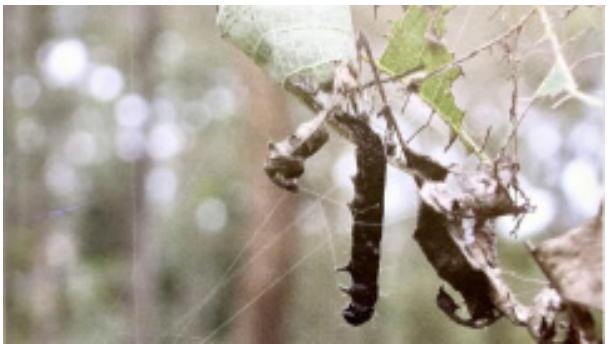
Hiroshima isn't just remembered because of the destruction; it's remembered because of what it stands for today: The A-Bomb Dome, one of the few structures still standing after the blast, now stands as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a global reminder of that day. Every August 6... People pray in front of the cenotaph for the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing, at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima on the 80th Atomic Bombing Day anniversary in Hiroshima, western Japan, August 6, 2025. People pray in front of the cenotaph for the victims of the 1945 atomic bombing, at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima on the 80th Atomic Bombing Day anniversary in Hiroshima, western Japan. Every year, on Hiroshima Day, people across the world light candles, float lanterns on rivers, and observe moments of silence. They remember not just the destruction but the hope that such a thing must never happen again.

Game-changer virus developed by Kerala Forest Research Institute can help save teak plantations

A revolutionary technology developed by the Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) can transform the way teak plantations are protected from their most notorious pest — the teak defoliator moth (*Hyblaea puer*). The institute has successfully identified, mass-produced and patented a naturally occurring virus, *Hyblaea puer* Nucleopolyhedrosis Virus (HpNPV), which causes lethal infection in the pest larvae and prevents widespread defoliation of teak trees.

For decades, the teak defoliator has wreaked havoc in plantations, stripping entire forests of their foliage up to six times a year, weakening trees and causing significant loss in timber yield. "When the larvae attack, the tree spends its energy regenerating leaves instead of growing. It's a huge invisible loss," explains T.V. Sajeev, Principal Scientist at KFRI. Conventional control methods such as aerial spraying of chemical pesticides were tried — at Konni in Kerala and Barnavappara in Madhya Pradesh — inviting protests due to environmental concerns. The KFRI even presented a paper at the 1980 Forestry Conference at Dehradun titled "The problem of teak defoliator: To spray or not to spray?"

KFRI's sustained research showed that the economic loss due to teak defoliators is staggering: an estimated 3 cubic metres of wood per hectare annually, translating to ₹562.5 crore loss in Kerala and ₹12,525 crore in India. The institute screened the pest's natural enemies and zeroed in on HpNPV, a virus that is entirely host-specific, targeting only the teak defoliator larvae, and thus completely safe for



the forest ecosystem. "The beauty of the virus is in how it works," said Dr. Sajeev. "It multiplies at least a trillion times inside a single larva. When the body breaks open, it releases huge quantities of inoculum. Even if the infection is sub-lethal, the virus stays in the insect, gets passed on to the next generation, and proves lethal then." With a clear understanding of the pest's life cycle, HpNPV can be applied during early-stage outbreaks to prevent larger infestations. Field trials at Nilambur in Malappuram, seen as India's cradle of teak, were a success. KFRI has already transferred the know-how for outbreak monitoring and virus application to the Forest department. "Now it's up to the department to formally adopt the technology," said Dr. Sajeev.

All you need to know about: ectopic pregnancies



A recent case of pregnancy stunned doctors in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh: an MRI scan, conducted after the pregnant woman complained of vomiting and stomach pain, revealed a foetus growing in the liver, as per media reports. This extremely rare condition is known as an intrahepatic ectopic pregnancy. Additionally, as Ectopic Pregnancy Awareness Day went by last week, on August 1, a day dedicated to highlighting this condition and the experiences of those who have been affected, here is all you need to know about it.

What is an ectopic pregnancy?

An ectopic pregnancy occurs when the fertilised egg, instead of implanting itself in the uterus, implants outside of it, commonly in the fallopian tube. This sort of pregnancy cannot proceed normally. It could cause bleeding, and may even be life-threatening in some cases. Pregnancy begins with fertilisation of a sperm cell and an egg cell. The fertilised egg is then meant to travel down the fallopian tubes, which are tubes that connect the ovaries to the uterus, and attach itself to the lining of the uterus (womb). In an ectopic pregnancy, the fertilised egg attaches itself to a structure other than the uterus. When it attaches to the fallopian tubes, it is called a tubal pregnancy. Rarely, the fertilised egg may attach to the ovary, abdominal cavity or cervix. Since only the uterus is meant to carry a growing embryo, these pregnancies cannot continue.

Why do ectopic pregnancies occur?

Ectopic pregnancies occur when the movement of the fertilised egg is blocked. This could occur due to inflammation or scarring of the fallopian tubes, damage to the fallopian tubes (due to prior surgeries or infections), or an irregularly-shaped fallopian tube. Risk factors for ectopic pregnancy include: a prior ectopic pregnancy, having had certain sexually transmitted infections, surgery of fallopian tubes, a history of smoking, infertility and fertility treatments, endometriosis, and having an intrauterine device in place at the time of conception. Advanced age (over 35) is also a risk factor.

How common are ectopic pregnancies?

A 2023 research paper, Clinical Profile, Risk Factors and Outcomes of Ectopic Pregnancy in a Tertiary Care Hospital: A Prospective Indian Study published in Cureus, noted that the incidence of ectopic pregnancies in India has been reported in the range of 0.91-2.3%. The study found that amenorrhea (absence of menstruation) was the most com-

mon symptom seen in the cases it analysed. On ultrasound, the most common finding was tubo-ovarian mass. In the majority of patients studied, the ampullary region in the fallopian tube was the site of the ectopic pregnancy. According to the 'Global burden of ectopic pregnancy from 1990 to 2019: A tendency, forecasted trend and inequality analyses based on the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019', in the European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Reproductive Biology, in June 2025, the number of ectopic pregnancies has fallen from 1990 to 2019. The study however highlights the significant burden of ectopic pregnancies, especially for low socio-demographic index countries. Addressing health inequality is crucial for developing effective intervention policies to improve global maternal health outcomes, it notes.

What are the signs and symptoms of an ectopic pregnancy?

Ectopic pregnancies don't always cause symptoms. Some symptoms may also be similar to those in early pregnancy such as a missed period, nausea and tenderness of breasts. Other symptoms may become noticeable later and may include: vaginal bleeding, pain in the lower abdomen, as well as pelvic and back pain, dizziness, pain in the shoulder, discomfort during bowel movements, and low blood pressure. The rupture of the fallopian tube, with sudden, sharp, abdominal pain and extreme light-headedness is a medical emergency as it can cause severe, internal bleeding. Immediate medical attention is required as it can be life-threatening.

How is an ectopic pregnancy managed and treated?

Many women may not know that their pregnancy is ectopic until they see a healthcare provider. Urine, blood tests and ultrasounds may be required for the doctor to arrive at a diagnosis. They are generally diagnosed early in the pregnancy. Since a pregnancy cannot proceed outside the uterus, an ectopic pregnancy is usually treated with medication or surgery. A common medication used is methotrexate: this stops the cells of the fertilised egg from growing and helps dissolve existing cells. This medication cannot be taken if the fallopian tubes are ruptured. It is important to have a confirmed diagnosis prior to taking the medication. After the medication is taken, follow-ups are required to monitor blood hCG levels (detection of pregnancy) and to determine if more medication is needed. In some cases, surgery may be required. Laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery is generally performed. The surgery may involve removing the egg from the fallopian, or removing both the egg and the tube. This depends on the amount of bleeding incurred, damage to the tube and other factors. In case of a ruptured tube, emergency surgery may be required.

What happens after an ectopic pregnancy?

Losing a pregnancy can be very difficult, and feelings of loss can last for a long time. It is important to seek help if required. Consulting a healthcare provider about future pregnancies is recommended. There is a higher risk for another ectopic pregnancy after having had one; however most women can go on to have successful pregnancies.

U.S. axes mRNA vaccine contracts, casting safety doubts

President Donald Trump's administration on Tuesday announced it would terminate 22 federal contracts for mRNA-based vaccines, questioning the safety of a technology credited with helping end the Covid pandemic and saving millions of lives. The announcement, made by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., marks his latest effort to weave vaccine skepticism into the core of US government policy. "We reviewed the science, listened to the experts, and acted," Kennedy said in a statement. The health department's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) is "terminating 22 mRNA vaccine development investments because the data show these vaccines fail to protect effectively against upper respiratory infections like COVID and flu," he added. "We're shifting that funding toward safer, broader vaccine platforms that remain effective even as viruses mutate." The changes affect Moderna's mRNA bird flu vaccine -- a move the company itself disclosed in May -- as well as numerous other programs, including "rejection or cancellation of multiple pre-award solicitations" from pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and Sanofi.

In total, the affected projects are worth "nearly \$500 million," the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) said. Certain late-stage projects were excluded from the move "to preserve prior taxpayer investment." "Let me be absolutely clear: HHS supports safe, effective vaccines for every American who wants them," Secretary Kennedy said. "That's why we're moving beyond the limitations of mRNA and investing in better solutions." Since taking office, Kennedy, who spent two decades sowing misinformation around immunisation, has overseen a major overhaul of US health policy -- firing, for example, a panel of vaccine experts that advise the government and replacing



them with his own appointees. In its first meeting, the new panel promptly voted to ban a longstanding vaccine preservative targeted by the anti-vaccine movement, despite its strong safety record. He has also ordered a sweeping new study on the long-debunked link between vaccines and autism. Unlike traditional vaccines, which often use weakened or inactivated forms of the target virus or bacteria, mRNA shots deliver genetic instructions into the host's cells, prompting them to produce a harmless decoy of the pathogen and train the immune system to fight the real thing. Though in development for decades, mRNA vaccines were propelled from lab benches to widespread use through President Trump's Operation Warp Speed -- a public-private partnership led by BARDA that poured billions into companies to accelerate development. The technology's pioneers, Katalin Kariko and Drew Weissman, were awarded the 2023 Nobel Prize in Medicine for their work contributing "to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times."

All you need to know about: Cervical Pessary

Preterm birth or birth before 37 weeks of gestation, is a major global health concern, significantly contributing to infant mortality and long-term health issues. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), India has the highest number of preterm births globally, with approximately 3.6 million babies born preterm each year. This high number of preterm births contributes significantly to neonatal deaths, with over 3,00,000 preterm babies dying annually.

What is a cervical pessary and why is it used?

A cervical pessary is a medical device, typically a silicone ring, placed around the cervix of a pregnant woman to help prevent preterm birth. It is used when a woman has a shortened cervix or cervical insufficiency that could lead to miscarriage or premature delivery. The cervix acts as a barrier keeping the baby inside the uterus and when it shortens too early, it may lead to preterm labor. A pessary helps by supporting the cervix and altering the angle of the cervical canal, reducing direct pressure from the uterus on the cervix. The pessary aims to support the cervix, potentially preventing it from opening too early. It is non-surgical and reversible. Some international trials show variable efficacy, but several demonstrate a reduction in spontaneous preterm delivery before 34 or 37 weeks in high-risk women. It is

primarily used to help prevent spontaneous preterm birth in pregnant women who are considered at high risk especially those with a shortened cervix detected during the second trimester. These are low-tech, cost-effective options, especially in settings where access to surgical interventions or frequent ultrasound screenings may be limited. A. Jaishree Gajaraj, senior obstetrician and gynecologist, says cervical pessaries like the arabin pessary have been in use for a decade and their adoption has become more common as a non-surgical option to manage cervical insufficiency. Unlike surgical procedures like cervical cerclage -- a surgical procedure where a stitch is placed around the cervix to prevent preterm birth or late miscarriage caused by cervical insufficiency, the pessary is a non-invasive, removable device, often inserted in an outpatient setting. It is designed to be a low-cost, low-risk alternative, especially helpful in settings where surgical expertise or infrastructure may be limited. "Earlier, we had to rely on cervical stitches, which required anesthesia and hospitalisation. The pessary, a soft silicone ring, offers similar support and can be inserted easily in an outpatient setting," Dr. Gajaraj says. According to the WHO and International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), cervical pessaries can play a valuable role in preventing preterm labor in select cases, such as single

India needs to focus on pulmonary rehabilitation to combat post-TB lung sequelae: experts



Tuberculosis (TB) remains a significant global health concern, with 1.25 million deaths reported in 2023, according to the World Health Organization. India bears a substantial burden, accounting for 26% of global TB cases and 26% of TB-related deaths. According to the Indian Journal of Respiratory Care (2022) and studies by The Lancet journal, many TB survivors continue to suffer from long-term lung damage, including fibrosis (scarring of lung tissue that reduces elasticity and impairs breathing), cavitation (formation of hollow spaces in the lungs due to tissue destruction), and airflow obstruction, despite completing their treatment.

These post-TB complications often lead to chronic respiratory impairment, reduced quality of life, and economic hardships due to lost wages and ongoing medical expenses. Hence, this calls for a renewed focus on comprehensive care, including palliative care and rehabilitation. The second UN high-level meeting on TB in 2023 made commitments to address these long-term consequences of TB, recognising the critical need for post-TB care. The WHO, through its End TB Strategy, aims to eradicate TB by 2030, and India's National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) has laid out post-TB follow-up guidelines to diagnose and manage complications. However, the practical implementation of these guidelines remains inconsistent, leaving many survivors without access to proper rehabilitation.

What is pulmonary rehabilitation and its status in India? According to the American Thoracic Society (ATS) and the European Respiratory Society (ERS), pulmonary rehabilitation (PR) is a multidisciplinary intervention designed to improve both the physical and emotional well-being of patients with chronic respiratory diseases. It is widely recognised as one of the most cost-effective treatments for improving lung function and overall quality of life. The Indian Journal of Respiratory Care identifies PR as the most effective and evidence-based tool to manage post-TB sequelae, helping to prevent further morbidity and mortality while improving patient outcomes.

According to Sanjeev Nair, professor of respiratory medicine, Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, PR encompasses various aspects, including physical exercise, breathing techniques, medication adherence, psychosocial support, nutritional counselling, oxygen therapy, smoking cessation, and occupational rehabilitation. Physical exercise plays a crucial role, incorporating upper and lower limb strengthening, treadmill exercises, and respiratory muscle training to enhance lung function. Additionally, breathing exercises such as diaphragmatic and pursed-lip breathing are essential in managing airflow limitations. Ensuring continued medication adherence is another key component, as many post-TB patients struggle with proper drug intake, which can lead to further health complications. Psychological support is also integral, as TB survivors often experience anxiety and depression due to stigma and the long-term effects of the disease. Nutritional support helps strengthen immunity, while oxygen therapy benefits those with severe lung damage. Occupational rehabilitation programs, such as those at Tambaram Sanatorium, train survivors in vocational skills,

allowing them to regain financial independence. Dr. Nair points out that India currently lacks dedicated PR centres, with the Vallabhbhai Patel Chest Institute (VPCI), University of Delhi, Delhi, India being one of the few institutions offering structured programs. The Indian government has designated the Rajan Babu Institute in Delhi to focus on PR and Tambaram Sanatorium in Chennai for palliative TB care, but these initiatives remain under expert review and have yet to be fully implemented. Early detection in controlling post-TB lung sequelae

Shibu Vijayan, chief medical officer, Global Health, Cure.ai, emphasises that pulmonary rehabilitation in India is still in a research phase rather than an implementation phase. He highlights the importance of early detection in controlling lung sequelae and stresses that this requires greater attention in both global and national TB care strategies. While there have been efforts to develop guidelines, many hospitals have yet to implement structured rehabilitation programs. Dr. Vijayan points out that sequential X-rays and pulmonary function tests are critical diagnostic tools to assess structural lung damage post-TB treatment. He explains that the focus has now shifted to X-ray-based follow-ups, which allow healthcare providers to monitor lung damage more effectively. The government of India recommends a two-year follow-up for TB survivors, which includes baseline X-rays, intensive treatment X-rays, and pulmonary function testing. However, adherence to this protocol remains inconsistent across healthcare facilities. "Strengthening early detection methods and ensuring the widespread implementation of X-ray-based follow-ups could significantly improve long-term outcomes for TB survivors," he says. According to Dr. Nair, early detection can prevent further infection. Especially because studies, including one he was part of in Ernakulam, found that 25% of TB patients tracked had died within seven years. It is crucial to diagnose the lung damages early as it can otherwise lead to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), ongoing lung obstruction, and abnormalities that impair daily activities. Ganesh Acharya, TB survivor and activist, points out the ground realities of inadequate post-TB care facilities in hospitals across India. He emphasises that patients often struggle to find specialised care and are forced to seek out pulmonologists and TB specialists on their own. Having battled TB for years, Acharya continues to suffer from asthma attacks, which frequently force him to take breaks from his career. He explains that post-TB care needs to be implemented like active TB treatment, as survivors remain vulnerable to complications and reinfection. "We need structured care, not just for treatment but for recovery," he says. Due to his TB-related health issues, he underwent lung surgery, which further revealed the challenges of accessing quality post-TB medical support. Acharya criticises the gap between policy and implementation, noting that while post-TB and palliative care are widely discussed, patients often struggle to find these services in practice. Expanding post-TB care access A major challenge is that TB care in India is largely decentralised, with treatment provided at primary healthcare centres that lack rehabilitation facilities. As a result, access to PR remains limited, especially in rural areas. To improve post-TB care, Dr. Nair stresses the importance of expanding PR to primary healthcare centres, ensuring accessibility for all TB survivors. Kerala's (Step wise approach to Airway Diseases) SWAAS programmes serves as a model for integrating COPD and TB care at the primary level. The programme provides mini spirometers for lung function assessments, supplies essential medications locally, and train nurses and healthcare workers to guide patients in breathing exercises and nutrition. Additionally, the involvement of local government bodies (panchayats) ensure continued financial and social support for TB survivors. Experts urge that by adopting and scaling up PR models like these, starting from primary care centres, India can bridge the gap in post-TB care, reduce mortality rates, and enhance the overall well-being of TB survivors.

Noida 'honour killing': A blue dupatta for a wedding and a strangulation

Neha Rathore, 23, wrote her father's and her name on the blue plastic entry door to their home, drawing flowers around it with chalk. A few weeks later, Neha was killed inside the house located in Bhangi mohalla (neighbourhood) of Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida, allegedly by her father, Bhanu Rathore, 40; and her brother Himanshu, 19. On March 12, around 5.30 a.m., her family hurriedly cremated her, allegedly burning all the clothes she owned. The day before her death, she had married her boyfriend Suraj at an Arya Samaj temple. Neha was from the Teli community; her husband of a few hours was from the Jat community — an inter-caste marriage often frowned upon across India. She was strangled with the same blue dupatta she had worn for her wedding.

The Uttar Pradesh police have registered a case at Bsirakh police station under BNS sections 103 (murder) and 238 (destruction of evidence). Across north India, 'honour killings' are a subset of the crime against couples who choose to break with the tradition of marrying within their caste. Earlier in March this year, Balram, 20, and Srishti, 19, were allegedly killed by Srishti's parents in Baghpat in 2025, because they were from different communities. In 2024, a man allegedly murdered his 18-year-old daughter right outside their house with an axe in Bahraich, because he felt she had ruined his reputation. In Gurugram, Haryana, Anjali, 22, was allegedly strangled to death by her parents and brother, for marrying a man from another caste, against her family's wishes in 2023. A house in the back lanes

The houses in Bhangi mohalla, in Chipiyana Buzurg village, are surrounded by upscale neighbourhoods with towering gated communities. The mohalla itself has houses that stick to each other for lack of space. Neha's house is quiet. It smells of dampness and cow dung. The walls are chipped and grey, covered with photographs of Hindu gods: Ram, Lakshman, Sita. Her sister-in-law carries her toddler around the house. Neha's mother, Nirmala, her head covered with a thick dupatta, fills a few containers with water. She has two sons and an older daughter. At first, the women are hesitant to speak. "Whatever happened, happened. We don't care; she's dead and I feel bad. I wasn't at home; I had gone to graze my cows. When I returned, she was dead," Nirmala says. At first she says Neha had a fever that led to her death, then that she had a thyroid problem which caused her to die, then that Neha was weak. Finally, she blames it on "bad luck." She does not believe her husband and son killed Neha. "I remember my last conversation with her. She told me she was going to Lal Kuan to buy lining fabric. She even returned with a packet. I don't know what happened after that," Nirmala says. "We had to cremate her quickly because you know, people have theories. Whatever happened, happened." Nirmala isn't sure of her daughter's interests or what she did in her free time. What remains of Neha in her family home is only her name on

the door. She stitched her life together

In Bhangi mohalla, where the lanes are so narrow only two people can walk side by side, residents stand in front of their doors, gossiping about what went wrong. She was full of life, her neighbours say. She made Instagram reels on the narrow street outside her house. Bhanu's food cart, just outside the house, stands empty and still. Anju Devi introduces her caste before she introduces herself. She is a Yadav, she says, adding that she is not from Neha's caste. She remembers Neha as being tall and underweight. "She liked watching TV serials, dancing, and stitching clothes. She would dance on Janmashtami (the day Krishna is believed to have been born)." Anju points to her red, rose-printed kurta, saying that Neha had stitched it, "But she never took money for it." This is a neighbourhood where most do not earn a minimum wage. Tulsi Chaudhary, who tries overhearing the conversation, too knew Neha and her mother well. "Neha wanted to study, but when her family returned to Noida from Hapur (where Bhanu had taken the family when he got a job), they stopped her studies for four years. She really wanted a job and wanted to take up stitching as a profession, but she never got the help and support she needed. She even wanted to become a police officer," Tulsi says, afraid Neha's family will know of this conversation. Neha Rathore's name in chalk on the entrance of the house, written by her with a flower drawn next to it. Suraj is tired and feels helpless, even as he continues working. He recalls when he met Neha in a Hapur school when they were about 16. Both families had found it difficult to make ends meet. While Suraj's father, Devender, worked as a farm labourer, Neha's father worked at a mill. He remembers her whispered calls, deleted messages, so her family would not find out they were in love. After school, Suraj found a job as a pick-up truck driver in Hapur, where he lives. He is rarely home, because his job demands that he's on the road. Suraj says he wanted Neha to study, to get a job, to make a life, to make things better for their family when they married. She had graduated from class 12, and he says she was a good student. She entrusted all her education documents to him, so he could pay her fees at a Ghaziabad college for BA in Sanskrit. "We took care of each other. Nobody in her family bothered to check if she had had food. I did. She told me we'd have a beautiful life together, that we'd travel. Now, she's just a contact in my phone, and a memory for me," Suraj says. When Suraj told his parents he wanted to marry Neha, he had just turned 25. A few weeks before March 11, the two decided to get married at an Arya Samaj temple, where the rituals are few. Suraj's family — his father and brother — rode on motorcycles to Ghaziabad. They picked Neha up from Chipiyana Buzurg village. Neha covered her face with a blue dupatta and reached the Ghaziabad court, to register their marriage. Suraj says, "We tried getting the registration done quickly, but we sensed somebody from Neha's family recognised her in the blue salwar-kameez.

Food from the woods: the forgotten link to climate resilience



Another International Day of Forests was observed on March 21, and beyond symbolic gestures, it is time to acknowledge the role of forests in mitigating the planetary polycrises of the Anthropocene. Forests are often called the lungs of the planet, but they are also its hidden kitchens. Yet, across the world, indigenous food systems that once thrived within forests are rapidly disappearing. In this context, this year's theme, "Forests and food", could not be more relevant. Food systems account for a staggering one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, while simultaneously fuelling deforestation, biodiversity loss, and land degradation. Yet, a key solution lies hidden in plain sight — reviving forest-based food systems as a low-cost, climate-resilient alternative. Our research on the indigenous Soliga community of the Biligiri Ranganata Hills, or B.R. Hills, in Karnataka offers ample clues on how forests are intertwined with food, health, livelihoods, and the overall sense of well-being? or "flourishing" of the community. For generations, the Soligas have depended on the forest's bounty such as wild berries, tubers, mushrooms, and small game, ensuring a varied and nutritious diet. Additionally, the practice of shifting cultivation, with millets, legumes, and vegetables grown in the forest environment, has been central to their food security.

The recipes of traditional Soliga foods we collected bear testimony to this: their meals are dominated by locally foraged greens such as karavadi soppu (balloon vine), seega soppu (dill), areage soppu (amaranth), and sasive soppu (mustard), along with legumes such as avarekalu (hyacinth beans), alasande (cowpea), and hurali (horse gram), and tubers. These ingredients are cooked using pepper corns and chilli, with little oil or fat. This way of cooking reflects the richness of the locally available bounty and their deep connection to the forest. However, many of these resources are now becoming scarce, or in some cases, completely lost, highlighting a fading way of life that once thrived in balance with nature.

Over the years, this forest-farm-food connection has unravelled particularly because of conservation policies that have reshaped the socio-economic and environmental landscape of the region. One of the most significant changes came with the resettlement of the Soliga tribes to the periphery of the forest for designating the B.R. Hills as a protected area for wildlife conservation in 1974. This relocation has profoundly disrupted their ability to access wild food resources and maintain their customary food practices. Furthermore, conservation policies introduced a ban on traditional litter-fire practices, which the Soligas had historically used to manage their agricultural lands. This practice of controlled burning was not only important for maintaining the health of the forests but also for cultivating specific crops that thrive in nutrient-rich, fire-managed soil. With the prohibition of fire practices, the forests have undergone significant ecological shifts, including the spread of the invasive Lantana species which has choked the native flora and diminished the availability of traditional food and me-

AI in beyond CSE: Why every field needs AI-savvy professionals

The yearly scramble to secure Engineering seats at prestigious universities has begun. The most sought-after courses are coveted by students and, more importantly, their aspirational parents. It should come as no surprise that B.E./B.Tech. programmes in Computer Science, particularly those with specialisations in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and, to a lesser extent, data, and analytics, are popular this season. Toppers who made it to CSE-AI are announced by coaching centers. Other Engineering specialties, such as Mechanical, Civil, Electrical, and Chemical, are also silently waiting in the background and are frequently disregarded. However, is this one-sided fixation on Computer Science warranted? Should only programmers be able to use AI? The answer is definitely no.

Story so far But let's take a look at the previous 20 to 25 years before continuing on this path. The dot-com boom sparked a craze for CSE and later IT programmes in Engineering. The less fortunate also have access to MCA and BCA. From the dot-com era to the present, the rush for CSE and Information Technology courses has continued, with software services companies becoming the go-to source for talent to satisfy their demand for youthful workers. The story has also turned several corners over the last 25 years. The current narrative unfolds as follows: In the 2000s, India was a comparatively less expensive source of IT services, and IT service providers were able to capitalise on the outsourcing trend. Now Indian tech firms moving up the value chain. Indian engineers are prepared to take advantage of the growing trend of generative AI. Along with their children's preference for this new trend, parents are also scurrying to find colleges that offer CSE with AI specialisation. However, this is something that all parents who pay fees should consider. First, it is a fact that as demand for seat increases, the cost of each seat in this highly sought-after programme rises every week. Is it something that all parents can afford? Indeed, there are only a certain number of seats available for deserving students. This implies that a greater portion of the demand can only be met by management quota. Before taking up the decision, one should consider if this discipline is the right fit for them. AI gives computing machines the training to think, learn, and make decisions like humans. But AI uses data and logic instead of emotions or instincts. At its core, AI is about teaching machines to recognise patterns, make predictions, and improve over time — in the same way, we learn from experience. So think of AI as Applied Mathematics with a brain. Every time an AI machine acts, it uses Algebra to handle data in rows, columns, and matrices; Probability to handle uncertainty; Calculus to help models minimise errors; Statistics to understand patterns in data; Geometry to recognise patterns in images, movement, and spatial data). In short AI is Mathematics in action, it brings equations to life by converting data into intelligence. That's why AI is not a specialisation, but a universal toolkit. It belongs everywhere and AI-powered professionals across all fields will rule the future, not just computer scientists. Re-

dicinal plants, as other ecological studies from BR hills show. Our research also highlights the diminishing importance of forests as a source of food and income among Soligas. The introduction of cash crops such as coffee on farms located on the forest fringes has been one of the primary shifts in the community's agricultural practices. This shift towards cash crops is, in part, a response to the increasing crop raids by wildlife, which has made the cultivation of food crops such as millets and vegetables more difficult.

Tribal land rights and the location of settlements has played a crucial role in shaping the Soliga community's access to food resources. The allocation of land rights, often subject to government policies and regulations, has influenced the degree to which the Soligas can practise subsistence farming and gather forest produce. The location of settlements, especially with respect to forest types and proximity to roads and markets, has also been a critical factor in determining food security. Communities located closer to markets and transportation networks have greater access to external food sources, but this has also led to an increased reliance on external food markets, further eroding traditional food systems.

The changing dynamics of forest ecosystems, agricultural practices, and land tenure have collectively altered the Soliga community's food sovereignty and nutritional security. One of the significant transformations has been the increased reliance on the Public Distribution System, which provides subsidised food to low-income households. The PDS typically provides staples such as rice, wheat, and sugar, which, though essential for survival, are often nutritionally inadequate compared with the diverse and nutrient-dense foods traditionally gathered from the forest. The tragedy is not just nutritional — it is also cultural. As younger generations move away from traditional foods, lured by the convenience of market-sourced alternatives, the knowledge of forest-based diets is fading. This generational shift, fuelled by globalisation and urbanisation, threatens to sever the deep-rooted connection between indigenous communities and their ecosystems. But this is not just about the Soligas. The global environmental crisis demands a fundamental rethink on the way food is produced and consumed. Reviving forest-based food systems and securing land tenure for forest-dependent communities could be game-changers in the fight for climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and nutritional security. In rural areas, agroforestry, integrating native fruit trees with traditional crops, can bolster rural food systems while providing income and strengthening livelihoods. Even in cities, a rethink is required. Urban greening initiatives under government programmes such as the Green India Mission and Smart Cities Mission provide an opportunity to create food forests in urban spaces — community-managed green zones incorporating trees, shrubs, vines, and other plants that produce fruits, nuts and other edible products that can nourish both marginalised communities and urban biodiversity. Initiatives such as Mission LIFE, which encourages the use of indigenous herbs and medicinal plants, must actively revalorise our forgotten food systems. If we are serious about tackling climate change, ensuring food security, and upholding social justice, then forests must be reimagined — not just as lungs of the planet but also as kitchens of resilience. Dhanya Bhaskar is Associate Professor of Ecosystem and Environment Management and Chairperson of Centre for Policy Studies at Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal; Shreelata Rao Seshadri is Professor and Director, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity and Social Determinants of Health, PHFI, Bengaluru; and Sheetal Patil is Lead, School of Environment and Sustainability, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru

evaluating the rush Today, AI is transforming every part of our lives, including how we grow food, conduct banking, shop, receive healthcare, and construct infrastructure. A CSE degree is not necessary to study AI. Three fundamental areas of quantitative sciences are incorporated into AI: Statistics and Mathematics, Logic and programming, and domain expertise. The real power of AI lies in that third pillar, or domain knowledge. It's where actual problems are resolved by AI. AI requires engineers who comprehend context in addition to code, whether they are creating climate-smart infrastructure, managing crops, creating energy-efficient engines, or identifying cardiac disorders. How AI is already transforming conventional engineering domains

Mechanical Engineering includes robotics, AI-driven design optimisation, smart manufacturing, and predictive machine maintenance. AI in Civil Engineering aids in the design of disaster-resistant structures, traffic flow optimisation, smart city management, and building health monitoring. In the domain of Electrical Engineering, AI plays a role in advanced control systems, power grid optimisation, and energy distribution. In Chemical Engineering, new material discovery, chemical process optimisation, and plant efficiency modeling are all being done with generative AI. In Biomedical Engineering, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing healthcare through robotic surgery, medical imaging, and personalised health analytics. In Agricultural Engineering, machine learning models power smart farming, drone surveillance, crop prediction, and soil health monitoring. The new reality of undergrad Parents usually wish for their child to thrive in a technologically advanced world. However, following a trend isn't the only way to succeed. Building long-term value and capability is the goal. AI is an enabler rather than merely a skill. And anyone who is prepared to solve problems, think critically, and never stop learning can master it. Avoid picking a branch based solely on its name. Make a decision based on your child's aptitude, interests, and vision. If your child enjoys building machines? Allow them to study AI while working as a Mechanical Engineer. If Environment and Sustainability appeal to them? Smart cities can be shaped by a civil engineer with AI expertise. If they have a strong interest in healthcare, an AI-savvy biomedical engineer could save lives. Hybrid thinkers — those who comprehend the issue and the technology — will be rewarded in the future. For instance, Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE) is in a unique position to spearhead the AI revolution among all the branches. Why? Since ECE pupils are already aware of Systems that are embedded; Processing of signals; Protocols for communication; and control systems. These are the fundamental building blocks of real-time AI inference, edge computing, IoT, and AI chips — creating self-driving cars, smart cameras, voice assistants, and wearable health monitors are examples of ECE + AI in the modern world. Using a Raspberry Pi, ECE students are creating facial recognition models. AI is being used to optimise 5G networks. Microcontrollers are being used to implement ML models.

Trump’s 50% tariff announcement could have 0.6% impact on India’s GDP growth, says Goldman Sachs



GNS News Agency, August 15

US investment group Goldman Sachs on Thursday said that the steep 50 per cent tariff on imports from India could reduce the country’s real GDP growth by around 0.6 percentage point (PP). “We had previously estimated a potential direct impact of around 0.3 percentage point (annualized) to India’s real GDP growth, following President Trump’s surprise announcement of a 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports,” the US investment group said.

If the new additional duty (including exclusions) is enforced, then that would constitute a potential incremental drag of around another 0.3 percentage point (annualized), Goldman Sachs said. “This estimate is based on India’s goods exports exposure of roughly 4 per cent of GDP to US final demand and a goods export demand elasticity of 0.5 as referenced in the IMF study. There are indirect impacts on real GDP growth through trade-related uncertainty as well, as we had written earlier,” it said. Amid the global

uncertainty, the RBI on Wednesday retained its annual and quarterly real GDP growth forecasts for 2025-26 at 6.5 per cent for April-June 2025, 6.7 per cent for July-September 2025, 6.6 per cent for October-December 2025, and 6.3 per cent for January-March 2026. Goldman Sachs has estimated the total effective US tariff on Indian imports would be around 32 per cent after all exemptions. However, the firm stated that it will wait for 20 days before deciding whether to revise its GDP forecast for India. “We see downside risks to our growth estimates for both CY25 and CY26, but are not making any changes to our growth forecasts at the moment, given that there is a three-week window for negotiations until the new incremental tariffs come into effect,” Goldman Sachs said. Here CY denotes calendar year. US President Donald Trump through a White House executive order announced an additional 25 per cent “ad valorem” duty on Indian goods imports, effective August 27, which will take the total tariff levy on Indian imports to 50 per cent. The executive order said that this “ad valorem” duty is owing to India’s continued energy purchases from Russia. The additional “ad valorem” duty will not apply to commodities included in Sec. 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. In response, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in a statement reiterated that the government “will take all actions necessary to protect its national interests”, it said. The US accounts for around 4 per cent of India’s crude oil imports, while Russia accounts for a third: The US accounted for around 4 per cent of India’s crude oil imports (in volume terms) in 2024-25, increasing from around 3 per cent in 2023-24, while Russian imports constitute around a third of Indian oil imports. In April and May 2025, the US accounted for 8 per cent (on average) of India’s crude oil imports, the US firm said.

Rural, urban consumer confidence on the upswing, but inflation likely to rise in FY27: RBI survey

The RBI’s survey on credit conditions shows that banks continue to offer easy lending terms, with most respondents expecting stronger loan demand in the second quarter of 2025-26. The RBI’s survey on credit conditions shows that banks continue to offer easy lending terms, with most respondents expecting stronger loan demand in the second quarter of 2025-26. (Express Archives: Amit Chakravarty)

Consumer confidence in both rural and urban areas saw a positive shift in July, according to the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) forward-looking surveys. This improvement has been largely driven by a decline in retail inflation and lower interest rates. However, the RBI survey on inflation expectations also flagged a potential rise in retail inflation in the next financial year (2026-27), projecting retail inflation to climb to 4.4 per cent, up from the expected 3.1 per cent for 2025-26. The survey highlighted a modest improvement in rural consumer sentiment for the current period, with the Current Situation Index (CSI) ticking up slightly. This gain reflects better conditions across key indicators such as employment, income, price levels, and overall economic sentiment. Meanwhile, the Future Expectations Index (FEI), which gauges consumer outlook for the year ahead, continued to strengthen, marking its sixth consecutive improvement.

These indices — CSI and FEI — are based on household responses to five key parameters: the general economic situation, employment, income, price levels, and spending patterns. The survey also showed that a greater number of rural households now expect inflation and prices to ease in the coming year. This shift in sentiment was supported by a drop in their current perception of inflation, along with a significant decline in expectations for future inflation. A similar trend was observed among urban consumers, whose confidence also saw a slight uptick, driven by more favourable views across most indicators. The urban CSI registered a modest gain, while future expectations remained firmly positive, indicating strong confidence in the economic outlook. The FEI also continued to improve, with the survey noting that concerns about inflation and prices have steadily decreased over the last three rounds. Households now expect price pressures to soften further over the next year. However, while optimism about current earnings



has grown, expectations for future income have remained largely unchanged. Loan demand to improve

The RBI’s survey on credit conditions shows that banks continue to offer easy lending terms, with most respondents expecting stronger loan demand in the second quarter of 2025-26. This anticipated growth is driven by increased borrowing across sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and retail or personal loans. Banks also expect loan terms to ease further, particularly for businesses in the manufacturing and services sectors. Overall, sentiment on loan demand remains upbeat through the fourth quarter of 2025-26, with the current favourable lending conditions likely to persist into the second half of the year. The survey did note, however, that loan demand in the first quarter had seen a seasonal dip across major sectors — a trend consistent with past patterns. Despite the current easing of inflation, the RBI survey on inflation projects that price pressures are likely to return in 2026-27. Headline inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), is expected to rise from 3.1 per cent in 2025-26 to 4.4 per cent in the following year. While inflation is expected to remain subdued in the near term, a gradual increase is forecast in the latter part of the year. Core inflation — which excludes food, fuel, and intoxicants — is also expected to stay elevated within a narrow range during the upcoming quarters. These projections are in line with the outlook of the Monetary Policy Committee, which foresees a steady rise in inflation through the end of the fiscal year and into the first quarter of 2026-27. The findings underscore the need for careful monitoring and timely policy responses to manage inflationary risks effectively.

Reduced oil purchases from Russia would not impact inflation, says RBI Governor

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sees no major impact on domestic inflation if India reduces its purchases of oil from Russia amid threats of an unspecified ‘penalty’ and a substantial hike in the 25 per cent tariff rate slapped on the country by US President Donald Trump. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday at the conclusion of the Monetary Policy Committee’s (MPC) three-day meeting, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said it was important to keep in mind that India did not buy oil only from Russia.

“It’s not only Russian oil that we are taking; we are taking oil from many other countries. If the mix changes, what is its impact on prices, what is the global commodity prices of crude, it will depend on all that. And the other thing it will depend on is how much of its impact, downwards or upwards, is actually taken by the government in the form of excise duties and other tariffs. So, we don’t see any major impact as of now because of this on inflation because I think the government will take an appropriate decision on the fiscal side in case there is any shock,” Malhotra said in the post-policy press conference. Trump’s July 30 decision to slap a 25 per cent tariff on India along with an additional but unspecified “penalty” for its defence and energy imports from Russia — the first use of secondary tariffs — sent shockwaves around the world as the two countries continue to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement. The American President has since then doubled down on his threat, telling television channel CNBC on Tuesday that he was going to raise the tariff on India “very substantially over the next 24 hours”, a day after he posted that India was buying “massive” amounts of Russian oil and selling it on for “big profits”, on his social media platform Truth Social.

New Delhi, meanwhile, has called the targeting of India over the purchase of Russian oil “unjustified and unreasonable” and said these imports began as its traditional supplies were diverted to Europe, with the US having “actively encouraged such imports by India for strengthening global energy markets stability”. At the time of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the former’s share in India’s oil imports was under 2 per cent, with New Delhi relying heavily on the likes of Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Since

then, Indian refiners have lapped up discounted Russian oil that was shunned by developed nations, resulting in its share in India’s oil imports jumping to 35-40 per cent. According to the RBI’s most recent Monetary Policy Report, published in April, if crude oil prices are 10 per cent higher than the RBI’s baseline assumption of \$70 per barrel for FY26, domestic inflation may be 30 basis points (bps) higher than the central bank’s forecast. On Wednesday, the RBI cut its full-year headline retail inflation forecast by 60 bps to 3.1 per cent.

Commenting on the impact of the current global trade uncertainties on inflation, Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta told reporters on Wednesday that nearly half of the country’s inflation basket consisted of food, whose price does not get impacted directly by global developments. “A significant part consists of non-tradables, which again does not get impacted by global developments. So, to that extent, a first-order direct impact of these evolving uncertainties on India’s inflation is likely to be very, very limited,” Gupta added. On the growth front, Malhotra said the RBI retained its forecast for the current fiscal at 6.5 per cent as there was not “sufficient data” to make any revisions. According to the governor, some of the global uncertainty was already factored in by the central bank when it cut the GDP growth forecast in April to 6.5 per cent from 6.7 per cent. “However, there is still a lot of uncertainty,” he added. According to Sakshi Gupta, principal economist at HDFC Bank, GDP growth is seen inching down to 6.3 per cent this year from 6.5 per cent in FY25. “However, in the case where tariffs remain elevated at current levels and/or are further raised we see a downside risk of 20-25 bps to our GDP growth forecast for the year,” Gupta added. When asked if the RBI, in addition to cutting interest rates, was prepared to support Indian business amid the current uncertain global trade scenario, Malhotra said the central bank had taken a number of measures to support growth, including on the regulatory and foreign exchange management norms front to make it easier for companies to do business and take part in international trade. “We will continue to do whatever is required to be done in such a scenario.

WHO updates COVID-19 guidelines: antibiotics advised only with suspected bacterial infection



World Health Organization (WHO), in its updated COVID-19 clinical care guidelines, has advised against the use of antibiotics when a bacterial co-infection is not suspected. “This is a strong recommendation for patients with mild COVID-19, and a weaker or conditional one for patients with severe COVID-19,” it noted. The recommendations are based on new evidence as well as changes in the disease’s spread and severity. “Recommendations about the use of antibiotics in COVID-19 patients are based on a recent systematic review and meta-analysis, and the pressing need to address antimicrobial resistance,” said WHO.

The updated guidelines are aimed at people directly or indirectly involved in the healthcare of patients with COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 conditions. This includes clinicians, allied healthcare workers, facility managers, and hospital

administrators. In its note, WHO said that there are two new recommendations about the use of antibiotics which follow from a recent meta-analysis of outcomes in patients treated with antibiotics for COVID-19. “For patients with non-severe COVID-19 and a low clinical suspicion of a concurrent bacterial infection, we recommend no empirical antibiotics,” it said. Empirical antibiotics are medications prescribed to treat infections before the specific cause (type of bacteria or other microorganism) is identified.

This approach is used when the infection is severe or when waiting for lab results would cause significant harm to patients. Also, WHO added that for patients with severe COVID-19 and a low clinical suspicion of a concurrent bacterial infection, they suggest no empirical antibiotics. WHO further added that these guidelines have evolved from the first version in 2020 in line with new information and changing circumstances of the pandemic. “Notable changes to COVID-19 disease over this time have been overall reduced infection rates and reduced disease severity. Emergency measures which were imposed have also been removed, and care for patients with COVID-19 has become more integrated with usual healthcare systems. This different environment has prompted a review of the scope and content of all existing guidance. In order to maintain a clear focus and relevance, we have removed recommendations which would be considered general medical principles, and those which are no longer specific to the management of COVID-19,” it said.

NOTTO’s advisory on organ donation has troubling recommendations, say doctors and experts

A recent 10-point advisory from the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) to States and Union Territories (UT) to augment organ donation and transplantation in the country has some contentious recommendations. It has proposed to make provisions to grant additional points in the organ allocation criteria for women on the waiting list to address gender disparity, to prioritise a near relative of a previous deceased donor in need of transplant, and wants hospitals to provide data of each donor and recipient for the national registry maintained by it.

NOTTO, in line with the 15th Indian Organ Donation Day 2025, had sent out the advisory with the approval of the competent authority of the Union Health Ministry. While it stated that States should honour the deceased organ donors, ensuring that they receive a dignified funeral and their family members are felicitated at public functions, it went on to suggest the following: to make provisions to give additional points in the allocation criteria for women patients in the waiting list for deceased donor organ transplants to address gender disparity, and to make provisions that if a near relative of a previous deceased donor needs organ transplant, then he/she may be given priority.

A senior doctor, who did not want to be named, said that these issues must be discussed in detail with all the stakeholders and cannot be implemented as such immediately. Another doctor in the know said: “There are no protocols for prioritising women and near relatives of previous donors. How will you define near relatives and streamline the same? Deceased donations, which run on the basis of altruism, have been happening since 1995, and how are we going to define near relatives of these donors?” J. Amalorpavanathan, former convenor, Cadaver Transplant Programme (CTP) and founder member secretary, Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN), said such an advisory was not necessary. “The powers of the State and Centre are clearly demarcated, and there is no need to infringe upon the role of either. These recommendations can only be seen as a furtherance to Government of India’s ‘One Nation, One Policy’ for organ donation and transplantation. It will lead to encroaching on the State’s role and policies



and gradually usurping power,” he said.

He said that when the CTP was debated in 2008, there was discussion about prioritising women. “But then, there were points on also prioritising children, and then working parents. We decided to do away with such categories and take every human being in need of transplant as priority,” he added. Another contentious point is asking States to issue directions to hospitals/centres performing organ and tissue transplantation/retrieval or tissue banking to provide data of each donor and recipient of organ or tissue for the national registry maintained by NOTTO. In the event of non-compliance, the States may consider taking action as per the Transplantation of Human Organ and Tissue Act, 1994. He viewed this as an example of the Centre encroaching on the right of the State to run matters of public health. Following a similar mandate from NOTTO in 2015, the State wrote back saying that any information required can be provided by the State government, which is fully in control of the transplant programme, he recalled. The advisory also wanted States to promote adopting a healthy lifestyle and to highlight the role of ayurveda and yoga. Experts, however, objected to their imposition on evidence-based medicine. While sources in the Health department said the advisory lacks clarity, a health official said these points require more discussion. Responding to a query on the sharing of data, officials clarified it was done through TRANSTAN.

Are you registered to become an organ donor? Find out why this is essential

August is a special month for organ donations. Indian Organ Donation Day is observed every year on August 3, commemorating India’s first successful deceased donor heart transplant on August 3, 1994. On this day, people from various organisations honour the lives of organ donors. The purpose of celebrating this day is to create awareness about deceased donor organ donation and its impact on improving patient quality of life. Additionally, World Organ Donation Day is marked on August 13, to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and to encourage people to consider becoming organ donors.

As of March 2020, more than 1,12,000 Indians were waiting for a transplant, and a new name was added to the national transplant waiting list every 10 minutes. As per a 2020 research report in India, every day, 20 patients who are in dire need of an organ transplant die due to the unavailability of organs. Raising awareness about organ donation is an important way to help clear the lacunae between the number of persons in need of organ transplants and the number of donors, and to create a platform to encourage more people to be front-line soldiers for a noble cause. According to the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation, India’s organ donation rate has increased from 0.05 per 10 lakh population to 0.8 per 10 lakh population in the duration of a few years. However, it presents a stark contrast when compared with other countries: Croatia’s 36.5, Spain’s 35.3, and the United States 26 per 10 lakh populations, respectively.

There are different types of organ donations: people can donate an organ or part of their organ while alive, to benefit a patient, or can be an organ donor after their death, once consent is obtained from their family. Here is a breakdown of how organ donation works: Living donor organ donation: Any person not less than 18 years of age, who voluntarily authorises the removal of any of his organ and/or tissue, during his or her lifetime, as per prevalent medical practices for therapeutic purposes. Living donor organ donation: A person, during his/her life can donate one kidney (the other kidney is capable of maintaining the body functions adequately for the donor), a portion of pancreas (half of the pancreas is adequate for sustaining pancreatic functions) and a part of the liver (the segments of the liver will regenerate after a period of time in both recipient and donor). Deceased donor and deceased donor organ donation: Anyone, regardless of age, race or gender, can become an organ and tissue donor after his or her death (brainstem/cardiac). Consent of near relative or a person in lawful possession of the dead body is required. If the deceased donor is under the age of 18 years, then the con-



India still continues to have a major shortfall between the number of organs required to save lives, and the number of donors. The more people register as donors, the more this gap can slowly be filled

sent from one of the parents or any near relative authorised by the parents is essential. Medical suitability for donation is determined at the time of death. A person can donate multiple organs and tissues after (brain-stem/cardiac) death. His/her organs continue to live in another person’s body. Each potential donor can save up to eight lives, of persons who are in need of organs such as the liver, kidneys, intestines, lungs, heart, and pancreas. In addition, they can vastly improve the quality of life for countless more by donating bone, skin, heart valves, corneas etc.

How do you become an organ donor?

You can become a donor by expressing your wish to do so on an authorised organ and tissue donation form. You may pledge to donate your organs by signing up on <https://notto.abdm.gov.in/> and registering yourself as a donor, or, for offline registration you may download Form 7 from the website and mail to NOTTO’s address in New Delhi. It is important to remember that not all people who pledge to donate their organs are suitable for organ donation. Only a few people die in circumstances where they are able to donate their organs. That is the reason we need more people to take the pledge for organ donation and register themselves as potential donors.

Amendment in Sports Bill to keep BCCI out of RTI Act



GNS News Agency, August 15

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will not be subject to provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, after the government introduced amendments to the National Sports Governance Bill that has been tabled in Parliament. The union sports ministry has cited a provision of the RTI Act, according to which only bodies 'substantially financed' by the government can be defined as a 'public authority'. When the Bill was tabled in Parliament on July 23, it had a provision in Clause 15(2) that ensured that all sports bodies recognised by the National Sports Bill would be considered a public authority under the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005. However, The Indian Express has learnt that the clause stating, "a recognised sports organisation shall be considered a public authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005 with respect to the exercise of its functions, duties and powers under this Act," has been omitted from the Bill via an amendment. The omitted clause would have brought every national Sports Federation (NSF) under the RTI Act. The BCCI has always resisted coming under the purview of the Act arguing that it's not dependent on government funds, unlike other sports governing bodies. The RTI Act defines a "public authority" as any institution or body created by any law made by Parliament or a State Legislature, including bodies owned, controlled, or substantially financed by the government, with 'substantially financed' being the key word in this case. The amendment has introduced a new clause that states, "A recognised sports organisation, receiving grants or any other financial assistance from the Central Government under sub-section (1) or from a State Government, shall be considered as a public authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005, with respect to utilisation of such grants or any other financial assistance." The change would mean that all NSFs will be under the RTI Act, but the only queries they are re-

quired to answer will be related only to government aid and other financial assistance, unlike the previous clause that allowed questions on duties and powers of the NSF, including selection.

"The amended clause will ensure that we don't violate the RTI Act. With the amendment, we have defined a public authority as an entity relying on government funds and assistance. We have removed the grey area from the Bill that could have resulted in it getting held up or being challenged in court," a sports ministry source told this paper. However, the BCCI will come under the purview of the Bill and can be questioned if there is any kind of government assistance involved. "The BCCI will still come under the Bill and they will have to form an Ethics Commission, an Athletes Committee and implement the Safe Sports policy. They can also be questioned if government assistance of any kind is involved, like the usage of infrastructure," the source said. Another significant amendment in the Bill is that it has included the Societies Registration Act of a state as one of the criteria for recognition of an NSF. Earlier Clause 8(2) stated, "No sports organisation shall be recognised under sub-section (1) unless such organisation is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 or is a not-for-profit company incorporated under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 or is a trust created under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882."

Now the clause will also add the Societies Registration Act of a state bringing the BCCI under the purview of the Bill as it's registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act, 1975. Sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya tabled two Bills in the monsoon session of Parliament — the National Sports Governance Bill and the National Anti-Doping (Amendment Bill). Both Bills are expected to be passed by the Lower House in the next couple of days. In 2016, the Supreme Court-appointed RM Lodha Committee, looking into cricket reforms, had recommended bringing the BCCI under the RTI Act. While considering the recommendation, the apex court had referred the specific issue to the Law Commission in July 2016. In its 275th report in 2018, the Law Commission too had recommended bringing the BCCI under the RTI Act. The Commission had underlined BCCI's monopolistic character, the public nature of its functions, and the 'substantial financing' it has received from appropriate governments over the years (through tax exemptions, land grants, etc.) to hold that the cricket body can be termed a 'public authority' under the existing legal framework and brought within the purview of the RTI Act.

Lovlina Borgohain accuses BFI official of disrespectful behaviour, IOA inquiry panel to convene meeting soon

GNS News Agency, August 15

Tokyo Olympics bronze-winning boxer Lovlina Borgohain's allegations of "disrespectful and gender-discriminatory behaviour" against national federation's executive director Col Arun Malik are being investigated and a report would be submitted soon, a Sports Authority of India (SAI) official has said. In a formal complaint addressed to Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, Sports Authority of India (SAI) Director General, the TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) division, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), and the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), Lovlina alleged that Malik humiliated her and undermined her achievements during a Zoom meeting on July 8, which was attended by SAI and TOPS officials.

On the call Lovlina requested that her personal coach, who was also present in the online meeting, be allowed in the national camp, something that goes against the BFI policy. She also wanted the coach to be allowed to travel with her to train in Europe. According to Lovlina, Malik responded aggressively and spoke to her in a demeaning manner. "He blatantly told me to 'shut up, lower your head and do as we say.'" His words were not only disrespectful but also carried an alarming tone of gender-discriminatory and authoritarian dominance — something that no one, especially a woman who has brought honour to the nation, should be subjected to," Lovlina stated in her complaint. "I was made to feel small, unheard, and powerless. It was not just a personal insult — it was an attack on every woman athlete who dreams of standing tall, both in and outside the ring," Lovlina stated in her complaint. She further asked for a "fair and swift inquiry" and also "necessary disciplinary action if these actions are found to be in violation of acceptable conduct." Malik, however, "categorically and unequivocally" denied the allegations, calling them "devoid of any merit." Lovlina's requests were considered and respectfully declined, as they are inconsistent with the policies of the Boxing Federation of India.



"As per BFI's Selection Policy published in January 2025, it is mandatory for all athletes to participate in the National Coaching Camp to be considered for evaluation and selection for international competitions," Malik said in his reply. "BFI, in the interest of fairness and uniformity, does not permit personal coaches or support staff within the National Camp." Taking note of the complaint, the IOA formed a panel, comprising TOPS CEO N S Johal, IOA's athletes commission vice chairperson Sharath Kamal and a woman advocate. The entire interaction between Lovlina and Malik was recorded during the meeting and a member of the inquiry panel said a report would be submitted soon. The committee was to give the report within two weeks of receiving the complaint but has been unable to convene a meeting due to "some prior commitments of its members." "Due to some pressing commitments, the panel has not been able to convene a meeting so far. But it would be done soon and since there is video available of the entire chain of events, it won't be a very complicated matter to deal with," a panel member said. It is learnt the Malik has asked the committee to expedite the process and also requested for the video recording of the interaction. "I don't want to focus on this right now because it will affect my game. I don't want to comment until the committee comes up with a decision," Lovlina, who is also a world champion, said.

'I think it's time to move on': Kagiso Rabada tells South Africa to look past WTC win and focus on future

GNS News Agency, August 15

Kagiso Rabada WTC Final South Africa's Kagiso Rabada celebrates after his five-wicket haul during the World Test Championship final between South Africa and Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London.

South Africa ended a long wait for an ICC Trophy when they defeated Australia in the World Test Championship final back in June but pacer Kagiso Rabada said on Thursday that it was time to move on from that euphoria of winning the title and focus on the next task in hand. The task he was referring to was South Africa's next three Twenty20 clashes and three one-day Internationals in a series vs Australia, starting on Sunday. "I think it was special, and I've done so many interviews on that since. I think it's time to move on. I don't think we'll forget about that ever as a team, and South Africa won't ever (forget), but time to move on now," Rabada told a press conference. "It was kind of like a relief. But the show moves on, and moving toward the T20 World Cup, I guess the approach will be a bit different. Now, you know, there's no fear of anything," he added.

Rababa, who turned 30 in May, has not played since the WTC final in London. "Thankfully, I've had quite a long break, so that's been awesome. Maintenance work consistently has to be done because the volume of cricket is quite a bit," he said. Talking about the South Africa vs Australia rivalry, he said, "It's always some hard cricket being played, some good cricket. Whenever we play Australia, I always feel like they get the best out of us, because they're sort of in our faces. And I guess we like that."



South Africa ended a long wait for an ICC Trophy when they defeated Australia in the World Test Championship final back in June but pacer Kagiso Rabada said on Thursday that it was time to move on from that euphoria of winning the title and focus on the next task in hand. The task he was referring to was South Africa's next three Twenty20 clashes and three one-day Internationals in a series vs Australia,

The Australia tour comes ahead of next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, and the 2027 World Cup in Southern Africa, and South Africa hope the experience will benefit the young players in their squad. "For me that's extremely exciting to see them raring to go. It's just about trying to see where we're at as a team, moving into almost like another generation," Rabada added.

Shubman Gill to lead North Zone squad for first time in Duleep Trophy 2025



GNS News Agency, August 15

After an impressive start to his Test captaincy with a 2-2 result in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, India skipper Shubman Gill will return to red-ball cricket later this month through the 2025-26 domestic season-opening Duleep Trophy as leader of the North Zone team. With the tournament returning to the six-team zonal format, Gill will be joined by Punjab and Haryana pacers Arshdeep Singh and Anshul Kamboj from the Test squad that had recently ended the England tour on a high with a dramatic six-run win at the Oval.

'He's a bit of a clown': Moeen Ali reacts to David Warner's 'surfboard' comments on Joe Root

Moeen Ali calls David Warner a clown for comments on Joe Root. Moeen Ali reacted to David Warner's 'surfboard' comments on Joe Root and called him a 'bit of a clown. With the Ashes still a couple of months away, the off-field chatter between former players of both countries have started. Initiated by Australia's David Warner who said Joe Root 'has to take the surfboard off his front leg' referring to Root's vulnerability to inswingers that often trap him lbw. He was swiftly countered by Stuart Broad took to X to clarify that Root did not possess a glaring weakness against Josh Hazlewood, who Warner had tipped to be Root's kryptonite.

Moeen Ali also pipped in with his opinion on Warner's remarks, calling him a clown. "He's just being Warner. He's a bit of a clown to be honest with you. He's trying to, obviously, get into Rooty's head, which he won't. He's not up for the whole banter thing. It's just Warner, isn't it?" Ali said on the Beard Before Wicket podcast. He also said that Root won't get affected by these sledges and will still score a boatload of runs. "But Rooty... the guy has scored so many runs now, he's been through the whole thing and it won't effect him. India tried it and it just didn't work, clearly didn't work, because he scored loads of runs. But yeah, there's some players you can do that to and others that you can't," he said. Warner, meanwhile, recently revealed that the reigning Ashes champs aimed for Root around his pads in the



past. "That's where we always targeted him." "The way that he brings down his bat playing on Australian wickets, it can bring him undone and I've seen it in the past," Warner said of Root. "I think he will have nightmares before he gets over there about Josh Hazlewood.

A bit like me and Broady. "Joe is a hell of a cricket player, look at the runs he has scored, the second leading run-scorer in the world. But I'm sure he'd like to score a hundred in Australia. It's one that has eluded him. I think that will be on his mind, so we will have to wait and see."

'Joe Root will have nightmares about Josh Hazlewood before Ashes tour': David Warner extends dig after Stuart Broad counter

GNS News Agency, August 15

Joe Root has been dismissed 10 times in 18 Tests by Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood. (Reuters) Joe Root has been dismissed 10 times in 18 Tests by Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood. Former Australia opener David Warner has maintained his criticism of England record-breaker Joe Root from last week, claiming that Test cricket's second-highest run-scorer will have nightmares of pacer Josh Hazlewood before the Ashes trip Down Under begins later this year.

Warner's "surfboard" comments had washed up on prickly English shores last week, prompting a response from Root's former teammate Stuart Broad, who declared that the England No. 4's record against Hazlewood was not as bad as it was made to be. "The big anchor there is Rooty, who is yet to score a hundred in Australia," Warner had told BBC Sport. "Josh Hazlewood tends to have his number quite a lot. He'll have to take the surfboard off his front leg," Warner added, referring to Root's vulnerability to inswingers that often trap him lbw. Root has been dismissed 10 times in 18 Tests by Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood, one fewer than the 11 times Australia captain Pat Cummins and India bowler Jasprit Bumrah have dismissed him. Broad, who has snapped Warner more often than any other bowler during his career, then took to X to clarify that Root did not possess a glaring weakness against Hazlewood. "I've never heard England's best ever batters front pad called a Surfboard. Just for clarity. Hazlewood has got Rooty LBW in Test Cricket 3 times. Three," wrote Broad.

The duo caught up during the Hundred 2025, where Warner is representing London Spirit and Broad is carrying out his broadcasting duties. "I have to ask — do you always call your pads surfboards or do you save that for Rooty?" Broad asked his old Ashes foe. "You've got to understand



that I'm small, so I tend to say they are surfboards," Warner replied. "I liked your (X post) but I forgot to tweet back actually, I will do that after the game." After being pushed further by reporters post the game on Root's weakness and Australia's potential target zones, Warner revealed that the reigning Ashes champs aimed for Root around his pads in the past. "That's where we always targeted him." Refreshingly honest in 'bunny' comparisons, Warner equated Root's perils against Hazlewood with his own poor record against Broad who accounted for his dismissal 17 times in Test cricket. "The way that he brings down his bat playing on Australian wickets, it can bring him undone and I've seen it in the past," Warner said of Root. "I think he will have nightmares before he gets over there about Josh Hazlewood. A bit like me and Broady. "Joe is a hell of a cricket player, look at the runs he has scored, the second leading run-scorer in the world. But I'm sure he'd like to score a hundred in Australia. It's one that has eluded him. I think that will be on his mind, so we will have to wait and see."

Capri Sports and KPMG unveil report highlighting commercial boom in women's sports in India

GNS News Agency, August 15

Hyderabad: Capri Sports and KPMG launched a unique report on women's sports in India and it is developed in collaboration with KPMG Sports Advisory and is a first-of-its-kind deep dive into the commercial ecosystem of women's sports in India, that covers viewership trends, brand partnerships, sponsorship data, and social impact. This detailed work of research highlights the exponential growth of leagues like the Women's Premier League (WPL), the increasing influence of women athletes on social media, and the evolving fanbase that is now as engaged, gender-agnostic, and loyal.

The report shines the spotlight on various aspects of the women's sporting ecosystem such as the Growth Drivers, the Spectators, the Social and Digital Impact and Footprint, the Strategic Investments, and finally, the Future Forecast, and recommendations for all Stakeholders involved in the ecosystem. Some of the highlights of the report were WPL viewership up 150% in just one year, women athletes now attract \$63 million in brand investments, female fans account for 44% of India's gaming audience, social media conversations around women's sports have grown 10x and projected commercial value by 2030: \$900 million.

Sania Mirza, PV Sindhu, Atiqa Mir and Deepa Malik were present at the launch of the report and discussed the



future of women's sport in India at length at the select gathering in Mumbai. Jinisha Sharma, Director, Capri Sports, said the report was deeply personal, for every young girl who dared to dream, and every woman who fought for a place on the field. For her part, six-time Grand Slam winner Sania Mirza said that it was the belief in female athletes that needed to go a long way. "So, I wish there was one secret to it. There isn't. But I definitely think the media, TV, a lot of corporate sponsors, people like us (former and current senior athletes) trying to put things together for the future of this country in different sports, and mentorship. I think that's something that will make a difference," she said.

Deepika Padukone asked for ‘ultra-hot, extra spicy’ noodles; Alia Bhatt said they evoked ‘travel memories’: Chef on his ‘virtually zero calorie’ noodles



Actors Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone have often publicly shown appreciation for the Japanese noodles soup dish, ramen. In a recent interview, their private celebrity chef Harsh Dixit opened up about making it for both of them. He revealed that while Alia mentioned that she gets transported to her travel memories, Deepika loves her noodles ‘ultra hot and spicy’. The chef also shared a few bits about his ramen recipe for them, highlighting the power of ‘intentional food’.

During a chat with The Hollywood Reporter India, Chef

Harsh revealed that he has been perfecting his ramen since more than a decade. “I have made this chicken and pork ramen for Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone. Alia told me it transported her to her travels. That’s the power of intentional food.” “There’s the tare (the seasoning base), often soy or miso, the broth, noodles, protein, and toppings. But I’ve started seasoning the broth directly instead of using tare. That trick has been a hit with all my clients,” he added, while breaking down the basic recipe of the ramen. For Deepika, he offered two broths – Tori Paitan (rich and creamy) and Shio tare (light and clear). The noodle options included classic alkaline noodles and Shirataki noodles made from konjac. “They’re called Miracle Noodles, virtually zero calories,” he said. The actor requested for her noodles to be “ultra-hot, extra spicy, with Miracle Noodles. It hit the spot for her, and she asked for seconds.” Harsh Dixit is a private chef to many superstars, includes Bollywood celebs such as Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Nagarjuna, Ayan Mukerji, Janhvi Kapoor, Mahesh Babu, Athiya Shetty, Suniel Shetty, and KL Rahul, and many others. In the same interview, Harsh also opened up about cooking for Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma’s anniversary in December 2019. He made the traditional Vietnamese dish Pho for the couple, with a special customisation as they are vegan. “I made Pho, but with a twist. There’s chicken and beef in the broth. But they were eating gluten-free at the time, so we went with rice noodles, which are traditional in Pho and gluten-free,” he said. He continued, “Vietnamese cuisine includes a lot of snake – snake wine, even snake meat. So, how about serving ‘snakes’ to vegans? The idea was to have fun while staying within the dietary boundaries. That’s what being a private chef is about.” Meanwhile, on the professional front, Deepika Padukone was last seen in Rohit Shetty’s Singham Again, last year. The actor will next star with Shah Rukh Khan and his daughter Suhana Khan, in Siddharth Anand’s King, in 2026. On the other hand, Alia Bhatt has Jee Le Zaraa, Brahmastra: Part Two, and Love & War in her kitty.

Radhika Apte says ‘insensitive’ Indian producer reacted to pregnancy news coldly, didn’t allow her to see doctor: ‘Forced me to wear tight clothes’

Radhika Apte has openly spoken about her difficult pregnancy and how she struggled to accept her body and the weight gain during and after the experience. While she was dealing with her own challenges, the film industry didn’t make things any easier. In a recent interaction, Radhika shared the stark contrast in empathy and understanding she witnessed between an Indian producer and an international filmmaker — while the Indian producer reacted ‘coldly’ to her pregnancy news, the international filmmaker offered her support and compassion.

Speaking during Neha Dhupia’s Freedom to Feed live session, Radhika said, “An Indian producer I was working with wasn’t happy about the news. He responded coldly and even insisted I wear tight-fitting clothes despite my discomfort and bloating.” Radhika emphasised that she was met with “insensitivity” while working on an Indian project. “I was in my first trimester and had constant cravings, I was eating a lot, be it rice or pasta and going through the usual physical changes, but instead of understanding, I was met with insensitivity. I wasn’t even allowed to see a doctor when I was in pain and feeling uneasy on set. That truly disheartened me,” she said.

The Sacred Games actor shared how the reaction of the Hollywood filmmaker she was working with was exactly the opposite and how he was quite supportive. “The Hollywood filmmaker I was working with was so supportive. When I mentioned I was eating more than usual and might look like a completely different person by the end of



the shoot, he laughed and said, ‘Don’t worry, even if you’re another person by the end of this project, it’s fine. Because you’re pregnant.’ That reassurance and warmth meant the world to me,” she said. Radhika admitted that though she respects professional commitments, that doesn’t mean people can’t show a little empathy. “I wasn’t expecting special treatment, just kindness and basic humanity after sharing such a personal and joyous piece of news,” she said.

Guru Dutt wasn’t a great actor, found him ‘fairly blank’, says Hansal Mehta: ‘His cinema overpowered his inadequacy’

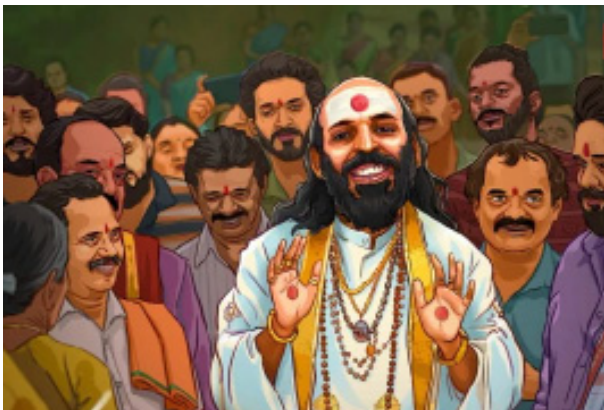
Guru Dutt continues to influence filmmakers even today, 100 years after his birth. The legendary actor and director of Pyaasa and Kaagaz Ke Phool among other classics has a bearing through his unparalleled craft on reputed modern filmmakers like Sudhir Mishra, R Balki, and Hansal Mehta. However, Mehta is of the opinion that Dutt was a far better filmmaker than an actor. “The principal performances in Guru Dutt’s films are remarkably not great. This is my personal, unpopular opinion — Guru Dutt himself was not a great actor,” said Mehta at an event commemorating 100 years of Dutt. “But the craft, the overall cinema of that moment was stronger. It wasn’t dependent on that one central performance,” he added.

Mehta argued that it was the other aspects of filmmaking, besides acting, that combined to make even a lacklustre performance excellent. “It was all the elements of cinema coming together — lighting, framing, the way scenes were staged. When you talk about craft, you often say, ‘Arey, performance itna achha nahi hai’ (The performance isn’t that great). You don’t notice (other aspects of filmmaking),” he argued. “Because the cinematic experience is so powerful, it overpowers his own inadequacy as an actor. So, you remember that frame — “Ye duniya agar mil bhi jaye toh kya hai,” him standing like Jesus Christ — but as an actor, I found him fairly blank if I look at him. I don’t need to because everything else in that is so complete,” added Mehta. Interestingly, Guru Dutt wasn’t meant to play the lead in Pyaasa, the 1957 tragedy Mehta referred to. Veteran screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar, who was also present on the same stage as Mehta at the event, recalled how Dutt initially approached the late thespian Dilip Kumar to play the role of the protagonist, a dejected poet, in a love triangle story also starring Waheeda Rehman and Mala Sinha. But Kumar passed it on because he’d just done another love triangle tragedy story — Bimal Roy’s Devdas



(1955), also starring Suchitra Sen and Vyjayanthimala. “He went back, cast himself, made seven reels of himself, and went back to Dilip Kumar. He said, ‘You watch these seven reels. This role belongs to you! Because you said no, I did it. But even now, if you feel (like doing it) after looking at these seven reels, I’ll scrap these and we’d make it again,’” recalled Akhtar. But Kumar found that impractical and turned the generous offer down. “Dilip sahab told me he repents three films he refused. Baiju Bawra (1957) was one of them. That’s maybe he couldn’t understand the intensity. And Pyaasa.

Su From So director JP Thuminad: ‘Raj B Shetty taught me how to engage with cinema’



The world seems to have changed overnight for JP Thuminad, the man behind the latest Kannada sensation Su From So. Describing the experience as anireekshithe — Kannada for “unexpected” or “unprecedented” — the actor-writer-director is trying to process the overwhelming rush as he promotes his debut across India. Released in theatres on July 25 and co-produced by Raj B Shetty, the Kannada comedy-horror film has exceeded all expectations. Fuelled by glowing reviews and audience love, Su From So offered the Kannada film industry a much-needed morale booster before it was quickly dubbed and released in Malayalam and Telugu. And to everyone’s delight, it currently shows no signs of slowing down.

There’s a fascinating story behind how Raj B Shetty came to know about the storyteller in you. Can you tell us a little about it?

I have always had a passion for telling stories. There was a time when I spun my own stories and shared them with friends and family, pretending they were scenes from films I’d just supposedly watched. My formal education was discontinued quite early on, and I entered the painting profession, but my love for storytelling never ceased. It also helped me with scripting theatre plays over the last 14 years. After I began working with Raj (B Shetty) sir, the word somehow reached him that I have countless stories up my sleeve, and he was interested to know if I’d ever direct a film. I had already been wanting to direct a short (not really knowing how a screenplay is to be written), but for some reason, I could never get Raj sir to like any of my stories! There’d be 60-70 of them in my mind, but he didn’t find much merit in any of them. So that’s when I decided that I would simply make a short film and show it to him, and that’s how it all started. He watched it and was very impressed, even saying that if he made a film on the same story, he would make it similarly. For me, who only wanted to impress Raj sir, getting that feedback was a big boost.

You say you weren’t sure how a film’s structure worked — was it difficult to convert Su From So from idea to script?

Yes, especially for a full-length feature. Raj sir would tell me that I had to first get everything in my mind out on paper, and the rest could be figured out later. Simultaneously, Rishab Shetty sir, with whom I worked in Garuda Gamana Vrishabha Vahana (2021), watched my short film and told me that a screenplay’s three-act structure was ingrained in me, even though I wasn’t aware of it consciously. These inputs, and my own clarity regarding how the film must be told, helped me put it together.

What kind of clarity are you talking about?

I knew that the storytelling had to be different here, and I wanted each character to tell the story in their own way. And a clash of egos among those characters or personalities was as important, because that’s how I’ve seen a community function around me. All the characters — Ravi, Yadhu, Sathisha and so on — in my film are innocent at heart, but there’s an endearing, comical play of egos among them that takes the story forward. Directing a film of this kind, where almost every scene is exuding energy, isn’t easy. Did it help you that you were working with actors — Shaneel Gautham, Prakash Thuminad, Deepak Rai Panaje, etc. — whom you have known very well? I have worked with these guys for over a decade now, and that helps a lot. The thing about working with people who are also your friends is that it could lead to two extremes: one, everyone comes together saying it’s ‘our film’, and the other, being taken for granted. I was lucky that I got the former, and everyone involved — actors, technicians and crew members — considered Su From So to be their film. The ones whom I met for the first time on the sets also felt that passion, and creating something like this wouldn’t have been possible without that sense of synergy. Alongside, we had the clarity about how to make the film and prepped a lot. We preempted

Man survived Hiroshima bombing, took a train out of the city, survived Nagasaki as well; James Cameron is going to make a movie on him

In a recent interview, director James Cameron described Christopher Nolan’s Oscar-winning film Oppenheimer as a ‘moral cop-out’ for not showing the true extent of the damage caused by the atom bombs that were dropped on Japan. The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended World War II, and served as the climactic moment of Nolan’s film, which presented the world-changing incident entirely from its subject’s point of view. The decision attracted controversy, which Nolan addressed in an interview with Variety, “It was always my intention to rigidly stick to that,” he said, adding, “Oppenheimer heard about the bombing at the same time that the rest of the world did. I wanted to show somebody who is starting to gain a clearer picture of the unintended consequences of his actions. It was as much about what I don’t show as what I show.”

Now, Cameron intends to revisit the tragic event which left hundreds of thousands affected in 1945, and millions in the decades that followed. Based on a true story that forms the subject of the recently released book Ghosts of Hiroshima, written by Charles Pellegrino, Cameron’s movie is being set up as his next project — a break between the upcoming third Avatar movie, and the fourth and fifth instalments that are written and ready to go. In an interview with Deadline, the world’s highest-grossing filmmaker opened up about his opinion on Nolan’s movie, and said, “It’s interesting what he stayed away from. Look, I love the film-making, but I did feel that it was a bit of a moral cop-out. It’s not like Oppenheimer didn’t know the effects. I don’t like to criticise another film-maker’s film, but there’s only one brief moment where he sees some charred bodies in the audience, and then the film goes on to show how it deeply moved him.”

things that could go wrong during the shoot, and also prepared ourselves beforehand in a few other areas — certain scenes or songs were meticulously shot on mobile phones first before we went on the floors. Since I was also acting in the film, I needed a strong behind-the-scenes team that could handle it when I was in front of the camera. My direction team, my DOP and many others were very collaborative. More importantly, we had incredible fun making the film, and that shows.

The last time a Kannada film received such overwhelming love and helped many of its cast members gain popularity was perhaps Kantara (2022). What do you suppose has worked in your favour?

I couldn’t pinpoint anything, to be fair, but the same clarity I referred to earlier could have helped us here. I knew from the very beginning that this was a film meant to entertain the masses, and not something for the insiders alone. I wanted to entertain the common folk out there, including my mother, father and relatives. I feel that simplicity, combined with a neatly written and executed film, worked well.

Along with the simplicity, there’s a strong emotional core in the film that struck a chord with audiences. I speak of the Bhaanu character (played by Sandhya Arekere), which speaks about the treatment of women in a non-preachy manner. Did that portion occur naturally to you while writing?

I think I wrote it the way I’d like a film to be, as a good blend of humour, an emotional journey, some action and so on. That’s the right kind of film in my eyes, but having said that, Bhaanu is the character closest to my heart. I couldn’t say exactly why, but she represents the many women I have witnessed growing up. The plight that she carries with her is common among women across backgrounds, but we find that so many of them are unable to openly address what they are enduring. My short film ‘Maa’, which impressed Raj B Shetty sir, tackles the same theme, and so do some of my plays — fascinatingly, I was never consciously attempting to discuss this topic.

Ravi Anna, the Shaneel Gautham character, is quite the rage now. In this era of franchises and cashing in on repeat values of certain characters, do you suppose there’s a sequel/spin-off in store using Ravi Anna and others?

At this point, the thought hasn’t crossed my mind even once, and I am actually on the lookout for something new and fresh. Who knows, a worthy idea might strike sooner or later, but I have yet to even consider that direction.

Do you plan to focus more on direction now?

More than direction alone, I am very keen on telling stories. Screenwriting and direction require a lot of time and effort, so I am equally interested in picking acting projects based on good roles. There’s the rangabhoomi (theatre) as well, to which I want to dedicate as much time as possible, so it is about balancing everything I can at this point.

You have worked alongside and under credible directors like Raj B Shetty and Hemanth M Rao. Anything you learnt from them?

For me, as much as I have learnt about filmmaking from them, what resonated more is the way they live and breathe cinema. If it wasn’t Raj sir, I would strongly assume that my journey would have been on a starkly different path because it was he who taught how to engage with cinema — from characters to the form itself — on a deeper level. Outside work, I have rarely discussed films or filmmaking with him — it would mostly be about life or similar reflective conversations. In Hemanth Sir’s case, he showed by example how a director must be on the film sets and how to direct one’s passion for storytelling. It’s only now, having made a film and released it, that I realise how much more I can learn and understand the craft. Now, I have to ask you about your love for actor-director Upendra, because his ‘presence’ in the film is so vital to the story! (Laughs) I have been a huge admirer of Upendra sir, particularly the writer and director in him. Back in the day, I would embody his style and his mannerisms by constantly reciting his dialogues at home. I was mad about each of his films and have even sold tickets in black for a few of them. I vividly remember getting beaten up by cops when I was selling Naagarahaavu (2002) tickets in black outside a theatre! As far as using him in my film as an element is concerned, it primarily stemmed from creating Ashoka’s (his character in the film) personality. Since the story involves him staging a performance of a kind, I wanted the posters in his room to suggest to the audience that he has a liking for cinema and acting. And that’s how Upendra sir’s ‘Kalpana’ cropped up, which was originally made in Tamil as Kanchana.