

Farmers block Rajiv Rahadhari near Gajwel over urea shortage

Siddipet: Braving the rain, farmers led by BRS leaders staged a massive rasta roko on Rajiv Rahadhari at Rimmanaguda near Gajwel on Saturday, protesting against the government’s apathy in ensuring urea supply.

The protest was spearheaded by BRS constituency in-charge Vanteru Prathapa Reddy. Traffic came to a standstill on both sides of the highway for several hours as farmers raised slogans against the Congress government, accusing it of ignoring their plight. The protesters demanded restoration of the Gajwel rake point to enable fertiliser transportation by train from different parts of the country, thereby addressing the shortage in Telangana.

PM Modi extend greetings to people on Janamashtami, calls it 'festival of faith & joy'

GNS News Agency, August 16

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Saturday, extended warm greetings to the people across the country on the auspicious occasion of Janmashtami and called it a sacred festival of faith, joy and enthusiasm."Heartfelt Janmashtami greetings to all countrymen. May this sacred festival of faith, joy, and enthusiasm infuse new energy and zeal into your lives. Jai Shri Krishna!" PM Modi said on social media platform X.Union Home Minister Amit Shah also extended greetings to countrymen on Janmashtami. "Hail Shri Krishna! Heartfelt greetings to all on Shri Krishna Janmashtami. The life of Lord Shri Krishna, a symbol of righteousness, ethics, and public welfare, inspires every Indian to walk the path of truth and duty," Home Minister Shah wrote on X."Heartfelt greetings to all countrymen on the auspicious occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami. May this festival infuse new energy and enthusiasm into your lives, this is my prayer to Lord Shri Krishna," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on X.

"Heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all the people of the state on the occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami, the birth celebration of Lord Shri Krishna, the symbol of truth, righteousness, and justice. I pray to Lord Shri Krishna for the happy, healthy, and auspicious life of you all. #ShriKrishnaJanmashtami2025," Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami wrote on X."I bow to Krishna, the universal teacher! Heartfelt congratulations and auspicious wishes to all on the sacred birth anniversary of Lord Shri Krishna, the foundation of the entire universe, the play-



ful one, and the supreme yogi, 'Shri Krishna Janmashtami'! May the flute-player infuse love, compassion, and devotion into everyone's life and bring welfare to the entire creation, this is my prayer. Hail Shri Krishna!" Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on X"Heartfelt greetings to all countrymen on the auspicious occasion of Shri Krishna Janmashtami," Union Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari wrote on X."Heartfelt wishes to all of you on Shri Krishna Janmashtami. Jai Shri Krishna," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wrote on its official X account.Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated every year to observe the birth anniversary of Lord Krishna. The auspicious occasion is marked by praying to Lord Krishna, visiting temples to seek his blessings, wearing new clothes, observing fasts, decorating homes and places of worship, making sweet dishes made of milk products.

Governors are not aliens, but checks on States’ ‘hasty legislation’: Centre to SC

GNS News Agency, August 16

The Union government has said the Supreme Court cannot treat Governors as “aliens” or “foreigners” on whom timelines can be imposed and whose discretion do not count.The submission by the Centre, made in a note authored by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, is part of the record in a Presidential Reference hearing scheduled before a Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai from August 19.

The Presidential Reference stems from an April 8 judgment pronounced by a Supreme Court Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan in a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu government, which had challenged Governor R.N. Ravi’s delay in clearing 10 re-passed Bills and his subsequent action to reserve them for consideration by the President.The two-judge Bench had thrust a three-month deadline on State Governors and the President to deal with State Bills sent to them for approval or consideration, respectively. It had concluded that Governors enjoyed no discretion while dealing with these Bills, and were totally bound by the ‘aid and advice’ of the State Legislature concerned. The Division Bench had even invoked Article 142 of the Constitution to grant ‘deemed assent’ to ‘delayed’ State Bills. The April 8 judgment had further directed that the President must seek advice from the Supreme Court under Article 143 (advisory jurisdiction) in case of any vexing State Bills.

The written submissions of Tamil Nadu, represented by senior advocate P. Wilson, countered that the Presidential Reference mechanism cannot be used to reopen or nullify binding judgments of the apex court itself. Questions on the powers of the President and the Governors as regards State Bills have already been settled by the April 8 judgment. Entertaining the Reference now would erode the finality attached to Supreme Court judgments under Article 141 of the Constitution. Tamil Nadu submitted the court was not bound to answer every Presidential Reference made to



it But Mr. Mehta maintained the April judgment of the court had clearly entrenched upon a zone exclusive to the President and the Governors.“Governors are not to be treated as alien/foreigner in the federating units of the Union. Governors are not just emissaries of the Centre. The Governors possess democratic legitimacy through indirect democratic representation. Governors are appointed by the President on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers... Governors are constitutional actors,” Mr. Mehta submitted.The law officer argued the nature of gubernatorial assent has a unique duality of character. Though the assent is given by an apex Executive authority, the act itself is legislative in nature. The Supreme Court’s approach ought to have been more calibrated.The Centre’s law officer submitted that neither Article 200 (Governor’s power to assent to State Bills) nor Article 201 (President’s power to consider State Bills referred to her by the Governor for consideration) provided any specific time limit.“The absence of any express time limit in Articles 200 and 201 is a deliberate and conscious constitutional choice. The judicial direction of imposition of any timeline would amount to an amendment to the Constitution,” Mr. Mehta emphasised.

EAM Jaishankar, South Korean counterpart, discuss strengthening ties; mark 10 years of partnership

GNS News Agency, August 16

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Saturday met with South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun in New Delhi, appreciating the strengthening convergences and increasing collaboration between India and South Korea as both countries marked 10 years of their Special Strategic Partnership.During the meeting, the leaders discussed ways to further enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries across various sectors.

“Delighted to meet FM South Korea Cho Hyun this morning. Held productive discussions on advancing our bilateral cooperation in trade, manufacturing, maritime & people-to-people exchanges as well as new opportunities in AI, semiconductors, clean energy and defence,” the EAM posted on X.Held productive discussions on advancing our bilateral cooperation in trade, manufacturing, maritime & people to people exchanges as well as new opportunities in AI, semiconductors, clean energy and defAlso exchanged perspectives on Indo-Pacific and contemporary global developments. Appreciated our deepening convergences and growing engagement as our Special Strategic Partnership completes 10 years,” the post added.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal noted that the (Special) Strategic Partnership between Indian and South Korea continues to remain robust and future-oriented, as he welcomed Hyun on his arrival in New Delhi on Friday evening for a two-day maiden visit to India.Taking to X, Jaiswal wrote, “Warm welcome to



FM Cho Hyun of the Republic of Korea as he arrives in New Delhi on his maiden visit to India. India- South Korea Special Strategic Partnership remains strong & geared towards the future."During his visit, the two nations plan to boost exchanges and cooperation, South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson and Deputy Minister for Public Affairs Lee Jaewoong emphasised on Thursday."Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho Hyun will pay a bilateral visit to India from August 15 to 17. During the visit, Foreign Minister Cho will attend a number of key engagements, including a meeting with S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India," Lee Jaewoong told reporters during a media briefing in Seoul on Thursday."With this year marking the 10th anniversary of the Korea-India Special Strategic Partnership, the two sides will discuss ways to boost exchanges and cooperation with a view to deepening bilateral ties," he added.

Heavy inflows force opening of floodgates at Hyderabad reservoirs

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has opened the floodgates of Osmansagar, Himayatsagar and Manjeera Barrage after about 45 mm of rainfall was recorded in nearly 20 per cent of the catchment areas.Usually, September is the month when the Water Board releases water, but this year the heavy inflows began a month earlier.According to officials, four floodgates of Manjeera Barrage were opened, releasing 46,261 cusecs against an inflow of 43,716 cusecs. The Full Tank Level (FTL) of Manjeera Barrage is 1,651.75 feet, while the present water level stood at 1,650 feet.

CM Revanth puts administration on high alert as IMD predicts heavy rains

GNS News Agency, August 16

Hyderabad: In view of the heavy rain forecast, Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy placed the entire administration on alert in the state. The IMD forecast moderate to heavy rains are likely to occur in Nizamabad, Sangareddy, Medak, Vikarabad, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Bhadradi Kothagudem and Khammam districts. According to the Meteorological department, 15 districts recorded heavy rainfall, while the remaining districts received normal rainfall. Jagtial district, which recorded deficit rainfall in the monsoon season, has been receiving heavy rains since last night.

The Chief Minister inquired about flood situation and relief operations in the heavy rain affected districts on Saturday morning. The officials were ordered to deploy NDRF and SDRF teams in advance and coordinate with district Collectors for relief operations in the flood hit habitations.The CM instructed the authorities to shift the families from low lying areas to relief camps in view of the increasing risk of overflow of canals, rivulets and ponds. The Irrigation department was tasked to monitor water levels in reservoirs, canals and flood flowing water bodies. The irrigation officials should alert the Collectors and field staff on the release of flood water regularly.

As part of precautionary measures, sand bags will be kept ready to contain flood damages alongside reservoirs and ponds which are brimming with heavy inflows. Police and Revenue officials were instructed to prohibit vehicle traffic by putting barricades on the roads, low level bridges and causeways where water levels exceeded.In a move to



check the spread of water and insect borne diseases in the heavy rain affected areas, the Chief Minister ordered Municipal, Urban and Village administration officials to carry out sanitation work in the areas where mosquito menace is high due to water stagnation.CM Revanth Reddy took stock of the flood situation in Greater Hyderabad limits and ordered the GHMC , HYDRAA, SDRF and Fire services wings to respond immediately to the requests from people for relief in the city.Instructing the state Health department to stockpile adequate medicines and open Medical Camps in the identified areas, the Chief Minister emphasized that precautions should be taken to prevent loss of life, property and livestock.CM Revanth Reddy suggested that Revenue, Electricity, Panchayat Raj, R&B, Medical and Health, Municipal Administration, Police, Fire services departments and SDRF personnel should work in coordination during heavy rains.

Grand Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations at Hare Krishna Golden Temple in Hyd

GNS News Agency, August 16

Hyderabad: The Sri Krishna Janmashtami festival was celebrated grandly at the Hare Krishna Golden Temple in Banjara Hills on Saturday.Lord Sri Krishna gave darshan to devotees in multiple forms, including Sri Radha Govinda, Sri Godha Krishna, and Sri Laddu Gopal. Devotees also had the opportunity to perform Unjala (Jhulan) Seva for Laddu Gopal. Scores of people from across the city visited the temple to receive the Lord's blessings on this auspicious occasion, according to a press release.

The celebrations began with Shodashopachara Seva at 4:30 am. Lord Sri Radha Govinda was adorned with select flowers, nava vastras, and specially crafted jewellery. The enchanting Shringara Arati marked the start of darshan, extending divine blessings to devotees. The Jhulan or Unjala Seva for Sri Laddu Gopal commenced simultaneously, allowing attendees to participate in this sacred ritual.In the morning, the auspicious Sri Sudarshana Narasimha Homa was performed for the



welfare and prosperity of all. An offering of 56 meticulously prepared dishes, known as Chappan Bhog, captivated attendees, followed by a splendid Raja Bhoga Arati enhanced by resonant bhajans and kirtans.The festivities included four elaborate abhishekams to Sri Radha Govinda at noon, evening, and midnight. The highlight of the day was the mesmerizing Vishesh 108-Kalasha Sandhya Maha Abhishekam, conducted in the evening.

PM Modi announces Made-in-India chips by 2025, semiconductor push gains pace

GNS News Agency, August 16

New Delhi: India's semiconductor market is expected to reach around \$110 billion by 2030, as the country will become a trusted node in the \$1 trillion global semiconductor market, according to a new report.Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his 79th Independence Day address from the Red Fort, declared that Made-in-India semiconductor chips will be available in the market by the end of 2025, marking a major milestone in India's push for technological self-reliance.The Union Cabinet this week approved four semiconductor projects worth Rs 4,600 crore. These new ventures will produce approximately 2,000 skilled employments in India, potentially creating many more indirect value chain opportunities, according to a report in India Narrative.Currently, Taiwan makes about 90 per cent of advanced chips for India. The new Indian facilities ensure a stable local supply of telecom, electric cars, and defence chips, boosting economic resilience and minimising strategic risks.'Designed and Made in India' chips can compete in global supply chains as companies look for alternatives to established giants amid US-China tensions, the report

noted. Odisha will receive two new projects, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab will each receive one. After new approvals, there are ten India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)-sanctioned projects in six states.Over 60,000 students are being trained in semiconductor-related skills, preparing the workforce India needs for both domestic and global demand. SICSem Private Limited in Odisha will build India's first commercial compound semiconductor fabrication facility. Defence, electric vehicles, trains, and energy infrastructure dependent on silicon carbide (SiC) devices will be the focus of this facility.Odisha-based 3D Glass Solutions Inc. envisions an advanced packaging and embedded glass substrate plant. This factory will provide cutting-edge chip packaging—a leap for AI, communications, and photonics sectors, the report said.Andhra Pradesh's ASIIP Technologies, in partnership with South Korea's APACT, will build a plant serving consumer, automotive, and communications electronics. Continental Device India Ltd. in Punjab will produce more MOSFETs and IGBTs with direct relevance for renewable energy, EVs, automation, and industrial digitalisation.The proposed products will have significant applications in defence, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, RF and automotive, photonics and co-packaged optics, etc.

Railways gear up to tackle challenges posed by heavy rains - SCR

Hyderabad, Aug.16 : In view of heavy rainfall during this monsoon season, the authorities of South Central Railways (SCR) asserted that they are committed for safety and operational excellence. "Monsoon preparedness is not just a seasonal protocol - it's a reflection of our proactive approach to passenger safety and infrastructure resilience. Every supervisor, every team member must act with urgency and precision", they noted. At a high-level review meeting held at Rail Nilayam in Secunderabad, SCR general manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava evaluated the zone's readiness to tackle challenges posed by heavy rains and ensuring uninterrupted, safe train operations. Strong emphasis was placed on close watch of vulnerable infrastructure such as bridges, tunnels, and Road under Bridges (RUBs) and other areas which are prone to water logging. Manning of Control and Disaster Management Centres by officers around the clock. Emergency Stockpiles: Ensure availability of sand, ballast, cement, boulders, and pipes for quick response. Besides swift repair works, continuous monitoring, to conduct regular inspections and maintain round-the-clock surveillance at critical locations are among the directives issued at the review meeting Prior to the review, the General Manager inspected the Disaster Management room, emphasizing the importance of 24x7 operational readiness. He monitored live feeds from vulnerable locations .

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, unlike the cold-blooded perpetrators from Pakistan, who kill people on the streets.

It Is Important To Ensure That The Authorities Are Accessible To The Public In The Event Of Heavy Rains And That Appropriate Helief Measures Are Immediately Provided To The people



Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas."Indian Chronicle August,16.""Atmakuri Chiranjeevi, CPI District Assistant Secretary""In view of the heavy rains that have been lashing Komaram Bheem Asifabad district since this morning, we request the District Collector to take appropriate steps to ensure that the officials of all departments are alert in public safety measures. In the context of the rivers and streams in the district flowing rapidly, important instructions should be given to the people, and in some villages, there are situations where it is not possible to prepare food due to flood water entering the houses.in some villages,they should ensure that food is provided to them. They demanded that wherever difficulties are arising for the heavy rains, they should identify them and formulate appropriate measures to prevent such situations from happening again in the future. Similarly, crops were submerged due to the rains, so they also requested that steps be taken to identify the farmers who have lost their lives and provide them with compensation.

The Village That Hoisted The National Flag 79 Years After Independence!"

"Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas."Indian Chronicle August,16.""Wave of Movement, Asifabad (Kerameri Komuram Bheem) In Pathaguda village of Kerameri mandal of Asifabad district, Independence Day celebrations were celebrated for the first time on August 15, 79 years after independence by hoisting the national flag. Pathaguda village is inhabited entirely by Kolam tribals.Independence Day celebrations were not organized for so many years as there was no school in this village. For the first time, a school was established in this village and a teacher was appointed by C. R.T. Nee.The Kolam tribals expressed their happiness



over the education of the students of this village and the organization of Independence Day celebrations.

National Millet Startup Summit 2025 Kick-Starts in Hyderabad With 120 Aspirants from 18 States



Hyderabad:National Millet Startup Summit 2025 Kick-Starts in Hyderabad. A three-day National Millet Startup Summit 2025 commenced today, 16th August 2025, at Minerva Hall in Hi-tech City, Hyderabad, and will run through 18th August 2025. The event brings together 120 aspirants from 18 states who will explore the vast potential of millet-based entrepreneurship and manufacturing.

The summit showcases millet machineries on display, offering a range of equipment and processes to help participants set up millet-based manufacturing units. Special focus products with live demonstrations include Millet Noodles, Millet Dosa, Millet Pongal Mix, Millet Ladoo, Millet Bisibela Bath, Millet Malt, Millet Namakpara, Millet Cheese Crackers, Millet Rava Idly, and Millet Revitizer Porridge. The HNA Council, comprising 100 doctors, is providing clinical guidance on millet-based nutrition and preventive health, while industry experts from IBLCS (Indian Business and Legal Consultancy Services) are advising on compliance and legal aspects, including CA Praveen Kumar and Advocate Shreshtha Goshika. The overall coordination is led by Dr. Giridhar Gangapuram.

Speaking at the opening, Mr. Prasanna Srinivas Sarakadam, Chairman of Millets the Best Food (MBF), emphasized the organization's expansion plans, saying, "We are planning to open Premium Millet Stores in every Mandal." This statement reflects MBF's commitment to expanding millet accessibility and building a robust millet ecosystem across districts. Jaganath Chinnari, Founder of Jaganath Millet Foods and a participant from Odisha, introduced his unique product "Millet Tea," which has already earned market applause, and announced his forthcoming product "Millet Wine," presently in the Research and Development phase. His presentation generated significant excitement among attendees on day one.Additional notes include that the Millets National Media Portal inaugurated this prestigious summit, which runs from 16th to 18th August at Minerva Halls, Madhapur, Hyderabad. Machinery expert trainer Mr. Jagannath Chinnari is conducting hands-on sessions to simplify millet plant setup, while Dr. Monica Sravanthi of the HNA Council provides clinical guidance on millet-based nutrition. Participants also receive guidance on regulatory and legal compliance from the IBLCS team, including CA Praveen Kumar and Advocate Shreshtha Goshika.

Children Dressed As Durgam Anirudh Aditya Varma Krishna Created Waves Of Devotion In Tatinagar

""Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas."Indian Chronicle August,16.""The Sri Krishna Ashtami festival was celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm in Tatinagar village of Kautala mandal, Komuram Bheem Asifabad district.On this occasion, the children of Durgam Sarath Chandra and Divya couple Anirudh and Aditya Varma of the village received the blessings of the villagers in the costumes of Krishna and Balarama. The innocence in the eyes of the children and the smiles on their faces are reminiscent of the nectarine sweetness of Krishna. While one was impressed by holding a lump of butter and appearing as Gokulananda, another attracted the people around with the movements of Balarama. Waves of devotion were felt in the hearts of everyone who saw the Panchajanyam, Mayura Pincham and the costume of Gopalakrishna.The village made the festive atmosphere in the village more enthusiastic. Everyone who saw the children's attire blessed Anirudh and Aditya Varma and wished them God's blessings in the future."



National Human Rights..Government Should Help The Victims Of Heavy Rains NHRC District Chairman Rathod Ramesh

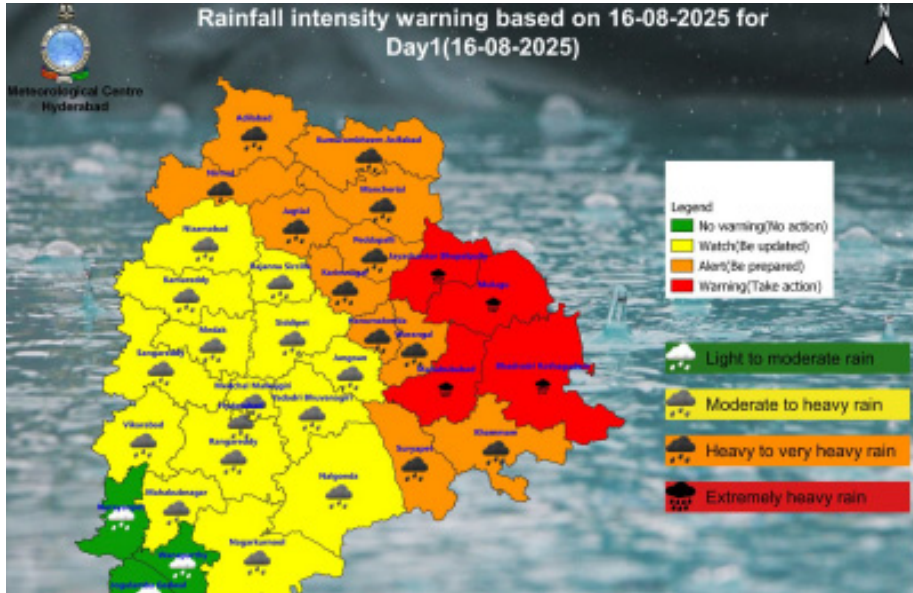
""Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas."Indian Chronicle August,16.""Due to the recent heavy rains across the district,people in low-lying areas have been affected by water entering their homes and croplands, resulting in poor farmers suffering losses.We request the district administration to assess the loss through the authorities and provide compensation to the affected farmers.

Similarly,in many villages in the district, roads and paths have been damaged due to the rains,causing severe disruption to people's movement. We demand on behalf of the National Human Rights Committee that such roads be repaired immediately and that people's transportation facilities are not disrupted.Only admins can send messages



Bhadradri Kothagudem district on red alert, heavy rain likely:District Collector Jitesh V. Patil""

""Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradri Kothagudem Bureau, August 16, Indian Chronicle: As per the Meteorological Department (16.08.2025), there is a possibility of heavy rain in the evening and night, and although there is no major rainfall at present, the intensity of the rains is likely to increase at night, said District Collector Jitesh V. Patil, IAS.Stating that the district is on red alert in this context, the Collector ordered all the officials to be alert and immediately disseminate information to the villages, farmers, local staff, and the public.The District Collector warned farmers not to go to the streams and fields, especially after evening, and advised the people to take precautions and stay safe.In case of accidents or when



they need help, they can contact the already established control rooms.Special Control Room Numbers:Collector's Office,

Bhadradri Kothagudem @ Palvancha 08744-24195093929 19743 (WhatsApp)Sub Collector's Office

Bhadrachalam08743-23244493479 10737 (WhatsApp)ITDA, Bhadrachalam79952 68352

Disturbance In The Unveiling Of The National Flag"

"Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas."Indian Chronicle August,16.""Penchikalpiti.The national flag was unfurled at the Chedwai Gram Panchayat office in the mandal on Friday. The school principal, village special officer, and mandal MEO Ramesh Babu hoisted the national flag and then lowered it slightly during the Independence Day celebrations. As part of the flag hoisting program, the staff had to face difficulties. Even after pulling the flag rope, there was no result. The officials and party leaders expressed their anger saying that the national flag that was hoisted had to be lowered slightly, untied, fixed, and hoisted again.

The Government Should Help The Victims Of Heavy Rains,CPM Recently Said.



""Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas."Indian Chronicle August,16.""Due to the heavy rains that have fallen across the district, water has entered the homes and croplands of people in low-lying areas, resulting in poor farmers suffering losses. We request the district administration to assess the losses through the authorities and provide compensation to the affected farmers."In many villages in the district, roads and paths were damaged due to rains, causing severe disruption to public transportation. Such roads were immediately repaired."immediately and that the transport facilities of the people are not disrupted.Durgam Dinkar, member of the CPM Party District Secretary's group

Mula Anil Goud appointed as Rangareddy District (Urban) Vice President"



"Serilingampalli August 16 Mula Anil Goud from Serilingampalli constituency has been appointed as the Vice President of Bharatiya Janata Party Rangareddy District (Urban). District President Vanapalli Srinivas Reddy released the appointment letter to this effect. Speaking on the occasion, Mula Anil Goud expressed special gratitude to President Srinivas Reddy and State President Ramachandra Rao for trusting him and entrusting him with the responsibilities. He said that he will do his best for the development of the party in Rangareddy district urban.

Komatireddy directs R&B officials to stay on high alert amid heavy rains

Hyderabad, Aug.16 In view of the incessant rains and flood situation across Telangana, Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has directed officials of the department to remain on high alert and ensure public safety. Reviewing the situation with special chief secretary Vikas Raj and senior officials on Saturday, the Minister said that flood damage has been reported at 454 locations, including 629 km of roads under the R&B network. So far, 22 stretches have been washed away, of which four have already been temporarily restored to facilitate traffic. Out of 108 critical locations where connectivity was disrupted, 71 have been cleared on a war-footing, while works are underway at the remaining points.The Minister instructed engineers to conduct field inspections at culverts, causeways, and bridges and take all necessary precautions to prevent any loss of life. He asked officials to coordinate with police, irrigation, revenue, panchayat raj and electricity departments to tackle the situation effectively.Temporary restoration must be carried out immediately wherever roads and culverts have been cut off, so that public transport is not affected," he said. Proposals for permanent reconstruction of damaged roads and bridges have also been sought. The Minister made it clear that all senior officials should remain at district headquarters and provide him with real-time updates on the ground situation. He warned that no official should go on leave for the next two days, stressing that while property loss can be restored, loss of life is irreversible.Special chief secretary Vikas Raj informed that 24/7 control rooms have been set up in all district circles and linked with the State R&B control centre for continuous monitoring. Chief engineer Mohan Naik briefed the Minister that all 37 divisions are on alert and field engineers are being monitored through video conferences.

Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar Assures Residents of Swift Resolution to Colony Infrastructure Issues



““INDIAN CHRONICLE”“SHADNAGAR, August 16”“Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar assured residents that all issues faced by colonies will be addressed as part of the town's development efforts. He urged everyone to work together for Shadnagar's progress and instructed officials to ensure that ongoing development projects are completed promptly. He also called on the public to cooperate with these initiatives.”“On Saturday, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar, who also serves as the Chairman of Public Sector Enterprises, visited several colonies in the 6th and 9th wards of Shadnagar municipality along with local leaders. Walking through the neighborhoods, he listened to the grievances of residents. Additionally, he inaugurated newly installed electricity regulators in the 9th ward.”“During the visit, residents submitted petitions highlighting key issues such as the need for CC roads, underground drainage, and street lighting. Responding positively, the MLA assured them that immediate steps would be taken to resolve these concerns.

He emphasized his commitment to transforming Shadnagar municipality into a model municipality. He noted that just 15 days ago, he had inspected electricity-related issues in the 9th ward with officials, leading to the swift installation of electricity regulators and poles to meet the residents' needs.”“The MLA encouraged colony residents to discuss and submit petitions for major issues such as internal drainage, CC roads, and water connections. He directed officials to regularly monitor ongoing development works to ensure their timely completion. He reiterated that immediate measures would be taken to address public grievances. Specifically, in the 6th ward, he acknowledged problems related to internal roads, drainage, and streetlights, promising their swift resolution.”“The event was attended by Market Committee Vice-Chairman Babar Khan, Congress Party Town President Konkala Chennayya, senior leader Chendi Tirupati Reddy, Mohammed Ibrahim, Mubarak, Koppunooru Praveen, Khadeer, colony residents, women, officials, and others.

Sri Kakatiya School Celebrates Krishna Janmashtami with Grandeur



““INDIAN CHRONICLE”“SHADNAGAR, August 16”“Sri Kakatiya School in Shadnagar marked Krishna Janmashtami with vibrant celebrations under the leadership of Principal Swathi Reddy. The event was filled with enthusiasm as students dressed as Lord Krishna and Gopikas captivated the audience with their charming performances.”“Speaking on the occasion, Principal Swathi Reddy expressed her wishes for the auspicious day, stat-

ing, “Krishna Janmashtami, the day Lord Krishna was born, is a sacred occasion. May this day remove all obstacles and fill everyone's lives with joy and prosperity.” The program saw active participation from school teachers, students, and parents, who came together to celebrate the divine festival with devotion and festivity.”“The event highlighted the cultural and spiritual significance of Janmashtami, fostering a sense of unity and joy among the school community.

ARREST OF INTER STATE DACOIT GANG MEMBERS

Serilingampalli August 16 Indian Chronicle On 12.08.2025, six unidentified armed offenders wearing masks entered Khajana Jewellers, Chandanagar. They opened fire at the Deputy Manager, Satish Kumar, injuring his left knee, and looted around 10 kg of silver articles including gold-coated silver. The injured was shifted to hospital. A case in Cr.No.890/2025 was registered at Chandanagar PS U/s 11(2), 115(2), 127(2), 324(3), 310(2), 351(3) BNS r/w Sec.25(1-B), 27(1) Arms Act. “Cyberabad Police arrested two accused persons who are involved in the offence of dacoity at Khazana Jewellers, Chanda Nagar, Hyderabad and recovered silver articles weighing about 900 grams. On further investigation (7) people identified involved. Details of the arrested accused:

1. Aashish Kumar Singh, age : 22 yrs, N/o.Saran Dist, Bihar State. 2. Deepak Kumar Sah, age : 22 yrs, N/o.Saran Dist, Bihar State. 3. Other offenders.The accused from Bihar planned to loot gold and diamond jewellery shops in Hyderabad using firearms. With the help of their associate Deepak Kumar Sah, a welding worker in Hyderabad, they rented accommodation at Asbestos Colony, Jeedimetla on 31.07.2025, procured two second-hand bikes, and conducted recce of showrooms at Chandanagar. They finally executed the robbery at Khazana Jewellers. Later, accused Aashish Kumar Singh was apprehended in Maharashtra, and based on his information, Deepak Kumar Sah, who arranged stay, vehicles, and helped identify targets, was also arrested.The managements of Jewellery shops are advised to have adequate security mechanism during the operational hours and also to have intrusion alarm panel at their establishment and to nearest police stations



to thwart such incidents. The above arrests were made with the combined efforts of SOT, CCS, L&O staff of Cyberabad under the supervision of Commissioner of Police, Cyberabad.

IMD warns of heavy rains, red alert issued for seven districts

Hyderabad, Aug.16 The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted that rain is likely to persist in Telangana for an additional three days. The anticipated rainfall is expected to last until August 18, with the potential for significant downpours, particularly in the northern and eastern regions on August 16 and 17. Consequently, the department has issued a red alert for seven districts due to the possibility of intense rainfall. The red alert has been announced for the districts of Adilabad, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherla, Jayashakkar Bhupalpally, Bhadradi

Kothagudem, Mahabubabad, and Mulugu. An orange alert has also been declared for eight districts, indicating the potential for heavy to very heavy rainfall, including Nirmal, Jagtial, Peddapalli, Karimnagar, Hanumakonda, Warangal, Suryapet, and Khammam. Furthermore, a yellow alert has been issued across all districts, signifying the likelihood of light to moderate rainfall, as well as heavy rains, except for the former Mahabubnagar area. The officials, who have previously issued red and orange warnings, have notified the district authorities to implement additional precautionary measures based on recent updates.

All department officials should work in coordination to make the Chief Minister's visit a success:District Collector



Jitesh V. Patil, ““Kukkadapu NareshKumar, Aswarapeta constituency, August 16, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil said that all department officials should work in coordination to make the Chief Minister's visit a success. On Saturday morning, a wide-ranging review meeting was held with the officials of the relevant departments in Bendalampadu village of Chandrugonda mandal under the chairmanship of the Collector, along with District Police Officer Rohit Raju and Ashwarapet constituency MLA Jare Adinarayana. This review meeting was held in the context of the state Chief Minister Enumula Revanth Reddy visiting Bandalampadu village of Chandrugonda mandal on the 21st of this month and inaugurating the Indiramma Indla Gruha Pravesha program. The Collector said—He ordered that the officials of all departments should work in coordination to make the Chief Minister's visit a success. It was suggested that the construction of the auditorium, stage design, guest seating facilities, parking arrangements, transportation, sanitation, drinking water facilities, power supply, medical camp, fire personnel, and security measures should be completed within the specified time. The Collector ordered the police department to take special traffic control measures so that the local people do not face any problems during the Chief Minister's visit. He ordered that all the arrangements related to the Chief Minister's visit should be of high stan-

dards and that the slightest mistake should not be made from the level of departmental officers to the field-level staff. It was suggested that special attention should be paid to sanitation in the areas where the Chief Minister will visit and that power supply and drinking water facilities should be continuous.District SP Rohit Raju said—He clarified that comprehensive security measures will be taken during the Chief Minister's visit and that no other vehicles except the Chief Minister's convoy should be allowed at the helipad area.

He suggested that if the officials of each department complete their responsibilities on time and work in coordination, there will be no hindrance in the visit.MLA Jare Adinarayana said—He said that it is everyone's responsibility to make the Chief Minister's visit a success. After inspecting the arrangements for the assembly hall, helipad, and vehicle parking in Bandalapadu village along with the Collector and SP, he asked the officials of all departments to take care so that the people do not face any problems.Later, the Collector, SP, and MLA together directly inspected the arrangements for the assembly hall, helipad, and vehicle parking in Bandalapadu, Chandrugonda, Damaracharla, and Maddukur villages. Necessary instructions were given to the officials on this occasion.District officials of all departments, public representatives, and others participated in this program.

Ponnam urges leaders to collaborate for Congress success in Jubilee Hills bypoll

Hyderabad, Aug.16 : Minister for Transport Ponnam Prabhakar stated that the Congress party's flag ought to be raised during the by-elections in the Jubilee Hills constituency. Ponnam Prabhakar, who also serves as the in-charge Minister of Hyderabad, convened a meeting with the Congress party's booth in-charges and prominent leaders from the Erragadda division, which is part of the Jubilee Hills Assembly constituency, at the Minister's Quarters in Hyderabad on Saturday. Those present included Congress leaders such as Mohd. Azaruddin, Inagala Venkatrami Reddy, Chairman of the Telangana State Dairy Development Cooperative Federation Gutha Amit Reddy, NSUI state president Venkata Swamy, along with various booth in-charges and other key figures. During the meeting, Ponnam Prabhakar encouraged all leaders in the Erragadda division to unite their efforts and urged every activist to contribute towards ensuring the Congress party's success in the upcoming by-election.He mentioned the necessity of estab-

lishing coordination committees for both the Erragadda division and individual booths, with leaders assigned to gather concerns from residents on a booth-by-booth basis within the division."The government is prepared to address the issues in the Erragadda division. I plan to accompany the GHMC Commissioner and the Hyderabad Collector on a tour of the division to oversee the completion of outstanding road projects. Moreover, I will personally conduct a padayatra within the division to identify problems alongside the relevant officials and work towards resolving them," Ponnam Prabhakar said.

The schemes launched by the State government should reach every household. Initiatives such as the new ration card distribution, provision of quality rice, Indiramma housing, urban development in Hyderabad, road construction, and canal development projects need to be systematically delivered to the community, Ponnam emphasised.

BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar claims sabotage in Medigadda pillar collapse

Hyderabad, Aug.16 : BRS General Secretary RS Praveen Kumar asserted that the failure of a pillar at the Medigadda Barrage, part of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, was a result of intentional sabotage by anti-social elements, rather than a natural event. He called for the establishment of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to conduct a comprehensive investigation.During a press conference at Telangana Bhavan here on Saturday, he highlighted that all three barrages of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project—Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla—successfully endured unprecedented flooding in 2022. The BRS leader raised concerns about why only the pillar at Medigadda fell without any apparent explanation. Praveen Kumar also questioned the lack of inquiry into any potential explosion, noting that no statements had been gathered and no seismic activity had been detected in the vicinity.

"On October 22, 2023, an assistant engineer filed a complaint at the Mahadevapur police station, reporting loud explosion-like noises at the barrage, which he believed suggested possible sabotage. However, no investigations have yet uncovered those responsible," the BRS leader said.

Praveen Kumar stated that the incident appeared to be a deliberate attempt to tarnish K Chandrashekhara Rao's legacy. He called for the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the alleged explosions and determine if Congress leaders, including Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, as well as BJP leaders Bandi Sanjay and G Kishan Reddy, were implicated. He also recommended examining their mobile phone records to find any links to the event. The BRS leader criticised the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) for not addressing the explosion allegations and questioned their swift inspection of Medigadda following a letter from Union Minister Kishan Reddy, while neglecting a dam collapse incident in Uttarakhand. The BRS leader claimed that the NDSA's report, which pointed out design and construction issues, was part of a predetermined strategy to undermine the BRS's reputation. He also rejected the accusations of financial mismanagement during the BRS's time in power and accused the Congress of disseminating falsehoods, such as the existence of "golden toilets" in Pragati Bhavan. He mentioned that Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, currently residing there, laughed off these allegations when questioned about them.

Tributes paid to Vajpayee on his death anniversary

Hyderabad, Aug.16 Telangana state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party today paid rich tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary. Vajpayee was a visionary leader who raised India as a global power, both economically and strategically, the party said.After garlanding Vajpayee's portrait to mark his death anniversary at state BJP headquarters here, party president N Ramachander Rao said that the then Vajpayee's government at the Centre had developed landmark infrastructure projects like Pradhan mantri gram sadak yojana (rural roads infrastructure programme), Golden quadrilateral project (national highways) and so on which had resulted in country's progress. Despite international sanctions after the Pokhran nuclear test, the then BJP government headed by Vajpayee had faced the challenges by steering the nation forward without any compromise. Vajpayee's birthday is being cel-

ebrated annually as the "Good Governance Day" both by the government and the party, he noted. Praising the RSS for nurturing leaders like Vajpayee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rao highlighted various welfare schemes like Valmiki-Ambedkar Awas Yojana, a housing program for the poor, and other national projects which had got benefited all sections of the society.

On this occasion, he criticised the present Congress government and the previous BRS government for allegedly failing to fulfill their election promises. Vajpayee should be taken as a role model not only by the BJP workers, but leaders of all political parties for betterment of the nation, he added. BJP state general secretary Kasam Venkateswarlu, state vice-president Chintala Ramachandra Reddy and several other state BJP leaders attended the event.

No contact, can't come within 300 metres of his flat: Delhi court restrains woman from stalking married man



GNS News Agency, August 16

A Delhi court last week restrained a woman from stalking and harassing a married man who had allegedly rejected her proposal to have physical relations. The woman, who was also married, was directed not to come within 300 metres of the man's flat or to contact him or his family members. Her husband was also restrained from going near the man. "Defendants (woman and her husband) are also restrained from stalking, harassing, or following the Plaintiff [man] or any member of his family either in person or through any means of communication, including electronic, telephonic, or social media platforms. Defendants are further restrained from making any attempt to contact the Plaintiff or his family members, directly or indirectly, including

through third parties," Civil Judge Renu of Rohini court said while passing the restraining order on July 25.

The court was hearing a suit filed against the couple by the man, who lived in Vijay Nagar in north Delhi. As per the man's plea, he met the woman at an ashram in 2019. Three years later, the woman confessed her feelings to him, but he rejected her proposal, stating that he was an old, married man, the plea said. Following this, the man alleged, the woman threatened to die by suicide. She also allegedly started stalking his children on social media and started pressuring him to establish sexual relations with her. The man said he was compelled to move court after the woman did not stop stalking him, even after a complaint was filed at the local police station. "This is in clear violation of fundamental rights and such interference causes irreparable injury which cannot be adequately redressed later," the court said, adding that the couple's actions infringed on the man's fundamental rights by hindering his ability to move freely and enjoy life peacefully.

The man had moved an interim junction application seeking relief against the couple from creating any "nuisance" outside his house and to prevent the stalking and harassment that he was facing. "From the plain reading of the plaint and the documents, i.e. screenshots of various chats between plaintiff and defendant and the CCTV footages annexed with the plaint it is clearly established that the plaintiff (husband) has a strong case in his favour which needs to be decided on its own merit," the judge added.

Behind Mandi's monsoon mayhem connect, experts see man-made factors



GNS News Agency, August 16

A mother-son duo was among three people killed in flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall, which also buried more than 20 vehicles under sludge and debris, inundated several buildings and partially destroyed nearly two dozen houses in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district, officials Tuesday said. As per the local MeT office, Mandi received 198.6 mm rain since Monday evening, flooding the Sukati nullahs flowing through the city. The gushing water carried with it huge amount of debris, which got deposited at several locations in about five-kilometer radius. Apoorva Devgan, Deputy Commissioner, Mandi, said, "We have recovered three bodies. One person sustained injuries while a woman is missing. The deceased were identified as Balbir Singh, son of Krishan Singh; Amarpreet Singh and his mother Sapna. Amarpreet's father Darshan Singh sustained injuries and is admitted to Mandi Zonal Hospital". He said rescuer saved over a dozen people who were trapped inside their homes. A relief camp has been set up at Vipasha Sadan as several houses have been damaged and some people have shifted to safer places and taken shelter at homes of their friends and relatives, he said. The fresh disaster comes a month after a series of cloudbursts in a span of one-and-a-half hours, spread over 20 hectares, triggered widespread devastation in the night of June 30 impacting four Assembly constituencies. The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), based on testimonies from affected residents, site inspections, and scientific data, ruled that not less than 12 cloudbursts occurred that night. The water levels in five seasonal rivulets had risen unexpectedly, and the width of local nullahs expanded from a few feet to between 30 and 45 meters, affecting human settlements located at a significant distance from the streambeds. The SDMA also identified over two dozen large and small sites where landslides occurred in the aftermath of the cloudbursts. The worst affected areas — Bagsiad, Bagchanogi, Jhanjheli, Thunag, Dharampur, Karsog, and Gohar — fall under the Seraj, Karsog, and Dharampur Assembly constituencies. DC Rana, General Secretary, SDMA, told The Indian Express, "Mandi has become the epicentre of disasters in Himachal Pradesh over the last three monsoons. While damage is being reported from across the state, Mandi has borne the brunt in terms of infrastructure and human life loss. We have observed that being in the Mid-Himalayan region, disasters often strike Mandi during the initial days of the monsoon".

Talking about the June 30 devastation in the Seraj region, Rana said, "Based on survivor accounts and on-ground inspection, we identified 12 locations where cloudbursts occurred. However, given the scale of destruction, it is likely that more cloudbursts took place than those we have mapped so far. The magnitude of the loss suggests that the actual impact was much greater. While our final report is pending, we have shared our preliminary findings with two multidisciplinary central teams that visited the affected areas in Mandi". While the tragedy sparked political and public outcry, it was not an isolated incident. In a detailed presentation to the central teams, Rana presented a bleak picture of the state's increasing vulnerability. Since 2018, Himachal Pradesh has recorded 148 cloudbursts, 294 flash floods, and over 5,000 landslides — a pattern that reflects the intensifying climate volatility in the fragile Himalayan region. Although the SDMA has yet to determine the exact trigger for the June 30 cloudbursts, it has pointed to extreme weather events, global warming, and unregulated construction as probable contributing factors to what is now being described as the worst monsoon tragedy of 2025. As of now, 24 bodies have been recovered from the Mandi disaster zone, while 27 people remain missing. Of the recovered bodies, 10 are still unidentified. The missing include 19 people from Jhanjheli, seven from Gohar, and one from Karsog. Notably, 11 of the missing were residents of the Deji village, one of the first to be hit by cloudburst and subsequent flash floods. More than 500 homes were completely washed away, and another 1,000 were rendered uninhabitable. Additionally, over 300 cattle are believed to have been swept away in the floodwaters. In terms of infrastructure, 254 roads — 176 of them in rural areas — remain blocked, while 172 electricity lines and 89 major water supply schemes are still disrupted. Although the SDMA has yet to pinpoint the definite cause of the devastation, environmental activist Guman Singh is unequivocal in his assessment. "Man-made factors are largely responsible for these floods and landslides. If muck, mud, and debris are entering the main town and homes in Mandi year after year,

it clearly indicates that humans are polluting natural nullahs, hillsides, and rivulets by dumping construction waste into them. Water will always find its way. The initial days of the monsoon always bring destruction because the natural drainage paths are clogged with debris and garbage," he said.

He added, "Changing weather patterns and increased instances of torrential rainfall, driven by global warming, will only accelerate such disasters. We must ensure that all infrastructure projects are planned with geological, geographical, and watershed considerations in mind. Without this, we are inviting disaster. While climate change is now a harsh reality with no reversal, nature conservation must be complemented with scientific and technological solutions to ensure future safety and survivability." Noted environmentalist Kulbhushan Upmanyu, president of the Himalaya Niti Abhiyan, also expressed concern over the destruction in the Seraj region. "Rampant construction in the form of mega hydro projects in the Himalayas appears to be linked to this disaster. I am not against development, but ongoing construction projects must undergo critical evaluation in terms of ecological impact and the fragile topography of Himachal Pradesh. It is worth noting that this region also faced severe devastation during last year's monsoon. The government must investigate the causes thoroughly and establish a strong disaster-prevention mechanism for the future," he said. Earlier, Union Home Minister Amit Shah ordered a comprehensive probe through a high-level committee which is expected to examine not only the immediate reasons behind the Mandi cloudbursts but also potential structural lapses in the state's preparedness and response systems. In 2024, Mandi reported the highest number of landslides in the state, with nine incidents. Kinnaur and Shimla followed with six each, Lahaul & Spiti and Chamba recorded four each, Solan three, Kullu two, and Bilaspur one. The remote village of Deji in Thunag bore the brunt of the cloudburst's fury on June 30.

Eleven residents, including five children, four women, and two men remain untraceable and are presumed dead. Families, devastated and resigned to their fate, are grappling with the painful possibility that their loved ones may never return. What compounds their suffering is the forensic uncertainty. DNA samples collected from grieving relatives have yet to match any of the remains recovered, leaving many families without closure. Hem Singh, whose daughter Kanta Devi and three granddaughters were washed away, said, "My son-in-law and I gave our DNA samples to the doctors and police team. Later, we were told that our samples did not match those of the recovered bodies. Despite this, we performed the last rites of our beloved ones." Out of 21 collected DNA samples, only one could help establish the identity of a body out of 11 recovered so far. According to the Superintendent of Police, Mandi, Sakshi Verma, "21 DNA samples were collected including 14 from Janjheli and 7 from Gohar. The results of 7 DNA samples collected from Gohar were received so far and merely one sample was matched. The body was identified as Parwati Devi, 47, who had gone missing from village Pangliyur. The results of 14 DNA samples taken of the residents of Janjheli were still awaited."

Maharashtra FYJC admissions of over 1.2 lakh candidates in Mumbai division hanging in balance

GNS News Agency, August 16

Over 1.2 lakh candidates from the Mumbai division are yet to get admission after three out of four rounds of the Centralised Admission Process (CAP) for First Year Junior College (FYJC). With only one merit list remaining now for the final CAP round that began on July 28, parents are anxious for their wards.

In the Mumbai division, which covers Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, and Palghar districts, 2,92,603 candidates had applied for FYJC admissions; of which 1,70,580 candidates have confirmed admissions on allotted seats, after three rounds of CAP. This leaves a total of 1,22,023 applicants without any admission yet.

As the last merit list will be out on Friday, August 1, parents are struggling to reshuffle their college choices, hoping for a preferable seat allotment. "Now we are second-guessing if we should have confirmed admission to a college allotted to us in the second round. But since that was low on our preference list of colleges, we decided to wait for a better option in the following rounds. But in vain," said one of the parents, adding that the family hopes to have a better allotment in the fourth CAP round. Besides, there is also a section of candidates who have not been allotted any seat yet. According to the office of the Director of Education that oversees the online CAP for FYJC, some applicants are facing trouble as they have chosen all colleges where the cut-off is much higher than the student's marks.

'It could have been done in a much better way, it was totally wrong': Haryana Congress leaders on Gurgaon police's 'foreigners verification' drive



GNS News Agency, August 16

Senior Haryana Congress leader Aftab Ahmed said Tuesday the Gurgaon police's crackdown last week on suspected foreigners in the city reeked of "sheer discrimination and a lack of basic thinking". Hundreds of men were rounded up by the Gurgaon police as part of a 'routine verification' drive to identify Bangladeshis and Rohingyas living illegally in the city. The move sparked panic among the Bengali-speaking migrant community, prompting many to leave the city. Speaking with the Indian Express, the Nuh MLA said, "If someone speaks Bengali or Assamese, it doesn't mean they are a foreign national, Bangladeshi or Rohingya". "There are ways to verify, but not like this. Putting them in holding centres, allegedly torturing and putting them up there for days. These are poor people doing odd jobs that no one else will do. It could have been done in a much better way; it was totally wrong. They have documents. The way they have been questioning, allegedly beating, and humiliating them, saying they're with Mamata (Banerjee), is..." Ahmed said he has been raising the issue with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Shatrueet Kapur, Director General of Police. "They are poor who, for their daily bread, are willing to work in unhygienic conditions, and still you mete out such treatment by relying on some Union Home Ministry order. That is not what it said; you verify, but not like this. We will keep opposing it tooth and nail if it continues as well." Haryana Congress leader Pearl Choudhary, who contested the 2024 Assembly elections from Pataudi, said the Gurgaon police's move seemed ille-

gal and invalid, and questioned its timing. "We have to see the timing, the Bihar elections are coming, I think it is very connected to the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) exercise," said Choudhary. "Bengali-speaking Muslims are being targeted in the context of the Bihar polls and even West Bengal next year. It is election-driven. It has led to an atmosphere of fear." Choudhary said the migrant workers have all documents, and this is not the right time for the drive. When asked about the lack of visibility of Haryana Congress leaders on the ground for the issue, she said they have been acting for the workers' interests away from the media glare. "We are in touch with them, and the national level leaders, even people working with me, are doing whatever we can do. Without informing the media, we are acting, and even many from the All India Professionals' Congress have been roped in for legal and other assistance. The media does not tend to give us space, but we are doing whatever we can do." Gurgaon police on verification drive The Gurgaon police have refuted allegations of violence or torture on their part, saying due process was maintained and no particular religion was being targeted in their check for illegal foreigners. Last Saturday, the police said they would round up only "confirmed foreign nationals" as part of their verification drive, as they shut four holding facilities that housed suspected foreigners on Friday. The four facilities were at community centres in Badshahpur, Sector 10A, Sector 40, and Sector 1 in Manesar. "We had completed verification and checking of the suspected foreigners, hence the move. Even earlier, only those who were strong suspects based on missing or discrepancies in documents, or for example Bangladeshi numbers found on their phone or their WhatsApp being deleted, were taken to the holding centres," a police spokesperson said. Earlier, Gurgaon MLA and BJP leader Mukesh Sharma supported the verification drive. "The Rohingyas have negatively affected the law and order situation in Gurgaon, we all know. They set up jhuggis (here) and their numbers increase... they have a system to get documents made." Asked about domestic help who are genuine citizens belonging to West Bengal being picked up, he said, "See, as directions have come from the (Union) government, we have to support the drive. The government and police are working based on their intel. Let the checking be thorough."

'Reputation being tarnished': DNA to Karnataka HC in plea to quash judicial probe report on Bengaluru stampede



GNS News Agency, August 16

Event management company DNA Entertainment Tuesday expressed concerns in the Karnataka High Court about the damage to its reputation, and raised the issue of not receiving a copy during their submissions while challenging the Justice John Michael D'Cunha report on the June 4 Bengaluru cricket stadium stampede. A division bench of Justices Jayant Banerji and Umesh Adiga was hearing DNA's plea against the panel's report, submitted last Thursday, seeking to quash it. It also sought an interim stay on the implementation of its recommendations. Among the extensive findings and recommendations of the report are a recommendation for legal actions against DNA, Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), and police officers over the M Chinnaswamy cricket stadium stampede, where 11 people

died.

A meeting of the Karnataka Cabinet last Thursday, led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, had accepted the report. Recalling the events of the day, DNA's counsel Senior Advocate B K Sampath Kumar stated, "It so happened that the function at the Vidhana Soudha drew a lot of crowds... at the behest of government officials and politicians, I wouldn't want to name them, the entire audience were asked to go to the stadium where the team was being facilitated." Kumar also raised concerns regarding procedural aspects of the judicial inquiry. Referring to media reports seeming to have details of the judicial report and not the petitioners, he added, "Panel holds so and so responsible for stampede. How do they (media) know about it? Against the names also.... they are all named. Apart from that, TV9 has even published the names of all the people". While noting that "every second" the reputation of the petitioner was being tarnished, Kumar clarified that he was confining his submissions to the questions of right to reputation and natural justice. Meanwhile, Advocate General Shashikiran Shetty suggested that the matter be deferred to see the stand of the Chief Justice's bench in the matter, as it was hearing the suo motu Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Bengaluru stampede case. The matter is set to be heard again next Tuesday. Meanwhile, DNA requested a clarification before the bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice CM Joshi that the suo motu proceedings would not interfere with their petition before the other bench, while the court put on record that the Karnataka Government had sought time to put forward the SOP for managing large groups.

Over Rs 500 crore dues in Haryana: IMA warns suspension of Ayushman Bharat treatment

GNS News Agency, August 16

In a letter addressed to Ayushman Bharat Haryana CEO Sangeeta Tatarwal, the IMA said, "It will not be possible for these hospitals to continue with Ayushman services from August 7 in a letter addressed to Ayushman Bharat Haryana CEO Sangeeta Tatarwal, the IMA said, "It will not be possible for these hospitals to continue with Ayushman services from August 7." The Indian Medical Association (IMA), representing nearly 600 private hospitals empanelled under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) in Haryana, has warned suspension of treatment under the scheme from August 7 if dues amounting to Rs 500 crore are not cleared.

In a letter addressed to Ayushman Bharat Haryana CEO Sangeeta Tatarwal, the IMA said, "It will not be possible for these hospitals to continue with Ayushman services from August 7 unless all payments (pending as on July 15) are cleared by that time. The responsibility of any inconvenience caused to the poor people of Haryana will lie completely on the shoulders of the Haryana government which is neither providing adequate budget nor smoothening the process of this scheme." According to officials, every month, bills worth Rs 80-90 crore from the private hospitals are raised in lieu of treatment under the scheme.

The association expressed frustration over repeated delays, citing previous assurances from top officials. "Time and again we have been apprising officials of regular payments, at times delayed by 4-5 months. In our meeting with Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on January 8 this year, we were assured that all payments will be made in 15 days. We again had a high-level meeting with the Chief Principal Secretary to the CM Rajesh Khullar on February 3 and we were assured that things will be streamlined after March 10." However, the IMA alleged that none of these promises have materialised. "Payments are still much delayed and irregular, unnecessary deductions are still being made. Processing of cases is also delayed, grievances are difficult to raise on the portal and NABH (national accreditation board for hospitals & healthcare) incentive of many hospitals has been cut under the guise of re-employment on the new portal." This is not the first time the IMA has raised the alarm. In January, it had threatened to suspend services from



This is not the first time the IMA has raised the alarm. In January, it had threatened to suspend services from February 3 over Rs 400 crore dues.

February 3 over Rs 400 crore dues. IMA Haryana president Dr Mahaveer P Jain said, "That time almost all payments were cleared. There is a budgetary provision of only Rs 750 crore for this scheme which is insufficient and it must be increased to over Rs 2,000 crore to ensure timely payments to the private hospitals." Responding to the concerns, Director General (Health Services) Dr Manish Bansal said, "We procure payments from the government for these hospitals on a quarterly basis. For dues of private hospitals, we have already sent the demand to the government. As soon as we get it, it would be disbursed to the private hospitals immediately." A senior officer said that the state government has sanctioned Rs 224 crore for distribution to hospitals against claims. "The rest will also be cleared soon," he said. Lok Sabha MP Kumari Selja has also urged the Chief Minister to intervene. "This scheme is a lifeline for the poor, and its suspension could trigger a health crisis in the state."

Punjab villagers on alert as Ghaggar River swells again; memories of 2023 floods haunt Patiala, Sangrur



GNS News Agency, August 16

As the monsoon intensifies in Punjab, anxiety has gripped several villages situated along the Ghaggar River in Patiala and Sangrur districts, with many fearing a repeat of the devastating floods of August 2023. Rising water levels on Wednesday and Thursday triggered a wave of concern among residents, who are closely monitoring the situation. "We don't want the 2023 floods to be repeated. The water level in the Ghaggar River rose on Wednesday and Thursday. We villagers were the first ones to alert the administration. So it is a wait-and-watch situation as the monsoon is still at its peak, and we can expect more rain ahead," said Jatinder Singh Chhatha, a resident of Dharmaheri village, which lies on the banks of the Ghaggar.

"Last time, the flood damaged all our crops. We had saved our lives by shifting to the first floor of our house, and ultimately the Army had to evacuate the villagers," he added. Highlighting a related concern, his father, Harbhajan Singh Chhatha, said, "Mirpur Choi is a drain that passes through our village. It is a long drain that starts from Mirpur village in Nakodar and extends up to Hansi Butana in Haryana. It hasn't been cleaned properly. Ghaggar's water falls into that, but it won't be able to absorb much water if the level rises." He stated that the villagers are at the receiving end if the panic situation continues. Harcharan Singh, a former sarpanch of the village, has warned of compounding risks. "Water from Tangri and Markanda — tributaries of Ghaggar — also converge near our village. Hence, we need to be extra careful. Moreover, the siphon points of the Ghaggar River were also not cleaned thoroughly by the drainage department," he said. People in other villages of Patiala, including Sassi, Sassi Brahmna, Hashimpur, etc, are also monitoring the river's behaviour. In Sangrur district, the situation is no different. Ranbir Singh, a resident of Bhunder Bhaini village in Moonak tehsil, said, "On Wednesday and Thursday, we got announcements made through the village gurdwara to stay alert as the water level in Ghaggar was rising. Villagers themselves went to check the situation as we received no intimation from the administration. The water has receded now, but the ghost of August 2023 is still haunting us. We can't get complacent at all." He pointed out that the breach in the Ghaggar River in 2019 had also caused damage to crops, lamenting that the residents continue to be the sufferers of Ghaggar fury for decades. Jatinder Singh of Dharmaheri elaborated on the extent of damage endured last year. "Our houses developed cracks, tube wells were submerged, and all we got was ₹6,800 per acre for 100 per cent crop damage, while the previous Congress government had given ₹12,000 per acre. If any loss happens this time, we'll have to take care of ourselves. We remember how the government responded

What Is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease? What should parents do to protect their kids? A doctor explains

GNS News Agency, August 16

Doctors in Delhi have been seeing a slight spike in cases of Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) among children aged between 2 and 7 years of age. Earlier this week, as cases surfaced among young children, several schools in Delhi issued advisories instructing to isolate the child if symptoms like rashes, fever or mouth sores appear and disinfect toys, surfaces and frequently touched items. The Indian Express speaks to Dr Manish Mannan, HOD Paediatrics & Neonatology, Paras Hospital, Gurgaon, on how the disease spreads, what parents should do, and what precautions to take.

What is the disease, and what are its symptoms?

It's a viral illness commonly caused by the coxsackievirus, affecting mainly children under 5. The classic signs include fever, painful mouth ulcers, and a rash with tiny blisters on the hands, feet, and sometimes buttocks. While it looks alarming, it's usually mild and self-limiting. HFMD spreads quite easily in settings like schools and daycares. The virus transmits through direct contact with saliva, nasal discharge, stool, or fluid from blisters of an infected child. It can also live on surfaces and spread via toys, utensils, or unwashed hands. This is why personal hygiene and proper sanitation are crucial in controlling its spread.

Who is at risk?

Children below the age of 5 are the most vulnerable due to their still-developing immune systems. However, I've also seen older children and even adults contract the virus, especially when there is a close-contact environment or poor hygiene practices. Children in daycare settings are particularly susceptible.

How important is it to break the cycle?

Breaking the chain of transmission is absolutely essential. As paediatricians, we advise isolating the child during the contagious period — usually the first 5-7 days of illness. Encouraging handwashing, disinfecting surfaces and toys, and avoiding school or playdates during the illness can significantly reduce outbreaks. Prevention is key to protecting both the individual child and the broader community.

Should parents be worried?

In most cases, parents don't need to panic. HFMD usually runs its course in about a week. The main discomfort is from mouth sores, which can make eating or drinking painful. My main advice to parents is to keep the child well-hydrated and manage the fever. However, they should seek medical advice if symptoms persist or worsen, or if the child refuses fluids. Sometimes, the ulcers in the mouth become fulminant, affecting oral intake. In such situations, a child may need hospital admission. You need to consult your paediatrician immediately in such situations.

Could it be life-threatening?

Though very rare, complications can arise. In immunocompromised children, or in cases caused by more aggressive strains of the virus, HFMD can sometimes lead to viral meningitis or encephalitis. Warning signs include a persistent high fever, extreme drowsiness, seizures, or neck stiffness. These are red flags, and parents should seek

in 2023, despite the Punjab chief minister's claims that compensation would be given even for the loss of a hen and an egg. We can't trust his words anymore." Meanwhile, authorities confirmed that the situation is under control for now. Pratham Gambhir, Executive Engineer, Drainage Department, Patiala, said, "The water level in the Ghaggar River rose to 14 feet on Thursday due to heavy rainfall in the upstream areas of Chandigarh and Dera Bassi. On Wednesday, the level had abruptly risen to 10 feet in the Chandigarh region. However, over the past 24 hours, the water level at the Bhankarpur/Chandigarh site has reduced to 2 feet.

Gambir said that based on the current trend, Ghaggar at Sarala point is not expected to rise further, and levels are beginning to recede. An advisory was issued on Thursday to nearby villages based on Bhankarpur, Chandigarh water levels, he said. "Now the situation remains under control. Further, no rainfall has been reported in the district for the Ghaggar catchment area in the last 24 hours," he added. However, activists and experts believe that beyond the Ghaggar, larger flood-prevention planning is urgently needed across Punjab. As of August 7, Bhakra Dam's water level stood at 1,639 feet, with an inflow of 70,000 cusecs and outflow of only 18,000 cusecs, while Pong Dam recorded a level of 1,375 feet, with 97,000 cusecs inflow and 21,000 cusecs outflow. Jaskirat Singh of Naroa Punjab Forum, an NGO, pointed out that the danger level for the Bhakra dam is 1,650 feet, because after 1,675 feet, water cannot be controlled. For Pong Dam, the danger level is 1,390 feet and becomes uncontrollable beyond 1,410 feet, he added. The NGO that primarily works in the field of river water pollution has urged the government to study the inflow and outflow of water from dams and regulate it accordingly.

"In 2023, there was a sudden release of water from the Bhakra dam on August 16, which led to floods in Punjab. This time, water should be released gradually to avoid a repeat. The Punjab Government and the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BMBM) must pay attention to the inflow and release balance," Jaskirat Singh remarked. "With August now entering its peak rainfall phase and memories of last year's flood still raw, both the government and the people are on edge. The question remains—will the state act in time to prevent another disaster?" Jaskirat asked. Govt orders special assessment on damage in Fazilka district The Punjab Government has ordered a special girdawari (assessment) in Fazilka district to evaluate the damage caused to crops and houses due to the recent heavy rainfall. This was shared by Amarpreet Kaur Sandhu, Deputy Commissioner, who stated that directions have been issued to all Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) to ensure that the assessment work is completed as early as possible. Sandhu said that during this special girdawari, a detailed report will be prepared regarding the loss of crops and damage to residential structures. The Deputy Commissioner mentioned that all departments concerned have been instructed to carry out the special girdawari in a transparent manner, ensuring that no eligible affected individual is left out from the documentation of losses. She further added that the assessment work will be carried out in a time-bound manner so that the final report can be submitted to the state government without delay. On the ground situation, the deputy commissioner said that water has been drained from most of the affected areas, and in the remaining locations, teams of officials are continuously working using pumps and other methods to remove the stagnant water.



immediate medical attention. Hospitals, meanwhile, have been seeing 5-6 cases a day. Dr Dhiren Gupta, Paediatrician at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said the numbers have increased in the last week. "We are seeing 5-6 cases every day, mostly toddlers, but it could also affect primary school children," he said. Dr Vibhu Kawatra, paediatrician, pulmonologist, and allergy specialist, said he has been seeing 5-6 cases for the last week among children in the 3-7 year age group. Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood had earlier said that "stray incidents that often occur during the monsoon season" have been registered so far, and some experts have observed a surge in the HFMD cases.

At 135, Delhi records the highest malaria cases in 5 years

GNS News Agency, August 16

Delhi has reported a spike in cases of malaria, with 135 recorded from January until August 2 this year, the highest in the last five years during the same period, according to civic body data.

West Zone of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had the highest number of registered cases at 30, as shown in the civic body's data, which includes numbers from the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Delhi Cantt and Indian Railways data as well. An additional 16 cases have been recorded with incomplete or wrong addresses. Delhi reported 115 malaria cases in 2024, 51 in 2023, 25 in 2022, and 16 in 2021 until August 2. The cases have risen sharply in the last five years, with 792 recorded in the previous year.

According to MCD officials, the most common breeding spots for mosquitoes are coolers, drums, flower pots, money plants, fridge trays, discarded rubber tyres, and scrap lying in the open on rooftops. "This is a very conducive environment for large mosquito breeding, and people should take preventive measures," an official said.

Meanwhile, 20 cases of chikungunya have also been reported, with the highest numbers reported from the West and Central Zones of MCD, with five cases each. Until last year, 23 chikungunya cases were reported during this period, but in the last five years, this vector-borne disease has seen a sharp rise, with four cases recorded in 2021, two in 2022, and four in 2023. However, an additional 15 patients have been recorded with incomplete or wrong addresses.

'Employer's discretion ends where employee's dignity begins,' Supreme Court reinstates TSRTC driver prematurely retired over colour blindness



GNS News Agency, August 16

The case stems from a routine medical enquiry, which declared Joseph, appointed as a driver in 2014, medically unfit for his position due to colour blindness. The case stems from a routine medical enquiry, which declared Joseph, appointed as a driver in 2014, medically unfit for his position due to colour blindness. Stating that "an employer's discretion ends where the employee's dignity begins," the Supreme Court recently overturned a high court division bench ruling and ordered the reinstatement of a driver from the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC), who was prematurely retired after being diagnosed with colour blindness.

The court also awarded 25 per cent of the arrears of salary, allowances, and benefits from the date of termination until reinstatement. The TSRTC was also directed to reckon the intervening period of termination as "continuous service". The court's decision, delivered by a bench comprising Justices J K Maheshwari and Aravind Kumar on August 1, not only vindicated the appellant, Ch Joseph, but also laid down a crucial precedent regarding an employer's constitutional obligation to accommodate employees who acquire a disability during service. The case stems from a routine medical enquiry, which declared Joseph, appointed as a driver in 2014, medically unfit for his position due to colour blindness. The TSRTC subsequently issued orders retiring him from service, while rejecting his request for alternate employment. Though he relied on a 1979 Memorandum of Settlement (MOS), which stated that the 'drivers' would be provided with alternate employment, the Telangana High Court gave its verdict in favour of the Corporation, directing Joseph to make representation for seeking his benefits.

In his appeal before the Supreme Court, Joseph contended that the 1979 MOS between the then-undivided Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) and the recognised unions is binding on the TSRTC, and the appellant, being a driver of the Corpora-

tion, was entitled to alternate employment. He said the high court failed to appreciate that his case falls within the category of people who have acquired the disability during service and thus would be entitled to alternate employment. The counsel for TSRTC informed the court that the 1979 clause was replaced by another clause in 1986 MOS, which said a possible suitable alternate job will be identified to the extent possible, and in case it is not possible, additional monetary benefit will be given. The TSRTC rejected Joseph's claim for an alternate job as he was an illiterate person without a qualification. Among several other grounds to set aside the high court order, the Supreme Court noted that he was prematurely retired from his service without any "demonstrable effort" by the Corporation to identify or assess the feasibility of alternative employment, despite the appellant having expressed willingness to be reassigned to a non-driving post. The apex court said that colour blindness, though a disqualification for driving, does not render the appellant unfit to serve in any other non-driving role. The court also said that the 1979 MOS clause that the Corporation claimed to have replaced "remains valid and enforceable" and added that no internal circular can override the terms of such a binding settlement.

The Supreme Court also noted that retirement on medical grounds must be a measure of last resort, only after the employer exhausts all reasonable avenues for re-employment. "This principle is inherent in the concept of 'reasonable accommodation', which is now recognised as an aspect of substantive equality under Articles 14 and 21," the court stated, adding that the failure to explore alternate jobs was not merely a procedural lapse but a "substantive illegality that violates the Appellant's right to livelihood and equal treatment." Further, the court stated, "Our concern is not confined to the facts of the present case but extends to the systemic risk that employers, particularly public sector entities, may attempt to bypass their obligation to offer alternate employment by drawing rigid distinctions between recognised and unrecognised disabilities under statutory frameworks." The court said that the obligation to "reasonably accommodate" such employees is not just a matter of administrative grace, but a constitutional and statutory imperative, rooted in the principles of non-discrimination, dignity, and equal treatment. The judgment added that the court was not crossing a line by intervening when an employee is removed from service for a condition he did not choose, and where viable alternatives are ignored, the court is upholding one drawn by the Constitution itself. "The employer's discretion ends where the employee's dignity begins," it concluded. Rahul V Pisharody is an Assistant Editor with the Indian Express Online and has been reporting from Telangana on various issues since 2019. Besides a focused approach to big news

R G Kar rape-murder: A year later, where the cases stand

GNS News Agency, August 16

Saturday, August 9, marks one year since a junior doctor was raped and murdered at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital. While her parents await justice, the cases related to the incident are still being heard at the Calcutta High Court, and courts in Sealdah and Alipore. At Sealdah court, the rape and murder trial continues

On January 18 this year, the Additional District and Sessions Court in Sealdah convicted civic volunteer Sanjoy Roy of rape and murder in the R G Kar case, and sentenced him to life imprisonment days later. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which has continued to probe the case, submitted its fifth status report before the Sealdah court on July 16, stating that seven witnesses have been examined. The CBI also submitted that it has scanned 32 terabytes of CCTV footage as part of its investigation. The Sealdah court is also hearing a case against former R G Kar principal Sandip Ghosh and the then officer in-charge of Tala police station, Abhijit Mondol, who were arrested on September 14 last year on charges of tampering with evidence in the rape-murder case. In December last year, the lower court granted bail to Ghosh and Mondol after the CBI failed to submit a chargesheet within the stipulated 90 days. The court granted bail on a surety bond of Rs 2,000 each and on the condition that the accused would appear before the CBI as and when called. While Mondol is out on bail, Ghosh remains in jail in connection with a financial irregularities case involving the hospital. After the Sealdah court convicted Sanjoy Roy in January and sentenced him to life imprisonment, the West Bengal government and the CBI challenged the order before the Calcutta High Court, appealing for capital punishment. On February 7, a division bench admitted the CBI's plea and dismissed the government's appeal.

In July, Roy moved the Calcutta High Court seeking acquittal in the case. During the hearing, his counsel submitted, "With only witness statements and circumstantial evidence, one cannot be convicted for life. There is enough evidence to prove that the convict is innocent." On July 16, a division bench accepted the plea. Former R G Kar principal Sandip Ghosh was booked in another case of financial irregularities at the hospital during his tenure, along with Ashish Pandey, the then house staff, vendors Biplob Singha and Suman Hazra, and Afsar Ali Khan, additional security



to Ghosh. It was alleged that the financial fraud was underway at the hospital for over three years, during which tenders were rigged while purchasing medical equipment for the hospital. Ghosh allegedly helped his associates bag the tenders.

On August 23 last year, the Calcutta High Court transferred the probe from the state-constituted Special Investigation Team to the CBI. The direction came in response to a petition by former deputy superintendent of the medical facility, Dr Akhtar Ali, who prayed for a probe by the Enforcement Directorate into multiple counts of alleged financial misconduct at the state-run hospital during Ghosh's tenure as principal. In his plea, Ali had accused Ghosh of illegal sale of unclaimed corpses, trafficking of biomedical waste, and passing tenders in lieu of commission paid by medicine and medical equipment suppliers. The chargesheet was filed in November 2024, nearly three months after Ghosh's arrest. In July this year, the trial in the financial irregularities case commenced at the Alipore CBI court with the framing of charges. "The first witness is being examined," Rahul Zohab, the counsel for Ghosh, told The Indian Express. Meanwhile, the counsel for the victim's family said that they would continue to fight till they got "actual justice". "The way the CBI is working, we are thinking of a re-investigation. We have obtained certain reports from senior doctors and specialists, and we will place them as and when required. Questions placed before the CBI are yet to be answered. Whatever investigation was done by the Kolkata Police in the first few days has been placed in the chargesheet. There is nothing new on the CBI's part," Amartya Dey, the counsel, said.

Over Rs 1,607 crore released for digital health infrastructure at PGIMER, Chandigarh in 5 years: Centre

GNS News Agency, August 16

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare revealed Friday that over Rs 1,607 crore was allocated and released for digital health infrastructure at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, during the last five years. The government's response came in the wake of a question raised by MP Manish Tewari in Parliament on critical issues and developments in digital infrastructure at the institute. The fund, released under 'Grants for Creation of Capital Assets', was incrementally increased to Rs 350 crore during 2024-25, the Centre stated. Despite these investments, Tewari's query appeared to reveal infrastructural gaps affecting patient care, notably in core facilities and digital systems upgrades. An annexure presented to Parliament also listed the medical equipment procured by PGIMER since 2020. Out of 1,096 items procured for various PGIMER departments, 147 remain non-operational or underutilised, including a significant number of items in neurosurgery and paediatrics. The government acknowledged that 93 per cent

of civil works for critical centres — including the Mother and Child Care Centre — are complete but cited delays due to building plan revisions, pandemic-related disruptions, and shifting of service blocks for safety compliance. To address these challenges, approvals have been granted for an Advanced Neurosciences Centre and a Critical Care Block under the PM-ABHIM scheme. Moreover, digital upgrades for PGIMER, such as the transition to Hospital Information System (HIS) 2.0 and the establishment of satellite centres in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, are underway. MP Tewari emphasised the urgent need for a dedicated PGIMER facility for Chandigarh residents, given the massive patient footfall from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to local residents. Referring to recent developments in land allocation for the PGIMER extension in Sarangpur, he urged the Centre to consider a Chandigarh-exclusive facility to fulfil the city's unique healthcare requirements—a proposal he intends to pursue further with Union Minister of Health J P Nadda.

Israel's security cabinet approves plan to take control of Gaza City



GNS News Agency, August 16

JERUSALEM/CAIRO, - Israel's security cabinet approved a plan on Friday to take control of Gaza City, a move expanding military operations in the shattered Palestinian territory despite growing criticism at home and abroad over the almost two-year-old war. Far-right allies in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition have been pushing for a total takeover of Gaza as part of his vow to eradicate Hamas militants, though the military has warned this could endanger the lives of remaining hostages held by the group. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Israel, at war in Gaza since Hamas' deadly attack on southern Israel in October 2023, is planning the expanded campaign after failed attempts to mediate a ceasefire and as it faces a rising international outcry over a deepening humanitarian disaster. Netanyahu's office said in a statement the military "will prepare to take control of Gaza City while providing humanitarian aid to the civilian population outside the combat zones". While Netanyahu said on Thursday Israel intended to take military control of the entire Gaza Strip, the plan approved on Friday focused specifically on sprawling Gaza City, the territory's largest urban centre, located in its north. In a statement, Hamas called Netanyahu's moves "a blatant coup" against the negotiation process. Israel's cabinet is expected to endorse the Gaza City plan.

Israeli media have said 900,000 people now live in Gaza City, which has been the focus of major ground and air attacks. They include many of those who were forced to leave towns in the northern edge of the enclave under army evacuation orders and ground operations. Before the war, Hamas' most powerful fighting units were believed to operate in northern Gaza, including Gaza City. It is not clear if that is still the case because Israel has killed the group's top leaders and many of its commanders and militants. Asked if Israel, whose forces say they already hold about 75% of the coastal strip, would occupy all of it, Netanyahu told Fox News Channel's Bill Hemmer in an interview on Thursday: "We intend to."

He said Israel did not want to keep the territory, but to establish a "security perimeter" and to hand over the territory to Arab forces to govern it. He did not elaborate on the governance arrangements or which Arab countries could be involved. Netanyahu, who has said there will be no end

to the war until Hamas is completely destroyed, has come under pressure from Israelis to do whatever it takes to bring home hostages held by the militant group, though many want the war to stop. "Well, basically, I think it's a death sentence to all the hostages that are still being held there. And it's the wrong decision to do it at this time," said Danny Bukovsky, a hotelier in Tel Aviv. There are 50 hostages still held in Gaza, of whom Israeli officials believe 20 are alive. Most of those freed so far emerged as a result of diplomatic negotiations. Talks toward a ceasefire that could have seen more hostages released collapsed in July. Palestinians, displaced by the Israeli offensive, shelter in tents, amid a hunger crisis, in Gaza City, August 1, 2025. REUTERS/Dawoud Abu Alkas/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab

Amjad Iraqi, senior analyst at International Crisis Group, said that Israel's government believes the solution is to "be more aggressive in carving Gaza's geography and demographics" because it has faced no real consequences despite an international outcry. "It's no wonder Israel is ready to do the same to the strip's de facto capital, even amid a spiral into famine," said Iraqi. A global hunger monitor has said a famine scenario is unfolding in densely populated Gaza, where nearly all the territory's more than 2 million people have been displaced, often repeatedly. Among the scenarios considered ahead of the security meeting was a phased takeover of areas in Gaza not yet under military control, a government source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Evacuation warnings could be issued to Palestinians in specific areas of Gaza, potentially giving them several weeks before the military moves in, the person added. In its statement on Friday, Netanyahu's office said the vast majority of the security cabinet believed that "the alternative plan presented in the cabinet would not achieve the defeat of Hamas nor the return of the hostages". "It just doesn't seem like there's any clear plan moving forward. So unless there's a clear plan, we should end the war, bring the hostages home and stop so many soldiers from dying", said Tel Aviv university student Talya Saltzman. A full occupation of Gaza would reverse a 2005 decision in which Israel withdrew thousands of Jewish settlers and its forces, while retaining control over its borders, airspace and utilities. It was unclear whether Netanyahu was foreseeing a prolonged takeover or a short-term operation. In a statement, Hamas called the approval of plans to occupy Gaza City and displace its residents "a new war crime".

Israel has rejected accusations of war crimes and genocide as it pursues the military campaign. Last month, two leading Israeli rights groups accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Arab countries will "only support what Palestinians agree and decide on," a Jordanian official source told Reuters, adding that security in Gaza should be handled through "legitimate Palestinian institutions". Netanyahu's government has ruled out a return to Gaza of the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited autonomy in parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank under 1990s interim peace accords. Hamas insists any deal must lead to a permanent end to the war. Israel says the group has no intention of fulfilling promises to give up power afterwards.

India pauses plans to buy U.S. arms after Trump's tariffs

GNS News Agency, August 16

NEW DELHI, New Delhi has put on hold its plans to procure new U.S. weapons and aircraft, according to three Indian officials familiar with the matter, in India's first concrete sign of discontent after tariffs imposed on its exports by President Donald Trump dragged ties to their lowest level in decades. India had been planning to send Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Washington in the coming weeks for an announcement on some of the purchases, but that trip has been cancelled, two of the people said.

Make sense of the latest ESG trends affecting companies and governments with the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter. Sign up here. Trump on Aug. 6 imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods as punishment for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, which he said meant the country was funding Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That raised the total duty on Indian exports to 50% - among the highest of any U.S. trading partner. The president has a history of rapidly reversing himself on tariffs and India has said it remains actively engaged in discussions with Washington. One of the people said the defence purchases could go ahead once India had clarity on tariffs and the direction of bilateral ties, but "just not as soon as they were expected to."

Written instructions had not been given to pause the purchases, another official said, indicating that Delhi had the option to quickly reverse course, though there was "no forward movement at least for now." India's defence ministry and the Pentagon did not respond to Reuters' questions. Delhi, which has forged a close partnership with America in recent years, has said it is being unfairly targeted and that Washington and its European allies continue to trade with Moscow when it is in their interest. Reuters is reporting for the first time that discussions on India's purchases of Stryker combat vehicles made by General Dynamics Land Systems and Javelin anti-tank missiles developed by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin. Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in February announced plans to pursue procurement and joint production of those items. Singh had also been planning to announce the purchase of six Boeing P8I reconnaissance aircraft and support systems for the Indian Navy during his now-cancelled trip, two of the people said. Talks over procuring the aircraft in a proposed \$3.6 billion deal were at an advanced stage, according to the officials. Boeing, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics referred queries to the Indian and U.S. governments. Raytheon did not return a request for comment. India's deepening security relationship with the U.S., which is fuelled by their shared strategic rivalry with China, was heralded by many U.S. analysts as one of the key areas of foreign-policy progress in the first Trump administration. Delhi is the world's second-largest arms importer and Russia has traditionally been its top supplier. India has in recent years however, shifted to importing from Western powers like France, Israel and the U.S., according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute think-tank. The shift in suppliers was driven partly by constraints on Russia's ability to export arms, which it is utilizing heavily in its invasion of Ukraine. Some Russian weapons have also performed poorly in the battlefield, according to Western analysts.

The broader U.S.-India defence partnership, which includes intelligence sharing and joint military exercises, continues without hiccups, one of the Indian officials said. India



also remains open to scaling back on oil imports from Russia and is open to making deals elsewhere, including the U.S., if it can get similar prices, according to two other Indian sources. Trump's threats and rising anti-U.S. nationalism in India have "made it politically difficult for Modi to make the shift from Russia to the U.S.," one of the people said. Nonetheless, discounts on the landing cost of Russian oil have shrunk to the lowest since 2022. India's petroleum ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. While the rupture in U.S.-India ties was abrupt, there have been strains in the relationship. Delhi has repeatedly rebutted Trump's claim that the U.S. brokered a ceasefire between India and Pakistan after four days of fighting between the nuclear-armed neighbours in May. Trump also hosted Pakistan's army chief at the White House in the weeks following the conflict.

In recent months, Moscow has been actively pitching Delhi on buying new defence technologies like its S-500 surface-to-air missile system, according to one of the Indian officials, as well as a Russian source familiar with the talks. India currently does not see a need for new arms purchases from Moscow, two Indian officials said. But Delhi is unlikely to wean itself off Russian weapons entirely as the decades-long partnership between the two powers means Indian military systems will continue to require Moscow's support, one of the officials said.

Helicopters rescue people stranded by floods on key India pilgrim route

BHATWADI, India, - Indian rescuers used helicopters on Thursday to pluck to safety people stranded by flood waters in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, two days after a sudden inundation and landslide killed four people, with more still missing. With roads cleared as rain eased, rescue teams arrived in Dharali, where Tuesday's wall of water had submerged in sludge homes and cars in the village on the route to the Hindu pilgrim town of Gangotri. Make sense of the latest ESG trends affecting companies and governments with the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter. Sign up here. Helicopters were carrying to safety those who had been stranded, the state's chief minister, Pushkar Singh Dhami, said in a post on X.

Buffeted by Trump and vote-rigging charges, India's Modi starts to push back



GNS News Agency, August 16

NEW DELHI, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is navigating one of the most challenging stretches of his 11 years in office. A contentious ceasefire with archenemy Pakistan, renewed scrutiny over his age and a diplomatic chill with the United States despite much-publicised rapport with President Donald Trump have converged to test his leadership like never before. While he needs to deal with these headwinds, Modi also has to answer opposition charges of vote-rigging in the 2024 general election. The challenges are coming to a head just before a difficult electoral battle in Bihar, one of India's most politically significant states. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

A defeat in the vote to the state assembly would not affect Modi's position in the national parliament, but it would be a hammer blow to the reputation of a leader who has maintained a vice-like grip on power since he was elected prime minister over a decade ago. This week, Trump's administration announced a total 50% tariff on imports from India, among the highest of any country in the world, throwing the bilateral relationship into deep disarray. Yet, until just six months ago, Trump and Modi were exchanging bear hugs and describing each other as close friends. "The Indo-U.S. relation sort of revolved around the personalities of Donald Trump and Narendra Modi," New Delhi-based political commentator Arati Jerath said.

"So now when it's souring, Modi has no buffer at all. There is a fair amount of disappointment that this strong leader has not been able to show the kind of strength and muscularity that he claimed to have." Modi, however, has begun to push back. He said on Thursday the country was ready to stand by its farmers at any cost, without referring to the tussle with the U.S. on opening up the agricultural and dairy sectors to lower Trump's tariffs. "India will never compromise on the interests of its farmers, livestock rearers and fishermen," he said at a public event. "And I am fully aware that I may have to pay a very heavy price personally, but I am prepared for it." posted by his party, Modi is shown taking blows on his back from stones, bricks and a

Australian mushroom murderer allegedly served poisoned pasta to her husband

GNS News Agency, August 16

An Australian woman who murdered three of her in-laws with a meal of toxic mushrooms also allegedly tried to murder her husband using poisoned pasta, a chicken curry and a sandwich wrap, evidence showed on Friday (Australian 8, 2025) after a judge allowed its disclosure. A jury last month found Erin Patterson lured her mother-in-law Gail Patterson, father-in-law Don Patterson and Gail's sister, Heather Wilkinson, to lunch at her home and poisoned them with servings of Beef Wellington that contained death cap mushrooms.

They also found the 50-year-old guilty of the attempted murder of Ian Wilkinson, Heather's husband, who survived the 2023 meal at Erin Patterson's home in Leongatha, a town of about 6,000 people some 135 km (84 miles) south-east of Melbourne. Patterson was initially charged with three counts of murder and five counts of attempted murder in 2023, with the four additional counts relating to her estranged husband, Simon Patterson. Justice Christopher Beale previously ruled the charges should be split into two separate trials, before the prosecution dropped the attempted murder charges relating to Mr. Simon Patterson on the eve of the first trial.

That meant details of the alleged attempts on her husband's life in 2021 and 2022 were never heard by the jury. "After the first time I got sick, I had the idea I got sick from Erin's food," Mr. Simon Patterson told a pre-trial hearing in Melbourne in October 2024. He eventually began keeping a spreadsheet of his illnesses that the court heard all happened after eating his estranged wife's cooking, including a penne bolognese, a chicken curry and a sandwich wrap. The alleged poisonings, on two camping trips and a walk, left him close to death, and he became so ill he was temporarily paralysed and had part of his bowel removed, the court heard at the time. In each case, doctors were unable to conclusively determine the cause of his illnesses. Mr. Simon Patterson raised his suspicions with his doctor and

dagger depicted as tariffs, while shielding a farmer with a plough on his shoulder. Analysts say Modi's comments indicate that the tariff battle with the U.S. would be front and centre of the campaign in Bihar that is likely to kick off next month. According to a recent survey by the VoteVibe agency, Modi's National Democratic Alliance will struggle to retain power in the state, largely because of a lack of jobs. However, VoteVibe founder Amitabh Tiwari said any nationalist backlash against Trump is unlikely to sway voters in what he calls a "hyper-local election" in the economically backward state. In other signs of pushback against Trump, Modi is planning to visit China in coming weeks and is likely to meet President Xi Jinping as well as Russia's Vladimir Putin, suggesting a potential realignment in relations.

Modi also spoke with Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Thursday to discuss the tariffs. The two countries, founding members of the BRICS bloc that Trump has criticised, are the two most affected by the U.S. levies. Russia, China and South Africa are the other founding members. Modi remains the world's most popular head of government, with an approval rating exceeding 75%, according to data intelligence firm Morning Consult. Yet, even his core Hindu nationalist base was unsettled by a surprise ceasefire with mainly Muslim Pakistan in May, following the most intense military confrontation between the two old enemies in decades. The ceasefire sparked controversy at home and abroad. Modi's government has repeatedly denied Trump's claims that he leveraged trade negotiations to broker the truce. Trump has since notably strengthened ties with Pakistan, which publicly thanked him for his role in ending the conflict, further complicating India's diplomatic narrative. At home, the main opposition Congress party has presented what it says is proof of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Election Commission "rigging and stealing" the 2024 general election by adding fake people to voter lists. "There is a huge criminal fraud being perpetrated on this country by the Election Commission and the party in power", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told a press conference on Thursday.

The BJP dismissed the allegations as Congress's frustration at repeated electoral losses: "When Rahul Gandhi can't cheat his way to power, he calls it a conspiracy," it said on X. The Election Commission asked Gandhi to "stop arriving at absurd conclusions and misleading the citizens of India". As Modi approaches his 75th birthday next month, his age has also become a topic of discussion, since other BJP leaders were sidelined after they passed the milestone. The BJP however maintains that there is no formal retirement age for its leaders. All in all, analysts said, Modi faces an onerous task. "Mr. Modi's brand value is now diminishing very fast, he needs to reinvent himself," said Rasheed Kidwai, visiting fellow at the Observer Research Foundation think tank in New Delhi. The sheen will come off particularly if he loses the Bihar election. Because in India, elections determine everything."



with his family, including his father Don, who died at the lunch. Don Patterson was so certain he had been poisoned at the July 2023 lunch he arrived at hospital with a container of his own vomit for medical professionals to test. Evidence from a computer seized from Patterson's home showing searches for other kinds of poisons was also excluded from the trial. Open justice After Patterson was found guilty last month, Justice Beale ordered the suppression of the pre-trial material to protect Patterson's appeal rights. But on Friday he ordered the restrictions be lifted, rejecting an argument by her defence team, who said that the release of the material combined with intense media interest would jeopardise any potential of an appeal. "Open justice is a fundamental concern of our criminal justice jurisdiction," Mr. Beale said on Friday. Patterson has 28 days from the as-yet unknown date of her sentencing to appeal, though she has not indicated whether she will do so. Any appeal by Patterson was unlikely to succeed, though it could not be ruled out, Mr. Beale said on Friday. Patterson maintained her innocence throughout the case that has gripped Australia, with her defence calling the deaths a "terrible accident". She pleaded not guilty to the counts of attempted murder against her husband. The court will next hear the case on August 25, the first of a two-day plea hearing where victim impact statements will be read.

Trump demands CEO of U.S. chip maker Intel resign 'immediately'

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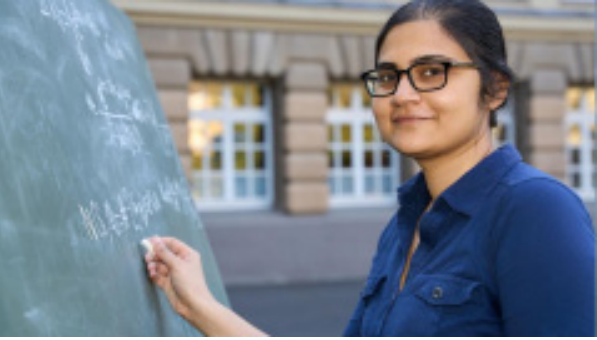
U.S. President Donald Trump demanded Thursday that the new boss of U.S. chip maker Intel resign "immediately," after a Republican Senator raised national security concerns over his links to firms in China.

"The CEO of INTEL is highly CONFLICTED and must resign, immediately. There is no other solution to this problem," Mr. Trump posted on his Truth Social platform, a day after Senator Tom Cotton said he had written to Intel questioning ties between CEO Lip-Bu Tan and Chinese firms. Mr. Tan "reportedly controls dozens of Chinese companies and has a stake in hundreds of Chinese advanced-manufacturing and chip firms. At least eight of these companies reportedly have ties to the Chinese People's Liberation Army," Mr. Cotton wrote in his letter, a copy of which he posted on his website. Mr. Cotton also noted Mr. Tan's role as the previous head of Cadence Design Systems, which he said recently "pleaded guilty to illegally selling its products to a Chinese military university and transferring its technology to an associated Chinese semiconductor company without obtaining licenses." Mr. Tan was head of the company at that time, Cotton said. The Malaysia-born tech industry veteran took the helm at struggling Intel in March, announcing layoffs as White House tariffs and export restrictions mud-



died the market. He has said it "won't be easy" to overcome challenges faced by the company. Intel is one of Silicon Valley's most iconic companies, but its fortunes have been eclipsed by Asian powerhouses TSMC and Samsung, which dominate the made-to-order semiconductor business. The company was also caught by surprise with the emergence of Nvidia as the world's preeminent AI chip provider. Intel's niche has been in chips used in traditional computing processes, steadily being eclipsed by the AI revolution.

‘It’s like writing a poem’: prize winner Rajula Srivastava on doing maths



When Rajula Srivastava was first notified about a prestigious prize, she was quick to dismiss it. All she got was a cryptic email from the personal email address of mathematician Terence Tao asking if she was free for a chat. Tao, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, is widely considered one of the most gifted mathematicians of our time. Srivastava couldn’t think of a reason why he would want to talk to her. “I obviously thought it was a scam,” she said.

But then she got a second email from him ten minutes later, asking to Zoom. After ascertaining that the email was not fake, she proceeded to cautiously respond. During their chat, Tao broke the news that she had won the Maryam Mirzakhani New Frontiers Prize, an initiative of the Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics, for her work in harmonic analysis and analytic number theory. She couldn’t believe it. “I told him I thought it was a scam, and he found that very funny, [saying] ‘maybe I want to scam a theorem out of you or something,’” she said with a laugh. “It was surreal, the way [the call] went.” A fondness for puzzles

Srivastava, a Hirzebruch Research Instructor at the University of Bonn and the Max Planck Institute for Mathematics in Germany, grew up in a science-loving family. In school, mathematics happened to be the subject she enjoyed the most among all the sciences: because it involved the least amount of memorisation. “Once you understand the logic behind things, you don’t have to memorize a lot of things ... beyond the multiplication tables in kindergarten,” she said.

She also realised she didn’t like doing lab work but she did enjoy solving puzzles. At the age of 15 she decided she wanted to be a mathematician and went on to do an integrated master’s degree in the National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), Bhubaneswar, where she majored in maths. She then wrote her master’s thesis in harmonic analysis, the study of functions and how they can be represented in terms of their frequencies — a topic she had begun to like. For her PhD, she chose to go to the University of Wisconsin-Madison mainly because of its big harmonic analysis group. Just like music can be broken down into harmonies, signals can be broken down into the frequencies that make them up. “But you need to be able to do it in a sensible way, so that the information you have in this breakdown should be such that you should be able to reconstruct your complicated signal once more from these pieces,” Srivastava explained.

That’s the basic idea of harmonic analysis, where one breaks down functions in terms of their frequencies or “harmonics” using a method called the Fourier transformation. One can imagine these frequencies to lie on a line, but you can also ask these questions in higher dimensions, Srivastava said. “Then it’s also about geometry, about the patterns and the shapes in which these waves are arranged.” To imagine a three-dimensional wave, picture a sound wave travelling in all directions via the molecules in air, or the ripples from an earthquake as it reverberates through the ground. In each case, there is a point at which the vibration originates, and the emanating waves then form the shape of a sphere. The vibrations travel radially outwards, perpendicular to the expanding wave. Her work mostly focused on waves in three or even higher dimensions. Spotting numbers on a line After her PhD, Srivastava went on to do her postdoctoral research in Germany, accepting a joint position between the mathematics department at the University of Bonn and the Max Planck Institute of Mathematics at Bonn. In her time there, from 2022 to 2024, she started diverging into problems at the interface of harmonic analysis and number theory.

Her husband, who is also a mathematician and a number theorist, first introduced her to counting problems. More than the potential applications of the number theoretical problems, however, Srivastava was motivated by sheer curiosity. With her expertise in harmonic analysis, she knew she had a bag of tools at her disposal. Could she now use

them to count things? She offered a simple example. While positioning integers on the number line, we learn that rational numbers have an exact address on the line. Even if it is a fraction, like say 5/7, the number line can be chopped up into smaller and smaller parts until we have an exact location for it. Irrational numbers don’t have an exact address, but one can still make a well-educated guess. “We can say that it’s between 1/1,000,000 and 2/1,000,000, [for example], which is a very tiny part and use those fractions to approximate your point,” she explained. “You’re saying up to this error, it is between these two fractions.”

But she worked on a similar question in higher dimensions. Instead of a line, imagine a three-dimensional shape like a sphere. Now if the point you want to map is somewhere on the manifold of this shape, what can you say about its approximability? “That’s how the geometry comes in,” she said. In higher dimensions, the fractions lie on a grid or lattice instead of being equally spaced on a one-dimensional number line. “So I have a lattice, and I have a shape inside the lattice. And then I’m asking: how close can points of this lattice get to points on the manifold?”

That’s how the two ideas — of harmonic analysis and counting points in 3D space — converge. “If you know that your waves live on a nice shape, then you know something about those waves or [their] frequencies,” she said. As both the wave frequencies and lattices are periodic, she worked on using the waves’ periodicity to count points on a shape within a lattice. Working on these problems eventually went on to win her the Maryam Mirzakhani New Frontiers Prize. More conferences in India Even as one of only two women out of the 25 students doing maths in her department at NISER, she didn’t feel any specific barriers to her progress during her integrated master’s program in India. She was confident, doing well in her exams, and didn’t have the need to constantly prove herself to others. But that changed when she went abroad: now she was not only a woman but she was also non-white. She eventually formed a community and received support from both men and women, but she still felt some alienation at the start when she moved out of India.

“You feel that you need to prove yourself more. You have less of a community to fall back on because there’s just less of you,” Srivastava said. “Sometimes if you’re the only brown woman in the room, you also somehow feel that you’re scrutinised more. Like, if you’re asking a question, then it better be a good question, not something stupid.” She thinks things are changing now, though, with more women of colour doing maths. Srivastava is coming full circle in her own career. Currently a visiting research fellow at the University of Edinburgh, she will soon move back to the University of Wisconsin-Madison and continue working on the intersection of harmonic analysis and number theory. She decided to move abroad long term because her husband is German and it was logistically easier to move to the US than to India for both of them. Another reason was more exposure to people and resources and being updated on new research developments, since many of the big conferences don’t happen in India. “I feel like they should do more [conferences] in developing countries, not just India, but also other countries of the Global South,” she said. Srivastava enjoys being part of a broader community: friends and associates who all speak the common language of maths and whom she was able to meet and collaborate with on problems once she moved out of India. But she’s also grateful to her early education in India, and to how many Indian universities, including hers, invest a lot in their students with scholarships and low fees. But doing maths can also be very frustrating at times, she said. Like when one spends most of the time researching answers to a problem instead of being able to just sit down and solve it. “Sometimes you have the broad outline, that this is how it should work. But actually implementing all the steps might take time,” she said. “Sometimes the ideas might come in a week, but just to write things might take months.” The rewards from small victories, like penning down one small theorem as part of a larger proof, keep her going. She also greatly values the independence of not having immediate deadlines and not needing to rely on expensive resources to work on her research questions. The latter is often the case in other fields like biology. “In math, you pretty much just need pen and paper. You can be anywhere, and you can just start thinking about [the problem],” she said. “Maybe you need a board and chalk, and that’s it.” On a day-to-day basis, if she’s really focused on a problem, maths is almost like meditation for Srivastava. She described how some think of it like a cross between art and science. “There’s something which is just in your brain and then somehow you prove [it], and then it’s true. Once it’s true, it will always stay,” she said.

Isabel Allende’s feminist manifesto continues in new book, My Name is Emilia del Valle

When Isabel Angélica Allende Llonza was around nine years old, she travelled with her grandfather to the Argentinian Patagonia, where he had sheep. “We went by train from Santiago as far to the south as the train would go, continued by car, crossed the Andes on horseback, and on the other side, we were picked up by rangers,” she writes via email. “That journey is engraved in my memory. That’s Chile for me, the country I long for.”

This deep longing and loss is present in every single book Allende, now 83, has written — from her bestselling debut *The House of the Spirits* (1982) to her latest, *My Name is Emilia del Valle* (translated by Frances Riddle, published by Bloomsbury), which is set mostly between San Francisco and Chile. From the moment she flew to Venezuela where she would remain for 13 years, Chile stopped being hers in the way it had till then, and everything changed forever. Over the years, Allende would keep interrogating the themes of displacement and identity, of memory and family, as well as the potent links between the personal and the historical, through her stories.

It started with *The House of the Spirits*, featuring the sprawling del Valle clan. A fantastically embellished history of her family, the book was inspired by Allende’s maternal grandmother’s family — “they were 12 siblings, all of them quite original, wonderful inspirations for extravagant characters.” Did she know back then that she would keep returning to them, from *Daughter of Fortune* (1999), to *Portrait in Sepia* (2000), and now in *My Name is Emilia del Valle*? “I had no idea if that book was ever going to be published or that I would write other books. Of course, I didn’t think that clan would intrude in other books,” she says.

Allende explains that Emilia sprung into being because she needed a way to write about the 1891 Chilean Civil War with a neutral voice. “It had to be a foreigner, and I wanted a woman narrator.” Like all of Allende’s heroines, Emilia too is rebellious and intrepid, and way ahead of her time. The illegitimate daughter of a former novice nun, the Irish Molly Walsh, and a Chilean aristocrat, Gonzalo Andres del Valle,

who seduced and abandoned her, Emilia is raised in 19th-century San Francisco by her mother Molly and her husband Francisco Claro, the director of a local school, who dotes on her, and will support and encourage her empowerment. He is the reason she grows up with a desire to see the world and “experience everything intensely”. This, coupled with a need to find out the truth about herself, her biological father, and a homeland she’s never known, pushes Emilia, a columnist, to request a war correspondent position. But why would the newspaper, where she’d finagled a regular column writing under a male pen name, send Emilia to Chile? That’s how she becomes Emilia del Valle, someone who speaks Spanish and has local family connections. Allende had to juggle the social mores of the time — so Emilia gets assigned the human-interest stories, while her male colleague, Eric Whelan, is given the more “serious” coverage.

Our focus naturally shifts to Allende’s feminist manifesto, the veins of which run through all her work, and through her own life, from an age as young as five years old. “I was an angry little girl,” shares Allende. “They (the women in her household — her mother and the maids) had no power, no money, no freedom as the men had. That was the beginning of a lifelong feminist struggle, which crystallised during my years at Paula (Chile’s first feminist magazine co-founded by Allende around the time of the second feminist wave). Those ideals have not changed.” Even through great tragedy, admirably. The Isabel Allende Foundation founded in 1996 is dedicated to the memory of her late daughter, Paula Frias, who died unexpectedly after a year spent in coma following a porphyria attack. Like everything else Allende does on the public stage, it is an extension of her feminism, offering support and empowerment to girls and women through education, knowledge about reproductive rights, protection from domestic and sexual violence. And the maverick shows no signs of flagging. “For me, writing is not a chore. I write because I love the process.

India pauses plans to buy U.S. arms after Donald Trump’s tariffs,



India has put on hold its plans to procure new U.S. weapons and aircraft, according to three Indian officials familiar with the matter, in its first concrete sign of discontent after tariffs imposed on its exports by President Donald Trump dragged ties to their lowest level in decades. India had been planning to send Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Washington in the coming weeks for an announcement on some of the purchases, but that trip has been cancelled, two of the people said. Mr. Trump on August 6 imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods as punishment for Delhi’s purchases of Russian oil, which he said meant the country was funding Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. That raised the total duty on Indian exports to 50% — among the highest of any U.S. trading partner.

The President has a history of rapidly reversing himself on tariffs, and India has said it remains actively engaged in discussions with Washington. One of the people said the defence purchases could go ahead once India had clarity on tariffs and the direction of bilateral ties, but “just not as soon as they were expected to.” Written instructions had not been given to pause the purchases, another official said, indicating that Delhi had the option to quickly reverse course, though there was “no forward movement at least for now.” Defence Ministry and the Pentagon did not respond to Reuters’ questions. Delhi, which has forged a close partnership with America in recent years, has said it is being unfairly targeted and that Washington and its European allies continue to trade with Moscow when it is in their interest.

Reuters is reporting for the first time that discussions on India’s purchases of Stryker combat vehicles made by General Dynamics Land Systems and Javelin anti-tank missiles developed by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin have been paused due to the tariffs. Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in February announced plans to pursue procurement and joint production of those items.

As global universities set up shop in India, it’s time for Indian B-schools to reinvent

As international universities from the U.K. and Australia steadily set up campuses across the country, India is an up-and-coming global education hub. This educational disruption follows the regulatory changes introduced in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which allows foreign universities to enter the Indian educational landscape due to eased regulations and the benefit of full control over their curricula and admission criteria. Given the saturation in the education industry, domestic universities, particularly business schools, will have stiff competition in the upcoming years.

A market ripe for growth With over 65% of India’s population being under 35 and more than 43.3 million students in higher education, we are home to a booming education market that is predicted to have a sustained demand for higher education, particularly for premium degrees in Business, Technology, and Leadership. The tightening visa rules across the globe don’t help, of course. With growing challenges in pursuing education abroad, it would not be surprising to see students opting for international branch campuses closer to home.

Given, as well, the increased demand for a future-ready workforce, companies are substantially seeking a holistically well-rounded workforce. The demographics, in addition to the aforementioned regulatory shifts and the high demand for skills and foreign degrees, lay the groundwork for the lucrativeness of branch campuses in India. Learn from global educational practices

Management education in India is at the cusp of change. In the coming years, we have the opportunity to redefine management education as we know it, enhance our pedagogical methods and initiate cross-industry collaborations to drive meaningful output and change. While Indian B-schools have grown in scale, they are still behind their global counterparts in terms of high-impact research output. Management education also cannot remain derivative — it must shape narratives on emerging markets, inclusive growth and innovation. Faculty exchanges and industry collaborations are key to elevating Indian B-school standings on a global level. International faculty members bring not only academic credentials but also diverse perspectives into the classrooms, fortifying pedagogy and the overall academic environment. This can be complemented by deepening industry linkages, ensuring curricula, research and placements remain aligned with and relevant to the industry. There is much to learn from global education practices, where academic institutions often have partnerships with industry to augment classroom learning with on-the-job experience, ensuring students develop theoretical understanding and practical skills. Such practices can lead to the inception of a globalised curriculum — where global business insights can be used for Indian markets. Furthermore, the introduction of flexible learning models such as part-time and distance learning MBAs allow for a wider scope of students.

The future of management education is shifting rapidly, Indian B-schools that fail to evolve risk becoming obsolete. We deal with outdated and oftentimes irrelevant curriculum that cannot keep up with the ever-evolving business landscape. If B-schools continue with the current transactional nature of management education, we will find ourselves overshadowed by the more agile and research-driven schools abroad. Without a proactive shift in mindset and method, many schools will be reduced to degree-dispensing institutions with little credibility, attracting neither the best talent nor industry attention. To thrive in this new landscape, Indian B-schools need to act decisively. We must embrace international best practices such as hybrid learning models that blend in-person, digital, and experiential components, making education more accessible, personalised, and future-ready. Emphasis should also be placed on curating niche learning programs in domains such as healthcare and sports management, given their popularity domestically and abroad. Fundamentally, Management education is about being ahead of the curve. Industry alli-

Singh had also been planning to announce the purchase of six Boeing P8I reconnaissance aircraft and support systems for the Indian Navy during his now-cancelled trip, two of the people said. Talks over procuring the aircraft in a proposed \$3.6 billion deal were at an advanced stage, according to the officials.

Boeing, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics referred queries to the Indian and U.S. governments. Raytheon did not return a request for comment. India’s deepening security relationship with the U.S., which is fuelled by their shared strategic rivalry with China, was heralded by many U.S. analysts as one of the key areas of foreign-policy progress in the first Trump administration. Delhi is the world’s second-largest arms importer and Russia has traditionally been its top supplier. India has in recent years however, shifted to importing from Western powers like France, Israel and the U.S., according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute think-tank. The shift in suppliers was driven partly by constraints on Russia’s ability to export arms, which it is utilizing heavily in its invasion of Ukraine. Some Russian weapons have also performed poorly in the battlefield, according to Western analysts.

The broader U.S.-India defence partnership, which includes intelligence sharing and joint military exercises, continues without hiccups, one of the Indian officials said. India also remains open to scaling back on oil imports from Russia and is open to making deals elsewhere, including the U.S., if it can get similar prices, according to two other Indian sources. Trump’s threats and rising anti-U.S. nationalism in India have “made it politically difficult for Modi to make the shift from Russia to the U.S.,” one of the people said. Nonetheless, discounts on the landing cost of Russian oil have shrunk to the lowest since 2022. Petroleum ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. While the rupture in U.S.-India ties was abrupt, there have been strains in the relationship. Delhi has repeatedly rebutted Trump’s claim that the U.S. brokered a ceasefire between India and Pakistan after four days of fighting between the nuclear-armed neighbours in May. Trump also hosted Pakistan’s army chief at the White House in the weeks following the conflict. In recent months, Moscow has been actively pitching Delhi on buying new defence technologies like its S-500 surface-to-air missile system, according to one of the Indian officials, as well as a Russian source familiar with the talks. India currently does not see a need for new arms purchases from Moscow, two officials said. But Delhi is unlikely to wean itself off Russian weapons entirely as the decades-long partnership between the two powers means Indian military systems will continue to require Moscow’s support, one of the officials said.



ances can produce meaningful outcomes for both the institution and students, such as co-designed curriculum, live projects and co-funded research. Leveraging their soft power is also necessary for Indian B-schools. Our access to the local market, cultural insight and demographics gives us the leverage to design management education that is not only globally relevant but also deeply rooted in the Indian context. Finally, meaningful transformation cannot happen without significant investment in faculty development. Investing in MDPs, interdisciplinary exchanges, allowing faculty sabbaticals in corporate setting is a must for curriculum and institutional relevancy. This is a defining moment for Indian B-schools, a chance to not just catch up, but to lead. Complacency is not an option as global campuses set foot in India and expectations keep evolving. Indian business schools must shed legacy mindsets, build global ambition and act with urgency. It is time to reimagine, not replicate, the future of management education. If Indian institutions aspire to compete on a level playing field with their foreign counterparts, the time to get the act together is now.

No ban on paracetamol, clarifies centre amid rumours

New Delhi: The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has not banned the commonly used paracetamol drug in India, Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Anupriya Patel said on Tuesday.

In a reply in the Parliament, during the ongoing Monsoon session, Patel said that “the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has informed that the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation is not in receipt of information about rumours” of the regulatory body banning paracetamol. Noting that “paracetamol is not banned in the country”, Patel said that “various Fixed Dose Combinations, including such combinations of paracetamol with other drugs, have been banned in the country”.

Further, the MoS noted that the government has rolled out the free drugs service initiative under the National Health Mission. “This aims to ensure availability of essential drugs and reduce out-of-pocket expenditure of patients visiting the public health facilities, including government hospitals and rural primary health centres,” she added. For the provision of free essential medicines in public health facilities, the states are provided with financial support. Support is available for procurement of drugs and strengthening or setting up of robust systems of procurement, quality assurance, supply chain management and warehousing, prescription audit and grievance redressal, and for the dissemination of standard treatment guidelines and establishment of the information-technology enabled platform named Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVTMS), which is used for monitoring the actual status of procurement and availability of essential medicines. Patel said that the Ministry of Health has also recommended a facility-wise essential medicines list to be made available at public healthcare facilities, including government hospitals and rural primary health centres.

PM Modi on 10 years of Digital India: ‘It has become a people’s movement’



narendra modiPrime Minister Narendra Modi attends Centenary Celebrations of Jain spiritual leader Acharya Vidyand Ji Maharaj, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Saturday. (DD/ANI Video Grab)With the government’s flagship ‘Digital India’ programme completing ten years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it has not remained a mere governance scheme, but has become a “people’s movement”.

“While decades were spent doubting the ability of Indians to use technology, we changed this approach and trusted the ability of Indians to use technology,” the Prime Minister wrote in a blog post on LinkedIn Tuesday. “In 2014, internet penetration was limited, digital literacy was low, and online access to government services was scarce. Many doubted whether a country as vast and diverse as India could truly go digital. Today, that question has been answered not just in data and dashboards, but in the lives of 140 crore Indians. From how we govern, to how we learn, transact, and build,

Digital India is everywhere,” Modi added.

He said that in 2014, India had around 25 crore internet connections, which has today grown to over 97 crore. “Over 42 lakh kilometres of Optical Fibre Cable equivalent to 11 times the distance between Earth and the Moon now connects even the most remote villages,” he said. The PM said that India’s 5G rollout is among the fastest in the world, with 4.81 lakh base stations installed in just two years, with high-speed Internet reaching urban hubs and forward military posts alike including Galwan, Siachen, and Ladakh. “India Stack, which is our digital backbone, has enabled platforms like UPI, which now handles 100+ billion transactions a year. Around half of all real time digital transactions happen in India. Through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), over Rs 44 lakh crore has been transferred directly to citizens, cutting out middlemen and saving Rs 3.48 lakh crore in leakages,” Modi said. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a government-backed initiative to create a national e-commerce network, has recently crossed 200 million transactions, with the last 100 million in just six months, Modi said. “From Banarasi weavers to bamboo artisans in Nagaland, sellers are now reaching customers nationwide, without middlemen or digital monopolies,” he added. The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) has also crossed Rs 1 lakh crore GMV in 50 days, with 22 lakh sellers including over 1.8 lakh women-led MSMEs, who have fulfilled orders worth Rs 46,000 crore, Modi said. Through the \$1.2 billion India AI Mission, India has enabled access to 34,000 GPUs at globally unmatched prices at less than \$1/GPU hour making India not just the most affordable internet economy, but also the most affordable compute destination, the PM said.

India ‘strategic ally’, trade deal being finalised: White House

India-US Trade Deal News: The India–US trade deal could be announced soon, as the White House on Monday said that US President Donald Trump may soon declare the conclusion of the agreement with India. This comes as trade talks enter their final phase, with fewer than 10 days remaining until the reciprocal tariff pause expires. A deal would mean that Indian goods will no longer be subjected to the 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs that is set to come into effect on July 9. Responding to a question at a press briefing, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said: “India remains a very strategic ally in the Asia Pacific, and the President has a very good relationship with Prime Minister Modi — and he will continue to have that.”

“The President said last week [that the US and India are very close to a trade deal], and it remains true. I just spoke to our Secretary of Commerce about it. He was in the Oval Office with the President. They are finalising these agreements, and you’ll hear from the President and his trade team very soon when it comes to India,” Leavitt said. While India–US trade talks appear to be progressing in the right direction, China has warned countries against negotiating deals at its expense. This comes at a time when Indian electric vehicle manufacturers are facing supply constraints due to disruptions in the distribution of rare earth elements from China. “If such a situation occurs, China will not accept it and will take resolute countermeasures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests,” China’s Commerce Ministry warned.

Ajay Srivastava, head of think tank GTRI, said that with India’s chief trade negotiator in Washington DC and the clock ticking, the next seven days could determine whether India and the United States settle for a limited “mini-deal” or walk away from the negotiating table — at least for now. Under such a deal, India is expected to cut MFN tariffs on a wide range of industrial goods, including automobiles — a persistent demand from Washington. In agriculture,



India may offer limited market access through tariff reductions and tariff-rate quotas (TRQs) on select US products such as ethanol, almonds, walnuts, apples, raisins, avocados, olive oil, spirits, and wine,” Srivastava said. However, India is unlikely to budge on sensitive sectors, and tariff cuts are not expected for dairy products or key food grains such as rice and wheat, where farm livelihoods are at stake, he said. “These categories are politically and economically sensitive, affecting over 700 million people in India’s rural economy,” Srivastava noted. Beyond tariffs, GTRI said the US is expected to press India for large-scale commercial purchases — including oil and LNG, civilian and military aircraft from Boeing, helicopters, and nuclear reactors. “There may also be pressure on India to ease FDI restrictions in multi-brand retail — potentially benefiting firms like Amazon and Walmart — and to liberalise rules on remanufactured goods, currently subject to stringent import norms,” he said. In return, the US will refrain from reimposing the controversial 26 per cent country-specific tariffs on Indian goods, which were unilaterally announced by President Trump on April 2. Instead, a 10 per cent baseline tariff may apply to most imports from India — but the US will not lower its own MFN tariffs on Indian exports, Srivastava said.

Neutral monetary policy stance retains an option for both pausing and cutting rates: RBI MPC Member Saugata Bhattacharya

Saugata Bhattacharya, a Member of the Reserve Bank of India’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), says that geopolitical tensions are unlikely to pose a “significant risk” to the RBI’s growth-inflation forecasts, based on the current data and global environment. Several positive factors supporting India’s economic momentum, including a favourable monsoon, strengthening rural demand, the possibility of monetary policy easing, and timely government initiatives — all of which bode well for a revival in growth, he says. In an interview with Hitesh Vyas and George Mathew, Bhattacharya — the lone MPC Member who voted for a more modest 25 basis points (bps) cut in the repo rate during the June policy review, as opposed to the 50-bps reduction backed by other members — emphasises that the committee’s “neutral” stance leaves room for both a pause and further rate cuts, depending on future developments. Bhattacharya currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research.

Although I had some prior reservations on changing the stance from neutral to accommodative at the April ’25 meeting, I had gone with the majority view on the shift. This was based on the clarification that the shift to accommodative signalled only that “a rate hike [was] off the table” and remained consistent with a pause, with the more probable future action, despite the then extreme uncertainty, being a cut, given the space opening up for policy easing with falling CPI inflation. The shift now back to neutral is simply a mild forward guidance that, post the steep 100 bps (and now front loaded) repo rate cuts over the space of 4 months together with the large surplus system liquidity, this was a time to pause, monitor the incoming data on a “meeting-by-meeting” basis, assess the effects on macro-financial data and proceed with further calibrated easing should economic conditions so warrant. The collective point was to emphasise that there would be no further pre-committed policy easing in this cycle.

A neutral stance still retains an option for both pausing as well as cutting rates. Given the present, evolving and likely continued elevated levels of uncertainty, rate actions will have to be based on incoming data and an assessment of the associated macro-financial environment. It is very difficult to provide guidance at this point. This change of stance, once again, in no way precludes the possibility of further easing if actual inflation undershoots forecasts and opens up further space for policy easing. RBI Governor has already articulated this succinctly. With recurring geopolitical tensions that pose a risk to inflation, do you expect domestic inflation to remain in the RBI’s comfort zone for the entire FY26? I don’t think, given our present information set,

various geopolitical tensions are likely to be a significant risk to RBI’s forecasts of the growth-inflation balance. To my mind, more worrying is the evolving series of bilateral trade deals with multiple countries, which will define the relative export competitiveness of India. More importantly, the eventual outcomes will define an eventual equilibrium of supply chains, investments, trade flows, which will have a more profound effect on India growth prospects. Given the challenging global environment, especially tariff issues, do you think we will be able to meet the real growth rate of 6.5 per cent in FY26

Due to the continuing elevated uncertainty regarding global trade, the continuing spillovers into financial markets volatility and the prospects, extending well into the medium term, of adverse economic shocks on growth, economic forecasts at this point, to my mind, are only indicative in nature, conveying merely a sense of the direction of travel. As of now, most high frequency indicators suggest continued resilience in economic activity. Prospects of a good monsoon and improving rural demand, combined with the monetary policy easing and various well-timed Government initiatives, augur well for growth revival.

What key triggers are required for India to achieve its aspirational growth target of 7-8 per cent?

As RBI Governor has stated, monetary policy is a necessary but not sufficient condition for stimulating growth. MP is a component of a coordinated policy response. The thoughtful personal income tax rate cuts in the Budget, higher targeted budget capital outlays, trade deals and negotiations, manufacturing incentives, regulatory and compliance rationalisation, all have to interlock. When do you expect the consumption-boosting measures announced in Budget 2025–26, along with the 100-basis-point repo rate cut, to begin translating into tangible increases in aggregate demand? The effects of the coordinated stimulus measures are likely to begin to see traction sooner rather than later. Transmission of the repo rate cuts plus the abundant liquidity infused by RBI will help accelerate transmission more quickly than in the past. The dip in personal income tax collections in Q1 FY26 suggests that tax paying households are already seeing an increase in their disposable incomes. This too will accelerate over the next quarters. Other price and income support measures will also help boost demand. The transmission of monetary policy in India has often been delayed or uneven. What structural reforms do you think are necessary for better pass-through, and can policy be truly effective without them? Transmission of repo rate cuts and surplus liquidity in FY26 is likely to have been faster than in previous easing cycles.

Silent saviours: the crucial role of obstetric anaesthesiologists in reducing maternal mortality



Maternal mortality is a key indicator of healthcare quality. According to the Sample Registration System’s (SRS) 2019–21 data, India’s Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has dropped from 130 (2014–16) to 93 (2019–21). States including Kerala (20), Maharashtra (38), and Telangana (45) have already met the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target. However, others like Madhya Pradesh (159) and Bihar (100) continue to lag, despite some progress made. As nations strive to meet the SDG of reducing maternal deaths to fewer than 70 per 100,000 live births, the contribution of obstetric anaesthesiologists is indispensable. The role of obstetric anaesthesiologists

While obstetricians often stand at the forefront of maternal care, a less visible but equally vital figure operates behind the curtain — the obstetric anaesthesiologist. Obstetric anaesthesiologists are highly trained physicians who specialise in providing safe and effective anaesthesia and pain relief during pregnancy, labour, and delivery, particularly in high-risk obstetric cases. Their role extends far beyond the operating theatre, integrating deeply with emergency obstetric care and intensive maternal monitoring. As maternal healthcare systems evolve to handle increasingly complex pregnancies, these specialists are proving instrumental in reducing maternal mortality and ensuring safe delivery outcomes. High-risk pregnancies are rising due to factors like advanced maternal age, IVF and multifetal pregnancies, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and pre-existing cardiac conditions. In such cases, anaesthetic management becomes a matter of life and death — not just comfort.

Obstetrics is the only specialty where emergency surgical procedures far outnumber elective and planned surgeries. Of these emergencies, 6-7% are stat surgical pro-

cedures that demand the highest of skills and clinical algorithms. In emergency caesarean sections, postpartum haemorrhage, or preeclampsia cases, anaesthetic decisions must be swift, safe, and tailored to the mother’s physiology. Delayed or inappropriate care by the team can lead to complications such as cardiac arrest, aspiration, or uncontrolled bleeding — all major contributors to maternal deaths globally. Another critical service provided by obstetric anaesthesiologists is labour analgesia — the management of labour pain through techniques such as epidural anaesthesia or several alternative options like IV - PCA (patient-controlled analgesia) using safe medications. Not only does this improve the birthing experience, but studies have shown that well-managed labour pain can reduce maternal exhaustion, lower the incidence of emergency interventions, and even decrease the rate of postpartum depression. Importantly, labour analgesia also allows high-risk women — including those with cardiac or neurological disorders — to undergo delivery with reduced physiological stress. Modern obstetric care increasingly adopts a multidisciplinary model, where trained anaesthesiologists in critical care, collaborate closely with obstetricians, obstetric physicians, foetal medicine experts and neonatologists.

This is especially critical in managing patients in Maternal Critical Care Units (MCCUs), where anaesthesiologists works with the motto – giving best to both the lives– and monitor not only sedation and pain control, but also look after invasive monitoring, ventilation, and provide organ supports.

The need for more training Experts advocate for greater recognition for, and investment in the training of obstetric anaesthesiologists, especially in resource-limited settings. Obstetric anaesthesiologists play a pivotal role in this ecosystem, ensuring safer deliveries and better coordination in emergencies—thereby supporting India’s push toward the SDG goals. In many developing regions, a lack of trained anaesthesiologists is a significant barrier to safe obstetric care. The Association of Obstetric Anaesthesiologists, India has made a curriculum and accredited several centres in India to train obstetric anaesthesiologists. We need to prioritise staffing and protocols that integrate anaesthetic services from the first trimester through to the postpartum period. In the quiet precision of their work lies a profound truth: obstetric anaesthesiologists save lives — often silently, always critically.

Kombucha can rebalance gut ecosystem in people with obesity: study

From Instagram reels to supermarket shelves, kombucha — the fizzy, fermented tea drink — has found a growing audience among health-conscious consumers in India. Promoted as a probiotic powerhouse, it’s touted for its supposed benefits to digestion, immunity, and metabolism. According to one estimate provided by Indian company Sbooch, the kombucha market in India grew from \$45 million in 2020 to \$102 million in 2024. Yet much of the enthusiasm has outpaced science. While kombucha’s traditional use and composition suggest potential health benefits, few rigorous studies have tested these claims in humans. Most research until now has focused on kombucha’s biochemistry or has been limited to animal models. This is why a recent study in The Journal of Nutrition stands out: it takes a closer look at kombucha’s effects on the human gut microbiome and how they matter for human health.

The study followed 46 healthy adults in Brazil — 23 with obesity and 23 of normal weight — over eight weeks in a pre-post trial. The participants were classified using (World Health Organisation cut-offs of) BMI and waist circumference. Every day, each participant consumed 200 ml of kombucha that had been prepared in the lab using black tea and fermented with a symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast (SCOBY). All participants were otherwise healthy and had no recent history of drugs, antibiotics or supplements. Stool samples were collected at the beginning and end to assess gut microbiome changes. The researchers used genomic tools to profile bacterial and fungal communities. They also measured fasting blood glucose, insulin, and proteins linked to gut barrier integrity since a weakened gut lining can allow harmful molecules to enter the bloodstream, trigger low-grade inflammation, and ultimately engender insulin resistance.

What we know, what changed After eight weeks, the overall microbial diversity was largely unchanged but the abundance of certain bacteria had changed in ways that suggested kombucha may help positively rebalance the gut ecosystem. Chemical analysis of the kombucha revealed a rich array of phenolic compounds, mostly flavonoids (81%) and phenolic acids (19%). These polyphenols are largely unabsorbed in the small intestine, reaching the colon where they serve as fermentable food for gut microbes. The authors suggested that they may promote the growth of certain bacteria by stimulating the secretion of mucus and creating a more hospitable gut environment. Notably, the population of Akkermansiaceae bacteria had increased in individuals with obesity. Previous research has linked this shift with better blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity.

The levels of Prevotellaceae also increased, specifically in the obese group. Certain strains of Prevotella copri have similarly been linked to improved insulin sensitivity, hypertension, and inflammation. Both groups also reported higher abundance of Bacteroidota, which play significant roles in digesting complex carbohydrates. Bacteria associated with less favourable outcomes including Ruminococcus and Dorea declined, becoming similar to the normal-weight group by the eighth week. Ruminococcus gnavus has been positively associated with inflammatory bowel disease and liver fat accumulation, while Dorea with high BMI and cholesterol markers. In normal-weight participants, Parabacteroides increased modestly. Parabacteroides goldsteinii has been known to reduce tissue inflammation, ameliorating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and Helicobacter pylori infections. The populations of Exophiala and Rhodotorula, two fungi associated with cystic fibrosis and obesity respectively, decreased as well. While the study offers promising clues about kombucha’s influence, especially for individuals with obesity, the researchers urged caution. The microbial shifts were modest and didn’t improve metabolic markers like blood glucose, insulin, or inflammatory proteins. Vineet K. Sharma, a metagenomics researcher at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Bhopal, noted that while most studies in India have focused on associations rather than causality, microbial shifts have been linked to metabolic changes in several cases. “For instance,” he said, “production of metabolites by gut microbes, such as short-chain fatty acids, bile acids, or tryptophan derivatives, has been shown to influence glucose metabolism, inflammation, and gut barrier integrity.” The team also pointed out that microbial responses vary by diet, genetics, and overall health, thus reducing the generalisability of the



findings. And with a short duration and a modest sample size, the findings remain a proof-of-concept.

The results are still valuable in what they reveal, however: kombucha does appear to nudge the gut microbiome in directions associated with better metabolic health after two months. Kombucha and India Whether the effects will hold for Indian populations remains an open question. Studies have indicated gut microbiota in India are distinct. In one of Sharma’s studies, Indian gut microbiomes formed a clearly separate cluster from Western populations. Indian guts, particularly among those consuming traditional plant-based diets, harbour more Prevotella, an inversion of the typical Western microbial pattern. Since consuming kombucha increased Prevotellaceae abundance in the study, it may not drive the same degree of change in local populations. “Even among Indians, microbiome composition varies with diet and location across the six regions we studied,” Sharma said. While North Indians have more Prevotella, South Indians carry a higher load of Bacteroides and Ruminococcus. Women from rural high-altitude areas have greater gut diversity than their urban counterparts. Ethnic tribes from Ladakh, Jaisalmer, and Khargone can be differentiated based on their gut microbiomes alone. Taken together, the new study is proof that no single brand of kombucha can claim to be ‘good’ for all consumers across geographies. The drink may support gut health but whether that translates to long-term metabolic benefits remains to be seen.

US pulls out from vaccines alliance Gavi, says it has lost public trust

London: US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr said the country is pulling its support from the vaccines alliance Gavi, saying the organisation has “ignored the science” and “lost the public trust.” A video of Kennedy’s speech was shown to participants at a Gavi meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, where the vaccines group was hoping to raise at least USD 9 billion for the next five years. Gavi is a public-private partnership including WHO, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, and the World Bank. It has paid for more than 1 billion children to be vaccinated through routine immunisation programmes, saving an estimated 18 million lives. The US has long been one of its biggest supporters; before Trump’s re-election, the country had pledged USD 1 billion through 2030. Kennedy called on Gavi “to re-earn the public trust and to justify the USD 8 billion America has provided in funding since 2001,” saying officials must “consider the best science available, even when that science contradicts established paradigms.” Kennedy said until that happens, the US won’t contribute further to Gavi. Kennedy, a longtime vaccine sceptic, said he and President Trump were concerned about how Gavi and the World Health Organisation partnered together during the COVID-19 pandemic to work with social media companies “to silence dissenting views, to stifle free speech and legitimate questions” during a time when many people had questions about vaccine safety. Kennedy said Gavi continues to make “questionable recommendations,” like advising pregnant women to get immunized against COVID-19 and funding the roll-out of a vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis in poorer countries.

Govt approves Rs 30,000-crore compensation to oil marketing companies for their losses on cooking gas sales



In April, along with hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel, LPG prices were hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, to provide some relief to the OMCs on cooking gas sales. (Reuters Photo)LPG subsidy India 2025: In April, along with hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel, LPG prices were hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, to provide some relief to the OMCs on cooking gas sales. The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a budgetary support of Rs 30,000 crore to public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) to cover their losses on sale of cooking gas cylinders below market price in consumer interest.

The Cabinet also approved the continuation of targeted cooking gas subsidy for poor households under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) for 2025-26 at an expenditure of Rs 12,000 crore. Beneficiary households will continue to receive subsidy of Rs 300 per 14.2-kg cooking gas cylinder for up to nine refills per year.The distribution of the Rs 30,000-crore compensation among the three OMCs will be done by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and they will be paid in 12 tranches, the government said in a release.

The compensation to give relief to the OMCs—Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL)—was in the works for a few months. It was expected to be from the additional mop-up from the hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel that took effect in April.In July, The Indian Express had reported that the proposal was expected to be considered soon by the Union Cabinet.“The international prices of LPG remained at high levels during 2024-25 and continue to remain high. However, to insulate consumers from fluctuations in international LPG prices, the increase in cost was not passed on to consumers of domestic LPG which led to significant losses for the three OMCs. Despite

the losses, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies have ensured continuous supplies of domestic LPG in the country at affordable prices,” the official release said.It added that this step also underlines the government's commitment to protect consumers from volatility in global energy markets while maintaining the ?nancial health of the OMCs.

It is estimated that the three OMCs incurred a cumulative loss of over Rs 41,000 crore on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG, or cooking gas) sales in 2024-25 (FY25) as they have been selling the household cooking fuel way below international prices. In April, Petroleum Secretary Pankaj Jain had said that he was hopeful that the OMCs will be compensated for their accumulated losses on LPG sales over a year or so through an appropriate mechanism by the government. Sources indicated that the Petroleum Ministry had sought support from the Finance Ministry to cover these losses. Support was also sought before the Budget for FY26, but no relief was provided at the time.Annual petrol and diesel sales in the country stand at around 16,000 crore litres, which means that the Rs 2-per-litre increase in excise duty announced in April should lead to an additional revenue of around Rs 32,000 crore for the government on an annualised basis. The Petroleum Ministry and the OMCs expected this incremental revenue to flow back into the OMCs as government support to cover losses on LPG sales. Notably, in October 2022, the government had approved a one-time grant of Rs 22,000 crore for OMCs to partially cover their accumulated losses of around Rs 28,000 crore at the time from selling LPG at a loss in consumer interest.

According to the Petroleum Ministry's estimates, the average Saudi CP—the international benchmark for LPG pricing—had shot up to to \$629 per tonne in February 2025 from \$385 in July 2023. This should have ideally translated into cooking gas being retailed at Rs 1,028.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi. But at the time, it was being sold at Rs 803. As India depends on imports to meet a bulk of its LPG demand, cooking gas prices are linked to international LPG price benchmarks. In April, along with hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel, LPG prices were hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, to provide some relief to the OMCs on cooking gas sales.“This compensation will allow the OMCs to continue meeting their critical requirements such as crude and LPG procurement, servicing of debt, and sustaining their capital expenditure, thereby ensuring uninterrupted supply of LPG cylinders to households across the country,” the government said.

No govt directive on Russian oil imports, free to scout for alternatives if Moscow's oil becomes unfeasible, says HPCL chairman

According to a recent report by Nomura, the implied discount on Russian crude oil for Indian refiners was estimated to have declined to around \$2.2 per barrel in 2024-25 from over \$12 per barrel in 2022-23.According to a recent report by Nomura, the implied discount on Russian crude oil for Indian refiners was estimated to have declined to around \$2.2 per barrel in 2024-25 from over \$12 per barrel in 2022-23.Public sector refiner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) has cut down on processing Russian oil as it has lost much of its price advantage over competing crude grades, and not because of geopolitical considerations or any signal from the government, according to the company's chairman and managing director Vikas Kaushal. While HPCL has so far not received any directive from the government on import of Russian crude, the refiner is free to look at alternatives if it were to completely stop buying Russian crude in the future due to any sanctions-related reason, Kaushal said in a post-earnings analyst call.

Russian crude's share in crude oil processed by HPCL contracted significantly to 13.2 per cent in the quarter ended June 30, primarily due to lower discounts hitting the competitiveness of Moscow's barrels, according to the HPCL chairman. According to a recent report by Nomura, the implied discount on Russian crude oil for Indian refiners was estimated to have declined to around \$2.2 per barrel in 2024-25 from over \$12 per barrel in 2022-23.“It's not that we are not buying Russian crude; those decisions are still open. It's just that whatever is economical will be bought,” Kaushal said in the analyst call.“We are free to look at alternatives as and when economic situations present (themselves). If we were not to buy Russian crude for any sanctions-related reasons, the impact would not be too significant for us,” he said.

The HPCL chairman's comments come amid trade tensions between India and the US, with Indian refiners' hefty imports of Russian crude surfacing as a major irritant for the Donald Trump administration. Earlier this week, Trump announced an additional 25 per cent tariff—over and above the 25 per cent tariff announced last week on Indian goods—as a penalty for India's Russian oil imports. New Delhi 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”.

Indian public sector refiners have paused Russian oil purchases, which had already slowed down in previous weeks, it is learnt. While the recent slowdown in oil imports from Russia is being seen as a signal by New Delhi to



Washington, sources in India's refining sector say that it is also due to discounts on Russian crude narrowing considerably. India has stated over the years that as a country that depends on energy imports, it will buy oil from wherever it gets a good deal, as long as the oil is not under sanctions. To be sure, Russian oil is not under sanctions, and is only subject to a price cap imposed by the US and its allies that applies if Western shipping and insurance services are used for transporting the oil.

The renewed pressure from the US and other Western powers—pressuring Russia's top trade partners to cut down on imports from the country—are aimed at forcing the Kremlin's hand into ending the Ukraine war. For Trump, who wants the three-year-old Russia-Ukraine war to end within days, this is an opportune time to pressure India over its Russian imports, given the sensitive trade pact negotiations between New Delhi and Washington.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow's share in New Delhi's oil imports was less than 2 per cent. With much of the West shunning Russian crude following the invasion, Russia began offering discounts on its oil to willing buyers. Indian refiners were quick to avail the opportunity, leading to Russia—earlier a peripheral supplier of oil to India—emerging as India's biggest source of crude within a matter of months, displacing the traditional West Asian suppliers. Russia now accounts for 35-40 per cent of India's total oil imports by volume. As Europe decided to stop the import of refined petroleum fuels from Russia, Indian refiners increased fuel exports to the continent.Despite the noise from sections of the West against India over the country's hefty purchases of Russian crude, this shift in oil and petroleum product trade had Washington's blessings, as the US wanted energy markets to remain stable and well-supplied, according to various US officials who served in the Joe Biden administration.

Jio eyes global leadership in 6G technology

New Delhi: Digital services company Jio is actively engaged in development of 6G technology with an aim to be a global leader in the segment, according to annual report of parent firm Reliance Industries.It is now the world's largest data operator carrying over 17 exabytes of data traffic monthly with about 60 per cent share of wireless data traffic in India.“Jio continues to work on future communication technologies and is actively researching and developing 6G technology, aiming to be a global leader in its development and deployment.“In less than a decade, Jio has driven India's transition from data darkness to data abundance with its vision and ahead of the curve investments on 4G pre-2016, fiber-to-the-home in 2018, standalone 5G in 2022, and FWA (fixes wireless access) in 2024,” RIL annual report for 2024-25 said.To augment Jio's technology leadership in building terrestrial networks, it is also building its own satellite communication platform and partnering with SpaceX to offer Starlink's broadband internet services

to its customers in India.As of March 2025, Jio had around 191 million 5G users on its network contributing about 45 per cent to its wireless data traffic. Jio has connected around 18 million homes as of March 2025 and has accounted for about 85 per cent of the total new additions in the industry during the fiscal year.The company also plans to completely go green by 2030 by accessing renewable energy mix from its own as well as third party plants. Jio is focused on 100 per cent renewable electricity by FY 2029-30, the report said. Reliance Group is pursuing its commitment to go net carbon neutral by 2035.“Jio's operations are also significantly more energy efficient as compared to its global peers. GSMAi, in its March 2025 report on energy benchmarking study, recognised that energy per data traffic (kWh / GB) for Jio is around 30 per cent of the global average,” the report said.Jio is actively engaging with the government's IndiaAi mission to build an artificial intelligence ecosystem — which is expected to consume huge energy due to data processing by high performance computing infrastructure.

‘Ab safed baal aa gaye...’: Why R Madhavan is choosing self-acceptance over anti-ageing, and what men can learn from it



R Madhavan explained why he doesn't feel the need to mask his age or compete with younger actors.R Madhavan explained why he doesn't feel the need to mask his age or compete with younger actors. In a space where youth often dominates the conversation around appearance, R Madhavan has chosen to take a different path. The actor recently shared his thoughts on ageing and appearance in an interview with ETimes, saying, “Ab safed baal aa gaye toh aa gaye (If I have grey hair, so be it). I have never dyed my hair, unless it is required for a role.” His relaxed attitude stems from what he's observed in others he respects.

He stated that he has taken inspiration from superstar Rajinikanth. “He doesn't care about how he looks off-screen, but on-screen, he is magic. Just like my friend Ajith (Kumar),” he noted. Madhavan further explained why he doesn't feel the need to mask his age or compete with younger actors. He said he isn't someone who carries emotional baggage or lives with dishonesty. Over the years, he stated that he has learned from his peers and seniors that an off-screen image holds little importance. Confident in who he is, Madhavan feels no need to project herself as younger than he actually is. “I'm not competing with someone who's younger than me. I'm competing with my own ability and my ability to bring out the best in me. There's an acceptance of who I am,” he noted.

One of the world's most venomous creatures, this animal's poison can stop a human heart within minutes

If you've ever spent time near warm ocean waters, you'll have heard signs of warning about an invisible jellyfish that looks delicate and harmless, but to not be fooled by it.Often lurking just below the surface of warm tropical waters, this marine creature delivers venom so potent it can stop a human heart in minutes.A member of the Cubozoa class, box jellyfish are distinct in appearance: they have a transparent, cube-shaped bell up to 30 cm across and can sport tentacles stretching up to 10 feet (3?m). These tentacles contain millions of microscopic harpoon-like cells called nematocysts, which inject venom when triggered.Unlike typical jellyfish that drift, box jellyfish are active swimmers, propelled by a muscular velarium that can push them through water at speeds of 1.5?m/s (about 4?mph).

Why the box jellyfish is so lethalUnusual venom potency: Chironex fleckeri, known as the Australian box jellyfish or “sea wasp,” is often labelled the most venomous marine animal. Its venom disrupts cells by creating pores, triggering cardiac arrest and rapid tissue destruction, sometimes in as little as 2 to 5 minutes.Deadly dosage: A single jellyfish carries enough venom to kill more than 60 adults. In Australia alone, box jellyfish have caused at least 69 deaths since the late 19th century, according to the Environmental Literary Council. Globally, 50 to 100 deaths occur each year from box jellyfish stings.

Speed of action: The venom acts with what experts describe as “blinding speed,” affecting the cardiovascular system almost instantly. Even when survivors receive antivenom, damage inflicted before treatment may require surgery or cause long-term impairment.A Caribbean box jellyfish is pictured here A Caribbean box jellyfish is pictured here. (file)Understanding the stingWhen a tentacle brushes against skin, nematocysts fire and inject venom. Damage can include intense burning, whiplash-like welts, nausea,

But why do many men feel pressure to hide visible signs of ageing?

Counselling psychologist Athul Raj tells indianexpress.com, “Because visible ageing in men often triggers a quiet fear of becoming less useful. In many professional and social spaces, appearance is linked to relevance. A man with grey hair or tired skin is not always seen as experienced — sometimes he is seen as replaceable. Especially in cultures like ours, where men are taught to lead, provide, and stay ahead, ageing becomes a perceived threat to their position.”It is not just about looking young, he adds. It is about maintaining status, control, and being taken seriously. Most men will not talk about this openly. “But that internal pressure to not ‘fall behind’ makes them mask ageing signs, even if their abilities remain strong. It becomes a way of protecting their place in systems that still reward appearance, speed, and charisma over substance,” states Raj.

Can embracing physical changes with age have a positive psychological impact on self-esteem and mental well-being in men?

Allowing natural ageing often leads to a quieter, deeper kind of confidence. When men stop treating their changing appearance like a problem to solve, they begin to relate to themselves differently. That shift brings relief. The energy that once went into control and cover-up is freed. Raj explains, “For many, it is the first time they stop measuring their worth by how youthful or sharp they appear. They begin to anchor it in character, integrity, and lived experience. This creates a more stable and less anxious identity. It does not happen immediately. But once it does, the relationship with the body becomes more honest, and the mind less reactive.”“Letting go of comparison is not passive,” stresses Raj, adding that it takes “active inner work.” Men need to acknowledge what they feel threatened by and stop pretending they are unaffected. Creating space for reflection, therapy, deeper friendships, and time away from constant performance helps. Focus needs to shift from proving something to becoming something. That is the transition that brings peace.



headaches, anxiety, and cardiac arrest in severe cases.Even if death does not follow immediately, victims often experience long-term consequences like scarring, chronic pain, or psychological trauma.First aid & prevention Apply vinegar (acetic acid) to neutralise undischarged nematocysts within 30+ seconds of contact, according to Australian Geographic. Avoid rubbing the wound, which can trigger further venom release. Wear protective clothing like wetsuits or lycra suits in stinger-prone waters, these can prevent nematocysts from recognizing your skin as prey Seek emergency medical care immediately. Antivenom exists and must be administered rapidly, ideally within minutes, to be effective.In recent years, scientists at the University of Sydney used CRISPR gene-editing technology to develop a molecular antidote. Applied within 15 minutes, it may prevent tissue damage and pain, though whether it protects against cardiac failure remains under study.The box jellyfish may be small and nearly invisible, but its venom has a staggering capacity for harm. As its range expands, and as coastal tourism rises, the need for awareness, prevention, and rapid treatment is more pressing than ever. Swimming in known “stinger season” zones without precaution is a risk no one should take.

Why Bengali kasundi is the most powerful mustard sauce you've never tried

Imagine a slice of soft white bread, layered with sharp Colman's mustard, and topped with either boiled, shredded chicken or mashed eggs. It's the mustard that gives it the edge—the sharpness and vinegary tinge elevating the simplest of sandwiches or dishes to another level. I'm a big fan of mustard—not the shorshe or sarson used in Bengali curries, but the kind made into a sauce, served as an accompaniment to various dishes. And one of my absolute favourites is Bengal's kasundi.I'm not being parochial here—you'd know that from my general disinterest in shorshe maach or shorshe phulkopi. But give me a spoonful of sharp, pungent, well-made kasundi, and I can eat it on its own.

The making of Bengali kasundi is nothing short of a rite. I come from a home where it never played a starring role on the dining table. Despite enjoying some of the finest Bengali cuisine, kasundi wasn't something we ate or served much—and so it was never made at home either. Like sandesh and many Bengali sweets, which are tedious to prepare, kasundi is widely available across Bengal, bottled and sold by numerous small and large manufacturers.

So why this sudden ode to kasundi? Because of a food guide that's been stirring up debate in culinary circles in recent years. TasteAtlas—a relatively new guide from Croatia that launched in 2018—ranks everything from global dishes and restaurants to ingredients. Naturally, these rankings cause much heartburn, particularly when they seem misinformed or arbitrary. Their latest list, on the world's best mustards, included several German, French, English and even Chinese varieties. But not that most nuanced of mustards—Bengali, and therefore Indian, kasundi, which is sharp enough to clear your sinuses.

Mustard—sarson, sometimes rai—is widely used across India, either for tempering or as a paste to flavour dishes. The leaves are cooked into sarson ka saag, or sautéed like spinach in many regions. But only in Bengal is mustard turned into a sauce that could rival the finest mustards in the world. We eat it with spinach, drizzled on top, or as a dip for crumb-fried fish or “chops.” It's sharp, piquant, and utterly delicious.Making kasundi, however, isn't as



simple as blending mustard seeds with water and salt. And neither is its past.

I suspect the reason kasundi was never made at home is because we didn't observe certain archaic or regressive customs—especially those rooted in caste or gender roles. Traditionally, kasundi was only to be prepared by Brahmins. I can't imagine my very educated and independent great-grandmother following such a rule. Hence, we stuck to bottled kasundi.

kasundi, mustard TasteAtlas's list of the world's best mustards included several German, French, English and even Chinese varieties. Kasundi is traditionally made on Akshaya Tritiya, in the Bengali month of Baishakh, right after the mustard harvest. According to old customs, only Brahmin men were allowed to make kasundi. Even Brahmin women could only wash, dry, and pound the mustard seeds—not make the actual paste. I've never seen this rule followed, even in the most traditional Bengali homes—but it is what the old prescriptions say.What I have witnessed is kasundi being made in a kitchen—and the sheer complexity of the process amazed me. This is a sauce that's been prepared for centuries, without any fancy tools, using bare hands and traditional knowledge. Over a dozen spices—green and black cardamom, cumin, coriander, nutmeg, mace, long pepper, chillies, black pepper, and the uniquely Bengali radhuni (wild celery seeds)—are used to create the spice mix that gives kasundi its signature punch.

R Ashwin and Chennai Super Kings could part ways ahead of the next IPL season, within a year after homecoming

GNS News Agency, August 16

In case Ashwin joins another franchise, there is room for conflict of interest and given the complexities involved it would be interesting to see how this plays out in the coming weeks. In case Ashwin joins another franchise, there is room for conflict of interest and given the complexities involved it would be interesting to see how this plays out in the coming weeks. Within one year of their reunion, R Ashwin and Chennai Super Kings (CSK) could part ways ahead of next edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), .

It is learned that the former India all-rounder has gained interest from a couple of franchises and has had talks with CSK over his future as a player. But what is adding to the intrigue is the fact that Ashwin is currently also serving as the head of CSK's High Performance Centre and Super Kings Academy. In case Ashwin joins another franchise, there is room for conflict of interest and given the complexities involved it would be interesting to see how this plays out in the coming weeks. Ashwin is keen on avoiding such a scenario and is understood to be in talks with CSK, who still seem keen on having his services at the franchise.

When CSK brought him back the fold for their ambitious High Performance Centre, it was evident that they would also acquire him at the auctions that followed. The franchise then spent Rs 9.75 crore at the auction to reunite him with Ravindra Jadeja. Ever since Chennai Super Kings showed interest in bringing Sanju Samson from Rajasthan Royals, Ashwin's name has been involved in discussions as part of a potential trade-off along with Shivam Dube. But Chennai have been keen on only an all-cash deal and have showed no interest to let go of Ashwin as part of any trade deal.

A veteran of 106 Tests, Ashwin enjoys a close relationship with N Srinivasan, who holds a majority stake in the franchise. And their relationship was one of the key reasons why Ashwin reunited with CSK ahead of the last season. Unlike Samson, whose relationship with Rajasthan has suffered in recent months, Ashwin enjoys a good rapport with the franchise officials. Personally and professionally,



there are plenty of connecting factors. The ultimate say in the matter now is solely with Chennai Super Kings, who have already set the ball rolling ahead of next season. MS Dhoni and Ruturaj Gaikwad have been in Chennai, meeting with the franchise officials to plan for the next season. Potentially, the only way out for Ashwin would be that he has to part ways with the CSK High Performance Centre, but as things stand there is no clarity on this. After making his IPL debut with the franchise in 2009, Ashwin became an integral member of the squad that made three successive finals between 2010 and 2012, where Chennai won back-to-back titles. He stayed with the franchise till 2015 before it was suspended. And after spells with Punjab Kings, Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals, Ashwin returned to CSK fold ahead of last season. In what turned out to be an underwhelming campaign for the franchise, Ashwin was even dropped from the playing squad. Having played only 9 matches in IPL 2025, Ashwin picked up 7 wickets at an average of 40.43 but more worryingly, conceded at 9.13 runs per over through the season. Compared to his IPL career economy rate of 7.20, this was Ashwin's most expensive outing in his IPL career. He wasn't too effective with the bat either, scoring just 33 runs with a highest score of 13. Ashwin, who announced retirement from international cricket during the Australia tour, is most likely to turn out for Tamil Nadu in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20s.

Australia name two Indian-origin boys in U19 men's squad for series against India U19

GNS News Agency, August 16

Two boys with Indian roots, Aryan Sharma and Yash Deshmukh, will be in the Australia U19 squad for the upcoming series against India from 21 September to 10 October. The series between India U19 and Australia U19 teams will feature three 50-over matches and two four-day matches in Brisbane and Mackay. This series is part of Cricket Australia's long-term player development strategy, offering young players the chance to gain international experience in white-ball and red-ball formats. It forms part of the preparation for a two-year-long ICC U19 World Cup cycle, with the tournament scheduled for January 2026 in Zimbabwe and Namibia. The cycle has so far included a camp at the National Cricket Centre in Brisbane, AUS U19 tour to India, and a specialised spin/batting training camp in India.

The matches mark the first appointment for former Australian coach Tim Nielsen as head coach of the national U19 squad, bringing a wealth of experience at international level, which will be invaluable in guiding Australia's next generation of cricketers. The National Under-19 male champi-



onships will be held in December, after which the final squad for the ICC U19 Men's World Cup 2026 will be selected. Cricket Australia said that the Australia U19 squad was chosen by the youth selection panel in collaboration with state talent managers. Following the series, players will return to their states and territories to continue preparations for the upcoming season.

Cristiano Ronaldo slams hat-trick in friendly vs Rio Ave, guides Al Nassr to 4-0 win



GNS News Agency, August 16

Cristiano Ronaldo Al Nassr Hatrick Cristiano Ronaldo snapped up yet another hat-trick in a career filled with them when he scored 3 goals against Rio Ave in a pre-season friendly. Cristiano Ronaldo snapped up yet another hat-trick in a career filled with them when he scored 3 goals against Rio Ave in a pre-season friendly on Thursday. The Al Nassr forward put the ball in the opposition net in the 44th, 63rd and 68th minute to help his team cruise to a 4-0 win.

The first goal was a typical poacher's finish when Ronaldo played a one-two with new signing Joao Felix and smashed the ball into the top of the opposition net. For the second goal, he turned back the clock with a vintage leap over the defenders as he headed the ball, crossed by Wesley, past the keeper. The 3rd one was a regulation spot

kick which he took when Felix was fouled in the box. In June, Ronaldo opted to renew his contract with Al Nassr till 2027, choosing to stay at the Saudi Arabian club for the foreseeable future. "A new chapter begins. Same passion, same dream. Let's make history together," Ronaldo had posted on X.

In May, the internet was abuzz with rumours about Ronaldo leaving Saudi Arabia after FIFA president Gianni Infantino had said that there were discussions on the Portugal forward playing the Club World Cup. "There are discussions with some clubs, so if any club is watching and is interested in hiring Ronaldo for the Club World Cup... who knows, who knows," he had said. Ronaldo had hinted about his Al-Nassr exit after the team's defeat in the Saudi Premier League (SPL) 2024-25 season-ending match to Al-Fateh. Meanwhile, in July, Felix took his total transfer cost to around \$260 million Tuesday when completing the move to Al Nassr. The Portugal forward teamed up with compatriot Ronaldo, joining from Chelsea for a reported initial fee of 30 million euros (\$34.6 million) and signing a two-year contract. Meanwhile, in other Saudi Premier League news, Holders Al Hilal will be banned from the 2026-27 Saudi Super Cup if they qualify after withdrawing from this season's four-team competition, the Saudi Arabia Football Federation's (SAFF) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee had said on August 6. The decision came after Al Hilal pulled out of the Super Cup, scheduled to be played from August 19-23 in Hong Kong, citing player fatigue following their Club World Cup campaign. They lost 2-1 to Fluminense in the quarter-finals on July 4.

Pawan Sehrawat, Vijay Malik set for high-voltage clash in PKL Season 12 opener

GNS News Agency, August 16

Hyderabad: Raiders Pawan Sehrawat of the Tamil Thalaivas and Telugu Titans' Vijay Malik — former teammates and now opponents — shared their excitement, insights, and camaraderie ahead of the opening clash in the Pro Kabaddi League Season 12 starting from August 29. "This opening match is special for me," said Pawan Sehrawat, who returns to Tamil Thalaivas after an injury-curtailed stint with the team in season 9. "I couldn't spend much time on the mat last time. Now I have a chance to finish what I started."

Heaping praise on the new-look Tamil Thalaivas side, he said, "The team is well-balanced, with experienced names like Arjun Deshmukh, Narendra Kandola, as well as young stars in Nitesh Kumar. We're ready." The match holds added emotion for Sehrawat, having spent the last two seasons

with Telugu Titans. "Playing against my former team in front of their home fans in Vizag — it's going to be intense. But I know I'll also get some love from the Titans supporters," he said.

Vijay Malik, now leading the raiding charge for the Titans, is equally upbeat. "Starting the season at home is a big boost. The Telugu Titans fans are among the most passionate in the league. The energy they bring gives us that extra edge," he said. "We've got a strong unit and a great mix this season. The goal is clear — we're going for the trophy." The banter between the two raiders was lighthearted but laced with competitive fire. "This season is going to be aggressive — on both sides," said Sehrawat. "The opening game will set the tone. It's a raider's league now, and fans are in for a treat." With Chennai and Vizag among the host cities, both Thalaivas and Titans will get the opportunity to play in front of their home fans. For Pawan, who missed

Michael Vaughan explains why Ollie Pope is a brilliant vice-captain but not a captain, says he can't have him walk in as skipper in Ashes if Ben Stokes can't play

GNS News Agency, August 16

Former England player Michael Vaughan said that while Ollie Pope was a good vice-captain, he was not cut out to be the England captain. Vaughan pointed out that Pope was not a natural leader which made it difficult for him to have that influence on that team in the 5th Test vs India. With the Ashes coming up in 3 months, Vaughan said that he feels that Harry Brook can take up the captain's mantle if regular skipper Ben Stokes couldn't play. "We don't laud how good some vice-captains are. (Marcus) Trescothick was the best vice captain. I think Ollie Pope is a brilliant vice-captain. But he's not a captain. And by giving him the captaincy, I can see it a mile off. He's not a natural leader out in the middle. I saw that last year against Sri Lanka. I have seen it again this week. Say you get to Perth and Ben Stokes, the shoulder or you know, his body's in bits. Anything could happen with Ben. Fingers crossed he's fine but just say you go to Perth and Ben can't play. I can't have Ollie Pope walk in as skipper. But I can have Harry Brook because I see a natural leader," Vaughan said in the Stick To Cricket podcast.

Pope was named captain in the 5th and final Test match of the recently concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy after Stokes had to pull out due to injury. This led to India giving a terrific fightback in the 4th innings, clinching the



match by 6 runs and drawing the series 2-2. "We took as long as we could to make the decision," Stokes had said. "I came down [to the Oval] this morning to give myself every chance just to play as a batter — bowling was ruled out as soon as we got the scan results. It's one of those where weighing up the risk and reward, the risk was way too high. Hearing where it could head to, it wasn't something that was worth taking a risk on. I wouldn't expect to put any of my players at risk of an injury like this. So I'll start rehabbing now and focus on what we've got coming up in the winter. Once this series was done I was feet up anyway, so it doesn't make too much difference," Stokes had said ahead of the match at the Oval.

Glenn McGrath tips Australia to thrash England 5-0 in Ashes 2025: 'It'd be interesting to see if they can win a Test'

GNS News Agency, August 16

With the Ashes still a fair way off, Australian legend Glenn McGrath has already set the wheels in motion of what will be a spicy series with a prediction of a 5-0 clean sweep by Australia. The first Test is scheduled in Perth on November 21 with McGrath predicting that England will be in for a tough time against the likes of Pat Cummins and Co.

"It's very rare for me to make a prediction, isn't it? And I can't make a different one — 5-0. I'm very confident with our team. When you've got Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon firing in their home conditions, it's going to be pretty tough. Plus, that track record England have had, it'd be interesting to see if they can win a Test," McGrath said on 'BBC Radio'.

England hasn't had the best time in the Ashes in the recent past, having not won the series since 2015. They have lost either 0-5 or 0-4 in all but one series in Australia since 2002-03. Their last Test win came in 2010-11 when they claimed a 3-1 series triumph. Australia won 4-0 when England last toured the country in 2021-22 and Pat Cummins' side have only lost two of their past 15 Tests at home, winning 11 and drawing two. "It's the top order or top and middle order of England against the Australian fast bowlers and Lyon. That's going to be a big match-up,"



McGrath said. He also added that the series will be an important one for Joe Root who hasn't had the best of form when playing in Australia with his highest score here being just 89. "This series will be a big one for Root. He's never really done that well in Australia, he's not even got a 100 over there, so he'll be keen to get out there. He's in fine form. Brook's the one that I've enjoyed watching. He just goes out there, plays his game, and takes it on. The Australians will need to get on him pretty early. Ben Duckett is such an aggressive opener. Zak Crawley would be keen to score a few more runs than he has previously," the Aussie legend said.

Gukesh explains how meditation changed him from 'impulsive, short-tempered kid' to calm world champion

GNS News Agency, August 16

Gukesh Dommaraju has revealed the role of meditation in turning him from an "impulsive and short-tempered kid" to a calm, history-making world champion. Gukesh has earned plenty of praise in recent years for his poise and his ability to stay unfazed even when under severe pressure in high-profile matches. Gukesh said that his transformation started when he realised that his inability to manage his emotions was bleeding into his chess results.

"I was always like a very impulsive, very short-tempered kid. I used to throw tantrums and like not manage my emotions. Then I realized that it's affecting my chess because whenever I would lose a game, the next few games too I would be very affected by it and I would not be able to play well. So I just realized that I should manage my emotions better. That's when I started doing some good practices like meditation and yoga, which really helped me to manage my emotions. It not only helps in chess but like all walks of life," Gukesh said at an event in Poland's Katowice, after playing in an exhibition blitz event against Jan-Krzysztof Duda. Gukesh lost 5-1 to Duda, who was part of Gukesh's team last year when he became the youngest world champion in chess history. Gukesh was also asked which asana he likes the most. To this, he just said he did some basic yoga positions. "I can't say like I'm like that advanced in yoga or something like that. But like I just do very simple and basic movement while focusing on breathing. Most of it is related to meditation. I don't really know much about yoga. I just know some basics and I do that at work," Gukesh said.

When the host asked him to show the crowd some yoga techniques, he said: "I'm not really a yoga master." At one point, he was asked if was doing deep breathing during games, he said: "You're overestimating my yoga

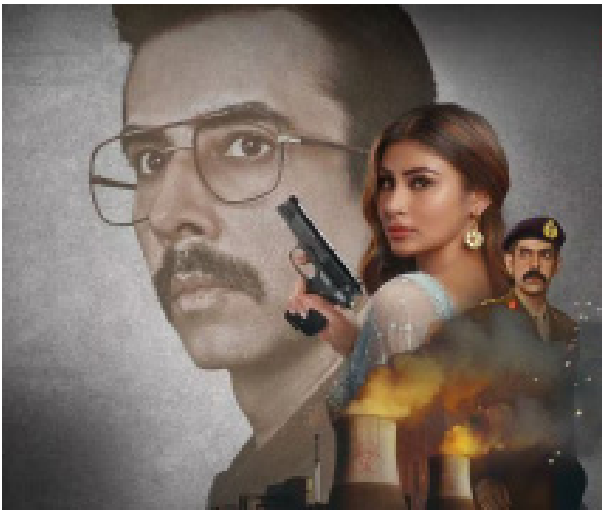


skills." Gukesh also said that he still has plenty of dreams he wants to conquer after realising his long-cherished one last year when he became the 18th world champion in chess history by defeating Ding Liren in Singapore. When asked what he is now chasing after becoming the youngest world chess champion in history, Gukesh said he was motivated by the dream of becoming the best player in the world. When asked what his dreams were away from the chess board, Gukesh said he wanted to become a "good person." "My childhood dream was to become the world champion. But at some point it became just be the best player. The youngest and all these things didn't really matter too much to me. It was about being the best and keep improving throughout my life to achieve that. To be the one player in the whole world who is like the best player, who you could clearly say that this is the best player in the world. That has become my dream. It's still a long way to go." Off the board, he said his dream was to be a "good person", something which he credited his mother Padma with instilling in him.



Kabaddi stars Pawan Sehrawat and Vijay Malik, former teammates turned rivals, gear up for the PKL Season 12 opener on August 29.

Salakaar review: This Naveen Kasturia series is a cringe-fest



In 1974, Pakistan's vaulting nuclear ambitions were spiked single-handedly by an Indian spy. And now, in 2025, the chatter around nukes is back again. Will Pak succeed this time around? How will India deal with the new threat? That's the thrust of Faruk Kabir's five-part series, 'Salakaar', reportedly based on real-life agent Ajit Doval's canny moves back in the 70s, which find a fresh airing.

This is yet another show built on showing the Pakistani establishment, including its then-president, as violent clowns, and the Indians as whip-smart. But it's hard to take this iteration (writing credits are shared amongst Kabir, Spandan Mishra, Srinivas Abrol and Swati Tripathi) seri-

ously: a scene which is meant to drip menace, has the supreme leader Zia Ullah (clearly based on Zia Ul-Haq, played by Mukesh Rishi) turn up himself at the Indian embassy with a dinner invitation for undercover agent-cum-attache Adhir Dayal (Naveen Kasturia). Said spy swans into Zia's mansion, where said leader is busy torturing a suspect, even as Project Kahuta, where the weapons of mass destruction are being built, is underway. You don't know what is more cringe-worthy: the cartoonish way in which the entire edifice collapses, or in the way, in the present day, Zia's grandson, the cruel Colonel Ashfaq (Surya Sharma) is back in the saddle, using a cricket bat to bash heads in.

Actually, you could be spoilt for choice, because this whole thing is a cringe-fest. We are presented with the comely Indian agent Mariam (Mouni Roy), now working under an older Adhir (Purnendu Bhattacharya), being ferried to a secret hide-out where the new plant is under construction. She has a way of transmitting information back to New Delhi which involves a pair of glasses. Don't ask. Meanwhile, in a flashback, we see the spry Adhir, trying to get into the graces of the Pakistani establishment with one of the oldest tricks in the book, a kidnapping gone wrong. Told you, don't ask. You may remember Rishi from the 1999 'Sarfaroosh', in which John Mathew Mathan and his star Aamir Khan resurrected the spy saga: the former shone in his brief role as a patriotic Muslim. Here, you can see the flash of that actor through the exaggerated scowls: the only other actor who rises above this series is Naveen Kasturia. Both deserve better. Salakaar cast: Naveen Kasturia, Mouni Roy, Mukesh Rishi, Surya Sharma, Purnendu Bhattacharya, Ashwath Bhatt. Salakaar director: Faruk Kabir. Salakaar rating: One star

Arjun Kapoor pushes Farah Khan aside to meet her cook Dilip, he fails to recognise actor: 'Sir, aap mera shot kha gaye'

Ahead of Rakshabandhan, filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan visited the house of Bollywood siblings Arjun Kapoor and Anshula Kapoor along with her long-time cook Dilip. While Dilip expressed excitement to meet them, he embarrassed Farah when he failed to recognise the actor. Farah Khan's latest vlog started with Arjun Kapoor arriving a little late and Farah Khan herself getting the door. Before, she could put a mic on him, he pushed her aside to meet Dilip and hugged him tight. He hugged and told Dilip: "Main apka bahaut bada fan hu! (I am a huge fan of yours)." A disappointed Farah says, "What the hell is this?"

Arjun then shook hands with Dilip and said, "Dilip, I am a huge fan of yours. I used to be a huge fan of Farah Khan, but now I am your fan." He then looked at Farah and gave her the reason for not being her fan anymore: "You are not casting me no!" A disappointed Farah said, "As if Dilip will." Farah then pointed towards Arjun Kapoor and asked Dilip, "Who is this?" A confused Dilip struggled to recognise him, prompting Arjun Kapoor to say, "He pulled an Amitabh Bachchan. He did a hain!"

Farah then helped him recall: "Didn't you just say his name when we were on our way to his house?" Dilip then said, "Yeah, Arjun Kapoor!" When she asked him "What's ma'am's name?" He again struggled to remember her name, leaving everyone in splits. Farah called him Ghajini, and said the cook can't recall anything. Dilip then shared, "I have watched sir's movie: Gunday." Arjun quickly tests him and said, "Then do the hook step of Tune Maari Entry". When Dilip said he doesn't know how to dance, Arjun asked Farah to teach him, "Farah taught you everything but dancing." The choreographer said, "I can't teach him! I don't want to forget the skill myself." Farah shared, "When I started the vlog, I decided it will be cooking related. In the very first vlog, I realised, 'I cannot do it all by myself. It is too much work.' Then I got Dilip in the vlog as my bouncing board. That very first vlog clicked and with the second vlog we had a silver button." Arjun asked: "Because Dilip was the..." Before the actor could complete his sentence, Farah interrupts him and said: "Because people just liked it. It was very real." Anshula intruded, "But, Dilip is the star!" Arjun looks at Farah and adds, "Sorry to inform you!" Farah then replied: "I am the starmaker guys! Main kya karu?" She then added, "After Rakhi Sawant and Deepika Padukone, it is Dilip!" Arjun said, "What a list to have!" Dilip then joined the conversation. Farah asked, "Dilip, who did you like bet-



ter in Gunday?" He looked at Arjun and said, "Sir." Arjun said, "Ranveer Singh will feel bad but thank you man!" Farah then shared, "Don't worry, his answer will change when he will visit him."

Dilip said, "In the movie what I liked the most was their friendship." When Farah asked, "And their rage?" Dilip replies, "It was not there as much, but their friendship was ultimate." Arjun then asked Dilip, "Why haven't you asked Farah to teach you the dance step yet?" Dilip gets all shy. Farah then revealed, "He recently danced with Jaaved Jaffry. They recreated an entire Boogie Woogie Boo." Arjun then advised Dilip, "You need to tell madame to teach you to dance. Otherwise, what is the point of being a cook to such famous choreographer?" He adds, "She should actually teach you everything including filmmaking." As they start to cook dahi kadhi and onion rice, Arjun claimed, "Dilip has done nothing in this vlog. Dilip has only spoken about Gunday and Ranveer Singh." He then taught him "Tune Maari Entry" step. "See, you found a dance trainer in me." Dilip too followed his instructions and learnt the step. Arjun also asked him to tell Farah that he will choreograph her next song. As Dilip handed several gifts to Arjun and Anshula, the actor asked Dilip, "Did you gift anything to Shah Rukh Khan when you met him for an ad shoot?" Before Dilip could reply to him, Farah says, "He gave him a hard time, that's what he gave him." This leaves the siblings in splits. Later, Arjun garnishes the rice with caramelised onions. He tells Dilip, "Did you see that Dilip, how well I did that?" Dilip agreed but expresses disappointment. "Han sir, par ap mera shot kha gaye!" This left Arjun speechless, who said, "Tum khana khao yaar, chalo!"

Archana Puran Singh warns son Aaryaman to 'watch it' as his girlfriend Yogita says she's critical, he replies he's still '10/10 for her'

Archana Puran Singh is back with another vlog with AAP Ka Parivaar on YouTube, and this time there is a new addition to the family. The actor's son Aaryaman Sethi's girlfriend, actor Yogita Bihani, also joined them on the biryani hunt in Mumbai. In their latest vlog, the family teased him for his 'true love'. While visiting different biryani restaurants, they also explored Salman Khan's family's favourite biryani outlet and choices.

During the beginning of the video, Aaryaman specifically introduced his girlfriend Yogita Bihani as 'our very own Madhubala'. Ayushmaan said, "You are mentioning her separately as if they have not seen her. True love, true love." "Aaj hum Biryani challenge karahе hain with Yogita Bihani. Biryani with Bihani!" Archana added. After trying the biryani at the first restaurant Persian Darbaar, Yogita gave an average rating to the food, stating that she is a bit critical, while the other family members give it a solid 8 and 9/10. "Aary, watch it, she is saying herself," Archana joked. "I am still 10/10 for her," he said, as his mother replied, "Aaye haaye, naya naya ishq!" They then visited Lucky restaurant, which had an Iranian style of making their biryani. After trying their flavourful food and 'A-class' desserts, they rated it lower than Persian Darbaar. The last one to visit was the famous Jaffer Bhai's Delhi Darbar, which is also a celebrity favourite for Mughlai Biryani. The manager revealed that they deliver biryani to Salman Khan's mother Helen. "Vo zyadatar pasand karte hain white biryani aur khichda. Whenever it's Arpita (Salman's sister Arpita Khan Sharma) madam's birthday or any other occasion, our food is delivered at their parties. Yusuf Khan sahab, Dilip Kumar sahab, aap log gaye

honge, jitna bhi khaana hota hai, mera hi hota hai (We deliver food at their parties)," he shared. White Biryani is their speciality, which is prepared purely using desi ghee and has a strong aroma with flavours. Towards the end of the vlog, all of them chose Persian Darbaar as the best one, mentioning that each one had its own flavour profile. Yogita Bihani, known for her roles in Vikram Vedha and The Kerala Story, recently opened up about being recognised for her appearance in boyfriend Aaryaman Sethi's vlogs, and not her acting. In Aary's latest vlog, she said, "There was this mother-daughter duo who curiously asked me, 'Are you Yogita?' I was like, 'Yeah... hi...' Then they said, 'We saw you in Aary Vlogs.' Her mother was also like, 'She is the same girl, right?' Then they clicked pictures with me. They told me, 'You too please continue to make vlogs, you look too good together.' I even told them, 'Actually, Aary was going to come here but because my flight landed early, he hasn't arrived yet.' They looked disappointed to have missed him." "Ten minutes after this incident, I realised this is the first time someone has spotted and recognised me. That too for my appearance in Aary Vlogs. I've been working as an actor for so long, but nobody ever recognised me for that. Acting se koi nahi pehchan raha mujhe, vlogging se pehchaan raha hai sab log (Nobody is recognising me for my acting; everyone knows me through vlogging)," she added while laughing. Archana Puran Singh's two sons – Aaryaman and Ayushmaan, and Yogita launched their new song 'Madhubala' recently. The trio even stepped out on the streets of Bandra to promote their track and take genuine feedback from the viewers.

Freakier Friday movie review: Lindsay Lohan, Jamie Lee Curtis film raises racial-ethnic-mix bar, serves a bit of Karan Johar



Freakier Friday Movie Review & Rating: There's much that's similar between the 2003 Freaky Friday and the 2025 Freakier Friday, starting with the central body-swapping premise, and the return of two main stars, Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan. The films may be separated by more than two decades, but the vibe is very much the same: get the sentiments out, but keep it broad and light, and make things right.

In the previous one, Dr Tess Coleman (Jamie Lee Curtis) and teenage daughter Anna (Lindsay Lohan) are at loggerheads by the former's impending marriage, with the latter not thrilled at the prospect of a stepdad. This time around, it is the turn of former rocker-present celebrity events manager Anna's Gen Z daughter Harper (Julia Butters) to be unhappy at the former falling hard for single hot dad Eric (Manny Jacinto), who is in possession of a daughter of his own, the very British Lily (Sophia Hammons), said girl being satisfactorily snooty and stand-offish, and therefore Harper's enemy number one. Confusion gets seriously confounded when the swap this time is split four ways, with the foursome becoming recipients of each other's bodies.

'Parveen Babi started crawling in the hotel...': How actor was replaced by Rekha in Silsila, she blamed Amitabh Bachchan

When Yash Chopra wanted to make a film on extra-marital affairs in 1981, he originally cast actors Parveen Babi and Smita Patil for lead roles alongside Amitabh Bachchan. However, later, the actors were replaced by Rekha and Jaya Bachchan. The development prompted several theories suggesting the changes were made over Amitabh Bachchan's recommendation. A similar claim was made by author and journalist Hanif Zaveri in an interview in January.

Speaking on Meri Saheli podcast, Hanif shared that it was due to Parveen's deteriorating mental health that Amitabh Bachchan suggested Yash Chopra to reconsider his casting choice. "When Silsila was in the making and they cast Parveen Babi... she requested Yash Chopra to let her carry her costumes with her. She had become that possessive. She carried her costumes everywhere and even took them to Kashmir, where she was shooting for Kaalia with Amitabh Bachchan." Hanif recalled one of the initial incidents about the actor that made people around her think she was suffering from some mental issues. "She was good friends with cinematographer Parvin Bhatt. She once took him to her room and showed to him: 'You see these clothes? They are my clothes for Silsila.' Bhatt was shocked. He asked: 'Why did you get them here?' She shared, 'Bombay mein chori hojati hai (They steal it in Bombay).' It was at that moment when Bhatt realised Parvin is suffering from some mental illness."

Hanif recalled another incident from the set which confirmed Parveen's struggle with mental health. "During the shoot of Kaalia, Parvin Bhatt and Parveen Babi had their rooms on the same floor with some distance when he found her crawling towards his room. She thought she would fall if she walked. This time, Bhatt confirmed that she was sick." He added, "Even Amitabh Bachchan noticed some changes in her during their shoot for Kaalia. He called Yash Chopra and asked him to fly to Kashmir. When he reached the set, he noticed that her cheeks were swollen, maybe



because of alcohol intake. This didn't suit his Silsila character. And on top of that, he got worried about her struggle with mental health. He feared that if it gets worse in between the shoot of Silsila, his whole film will come to a halt. He then lied to Parveen saying they made changes in the film's script and that her role has become too small. He made an excuse and removed her from the film. This, however, made a huge impact on the actress." The sudden changes in the casting of Silsila made Parveen believe Amitabh Bachchan was behind it. Several theories were also made. However, Hanif shared, "Even if Amitabh Bachchan got it all changed, it wasn't because he had a problem with Parveen, but he was thinking for the film." Previously, in an interview with ANI, Parveen's good friend and actor Ranjeet shared, "Once she was very upset and she was crying. I asked her 'Kya hua Parveen?' (What happened Parveen?)" We were in Kashmir. I don't mind quoting because it's a fact. A film was made, Silsila, and Parveen Babi was the original heroine but she was asked to leave. And because of a gimmick controversy, they cast Rekha and Jaya Bhaduri in the film otherwise it was Parveen and Rekha."

Sunita Ahuja says mother burnt her face with a hot tawa when she failed in Class 8th: 'I was in relationship with Govinda by then'

Govinda and his wife Sunita Ahuja fell in love while she was in school, and he had finished college. Sunita's parents did not approve of this relationship at first as it was starting to affect other aspects of her life. In a new interview, Sunita recalled how her mother beat her up when she failed in 8th standard and lied about it at her home. She shared that she wasn't a bright student but her mother wanted her to excel in studies.

Talking to Galatta India, Sunita shared, "I was in 8th standard and I failed the class. I didn't tell my mother about it, and by then, I was already in a relationship with Govinda. I lied to my mother saying that I have passed. So my mom, she heated up a tawa (pan) and she burnt me here (points at her cheek bone), and she questioned me about my lies. My mom was very strict. She pushed me to study but I hated it. I would just fall asleep whenever I opened my books."

Sunita laughed and shared another anecdote about her childhood where she harmed her older sister. "My older sister, once she was trying to make me study, and I was hating it. So I took a blade and cut her thigh with it," she said. Sunita shared that while she did not enjoy formal education, she enjoyed maths because she always "loved money." Sunita and Govinda have been married since 1987. They hid their marriage from the world during the first year,



and only announced it after the birth of their daughter Tina. Sunita's father was vehemently against the marriage and did not even attend the wedding. "When I got married to Govinda, he had a big family."