

IMD issues red alert for extremely heavy rain in Telangana

Hyderabad: The India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad, in its forecast on Monday evening, issued a red alert for extremely heavy rainfall in four districts and heavy to very heavy rainfall in 20 districts of Telangana on Tuesday. A heavy rainfall warning has also been issued for Hyderabad and its neighbouring districts for the next 24 to 48 hours.

The red alert of extremely heavy rainfall, which could bring more than 204.4 mm of rain, has been issued for Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Bhadradri Kothagudem and Mahabubabad districts.

Bhatti praises Telangana's role in driving social revolution



Hyderabad, Aug.18 Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said Telangana State stands as a model for social revolution in the country. He said under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the cabinet has brought decisive changes committed to social justice. Speaking at the Sardar Sarvai Papanna Jayanti celebrations at Ravindra Bharati here on Monday, Bhatti Vikramarka stated that for the first time in the country, Telangana successfully carried out a caste census across the state. Based on this, the government has ensured 42 percent reservations for Backward Classes in local bodies, education, and employment, which was unanimously passed in the Assembly and sent to the Governor. This historic step taken by Telangana has sparked nationwide discussion and created a situation where even the Union Government is compelled to conduct a caste census, he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister called upon every Bahujan in every village to widely campaign about this achievement. He urged the people to safeguard and strengthen the people's government, so that future generations of Bahujan children will reap its benefits. Bhatti Vikramarka announced that the government has decided to install a statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna in front of the Secretariat as a symbol of his struggle and inspiration. He said that allocating space right opposite the Secretariat for the Papanna statue is highly motivational, calling it a foundation for social justice and righteousness. Bhatti Vikramarka said that at a time when he had nothing, Papanna united all castes and achieved what he aspired for, and today, we must all follow his path. He expressed gratitude on behalf of the people of Telangana to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for allocating land and approving the installation of Papanna's statue in front of the Secretariat. Bhatti Vikramarka further stated that the government is firmly committed to providing reservations for backward classes, while some political parties are spreading misleading propaganda. He appealed to the people of Telangana to stand united, protect the people's government, and send a clear message to such forces.

Telangana is stinking with sewage and garbage : KTR



Hyderabad, Aug.18 Former minister and BRS party working president KTR today alleged that Hyderabad city and other towns in the state were stinking with sewage and garbage everywhere due to lack of coordination between the state municipal department and health department. He strongly criticized the Congress government and called it a garbage government. He said that people were facing various problems due to seasonal diseases this monsoon.

He alleged that the state government and private hospitals were overflowing with patients due to the poor performance of the Congress government. He reminded that during the BRS regime, the municipal department, GHMC and medical and health departments had held coordination meetings on the seasonal diseases and other health problems 2 months before the monsoon and had taken preventive measures But added that the situation was not visible now.

HC notice to Sabita Indra Reddy in OMC case

Hyderabad, Aug.18 (NSS): In a significant development, the Telangana High Court has issued notices to former minister and BRS MLA Sabita Indra Reddy and retired IAS officer Kripanandam in the sensational illegal mining case of Obulapuram mining company (OMC). Dealing with a petition filed by the CBI challenging the order of the Nampally CBI court, the High Court ordered Sabita and Kripanandam to file their counter affidavits in this regard. The case hearing was adjourned to September 6. Earlier, the Nampally CBI court after a long trial of 15 years, in its final verdict, declared five people guilty and another two innocent in the case. The accused Gali Janardhan Reddy, BV Srinivasa Reddy, Mefaz Ali Khan, the then director of mines department VD Rajagopal were found guilty and were sentenced in the case. Janardhan Reddy was sentenced to seven years in prison, besides imposing a fine of Rs 10,000 each on all the convicts.

Contractors stage protest in Telangana Secretariat again seeking bill payments

Hyderabad: Unable to tolerate the State government's apathy in clearing their pending bills, Mana Ooru Mana Badi contractors staged a protest in front of the chambers of Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Monday. The contractors entered the Secretariat and headed towards the Deputy Chief Minister's chambers. However, police, on noticing their gathering, tried to obstruct them. A brief argument took place between the contractors and the police after they were denied permission to meet the Finance Minister. The contractors informed the police that they only wanted to make an appeal, but were not allowed.

CM Revanth announces padayatra in support of Rahul Gandhi's fight against vote theft

Hyderabad, Aug.18 Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy warned that some political forces are executing the conspiracy of "Vote Chori (Vote Theft)" in the Telangana State also, similar to Bihar and Maharashtra and other parts of India.

Speaking at the 375th birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud Maharaj here on Monday, the Chief Minister said the Congress will thwart away all the attempts being made by some political parties for vote theft to win the elections in Telangana.

The Chief Minister called upon all to join the fight against vote theft. Stating that he along with Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka will participate in the Padayatra in support of Rahul Gandhi's fight against vote theft, Revanth Reddy said the Election Commission registered one crore votes in Maharashtra in 4 months and it helped BJP to come to power in the state from the vote theft. Revanth Reddy took a strong exception to the Election Commission for asking an affidavit from Rahul Gandhi instead of taking action against the responsible in the vote theft scam. It was Rahul Gandhi who exposed vote theft in Bihar where 65 lakh votes

AI-powered citizen services for one crore people by 2027: Sridhar Babu

Hyderabad, Aug.18 Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu has announced that the State government is committed to delivering AI-powered citizen services to one crore people by 2027. He was speaking after inaugurating a three-day training programme for government officials at the Dr. MCR HRD Institute, Jubilee Hills on Monday, organised by the Emerging Technologies Wing of the IT department under the theme "AI-led Digital Transformation – Champions & Catalysts Programme".

Our government is not one that reacts after a problem arises. We believe in being proactive, transparent, and forward-looking. With the help of AI, we aim to build a Telangana where citizen services reach people even before they ask," the Minister said. He outlined the government's vision of making Telangana a hub for a \$5 billion AI economy, which would generate thousands of new jobs. To achieve this, initiatives such as an AI City, AI University, and Telangana AI Innovation Hub are being developed to international standards, Sridhar Babu said. Highlighting Telangana's pioneering efforts, the Minister noted that the State is the first in the country to launch an AI-driven Telangana Data Exchange (TGDeX), which is now serving as a role model for other states. Building on this momentum, the government is working to make over 300 citizen

Governor inaugurates free mega surgical health camp for Divyangjan at Raj Bhavan

Hyderabad, Aug.18 (NSS): A free mega surgical correction and health camp dedicated to providing medical support for Divyangjan was inaugurated at Raj Bhavan community hall on Monday by Governor Jishnu Dev Varma.

The initiative has been jointly organised by the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Hyderabad branch, in association with the Disable Foundation Trust, Dr. Naari Charitable Trust, Agarwal Seva Dal, Ravi Helios Hospital, Pitti Trust, and several other supporting organisations. The camp aims to provide free expert surgical procedures, diagnostic tests, ophthalmic examinations, and distribution of spectacles to persons with disabilities, ensuring access to quality healthcare for the most marginalised.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Jishnu Dev Varma hailed the health camp as not just a medical service but as a "powerful expression of compassion, collaboration, and social responsibility." He underscored the importance of collective efforts by hospitals, NGOs, and volunteers in bridging healthcare gaps faced by the differently-abled community.

The Governor also recalled the passage of the rights of persons with Disabilities Act, enacted under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which expanded the definition of disability from seven to twenty-one categories,



were deleted before the Assembly elections. firming the people's government will fulfill the aspirations of BC community, the Chief Minister criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister of Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy for obstructing the implementation of 42 per cent BC quota in education employment and political opportunities to the backward communities.

Revanth Reddy questioned the Union government for opposing the BC quota in the guise of Muslim. He dared the BJP to scrap Muslim quota in BCs in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. Clarifying there is no mention of religious based quota, the Chief Minister said that the Panchayat Raj act enacted during KCR rule was a curse to the BC community.

Revanth Reddy said

BRS stay away from participating in dharna on the BC quota. Is it Union Minister of Coal G Kishan Reddy or Prime Minister Modi blocking BC reservations?,"he asked. Stating that the Congress government took the responsibility of providing quality education and jobs to BCs, the Chief Minister appealed to the community to pursue higher education and become part of the rulers. Revanth Reddy emphasised that weaker sections will be empowered only when they get power.

He recalled the heroic fight and services rendered by Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud for BCs empowerment by establishing the BC Province. Revanth Reddy alleged that the previous government conspired to destroy famous Khilashapur Fort in the name of mining. We visited the fort and announced the development of the famous fort as a big tourist destination," he said. The Chief Minister said that recognising Papanna Goud's services, the state government is installing the statue of the prominent BC leader near the state Secretariat. "The statues of famous personalities are not meant to organise death and birth anniversaries, but to take forward their aspirations and inspire the future generations," he added.

The Chief Minister said the bills are still pending before the Centre and the ordinance forwarded by the Governor was also pending at the Centre. Demanding the union government for the approval of the bills, Revanth Reddy said that Congress held a big dharna in Delhi, but the centre fell on deaf ears for the last 5 months. "Why did the BJP and



services across 20 departments available through AI-powered platforms, Sridhar Babu said. As part of this initiative, 250 officials from 20 departments have been selected for specialised AI training. Over the next three months, these officials will be mentored by AI experts to help them integrate emerging technologies into governance and service delivery, he added.

Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, Special Chief Secretary Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Secretary Bhavesh Mishra, and other senior officials were also present.



including acid attack survivors. The legislation, he said, empowered millions of Divyangjan by recognising their rights and widening avenues for inclusion. Highlighting Raj Bhavan's own efforts, Dev Varma noted the institution of the Governor's Excellence Awards, under which a special category for Divyangjan was introduced this year. He congratulated inspiring achievers like Paralympic medalist Jeevanji Deepthi and the Aditya Mehta Foundation, who were among the awardees recognised for their outstanding contributions in motivating and empowering differently-abled persons.

Ramanthapur Janmashtami celebrations end in disaster as six electrocuted



Hyderabad, Aug.18 During the Janmashtami celebrations, a tragic incident occurred in Gokhale Nagar, Ramanthapur, Hyderabad, at midnight on Sunday, resulting in the deaths of six individuals due to electrocution, while four others suffered injuries. The disaster unfolded when a chariot carrying an idol of Lord Krishna came into contact with live electric wires after the vehicle that was towing it broke down. oup of young men attempted to manually push the decorated chariot when it allegedly touched the overhead electric lines. The deceased have been identified as Krishna Yadav (21), Suresh Yadav (34), Srikanth Reddy (35), Rudra Vikas (39), Rajendra Reddy (15), and Ganesh (21). Reports indicate that a total of nine people received electric shocks. Local residents promptly moved the victims to the hospital; however, five were pronounced dead upon arrival. Unfortunately, another injured individual, Ganesh (21) from Amberpet, succumbed to his injuries at Osmania General Hospital on Monday afternoon. Several individuals hurt in the incident are receiving care at a private hospital, with their conditions reported as stable. The Uppal police are currently conducting an investigation. Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu expressed his shock over the event and offered his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. He visited Gandhi Hospital to comfort the grieving families of the victims. During his visit, the Minister announced that each bereaved family will receive an ex-gratia payment of ₹5 lakh and confirmed that the government will cover all medical expenses for the injured individuals. This incident is extremely tragic and unfortunate. It is all the more distressing that the mishap occurred when the Shobha Yatra was just 100 meters from its conclusion. Preliminary reports suggest that the accident was caused due to live current passing through a cable wire, he said. The Minister further stated that instructions have been issued for a detailed inquiry under the supervision of the district collector and strict action will be taken against those found responsible after the inquiry report is submitted. He announced that a special drive has been ordered across Greater Hyderabad to review and address the risks posed by hanging cable and electric wires.

No government land available for SC, ST and BCs, says Revanth Reddy

GNS News Agency, August 18

Hyderabad: After admitting that the State government lacked funds to spend even Rs 500 crore a month towards capital expenditure, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday said there was no government land available in villages. There was no patta land available for allotting to SC, ST and BCs. There was no financial flexibility to extend support through different corporations, he said, stressing that only education could transform the lives of the poor and downtrodden. The Chief Minister laid the foundation for a statue of Sardar Sarvai Pappanna Goud at Tank Bund here on Monday.

Later, addressing the gathering at Ravindra Bharathi, the Chief Minister said he did not want to criticise the absence of BRS and BJP members at the Jantar Mantar protest demanding implementation of 42 percent reservations to BCs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy should take up the issue with the President and get assent for the two bills passed in the State Assembly, he said. He alleged that opposition parties were misleading the people, especially BCs, by claiming that the State government was extending reservations to Muslims.

"The BJP government has a grudge against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. Already many cases are booked, and if required, register four more cases against him, but do not oppose his ideologies," Revanth Reddy said. The Chief Minister also slammed the BJP government, stating that it had come to power with fake votes. Between the Assembly elections and Parliament elections in Maharashtra, one crore new votes were enrolled in four months. How was this possible, he asked, and alleged that the Election Commission of India had ridiculed the Indian Constitution.

"Instead of addressing the concerns raised by Rahul Gandhi, the Election Commission is instructing him to file an affidavit," Revanth Reddy said. TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud, speaking at the function, expressed concern that traditional occupations were being neglected. Recalling his recent trip to France, he said a Microsoft vice president had informed him that he hailed from a carpenter's family and was still continuing with the occupation.

"After going home, the Microsoft vice president in France is continuing his traditional occupation of carpentry," he said, stating that the Telangana government should ensure that traditional occupations were not neglected and the present generation should be encouraged to take up the professions.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Alaska Summit, a damp squib

For all the hype surrounding the Alaska summit between United States President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, it turned out to be more of optics than of any substance. Known to revel in orchestrated public spectacles and grab credit for even the slightest hint of success—real or perceived—, Trump was uncharacteristically quiet and sullen after the three-hour-long high-stakes meeting at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. The summit failed to achieve any breakthrough for peace in Ukraine despite high expectations. For those looking for a broad framework to resolve the conflict and end the three-year-long Russia-Ukraine war, it was a day of disappointment. However, for Putin, seen by the Western world as a war criminal, it was a significant diplomatic triumph that boosted his international standing. In fact, the Russian strongman had it everything on a platter — a colourful red carpet welcome, a brief ride in Trump's limousine, a chance to be the first to deliver opening remarks before the media and, to top it all, the host's endorsement of his plan to seek a sweeping peace agreement in Ukraine instead of securing the urgent ceasefire. By bowing to this position, Trump has poured cold water on the hopes of Ukrainians and their European supporters for an immediate halt to the bloodshed. Now, the conflict grinds on, and the people of Ukraine will continue to suffer. Neither side offered clarity on whether any substantive issues had been discussed or resolved. Both spoke vaguely of “understandings” and “progress” without elaboration. Notably, both leaders avoided taking questions from the media, an unusual move for Trump, fuelling speculation that there was little real progress to present.

Chilkur priest welcomes Telangana BJP chief for his letter to pm on governor's powers issue

Hyderabad, Aug.18 : Chilkur Balaji Temple Head Priest C S Rangarajan has hailed the letter written by Telangana BJP chief N Ramchander Rao to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with regard to the Presidential Reference of the two judges Bench Judgement on Powers of Governor and the President. In the letter, Ramchander Rao brings to light the Deity Right to be worshiped and Thiruppan Alwar Ammal (SC/ST) communities' Doctrine of Dharma related to worship of the Deity which are intricately involved. In the above context, it is pertinent that the above reference not only need to be admitted by the Supreme Court, which is going to decide regarding the maintainability of the above reference on August 19, 2025, but also considering inalienability of the right of Thiruppan Alwar Ammal (SC/ST) communities' Doctrine of Dharma to propitiate and protect the worship of Hindu Deities, the above reference and issue No.12 framed by the Supreme Court, ought to be compulsorily allowed, as otherwise. In this connection, N Ramchander Rao submitted that R Venkataramani, Attorney General for India, was requested by the Supreme Court to assist the Court, for which he has accepted and as such, his role is confined to that of Amicus Curie. As such, your good selves may take steps to appropriately instruct the arguing Counsel on behalf of Government of India, to handle the above reference sensitively in order to ensure effective adjudication of the above reference, keeping in view of the larger National interest and also the above referred Deity Rights i.e. Thiruppan Alwar Ammal (SC/ST) communities' Doctrine of Dharma related to worship of the Deity.

Further, as mandated by Article 145 (3) of the Constitution of India as per which, any case involving a substantial question of law as to interpretation of the Constitution of India, the minimum number of Judges shall be five (5). It may be pertinent to note that the makers of the Constitution have deliberately kept such a high bar, to ensure that no ad-hoc or inadequate or inappropriate decision is arrived at by the Supreme Court in the matters involving substantial question of law.

Govt will submit report to the centre to seek funds: Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar

Hyderabad, Aug.18 : A departmental review meeting was held at the Secretariat on Monday under the chairmanship of Telangana State Welfare Minister Adluri Laxman Kumar. The review meeting was held on the funds to be received by the Social Welfare Department on behalf of the Central Government to the State Government.

Speaking on the occasion, The Minister stated that a detailed discussion was held on the status of funds along with the State Chief Secretary (CS) and the Principal Secretaries of the Social Welfare Department, and a report was prepared to be submitted to the Central Government after a comprehensive review of all the issues. The Minister said, “Due to the negligence of the previous rulers in not reviewing this in the previous government, many welfare programs that were to be provided to the poor people have been lost due to the lack of funds from the Central Government.”

He also said that after assuming responsibility as a Minister, he had been reviewing one after the other and taking decisions on how to make welfare schemes accessible to the people.

The Minister made it clear that steps would be taken to provide basic facilities, especially in SC, ST and Minority Gurukul schools and added that education should not be neglected under any circumstances. The Minister assured that there should be quality in the diet in the Gurukuls and added that the state government would provide the necessary funds for it. The Minister said that he would soon go to Delhi and submit a report directly to the Central Government and work to ensure that the funds due to the state are received quickly.

The welfare of the people is the aim of the Congress government. MLA Jare“



“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Aswaraopeta constituency, August 17, Indian Chronicle:“Honorable MLA Jare Adinarayana today handed over checks worth Rs. 6.45,500 sanctioned to the beneficiaries of Annapareddipalli Mandal through the Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF) to 20 beneficiaries at the Panchayat office in Annapareddipalli village. “Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Telangana State Government is saving lives by raising crores of rupees in the form of the Chief Minister Relief Fund



for the common middle-class people by covering medical expenses and LOCs for emergency surgeries and saving people's lives.

The welfare of the people is the aim of the government, and the Congress government is working to ensure that schemes like the Chief Minister Relief Fund are of maximum benefit to the people. “Congress party leaders, local leaders, public representatives, beneficiaries, and others participated in the program...

Heavy Rains: Narayana Assures Woman Whose Wall Collapsed“



“Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas.“Indian Chronicle August,17. “Wankidi Due to the

heavy rains that have been falling for the past two days, the wall of the house of a woman named Tanubhai from Eno village in Wankidi mandal collapsed. Upon learning of this, Wankidi mandal president Gurnule Narayana went to her house on Sunday and assured her to be brave and that he would definitely ensure that Indiramma's house comes in the second phase. Also, as the water stagnated at the bridge on the main road leading to Enali village, he visited the bridge along with the villagers and reminded them of the promise made last year to repair it.

Minister Ponguleti MLA Jare visited Chandrugonda.“



“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Aswaraopeta constituency, August 18, Indian Chronicle:In Bhadradi Kothagudem district, Aswaraopet constituency, Chandrugonda mandal, Telangana State Minister for Home, Revenue, and Information, Gow Sri Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy “Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy visited the houses in Bendalapadu village for the Indiramma Indira Gruha Pravasha event attended by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Later, he visited the Elepad, where the Chief Minister will



land, spoke to the officials, gave some suggestions, and then inspected the Chief Minister's Sabha site in Damaracharla. “On this occasion, Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy was accompanied by District Collector Jitesh V. Patil, SP Rohit Raju, Aswaraopet MLA Gow Sri Jare Adinarayana, Sathupalli MLA Sri Mati Matta Ragamayi, Bhadrachalam MLA Tellam Venkat Rao, Vaira MLA Maloth Ramdas Nayak, district officials, mandal officials, senior leaders of the mandal Congress Party, and others.

375th Birth Anniversary of Sardar Sarvai Papanna celebrated at Ravindra Bharathi

Hyderabad, Aug.18 : The 375th birth anniversary celebrations of Sardar Sarvai Papanna, a symbol of courage and bravery, was held at Ravindra Bharathi here today. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, TPCC president and MLC Mahesh Kumar Goud and others offered floral tributes to the legendary freedom fighter.

On this occasion, Mahesh Kumar Goud said that Sardar Sarvai Papanna rose to become a formidable leader and had even captured Bhongir and Golconda forts during Aurangzeb's reign. Recalling Papanna's heroic deeds, he said that the legendary fighter was a true people's leader dedicated to public service. The Chief Minister has decided to install a statue of Papanna near the state Secretariat and directed officials to complete it within six months. “Despite financial constraints, the government is fulfilling its promises. The CM is implementing Rahul Gandhi's slogan — ‘As per the population, so should be the share.’ The caste survey taken up in Telangana is a historic decision that will guide the entire country,” he claimed.He criticized the op-



position for obstructing legislations aimed at providing 42% reservations for Backward Classes (BCs) and urged leaders to draw inspiration from Sarvai Papanna and Jyotiba Phule in serving society.

TTD appeals to devotees not to approach middlemen for Darshan or Accommodation

Tirumala, Aug.18 :Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) appeals to devotees visiting Tirumala not to approach brokers or middlemen for darshan or accommodation.Devotees are advised to book darshan through TTD's official website or through token-issuing counters only.Recently, one Y. Vishwanath from Hyderabad lodged a complaint stating that one Vanam Nataraj Narendra Kumar and K.S. Nataraj Sharma collected ₹90,000 from him, claiming to arrange VIP break darshan tickets.

According to the complaint, the accused persons promised VIP break darshan tickets for 12 members on August 16, 2024, and collected ₹90,000. However, despite repeated requests and phone calls, they neither provided the tickets nor refunded the money.On investigation, TTD Vigilance found that the accused have been cheating several people in Hyderabad and surrounding areas in the similar manner. Around 12 police cases have already been registered against them. TTD clarified that Vanam Nataraj Narendra Kumar and K.S. Nataraj Sharma are not TTD employees and have no connection whatsoever with TTD.TTD is frequently receiving complaints from devotees regarding fake darshan ticket bookin Hence, TTD strongly advises devotees not to rely on unauthorized websites or middlemen. and reiterates only to book through the official TTD website <https://ttddevasthanams.ap.gov.in> or the TTD mobile app using Aadhaar detail For information, devotees may also contact the TTD toll-free number 155257.To create awareness among devotees regarding fraudulent activities by middlemen, TTD is undertaking campaigns across various media platforms.If devotees suspect any fraudulent activities, they are requested to contact TTD Vigilance officials on 0877-2263828, where officers will be available round-the-clock.

Nadda assures Lokesh for release of 29,000 mt urea to AP by Aug 21

Hyderabad, Aug.18 Following the request made by AP minister Nara Lokesh regarding urea shortage in Andhra Pradesh, Union minister JP Nadda today assured him for release of 29,000 metric tonnes of urea by August 21.

On Monday, AP minister met Union minister for health, fertilizers and chemicals JP Nadda in New Delhi with a plea to take immediate steps facilitating Andhra Pradesh to overcome urea shortage. Lokesh highlighted the severe shortage of urea amid the ongoing Kharif season and urged for immediate allocation of urea to support farming community Responding to the plea, Nadda assured for effectively addressing the shortage, saying that the centre will release about 29,000 MT of urea to AP by August 21.

Besides, Lokesh discussed about various developmental activities being taken up in AP. He informed the Union minister about the proposed establishment of a Plastic Park to promote local industry and to generate employment opportunities for youth. He also discussed about establishment of permanent campus in National Institute of Pharmaceutical education and research (NIPER) in Visakhapatnam. Already 100 acres of land has been identified for the project and needs necessary permissions from the Centre for its development. He also sought the Centre's support for various pending projects which are taken up under the coalition government in AP.

Call for National Pension Scheme- Senior Journalists' National Conference

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug.18 The first-ever national conference of the Senior Journalists in India, to be held in Thiruvananthapuram from August 19 to 21, 2025, will make a call for a national pension scheme for senior journalists, in view of the extreme disparities in social security benefits available to retired journalists in various states.

The conference is being hosted by the Senior Journalists' Forum-Kerala, an organization which has brought together most of the senior journalists in the state under its banner. It has units in all the districts of Kerala and conducts regular organizational elections and also a number of programmes for the benefit of senior journalists and their families. These include a welfare fund for meeting urgent medical expenses for those who are in financial difficulties, family get togethers, group tours for families to all parts of India, honouring journalists who have won awards and other major recognitions, etc. Members of the SJFK are represented in the various committees constituted by the State Government for journalists' welfare, including the State Pension Management Committee.

The conference will address all major concerns of the journalists in the country including the need for ensuring decent pensions for journalists in all the states, inclusion of all sections of the profession like those who worked in the desk, reporting, proof, photojournalists, etc., in the pension schemes, a nationwide health insurance scheme for senior journalists, restoration of railway concessions and other benefits for seniors, higher minimum pension in PF, etc. The conference will elect a national level committee to carry forward the campaigns and public actions to be decided by the national conference.Around 250 delegates from 21 states are expected to participate in the conference to be held at PWD Rest House conference hall, Thycad. It will be inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on August 20. A national media seminar the same day will be inaugurated by eminent media analyst Sevanti Ninan.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to the general public at large that, Yedlapalli Nagarani D/o Yedlapalli Chitti Babu R/o H.No. 4-3-289/2, Municipal Quarters, Adilabad is the owner of Plot No. 57, measuring 40' x 60'=2400 Sq Fts, in Sy.No. 54, situated at Village, G.P. & Mdl; Malvala, Adilabad, within the limits of Adilabad Municipality. That, the original link document No. 1114/1997 has been lost.

If anyone has any claim, right, title or interest of any kind in the said property, they may contact the undersigned within 7 days of the publication of this Notice, with all documents of claim and title.

If any one finds the above document kindly handover to undersigned.

If no objection is received within 7 days, and if any claim and objection arise, it shall be deemed to have been waived Dt: 14-08-2025

Bipin Kumar Patel
Advocate,
ADARSH Building,
N.H.No.44, Adilabad
Cell: 9440005500

'Scene' is permanent...Sweet memories are eternal... Today is World Photography Day..““



““Ranjith naik Bhukya , Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau , August 18, Indian Chronicle:me is running fast...everyone knows that the time that has passed will never come back.t it isphotography that keeps the memories of the past alive before our eyes.ch photos can take us back many years.n remind us of the sweet memories of the past.n bring back the events of yesteryear...reover, they can capture the beauty of nature.n keep beautiful scenes forever...n show the signs of good deeds, the forms of past people, and many other incidents in the form of pictures.ere is no doubt that photos are a part of everyone's life. It can also be said that they have infiltrated our daily lives in the form of selfies. However, this photography also has a day. Today is World Photography Day.autiful and wonderful scenes can be preserved in a camera for a lifetime. Photos give us the opportunity to always look back on the memories of the past. Photos not only preserve unique bonds and sweet moments but alsohave the power to awaken history. The scene fades in an instant. Photography captures that scene.It is photography that preserves sweet memories forever. Celebrating any auspicious event without a camera is unthinkable. Photography has acquired many modern trends since then. The camera has completed almost 186 years. The journey of photography, which began many years ago, has undergone many changes. World Photography Day is celebrated every year on August 19. The word "photography" comes from a combination of two

Greek words. Photo means 'light.' Graph means writing... That is, writing with light. In 1820, the French scientist Joseph Nicéphore made a photographic device and took the first photograph. On August 18, 1839, L.J.M. Daguerre of France proved that the scene could be preserved permanently through the silver iodide method. He announced this to the world on August 19, 1839. It reached England from France in 1839 and came to India at the same time. In 1961, the first photo studio was set up in Karimnagar. In 1980, color photography began to flourish with computerized printing machines.In the past, cameras had to be carried separately. Now, cameras have become commonplace in every cell phone. With the advent of smartphones in the market, the capabilities of cameras in cellphones have increased significantly. Some cellphone companies are launching their products specifically for those interested in photography. Since they are multipurpose, taking photos has become a habit for everyone. Selfies have become a sensational process in recent times.Amazing... His photography... from agency to national level...Sheikh Sharif, the head of Classic Photo Studio, an international photographer from Bhadrachalam, excelled in photography and gained recognition at the state and national levels. He has been taking artistic and tribal lifestyle pictures for 30 years and is receiving praise. He participates in photography competitions in any state. In 2017, he won two fellowship awards from the Image Clegg Society in America and made Bhadradi famous internationally.

Godavari rising at Bhadradi... Officials alerting low-lying areas



“Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, August 18, Indian Chronicle: The Godavari is gradually rising at Bhadrachalam. Godavari, which was 34.1 feet at 5 am, is gradually rising to 35.7 feet at 10 am, 37.1 feet at 3 pm, and 37.50 feet at 4 pm. As the Nizamsagar project is receiving heavy flood, the project gates have been lifted, and 1.60 lakh cusecs of water have been released downstream. In addition, as the Sriramsagar project is receiving heavy flood, officials say that the inflow is likely to reach 3 lakhs by night. Due to



heavy flooding due to the rains upstream, 17 thousand cusecs of water have been released downstream at Charla Thaliperu.

As floodwater from Pranahita enters Godavari, the Godavari flood at Bhadrachalam is gradually increasing. Officials are predicting that the floodwaters are likely to increase further at night. People in low-lying areas are being alerted in advance. Steps are being taken to evacuate pregnant women to PHCs in agency areas.

Selection Of Guest Teachers And Faculty

On August 18th“Kumrambheem, Asifabad district Reporter.Jade Srinivas.“Indian Chronicle August,17.“Komuram Bheem Asifabad Mahatma Jyotibapule Gurukul School&College on Monday,August 18, for teaching in English medium, Social Science PGT (Female) 1 Physics JL (Female) Mathematics JL (Female) 1 Chemistry JL (General) 1 Interested candidates are advised to appear with original 1 set of Xerox certificates related to PG, B.Ed.TET.Demos for these posts will be held at Mahatma Jyotibapule Boys' Schools/ Colleges in the district center on August 18, 2025 at 10 am, said B Shweta, District Convener of Mahatma Jyotibapule Gurukuls, in a statement.



Minister Ponguleti's Extensive Tour in Tekulapally Mandal“

* Women welcomed with traditional Harathi** Foundation laid for development works worth 8.95 crores

““Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, August 18, Indian Chronicle: On Monday, Minister for Revenue, Housing, and Public Relations, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, along with MLA Koram Kanakaiah, extensively toured Tekulapalli mandal. Congress leaders and supporters gave him a grand welcome. Women greeted him with traditional Harathi. Later, at Mutyalampadu Crossroads, under the leadership of Koram Surender, Minister Ponguleti, MLA Koram Kanakaiah, and Wyra MLA Randas Naik were felicitated with garlands.“As part of the tour, foundation stones were laid for development works worth ?8.95 crores across the mandal. The minister laid the foundation for a high-level bridge between Paata Thanda and Rampuram villages with ?2.50 crores. He also laid the foundation for development works on the BT road between Tavurya Tanda and Kokya Tanda villages with ?1.45 crores. To ease the difficulties of the people of Petram Chelaka Stage – Petram Chelaka village, he unveiled a plaque for the construction of a high-level bridge with ?2 crores.“In Kishtaram Gram Panchayat, villagers had been facing hardships in performing funeral rites of the deceased. When MLA Koram brought this issue to the attention of Minister Ponguleti, he sanctioned ?3 crores for development works and laid the foundation stone, also unveiling the plaque.““Speaking on the occasion, MLA Koram Kanakaiah said that in Indiramma Rajyam (Indira Gandhi's welfare state), steps are being taken to ensure that welfare benefits reach everyone, and expressed gratitude to the minister for paying special attention and supporting the development of their constituency.“Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy emphasized that contractors must ensure quality in the construction of bridges. He warned that substandard bridges will not be tolerated and have no place under the Congress government. He added that MLA Koram Kanakaiah has been a strong support for the people of Tekulapalli mandal, and assured that he himself would stand in the forefront of all development works. He also instructed officials to submit proposals for road construction projects based on people's needs.“The event was attended by District Collector Jitesh V. Patil, Illandu constituency Congress leader Koram Surender, RDO Madhu, Tahsildar Veerabhadram, MPDO Malleshwari, DSP Chandrabhanu, Market Committee Chairman Rambabu, CI Battula Satyanarayana, Tekulapalli SI A.Rajender, Bodu SI P. Srikanth, Allapalli SI Someshwara Rao, Yellandu SI Nagul Meera, ATMA Committee Chairman Boda Mangilal, PACS Chairman Lakkineni Surendar Rao, Congress mandal leaders Eedi Ganesh, Mood Sanjay, Bandla Rajini, Mandal Congress President Bhukya Deva Naik, Senior Congress leader Dal Singh Naik, Islavath Redya Naik, Kambhampati



Srinivas, Dalapati Srinivas, Lakkineni Shyam Babu, and several other mandal Congress leaders.

Shadnagar ACP Urges Peaceful Celebration of Ganesh Utsav“



“INDIAN CHRONICLE ““Shadnagar, August 18,““ Shadnagar Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Lakshminarayana has called for the celebration of Ganesh Utsav in a peaceful atmosphere. Speaking as the chief guest at a peace meeting organized under the auspices of Circle Inspector (CI) Vijayakumar at Bugga Reddy Gardens in the town as part of the Ganesh Utsav festivities, he emphasized the importance of obtaining online permissions for setting up Ganesh mandaps without fail. He also announced that geo-tagging would be implemented for all Ganesh mandaps.““ACP Lakshminarayana advised organizers to take appropriate precautions at the mandaps in view of the ongoing rains. He urged the public to immediately dial 100 if they notice any suspicious individuals during the celebrations. He further explained that officials would be available to make all necessary arrangements for the Ganesh immersion program.““Town CI Vijayakumar, Commissioner

Suneetha, Vishwa Hindu Parishad state leader Bandari Ramesh, Utsav Committee leader Ande Babayya, Market Committee Vice Chairman Babar Khan, Electricity Department AD Satyanarayana, MVI Vasu, Fire Station Officer Jagan, Lawyer Chendi Mahender Reddy, and Muslim leaders addressed the gathering.

They highlighted that in Shadnagar town, all festivals are celebrated with a sense of brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims. They stressed that the responsibility lies with the mandap organizers to ensure no untoward incidents occur at the venues. They also called for maintaining cleanliness at the mandaps and keeping fire cylinders along with water readily available. The speakers urged everyone to conduct the Ganesh Navaratri celebrations with devotion and faith.““The program saw participation from leaders of various political parties.

Press Sewa Portal is a single-window solution ensuring transparency and faster approvals: PRGI

Hyderabad, Aug.18 : The Press Information Bureau (PIB), Hyderabad, under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, organized a one-day workshop titled 'Vartalap' addressing the issues faced by publishers at CGO Towers, Kavadiiguda, here on Monday. In his address, Yogesh Baweja, Press Registrar General of India(PRGI), emphasized that the Press Sewa Portal has been introduced as a single-window solution to simplify the registration process. This initiative aims to enhance transparency, accelerate approvals, and improve the ease of doing business for publishers. Earlier, Shruti Patil, Additional Director General of PIB Hyderabad, highlighted that this was the first interactive session of its kind in Telangana, designed to clarify publishers' queries and provide guidance on the new PRP Act. She also announced that PIB Hyderabad, with the support of PRGI, would soon establish a dedicated helpline for publishers. Ashutosh Mohle, Deputy Press Registrar, delivered a detailed presentation on the new Act. He explained that the entire registration process has transitioned online since March 2024. He stated that applications would be deemed approved if there is no response within 60 days and emphasized the importance of publishers avoiding agents and using the PRGI portal directly. A live demonstration of the portal was given by Gourav Sharma, Assistant Director of NIC. Publishers from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh actively participated in the interactive session. PIB officials, including Dr. Manas Krishna Kanth, Deputy Direc-

tor, along with Media and Communication Officers Gayathri and Shivacharan Reddy, and officials from I&PR, attended the workshop alongside publishers from both states.

BJP welcomes Cong govt's decision to install statue of Sardar Sarva Papanna Goud

Hyderabad, Aug.18 Paying tributes to Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud on his birth anniversary, Telangana state BJP President N Ramchander Rao today expressed his gratitude to state government for taking a decision to install statue of Papana Goud who had fought against the Mughal empire and stood bravely against oppressive feudal system.Participating in the birth anniversary celebrations of Sardar Papanna Goud at the BJP state office today, Ramachander Rao recalled the invaluable services rendered by Papanna Goud for the country. Papanna Goud fought and became a martyr for poor, downtrodden and marginalized communities in Telangana, he noted.

MLC Naveen Kumar Reddy Hails Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud as an Ideal Warrior“



“INDIAN CHRONICLE ““Shad Nagar, August 18““ Mahabub Nagar MLC N. Naveen Kumar Reddy described Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud as a brave warrior who made rulers tremble and sacrificed everything for the welfare of the oppressed and the self-respect of the masses. He emphasized that Papanna Goud remains an inspiration for all.““The remarks came during grand celebrations marking the 375th birth anniversary of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud in Shad Nagar town center, Ranga Reddy district. Organized under the auspices of various Goud and youth associations, the event saw the MLC attending as the chief guest in response to the call from Goud community organizations.““On the occasion, MLC Naveen Kumar Reddy offered floral tributes to the statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud, paying homage in a solemn ceremony. He

highlighted that Papanna Goud's birth in Telangana is a source of pride for everyone, as he boldly opposed tyrannical rule and dedicated himself to the upliftment of marginalized sections.““Calling Papanna Goud India's first Telugu revolutionary hero and the founder of the first Bahujan kingdom, the MLC stated that his birth anniversary feels like a festival for all. He noted that several BRS leaders and Backward Classes (BC) figures across the state are commemorating his struggles today.““The program was attended by prominent figures including Nakkala Venkatesh Goud, former councilors Srinivas Goud, Eshwar Raju, BS Sudheer, Pilli Shekhar, Jupally Shankar, MPTC Katna Ravinder, Elikatta Srinivas Reddy, Raghavender Goud, as well as leaders from the Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud Youth Association and others.

Grand Mahakumbh Samprokshanam and Sacred Rituals Held at Pedda Janammamet Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Swamy Temple“



“INDIAN CHRONICLE ““SHADNAGAR, AUGUST 18““Under the leadership of former Shadnagar MLA Bakkani Narsimhulu, the Pedda Janammamet Sri Lakshmi Venkateshwara Swamy Temple in Shadnagar hosted the Mahakumbh Samprokshanam and a series of sacred rituals, drawing large crowds of devotees and prominent figures. The spiritual ceremonies, marked by deep devotion, commenced on August 15 and are set to continue until August 20, according to temple authorities.““On Monday, the events were graced by the presence of former MLA Anjaiah Yadav and several notable town figures, who joined devotees in participating in the sacred programs. The day's

schedule included a range of rituals such as Nitya Sevakalam, Vedadi Vinnapalu, Nitya Havanam, Sudarshana Homam, Visheshha Homam, Nitya Purnahuti, Pavithranga Visheshha Aradhana, Vedadi Shattumurai, and Tirtha Prasada Goshti, all conducted with reverence and precision.““The ongoing festivities have created a vibrant spiritual atmosphere, with large numbers of devotees and residents attending to seek blessings and partake in the sacred ceremonies. The temple authorities have ensured meticulous arrangements to accommodate the influx of visitors, fostering an environment of devotion and unity during this significant religious event.

Santosh Kumar Verma Assumes Charge as Divisional Railway Manager, Hyderabad Division

Hyderabad, Aug.18 Santosh Kumar Verma has taken charge of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Hyderabad Division, South Central Railway on Monday. He belongs to the Indian Railways

Stores Service (IRSS), 1995 batch. Before taking over charge of the new assignment as Divisional Railway Manager, he was serving as Joint Secretary in Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi. Santosh Kumar Verma holds a BE (Bachelor of Engineering) in Mechanical Engineering from the Madan Mohan Malviya University of Technology (MMMUT) and M. Tech from Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. He has held various positions as Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, Nagpur / South East Central Railway, Dy. Chief Materials Manager / Central Organization for Railway Electrification (CORE) / Prayagraj. He had also held the post of Director/Stores/Research Development and Standardization Organization (RDSO)/Lucknow, Chief Materials Manager/North Western Railway/Ajmer, Additional Divisional Railway Manager/



Hubli Division/South Western Railway. He had also undergone training in Public Policy Management from prestigious institutes like Indian School of Business (ISB)/Hyderabad, INSEAD/Singapore and ICLIF/Malaysia.

Students refuse to enter classrooms as Army Law College Pune protest continues on day 11

GNS News Agency, August 18

Students of Army Law College in have continued their protest against the principal and registrar for the eleventh day on Monday by refusing to enter classrooms. Lectures were conducted by professors in open spaces in the college building. The Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), to which the college is affiliated, has written to the principal on Thursday last week demanding a report on the protest and its resolution.

A student of the college told The Indian Express, “We are continuing the protest on the eleventh day now. We have refused to enter the classroom, but since students were missing out on academics, we are sitting outside the classrooms and the professors are conducting the classes there. All 377 students are against her, we don't know why the administration is supporting the principal.”“We have no other choice left to continue this protest. Our primary demand is the principal resigns and that has not been met yet. If we stop now she has a vindictive nature and we don't want to fall prey to it,” he added. Visuals of students marching on campus the previous night have also appeared on social media.

The students have alleged that after Dr Madhushree Joshi and Col Suneel Mann took over as Principal and Registrar respectively, the college's environment became hostile, unprofessional, and oppressive. They allege that faculty members are being assigned subjects outside their core expertise, academic timetables are frequently changed with little to no prior notice, implementing academic policies that hinder students' mental health, dissolution of the Student



Council, and other issues.Pro Vice Chancellor of SPPU Parag Kalkar told The Indian Express, “We have been informed by the students about the issue last week. Accordingly we have sent a letter to the principal to resolve the issue through email. The letter was sent on Thursday and the college was to respond immediately. Today is the first working day after Thursday. After we receive the report, we will take an appropriate decision according to the University Act. If the issue does not get resolved at the college level then the University will get involved.”Joshi had previously denied the allegations against her and said the “protest was neither expected nor required, as the ALC office is always open for discussion”, after the administration called in the police on campus on August 8 when the protest began. Joshi or Col. Mann could not be reached for a comment on Monday.

“Vicious racist attack on two Sikh elderly men in Wolverhampton”: Sikh Federation strongly condemns incident, questions UK govt

GNS News Agency, August 18

An alleged video from Wolverhampton has gone viral showing two elderly Sikh men being assaulted in broad daylight.An alleged video from Wolverhampton has gone viral showing two elderly Sikh men being assaulted in broad daylight.Sikh Federation, the UK-based Sikh rights body Monday condemned the alleged racist attack on two Sikh elderly men in Wolverhampton.An alleged video from Wolverhampton has gone viral showing two elderly Sikh men being assaulted in broad daylight. One of the victims can be seen without his turban laying on the floor, while another is being kicked and punched. According to media reports, the British Transport Police arrested three teenagers for the racial attack.

The body said that they have spoken to both victims and their families following the attack last Friday at around 2 pm by a group of young white men outside Wolverhampton train station.“The elderly gentlemen, both local taxi drivers, were on duty outside the station, while working for a local taxi firm. A group of three white men exited the station and approached one of the drivers and demanded he take them to Oldbury. One of the drivers told us they were very rude and abusive and ordered him to take them. He explained that the system does not work this way and that they would have to go into the taxi rank and book from there. But they were not interested or listening, instead they continued with their swearing and abuse. They used the P word and laughed, before walking away. The group then returned after being told the same by other drivers and were a lot more aggressive and abusive towards the driver. There was a barrage of racist abuse using the P word accusing him of only taking P customers,” said the UK body in a statement.

“They then stepped to his face and started pushing him and within seconds he was being assaulted and punched in the face. His dastaar (turban) was removed while he was being punched and attacked from all sides by the three men and he fell to the floor as the attack continued. When a colleague who was also a friend who is in his 70s tried to stop them and come to his aid the group turned on him and brutally attacked him. He has several broken ribs, is heavily bruised, having difficulty breathing and is in pain. Both victims have been living and working in the UK for over 30 years, and never experienced such a violent and scary attack. The assault only stopped when members of the public intervened and shouted at them to stop as they recorded the whole thing. We understand all three men were arrested and detained by police, before being released on bail on Saturday,” said the Sikh Federation I strongly condemn the horrific attack on two elderly Sikh men in Wolverhampton, UK, during the course of which one Sikh's turban was removed forcibly.“What is shocking is despite having many who witnessed the attacks as well as CCTV



footage and taking the attackers into custody, the police officers only reached out to speak to the victims more than 48 hours after the attack as the video of the attack went viral. They were told due to limited resources their statements would be taken later today. No one from victim support has been in contact despite such a brutal attack,” added the statement.“There has been a worrying increase in Anti-Sikh hate crimes across the UK since Labour came to power. What is most concerning is that recent incidents have targeted those that are most vulnerable in the community, either young children or elders. Furthermore, these crimes and attacks are being carried out in public places and during the daytime,” said Sikh Federation in a statement.

Dabinderjit Singh, the Lead Executive for Political Engagement at the Sikh Federation (UK) said: “Keir Starmer in his efforts to appeal to Reform UK voters needs to accept he has unwittingly unleashed a level of hate with his irresponsible ‘island of strangers’ immigration speech. This also appears to be preventing him and the Labour government delivering on their specific promise before the General Election to treat Anti-Sikh hate on a par with Antisemitism and Islamophobia.”

Jas Singh, Principal Advisor to the Sikh Federation (UK) said: “These two elderly men have been left seriously injured and traumatised by this attack, with no support and limited follow up from the authorities or police. It is unacceptable that the follow up yesterday only came after the video of the attack went viral.

This incident must be treated as a religious and racially aggravated hate crime, as this is exactly what it is. A brutal racist attack by three young men on two elderly Sikh taxi drivers without any provocation. The UK Government, especially after Keir Starmer's reference to ‘island of strangers’ immigration speech needs to urgently address Anti-Sikh hate and act upon the recommendations nearly 5 years ago by the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs.”

Row over Bengali-speaking migrants | Bengal announces financial scheme for returning migrants: Rs 5000/month for a year

GNS News Agency, August 18

Row over Bengali-speaking migrants | Bengal announces financial scheme for returning migrants: Rs 5000/month for a yearThe decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Banerjee. (File Photo)West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday announced a new financial scheme for migrants returning to the state in the wake of detention and deportation of Bengali-speaking people from different parts of the country, especially BJP-ruled states like Delhi, Haryana, and Maharashtra, on suspicion of them being illegal Bangladesh immigrants.

Under the scheme, named Sramosree, every migrant family would receive Rs 5000 per month for a year on their return.The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Banerjee.Addressing the mediapersons after the Cabinet meeting, the chief minister said: “In the double-engine government states, Bengali migrant workers are being attacked in a planned manner. They are being detained, jailed, and even deported to Bangladesh. Our 22 lakh migrant workers work in other states. We have decided to stand by those who have been tortured and are returning to West Bengal without anything. We have decided to launch this scheme, Sramosree, for their rehabilitation.”According to the chief minister, the state Labour Department will be the nodal body for implementing the scheme.“We will start a portal on Sramosree, where migrant workers can apply for the benefits. They will also be given jobs under the Karmasree project,” the chief minister said, adding the returning migrant workers will be included in other schemes like Khadya-Sathi and Sasthya-



Sathi. In case the migrant worker gets a job within a year of their return, the CM said, the nodal body would then decide whether the monthly compensation could be continued or not. There have been several cases of West Bengal migrant workers being detained in various states during verification drives carried out by the respective state authorities. Some were even pushed into Bangladesh from Assam, another BJP-ruled state. While some have been brought back from Bangladesh, families of several deported migrants have filed habeas corpus petitions in the High Court. For the two months, the TMC and West Bengal chief minister have on several occasions hit out at the BJP for “exporting their anti-Bengal agenda to other parts of the country in a strategic and systemic manner.”“Speaking Bengali does not make one a Bangladeshi. These individuals are as much citizens of India as anyone else, regardless of what language they speak.

Operation Sindoor was ‘declaration of India’s ability to stand tall through self-reliance’: DRDO chief Samir Kamat



GNS News Agency, August 18

Operation Sindoor was a “declaration of India’s ability to stand tall through self-reliance, strategic foresight and indigenous technological strength,” Samir V Kamat, Chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), said Saturday.Addressing the 14th convocation ceremony of the Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT) in Pune, Kamat said, “Just a few weeks ago, India launched Operation Sindoor. This was a highly coordinated, multidimensional operation that addressed a

high-stakes challenge along our western borders.”

Without disclosing operational specifics, he said, “I can share with a sense of pride that the success of Operation Sindoor was not merely defined by the courage and capability of our soldiers in uniform, but also by the technological backbone that supported them with sensors, unmanned platforms, secure communications, AI-based decision support, as well as precision weaponry.”The forces, he said, used indigenous systems during the operation, “such as Akash short-range surface-to-air missiles, the medium range surface to air missiles, the BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, the D4 anti-drone system, the airborne early warning and control, the Akashteer system as well as the C4I systems (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence). All of these emerged from our indigenous defence R&D community, and institutions such as DIAT also played a crucial role in their development.”He further said, “Operation Sindoor was more than a mission... It was also a call to the next generation to keep this momentum going and make India a technology leader in defence technologies.”At the convocation, the Institute awarded degrees to 298 students, including 206 MTech students, 68 MSc and 24 PhD students in various disciplines. A total of 18 gold medals were also awarded to the students this year.

Sharad Pawar claims offer of 160 Assembly seats before Maharashtra polls, says he and Rahul Gandhi declined it

GNS News Agency, August 18

Pawar lauded Rahul Gandhi’s recent presentation on alleged polling irregularities and criticised the Election Commission of India (ECI) for seeking a separate affidavit from him.Pawar lauded Rahul Gandhi’s recent presentation on alleged polling irregularities and criticised the Election Commission of India (ECI) for seeking a separate affidavit from him. Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar Saturday said two people had approached him ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections, claiming they could guarantee 160 out of 288 seats. Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, Pawar said he facilitated a meeting between these people and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, but the two leaders ultimately dismissed the offer, stating, “This is not our way”.

“We did not give it the attention it perhaps required. But I still remember — before the Assembly elections were announced, two people came to meet me in Delhi. They told me that Maharashtra has 288 Assembly seats, and out of those, they would guarantee us 160 seats. I was surprised. To be clear, even though they claimed such a guarantee, I had no doubts about the Election Commission. But such people do show up, so I ignored them.”“I arranged their meeting with Rahul Gandhi. They told him whatever they wanted to. However, both Rahul Gandhi and I felt that we should not pay attention to such things. This is not our path. We decided we would go before the people and find ways to earn their support,” Pawar told reporters in Nagpur.

Pawar lauded Rahul Gandhi’s recent presentation on alleged polling irregularities and criticised the Election Commission of India (ECI) for seeking a separate affidavit from him.“The Election Commission is an independent body. Rahul Gandhi said he has already taken an oath in Parliament, so there is no need for a separate affidavit. If the Election Commission still insists on such a thing, that is not right. Rahul Gandhi’s allegations need to be probed in depth. The truth must come out. My only point is that the objection was regarding the Election Commission. Then why do BJP leaders or the chief minister need to respond? We want an answer from the Election Commission, not from the BJP,” said Pawar.Referring to the recent INDIA bloc meeting in Delhi, Pawar dismissed speculation over Uddhav



Thackeray’s seating position, comparing it humorously to movie-goers avoiding the front row.“First, I must say I have been seeing since yesterday that there is politics over where Uddhav Thackeray was seated in Delhi. When you watch a presentation, you don’t sit in the first row just as when you go to watch a movie, you don’t sit in the first row, you sit further back. Similarly, I, too, was seated at the back. The point is, you don’t sit close to the screen; you keep some distance. Unfortunately, politics is being done over where Uddhav Thackeray was seated,” he said.Hours after Pawar’s comments, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the Opposition has a habit of lying and running away.“Although Rahul Gandhi has often raised doubts about the EVM machines, Sharad Pawar has never said so. In fact, Sharad Pawar has often taken a clear stand that it is wrong to blame the EVMs. However, now, after Rahul Gandhi’s meeting, Sharad Pawar has suddenly started talking about changes in the voting process. This is the result of Rahul Gandhi’s meeting,” said Fadnavis.“No matter how much confusion the Opposition creates, elections are not held anywhere as transparent and free as in India. Those who accuse EVMs and the Election Commission speak in public. But they are not ready to give an affidavit. They say that we have taken an oath in Parliament. But is the oath in Parliament valid in the Supreme Court and the high court? They know that if they are caught lying, criminal action can be taken against them tomorrow. Therefore, these are cowardly people who lie and run away every day,” criticised Fadnavis.

August starts on a dry note in Pune as district reports rainfall deficit of 88%



GNS News Agency, August 18

The first week of August has largely been dry in Pune, with the city receiving just 13.1 mm of rainfall as against the normal of 80 mm – a deficit of 88 per cent, which comes after an almost-dry July, weather officials said.

Across Maharashtra too, August has been unusually dry so far. The state has received only 30.4 mm of rainfall against the normal of 98.7 mm. Six states across the country have reported a rainfall deficit during the first week of August, while five recorded a large deficit. The rest of the

states have reported either normal or a large excess in rainfall. In Himachal Pradesh, meanwhile, flash floods caused large-scale devastation and the death of scores of people.In Maharashtra, the monsoon has entered a phase of lull. Anupam Kashyapi, former head of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), said that it is expected to see a revival from August 13. A low-pressure area is likely to form in the north-west to adjoining west central Bay of Bengal during the time, he stated.

Similarly, westerlies from the Arabian Sea are expected to strengthen, which would see monsoon activities gathering pace across Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, East Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, Kashyapi added. Rainfall is also expected to revive in the Konkan, Pune and Mumbai from early next week onwards. This year, monsoon started on a good note but has slacked off since July. Cumulative rainfall data released by the IMD shows that, overall, the monsoon has been just about normal in most parts of the country. As many as 320 districts reported normal rainfall, while 199 are seeing either a deficit or a large deficit. The country, as a whole, has received 527.1 mm of rainfall as against a normal of 518 mm for the period.

Police lathicharge protesters to halt march to Bengal secretariat marking year since R G Kar rape and murder

GNS News Agency, August 18

Parts of Kolkata and neighbouring city of Howrah descended into chaos on Saturday as protesters clashed with police during the “Nabanna Abhiyan”, a march toward the West Bengal state secretariat.The demonstration was called by the parents of a junior doctor who was raped and killed at R G Kar Medical College Hospital on August 9, 2025. They were joined by Suwendu Adhikari, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly and a Bharatiya Janata Party MLA, along with other party leaders.The rally began around noon at Rani Rashmoni Road, with protesters waving national flags and marching toward Nabanna in Howrah. Police had erected iron barricades, guard rails, and deployed large contingents of officers along the routes in both Kolkata and Howrah.Clashes broke out at Park Street, where protesters tried to dismantle guard rails and break

through barricades. Police responded with lathi charge, halting the march.“We will not budge. The Mamata government is scared. That is why the cops are doing this,” Adhikari told reporters. He and other BJP leaders staged a sit-in at the site after being stopped.The victim’s father accused the police of attempting to block the rally at its starting point.“People’s voices will not be throttled. Police cannot stop the protests. They tried to stop us from coming to the venue of the protest in Rani Rashmoni Road. But somehow, we evaded the cops and came here. We will get justice,” he said.r g kar protest In Howrah, protesters at Santragachi climbed iron barricades in an attempt to cross over, while others at Howrah Maidan were stopped by police. (Express Photo by Partha Paul)In Howrah, protesters at Santragachi climbed iron barricades in an attempt to cross over, while others at Howrah Maidan were stopped by police.

Trainer aircraft makes emergency landing in Pune’s Baramati due to technical snag, no casualties



GNS News Agency, August 18

A trainer aircraft of the Redbird Flight Training Academy in Pune’s Baramati made an emergency landing around 7.45 am on Saturday and suffered damage. No casualties were reported in the incident.Sudarshan Rathod, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Baramati Division), who confirmed the incident, said that a trainee pilot was flying an aircraft of the Redbird Flight Training Academy in the morning hours. “Due to some technical failure, the aircraft made an emergency landing on the airstrip. It is learnt that the wheel of the aircraft got damaged. Nobody was injured in the incident,” said Rathod.He said that the airstrip falls under the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and is used by the Redbird Flight Training Academy for train-

ing purposes.

No complaint or offence regarding the emergency landing of the aircraft was registered with the Pune Rural police.Meanwhile, on August 6, Vaibhav Solankar, an office-bearer of the BJP’s youth wing, had submitted a complaint to the Chief Minister’s Office in Mumbai demanding action against Redbird Flight Training Academy as its aircraft had met with accidents multiple times, and were causing a threat to residents.Solankar said the aircraft have at times crashed in farms and alleged that the Academy is not following the norms laid down by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).Solankar said that he had also submitted a complaint to Murlidhar Mohol, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, on August 2, demanding that the Central Government formulate strict safety norms for the Redbird Flight Training Academy to prevent mishaps.“If the aircraft crashes in a residential or industrial area in Baramati, it can cause a risk to the lives of the people,” said Solankar.In October 2023, there were two incidents of emergency landing of aircraft of the Redbird Flight Training Academy in Baramati, in which a trainee pilot and an instructor were left injured.Earlier, four accidents involving trainer aircrafts were reported from Baramati between June 2013 and July 2022.In December 2024, two trainees of Redbird Flight Training Academy had died, while two of their colleagues were left injured, in a car accident, in the mid night hours, at Lamajewadi on the Baramati-Bhigwan road.

In Pune, a Stanford alumnus challenging familiar habits of looking, offers new ways of seeing

GNS News Agency, August 18

In a quiet corner of the Vesavar Art Gallery, windows are “sheets of light,” penetrated by plants, framed by breeze, and built into a world where art and aesthetics merge. This vision of artist Amitabh Ashesh, shaped by his decade-long self-developed theory, “Yufism”, forms the heart of the gallery’s exhibition, Yun Bhi – So Too. The exhibition will continue till August 12.Ashesh’s works challenge the familiar habits of ‘looking’. An IIT Bombay and Stanford University alumnus, the artist says that people often confuse his art with Cubism, an art movement of the early 20th-century, whose famous members were Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.“Yufism is a new concept in nature. In Yufism, rain can be depicted in the form of cubes, a window can take the shape of the breeze flowing outside. Yufism is about rethinking how we see and translate reality,” said Ashesh.In his work, a window is not just a rectangle framed against a wall, but light and the plants outside. “If light is what makes us see, why should we keep painting it like a flat background? I treat light itself as a subject of presence,” said the artist.

Ashesh described his exhibits as “proof-of-concept” pieces, prototypes for a new way of seeing. “I believe these are just the blueprint for something no one has done before. It’s still growing, but people and spectators are getting more and more interested in Yufism. It gives them a fresh lens,” he added.The inspiration for the paintings came from the artist’s own surroundings, such as his home, the streets he walks, and, most intimately, his wife. “I don’t paint her as a figure in the usual sense. I see her through the Yufist lens on the canvases. Most of my work is from my life experi-



ences,” he said.Many of the canvases hold a texture of words. Unlike most artists who stop at a simple name, Ashesh added a few lines to give each painting a meaningful shape, blending into the concept. This gave it a context to what people might just see and understand.One such piece was where rain transformed into floating cubes, their edges glowing. Another, windows twisting to form breeze, replacing the rigid pane with airy swirls, as if the glass itself dissolved into the wind outside.

For Ashesh, Yufism is not just a style but a philosophy of observation. “I’m not offering a finished product. I’m sharing a starting point, like discovering a new place. The possibilities are endless”, he said.The artist hoped that, over time, Yufism will inspire others to explore its principles and build on them. “It’s not about me alone, It’s about opening a door for others to walk through, and maybe they’ll take it somewhere I can’t even imagine,” he said.

World’s smallest monkey, honey bear, red-eared turtle: What Customs at Mumbai airport found from bag of passenger arriving from Bangkok



GNS News Agency, August 18

The Customs department arrested a passenger at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in Mumbai Friday evening for allegedly smuggling two kinkajous (also known as honey bear, a mammal found in the rainforests of Central and South America), two pygmy marmosets (smallest monkey in the world, native to South America), and 50 albino red-eared sliders (a color variation of the common red-eared slider turtle).The Customs nabbed Sharukhhan Mohammed Hussain, an Indian citizen, when he arrived from Bangkok based on specific intelligence. While checking his dark-coloured trolley bag, officials found that he was carrying live wildlife. They booked him under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, read with the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Kinkajou is listed in Appendix III of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and the pygmy marmoset is listed in Appendix II of CITES and Schedule IV of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Albino red-eared sliders are not listed in either CITES or the amended Wildlife (Protection) Act.In the past six months, Customs officials in Mumbai have arrested several people for allegedly smuggling wildlife, including meerkats, star tortoises, and various types of lizards, some of which are exotic species.Two of the largest seizures happened on July 10 and 11, when the Customs confiscated meerkats, Sumatran rabbits, great-billed parrots and Indo-Chinese box turtles at Mumbai Airport. Two passengers travelling on separate flights with wildlife were arrested.

On June 1, the Customs arrested a Chennai resident, Mohammed Hanif Shahul, at the Mumbai airport after he arrived from Kuala Lumpur, as it recovered five baby siamang gibbons. They were ingeniously concealed inside plastic boxes/cages, which were then placed inside the trolley bags carried by the passenger.During a further inspection of the baggage, officials discovered that the passenger was carrying three live spider-tailed horned vipers and five Asian leaf turtles. Both species are listed under Appendix II of CITES as well as Schedule IV of the amended Wildlife (Pro-

tection) Act.They also found 44 Indonesian pit vipers in Shahul’s bag. Of these, 43 were alive, and one was found dead. This species is not listed under CITES. According to a Customs release, this incident constituted a violation of CITES and import policies, as the importation of live animals requires a license from the Director General of Foreign Trade.

Farmers urge Modi to stand firm against US tariffs, calls for ban on US companies

GNS News Agency, August 18

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the country “will never compromise on the interests of its farmers,” farmer leaders from Haryana urged the Modi government to impose a ban on American companies operating in India as a befitting response to the US move to hike tariffs.

President of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Chaduni) Gurnam Singh Chaduni thanked the Centre for taking a stand for farmers. Urging the Prime Minister to act decisively, he added, “American companies functioning in India and trying to control the market should be thrown out. When they are ready to destroy us, why should we spare them? Why have we given them a place in our country?”

Chaduni added, “When you take a stand, the country will stand by you and this would cause fear among countries such as America. Otherwise, they will threaten us in the future too.”

He added that people should stop buying products of American companies. “We have seen in Gharaunda (Karnal) where American companies have opened three malls and were given special concessions. Why are we supporting them? We oppose Donald Trump and his policies. In future, we will hold protests against them,” he added.

He added, “We believe that America wants India to open its agriculture, fisheries, and dairy sectors to its large corporations and multinational companies, which goes against the interests of our farmers. More than half of India’s population depends on agriculture, and ignoring their interests cannot be accepted under any circumstances.”Pagdi Sambhal Jatta Kisan Sangharsh Samiti president Mandeep Nathwan said, “If the PM is true to his commitment, the Centre should impose a ban on American companies operating in India.”Paddy dwarfing: Virus hits paddy again, BKU seeks compensation

20 years after he was ‘caught taking Rs 500 bribe’, Telangana HC upholds acquittal of junior assistant in Hyd



GNS News Agency, August 18

Twenty years after he was “trapped” for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 500, the Telangana High Court recently upheld the acquittal of a man who worked as a junior assistant in the tax section of the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (now Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation). The bench of Justice E V Venugopal dismissed a criminal appeal filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) against a lower court’s acquittal of the junior assistant who was accused of taking a bribe to process a mutation application. The judgment, dated July 16, underscored the significance of the complainant’s motive and the absence of a pending “official favour” at the time of the alleged bribe. The judgment stated that on “perusal of evidence of P.W.1 (the complainant), it is clear that P.W.1 has categorically admitted that he has filed the complaint against the respondent/accused with the appellant/ACB only with an ill-intention and it is manifestly attended to by the de facto complainant.”

The accused was charged under relevant sections of

the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. According to the prosecution, the de facto complainant purchased a house in Begumpet in January 2005. He submitted an application for mutation in February 2005, and a week later, the accused allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 500 to process it and stalled the application. Subsequently, the ACB set a trap, and the accused was found to have accepted the money. A sodium carbonate test on the accused’s right-hand fingers turned pink, and the tainted cash was recovered from his pocket. Despite this, the trial court acquitted the accused on March 7, 2013 — a decision the ACB challenged in the current appeal.

The counsel for the state, Vishal Gandhi, argued that the prosecution had proved the demand and acceptance of the bribe, which should have been sufficient for a conviction. He contended that the trial court should not have acquitted the accused just because no official work pertaining to the complainant was pending before him “at the time of laying of trap”. However, the defense counsel T V Kalyan Singh submitted that “in the absence of any official favour pending with the respondent/accused, the demand and acceptance of bribe by the accused is of no consequence”. He also highlighted a critical admission by the complainant during cross-examination that he had lodged the complaint out of a grudge after the accused declined to process the mutation without proper documents. The court found no reason to interfere with the lower court’s “well-reasoned and well-founded” judgment, thereby dismissing the appeal and reaffirming the acquittal. 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 developments, Rahul has a keen interest in stories about

Telangana HC orders release of former railway employee’s pension, says can’t withhold it over ‘mere pendency of plea’

GNS News Agency, August 18

Telangana high court, TSIDCThe appellant had faced both departmental and criminal proceedings, and was convicted in a criminal case in February 2010 before being dismissed from service in June 2010. The Telangana High Court recently ordered the immediate release of a former railway employee’s pensionary benefits, stating that the mere pendency of a Special Leave Petition (SLP) by the CBI against the appellant’s acquittal in a case could not be a reason to withhold it. The division bench of Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G M Mohiuddin delivered the judgment on Monday in a writ appeal. “Mere pendency of the SLP could not be treated as continuation of a judicial proceeding, which has ended up in the acquittal of the appellant by the appellate court. The statutory rule also does not permit withholding of pension upon conclusion of judicial proceedings,” the judgment said.

The appellant had faced both departmental and criminal proceedings, and was convicted in a criminal case in February 2010 before being dismissed from service in June 2010. However, the writ court acquitted him of all charges in November 2022, following an appeal, and he was reinstated in service in June 2023. He superannuated just two days later, on June 30 that year. The period of his dismissal was treated as “Not on Duty” based on the “No Work No Pay” principle. Subsequently, the departmental proceedings, which were based on similar charges as the criminal case, were also quashed by the court. However, the court’s order included an observation that the appellant could only seek the release of his pensionary benefits after the disposal of the Central Bureau of Investigation’s (CBI) pending petition against his acquittal. It was this part of the order that the appellant challenged in the high court. Pratap



Narayan Sanghi, the appellant’s counsel, argued that there is no provision in the rules to withhold pension after an employee has been acquitted, especially when there is no stay on the conviction. On the contrary, L Pranathi Reddy, the senior standing counsel for the Centre, argued that the pendency of the SLP constitutes a “continuation of the judicial proceedings”. She further contended that if the appellant were to be ultimately convicted, the Railways would be unable to recover the disbursed pensionary dues. “We are clear in our minds that if the judicial proceeding or departmental proceeding has come to an end in favour of the employee, like in the present case, the statutory rule does not provide for any exception to still withhold the pensionary dues of such an employee,” the judgment stated. The high court concluded that the appellant is entitled to the release of his pensionary benefits following his acquittal and the quashing of the departmental proceedings. The court directed the respondents to make a decision on the release of the appellant’s admissible pensionary dues within four weeks.

‘Can we move out of our homes?’: Pune residents urge noise regulation as dhol-tasha groups gear up for Ganesh festival



Pune residents are highlighting the health impacts of noise pollution caused by dhol-tasha groups, particularly on senior citizens, children, and those with illnesses.

GNS News Agency, August 18

As Ganesh Chaturthi approaches, dhol-tasha pathaks in Pune have started prepping hard with their daily practice. But the noise pollution created particularly in residential areas has become an issue for residents. People from various parts of the city are demanding that the municipal authorities and the police put in place sound regulations, continuous monitoring, and group limits for the dhol-tasha rehearsals. Dhol-tasha is a traditional musical ensemble, particularly popular in Maharashtra. It features two distinct drums: the dhol, a large, double-headed cylindrical drum, and the tasha, a smaller, high-pitched, single-headed drum, akin to a kettle drum. “Playing dhol-tasha is a good cultural activity, but playing it loud for hours in the immediate vicinity of a residential area is affecting our health. People suffering from high blood pressure, some are cancer-survivors or have other ailments, cannot manage such high decibels and their health is adversely impacted, said Vihang Shah, a resident of Baner and founder of Green Clean Safe Bharat.

“Along with senior citizens, even youth are affected. They are studying in colleges or schools and preparing for exams. With continuous exposure to high-decibel noise from dhol-tasha pathaks, they cannot focus well and may suffer from hearing ailments in old age,” Shah added. He emphasised that dhol-tasha groups are always welcome, but they need to practice in dedicated public spaces or auditoriums far from residential areas, as residents have limited choice to leave their homes. This year, Ganesh Chaturthi will be on August 27, initiating a 10-day festival that concludes with the immersion of idols, in a ritual known as Ganesh Visarjan. Speaking to The Indian Express, Dr Kalyani Mandke, a practising audiologist based in Sadashiv Peth, said, “Not just elderly, pregnant women or children, but every age group suffers through the noise levels that exceed a certain limit, let it be through DJ, dhol-tasha or any other source. Such noise pollution disturbs adrenaline levels, and this causes increased stress, sleep disruption, and gradual hearing damage. Also, their consequences are affecting work output and productivity.” In September 2024, a Supreme Court bench led by the then Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud stayed the directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), West Zone, which included the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), along with police officials, to carry out real-time sound monitoring during the Ganesh festival. The directions stayed also included a limit of 30 members in each group of dhol, tasha and zanj pathak during Ganpati Visarjan.

“After the NGT order stay, it will now be even more difficult to keep a check on noise pollution. We now expect the authorities to keep a check on violations and take suo motu action. The dhol-tasha pathaks must also willingly take steps to limit their members in public interest,” said Rahul Jadhav, a resident of Wakad. Moreover, Mandke urged that authorities must listen to their demands. “During a recent dhol-tasha-related meeting at PMC, the authorities didn’t even listen to our plea. Without hearing our grievances, how can they address them?” she said. To restrict the noise level to breach the residential limits rule, several dhol-tasha groups in Pune, though, are adopting noise-dampening practices. “To respect the safe decibel range, particularly in residential areas, we use jute bags and nylon padding to cover the dhol. This significantly dampens the noise. We also practice alternatively in small batches so that noise can be controlled,” said Tejas Pathak from Shreeram dhol-tasha pathak.

BMLTA slams Bengaluru tunnel road project, says it does not align with Comprehensive Mobility Plan



GNS News Agency, August 18

In a first of its institutional criticism of the ambitious north-south tunnel road project connecting Hebbal and Silkboard junction, the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA) has flagged several discrepancies in the project. According to the BMLTA review of the feasibility report of the tunnel road project, accessed by The Indian Express, the transport planning body has stated that the proposed project does not align with the objectives and goals of the approved Comprehensive Mobility Plan (CMP) for Bengaluru. Further, it stated that the project does not align with either Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)’s Climate Action Plan or National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP). In fact, despite several discrepancies, Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited, which is executing the tunnel road project, has gone ahead with global tenders for the project. BBMP submitted the feasibility study report of the proposed north-south corridor in July 2024 for review and approval by BMLTA. The Directorate of Urban and Land Transport, which serves as the secretariat to BMLTA, conducted a technical review of the proposal, following which 14 technical observations/comments were documented for consideration of BBMP.

According to CMP, it targets a 70 per cent public transport share by 2035; however, tunnel roads encourage car-based commuting, the review noted. BMLTA noted that BBMP has no prior experience in the state to implement such a large (14.5-metre twin tube) deep tunnel. Instead, BMLTA recommends alternative short-length strategic alignments where such tunnels may play a critical role in improving connectivity of existing road networks. It also recommended a signal-free connectivity of Outer Ring Road (ORR) at Goraguntepalya junction, signal-free connectivity of ORR between K R Puram and Benniganahalli (to decongest Old Madras Road from Tin Factory to KR Puram) and signal-free connectivity of ORR between Central Silk Board and J D Mara junctions. BMLTA further recommended considering tunnel configurations for the proposed Peripheral Ring Road (PRR). “Given that the development density along the PRR is relatively low, constructing tunnels here may pose fewer technical challenges. It could also potentially reduce land acquisition costs and open up avenues for private investment, especially as the PRR is already being planned as a toll-based road,” the agency stated.

One of the major criticisms is the absence of a scientific travel demand assessment. The agency noted that BBMP failed to conduct origin-destination (O-D) surveys, which are essential for understanding travel patterns and estimating how many commuters would use the tunnel. BBMP’s claim that O-D surveys are only relevant in early-stage transport planning was contested by BMLTA, which noted that a feasibility study itself is an early-stage exercise.

Chandigarh e-auction: Residential plot in Sector 33-C with Rs 14.96 cr reserve price, commercial SCO in Sector 8-C with Rs 14.59 cr among key listings

GNS News Agency, August 18

The UT Chandigarh Estate Office has announced the e-auction of premium residential and commercial properties in the city, including the highest reserve price plot of Rs 14.96 crore at Sector 33-C and a top-value commercial SCO site in Sector 8-C priced at Rs 14.59 crore. The residential sites are being offered on a freehold basis, while commercial properties are on leasehold. The online auction will be conducted through the Government of India’s official e-auction portal. As per the official schedule, submission and payment of required documents and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) will be accepted from August 8 to 28. The scrutiny and approval of submitted documents will be carried out between August 29 and September 1. The e-auction process is set to take place from September 2 to 4, with daily bidding windows open from 9 to 11 am.

The auction features 14 residential plots across sectors 19-B, 33-C, 38-B, 40-D and 44-C. Plot sizes range from 88.06 sq yards to 281.25 sq yards. The smallest residential plot available for auction is of 126.75 square yards in Sector 40-D, and the biggest one is 1,014 square yards (2 kanal plot) in Sector 33-C. Among the total 14 residential plots on auction, there are four one kanal plots (503.028 square yards each) with the reserved price of Rs. 7.42 crore each – all in Sector 19-B. The highest reserve price is Rs. 14.96 crore for a 1,014 square yards plot (2 kanal) in Sector 33-C, and as per the auction notice, it is not a corner/ park-facing. The lowest reserve price is Rs. 1.78 crore for a 126.75 square yard plot in Sector 40-D. EMD for residential plots vary from Rs. 3.57 lakh for the smallest plot (126.75 square yards) and Rs. 29.93 lakh for that of the biggest plot (1,014 square yards).

A 5 per cent premium will be levied on corner or park-

“Without O-D data, traffic shift estimations are speculative, impacting assessments of segment-wise demand, entry/exit point locations, and potential traffic diversion from other projects like metro or suburban rail,” the agency noted. Further, the project lacks a scientific evaluation of its impact on surface-level roads and junctions, the agency said. The feasibility study omitted turning movement counts (TMCs) and junction-level simulations, failing to assess whether roads and junctions at proposed entry/exit ramps can handle diverted traffic. “This oversight risks exacerbating surface-level congestion at tunnel access points, potentially undermining the project’s goal of reducing traffic bottlenecks,” BMLTA observed. BMLTA also pointed out that the study ignores interactions with other major infrastructure projects, such as Metro phases 2A, 2B, 3, and 3A, suburban rail corridors, and the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) policy. According to BMLTA, by not accounting for these parallel systems, which are designed to address similar commuter demands, the tunnel’s demand forecasts are likely overestimated, leading to flawed planning assumptions. BMLTA also criticised the project’s reliance on flawed traffic data and analysis. Reported average daily traffic volumes between Hebbal and Mekhri Circle (1,500 to 3,500 passenger car units) were flagged by BMLTA as unrealistically low, with camera-based counts lacking clarity on specific roads and directions.

“The rudimentary forecasting methodology risks overestimating the tunnel’s utility, rendering financial calculations and congestion-relief claims unreliable,” it noted. Compounding these issues, BBMP’s study neglected geological and seismic risks, providing no details on tunnel depth, seismic risk analysis, or Bengaluru’s geological vulnerabilities, despite the city being in Seismic Zone II with reported active fault lines in Southern Karnataka, BMLTA said. Environmental and hydrogeological concerns were similarly overlooked, with no Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) conducted despite the tunnel’s proximity to Rajakaluves and lakes like Hebbal Lake, BMLTA noted. Additionally, the project underestimates land acquisition needs for entry/exit ramps, ventilation shafts, and impacted buildings, such as those near Silk Board, with no associated cost estimates, leading to an incomplete financial analysis, as per BMLTA. BBMP’s cost estimates exclude critical components like land acquisition, ecological mitigation, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), and surface traffic management, while the financial model fails to assess realistic toll revenue under reduced demand scenarios, it said. BMLTA also highlighted conflicts with Metro infrastructure, with BBMP identifying only three tunnel-metro conflict points compared to the agency’s identification of 11, including six with existing or proposed Metro lines and five at ramp locations. Satya Arikutharam, an urban mobility expert, said, “I am not at all surprised by the BMLTA review comments. This is exactly what the city has been trying to say to the Government for the past one year. I hope BMLTA’s sound advice is taken seriously, and the government abandons the unscientific car-only tunnel. Strengthening public transport is the only proven way forward for Bengaluru. Rajkumar Dugar, convener of Citizens For Citizens forum, told The Indian Express, “The views of DULT, even though couched in nice wording since they are part of the government, strongly vindicate what 90 per cent of Bengaluru feels. In fact, they have asked more questions than we, as concerned citizens, have asked. We hope the Karnataka government will drop this disastrous project and focus fully on completing dozens of projects languishing for years, improving public transport, drainage, cleanliness, etc.”



facing plots, including sites in Sectors 19-B, 40-D and 33-C. In the commercial segment, seven properties, including SCOs, constructed booths, and service booths across Sectors 8-C, 24-D, 41-D, 22-C, 43-B, and 44-C and D will be auctioned. The most expensive is a 324.803 square yard SCO site at Sector 8-C with a reserve price of Rs 14.59 crore and an EMD of Rs 29.08 lakh. The lowest-priced commercial site carries a reserve price of Rs 41.81 lakh for 13.63 square yards (constructed service booth) at Sector 43-B. The lowest-priced commercial booth site is 22.34 square yards (Sector 45 C & D) and its reserve price is Rs. 66.50 lakh. Corner and park-facing sites in the commercial category will also attract an additional 5 per cent charge. The Estate Office has invited prospective bidders to register online at <https://eauction.gov.in> and obtain a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) for document submissions. Required documents include proof of EMD payment via RTGS/NEFT, PAN card, identification proof, and signed terms and conditions. Incomplete applications will be summarily rejected, as mentioned in the notification.

BRS calls Bandi Sanjay unfit for Union Minister’s post

Hyderabad: BRS leader Ravula Sridhar Reddy called out Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay for degrading the dignity of the Union Cabinet with his baseless and defamatory remarks against BRS president K Chandrashekhara Rao and working president KT Rama Rao. He termed Sanjay unfit for the Union Cabinet and warned of severe consequences if the latter continued his rhetoric. Addressing a press meet at Telangana Bhavan on Saturday, Sridhar Reddy said Sanjay should be admitted to a mental hospital for his recent statements. The Union Minister lacked basic knowledge on key issues, but was

using the media for cheap publicity.

“Despite being a Union Minister, he failed to speak on Telangana’s development in the Parliament. He did not bring a single major project to the State,” he added. The BRS leader charged that Sanjay’s conduct had corrupted the BJP, turning it into a B-team for the Congress. He ridiculed the BJP leader for passing time by challenging opposition leaders to take oath in a temple on some issue or other, rather than addressing people’s problems. “Show your strength by winning half the MPTC seats in Karimnagar before making tall claims,” Sridhar Reddy said.

250 grams of mangoes instead of bread for breakfast led to improved glycaemic control in diabetics



GNS News Agency, August 18

A small study carried out for two months involving 35 participants with type-2 diabetes has found that daily consumption of 250 grams of mango pulp and 200 ml of toned milk for breakfast resulted in improved glycaemic control, weight loss, reduced waist circumference, and improved insulin sensitivity compared with the control group. The control group had 81 grams of white bread and 200 ml of toned milk. Results of the study were published recently in the Journal of Diabetes & Metabolic Disorders. The serving size of mango was chosen based on macronutrient content to ensure equicaloric comparison with the control group. Blood glucose levels, body weight, anthropometric measures, and lipid profile of all 35 participants were measured before and after two months of the study.

The participants were split into three groups — two treatment groups and one control group. The two treatment groups had 10 participants each — one group was served Safeda (Banganapalli) mango pulp, while the other treatment group was served Dasheri mango pulp. The control group with 15 participants consumed 81 grams of white bread. Lunch and dinner for both the treatment and control groups was a standard equicaloric diet as advised by guidelines for Asian Indians. Lunch and dinner for participants in the treatment and control groups were rich in vegetables and fruits, whole-grain, high-fibre foods, low-fat dairy products, limited foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, less sugar-sweetened beverages and foods with added sugar, reduced salt intake and no alcohol. One of the main reasons why participants in the treatment groups showed improved glycaemic control is because of the relatively less glycaemic index of mango compared with white bread. Food items with lower glycaemic index are less likely to significantly spike blood sugar levels when consumed in moderation. In addition, the fibre content in mangoes contributes to slower glucose absorption.

“The relatively lower glycaemic index and fibre content in mangoes is the reason why there is better blood glucose control and reduced insulin resistance compared with the group that had white bread, which is carbohydrate,” says Dr. Anoop Mishra, Chairman, Fortis-C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases and Endocrinology, Chirag Enclave, New Delhi, and the corresponding author of the paper. “It is important to note that a finite and small serving of mangoes should be a replacement for carbohydrates. Diabetics should not consume mangoes in addition to normal diet,” he says. “The glycaemic index of mango is low to moderate — from 51 to 56 — while it is around 75 for white bread,” says Dr. Sugandha Kehar from the Diabetes Foundation (India), New Delhi, and the first author of the paper. “The sweetness of mangoes is wrongly perceived to elevate our blood glucose levels. We fail to realise or take into account the low-moderate glycaemic index of mangoes. We incorporate white bread and other refined carbohydrates in our diet without realising the adverse effects, particularly the relatively high glycaemic index.”

Participants in the intervention group were served 250 grams of mango pulp for breakfast each day for the entire duration (two months) of the study. According to Dr. Kehar, there is no difference between eating fresh mango and mango pulp. Mango pulp was used in the study to ensure compliance and to ensure participants had only 250 grams of mango each day for two months. The control group who consumed white bread showed significant increases in fasting blood glucose levels and HbA1c, while participants in the intervention group (both mango varieties) had lower fasting blood glucose levels and HbA1c. Participants in the intervention group (both mango varieties) demonstrated improvements in insulin sensitivity compared with the control group. There was reduction in body weight, BMI and waist circumference among participants who consumed mangoes compared with those who consumed white bread.

Importantly, the average blood sugar level for the day among participants who consumed mangoes was less compared with participants who consumed white bread. “A better glucose profile after breakfast can help maintain better blood sugar levels throughout the day,” says Dr. Mishra. This is where substituting carbohydrates with a limited portion (about 250 grams) of mangoes for breakfast will help diabetics better control their blood glucose levels. While blood glucose levels, anthropometric measurements, weight and BMI were measured by the researchers before the start and end of the study, daily blood glucose levels were measured by the participants using a glucometer and daily food intake details were also recorded by the participants. The study has some limitations. Besides being small in size, the duration of the study was only for two months. Larger studies for a longer duration are necessary to confirm the benefits of limited consumption of mangoes for breakfast instead of carbohydrates. The team had undertaken a pilot study to test the effectiveness of mangoes in reducing blood glucose levels. The pilot study tested both diabetics and non-diabetics. In the first part of the pilot study, the oral tolerance test two hours after breakfast consisting of 250 grams of mangoes (three varieties) for the intervention group and white bread for the control group was studied. The study included 25 non-diabetics and 20 type-2 diabetics. Mangoes were found to produce similar or lower (non-significant) glycaemic responses in both diabetics and non-diabetics. In the second part of the pilot study, blood glucose was monitored continuously for three days. The study included 25 non-diabetics and 25 type-2 diabetics. Mangoes (250 grams) for breakfast produced similar glycaemic responses as bread in the case of non-diabetics.

The Telugu Desam Party-led NDA government in Andhra Pradesh is revisiting the education sector reforms introduced by its predecessor and is making changes wherever deemed necessary. Minister for Human Resources Development Nara Lokesh has stated that policies yielding positive outcomes will be retained, while those that failed to deliver tangible results will be rolled back. The task being both critical and challenging, the Minister is taking an objective and balanced view of the educational landscape, recognising that the well-being and future of students must remain at the heart of the new initiatives. Officials in the education department are assessing what has worked, what needs improvement, and how best to move forward without causing inconvenience to stakeholders. The task at hand is to cater to the needs of 58,535 schools, 68,15,925 students, and 3,13,112 teachers across the State. Of these, 44,285 are government schools with 33,37,762 students and 1,84,898 teachers; 789 are aided schools with 87,612 students and 3,259 teachers; 13,461 private schools with 33,90,551 students and 1,24,955 teachers.

According to Mr. Lokesh, the TDP government inherited an education system in a state of paralysis, lacking essential frameworks and operational efficiency — a charge refuted by the YSR Congress Party, which has accused him of “systematically weakening the education sector in the State.” The data show that the State has 12,512 single-teacher schools, 5,312 government schools with single-digit enrolment, and 14,052 State-run schools with 20 or fewer students. The overall enrolment in government schools declined by 10,49,596 students between 2022 and 2024.

With declining learning outcomes, the government faces the formidable challenge of reversing the trend to secure children’s futures. A recent survey suggested that 84.3% of Class III students could not read a Class-II level text, 62.5 % of Class V students struggled with basic reading, 47% of Class VIII students still could not read Class II level text, 59.1 % of Class III students could not perform basic subtraction, 54.8 % of Class VIII students could not perform division and only 12.9% and of Class III students could solve basic division problems.

Citing the dismal result of the survey, Mr. Lokesh has rolled back his predecessor’s initiatives such as transition of the government schools to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 2022-23 without sufficient preparation, implementation of TOEFL in State-run schools at a cost of ₹58.84 crore, and the move to adopt International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in government schools. A sum of Rs. 4.86 crore was paid for just the interim report for the proposed IB implementation. One of the most controversial decisions of the previous YSRCP government was GO 117, which reorganised schools and reapportioned teaching staff. The order divided schools into six categories and mandated the merger and de-merger of classes. The fragmentation of schools led to the number of schools having fewer than 10 students rising from 1,215 in 2021-22 to 5,312 in 2024-25, and schools with fewer than or equal to 20 students increasing from 5,520 to 14,052 during the same period, indicating a severe decline in student enrolment.

To curb the ill effects of GO 117, the NDA government introduced GO 21, which revises the restructuring model by creating nine categories of schools. However, this faced trouble, with teacher unions raising serious concerns over its “negative impact on the public education system”. GO 21 is part of the transformative journey called Learning Excellence in Andhra Pradesh, which aims to improve ac-

Headaches are common, but it is important to be able to recognise a dangerous one: here’s how



Headaches are one of the most common ailments affecting humans. Between 40 to 52% of the global population has had a significant headache at some point in time. The lifetime prevalence of headaches is estimated to 93% in men and 99% in women. The scope of the problem is immense, illustrated by the fact that there are hundreds of national headache societies across countries and thousands of books on headaches. Headaches can vary from the mild, just a nuisance to be ignored, to life-threatening massive brain haemorrhages. The International Classification of Headache Disorders, lists over 300 distinct types including a specific headache attributable to space travel.

Several types of innocuous headaches can co-exist. It is important to quickly recognise a new, possibly dangerous headache, which could occur in 10% of all headaches. When symptoms and history are vague, so is the possibility of a precise diagnosis. Recognising the dangerous headache requires knowledge, clinical acumen and a high index of suspicion. Investigations today are so sophisticated that “incidentalomas” (masses or lesions found during imaging that were not the primary reason for imaging) are picked up on MRIs and even angiograms, which however, may not explain the headache itself. Clinical correlation is essential. An investigation presupposes that a narrow differential clinical diagnosis has been made. A “thunderclap explosive headache”, particularly at the back of the head, occurring within a minute or the “worst headache I’ve ever had” along with neck discomfort may suggest a brain haemorrhage. A new type of headache, one that has not been previously experienced — sudden, severe, with vomiting, drowsiness and visual disturbances — needs immediate investigations. It is better to go directly to an advanced neurosurgical centre rather than the nearest doctor in such cases.

One important fact to note is that headaches should not be attributed to co-existing hypertension. Only a hypertensive crisis with persistent diastolic blood pressure of over 120mm Hg may contribute to a headache. A postural headache, increasing with bending and rolling over in bed or when having a bowel movement is significant. A headache with persistent intense vomiting or which wakes one from sleep could also be a dangerous headache. Headaches could also precede a stroke - facial, arm weakness and speech difficulties must be looked for. Like aneurysms (weakness in the arterial wall), abnormal connections between arteries and veins in the brain (arteriovenous malformation) can leak or rupture causing a severe headache. This has to be managed before a second, often fatal bleed, occurs. Brain tumours, brain infections, brain swelling, acute hydrocephalus (obstruction to the cerebrospinal fluid pathway) are also causes of dangerous headaches. A headache after a head injury and severe headaches with high fever also need to be investigated. Headaches progressively increasing significantly over 24 hours, occurring for the first time in those over 50 years of age and in those with cancer need to be evaluated. A severe headache in the third trimester of pregnancy with elevated blood pressure could be a symptom of preeclampsia.

A detailed drug history is essential in evaluating headaches. This should include use of blood thinners, steroids, oestrogens, contraceptives, immunosuppressants and chemotherapy. Hypo- or hyperglycaemia causing headaches must be reversed immediately. Never discount suggestions or associations given by the patient. A physical examination (general, ENT, ophthalmic, dental, neurologic) should be conducted. A psychometric evaluation may also be necessary. psychometric evaluation is important but often not diagnostic. Details regarding time of onset, frequency, type of pain, location, aggravating and reducing influences, severity and duration could give important clues. A headache in the presence of congenital heart disease, ear discharge or other major septic focus, a headache following minor trauma particularly in the elderly, persistent headaches in young children and headaches with seizures could be dangerous headaches. Glaucoma and other eye conditions could present with severe pain over the eyes. Sinusitis produces a constant dull aching headache. Malaise, nasal discharge and local tenderness, headaches increasing with head jarring, bending and stooping can all aid in a diagnosis. In frontal sinusitis, pain is more in the early morning and in maxillary sinusitis, afternoon. Every headache should be considered organic: for example, diagnose a “muscle contraction” headache not a “tension” headache”. Sudden, severe, generalised headaches, in a drowsy patient looking ill, with fever, increased pulse rate, sweating, neck stiffness and with visual disturbances require urgent evaluation.

Any patient coming to an emergency room for headache management almost certainly does not have a psychosomatic headache. An appropriate investigation of a dangerous headache is mandatory. However tests should not be resorted to, without a detailed clinical history and examination. Response to analgesics and the long-standing presence of a known headache, does not exclude a new dangerous headache. Reevaluate, revise the diagnosis and seek a specialist’s opinion when in doubt. Headaches can rarely even be the sole manifestation of a seizure, picked up on a EEG, responding only to anti-convulsants. Sometimes however, living with a non-serious headache may be better than trying to find a specific cause!

Across India, healthcare workers are forced to make difficult decisions to refer patients to healthcare facilities every day. Whether it’s a woman in labour with high blood pressure, a patient in septic shock from a snakebite, or a child with breathing difficulties, the decision to refer a patient from a primary or secondary care centre to a higher-level hospital is a critical one. In most parts of the country, however, that decision is not guided by clear protocols or institutional support -- wherein institutions have clear tie-ups with higher centres for formal referral. India’s referral system is inhibited by a collectivistic culture that fosters decision-making, where multiple people weigh in. Although this is primarily done as a form of risk mitigation to ensure all perspectives are accounted for, it can completely derail medical planning.

India’s health system is organised in pyramid form. People access preventive and basic care at primary-level health centres, and are then referred to district hospitals for more complex care, or tertiary centres for specialised interventions. However, this pyramid crumbles under pressure when both primary and secondary care centres lack the resources to manage patients and are forced to refer them to tertiary centres. Lindsay Barnes, a midwife who helps run a childbirth centre in Jharkhand, in eastern India, describes an encounter she had with a pregnant patient suffering from hypertension and seizures. The woman came to her clinic by rickshaw after doctors at a larger district hospital in Bokaro, Jharkhand, gave her an unknown injection and referred her without a doctor’s note or case file. “Without a doctor’s note [the patient] came to our rural centre, which is not equipped to handle such emergencies. We didn’t even know what drug she had been given or what dose, so we couldn’t even try to stabilize her. She had to be referred again, which was inconvenient for her and her family.” According to Mrs. Barnes, disorganised referrals are the norm in her part of India. “Almost all conditions receive first aid at the primary care level. If specialised care is required, a good referral must be made to a secondary or tertiary care centre,” says Sharad Iyengar, a paediatrician and secretary of Action Research and Training for Health (ARTH), a not-for-profit organization in Rajasthan that runs a nurse-led maternal health centre. “But currently there are no formal relationships between the centres operating at various levels in a given area.”

According to Dr. Iyengar, deciding to refer a patient is a complicated process. Primary care providers walk a tightrope: if they refer a patient too early, they could waste a patient’s time and money; if they refer too late, it could cost a life. “There is a zone of illness where referral is ideal — the patient is not so sick that he/she will die in transit, but isn’t well enough to be treated in a primary or secondary care set up. The provider needs to refer the patient in this zone promptly, rather than waiting until they worsen. The more you wait, the harder it is to reverse,” says Dr. Iyengar. “But decisions are often subjective, and the provider can never be fully sure.” Furthermore, there are financial incentives and kickbacks that may compromise provider judgment.

Mrs. Barnes recounts a situation where she wanted to refer a patient whose haemoglobin levels were falling after having had a Caesarean section. Suspecting that the patient had internal bleeding, Ms. Barnes referred her to a centre with a blood bank. The patient’s relatives, however, had hired an ambulance driver who was getting kickbacks from several other private hospitals to bring patients to them. He took her to one of those hospitals, which did not have a blood bank. The patient needed to eventually go to a different hospital, but Mrs. Barnes has no further information on what happened to her. Mrs. Barnes reveals that this is a common occurrence, with family members and other inter-

Rewriting the rules of school in Andhra Pradesh



cess, learning outcomes, and future-ready skills. The recently concluded ‘Mega’ DSC (District Selection Committee) exam, conducted to recruit 16,347 teachers in government schools after a gap of seven years, enhanced the government’s image. Other welcomed steps include the introduction of academic star ratings to assess both student and teacher performance, targeted efforts to boost school enrolment in rural and tribal areas, and the consolidation of multiple teacher apps into a single platform. In intermediate education, curriculum and textbook revisions for first-year students are being implemented from the current academic year, aligning with the syllabus with national competitive standards. The revisions would be introduced for second-year students from the academic year 2026-27. The reach of the changes being made is very vast, and resistance to change is natural in large systems, especially when previous reforms are still being digested. The government should remain watchful of implementation gaps that often emerge. Due diligence is key to ensuring that the quality of learning improves without sacrificing stability.

Gulzar Houz turns into plastic dump two years after Rs 30 lakh restoration

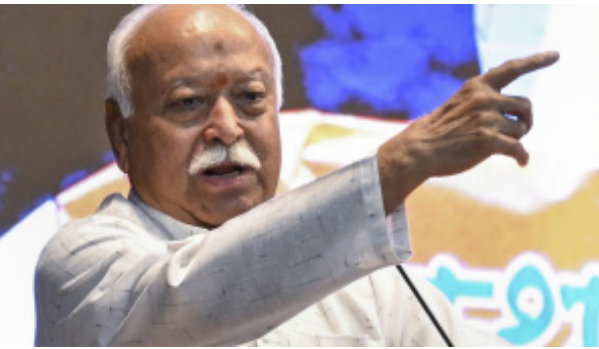
Hyderabad: Two years after the much hyped inauguration, the Gulzar Houz, a nearly four centuries old fountain, is reduced into a plastic waste dump yard.

The historic fountain after months of careful reconstruction was inaugurated in October, 2023. The Quli Qutb Shah Urban Development Authority (QQSUDA) had spent nearly Rs. 30 lakh on its rebuilding. The Deccan Terrain Heritage, a company with expertise in heritage conservation had reconstructed the structure and brought it back to life. “For a few months, things seemed to have changed and the fountain was attractive and clean. But then, the whole thing went back and it is now reduced into a waste dump yard. Plastic bags and bottles are dumped inside the water,” said Sirajuddin, a local shopkeeper. Gulzar Houz is located in the centre of the four arches – the Machli Kaman, Sher-e-Batil Kaman, Kali Kaman and Charminar Kaman, and lies on the northern side of the Charminar monument. The fountain was originally built by Mir Momin Astarabadi, who served as Prime Minister under the rule of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. It was known as Char-su-ka-Houz which over time evolved into “Suk-Houz” and eventually came to be known as “Gulzar Houz.”

The broken system of hospital referrals in India

locutors, such as distant relatives or drivers also influencing where the patient ends up. “So many parties are involved in the decision-making process that, in many cases, the woman may be taken to a completely different centre than what was in the birth plan,” she says. “The referral system is not so much broken as it is completely non-existent in our area [Jharkhand],” says Mrs. Barnes. According to her, the referral network lacks structure, accountability, and basic human-centred planning: a system design that prioritises the needs, capabilities and limitations of people who will use it. Any referral system should ensure that the patient has the maximum chance of reaching the referral centre alive. An ideal referral, according to Mrs. Barnes, should include a doctor’s note explaining the patient’s condition and the reason for referral. The referring physician should also confirm that the tertiary centre has the capacity to admit the patient and that there will be a health worker accompanying the patient, in an ambulance with amenities, who can intervene if the patient some help. In India however, many patients are often sent away with nothing but vague instructions and little else. These issues, Mrs. Barnes says, stem from a lack of accountability, organisation, and regulation in India’s healthcare system. In maternal care, where the stakes are especially high for women and health centres, hospitals do not want to take risks. Maternal deaths are notifiable, and are subject to government audits. “No one wants a death on their record,” Mrs. Barnes says. Instead of stabilizing the patient or coordinating a referral, many practitioners discharge the patient or encourage her to leave so that they are not liable for her death. There is also a lack of data transparency according to Mrs. Barnes. “If a patient dies after being referred, it is difficult to determine whether that death came from illness or medical neglect,” she says. According to Shirish Rao, an emergency medical officer in a government-run secondary hospital in Mumbai, over referrals to tertiary care centres are burdening the system beyond its capacity, making ideal referrals impossible. The cause for that is clear -- there is a lack of infrastructure and trained personnel at primary and secondary level centres. Dr. Rao works at a secondary hospital, but it lacks a 24-hour pharmacy, diagnostic and radiological services, and an emergency operating theatre. “At night, there is no point in registering a patient here because we know nothing is available, especially if a surgical intervention is needed. This patient will then be sent to one of the tertiary care centres, which become completely overloaded, so often, this patient cannot enter that saturated system at all,” he says. According to him, oftentimes, only one doctor is posted in the emergency department; and a formal referral would require them to accompany the referred patient to the tertiary care centre. If they accompany the patient, the emergency department remains unmanned. To prevent this, many centres have started intimidating patients into leaving. This is colloquially known as “negative counselling against admission.” Physicians tell patients that the facilities they require are not available and that they could either stay and wait at their own risk or leave for a different centre. “More often than not, the patient decides to leave for a different centre,” he says. The problem with this method, however, is that there is no one is to ensure the safety of the patient as they travel to the next health facility. There is also no guarantee that they will be treated in the other facility, either. Because many tertiary hospitals lack the resources to take on additional patients many patient relatives as well as health providers from tertiary centres have begun resisting referrals. A gynaecologist based in Tiruvallur said that she had to apply fundal pressure on a birthing woman whose labour was not progressing properly, because the relatives insisted that the patient did not want to be referred. “

Should political leaders retire at 75?



The suggestion of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat last week that leaders should step aside at the age of 75 triggered a debate. Opposition leaders saw Mr. Bhagwat’s comment as a nudge from the RSS to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is turning 75 in September, to step down. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has maintained a studied silence on the issue. Should political leaders retire at 75? Manisha Priyam and Rahul Verma discuss the issue in a conversation moderated by Sobhana K. Nair. Edited excerpts:

Is politics across the globe and especially in India geared in such a way that politicians reach their peak only in old age?

Manisha Priyam: Do people prefer younger leaders? Yes. But why don’t they get younger leaders? This depends on several imponderables such as who controls the party machinery, who controls the party purse strings, and whether such leaders can garner resources.We have often seen that those who reach the top hold on to their position. For instance, Lalu Prasad gained popularity at a young age. At the age of 42, he became Chief Minister of Bihar in 1990. He held on to the president’s position at the Rashtriya Janata Dal. In Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav had to fight his father Mulayam Singh Yadav for the leadership position in the Samajwadi Party.Regarding Mr. Bhagwat’s suggestion: this is not the first time that such a remark is coming from the RSS. This (unsaid rule) was used effectively in 2014 to allow Prime Minister Narendra Modi to (push out some older leaders and) nominate his own people at the top levels. But come September, I don’t see Mr. Modi stepping down. Today, the RSS requires the BJP machinery much more than the BJP requires the RSS. Mr. Bhagwat does not control the levers of power in India; they clearly remain with Mr. Modi.Rahul Verma: As per one research study, less than 10% of all elected representatives globally are below the age of 35. Once you come to India, this problem actually accentuates. From the first Lok Sabha in 1952 to the current Lok Sabha in 2024, the average age of our parliamentarians has actually gone up. The number of MPs who are below the age of 40 has declined over time and the number of MPs who are above the age of 60 has increased. The problem is not that we don’t have newer faces coming into politics; the problem is, as Professor Priyam said, that the older generation of leaders does not easily cede space to younger ones. Also, perhaps, a political party itself is unwilling to bid farewell to an established leader fearing that it will destabilise the existing structure.At the same time, I am not sure that voters would actually prefer younger politicians. It might be alright to have a 30-35-year-old MP or MLA, but I think voters would prefer older candidates for the post of Chief Minister or Prime Minister.As far as Mr. Bhagwat’s comment is concerned, I concur with Professor Priyam that we are unlikely to see any change (regarding Prime Minister Modi’s position).

Is there any evidence which shows that nations led by younger leaders perform better?

Manisha Priyam: We have a large number of nations where there is no form of democracy, let alone change of political leadership. These include China and Russia. And we see various forms of either party authoritarianism or one-man rule in these countries.In parallel, we also have the example of the U.K. where there have been several Prime Ministers taking office in their 40s, from Tony Blair to David Cameron. The British example tells us that when people want political change, that political change also comes by way of political leadership change. And I think we need to

understand that link better.As for India, we are now the world’s youngest nation. Our political leadership needs to reflect this aspect of our democracy. A political democracy survives by reincarnating legitimacy and renegotiating its social compact with people. On the question of age and political leadership, it must turn towards seeking younger people as political leaders. And these younger leaders should not come from established political families alone.Rahul Verma: As per the available performance analysis of Indian parliamentarians, we know that younger leaders may not necessarily be better parliamentarians. Data shows that MPs above 60 years of age have 80% attendance in Parliament, while those below 40 have 73-74% average attendance. The older MPs ask far more questions in Parliament.At the same time, I would add the caveat that age is not the only criteria; the health and mental faculty of a leader is equally important. Unfortunately, we have no empirical evidence to point at a direct correlation between a nation’s economic health and the age of its leadership.Some studies have pointed out that the governance models of younger leaders may vary drastically from that of an older leadership. There can be material differences in the decisions taken by a younger or an older leader. Younger leaders are much more likely to invest their budget in economic activities of job creation and infrastructure development, while their budgets for social welfare measures, especially health-related schemes, may be low. Younger leaders do govern differently, but one can’t say if it is necessarily better.

Should there be a concrete law or regulatory mechanism to retire political leaders or to ensure that a leader who is facing mental or physical challenges steps down?

Manisha Priyam: There has been a lot of speculation around Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar’s health, especially after some of his television appearances. Even in the election season, his political statements were few and far between. Under the provisions of the Constitution, it would be perfectly legitimate for the Governor to seek a health report of the Chief Minister. People have a right to know if the health of the Chief Minister has been severely compromised. But in Mr. Kumar’s case, it is unlikely that such a step will be taken. I do feel this is a mockery of democratic processes. And it is not only Bihar; we have seen numerous examples in the past from various States. In Tamil Nadu, the truth about former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa’s health was concealed from the voters. The unfortunate reality is that in such cases, the people have to wait until the elections to force the change.Though we never had a similar situation at the Centre, considering that the Prime Minister is always under the public glare, should we have a hard cut-off date for retirement? I am not sure. But we must have a transparent mechanism by way of which the electorate is kept informed about their leader’s health. Here though, the greater responsibility is of the political parties. We could have a term limit for the Prime Minister and for Chief Ministers, though.Rahul Verma: Yes, it is desirable to have politicians who are in the best of health and are able to make sound decisions. But how do we achieve this end? Every solution to address this issue comes with its own set of problems. Prescribing a retirement age will also require creating structures that enable career progression in politics faster. That can’t be done if we have fixed the minimum age to contest elections at 25 years. Over 8,000 candidates contested the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Less than 100 competitive candidates were below the age of 30. So just bringing in laws won’t change any of this.Even term limits are not exactly an effective solution. Look at the U.S. It has a term limit, yet we saw Joe Biden leading the country at 81 while struggling with cognitive issues. He was succeeded by Donald Trump, who is 79 years old. But as Professor Priyam says, there is a conversation across the globe about how the citizens are perhaps entitled to have access to health bulletins of their leaders. Though, again, this isn’t exactly an elegant solution. What if the country is on the verge of a war or some kind of economic crisis? An adverse health bulletin of the leader would only add to panic in such a situation. It doesn’t even have to be a catastrophic problem; even the markets could react badly if the medical bulletin of the leader is not good. So while it is desirable that no person should remain in office if they aren’t mentally or physically fit, it cannot be regulated through legislation or any formal system.

For every child free for adoption, 13 parents wait in line : Data

For years now, the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) — the country’s nodal adoption agency — has struggled to effectively manage adoptions. While a significant number of parents are willing to adopt, only a limited number of children are legally cleared for adoption. This imbalance has not gone unnoticed. In 2022, a Parliamentary panel called this imbalance a “paradoxical situation,” and in 2023, the Supreme Court “expressed displeasure” over the time-consuming adoption process.Latest data obtained through a Right To Information application filed by The Hindu show that the asymmetry continues even in 2025, and the gap has widened further. In 2021, 26,734 prospective parents registered in the CARA portal, and 2,430 children were legally free for adoption. In other words, there were 11 prospective parents for every child free for adoption in 2021.

As of mid-July 2025, the number of prospective parents has grown to 36,381 — an increase of about 9,600 from 2021 — while the number of children legally free for adoption has increased to 2,652 — only 222 more than in 2021. Currently, there are 13 prospective parents for every child free for adoption as shown in the chart below. The rise in the number of prospective parents could be one reason behind the growing gap. “The number of people opting for adoption has substantially increased. Issues such as infertility are no longer the only reasons why parents consider adoption”, said Gayatri Abraham, the founder of Padme, a comprehensive adoption resource platform for Indian parents. Still, in a country where an estimated 3.1 crore children were orphans according to the 2020 World Orphan Report, the fact that only a couple of thousands were identified as free for adoption is difficult to justify.Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and West Bengal accounted for over 50% of prospective parents in 2025, as shown in the chart below. The average delay for prospective parents to get an adoption referral has increased from one year in 2017 to three years by 2022, to about 3.5 years currently. If CARA does not act soon, the delay will increase further in the coming years and “force parents to adopt a child illegally”, as warned by the Parliamentary Committee.The Juvenile Justice Act (2021) lists out a time-bound procedure for a child in Child Care Institutions (CCI) to be declared legally free for adoption. Yet, the status of its implementation remains questionable. “There are so many stakeholders on the ground. Nobody is held accountable for not implementing”, says Smriti Gupta, co-founder of Where Are India’s Children, a Child Welfare and Action Foundation. She said that implementation could be a huge challenge due to resource limitations, lack of training, and a gap in linkages between

adoption agencies and the CCIs. She added that the idea that every child deserves a family is not strong in India.Data shows that over 22,000 children are in the CCIs, 8.5 times more than the number of children legally free for adoption, in 2025 (2,652). The children in the CCIs include those orphaned, abandoned, surrendered by parents and those who have parents/guardians who are unfit for parenting or do not visit them.

The process of declaring children in the CCIs as legally free for adoption remains a grey area. Smriti Gupta explained, “There are children whose parents keep them in the shelter because of economic issues. They might occasionally visit them. There is another set of kids who are completely abandoned/orphaned. Then, there are these kids in the middle, who have a guardian/parent on paper. And this person never visits the child, but exists only on paper. CARA is pushing to evaluate children with no visitation and an unfit parent/guardian, but needs a lot of follow up and follow through.”Because of these complexities, not every child in the CCIs can be made free for adoption. Even after accounting for that, the gap between the number of children in these institutions and those entering the adoption pool is still quite high. For instance, in Himachal Pradesh, only one child is legally free for adoption in 2025, whereas 829 are in the CCIs, as shown in the chart below. In Maharashtra, only 236 children are legally free for adoption, while 5,284 are in the CCIs. It will be a big leap to assume that these gaps are only due to the complexities stated above and the delay needs to be audited. The delay in declaring children legally free for adoption reduces their chances of getting adopted. Close to 34% of the children currently in the adoption pool fall in the 14-18 age group.As the Parliamentary Committee had stated, “older children and children with special needs are usually not preferred for adoption by Indian parents”. Moreover, delay would make it harder for the child, who has been in the institution for so long, to adapt as well. The longer wait times also have an impact on the registered prospective parents. Gayatri said, “Many parents start looking for children in the 0-2 year group.

Then, they see the waitline is three years, and become anxious. They then become willing to make the switch to adopt slightly older children, willing to jump the queue. Waitline shouldn’t be the reason one changes categories, especially not while going through the process.”Sources: RTI reply received from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the 2020 Orphan Report (INSAMER), and “Review of Guardianship and Adoption Laws”, by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law

How is China leading the green energy sector?



China installed more wind turbines and solar panels in 2024 than every other nation combined. This statistic alone underlines how China has sped ahead in the global green energy race, cornering the entirety of the renewable supply chain due to firm control over the extraction of key raw materials such as polysilicon and lithium. China also asserts dominance over the manufacturing of solar panels, wind turbines, and batteries.China’s renewable energy revolution is the result of decades of strategic state planning and massive investments in innovation. Starting with modest pilot projects in the early 2000s, Beijing is now leading in solar panel and battery production. In 2024 alone, China allocated a remarkable \$940 billion into the renewable energy sector, according to U.K.-based research organisation Carbon Brief, from an initial investment of \$10.7 billion in 2006. In comparison, India’s renewable energy sector received a combined total investment of \$3.4 billion in 2024-25 as per the Council on Energy, Environment, and Water, highlighting the stark gap.

Turning crisis into opportunityApart from climate goals, what mainly inspired China’s green revolution was a mounting crisis of extremely high levels of air pollution, coupled with concerns about energy insecurity. By the early 2000s, the country’s reliance on coal had made its cities nearly unliveable, resulting in air pollution so bad in Beijing and Shanghai that it was visible from space and had garnered global attention. Importantly, growing public awareness about the adverse affects of air pollution played a key role in pressuring the government to act.Moreover, surging electricity demand left parts of the nation teetering on the edge of blackouts. Also, increasing dependence on foreign oil triggered concerns over energy security. China’s oil imports are largely dependent on West Asia and sensitive shipping lanes through the Strait of Hormuz and the South China Sea.Therefore, what began as a survival strategy quickly evolved into a platform for national ambition. In less than two decades, China transitioned from an environmental underdog to a clean-energy driven superpower. The turning point came with the 11th Five-Year Plan (2006–2010), which elevated renewable energy to a national strategic priority. The passage of the Renewable Energy Law in 2005 created legal backing for this vision, offering grid access guarantees and price incentives for wind and solar producers, particularly private enterprises that received generous government subsidies. The state poured billions into infrastructure and R&D, while provinces like Gansu, Inner Mongolia, and Jiangsu were identified as early testing grounds for wind and solar farms, in keeping with the Chinese economic practice of starting with pilot projects before scaling up.

State-owned Enterprises (SOEs) and banks had a key role to play in executing plans that were led by China’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) and the National Energy Administration (NEA). Public sector banks provided heavy loans, while industrial giants like State Grid, Huaneng, and Genertec brought wind farms and solar parks online at record speed. As SOEs, these firms didn’t face the financial limitations of the private sector.The speed was enabled by a blend of state coordination and market dynamism. While the policy push ensured demand at home, the sheer manufacturing scale drove down prices abroad. From the start, Beijing had a global vision for its ambitions, using programmes such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to push green trade, whether through the export of solar panels, construction of hydropower stations in Africa or building wind farms in Latin America.“The undertaking of major national projects, quickly integrating funds, technology, and policy resources, and achieving scale effects that private

enterprises cannot achieve, that is what led to this growth achieved by SOEs,” explains Li Menghui, representative of Genertec. SOEs translated national climate policy into large-scale action, deploying wind farms, solar parks, and high-voltage transmission lines in remote regions. Due to the substantial support provided by the central government in the form of mandates, low-interest credit, and political backing, these companies could move more quickly and take significantly greater risks to innovate than their private counterparts globally.

SOEs were also deployed to focus on niche industries, allowing them to use their vast investments in the development and enhancement of a particular technology. Specialised SOEs were not only involved in building domestic energy infrastructure but also served as ambassadors of China’s green agenda abroad. SOEsaccount for 55% of global renewable energy investment, as per Bloomberg Finance. China’s SOEs turned clean energy into a tool of statecraft, aligning economic development with global dominance in renewable energy. Without them, China’s rapid leap from fossil-fuel giant to renewable superpower with global influence would not have been possible.China’s green energy push wasn’t without bumps along the way. For instance, in the mid-2010s, wind and solar installations outpaced the ability of the national grid to absorb their output. This led to the curtailment of energy, especially in northern provinces such as Inner Mongolia, Jilin, and Gansu where wind power curtailment was as high as 20% in 2014. These bottlenecks revealed a critical gap in transmission infrastructure. Although the creation of renewable energy projects was rapid, other aspects of national infrastructure could not keep up with the growth. Beijing responded through heavy investments in ultra-high voltage transmission lines and more focus on better integrating renewables into the national grid. Over a decade, State Grid doubled its investment from \$33.31 billion in 2010 to \$88.7 billion this year, according to Reuters.Another problem was haphazard subsidy policies to SOEs that encouraged wasteful expansion, without adequate oversight. The vast expansion of projects encouraged a build-at-all-costs mentality, leading to redundant projects and inefficiencies across the sector. To correct those issues, Beijing tightened oversight mechanisms and emphasised planning that favoured efficiency and grid-readiness over capacity. One lesson for Beijing was that in the race for renewable development, speed could not trump structure and organisation.

With a sprawling global network spanning 61 countries and a web of joint ventures, with local state-owned enterprises, from Angola to Hungary to Bangladesh, China’s geopolitical presence in the sector has become deeply entrenched. The current focus is on ensuring dominance in the next wave of clean energy technologies. With support guaranteed by the state to firms such as Longi, Goldwinc, and CATL, production costs have been slashed due to market dominance, leading to vertical integration and economies of scale. The next wave of advancement in renewable technology will arrive in the form of AI-powered smart grids, green hydrogen, and next-generation nuclear technologies like thorium reactors, all of which Beijing has set its eyes on with the same formula of aggressive state investment, breakneck deployment, and focus on the export of technology and influence.The world now faces a bifurcated energy landscape, as the U.S. and its allies scramble to pump billions into reshoring clean energy industries through mechanisms like the Inflation Reduction Act. The key difference between Chinese SOEs and Western private enterprises is the ability of the Chinese state to mobilise large-scale manufacturing capabilities and properly utilise their vast scale. This enables low-cost, high-speed deployment of renewable tech, while the West grapples with higher costs, slower implementation, and far more complex political considerations on the adoption of green energy within each of their countries. The contest of the future, ultimately, will not be about panels or turbines or climate targets but who sets the rules of the global energy game. Will the future of climate tech follow Beijing’s centralised, scale-driven blueprint, or will any other player be able to innovate fast enough and demonstrate a credible counter-model to offer to the world?Kabir Jeet Singh is a student and writer based in Beijing, with a deep interest in global economics, energy

The icing on the cake while covering a sport

More than a decade ago, my professor at journalism school advised us to always carry a few chocolates or an energy bar while we were on the field. This was to counter the uncertain world of day-to-day reporting, where both availability of food and windows to eat are erratic.However, I took up sports journalism, where a day is more structured. We know of events beforehand, and we usually cover a sport which has designated breaks for lunch and tea, and of late, even dinner. This has given us the opportunity to explore multiple culinary worlds. So much so that the lunch and tea spreads rank second in the list of our curiosities, just below the great sport itself.

There are those who consider catering at stadiums as an enabler and not a main event. It helps scribes do their jobs without having to worry about filling their stomachs. It is a complimentary service, not a right. But cricket in India — at least at a majority of the stadiums — has such good arrangements for food that it has become an integral part of our experience.In this, I can say with authority — and can speak for a lot of others too — that Chennai and its iconic venue Chepaunk ranks the best. It did when I worked there from 2012 to 2015, and it still did when I went back last year.During IPL 2024, one favourite dish was kalan pattanni milagu peratal (mushrooms and green peas cooked in crushed black pepper and onion masala). It was rich and layered, in line with its long name and elaborate explanation.Bengaluru, my home city; Indore, widely regarded as the street food capital of India; and Ahmedabad, which I have visited often in the past two years, offer excellent spreads too.In fact, cricket reporters regularly upload photos of ‘today’s menu’ on social media platforms, and two enthusiastic journalists even started a web portal to document each venue and the food it had to offer.A month ago, I landed in Leeds, United Kingdom, to cover the opening match of the ongoing five-match Test series between England and India. I had, of course, packed my usual set of ready-to-eat meals, but I was very much looking forward to the lunch and tea buffets at the famed cricket ground in Headingley.Mac and cheese and one boiled vegetable welcomed me on day one. With that, my bubble, which had swollen disproportionately because of years of pampering, burst immediately. The local press corps was upset with the cuisine too, and though things got better in the days ahead



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and the desserts were outstanding throughout, the first afternoon was a rough reminder that catering was indeed a service and not a right.My colleagues from other Indian media houses, who had past experience of covering cricket in England, assured me that I would be better off in Birmingham, the venue for the second Test. The West Midlands city has a significant Asian population and I was desperate to see that rich diversity reflect in my plate.The Industrial Revolution-era megapolis did not disappoint, with the first afternoon offering masala chickpea salad, Indian chopped salad, slow cooked carrots and broccoli, and home-made flavoured bread. To round it off, there was chocolate mint with chocolate mousse and egg custard tart, tickling my taste buds no end.Wimbledon, my last stop of the work tour, was predictable but perfect. From the menu to the chefs to the counter-managers in the media cafeteria, nothing had changed much since my first visit in 2019. The world famous strawberries and cream was inflation-proof from 2010 to 2024 at £2.50, and rose by 20 pennies only this edition.And like a champion tennis player’s repeatable technique, the catering at the All England Club delivers every single time. A great service that everyone rightfully enjoys.

Amid Trump’s tariffs, trade talks hit pause, arrival in India of US negotiators uncertain



US President Donald Trump escalated trade tensions between the two countries by doubling tariffs on India to 50 per cent, the highest globallyUS President Donald Trump escalated trade tensions between the two countries by doubling tariffs on India to 50 per cent, the highest globally.Negotiations between India and the US for a trade agreement have hit a pause, a government official told The Indian Express Friday. This comes two days after US President Donald Trump escalated trade tensions between the two countries by doubling tariffs on India to 50 per cent, the highest globally.

“Formal talks for a trade agreement have paused, pending a political resolution. The discussion is no longer in the realm of commercial negotiations. The arrival of the US trade team is uncertain, as no formal communication has been received from the US side,” the official said.The pause in talks, after months of discussion, comes after New Delhi

decided to dig in its heels over market access in the agri-cultural sector. Allowing genetically modified (GM) products is against India’s principle, a government official said last month.Queries emailed Friday by The Indian Express to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry did not elicit a response.

A day earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country “will never compromise on the interests of its farmers, livestock rearers and fisherfolk”. He said he knew that he “personally will have to pay a very heavy price”, but he was “ready for it”.There was, however, no reference to the deadlocked negotiations or to Trump’s unilateral action Wednesday of doubling the tariff on India from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. Trump did provide a 21-day window before the additional 25 per cent levy kicks in.On Friday, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, speaking at the Business Today Summit, said India has signed trade deals with the UAE, Mauritius, EFTA, Australia and the UK, and is in “dialogue with many countries such as Oman, the EU, the US, Peru and New Zealand.”“The world keeps evolving. International trade keeps finding new pathways, and what we are seeing today is bound to happen every few years. Over time, new countries rise and some decline. This is part of the history of nations. And this is India’s time. The Prime Minister yesterday raised the confidence of the nation by saying that India is not going to bow down to anybody and that Indian farmers need not worry. India has a place in the new world order,” he said.On how India would tackle deglobalisation and the penal US tariffs, Goyal said: “I don’t see any deglobalisation. I see countries restructuring their trade routes and trade partners, and I am confident that India will do more exports than we did last year.”

Agri red lines: India’s last-minute pullout from RCEP offers cues to why the US trade talks have hit a wall

GNS News Agency, August 18

India’s last-minute decision in November 2019 to withdraw from joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a mega-regional pact and the most expansive regional trade agreement that India had ever negotiated, was triggered by a belated rethink in New Delhi policy circles.Coming amid a chorus of protests from stakeholders, the most potent catalyst that proved instrumental to this pivot by the NDA government were several thousand handwritten letters posted by women who were part of cooperative organisations, a large majority of them from dairy cooperatives of Gujarat. In these similarly-worded letters, the women from the cooperatives flagged concerns about the potentially deleterious impact of the deal on the agri sector and their respective livelihoods. All these were mailed to the post box in South Block, with the sheer volumes of the incoming letters serving to effectively amplify the concerns that was already resonating in policy circles regarding the ominous presence of China in the grouping and the potential for cheap Chinese goods to flood India’s markets and harm domestic industries, especially in sectors like agri, dairy and steel. Just weeks later, India conveyed its decision to pull out.

The build-up to RCEP, and the last minute jettisoning of the deal by New Delhi, seems to be coming full circle. As the India-US trade talks head into a wall with the 50 per cent tariff looming in the horizon, the dairy and agri sectors, and the issue of GM crops, are proving to be red lines that New Delhi is clear it will not breach, given the political cost of this decision. While the negotiations for the deal have been constructive and there was a clear sense by end-June in New Delhi that an agreement was close, events have spiralled into a tailspin since then. “Diplomatic and non-trade issues” that cropped up have effectively pushed the deal aground, as reported by The Indian Express. Meanwhile US President Donald Trump has ratcheted up the pressure, primarily because India appears to be staying firm on issues rather than caving in, as a number of other countries have done to bag a headline tariff deal. While that frustration in Washington DC has played a part in the talks heading downhill, diplomatic issues such as India’s rebuttal of some claims made by Trump have contributed to the downward spiral in relations.Now with the 50 per cent tariffs on India’s exports to the US a reality, at least as things stand today, the real cost of the tariff impact from India’s perspective can be tangibly calculated. The uncertainty so far was proving to be a bigger problem than the tariffs themselves. More than the loss of competitiveness, the high tariffs could dent the positioning of India as a viable China plus-one-alternative, which has already helped New Delhi emerge as a competitive player in high-value assembly such as mobile handsets.

Higher duties & Russian oilThe imposition of higher tariffs on India is part of Trump’s negotiating playbook, which has consistently followed a pattern: keep throwing in a big tariff number to unsettle the other side and then gain leverage on the negotiating table. China too faced 145%, before tariff came down to 30%, and the EU was threatened with 30% just before its final tariff talks, with that number coming down to 15% after the deal was struck.Whenever negotia-



tions have stalled with other countries too, President Trump tends to escalate matters as part of a strategy to seek leverage. Other than China, most other countries including the EU, South Korea and Japan had rushed in to wrap up deals within days.Clearly, a decision has been taken in New Delhi to weather the tariff impact, while continuing backchannel negotiations. Also, these secondary tariffs, while being imposed under the guise of Russian oil purchases funding the Ukraine war, seem to be less about Russia and more about India. While some are reading this as Trump’s attempts to corner Russia, it is clear that a genuine attempt to throttle Moscow would have warranted a stronger action on China, the biggest buyer of Russian oil. Ironc still is the fact that Europe continues to buy non-coal minerals from Russia while the US too has stepped up its purchase of uranium and palladium from that country.

In terms of impact on India, while the US is the country’s largest export destination, nearly a quarter of the Indian exports, including pharmaceuticals and sectors such as electronic goods, have a concessional duty impact while entering America at this point in time.India has already started a graded tapering off of Russian oil since June. That is not particularly difficult from an economic standpoint, especially at this point, given that the gap between Brent crude and Russian Urals grade, which used to be \$30 in 2022, is now down to around \$5 per barrel. The effective landed price adjusted for shipping and the higher insurance on Russian cargo comes to about \$2-3 per barrel. The whole economic impact is perhaps overstated in these current circumstances, and switching back to other grades of crude would be possible. But then there could be a price surge in Opec oil, if India were to substitute the entire 1.7 million barrels per day that it currently buys from Russia to West Asian crude. That could impact everybody, including America.Given India’s hard redlines on agri trade and dairy, New Delhi was prepared to offer something in return. Like Japan did with concessions on rice, even as it walked away with a favourable deal for its auto sector. India has indicated its willingness to offer concessions on high-value purchases that the US is keen to package as part of its tariff-setting exercise and has said it is open to purchasing three big-ticket items from the US: defence equipment, natural gas imports and nuclear reactors. On specific sectors such as auto, India has communicated its openness to a quota system that progressively opens up market access in that sector over a span of multiple years, like it did in the UK deal signed last week.

Here’s how to activate and use GPT-5 in ChatGPT for free

Hyderabad: OpenAI has unveiled GPT-5, its most advanced AI model yet, and made it available to all ChatGPT users with certain usage limits. The upgrade promises smarter, more accurate, and more versatile assistance across a wide range of everyday and professional tasks from coding to creative writing, from solving equations to interpreting images.Unlike previous versions, GPT-5 operates on a unified system that intelligently decides how to respond. It automatically chooses between giving a quick, concise reply or using a deeper “Thinking” mode for complex queries. This flexibility means that whether you’re drafting an email or designing a website, GPT-5 adapts to your needs without you having to switch models manually.Using GPT-5 is straightforward: simply type your question or task into ChatGPT. The model will decide how much reasoning to apply unless you specifically tell it to “think hard” for a more detailed answer. This feature allows users to balance speed and depth depending on the situation.For those needing even more power, OpenAI offers GPT-5 Pro available through the Pro plan which unlocks extended reasoning capabilities. This is particularly useful for complex projects such as research analysis, advanced code generation, or intricate data interpretation.

Build apps and websites with ease Simply describe your idea, and GPT-5 can generate functional, well-designed code and even help refine the interface.Write with greater clarity and creativity From polished business reports to poetic verses, GPT-5 can adapt its tone and style to suit your purpose.Get informed, context-aware health guidance While not a substitute for professional medical advice, GPT-5 can serve as a knowledgeable assistant to explain conditions, outline lifestyle recommendations, and summarise research.Tackle complex math and problem-solving The model can handle detailed calculations, data analysis, and logical reasoning with improved accuracy over previous versions.Interpret and work with visuals GPT-5 can answer questions about images, diagrams, or charts, making it useful for educational and design-related tasks.GPT-5’s launch is more than just a version upgrade it represents a step toward AI that can function as a true thought partner. With better safety filters, fewer factual errors, and clearer communication, OpenAI says GPT-5 can help professionals, students, and hobbyists alike get work done faster and smarter. The arrival of GPT-5 comes as AI adoption accelerates across industries, with businesses and individuals increasingly relying on generative models for decision-making, automation, and creativity.

Yasmin Karachiwala reveals Deepika Padukone and Alia Bhatt did ‘a lot of Pilates’ after giving birth: ‘One thing they have that others don’t is...’



Pregnancy is one of the most beautiful phases of a woman’s life. While eating healthy and nutritious foods is highly recommended during this time, it is also necessary for mothers-to-be to keep themselves physically fit during the nine months of pregnancy, and beyond. Celebrity fitness trainer Yasmin Karachiwala revealed during an interview with podcast host Bhavishya Sindwani that Bollywood A-listers like Alia Bhatt and Deepika Padukone both incorporated Pilates into their postpartum workout routine to stay fit and lose weight.“One thing that they have that others don’t is commitment. They are very disciplined to ensure they get their workout done each day. Deepika did a lot of Pilates after she delivered. Alia, Deepika both. You cannot get a body like someone else, but you can be as fit as someone else,” said the expert.Why is Pilates good during pregnancy and afterDuring pregnancy

As a series of controlled movements, mostly on an exercise mat, Dr Deepthi Bawa, senior consultant-gyneacologist, IVF specialist, laparoscopic and cosmetic surgeon, SPARSH Hospital for Women and Children, told indianexpress.com that Pilates involves moves that are very easy to modify during pregnancy.“Provided the doctor has given you a go-ahead, as a low-impact pregnancy workout, Pilates boosts flexibility and balance and prevents back pain by strengthening your pelvic floor and core muscles (your abs), which support your spine. This equips your body better to cope with the strains caused by the weight of your growing baby,” she explained.According to her, it strength-

ens the core, which lends more stability to the mother as the bump grows, and also helps reduce back pain by exercising the tummy muscles that stabilise the back and pelvis. Strengthening these muscles can help reduce back or pelvic pain. Pilates during pregnancy also helps relax and control breathing, which is important for pregnancy and labour.According to her, pregnancy causes certain muscles, such as your pelvic floor and abdominals, to be under pressure — especially during full term and the delivery. Once the baby is delivered, these muscles become extended and weaker than before pregnancy. This is where Pilates can help strengthen your core muscles, including your deep transverse abdominis and pelvic floor.“The controlled movements required in these exercises help rebuild core strength, which is often weakened due to pregnancy and childbirth. Strengthening the core improves posture and helps alleviate lower back pain, a common concern among new mothers,” said Dr Bawa.Additionally, such functional strength training exercises enhance pelvic floor health, which is essential to prevent urinary incontinence and support recovery from vaginal or cesarean delivery. “Engaging in strength training postpartum aids in boosting overall energy levels and combating fatigue, as it promotes better blood circulation and increases endorphin production,” said Dr Bawa.

1. Consult your gynecologist first
2. If you are planning to take up a Pilates regimen during pregnancy, find an experienced trainer who has worked with pregnant women before.
3. Follow the precautions and do not overdo it.
4. Get your posture, abdominal, and pelvic floor strength assessed to find the right Pilates workout for you.
5. Mind your balance with a growing belly. So, avoid getting off the floor quickly.
6. Stop exercising if you feel any discomfort.

However, Dr Bawa urged mothers to begin under professional supervision and customise their workouts based on their recovery stage. Gentle, progressive training can be transformative for new mothers aiming to reclaim their physical well-being.

The internet thinks celebrities get their ribs removed for a slimmer waist; a surgeon gives a detailed breakdown



Body modification trends can go to extreme lengths, and getting your ribs removed for a smaller waistline is the latest buzz on the internet. Yeah, that snatched waist is not just a product of intense gym sessions and intermittent fasting. For decades now, Hollywood and Bollywood celebrities have been falsely accused of undergoing a rib removal surgery for a teeny tiny waist — think Cher, Marilyn Monroe, the Kardashians and Jenner sisters, and now Mouni Roy and Disha Patani have joined the long list of rumoured.But our job is to separate viral trends from medical facts. Thus, we reached out to Dr Arush Sabharwal, Bariatric and Metabolic Surgeon at Surgical Centre for Obesity and Diabetes Clinic, Delhi, to get all the necessary details.

What does rib removal surgery entail?

“The procedure of rib removal basically removes the 11th and 12th ribs of the ribcage (also known as the floating ribs), the ones that are not connected to the breastbone. The purpose behind this is to create a smaller waistline visually by narrowing down the lower rib cage,” said the doctor.Explaining how it makes your waistline appear small, Dr. Sabharwal clarified that when the floating ribs are removed, they slightly reduce the waist, resulting in an hour-glass figure, especially when wearing tight corsets or styling it strategically. “But to be honest, it is just an illusion, not actual weight loss or fat loss,” he said.

How safe is it?

According to Dr Sabharwal, a rib removal surgery is neither safe nor recommended by experts. “Rib removal is

a high-risk cosmetic surgery with no health benefit. There are multiple risks involved with this process, including injury to vital organs like kidneys, liver, or lungs, chronic pain, nerve damage, or breathing issues, infections, poor healing, or scarring, as well as loss of natural protection to internal organs.“This isn’t a regulated or widely practiced procedure. In fact, most qualified surgeons won’t perform it unless it’s medically necessary (like for trauma or tumors),” he revealed.

What kind of precautions should you keep in mind?

If you are particularly interested in undergoing this cosmetic treatment, Dr. Sabharwal recommends consulting a surgeon in a well-equipped hospital rather than a beauty clinic abroad.“Ask yourself: Are you willing to sacrifice bone and organ protection for a temporary visual effect? And get a second opinion from a surgeon who can guide you on safer, body-positive options,” he said, adding that once ribs are removed, the change is irreversible.As a bariatric and metabolic surgeon, Dr. Sabharwal emphasized the importance of avoiding shortcuts in life and instead opting for medically approved solutions to reduce your waistline. He encouraged undertaking medical weight loss programs, bariatric surgery for eligible patients, healthy lifestyle changes, along with strength training and non-invasive contouring treatments – if needed.To conclude, the expert highlighted that the desire to become slimmer and beautiful should not lead you to dangerous decisions. “Shortcuts like rib removal are not only insane but dangerous, too. Your waistline is not as important as your health,” he said.

Experts warn against excessive intake of Ultra Processed Foods

Hyderabad: Ultra Processed Foods (UPFs) have become a scourge in the modern era, with healthcare professionals, public health specialists and nutritional scientists blaming them for the rise of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs).Many modern-day NCDs such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, chronic heart diseases, strokes, kidney failures and cancers are directly linked to the consumption of UPFs, which also accelerate the ageing process.The reason UPFs face so much contempt is because they are unhealthy, low in nutrient content, high in calories and contain high levels of fat and sugar. Yet, they are inexpensive and widely consumed because they offer a unique taste, are low cost and easily available. These include sugary drinks, ice creams, cookies, cakes, frozen processed foods, cold cut meats and instant foods.

“UPFs refer to food and beverage products that have undergone extensive industrial processing and contain a

high number of additives such as preservatives, sweeteners, colourings, flavourings, emulsifiers and other substances that are not commonly used in culinary preparations. These additives play a role in enhancing the food’s taste, appearance and shelf life,” says the Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) in its Dietary Guidelines.Another group of UPFs known to trigger lifestyle ailments, especially when consumed uncontrollably, are instant foods, fast foods and street foods.Instant foods include noodles, breakfast cereals, soup mixes and others which are highly processed and high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS), along with artificial colours, flavours and preservatives.Fast foods are items that are cooked within minutes of order. Some of these, such as chips, shakes, pizzas, burgers and fries, are HFSS and ultra processed. While most street foods are wholesome and fresh, people need to watch out for excess fat, sugar.

London Spirit investor unhappy on key players missing the Hundred opener due to IND vs ENG series: ‘Many people invested hundreds of millions of pounds’

GNS News Agency, August 18

The recently concluded Anderson-Tendulkar trophy has been compared to one of the greatest Test series in the modern era, which is the 2005 Ashes. While the taste of some tasty Test cricket was still on the taste buds among the English fans, the Hundred tournament started just 24 hours after. In the season opener London Spirit took on the Oval Invincibles. The former were soundly thrashed by the latter. The Spirits missed their key players in Ollie Pope, Jamie Smith, and Jamie Overton, who were all part of the final Test. One of the investors in the Spirit team, Nikesh Arora, pointed out that because of the amounts that are being invested, it is important to make a better schedule so that the marquee players are available. "I just think that in future we have to make sure it's timed in such a way that if you're only going to have a 26-day tournament where many people invested hundreds of millions of pounds, it's only fair that we create enough space so all the right people can play," Arora said, speaking to The Telegraph.

"Some of the guys were required to rest until a few days after the first match which is kind of disappointing," he said. "I understand it. I think for the future it requires better planning. I would never want a sportsperson to be extended because we want them to play well for a very long period of



time. They've just come out of a spectacular series, made even more spectacular by the ending. I'm still smiling from it," he added. While the other investor in Spirit, Satyan Gajwani, said there is going to be a bit of friction between both the Test matches and the Hundred, he reassured that it is good for the game and that it will serve different audiences. "We also saw that with the IPL in its first five years. Any new format is going to have tension, and there's going to be tension between Tests and the Hundred. But I think overall, it's good for the game. I think it attracts different audiences. It widens the scope of fans that could be interested in cricket."

‘I wouldn’t be here without his input’: Joe Root talks about heartwarming bond with grandfather

GNS News Agency, August 18

Joe Root might be only 2,378 runs away from breaking the great Sachin Tendulkar's record but according to the cricketer, he wouldn't be half as good as he is now if it wasn't for his grandfather's inputs. Taking part in a show where he scrolls through his phone and stops at a specific photo, Root had a warm smile on his face. As the anchor asked about it, Root held up the phone to reveal a photo where the player stood with the 2019 ODI World Cup with his grandfather. "This is a long way back. This is when we won the World Cup in 2019, with my grand dad actually. It's a lovely photo. He took me to everything as a kid, growing up. Mum and Dad would be working so all my junior matches, he would be the one that ferried me here, there and everywhere. He loves his cricket. He's a lifelong cricket fan. He went and watch Don Bradman play cricket way back in the day. So to be able to experience a moment like that with him at the home of cricket was very special. Just brings back all those childhood memories, all those journeys up and down the country. So I am very grateful for everything that he did for my game. I wouldn't be here without his input," Root said. In the recently concluded Anderson-Tendulkar series, Root closed the gap between him



and the legendary Tendulkar on the Test batting charts as he finished the series with 534 runs in five Tests. Root surpassed the likes of Rahul Dravid, Jacques Kallis and Ricky Ponting in terms of Test runs across the last two Tests while his 39th century propelled him to the fourth spot. The series ultimately ended 2-2 with England winning the 1st and 3rd Test at Leeds and Lord's while India drew level with the 2nd and 5th Tests at Edgbaston and the Oval respectively. The 4th Test at Manchester was a draw.



GNS News Agency, August 18

Hans Niemann new castle Niemann, who finished second in the recently concluded Freestyle Chess event at Las Vegas, was seen relaxing on the countryside, detoxing from the constant hectic schedule and jokingly said that he had bought a castle. American chess Grandmaster Hans Niemann has always been one of a rather colourful characters in the world of the sport. Be it his overjoyed reactions at arch-rival Magnus Carlsen's or being accused of the World No. 1 of cheating, he has always grabbed headlines. In a new video uploaded on his YouTube channel, Niemann, who finished second in the recently concluded Freestyle Chess event at Las Vegas, was seen relaxing on the countryside, detoxing from the constant hectic schedule and jokingly said that he had bought a castle. "Hello everyone. Welcome to my new castle. After my victory in Las Vegas, I wanted to make a new acquisition. This is where I'll be doing most of my training. And uh perhaps I'll welcome some of my fellow chess players to enjoy my new purchase," he said in the video. In the video he also talked about getting to playing classical chess. He said that he had played 261 classical games in 2021, then 180 in 2022. Then the cheating scandal happened.

He will be playing at Spanish league now as he looks to get back into classical chess mode as he looks to get in shape for big events like FIDE World Cup in India and the Grand Swiss tournament. Recap: Las Vegas. Obviously my performance in Las Vegas was a surprise to fully everyone but myself. I immersed myself into freestyle and probably haven't opened Chessbase in a while. So hopefully when I play my first classical tournaments in a while, the Spanish League, starting from August 8th, I'll be able to reacclimatize to the speed or the lack of speed in classical. I'll be playing the Spanish league. It's a seven games all classi-

‘Score a century for me today’: Priyansh Arya smashes third hundred in Delhi Premier League after childhood coach calls for special knock

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Dashing southpaw Priyansh Arya was the breakout star among the state T20 leagues last year, having set the inaugural Delhi Premier League season on fire with mighty sixes and prodigious bat-swing. Arya's immense ball-striking abilities straightaway caught the eye of the talent scouts and Punjab Kings head coach Ricky Ponting, who roped him in at Rs 3.8 crore for the franchise ahead of the IPL 2025 season. Thanks to his sizzling run with the South Delhi Superstarz last season, Arya soon became a household name after an impressive maiden IPL season where he racked up 475 runs in 17 innings, including a century. Returning to the DPL stage this month, the left-handed opener had a quiet start before finding his groove again with another century at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi on Friday. In yet another spell-binding performance performance for the Outer Delhi Warriors, Arya conjured up a 111-run knock in only from 56 balls. His record-breaking innings, which in-

cluded seven fours and nine sixes, propelled the team to a massive total of 231/7, making him the first batter to smash three hundreds in the Delhi-based tournament. After a lean start to the season, tallying only 50 runs in three innings, Arya said that his childhood coach Sanjay Bhardwaj had urged him to smack a century prior to the game. "He said, 'Score a century for me today,'" Arya told in the post-match chat. "I took my time early on, got set, and I'm glad I could do exactly what he asked." However, Arya's knock went in vain as the East Delhi Riders romped home by five wickets in the steep chase. Led by skipper Anuj Rawat's rapid 82, the Riders raced home with four balls to spare. Priyansh shot to the limelight when he six sixes in an over in the DPL last year and topped the batting charts with 608 runs, including two centuries. Arya also had a prolific Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy campaign for Delhi last season, top-scoring with 325 runs in 9 matches at a strike rate of 176.63. "I watched many videos of young players.

Michael Phelps hits back at USA Swimming: ‘Treated me like piece of meat through my career’

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(LEFT) Michael Phelps reacts after winning the silver medal in the men's 100-meter butterfly final during the 2016 Summer Olympics. (RIGHT) Phelps' exchange with Lilly King. (Photos: AP, Instagram screenshot) (LEFT) Michael Phelps reacts after winning the silver medal in the men's 100-meter butterfly final during the 2016 Summer Olympics. (RIGHT) Phelps' exchange with Lilly King. (Photos: AP, Instagram screenshot) The war brewing in US swimming got bigger with Olympic legend Michael Phelps taking another swipe at USA Swimming after their public statement defending itself for their recent performance at the Aquatics World Championship in Singapore. Phelps accused the governing body of swimming in USA of treating him like a "piece of meat" throughout his career.

Phelps, along with another swimming great Ryan Lochte, had led the chorus of criticism against the American swimming federation during the event, where the Americans' superiority in the pool came under threat. The event in Singapore ended with USA leading the medal table for swimming in the pool. However, it was China that ended as the table toppers in the overall standings with both the the most gold medals (15) and overall medals (37) across the championship's six disciplines.

During the event, Phelps and Lochte had shared a meme on their social media portraying the funeral of American swimming. Rowdy Gaines, a three-time Olympic gold medalist, had also criticised USA Swimming in interviews with The Associated press and on live broadcasts for the American network NBC. Among other things, Gaines had also spoken about how USA Swimming was without a CEO, even though the next Olympics are in three years at home in Los Angeles. This led to USA Swimming responding with a statement attributed to interim CEO Bob Vincent where USA Swimming said it was "saddened and disappointed at the timing of the comments". "We respect and value the opinions of Rowdy, Michael, Ryan, and all USA Swimming alumni. We acknowledge that their comments come from a place of passion and genuine desire to see USA Swimming succeed. We are saddened and disappointed at the timing of the comments. The USA Swimming team battled severe illness in Singapore, and these comments added public scrutiny to an already challenging situation for our athletes and coaches. We are incredibly proud of the resilience of our team in the face of such difficult circumstances



and remain confident in the leadership, strategic direction, and culture established by newly appointed National Team Managing Director Greg Meehan. USA Swimming has reached out directly to Rowdy and other notable alumni in recent months, offering them a forum, including an invitation to join in a more official manner. The door remains open, as the only path forward for our sport is to work collectively to achieve a shared vision of success. We remain focused on the task at hand: winning LA28," the statement read.

This evoked a sharp response from Phelps. "Maybe a false statement, because I know they didn't reach out to Rowdy. They've shoved us out the door for years. Treated me like a piece of meat thro my career. Hopefully it changes someday," Phelps said in the comments of the Big Friendly Swim Podcast account on Instagram. American swimming contingent was underwhelming at the Paris Olympics last year where they led the medals table, but won only eight gold medals, the lowest total since the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Their World Championships preparations were affected by a case of "acute gastroenteritis" for many athletes, which was picked up at training camp in Thailand. Phelps and Lochte's criticism had also evoked a clapback from current American swimmer Lilly King, who tagged them on social media after a medal-winning night in Singapore and wrote: "You have been real quiet tonight." To this, Phelps wrote: "We should be so proud of how the team swam as a whole Right? Apologies for having higher expectations for the leadership of the team. My opinions were way off. USA Swimming has what they finally want, me to 'stay in my lane'. They will continue to help the kids reach childhood dreams by their continued support."

Kane Williamson recalls umpiring error from 2019 final: ‘Rule is the rule...that was one of those unfortunate things’

GNS News Agency, August 18

The 2019 final one which England won for the first time in the 50-over format, came with quite a bit of controversy. Ben Stokes tried to snatch the second run in the final over, and Martin Guptill's throw hit diving Stokes' bat and ran away for a boundary. The umpire awarded England six runs, but later it was clarified that the second run should not have been counted as the throw was completed before both batters crossed each other, and England should have been only awarded five runs. England managed to tie the game in the 50 overs and later went on to win the final on boundary count. "It was a shame that the ball hit Stokes' bat, but I just hope it doesn't happen in moments like that. Unfortunately, that sort of thing happens from time to time. It's a part of the game that we play. I don't wish to nitpick, just hope it never happens in such moments ever again," Kane Williamson said after losing the final at Lord's in 2019.

Recalling the incident, Williamson, speaking on Star Sports, reflected on the same again. "I mean, it went to the boundary, and then the rule is the rule. So, you accept that. Stokes put his hands up and wasn't obviously going to run, but it raced off as he accidentally deflected it." "Yeah, there you go, so we won it. It's a good feeling. It was quite remarkable to hear that afterwards and for the umpires to get



that wrong. But, in the moment, you went just trying to control what you could control. That was one of those unfortunate things. Remarkable when you see it – Stokes is not even looking," he added. "It was a quiet dressing room as you could imagine. There was a lot of disappointment. Obviously, tying there and then the Super Over we tied. So then, it was the boundary count, which unless you read the old manual, if anybody knew that was a rule really [sic]. Trying to make sense of that was the toughest part," said Williamson recalling the final.

‘He wasn’t very good’: When Magnus Carlsen played chess with Sam Altman, Mark Zuckerberg, Demis Hassabis and met Elon Musk

GNS News Agency, August 18

The world's greatest chess player of this generation, Magnus Carlsen, recently switched roles to do commentary instead of playing chess for an AI chess exhibition tournament on Google's Kaggle Game Arena. Carlsen had some sharp words for the world's leading general-purpose large language models (LLMs) such as xAI's Grok 4, OpenAI's o3, Gemini 2.5 Pro (Google), Gemini 2.5 Flash (Google), o4-mini (OpenAI), Claude 4 Opus (Anthropic), DeepSeek R1 and Kimi k2 (Moonshot AI). Carlsen was doing commentary for the Take Take app for the final of the AI chess exhibition tournament, where OpenAI's o3 (backed by Sam Altman) humbled xAI's Grok 4 (backed by Elon Musk).

"I have played in the same chess tournament as Sam Altman. It was an alternate moves tournament in Silicon Valley. It was around the Champions Chess Tour final in 2022. And I think Anish Giri was on the team with him. Sam wasn't very good. So Giri was very unhappy about being teamed with him," Carlsen laughed. "But he actually learned a lot through the experience. You



could tell that he was very smart." Carlsen also spoke about playing in a tournament with Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg. "He didn't know much chess, but he was a little bit the same as Sam Altman. I thought he was even better. Was learning very, very quickly, he was forming his own opinions very quickly, which I thought was impressive. It's a useful skill. They were not necessarily right, which you wouldn't expect, but they were always well-reasoned," Carlsen said.

Carlsen then spoke about Musk and spoke about the X owner's disdain for chess, before explaining why he understands it to an

extent. "Elon I've seen in person but I haven't talked to him. You know he famously doesn't have the greatest respect for chess players or the game which, to some extent, I understand because it is not a very complicated game, right? It is very simple in many ways but I think that's also the beauty of the game. Like it's obviously simple since it took computers not that long to master it, right? Compared to some other games. But chess is also rich and very difficult to play as well. Like it's simple enough to play that you can get joy from playing after practice. Like not maybe immediately but after practice practicing

a bit but hard enough that you can never actually get particularly good at it as a human which we've found out by seeing engines play," Carlsen said. Carlsen shared a funny anecdote about playing chess with Demis Hassabis, the CEO of DeepMind Technologies and an AI Adviser to the UK Government, who was recently awarded a Nobel Prize in Chemistry. "I played an alternate moves event with Demis quite a few years ago at the London Chess Classic. It was a lot of fun. Demis is fantastic. I've met him many times, but in terms of chess, he's kind of set in his ways: like he loves playing the Botvinnik System as white

Apoorva Mukhija aka Rebel Kid spends Rs 3 lakh on her makeover; gets veneers, laser hair removal, IV drip

Popular content creator Apoorva Mukhija, better known as Rebel Kid, has just dropped a candid and humorous video on her YouTube channel, offering fans a behind-the-scenes look into her recent glow-up journey that cost her around Rs 3 lakh. In the 11-minute vlog, Apoorva shared that she got everything from a hair makeover and teeth veneers to nails, brows, and even a facial massage, all documented with her signature self-deprecating humour and quirky commentary. The vlog opened with Apoorva introducing herself in her trademark satirical style, saying:

“Log mujhe pyaar se kuch nahi bulate hai, kyunki log mujhe pyaar se bulate hi nahi hai.” (People don’t call me anything lovingly, because they don’t call me with love at all.) She goes on to explain the inspiration behind this transformation, adding: “So I started introspecting about why people didn’t like me, and then I realised it’s not me, it’s God’s fault. Kyunki bhagwan ne mujhe attitude toh Aishwarya Rai wala diya par shakal ye diya hai. Isiye today I have decided to change myself physically.” (Because God gave me Aishwarya Rai’s attitude, but this face. So today I’ve decided to change myself physically.)

Her first stop was a salon visit where she got her hair coloured, not without some light-hearted jabs at herself: “Maine sir ko bola hai ki aap mere baal bleach nahi kar sakte, kyunki mere sar par chaar hi baal bache hai. Aur agar yeh bhi jhad gaye toh mujhe hair transplant karwana padega.” (I told the stylist not to bleach my hair because I only have four strands left on my head. If these fall out too, I’ll need a hair transplant.) Joining her in the salon was fellow influencer Anmol Bhatia, who also gets her hair coloured. Apoorva wrapped up her salon visit with a pedicure before moving on to the next step in her glow-up.

The video then took us to a dental clinic where Apoorva underwent teeth whitening and talked openly about getting veneers: “This is not my actual real teeth. I absolutely hated what my actual teeth looked like. I have gotten veneers, which basically means unhone mere purane daanton ke upar naye daant laga diye hai, cement kar diya.” (They put new teeth over my original ones and cemented them in.) She also addressed the online trolling she’s faced in recent weeks for her veneers: “So, all the comments about veneers were like ‘Oh my God, I’m so sad, she used to look so pretty.’ And I just have one question for you all, are you all blind? People were like ‘you look so unnatural’, so I’m like, yeah, because my natural was so ugly.” Next, Apoorva visited her dermatologist and continued to poke fun at her own transformation: “Mujhe vishwas nahi ho raha hai ki main life mein itni ameer ho chuki hoon ki mere paas ye bhinn-bhinn prakara ke doctors hai. Mere papa bachpan mein ek uncle ko phone lagate the jo humari building mein rehte the, aur wohi humari saari beemariyon ka ilaaj kar dete the. Humare papa kabhi humein doctor ke paas lekar nahi jaate the, kehte the ki Combiflam kha lo, sab theek ho jaayega. But now look at me, taking six appointments in a day.” (I

This singer bought cars worth more than Rs 7 cr after being inspired by Madhuri Dixit’s husband Dr Nene; garage contains a Lamborghini, Porsche

Every kid has always drawn a racecar, and every other kid has always wanted a Toyota Supra while growing up because of the Fast And Furious franchise. Some realise their dreams of owning their favourite cars, and Bollywood singer Stebin Ben is one of the lucky ones. Known for songs like ‘Baarish Ban Jaana’, ‘Sahiba’, and ‘Thodha Thodha Pyaar’, Ben has amassed over 10 million monthly listeners on Spotify and 640k subscribers. The numbers have certainly brought in a comfortable amount of money, since the singer has a garage with cars worth more than Rs 7 crore.

Stebin recently appeared on an episode of History on Wheels by Mashable India, where he talked about his love for cars and how he slowly built his way up to buying his most expensive car to date. He said, “I think for me it started as a kid, playing with scale models of cars and video games and just dreaming of owning those machines in real life. At the start of it, I just wanted to buy a Jaguar or a BMW car, and I stayed true to the promise I had made to myself, and I bought a 5 Series and a Jaguar XF right after that.”

Talking about his current cars, the singer said, “Right now I have an S-Class Maybach, a Lamborghini Urus, and a Porsche Boxster. I got all of them very recently. The Urus is for when I travel with my ‘boys’ and we all go for a drive. For me, the Porsche is a date night car. Honestly, the first time I saw a Lamborghini was a Gallardo, and then slowly I developed my liking for the car. In Mumbai, it’s very difficult to drive two-seaters, and with this car you get the ‘sports car’ feel and the height, and it’s obviously very comfortable.” He shared details about his first car and revealed what all he plans to buy in the future for his al-

Jacqueline Fernandez shares fitness mantra: ‘Do the hardest thing first’

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez has revealed her mantra to keep fit and shared that it’s doing the hardest thing first in the day. Jacqueline took to Instagram stories, where she shared a glimpse of her Saturday morning. In the image, the actress, who is dressed in blue athleisure, is seen taking a mirror selfie at the gym. “Always do the hardest thing first in the day. Work out time,” she wrote as the caption. The actress recently spoke about the growing importance of mental health and self-care. Speaking on the sidelines of an event in Bhopal, the ‘Kick’ actress pointed out that modern life comes with constant pressure. Jacqueline said, “Today’s world is very stressful. In such a situation, mindfulness and meditation are very important. Whether you get 5 minutes, 10 minutes or half an hour – you should give it to yourself. This keeps the mind calm and the body healthy.” She also spoke about the deeper connection she shares with her body and mind. “Both my body and soul are fit and strong. I am very spiritual.” The actress’ latest release is “Housefull 5”, which also stars Akshay Kumar, Abhishek Bachchan, Riteish Deshmukh, and Sonam Bajwa are just a few of the stars who are set to light up the screen. Also joining the cast are Nargis Fakhri, Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff, Nana Patekar, Chitrangada Singh, Fardeen Khan, Chunky Pandey, Johnny



can’t believe I’ve become so rich that I now have different types of doctors. As a child, my father would just call an uncle from our building to treat all our illnesses. He never took us to a doctor, he’d just say take Combiflam and everything will be fine.” She wrapped up the day with a visit to a nail salon where she opts for cat-eye nails that change colour: “I got one of those cat-eye nails whose colour keeps changing, because for my 24th birthday, I wanted to do something that truly reflects what my life has been for the past 23 years, which is: my life surrounded by people who keep changing their colours.” In the closing moments of the video, after her glow-up is complete, Apoorva signed off in her trademark style: “I spent close to Rs 3 lakh, and this is what I finally look like now. I honestly look the same. Whatever little difference is there is because of the makeup. Nothing really changed even after spending Rs 3 lakh, except for my teeth, which you all seem to hate. So if you liked this video, please like, share, and subscribe, and help me earn my Rs 5 lakh back.” For those unfamiliar, Apoorva Mukhija made headlines earlier this year when she appeared on comedian Samay Raina’s controversial panel show India’s Got Latent, alongside creators like Ranveer Allahbadia and Ashish Chanchlani. The episode sparked massive backlash online due to its use of objectionable language, leading to FIRs against the panel members. The situation escalated so much that Apoorva was reportedly asked to vacate her rented home. Most recently, Apoorva appeared in Amazon Prime Video’s reality show The Traitors and was also featured in filmmaker Farah Khan’s YouTube series, where Farah visits celebrity homes with her personal chef, Dilip.



ready impressive car collection. “My first car was a Honda City ZX, which looked like a dolphin. I built my garage from there; the BMW came, then the Jaguar, and so on and so forth. But the next car I want is either the long wheelbase Phantom or the Ghost; that is on my radar now. I also want to have a Ferrari, either the 296 or the F8. Currently I am in the phase of learning and looking for new cars, and I saw your episode with Dr Nene, and it’s so great to see someone being so passionate about their cars.” While some of the models and years are not clearly mentioned, Stebin’s total garage value is more than 7.25 crore. According to CarDekho, the S-Class’ current on-road price is Rs 1.9 cr, the Porsche Boxster is worth Rs 1.57 crore, and the Lamborghini Urus costs Rs 3.01 crore, making it the most expensive car he has ever bought. The Rolls Royce models that Stebin wishes to buy, the extended wheelbase version of the Phantom and the Ghost, are worth Rs 10.48 crore and Rs 10.19 crore.

Lever, Shreyas Talpade, Dino Morea, Ranjeet, Soundarya Sharma, Nikitin Dheer, and Akashdeep Sabir. Produced by Sajid Nadiadwala under the banner Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment, “Housefull 5” released on June 6. The film follows multiple imposters who claim to be the son of a recently deceased billionaire as they compete for his fortune while aboard a luxury cruise ship. The first installment of the “Housefull” franchise released in 2010 and was loosely based on the 1998 Tamil film Kaathala Kaathala. The second installment hit the big screens in 2012. Meanwhile, Housefull 3 and Housefull 4 released in 2016 and 2019 respectively. She will next be seen in “Welcome To The Jungle”. Directed by Ahmed Khan, the film boasts a massive budget. It stars Akshay Kumar, Sanjay Dutt, Jackie Shroff, Suniel Shetty, Arshad Warsi, Raveena Tandon, Disha Patani, Lara Dutta, Jacqueline Fernandez, Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Aftab Shivdasani, Paresh Rawal, Johnny Lever, Rajpal Yadav, Krushna Abhishek, Kiku Sharda, Daler Mehndi, Mika Singh, Mukesh Tiwari, Zakir Hussain, Yashpal Sharma, and Sayaji Shinde in pivotal roles. Presented by Base Industries Group, “Welcome to the Jungle” is produced by Firoz A Nadiadwallah and is scheduled for a grand theatrical release in the Christmas week, on December 20.

Bhumi Pednekar launches ‘premium water’ brand which charges Rs 200 for 750 ml: ‘Wanted it to be accessible to people’

Bollywood actor Bhumi Pednekar recently launched a beverage brand, Backbay, with her sister Samiksha Pednekar as her co-founder. The Pednekar sisters had been working on the brand for the past two years and put up a manufacturing unit in Himachal, where they package “natural mineral water”. The brand has launched with selling water priced at Rs 150 for a 500ml packet and Rs 200 for a 750ml packet.

Bhumi Pednekar and Samiksha Pednekar gave several interviews promoting their brand where they revealed the story behind their brand, its name and the pricing of the product. Speaking with CNBC-TV18, Bhumi shared, “It is our own facility in Himachal. We have put up our own plant and we are very proud of it. And, our workforce is led by women because that’s just the kind of value system we wanted to inculcate within our brand. Our capacity is 45,000 boxes a day. We have a large capacity.” She shared that the packaging is unlike the plastic and glass bottle packaging that is often seen in the market. “Our packaging is specifically called Gable Top Paper packaging. We have also gone a step further and our cap is actually a bio cap, she said and added that they are the only ones in India using this kind of packaging. Backbay won’t just be a water brand but a premium beverage brand with more line of products being under R & D. Speaking to Business Today, Samiksha shared, “We also have sparkling water in the line with three flavours: Lichi, Peach and Lime.”

In a chat with Business Today, they also revealed the pricing of their debut product. Bhumi shared, “We have 2 SKUs which are 500 ml and 750 ml and as far as pricing is concerned, we have priced it at right in the middle of very expensive plastic variant and the least expensive glass variant. The plastic is up to Rs 90 and glass goes up to Rs 600. My 500 ml is at Rs 150 and my 750ml is at Rs 200. It is premium water, but we wanted to keep the pricing as such that we wanted it to be accessible to people.” She claimed, “Today, Indian customers are ready to pay that money for energy drinks, so here we are giving you a product that is something as essential and basic as water and it is good water, water that will give you the kind of hydration it is supposed to give.” Explaining the reason behind the pricing, Bhumi shared, “We are Himalayan premium water. My



water is full of minerals and electrolytes that are naturally occurring. We want to hit the Rs 100 crore mark in the next four years. And 15 years down the line, we want to be in everybody’s home. Our water is packed at source. It is untouched by human hands.”

Speaking about her target audience, Bhumi told Business Today, “It is said that by 2030 the mineral water market will reach the 3 billion dollar market. My TG is people who want clean product. And where do I see my products in future... I see them in school, corporate canteens, colleges, theaters, airport, hotels, and restaurants.” She confessed, “Every time I see a child drink water from a plastic bottle, I just want to pull that bottle and tell him ‘don’t do that’. Of course, when it is absolute necessity, it is a different conversation. But this comes from a place where you have a choice and yet you choose something that is full of toxic chemicals. Backbay is self-funded company without any external funding. Bhumi shared, “I had started investing money since the age of 17 from my very first salary which was a cheque of Rs 7,000 from Yash Raj Films. The reason we could back Backbay is because of my investments. I splurge a lot of money in all the investments that I do.”

Dev Anand lost all his money after his most ambitious film with Shabana Azmi, Zeenat Aman failed: ‘In 15 minutes, he knew it was all gone’

Among the many greats and legends of Bollywood, some names stand head and shoulders above the rest, and Dev Anand is one of them. The charming actor continues to be one of the most celebrated actors of Indian cinema and was part of some of the most iconic films of Bollywood. His nephew, director Shekhar Kapur, recently talked about how his off-screen persona was nothing short of inspiring and how the man dealt with the failure of the most ambitious project of his career. The Bandit Queen director made an appearance on Filmfare’s YouTube channel and shared how anyone around Dev could learn so much about life by just observing him. He said, “You learn from seeing someone like that deal with his life. I remember that Ishk Ishk Ishk had just been released, and he had put his own money into it. I went to the premiere because I had a small part in it. We came back to the Oberoi hotel, and I sat in his room while he was getting calls from everyone in the industry. Naturally people congratulated him and told him what a fantastic film he had made, but soon reality started setting in. Someone told him over the phone that people got up and left the theatres while his film was still playing.”

Shekhar recalled how the film completely broke Anand financially, and yet the actor was unfazed and

Aamir Khan reveals Sitaare Zameen Par was made on a budget of Rs 122 crore, says his partner backed out after he rejected OTT deals: ‘I had to buy them out’

Aamir Khan’s journey with his film Sitaare Zameen Par has been just as engaging as his film and in a new chapter of that ongoing journey, Aamir has revealed that he plans to eventually drop his film on OTT, a plan that he outrightly dismissed for months. He has also revealed the budget of the film and suggested that he is yet to make any money from the film, that costs roughly Rs 122 crore. So it is yet to be determined if Aamir’s plan of taking the pay-per-view route after releasing in theatres was a wise move.

Aamir joined entertainment journalist Matthew Belloni on his podcast The Town and shared some shocking details about the actual amount of money that has been pumped into Sitaare Zameen Par. When Matthew asked him how the film was doing on YouTube, Aamir replied, “It’s doing better. It’s doing way beyond what YouTube expected. I’m not allowed to give numbers, so I’m afraid I won’t be able to give any numbers right now. I hope that I make the money back, and right now both YouTube and I are separately promoting it on the platform.” The Lagaan actor broke down his budget for the film and said, “We have a marketing budget for this, and YouTube is putting its strength behind this, and YouTube is also putting up a marketing budget for this. There’s a separate budget for the theatrical release and a separate budget for the YouTube release.” Aamir revealed that the initial budget for the film was \$11 million (Rs 96 crore), but a major cost came out of nowhere once his partners learnt that he wasn’t going to accept the OTT deal. He said, “I had to pay a price also because I had a partner with me earlier, and they weren’t very keen on this rash idea of mine. They didn’t like me turning down money, so they preferred that I buy them out, and so therefore the film has actually cost me about \$14 million (Rs 122 crore); let’s say between \$14 and \$15 million (Rs 122 cr to Rs 133 cr) is what the cost of the film for me is.” Upon learning this, the host asked him what the split



between him and YouTube is for the film, and while Aamir didn’t reveal the exact number, he hinted that it is a favourable deal for him and better than the traditional 50-50 split between filmmakers and theatres. The actor highlighted that this move will create a path forward for other filmmakers to successfully distribute their content. “I think that one of the biggest steps that we’ve already taken is that today my film is actually available across not just India, but outside of India. It also is a great opportunity for younger filmmakers who are making films, indie films which don’t have huge stars. They just don’t get distribution in theatres.” Now since the movie is already out on YouTube for the price of Rs 100, it won’t presumably get the same deal it was initially offered by OTT platforms. As per trade analyst Komal Nahta, Prime Video offered Rs 120 crore for the film but Aamir turned down the deal. According to industry tracker Sacnilk, the film’s worldwide collection currently stands at Rs 276 crore. Directed by RS Prasanna, the cast of the film includes Aamir