

8,000 PLUS RUNNERS PARTICIPATE IN 5K CURTAIN RAISER

Hyderabad, Aug.23 (NSS): The “5K Curtain Raiser” of 14th edition of "NMDC Hyderabad Marathon powered by IDFC FIRST Bank" witnessed an overwhelming response, with 8,000 plus runners participating at the Sports Expo, Hitex, here on Saturday morning. The event was flagged off by NMDC director (technical) Vinay Kumar and IDFC First Bank CMO Shreepad Shinde.Addressing a gathering, Vinay Kumar emphasized the importance of an active lifestyle in improving longevity and quality of life. Shreepad Shinde encouraged runners to view the 5K as a stepping stone towards greater fitness challenges.

PM Modi urges scientists to prepare for deep space exploration on National Space Day



GNS News Agency, August 23

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked space scientists to prepare for a deep space exploration mission to unravel the secrets that brighten the future of humanity. In a video address on the National Space

Speaker issues notices to BRS MLAs amid defection controversy



Hyderabad, Aug.23 A key development has taken place in Telangana politics. Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad has issued notices to BRS MLAs who have defected from their party.

On Friday, notices were sent to five out of the ten MLAs who switched allegiance, with reports indicating that additional notices may be forthcoming for other MLAs as well. In light of directives from the Supreme Court, Speaker Gaddam Prasad has acted to notify the defectors. It appears that the decision to issue these notices was made after consultations with legal experts. There is considerable anticipation surrounding the responses of the defected MLAs to the Speaker's notifications, reigniting interest in Telangana politics. The crucial questions now are whether these defected leaders will choose to return to the BRS party in response to the notices or opt to resign from their positions. The outcome remains uncertain.

The Speaker has sent notices to Bandla Krishnamohan Reddy, the MLA from Gadwala, due to his alleged affiliation with the Congress party after winning as a candidate for the BRS party. He has been asked to promptly address the complaints put forth by the BRS party. Moreover, it has been reported that four other MLAs have also received notices from the Speaker. In response to the notices issued by Speaker Prasad Kumar, MLA Krishnamohan Reddy stated that he will provide his response shortly. He emphasised that he has not switched party and has not joined the Congress party. The BRS MLA explained that his meeting with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was merely a courtesy call aimed at discussing development for the Gadwala constituency. Krishnamohan Reddy affirmed that he remains a member of the BRS party.

KTR calls on Sam Altman to establish OpenAI operations in Hyd

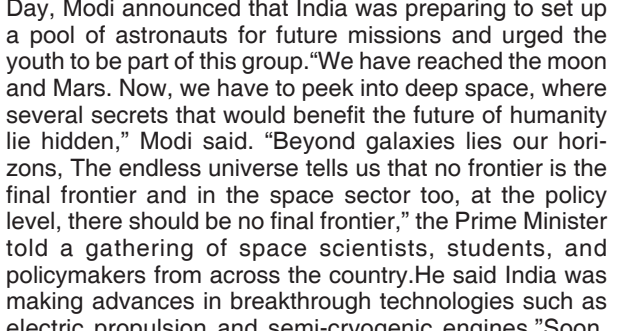
Hyderabad, Aug.23 BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao has warmly welcomed Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, and encouraged him to set up the company's India operations in Hyderabad. Altman recently revealed intentions to open an OpenAI office in India soon, and KT Rama Rao took this chance to advocate for Hyderabad as the ideal site.

In a tweet on Saturday, KT Rama Rao invited Altman, who is expected to visit India next month, emphasising Hyderabad's qualifications as a prime location for OpenAI's initiatives in the country. He described the city as a lively center for innovation, boasting the necessary infrastructure to support a global technology leader such as OpenAI. The BRS MLA highlighted Hyderabad's active innovation ecosystem, which includes prominent institutions like T-Hub, WE Hub, T-Works, the Telangana State Innovation Cell, and the Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad. These organisations have established the city as a significant player in the realms of startups and technological progress. The BRS leader emphasised that Hyderabad has emerged as a preferred location for major global tech companies, including Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Meta, Apple, and Qualcomm, due to its substantial pool of technology and startup talent. This environment makes it an excellent foundation for OpenAI to utilize India's skilled workforce, he stated. KT Rama Rao also underscored Telangana's ambitious efforts to position itself as India's capital for AI. He mentioned that the state government had designated 2020 as the “Year of AI” and initiated various AI-focused programs to encourage innovation.

"DISCOVER INDIA PROGRAM" CONCLUDES

Hyderabad, Aug.23 The College of Defence Management (CDM), Secunderabad, successfully concluded the five-day "Discover India Program" for international participant officers of HDMC-21. The initiative provided immense exposure to India's cultural, historical, socio-economic and governance frameworks, aimed at enhancing defence diplomacy and international cooperation. The program featured distinguished subject matter experts who delivered insightful lectures on various aspects of India's rich and multifaceted identity. The inaugural session set the stage for an immense cultural and historical tour of India by Commodore Harsh Bhargava (Retd) who addressed the audience with a catchy topic titled “India that you do not know”. Renowned experts delivered sessions on India's political system, cultural diversity, scientific heritage and major government initiatives like Make in India, Digital India, and Ayushman Bharat. Participants appreciated the insights which showcased India's journey towards becoming a self-reliant and developed nation.

CM Revanth orders funeral with state honours for Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy



Hyderabad, Aug.23 : Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy instructed the officials to perform the last rites of departed Communist Party of India (CPI) national leader and former MP comrade Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy with state honours. The Chief Minister on Saturday ordered Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao to issue or-

Govt allocates Rs.375 crore for Musi Riverfront development project

Hyderabad, Aug.23 : The Telangana government has initiated efforts to restore the Musi river. To this end, the Finance department on Saturday issued an official order approving the allocation of Rs.375 crore from the budget for the Musi Riverfront Development Project for the financial year 2024-2025.

As part of its comprehensive plan to rehabilitate the Musi River, the government has already begun removing structures in the river's catchment area up to the junction. The initiative to clear the accumulated garbage from the Musi river is currently in progress. With the recent allocation of funds, the efforts to clean the Musi are expected to gain additional momentum. The

No looking back, Musi river poised for rejuvenation: Sridhar Babu

GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad, Aug.23 : Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Saturday reaffirmed the government's commitment to rejuvenating the Musi river, declaring there was “no going back” on the project despite resistance. “Whenever a good initiative is taken, there will always be forces that try to obstruct it. The same is true of the Musi. But for the sake of future generations, we will complete this mission. Telangana will stand as a role model in water resource conservation,” the Minister said.

He was speaking after inaugurating the South Zone Conference of the Institute of Town Planners India (ITPI), organised by the ITPI Telangana regional chapter at a hotel, Banjara Hills. The theme of the conference was “Policies and Strategies Towards Biophilic Urbanism.” Sridhar Babu stressed that urban planning forms the foundation of economic prosperity, adding that true development must go hand in hand with environmental sustainability. “Constructing buildings alone does not constitute growth. Every policy we frame, every forest we protect, every river we restore, and every livelihood we create — these are acts of inter-generational justice,” he observed. The Minister pointed out that Telangana has already set national benchmarks in urban greenery expansion, carbon-neutral growth, water

Supply urea to state without further delay: Minister Tummala



Hyderabad, Aug.23 State Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao on Saturday held a meeting with RFCL CEO Alok Singhal and NFCL Sales Manager of Telangana Rajesh at the Secretariat.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the state had not yet received 62,473 metric tons of urea quota from the RFCL. The Minister said that the farmers were facing difficulties due to the delay in supply of the urea to



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Corporation Limited, tasked with the river's beautification and cleaning, informed the ADB team visiting the state about the environmental initiatives planned alongside the cleaning efforts. This has paved the way for the disbursement of funds for the Musi cleaning project.

This initiative will include the development of roads and state-of-the-art infrastructure along both sides of the Musi River. Moreover, the project will utilise an Interceptor Channel network design to effectively distinguish flood water from drainage water in the Musi River.

No looking back, Musi river poised for rejuvenation: Sridhar Babu



conservation, and sustainable transport. He emphasised the role of technology in designing climate-resilient cities and called for planning that takes into account climate change, urban flooding, pollution, groundwater depletion, shrinking green cover, and rapid urbanisation. The conference was attended by ITPI President N.K. Patel, Secretary General Kul Shrestha, Coordinator (Techno Admin) Pradeep Kumar, ITPI Telangana Regional Chapter Chairman S. Devender Reddy, and Secretary K. Muralidhar Reddy, along with several town planners and policy experts.

Supply urea to state without further delay: Minister Tummala

the state. The Minister asked the CEO to take steps to ensure that the urea that is due to arrive in the state on time before it has a negative impact on the farmers' crops. The Minister clarified that the entire urea quota that is due to arrive in the state should be supplied.

He suggested that at least 50 percent of the urea should be sent to the state this week itself either from the RFCL or NFCL. The Minister clarified that the fertilizer should be distributed immediately so that the farmers do not face any inconvenience. Responding to this, the RFCL CEO assured that the required urea would be supplied to the state soon. He assured that necessary steps would be taken to meet the needs of the farmers. The Minister said that 42 thousand metric tons of urea was currently available in the state and another 6543 metric tons of urea would arrive on Saturday. The Minister also said that another 37,877 metric tons of urea was likely to arrive on various dates till the end of this month. The Minister noted on this occasion that regular consultations were being held for the supply of the urea and added that the farmers do not need to worry

ders and make arrangements to perform the last rites of Sudhakar Reddy with state honours. Veteran CPI leader Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy (83) breathed his last on Friday night due to old age-related ailments while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Hyderabad. His final rites are scheduled for Sunday, awaiting the arrival of his elder son from the United States. Sudhakar Reddy's body will be available for public viewing at the CPI State Office, Makhdoom Bhavan, starting at 10 am on that day.

The funeral procession is set for the afternoon, after which his remains will be donated to Gandhi Medical College for research, in accordance with his wishes.

Additionally, his eyes will be donated to the Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital. Sudhakar Reddy represented the Nalgonda constituency in Parliament twice, in 1998 and 2004, and chaired the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour. He transitioned from student movements to national politics, serving three terms as the national general secretary of the CPI.

KTR writes to Bhatti, asks State government to support Sircilla weavers



GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad: Voicing concern over the financial crisis faced by weavers in Sircilla, BRS working president and Sircilla MLA KT Rama Rao on Saturday appealed to Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka to address the issue on priority. In a detailed letter, he sought the immediate waiver of Rs 35.48 crore in back billing dues and the release of Rs 101.77 crore in pending electricity subsidies to ease the distress of the weaving community.

Rama Rao pointed out that Sircilla was renowned for its power loom industry, with around 25,000 units operating. The sector has been in dire straits for some time due to adverse market conditions. He noted that during the BRS regime, the Bathukamma saree scheme provided weavers with steady work and income. However, the current financial burden, including unpaid subsidies and back billing dues, is pushing weavers into despair. He expressed concern that “suicide may become their only recourse” if the government fails to act. He explained that power loom units, which earlier availed a 50 per cent electricity tariff subsidy under the cottage industry category, were later reclassified as SSI units under the Industry-3 category due to lack of awareness. Following High Court directives, 127 SSI units and 191 other units have been served with Rs 35.48 crore in back billing dues. Already struggling financially, the weavers are unable to bear this burden, making it difficult to keep their looms running. The Sircilla Cooperative Electric Supply Society (CESS) is also facing severe financial strain due to the non-release of Rs 101.77 crore in electricity subsidies owed by the State government. This has left CESS unable to clear dues for power purchases from TGNPDCL, further aggravating the crisis. He urged the State government to intervene immediately to protect the livelihoods of Sircilla's weavers, calling for waiver of the Rs 35.48 crore back billing dues and prompt release of the Rs 101.77 crore subsidy.

Harish Rao slams Congress Govt over fertilizer shortage

Hyderabad, Aug.23 : Former minister and BRS MLA Harish Rao came down heavily on the Congress Government in Telangana for pushing farmers into distress with its failure to supply fertilizers in time.

Quoting the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India, Harish Rao said the Centre has made it clear in its press release that there is no shortage of fertilizers in the country. The Ministry said against the requirement of 143 LMT of Urea, 183 LMT is available and 155 LMT has already been sold. Similarly, in DAP, 49 LMT is available against the need of 45 LMT, and in NPKs, 97 LMT is available against the need of 58 LMT. “The figures released by the Union government show that fertilizers are available in surplus at the national level. Then who is lying? Is it the Congress government led by Revanth Reddy, or the Ministry headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi?” Harish Rao asked. In a release here on Saturday, he said if the Union government's data is correct, then the fault lies squarely with the Telangana Congress government, which has failed to procure and distribute urea on time. “

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Ray of hope for a 'clean' HCA

That the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) has been synonymous with everything that is detrimental to the image of the gentleman's game is... Local events calendar That the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) has been synonymous with everything that is detrimental to the image of the gentleman's game is commonplace. It has reached such lows that the moment the name HCA crops up, out spring words like corruption, irregularities, shoddy club structure, outright defiance of the guidelines and reform regulations and making a mockery of Supreme Court rulings as regards governance and administration. Though, the Association has been in the news for all the wrongs reasons for several years now, its image touched the nadir when A Jagan Mohan Rao became its President using fraudulent means despite not meeting the qualification criteria. Also Read - Will Tamil public bless this hero with 'Vijayi Bhava' in 2026? The last two years have been marred by murky 'deals' ostensibly at the behest of Rao and his cronies. They were carried away in their blind belief that their whims and fancies would hold sway all through their ill-gotten tenure. It was this 'I can do no wrong' arrogance that saw them rub the shoulders of Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on the wrong side. The flashpoint of the IPL 2025 ticketing scandal that led to SRH management threatening to relocate their headquarters to outside of RGICs was without any doubt the beginning of the end of Rao's misrule. He and his men have been arrested on charges of forgery and fraud, a development that has been hailed by some 'genuine' former administrators.

People Must Celebrate Festivals Peacefully: SP Rohit Raju



*****Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadrachalam Kothagudem Bureau, August 23, Indian Chronicle: District SP Rohit Raju, in a monthly crime review meeting held at the District Police Headquarters, urged police officials to take stringent measures to prevent any untoward incidents during the upcoming Ganesh Navaratri celebrations. "Addressing the police officials, the SP emphasized the need for a "Quality of Investigation" in every case to ensure that criminals are convicted and victims receive justice. He warned that any delay in case investigations would not be tolerated and that disciplinary action would be taken against negligent officers. "He instructed officials and personnel to be constantly visible on the roads through patrolling and "Blue Colts" vehicles to be accessible to the public. "SP Rohit Raju gave specific instructions for the Ganesh festival preparations: "Law and Order: Police must make robust security arrangements to prevent any untoward incidents during the Ganesh Navaratri festivals. "Committee Coordination: Officials should explain the rules and regulations to Ganesh Utsav Committee members and ensure their compliance. "Processions: Committee members must be informed that DJs and firecrackers are prohibited during processions (Shobhayatras). "Traffic Management: Strict traffic control arrangements should be made during the processions to avoid inconvenience to the general public. "Key Focus Areas for Police: "The SP also reviewed pending cases in all police stations within the district and gave instructions on several other key areas: "Anti-Social Activities: He directed officials to maintain a special watch on individuals involved in anti-social activities like ganja (cannabis), gambling (matka), and other illegal activities, and to take strict action against them. "CCTV Surveillance: Officials should encourage the installation of CCTV cameras in all police station jurisdictions. They must also raise public awareness about the importance of CCTV cameras in residential areas and commercial establishments. "Property Crimes: He advised using modern technology to quickly apprehend criminals in property cases, recover stolen goods, and return them to the victims. "Cybercrime: Officials were instructed to conduct awareness programs to protect the public from cybercrimes. He urged a swift response to victims of cybercrime who report the loss of money, offering them immediate support. "Road Safety: Police must identify accident-prone areas (black spots) in their jurisdictions and coordinate with relevant authorities to implement preventive measures. "Case Resolution: The SP stressed the importance of coordinating with legal authorities to expedite the resolution of pending cases and ensure justice for victims. "Traffic Violations: He directed constant vehicle checks to catch individuals driving under the influence or engaging in rash driving, and to take strict legal action against them. "The meeting was attended by Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh, Kothagudem DSP Rehman, Palvancha DSP Satish Kumar, Yellandu DSP Chandra Bhanu, Manuguru DSP Ravinder Reddy, DCRB DSP Mallayya Swamy, and other CIs, SIs, and staff from the district.

District Judge Vasant Patil visited yellandu court

Yellandu August 23, Indian Chronicle: " Bhadrachalam Kothagudem district judge vasant patil visited yellandu court on Saturday. On this occasion, the court judge Keerthi Chandrika Reddy was greeted by a bouquet. Subsequently, the district judge inspected the repairs of the court premises. He examined the pending work for the past five months and ordered contractors to complete the work fast. The records of the court were then examined. Under the auspices of the Bar Association, the judge has issued a memorandum of understanding to build toilets for lawyers and clients in the court premises. He then participated in the bee dinner organized by the Bar Association. He was accompanied by Judge Keerthi Chandrika Reddy, Bar Association Presidents K Umamaheswara Rao, General Secretary Keerthi Karthik, Senior Lawyers P Narasayya, D Anand, V Narsaya, P. Gopinath, P Balakrishna, Ravi Nayak, AO kiran kumar, police, court members.

Officials' Negligence in Town Development Works

"Ashok Nagar Culvert Construction Neglected""CPI(M) Demands Action Against Contractor"



*****Shaik sharief ,Bhadrachalam, August 22, indian chronicle : "M.V. Narasareddy, a member of the CPI(M) district committee, alleged that due to the negligence of officials in development works, the local people are facing severe hardships even as the town is hit by fevers due to rains and floods. He demanded that the culvert construction works undertaken in Ashok Nagar Colony be completed immediately. "On Friday, as part of a fact-finding tour organized by the CPI(M) 11th Ward Committee, locals brought to the attention of the CPI(M) team that a canal was dug for the construction of a culvert in Ashok Nagar's Raghavendra

'Uddeepakam Workbook-2' for the Educational Development of Tribal Students: ITDA PO B. Rahul

*****Shaik sharief ,Bhadrachalam, August 22, indian chronicle : "Bhadrachalam ITDA Project Officer (PO) B. Rahul stated that 'Uddeepakam Workbook-2' has been introduced to improve the educational development and learning of tribal students. He directed the School Complex Resource Persons (SCRPs) to take special care to ensure that teachers in every school properly engage students in practicing this workbook. "On Friday, a special meeting was held at the PMRC building with SCRPs from the Bhadrachalam Kothagudem district to discuss the action plan for the implementation of 'Uddeepakam Workbook-2'. During the meeting, he mentioned that the introduction of the 'Uddeepakam Workbook' last year in GPS (Gurukula Primary Schools) significantly improved the learning of tribal children. This year, to strengthen the education of students in primary schools in addition to GPS students, 'Uddeepakam Workbook-2' has been introduced and supplied to all schools. "He advised the concerned SCRPs to check whether teachers are making students work on the workbook when they visit the GPS schools under their supervision. He also instructed them to examine the workbooks written by the students and, if there are any mistakes, to have the teachers correct them. He warned that action would be taken against anyone showing negligence in this prestigious program. "He announced that a 'TLM Mela' on the 'Uddeepakam Workbook' would be organized at the ATDO division level on August 28, 29, and 30, and the SCRPs should take responsibility for making these events a success. He instructed the ACO to conduct a review meeting with the SCRPs every 15 days to assess their performance and ensure they work with honesty and commitment. He emphasized that the 'Uddeepakam Workbook-2' should be completed by Dussehra, and special attention should be paid to identify-

Celebrate Ganesh Festivals in a Peaceful Atmosphere: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil

*****Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadrachalam Kothagudem Bureau, August 23, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil stated that strict measures should be taken to ensure the Ganesh Navaratri festivals are conducted peacefully. On Saturday, he held a meeting with officials from the Revenue, Police, Panchayat Raj, Fire, Electricity, and Municipal departments at the IDOC office to discuss the arrangements for the Vinayaka Chavithi and Navaratri festivals and immersion. "During the meeting, the District Collector said that firm actions must be taken to ensure the peaceful conduct of the Ganesh festivals. He emphasized that all Ganesh pandals must be mandatorily registered. He requested that Ganesh Mandal organizers provide complete details in advance to ensure better coordination among various departments, which will help in celebrating the festivals more grandly. "He advised that officials from the Police, Revenue, and other departments, along with festival committee members, should hold meetings at all municipal and mandal levels in the district to plan the Ganesh festivities. He stressed that the Ganesh Navaratri festivals should be conducted without any incidents or undesirable events from the first day until the immersion, in a peaceful environment. "Guidelines for Organizers: "The Collector outlined several key guidelines for the organizers and public: "Electricity: Pandals must obtain permission from the Electricity Department for power connections. The Electricity Department will conduct an audit of the pandals to ensure safety and prevent accidents. Organizers should install idols that are not too tall to avoid contact with electricity wires. "Sound: Permission from the Police Department is required for installing microphones at the pandals. "Immersion: As idols are expected to arrive from other districts for immersion, the process should be carried out with utmost security only at designated locations. A strict plan and a detailed route map for the immersion must be prepared. "Roads: Necessary road repair work on the immersion routes should be undertaken immediately. "Vehicles: Vehicles used for the immersion



Hotel lane two months ago, but the work has not been completed yet, leading to the accumulation of stagnant water and the presence of mosquitoes and pigs. "Speaking on the occasion, Narasareddy said that if a contractor who takes up development works does not complete them on time, it would lead to many problems. He questioned why the officials were not taking action against the contractor who has not completed the work even after two months since the canal was dug for the culvert. He asked if the officials' love for contractors was more than their concern for the people. He warned that contractors are acting arbitrarily due to official negligence and if the Ashok Nagar culvert is not completed immediately, the issue would be brought to the attention of the district collector. "He also stated that despite many problems piling up in Ashok Nagar Colony, no official has visited the area. He urged the Panchayat officials to visit the colony immediately to take up sanitation works and complete the culvert construction as soon as possible. The program was attended by the party's town committee members Yerramshet Venkatrama Rao, Parelli Santosh Kumar, branch secretary Punyavathi, district committee member Y. Poornima, and other leaders Ghanapathamma, Gundla Rani, Suramma, Savitramma, and others.



ing and targeting children who are weak in their studies to ensure the workbook is properly utilized. He told them to inform the DD Tribal Welfare Officer or the ACO if any teachers in GPS schools do not cooperate with them, and to send their daily feedback to the office. "He also informed them that the 'Uddeepakam Workbook-2' assignment exams would be conducted this year through private NGOs. Accordingly, he advised teachers to first thoroughly read the workbook themselves before teaching it to the students in an easy-to-understand manner. The meeting was attended by DD Tribal Welfare Officer Manemma, ACO Ramesh, SCRPs, and others.



procession must be certified by the Transport Department. "Security: Adequate police presence and a robust security system should be arranged at every Ganesh pandal and along the immersion routes. "Music and Behavior: Only devotional songs should be played during the festivals, respecting the sentiments of all religions and communities. Organizers and committee members should be vigilant and avoid any provocative actions that could disturb peace and order. "Environmental Protection and Safety: "The District Collector highlighted the importance of environmental protection: "Idols: He urged the public to worship clay idols (Matti Ganapatis) as they are eco-friendly, unlike idols made from chemicals and Plaster of Paris, which cause environmental damage. "Distribution: The Pollution Control Board will distribute free clay idols in all four municipalities of the district. "Waste: Organizers should use dustbins to manage waste and avoid using plastic items for distributing Prasad to devotees. "Safety: The use of cranes for immersion is mandatory, and expert swimmers (Gaj Eetagaallu) should be kept on standby at immersion sites. "He called for the public to come together, transcending caste and religion, to celebrate the festival in a peaceful atmosphere. "The meeting was attended by SP Rohit Raj, Bhadrachalam Sub-Collector Mrunal Shrestha, ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh, Additional Collector Venugopal, Additional Collector for local bodies Smt. Vidya Chandana, DPO Chandramouli, DMHO Vijayalakshmi, Mission Bhagiratha EE Tirumalesh, RDO Madhu from Kothagudem, municipal commissioners, and other officials.

T-CHIP Delegation Engages with ARM, Synopsys, TSMC & Faraday

Taipei /Hyderabad, Aug.23 : On its second day in Taiwan, the T-CHIP (Technology–Chip Innovation Program) delegation led by Sundeep Kumar Makthala deepened Telangana's global semiconductor outreach through strategic dialogues with industry titans ARM, Synopsys, TSMC, and Faraday Technology. The discussions centered on building long-term partnerships that will position Telangana as a strategic hub in the global semiconductor value chain. With Taiwan contributing nearly 65% of the world's semiconductor output, collaborations with its leading institutions and companies open doors for technology transfer, talent exchange, and joint ventures in chip design and manufacturing.

At ARM Taiwan, discussions revolved around integrating ARM's processor IP—powering over 99% of the world's smartphones—into Telangana's academic, research, and startup ecosystem. Topics included ARM-aligned curricula, innovation workshops, and incubator support aimed at fostering localized chip innovation. The delegation also visited Synopsys, a global leader in EDA and semiconductor IP, where they explored joint ventures in secure-chip training, co-innovation labs, and design-for-security R&D initiatives. These collaborations aim to place Telangana's engineers at the forefront of global chip design standards.

A key highlight was the visit to TSMC, the world's largest contract semiconductor foundry and a key player in advanced chip manufacturing. The delegation discussed potential student exchange, technical visits, and collaboration that could elevate Telangana's academic and industry readiness for cutting-edge semiconductor technology. At Faraday Technology, known as Taiwan's leading fabless ASIC and silicon IP provider with a strong portfolio of self-developed IPs and turnkey ASIC/SoC services (1993–present), the delegation discussed opportunities for training in SoC tape-outs, IP customization, and advanced chip design—key capabilities for Telangana's emerging semiconductor ecosystem. The presence of Ken Khoo (CEO, Spring Semiconductor) and Maruthi Kurma (WTITC ASEAN President) highlighted international industry and diaspora support for the T-CHIP mission. Reflecting on the day, Mr. Sundeep Kumar Makthala said "These discussions are foundational to building Telangana's semiconductor talent pipeline. By aligning our ecosystem with global leaders, we are ensuring that our students, startups, and researchers are ready to contribute meaningfully to next-gen chip innovation."

TRAFFIC ADVISORY FOR SUNDAY'S HYDERABAD MARATHON 2025

Hyderabad, Aug.23 The 14th edition of Hyderabad Marathon will be held on Sunday (August 24) between 5 AM and 11:30 AM. The event will start from People's Plaza (Necklace Road) and ends at Hitex Exhibition Grounds (Madhapur), culminating at Gachibowli stadium. As per the schedule, 42 KM Full Marathon: Starts at People's Plaza, Necklace Road, while the 21 KM Half Marathon: it also starts at People's Plaza. As for 10 KM Run, it starts at Hitex Exhibition Grounds, Madhapur.

In view of the Sunday's event, several traffic diversions and restrictions will be in effect in Cyberabad Commissionerate limits. As for "Lingampally via IIT Junction", the traffic police asked the commuters to use alternate routes via Shaikpet, Gachibowli Flyover, Biodiversity Flyover and ORR. Restrictions on Kothaguda - Cyber Towers will be in force till 7:15 AM. With regard to Shaikpet/ Mehdiapatham to Lingampally: traffic diversions takes place via Kazaguda Junction, Nanakramguda and Wipro Junction. Restrictions will be up to 11:30 AM between Indiranagar and HCU Gate No.2. To Kothaguda/Kondapur and KPHB: Diversions via Biodiversity Flyovers, IKEA, Lemon Tree Junction, and Madhapur. Restrictions upto 8:00 AM on specific stretches. From Jubilee Hills Road No.45: Diversions through Divya Diamonds, Durgam Cheruvu, ITC Kohinoor, Knowledge City, Nanakramguda. Restrictions on Road No.45 Flyover & Cable Bridge until 8:30 AM. From ROB/ KPHB: Diversions towards AIG, Botanical Garden, IKEA Rotary. Restrictions on Cyber Towers–Kothaguda until 7:30 AM, Cyber Towers - IKEA until 8 AM. From Hafeezpet to Jubilee Hills Road No.45: No left turn at Kothaguda; diversions via Udupi - Rolling Hills - IKEA Flyover - Cable Bridge. Restrictions on Kothaguda - Cyber Towers until 7:30 AM. APPEAL: Commuters are advised to avoid restricted routes during the marathon hours and plan their travel accordingly. Cyberabad Traffic Police requested FPR public cooperation for smooth conduct of the event.

CYBERABAD POLICE CRACKED CHAIN SNATCHING AND LOOT CASE:

Hyderabad, Aug.23 : In the sensational Khajana Jewellers theft case on August 12 this year, the Cyberabad police have arrested two accused - Aashish Kumar Singh and Deepak Kumar Sah at Jejuri in Pune and Hyderabad. The police have recovered 900 grams of looted silver articles.

According to the police, six unidentified armed offenders entered Khajana Jewellers in Chandanagar area and opened fire on the deputy manager injuring him on his left knee and looted about 10 kgs of silver articles (gold coloured). A case was registered at Chandanagar police station under various sections of BNS and Arms Act. On August 19, two more accused - Anish Kumar Singh and Prince Kumar Rajak, were arrested at Pimpri (Pune). About 1,015 grams of looted silver articles and one country-made firearm was recovered from them. On August 22, two prime accused - Prince Kumar Bharati (main lead) and Rohit Kumar Rajak alias Rohit Baitha (who fired the weapon), were arrested at Ankleshwar (Gujarat). As per the information, the duo revealed that a firearm and stolen ornaments were hidden and will be recovered during police custody. Investigation is continuing to trace and apprehend the remaining three accused and to recover the property. As for the criminal background, Prince Kumar Bharati is a habitual offender involved in several cases of Siwan, Gopalganj and Saran districts (Bihar) and was booked under various sections of IPC, BNS, Arms Act and NDPS Act. Rohit Kumar Rajak alias Rohit Baitha - wanted in the crime registered at Ekma PS, Saran Dist. (Bihar) under BNS & Arms Act.

Implement HPC Wages for Singareni Contract Workers – IFTU““



““Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, August 23, Indian Chronicle: The Singareni Collieries Contract Workers Union has demanded that High Power Committee (HPC) wages be implemented for contract workers employed in Singareni. “A general body meeting was held on Saturday at the JK Civil Contract Workers’ adda in Yellandu, presided over by Kondapalli Srinivas, SCCWU Region President. “Md. Rasuddin, State President of the Singareni Collieries Contract Workers Union, and K. Sarangapani, IFTU District President, addressed the gathering. They criticized the negligent attitude of national unions in Singareni for failing to implement HPC wages, even though the same were enforced in Coal India under a 2013 agreement signed by five national trade unions with Coal India

management. “The leaders also demanded that 15% of this year’s profit share bonus be paid to contract workers. They highlighted the key demands of contract workers, including wage hike, statutory rights, equal pay for equal work, and resolution of pending issues. “They announced that a state-level conference will be held on September 7 at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram, Hyderabad, and appealed to all Singareni contract workers to participate in large numbers. “Participants in the meeting included Kondapalli Srinivas – SCCWU Region President, Md. Rasuddin – State President, Singareni Collieries Contract Workers Union, K. Sarangapani – IFTU District President, Raavuri Upender Rao – IFTU Yellandu Area Committee President, Local contract workers of Yellandu

TDP Demands Sanitation Works, Action Against Monkey-Dog Menace“““



““Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, August 23, Indian Chronicle: The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has demanded immediate sanitation works in villages and measures to control the menace of monkeys and stray dogs. “At a meeting in Yellandu, TDP constituency coordinator Mudragada Vamsi and TNSF state leader Chandavat Ramesh Babu said villagers have been suffering for two years due to lack of cleanliness, seasonal diseases, and animal attacks. “A petition was submitted to MPO K. Chiranjevi, urging action against poor sanitation, unchecked weed growth, non-functioning streetlights, garbage

not being cleared, and drains left uncleared. They demanded that monkeys be caught and released in forests to protect villagers. “MPO Chiranjevi responded positively, assuring that pending sanitation works in panchayats will be completed soon. “Participants included: Mudragada Vamsi, Chandavat Ramesh Babu, Palamalu Balakrishna, Deshavath Srihari, Karun Narasanna, Maifa Balaraj, Vemuri Salman Raj, Kandiravi, Daggula Lingayya, Podila Shyam, Dasari Gopalakrishna, Guguloth Ramdas, Devarakonda Naveen, Guggala Rajesh, Mukka Srived, and other local leaders.

DID PAYTM CEO VIJAY SHEKHAR SHARMA JUST HAND OVER ALL HIS MONEY TO KAPIL SHARMA ON NETFLIX’S THE GREAT INDIAN KAPIL SHOW SEASON 3?



Hyderabad; The upcoming episode of The Great Indian Kapil Show promises a laughter riot with India’s leading entrepreneurs taking center stage. BOAT’s Aman Gupta, MamaEarth’s Ghazal Alagh, OYO’s Ritesh Agarwal, and Paytm’s Vijay Shekhar Sharma join Kapil Sharma for an evening of wit, banter, and inspiring anecdotes. Business meets banter as Kapil dives into their journeys, quirks, and secrets, and of course, sprinkles in his trademark humour that leaves even CEOs tongue-tied. Kapil, acknowledging Vijay Shekhar Sharma’s humble beginnings, asked him about luxury spending habits. To this, Vijay quipped that one should always stay in “best survival mode” while spending money and confessed that his ultimate stress-buster is golgappe. Hmmm that makes us think, does he also live by the motto “paytm karo” after he’s done with his goals and gappes?

When Kapil cheekily asked how much money is

enough to live a good life, Vijay replied, “1–2 lakh per month.” Without missing a beat, Kapil shot back, “Utna rakh ke baaki hume Paytm kar denge?”

The conversation got funnier when Vijay spoke about his small-town roots and struggles with English during engineering college. He recalled studying from both Hindi and English books side by side, “ek mein likha tha pratirodh, aur doosre mein resistance!” Kapil, in his signature style, quickly quipped, “Suddenly mujhe realisation hua hai... mujhe toh itni Hindi bhi nahi aati!” Vijay then praised Kapil, saying, “Aap iss baat ka ek example ho ke bhasha kabhi success ka maadhyam nahi hoti.” Ghazal Alagh added that India is truly going global, with so many Indian CEOs leading the world’s biggest companies. Laughter, inspiration, and a whole lot of golgappa talk, this episode promises to be a blockbuster blend of success and stand-up, 23rd August, only on Netflix’s The Great Indian Kapil Show Season 3!

Celebrate Ganesh Festival Peacefully Rachakonda CP Sudhir Babu

Hyderabad; Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudhir Babu held a video conference from the CP office on Saturday to provide instructions and guidelines to officials regarding security arrangements for the upcoming Ganesh festival. He emphasized that the Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations, one of the largest festivals in the state, should be conducted as per plan, ensuring a peaceful atmosphere with no untoward incidents during the immersion process. He directed officials to hold prior meetings with organizers to review arrangements for the installation of Ganesh idols.

Sudhir Babu instructed that no issues related to law and order should arise during the festival, urging all stakeholders to work collectively and coordinate with civic departments in their respective areas. He emphasized that the Rachakonda police, along with officials from GHMC, Fire Department, Irrigation Department, Medical Department, Electricity Department, Transport Department, and others, should coordinate to ensure the Ganesh Navratri celebrations are conducted peacefully and smoothly. He advised the staff to treat devotees with courtesy during the immersion, remain vigilant about law and order, and coordinate with all departments to carry out their duties effectively. He stressed the importance of promptly responding to Dial 100 calls, extensively utilizing CCTV cameras, and prioritizing visible policing.

For the convenience of devotees, he directed the setup



of tents, electric lights, and barricades at the immersion sites, along with arrangements for drinking water, mobile toilets, and medical facilities. He also called for uninterrupted 24-hour power supply, road repairs, and sanitation work to ensure no inconvenience to the public and devotees. He urged the public to celebrate the Ganesh festival grandly, respectfully, and without obstacles, assuring that the police are fully prepared in terms of security. The video conference was attended by DCP SB G Narasimha Reddy, DCP Crimes Aravind Babu, DCP Admin Indira, Additional DCP Admin, SB, CCRB ACPs, and other officials.

Cyberabad police cracked the murder case of minor girl; Assailant identified

Hyderabad, Aug.23 The Cyberabad police today said that they had identified the assailant, a minor boy studying in 10th class, who had entered the house on August 18 this year intending to “steal a MRF cricket bat” belonging to the younger brother of the victim (10-year old girl). When the victim noticed and raised an alarm, the assailant who was identified as a “Child in Conflict with Law (CCL)” had stabbed her multiple times with a knife, leading to death in her house located at Kukatapally. After the incident, the CCL washed the knife, changed clothes and tried to conceal his involvement.

During the investigation, the police have seized a knife used in the commission of offence, a handwritten note detailing the theft plan, clothes worn by the CCL during the incident and cricket bat (MRF brand). The police apprehended the boy (CCL) and is being produced before the concerned court. Cyberabad police commissioner Avinash Mohanty said that the above arrests and detections were possible due to “combined efforts of SOT, CCS and L&O staff of Chandanagar and Kukatapally police stations.

Grand Celebration of National Space Day at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Wargal

Wargal, Aug.23 : Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Wargal, celebrated National Space Day on Saturday, commemorating the historic success of Chandrayaan-3 mission. The event was marked by enthusiastic participation from students and staff, making it a grand success, stated Dasi Rajendar, Principal of the Vidyalaya. The celebration was graced by Madhavaneni Raghunandan Rao, Member of Parliament, Medak Constituency, as Chief Guest, and Ramchandrarao, Senior Scientist at Research Centre Imarat (RCI), DRDO Hyderabad, as Guest of Honour.

The distinguished guests inaugurated the event with lighting of the lamp and garlanding the portrait of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, the Father of the Indian Space Program. They also visited and appreciated space science exhibits prepared by students, which showcased creativity and scientific temperament. Addressing the gathering, Ramchandrarao

Rao inspired students to aspire for careers in space science and contribute to India’s ambitious missions led by ISRO and DRDO. He emphasized that Indian scientists are making the nation proud with their path-breaking innovations.

Speaking on the occasion, Raghunandan Rao expressed his delight in associating with the Vidyalaya once again. He elaborated on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and motivated students to play a pivotal role in transforming India into a developed nation. He also lauded ISRO and DRDO for their stellar achievements in advancing technology. As part of the celebrations, winners of the science exhibition were felicitated by the dignitaries. Earlier, Sri Raghunandan Rao unveiled a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the Vidyalaya campus, in the presence of staff and students.

Adequate urea supply to farmers - Assures Telangana Govt

Hyderabad, Aug.23 The Telangana Government today assured the farmers that there will be no shortage of urea in the state and appealed to them not to be misled by opposition propaganda.

Both Agriculture minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and Industries minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu today held a high-level review meeting at state secretariat with the officials from Ramagundam Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (RFCL), Agriculture and Industries departments. The Ministers examined the reasons for frequent interruptions in production at RFCL. They emphasized that Telangana must not be treated on par with other states. Expressing displeasure over RFCL’s poor performance - operating only

40 days out of 145 days this season, the Ministers questioned RFCL chief executive officer Alok Singhal on the lack of permanent corrective measures. The plant is not just a business venture but a key development partner in Telangana’s growth, the ministers noted and urged RFCL’s parent company, National Fertilizers Limited (NFL), to supply at least one rake of urea daily to Telangana from its other plants until the production resumes at Ramagundam. To ensure uninterrupted supply, the Ministers assured that if RFCL faced any hurdles in this regard, the state government would take up the matter with the Centre for a resolution. Special Chief Secretary Sanjay Kumar, Agriculture Secretary Raghunandan Rao, RFCL Unit Head Rajeev and other senior officials participated in the review.

Let's celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi in an environmentally friendly way: Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi

Hyderabad, Aug.23 City Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi has urged the people of the city to celebrate the upcoming Ganesh Chaturthi in an environmentally friendly and dignified manner. On Saturday, the Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi along with GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan, distributed clay Ganapati idols to employees and staff at the GHMC headquarters.

Speaking on the occasion, the Mayor said that the Ganesh Chaturthi was an important festival that lasts for ten days. She informed that the main objective of the GHMC was to celebrate this festival in support of the environmental protection. She explained that arrangements for sanitation, street lights, removal of tree branches, road repairs, immersion arrangements, cranes, control rooms, baby ponds, excavator ponds and temporary ponds had been completed so that the people do not face any difficulties. The

organizers were advised to take precautions to prevent any untoward incidents at the Ganesh idol pandals by her. She said that special attention would be paid to the sanitation during the processions. The Mayor said that 25 thousand workers would be working in three shifts.

She urged that the clay idols should be installed instead of POP idols, which are harmful to the environment. She noted that Like last year, plans had been made to distribute 2 lakh clay Ganesh idols at the field level this year also. The Mayor said that the concerned departments were working in coordination with each other. On this occasion, clay pots made from C&D waste and lamp garlands made of clay were distributed. Additional Commissioner (Sanitation & Health) Raghu Prasad, officers and staff of various departments and others participated in the program.

Priests and EOs get promotions

Hyderabad, Aug.23 (NSS): With the special initiative of State Minister for Endowments Konda Surekha, the Endowment Department has provided promotions to the priests and EOs of the temples. The promotions have been pending in the Endowment Department for years. In this regard, Minister Surekha handed over copies of orders to the promoted priests and EOs at the Secretariat today. As per G.O. MS.No.261 for priests and staff working in various temples, a total of 16 candidates were selected for Grade-III to II posts, Grade-II to I posts Veda Parayanam posts.

Minister Surekha handed over the orders to two candidates from EO Grade-III to EO Grade-II, one from Mofisil Senior Assistant to EO Grade-II, and three candidates from Devasthanam Junior Assistant category under Conversion of Services as EO Grade-III. The seniority of the EO Grade-I, Mofisil Superintendents, and AEOs of prominent temples,



which are feeder categories that were to be promoted to the Assistant Commissioner category, has been stopped due to various reasons. The state government has issued orders to review it.

DONOR projects in Meghalaya are progressing well- UM Bandi Sanjay



Shillong: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar expressed satisfaction over the progress of the Development of North Eastern Region (DONOR) projects during his official visit to Meghalaya. He commended the efforts of local authorities in delivering central welfare schemes, particularly in aspirational districts and blocks.

C As part of his visit, the Minister paid a courtesy call on Governor Vijay Kumar at Raj Bhavan on Sunday morning. Later, he chaired a review meeting at the Secretariat in Shillong, focusing on the implementation of centrally sponsored programs in the North Garo Hills district. The review

was conducted via video conference, with District Collector Abhishek Shiney presenting updates on development initiatives. Officials briefed the Minister on the positive public response to the central government's efforts in Meghalaya. Sanjay Kumar congratulated the administrative teams for successfully implementing welfare schemes even in remote and hilly regions. He highlighted that the Narendra Modi government has allocated Rs 2 lakh crore for the development of the North Eastern states through a dedicated ministry, addressing decades of neglect prior to 2014.

Meghalaya Chief Secretary Shakeel Ahmed and several senior IAS officers participated in the review session, discussing strategies to further accelerate development in the region. Earlier in the day, the Union Minister visited key infrastructure and institutional projects in Shillong. His itinerary included NEIGHRIMS, a premier medical institute in New Shillong; NEIAH, an Ayurvedic medical institute; and the Software Technology Park of India (STPI). At the IT park, he interacted with representatives from companies such as iMerit and 24/7 AI, applauding their role in generating employment for local youth. Sanjay Kumar also inspected the Integrated Command Control Center, reviewing its operational capabilities. He inquired about the status of several ongoing projects, including the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) under construction in the region.

Supreme Court never said you don’t fight the Naxals, says Sudershan Reddy on Salwa Judum judgment

GNS News Agency, August 23

The Supreme Court never told the Centre that “you don’t fight the Naxals, but the state cannot outsource its responsibility to protect its people”, the Opposition’s Vice-Presidential candidate Justice B. Sudershan Reddy said on Saturday (August 23, 2025). The retired Supreme Court judge was responding to a question on Home Minister Amit Shah’s accusation that Justice Reddy supported Naxalism and that had he not delivered the Salwa Judum judgment, Left-Wing Extremism in the country would have been eradicated before 2020.

In an interview to The Hindu in Delhi, Justice Reddy said he did not want to join issue with Mr. Shah, since a Supreme Court judgment was not meant for public debate. “Whatever its merits may be, there are acceptable standards to review a judgement and make a comment upon that,” he said. He said Mr. Shah perhaps had not read the judgment and was wrongly briefed by someone. The July 2011 judgment, that Justice Reddy co-authored with Justice S.S. Nijjar said that the formation of Salwa Judum was an “abdication of constitutional responsibilities of the state to provide appropriate security to citizens by having an appropriately trained professional police force of sufficient numbers and properly equipped on a permanent basis”. “The state alone has the exclusive right to use violence.... it is the state alone that can use that power. It cannot be used against the targeted group through another instrumentality... the state can not outsource its power.” Justice Reddy, 79, was unanimously chosen by Opposition parties on Tuesday after considering a variety of names. During his four-and-a-half-year tenure in the Supreme Court that ended in 2011, Justice Reddy also delivered a judgment - just a few days prior to his retirement - criticising the Union government for slackness in investigating black money cases and ordered constitution of a Special Investigation Team for bringing back unaccounted money unlawfully kept in bank accounts abroad. This order, among others, is being flagged by the BJP to claim that the Opposition’s V-P candidate himself had found fault with the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. Justice Reddy conceded that many of his orders may have been against the UPA government, but said “Prime Minister Manmohan Singh never directly or indirectly interfered with my work”.

The BJP also flagged that Justice Reddy’s tenure as Goa’s Lokayukta was truncated due to the Congress’s cam-



paign that he was then Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar’s “Yes Man”. Justice Reddy recounted how Parrikar approached him for the post and he joined only when the enabling law was amended to bring the Chief Minister under its jurisdiction and the Lokayukta’s office was given its own investigating team. Parrikar, he said, agreed to both. “The first notice the Lokayukta’s office issued was against Parrikar,” Justice Reddy said. He rejected the claim that it was the Congress that ran the campaign. The numbers are stacked against Justice Reddy and government candidate C.P. Radhakrishnan is expected to sail through easily. “I have never entertained the idea that this is a losing battle... I would appeal to the Members of Parliament to consider my candidature on its own merits and take an appropriate decision.” The agenda for this contest, Justice Reddy said, was set by the “other side”. “They started proudly proclaiming that here is a candidate [Mr. Radhakrishnan] who joined the RSS at 15 years of age and therefore, this would be an ideological fight. It is only then I responded that it is true... it is going to be an ideological fight between a liberal constitutional democrat and a quintessential RSS person.”

Justice Reddy who chaired the Expert Group on Telangana Caste Census, said that a caste count was essential for the country. “How would you formulate your social, economic and political policies unless you have the details of the weaker sections of the society?” he asked. Justice Reddy suggested that the list of 43 questions framed by the Expert Group he chaired can be used by the Centre for the caste count that will be undertaken with the long-pending Census exercise. The caste census data, he said, should be made public. The concept of fraternity as imagined in the Indian Constitution will be achieved only if the caste count is done, he said.

Intel and the new American state capitalism

GNS News Agency, August 23

For decades, American politicians have looked across the Atlantic at Europe’s experiments with state-directed industry with a mixture of pity and scorn. The French model of dirigisme, with its state-owned champions and politically guided investments, was often held up as a cautionary tale of bureaucratic meddling and economic sclerosis. Yet, in a move that turns decades of free-market economics on its head, the United States government is now a leading shareholder in one of Silicon Valley’s founding giants. The agreement for Washington to take a nearly 10% stake in Intel is more than just a bailout for a struggling chipmaker; it is a striking symbol of a new era in American economic policy, one that bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the European state capitalism of the 1960s.

The deal itself, announced by President Donald Trump, is an extraordinary piece of political theatre and financial engineering. The 10% stake in Intel will not be funded by new money, but through a clever conversion of funds already allocated to the chipmaker through the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act, which was designed to bolster domestic semiconductor manufacturing. The current arrangement with Intel was born of a hurried rapprochement between the president and Intel’s chief executive, Lip-Bu Tan. Mr. Trump had previously called for Mr. Tan’s resignation over his prior investments in Chinese start-ups. After a meeting, however, the president’s tone changed dramatically.

It is a transactional, almost improvisational, approach to industrial strategy that has become a hallmark of the administration. “I said, I think you should pay us 10% of your company. And they said ‘yes’ — that is about \$10 billion,” Mr. Trump told about his interaction with Intel during an Oval Office press briefing on Friday. “He walked in wanting to keep his job, and he ended up giving us \$10 billion for the U.S.,” Mr. Trump said.

This is not Mr. Trump’s isolated venture. The White House has struck other unusual deals, including allowing Nvidia and AMD to sell certain AI processors to China on the condition that Washington receives a portion of the revenue. The Intel deal, however, marks the most significant direct equity stake in a major technology firm, prompting Mr. Trump to declare, “We do a lot of deals like that: I’ll do more of them.” The parallel with 1960s Europe is compelling. Back then, governments in countries like France and Britain, alarmed by what was dubbed the “technology gap”

with America, poured public money into creating “national champions” in strategic sectors such as computers and aerospace. The belief was that only the state had the deep pockets and long-term vision to build companies that could compete on a global scale. These policies, however, were largely unsuccessful, often resulting in uncompetitive, state-coddled firms that drained taxpayer funds and lagged in innovation. Intel, once the undisputed king of semiconductors, now finds itself in a position that makes it a candidate for such state intervention. The company has been hemorrhaging money, posting a staggering operating loss in 2024, and has fallen technologically behind rivals like Taiwan’s TSMC. Its struggles to attract external customers for its manufacturing arm and delays in construction plans in states like Ohio have cast doubt on its turnaround strategy. This weakness made Intel uniquely receptive to Washington’s offer. Foreign competitors like TSMC and Samsung, which are also building factories in America with CHIPS Act subsidies, are far too successful and valuable to entertain ceding a significant equity stake to Uncle Sam.

So, this is not a case of the government picking a winner, but of preventing a national icon — and a critical node in the domestic semiconductor supply chain — from falling further into irrelevance. However, there is a crucial distinction between this new American interventionism and its European precursor. The government’s investment is structured as a passive, non-voting ownership stake. Washington will have no seat on the board and no formal governance rights, and has agreed to vote with the company’s board on most shareholder matters. This suggests a more sophisticated model than the heavy-handed state control of the past. The goal appears to be to provide vital capital and a government seal of approval, ensuring the taxpayer shares in any potential upside from a successful turnaround, without succumbing to the temptation of political meddling in day-to-day operations. Nonetheless, the risks are profound. The line between a passive partner and an influential stakeholder can blur, especially if Intel’s troubles persist. Future administrations may not share the current hands-off approach. The government is now financially exposed to Intel’s performance, creating a dangerous precedent where corporate failures in strategic sectors become direct liabilities for the public purse. This move fundamentally alters the relationship between the state and private enterprise in a way that could introduce new and unpredictable forms of political and market risk.

Former Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe shifted to prison hospital following remand



Sri Lanka’s former President Ranil Wickremesinghe was on Saturday [August 23, 2025] sent to the National Hospital from Colombo’s Magazine Prison, a day after he was arrested on charges of misusing public funds. Mr. Wickremesinghe, 76, was remanded in custody after the Colombo Magistrate Court refused to grant him bail in a case of alleged misuse of state funds [LKR 16.6 million or roughly \$55,000] for a private visit to the United Kingdom in September 2023, when he was in office. He was sent to the prison hospital soon after, reportedly owing to high blood pressure and his diabetes condition that needed medical attention. “He has been transferred to the National Hospital [Colombo’s main government hospital] this [Saturday] afternoon, following advice from the prisons medical board,” Prisons Department spokesperson Jagath Weerasinghe told The Hindu. On Saturday (August 23, 2025), members

Kolkata Police file chargesheet in law college gangrape case; four accused named

GNS News Agency, August 23

The Kolkata Police on Friday (August 23, 2025) filed a 658-page chargesheet naming four accused, including Monojit Mishra, allegedly “unofficial head” of the Trinamool Congress’s (TMC) student wing on the campus, in connection with the gangrape of a student at the South Calcutta Law College. The chargesheet has been filed within 58 days; the incident took place on the evening of June 25. A high-ranking official of the Kolkata Police on Saturday said that Mr. Mishra, 31, a former student and staff member of the college; current students Zaib Ahmed, 19, and Pramit Mukherjee, 20; and the security guard on duty at the time, Pinaki Banerjee, 55, had been charged under several Sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including 70(1) (gangrape); 142 (wrongful confinement); 140(3) (kidnapping with intention to cause harm); and 238 (concealing evidence or shielding offender with false information), among other charges.

Mr. Mishra, Mr. Ahmed, and Mr. Mukherjee have also been charged under Section 77 of the BNS, which deals with the watching or capturing images of a woman in a private act without her consent, and certain Sections of the Information Technology Act that deal with transmission of sexually explicit content. The police additionally charged Mr. Mishra under BNS Sections 118(1) (causing grievous hurt through dangerous means), and 351(3) (criminal intimidation). According to the survivor’s police complaint, the accused sexually assaulted her between 7.30 p.m. and 10.50 p.m. on June 25, in the security guard’s room. They had also allegedly locked the main gates of the campus, filmed the assault, and threatened to release videos of the act.

TMC leaders claim aggressive Ravneet Singh Bittu pushed Abu Taher in Lok Sabha



GNS News Agency, August 23

Trinamool Congress leaders have written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, alleging Murshidabad MP Abu Taher Khan was pushed by Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu on Wednesday (August 23, 2025) during the introduction of the bills for the removal of jailed Ministers. According to a source, in a letter dated August 21, TMC Lok Sabha Deputy Leader Satabdi Roy and MP Mahua Moitra wrote that the Murshidabad MP was pushed without provocation while he was standing close to the Well of the House. Parliament Monsoon Session: Follow live updates, highlights on August 20, 2025

The lawmakers also said they were exercising their right to protest while the bills were being introduced, but they were rendered “helpless by the throttling.” On Wednesday, tempers flared in the Lok Sabha, copies of bills were torn and flung, as TMC MPs charged towards Home Minister Amit Shah, when he introduced the three draft laws for the removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and Ministers arrested on serious criminal charges.

In their letter, the TMC leaders said that as elected representatives, they were duty-bound to raise the voice of the people, and accused the government of bypassing all parliamentary rules and norms in bringing the Constitution (One Hundred and Twentieth) Amendment Bill, 2025. They alleged that during the protest, Mr. Taher, who had been in a hospital for months, was standing at the edge of the Well of the House when Mr. Bittu “forcefully and violently” pushed him. “It was during this protest that our Hon’ble colleague Sh Abu Taher was standing at the edge of the Well. He is a Member who has been through a serious illness recently which required months of hospitalization and this is a fact that most of our Hon’ble colleagues, including on the Treasury Benches, are well aware of,” they said in the letter. “It was, therefore, shocking when we saw Hon’ble Union Minister Sh Ravneet Singh Bittu forcefully and violently pushing Sh Abu Taher. It was an unprovoked attack by the Hon’ble Minister against a colleague who is still recovering from a serious illness,” the TMC MPs claimed. They also said Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju was standing behind Mr. Bittu, “egging and provoking his colleagues to attack the protesting MPs from the Opposition.” “This unprovoked aggression put us in a state

of the political Opposition, including former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, and Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa, visited Mr. Wickremesinghe. Speaking to reporters, Mr. Rajapaksa said: “He [Mr. Wickremesinghe] was in good spirits... he understands this is part of politics.”

Nalin Bandara, a parliamentarian from the main opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB or United People’s Power), who also visited Mr. Wickremesinghe told local media that the former President called for Opposition parties to get onto a “common stage” to fight the government, news agency AFP reported. Mr. Wickremesinghe’s arrest is the latest and the most high-profile case in the government’s ongoing crackdown on corruption so far. President Anura Kumara Dissanayake rose to the country’s top office in September 2024, winning chiefly on an anti-corruption plank. His National People’s Power [NPP] coalition enjoys a two-thirds majority in Parliament, after it secured a huge mandate in the general election in November last year. The United National Party (UNP), which Mr. Wickremesinghe leads, has said that the government felt “threatened” by the seasoned politician, who has served as Prime Minister six times and as President from July 2022 to September 2024, after citizens ousted former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. “They fear he might return to power, and that is why this action,” UNP General Secretary Thalatha Athukorala told reporters in Colombo. The UNP currently has one seat in the 225-member Parliament, in addition to two allies. Mr. Premadasa’s SJB, created after a split within the UNP, has 40 MPs.



The survivor also accused the college security guard of not helping her despite being present on campus at the time the crime was committed. “The accused took me to the guard’s room and made the guard sit outside. They took me to the guard’s room forcefully. One of them undressed me and started raping me... [One of the accused] also tried to hit me with a hockey stick,” the survivor had said in her written complaint to the police. Students of the college, including the complainant, had said that Mr. Mishra, called ‘MangoDa’ by students, had significant political sway within the campus despite being a former student, due to his alleged links to the ruling party. ‘Monojit Dada is in our hearts’ was found written in prominent graffiti on the walls of the campus. TMC leaders have denied allegations of Mr. Mishra’s association with the party, with the president the party’s Chhatra Parishad (students’ council) Trinankur Bhattacharya claiming that Mr. Mishra held the “lowermost” position of “one of many organising secretaries” in the south Kolkata unit, and that the party had severed ties with him in 2022.

of fear for our safety until our colleague Hon’ble MP Sh Yusuf Pathan stood between us and the aggressive Hon’ble Ministers in order to protect us,” the MPs said, and urged the Speaker to take the “strictest” action. During the Wednesday pandemonium, Trinamool leader Kalyan Banerjee tried to tug at the microphone in front of Mr. Shah and shout slogans into it. Other leaders from the party tore the bill and flung its bits in Mr. Shah’s face. BJP members charged towards the opposition MPs who were in the Well, with Mr. Bittu rushing to the aisle and Mr. Rijiju moving to stand next to Mr. Shah, gesturing to the Opposition members to step back.

Uproar in U.P. as man carries dead newborn in bag to DM’s office; Opposition alleges healthcare collapse

There was uproar in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday (August 23, 2025) after a video of a man reaching the District Magistrate (DM) office in Lakhimpur Kheri, carrying the dead body of his newborn in a bag. He alleged that the private hospital where his wife had been admitted kept raising the fee and delayed delivery, leading to the death. Opposition lashed out at the State government over the dismal condition of healthcare services and lack of regulatory oversight.

“I admitted my wife to the hospital here (Lakhimpur Kheri). They (hospital management) said normal delivery would cost ₹10,000 and C-section delivery would cost ₹12,000. As my wife’s pain increased, the charges kept increasing. By 2.30 a.m., I somehow managed to arrange the money and told them that if it was beyond their capacity, I should take my wife somewhere else. But they kept demanding more money. I told them to start the delivery and I would arrange for the rest of the money, but they clearly said that ‘first give the money, only then the operation will take place’... Meanwhile, my child died. Then they threw my wife on the road. We went to a surgeon... After that I went to the DM and he came here with me. I brought my dead child in a bag,” said Vipin Gupta, the father, speaking to local media persons. The incident occurred on Friday (August 22) at a private hospital named Golder Hospital.

Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai said these scenes clearly show that U.P.’s health system has collapsed with no regulatory oversight. “I have not seen such a disturbing visual in my recent memory. I have been in public life for over 28 years. The incident highlights the healthcare services’ collapse and complete lack of regulatory mechanism in Uttar Pradesh,” said Mr. Rai.

‘Are all vegetarians impotent?’: BJP hits out at Sanjay Raut for criticism of Independence Day meat sales ban



GNS News Agency, August 23

The BJP Thursday attacked Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut over his remarks on the decision by several civic bodies in Maharashtra to close slaughterhouses and ban meat sales on Independence Day and sought an apology from him for allegedly calling vegetarians impotent. Accusing Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of curbing individual freedom over the choice of food, Raut had said, “How can the government stop people from eating non-vegetarian food? Why are such restrictions imposed? Do they want to make people impotent?” Responding to Raut’s comments, Fadnavis Wednesday said, “Some people have started calling those eating vegetarian food as impotent. This foolishness must stop. Every individual has the right to decide what to eat and not eat. The Constitution has given the right to live to Everybody.” BJP media cell incharge Navnath Ban, in a press conference in Mumbai Thursday, demanded an unconditional apology from Raut. “He has insulted Warkari,

Dharkari, Malkari, Nath Sampradaya, and Bhagwat, who have strictly observed vegetarianism for centuries. Now, does Raut imply that all vegetarians are impotent?” asked Ban.

The terms Warkari, Darakari, and Malkari are associated with the Varkari devotional movement, which centres on the worship of the presiding deity of the Pandharpur temple, Lord Vitthal. The BJP spokesperson said, “Everybody has the right to do politics. They can attack the government. But when you blatantly call vegetarians impotent, it is disgusting. This is highly derogatory and insulting to these communities who have given immense contributions to society both spiritually as well as in battles.” “Nath Sampradaya is known for its valour. They waged and won many battles against the invaders. If someone were to question vegetarian communities and call them impotent, the BJP will not tolerate it,” Ban added. “Raut should issue an apology to all these communities immediately. Or else we will be forced to take to the streets,” Ban warned. He also criticised the Shiv Sena (UBT) MP for questioning the state government’s development work. “From Atal Detu, Coastal Road, BDD Chawl, Dharavi, Metro, Samruddhi Expressway... The list runs long. And these developments have transformed the face of Maharashtra,” he added. Nagpur, Kalyan-Dombivli, Malegaon and Jalgaon are some of the civic bodies in Maharashtra that have ordered closure of slaughterhouses and meat shops for 24 hours on August 15. The Kalyan-Dombivli civic body, the first to issue the notification, said the restriction will apply to all licensed butchers dealing in goats, sheep, chicken, and large animals, and would come into force from midnight on August 14.

Mumbai’s new coastal road promenade: what is it all about and how can residents access it?

GNS News Agency, August 23

The promenade forms a part of the 70 hectares of 110 hectares of the reclaimed portion of the coastal road earmarked for open spaces. The promenade forms a part of the 70 hectares of 110 hectares of the reclaimed portion of the coastal road earmarked for open spaces. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to open the 5.5-km-long stretch of the 7.5-km-long promenade of the Mumbai Coastal Road on Independence Day. This will be the third sea-viewing promenade in the city, after Marine Drive and the Bandstand promenade. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the promenade on Thursday afternoon. It will be accessible from 4.30 pm on Friday onwards.

The 5.5-km-long promenade will be longer than Marine Drive, featuring cycle tracks and seating areas alongside patches of green cover. This promenade will extend between Priyadarshini Park at Breach Candy and Worli, and run parallel to the coastal road. The promenade will also become an alternative to the erstwhile Worli seaface, which had to make way for the 10-km-long coastal road in 2019. While the original promenade at Worli still exists, the view has been altered since the sea had to be reclaimed to construct the high-speed corridor. As a result, the new promenade will become the new shoreline of the island city. To enhance greenery on this stretch, the BMC has planted 300 trees, including palm, Washingtonia robusta, and Barringtonia, along the promenade. The promenade forms a part of the 70 hectares of 110 hectares of the reclaimed portion of the coastal road earmarked for open spaces. The 70-hectare land parcel will also feature amphitheatres and green belts in addition to the promenade. According to civic officials, another key advantage of the promenade is that it will serve as a natural boundary against high tides during the monsoon. The authorities have placed stone boulders at the base of the promenade to ensure that the impact of



high tides on the wall is less.

How will the residents be able to access the coastal road?

The promenade is located on the western edge of the coastal road, which is the new shoreline for this stretch. Residents don’t have direct access to it since vehicles move very fast on the coastal road, and as a safety measure, pedestrian crossing has been banned on the coastal road. The civic authorities have therefore constructed pedestrian underpasses for entry and exit from the road. There are 19 such underpasses, four of which have been opened now to enable the public to access the promenade. The first entry is from the Akriti Parking Building on Bhulabhai Desai Road. This entry will be followed by another one from Vatsala Bai Desai Chowk (Haji Ali Junction), the third entry from Worli Dairy at Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Road, and the last entry from the Bindu Madhav Thackeray Chowk. Civic officials said that the remaining 15 pedestrian underpasses would be opened in a phased manner after the work on the remaining 2.5-km stretch of the road is taken up. The officials said the remaining portion would take more time to be ready as it was not included in the first phase of the plan and that a fresh tender was floated for it.

Man killed, daughter injured as tree falls on bike in Kalkaji; key roads waterlogged



GNS News Agency, August 23

A 50-year-old man was killed and his daughter injured after a huge tree fell on their motorcycle in Southeast Delhi’s Kalkaji during heavy rain on Thursday morning, police said. The incident took place at 9.50 am. “An old roadside Neem tree suddenly fell in front of the HDFC Bank near Paras Chowk in Kalkaji. As a result, two individuals riding a motorcycle — Sudhir Kumar and his daughter Priya (22) — were trapped beneath the fallen tree,” said police. The impact left both of them critically injured and they were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. The man died during treatment at AIIMS Trauma Centre. “Local police responded swiftly to the PCR call, and rescue operations were initiated by the IO/SHO Kalkaji and staff, with support from ACP Kalkaji and the Traffic Inspector, who also arrived promptly at the location,” said police. A hydraulic crane was deployed to remove the tree and clear the road, they said.

Municipal authorities have been alerted to assess the damage and carry out necessary pruning in the area to prevent further incidents, the officials added. The rain also affected traffic on key roads — DND flyway, Ashram, Delhi-Meerut Expressway, Mathura Road, Outer Ring Road in Subroto Park, and Rao Tula Ram Marg — owing to waterlogging. The Public Works Department received around

50 complaints regarding waterlogging. Most calls were from South and North Delhi. Areas like Pul Prahlad Pur, Ring Road and Outer Road were affected, said officials. Other affected areas included Press Enclave Road, Lajpat Nagar, near IGI Airport, AIIMS flyover, Bhairon Marg, Africa Avenue and adjoining areas.

While the Delhi Traffic Police were quick to update about the situation on their X handle, commuters complained of waterlogging on roads on their social media. The advisory read, “Due to recent rains causing waterlogging under AIIMS Flyover and South Extension Loop, traffic is affected on Aurobindo Marg on both the carriageways from Hauz Khas towards Madarsa and vice versa. Kindly plan your journey accordingly. Recent rains caused waterlogging at Moolchand Underpass, and traffic is affected on Ring Road in the carriageway from Ashram towards Moolchand. Kindly plan your journey accordingly.” Another advisory said there is waterlogging at GTK Depot, Jahangirpuri, and Adarsh Nagar, and that traffic on the Old GT Road is likely to be severely affected. Commuters are advised to avoid taking the old GT Road. The traffic advisory also noted: “Due to ongoing rain causing waterlogging at Gali No. 10, New Rohtak Road, Anand Parbat, traffic is affected in both the carriageways from Kamal T-Point towards Punjabi Bagh and vice versa. Road users are advised to take an alternate route towards Sarai Rohilla. Commuters heading towards Kamal T-Point may take a U-Turn from Ashok Main Park Metro Station towards Punjabi Bagh.” Traffic officials also said some calls of trees falling were received, owing to which vehicular movement was affected; earthmovers had to be roped to clear the roads.

: GHSPCA rescues eight cobras from snake charmers in Adibatla

GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad: Animal volunteers of the Greater Hyderabad Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (GHSPCA) rescued eight cobras from individuals who were displaying them by keeping them in crates at Sri Yellamma Thali Devalayam, Suramgutta, in Adibatla police station limits. Almost after two-weeks of Nagpanchami, snake charmers and their family members continued to display snakes.”

Longest Metro route proposed via Wakad to provide connectivity across Pimpri Chinchwad



GNS News Agency, August 23

After connecting Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, as well as the entire Pune city via the Metro rail, the Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (Maha-Metro) has now proposed to link all of the Pimpri-Chinchwad region and extend it to the nearby industrial town of Chakan, via Nigdi, Wakad, Pimple Saudagar, and Bhosari. Once the Central Government gives its approval, the proposed 41-km-long Bhakti Shakti-Wakad-Nashik Phata-Chakan route will be the longest route of Pune Metro in the city.

“The Maha-Metro implementing Pune Metro rail has prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the elevated Metro rail route from Nigdi to Chakan, which will have a total of 31 stations at an estimated cost of Rs 10,383.89 crore,” said Hemant Sonawane, Executive Director of Pune Metro. It has been proposed to provide changeover for commuters on the new route by providing connectivity via sky-walk to Hinjewadi to Shivajinagar line at Wakad and Swargate to Pimpri Chinchwad line at Sant Tukaramnagar Metro station, allowing Metro rail accessibility to any corner of Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. The Metro route named Bhakti Shakti-Wakad-Nashik Phata-Chakan is designed to run at a maximum speed of 80 km per hour. It is expected to have a ridership of 3.38 lakh per day by 2031, which would increase to 7.81 lakh by 2061. Stations on the new route

The Metro train will start from Bhakti Shakti on Old Mumbai-Pune highway and will have stations at Transport Nagar, Ganesh Nagar, Mukai Chowk, Ravet, Punawale Gaon, Punawale, Tathawade Gaon, Tathawade, Bhumar chowk, Bhujbal chowk, Wakad Vishal Nagar corner, Kokane chowk, Pimple Saudagar, Pimple Gurav, Nashik Phata, Sant Tukaramnagar, Valabh Nagar, Gavli Matha chowk, Bhosari MIDC, Bhosari District Centre, Godown chowk, PIEC, Bharatmata Moshi, Chimbali Phata, Bargevasti,

Kuruli, Alandi Phata, Nanekarwadi and Chakan. The Metro route named Bhakti Shakti-Wakad-Nashik Phata-Chakan is designed to run at a maximum speed of 80 km per hour. The Metro route named Bhakti Shakti-Wakad-Nashik Phata-Chakan is designed to run at a maximum speed of 80 km per hour. The Maha-Metro has proposed a depot-cum-workshop near the Bhosari District Centre Metro station land, of 12.04 hectares owned by the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA). The route will have three car coaches to ply, while 63 coaches will be required by 2031 to meet the estimated ridership, with 48 coaches for the Bhakti-Shakti to Chakan route and 15 coaches for the Bhumar Chowk to Godown Chowk route. These coaches will handle 3.38 lakh commuters daily. The coaches will have to be increased on the new stretch to 129 to meet the estimated ridership of 7.81 lakh per day, officials said.

The PCMC and state government will have to carry out land acquisition as the proposed route falls under the jurisdiction of PCMC and PMRDA. The proposal, after approval of the PCMC and PMRDA, will be forwarded to the state government for approval. It will be implemented only after a go-ahead by the Central Government. The previous longest route was the 31.63-km Khadakwasla-Kharadi route, which is set to be constructed at Rs 9,897 crore. Though it has got the approval of the state government, authorities are awaiting the nod of the Central Government for implementation. At present, the Swargate to Pimpri Chinchwad route and Vanaz to Ramwadi route are operational, while the Hinjewadi-Shivajinagar rail route will be operational in the next few months.

Meanwhile, the Pune Metro Rail has begun the extension of the route from PCMC to Bhakti Shakti and Swargate to Katraj after the approval from the Central Government last year. In June this year, the Centre approved the development of Vanaz to Chandni Chowk and Ramwadi to Wagholi routes, while the proposal for the new route from SNDT to Manikbaug via Warje and Khadakwasla to Kharadi is awaiting the Centre’s nod. BJP legislator Shankar Jagtap from Chinchwad said, “A game-changer for Pimpri-Chinchwad is coming closer as Maha-Metro has officially submitted the Detailed Project Report (DPR) to PCMC — the first big step towards making the Nigdi to Chakan Metro a reality.” The route from Bhakti-Shakti Chowk in Nigdi to Chakan will provide seamless connectivity for 35-40 km and link almost 75 per cent of Pimpri Chinchwad city with fast, comfortable, and eco-friendly transit, he said, adding this Metro will cut travel time to Chakan MIDC and PCMC’s busiest hubs.

Over 500 families get keys of flats under Worli BDD Chawl redevelopment project

GNS News Agency, August 23

Around 556 families got possession of their new houses under the BDD Chawl Redevelopment Project in Worli on Thursday. The key distribution ceremony took place in Mumbai in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and other ministers and top officers. Under the scheme, beneficiaries who are currently residing in 160-sqft rooms are being relocated to 2 BHK ownership flats of 500 sqft carpet area, free of cost. Spearheaded by Mumbai Housing and Area Development Board (MHADA), this is the first phase of the redevelopment project, which will ultimately rehabilitate 9,689 people from 121 old slums in Worli. Flats that were handed over on Thursday are part of the D and E wings in Building No 1. The remaining houses in the first phase will be handed over to the residents, also in a phased manner, said MHADA officials. “This is the largest urban redevelopment project in Asia. Over 15,000 residents will receive new homes under the scheme. Around 3,500 homes are planned for distribution by the end of this year, with another 3,000 to be handed over next year,” said Aseem Gupta, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department. The comprehensive scheme for Worli consists of 34 rehabilitation towers of 40 floors. Each flat will have one parking facility in the stilt along with a six-level podium, and a seventh-floor podium landscaped garden. A self-sufficient township will be constructed with facilities such as a commercial complex, school, hospital, gymnasium, and hostel. Infrastructure facilities include sewage treatment plants, solar power supply systems, and rainwater harvesting. “We aim to provide every eligible tenant with not only a house, but also a secure and well-designed living space. Today’s handover is a significant start,” a senior MHADA officer said. MHADA will maintain the buildings in



good condition for 12 years, said the officers. “MHADA is doing and has done a good job with their houses with quality construction, which do not feel like rehab projects, but like sellable houses. We are very sure that these houses would stand strong for the next 100 years,” said Eknath Shinde, who also holds the portfolios of Urban Development, Housing, and Public Works. Some historical sites within the BDD areas such as Jamboree Maidan and Ambedkar Maidan, will not be touched, but one of the original chawl buildings will be left intact and turned into a museum to preserve the heritage of BDD chawls that were built during the British era. By December, MHADA plans to complete over 3,500 flats in Worli, Naigaon, and N M Joshi Marg. The residents have been shifted to transit camps, with the provision of a monthly rent subsidy of Rs 25,000 for 11 months. The BDD Chawl Redevelopment project, spread across 86 acres of land in Mumbai, will replace 207 chawls and give shelter to more than 15,000 residents. Naigaon redevelopment will have 20 rehabilitation buildings for 3,344 units, and N M Joshi Marg will have 14 buildings with 2,560 residential and commercial units.

Serious risks to Namma Metro structures, more traffic chaos: What DULT found in its review of Bengaluru’s tunnel project

GNS News Agency, August 23

The proposed 16-km underground tunnel road between Hebbal and Silk Board junction in Bengaluru could threaten the structural safety of Namma Metro tunnels and worsen traffic congestion unless major design and mitigation measures are implemented, according to the Karnataka Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT). The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) submitted the feasibility study report of the proposed north-south corridor for review and approval by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA) in July 2024. The DULT, which serves as the secretariat to the BMLTA, conducted a technical review of the proposal, following which several observations were documented for the BBMP’s consideration. On structural safety, the DULT has said, “The proposed alignment intersects with multiple Metro lines and may cause stress interference which can impact the Metro tunnel’s structural performance.” The review highlights several locations where the underground tunnel will either cross or run in close proximity to the alignments of Metro Phase 2 and Phase 3A. These locations include Marigowda Road, Dairy Circle, NIMHANS, Wilson Garden, Guttahalli Main Road, 8th Main Road in Sadashivanagar, Corporation Circle, KR Circle, and Palace Road. According to experts, stress interference in this context refers to the changes in underground pressure and stability that can occur when a new tunnel is built close to an existing Metro tunnel. For example, at Marigowda Road, the DULT’s review states, “the proposed alignment of the underground tunnel intersects with the proposed Metro Phase 3A (Hebbal-Sarjapur line), which may cause stress interference which can impact the metro tunnel’s structural performance.” At Dairy Circle, the proposed alignment of the underground tunnel intersects with

the proposed Metro Phase 2 (Gottigere-Nagawara line), which may cause stress interference and impact the metro tunnel’s structural performance, the review says. Similarly, the DULT flags stress interference and lateral displacement to existing and upcoming Metro networks near NIMHANS, Wilson Garden, Guttahalli Main Road, Sadashivanagar, Corporation Circle and KR Circle. Tunnel road to compound traffic issues, says review. The review also notes several traffic issues the tunnel, proposed for four-wheelers only, could create. On Jayamahall Main Road, the agency warns, “Ramp construction, without undertaking land acquisition and provision of proper weaving area prior to the ramp, will lead to choking of Jayamahall Road.” In Sadashivanagar, accommodating an exit ramp on the existing 8th Main Road is not feasible, as it will cause road congestion and excessive traffic delays, the review says. For Palace Road and Basaveshwara Circle, the review cautions, “The feasibility report should assess the additional traffic that would come to the junction if the tunnel ramp were constructed and if the junction would be capable of handling the additional traffic without impacting the surrounding roads.” At KR Circle, the proposed exit ramp will lead to additional traffic to the already congested KR Circle, exacerbating congestion and creating merging conflicts... such impact analysis has not been carried out,” the review states. Near Corporation Circle, the review indicates that traffic exiting from the tunnel road will increase the traffic load at nearby junctions, such as Coffee Day Junction and Queens Junction. On Siddapura Road near Ashoka Pillar, the agency notes that there may not be adequate width to accommodate the proposed entry ramp and weaving area and that the impact of the proposed ramp on Ashoka Pillar Circle, considering the additional traffic that would need to pass through the circle, needs to be assessed.

Partition shattered Sanatan Bharat’s unity... Congress divided nation in greed for power: Yogi Adityanath



GNS News Agency, August 23

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that the Uttar Pradesh government will provide land leases and full rehabilitation to eligible families under the CAA. PartitionChief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that the Uttar Pradesh government will provide land leases and full rehabilitation to eligible families under the CAA. The 1947 Partition was a dark chapter “born out of appeasement politics that shattered Sanatan Bharat’s unity” and inflicted deep wounds on the nation, said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday, targeting the Congress at an event in Lucknow on Partition Horrors Remembrance Day.

He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi with “reviving this forgotten history” by declaring the remembrance day in 2021. “Today, the entire country mourns, remembering the horrors of August 14, 1947,” he said. Adityanath also praised the PM for granting citizenship and rehabilitation rights to refugees through the Citizenship Amendment

Act (CAA), noting that, for the first time, displaced people in Jammu & Kashmir and other regions received citizenship and began contributing to India’s development. “The Congress never made any sincere effort for their rehabilitation,” he added. Paying homage to the victims, he also announced that the Uttar Pradesh government will provide land leases and full rehabilitation to eligible families under the CAA. “We are committed to protecting their rights and ensuring their dignity,” he affirmed.

The CM stated that while revolutionaries willingly embraced martyrdom for India’s freedom, the Congress divided the nation in its greed for power. He also alleged that the Congress’s policies led to the ethnic cleansing of Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists from places like Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Multan in West Pakistan. He added, “The violence claimed 15-20 lakh lives and displaced crores, marking one of the darkest episodes in history.” He went on to accuse the then Congress government of showing complete apathy towards the displaced. “No memorials were built, no museums established for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Christians who were forced to leave their ancestral homes. Their suffering was erased from public memory,” he alleged. Inaugurating an exhibition, the CM urged citizens to draw lessons from history and emphasised the importance of connecting the younger generation with it. He said the exhibition portrays the grim reality of Partition — its massacres, riots, and forced migrations. Through digital archives, rare photographs, newspaper clippings, state records, and preserved belongings of displaced families, the exhibition depicts the agony of those affected by the Partition-era violence

Comedian Kapil Sharma’s Canada cafe attacked by two gangs in a month. Here’s why

GNS News Agency, August 23

In the past two weeks, two gangs in Canada opened fire at a café owned by Indian actor and comedian Kapil Sharma. No injuries were reported in either incident, as the attackers’ intent was reportedly to “instill fear” rather than harm staff or customers. Two Indian gangs have claimed responsibility for these attacks: Harjit Singh Laddi, associated with Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), and Goldy Dhillon of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang.

The Laddi group of BKI, which had made a video of the shooting from July 10, claimed responsibility on social media. It said a character on The Kapil Sharma Show had made some “humorous” remarks on Nihangs Sikhs, and that they tried to contact Sharma through his manager but did not get any response. The post also sought a public apology from Sharma. Dhillon attacked on August 7. He, too, recorded the shooting and posted a video claiming responsibility. The reason for this attack, provided by the Bishnoi gang, was linked to Bollywood superstar Salman Khan. They were angry with Sharma for inviting Khan to his show on Netflix recently.

A day after the second shooting, an audio message allegedly from another Bishnoi gang member, Hari alias Harry Boxer, surfaced on social media. In it, he can be heard issuing a warning to Bollywood, threatening that any producer, director, or actor — big or small — who works with Salman Khan will be targeted. The Bishnoi gang has held a long-standing grudge against Khan over the 1998 blackbuck poaching case in Jodhpur, dating back to when Bishnoi was a teenager. Following an attack near Khan’s residence in April last year, allegedly by Bishnoi gang shooters, the actor’s security has been heightened. After the incident, the Maharashtra Police also increased security for Sharma at his residence in Mumbai. The Delhi Police, which monitors the activities of these gangs even abroad, believes the attacks on the café were meant to create fear in India — with extortion as the primary motive.

A senior officer told The Indian Express that beyond the stated reason for the shooting at Sharma’s café in Surrey, the gangs aimed to send a message to the film indus-



try and local businesses. That’s why they recorded and publicised the incident, he said. Both these gangs have their origin in India; however, they are active in Canada. While BKI is a banned organisation in India, because of its separatist leanings and pro-Khalistan stance, Bishnoi has fashioned himself as an “ultra-nationalist” gangster of late.

Who are the attackers?

Police said Laddi, who hails from Nawanshahr in Punjab, is suspected to be residing in Germany. He is on the National Investigation Agency’s most-wanted list. His name cropped up in connection with the murder of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Vikas Prabhakar in Rupnagar, Punjab, in April 2024.

Laddi has been chargesheeted, along with BKI leader Wadhwa Singh Babbar, in relation to the VHP leader’s murder. The NIA has announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh for information leading to his arrest. Dhillon, alias Gurpreet Singh, is also believed to be staying in Germany. Police said he is actively working for Lawrence Bishnoi by providing foot soldiers for the gang’s operations in Punjab and its surrounding areas. His name also cropped up in an extortion case involving a Canada-based businessman in May. The Punjab Police has arrested several men associated with Dhillon. As per police records, he is facing over a dozen cases — including murder, attempt to murder, and violations of the Arms Act — in Punjab.

Delivery boy at Mumbai courier firm steals gold ornaments’ parcels worth Rs 2.9 crore, arrested from Rajasthan



GNS News Agency, August 23

The police on Tuesday arrested a courier service delivery boy who had allegedly fled with 17 parcels of gold ornaments — worth Rs 2.9 crore—which he had collected from various jewellery shops in the Kalbadevi area in South Mumbai. The suspect, Mehul Garg, 24, an employee at ‘Jai Ambe Courier Service’ in Vile Parle (East), was nabbed from his native place in Udaipur, Rajasthan, and brought to Mumbai on Wednesday, the police said.

Garg, who had formerly worked with the courier firm between April 2023 and March 2024, rejoined only a few days ago, the police said. According to the police, the complainant, Sahil Kothari, runs the courier firm that exclusively deals with the collection and delivery of gold and diamond jewellery parcels. As per the procedure, the delivery boys were supposed to share the order details once they picked the parcels from the jewellery shop and the pictures of the parcel boxes on the office WhatsApp group. Kothari stated in the complaint. According to Kothari, on August 5, Garg had collected several parcels of gold ornaments from South Mumbai and informed Kothari around 7 pm that his bag was full, but his phone battery was very low and that it would get switched off soon. He had told him that he would be coming to the office. When Garg did not return till 8 pm, Kothari tried contacting him, but found his mobile switched off. This raised Kothari’s suspicions that Garg had intended to steal the

parcels as he was aware of their content. Garg had absconded with the gold ornaments worth Rs 2.9 crore instead of delivering to customers, said a police officer.

The complainant then approached the Vile Parle police station, and after verification, a case of breach of trust was registered against Garg on August 7. Based on technical evidence, the police learnt that he was hiding in Udaipur. The police team visited his village, recovered all the stolen parcels from his house, and arrested him, said a police officer

Anglers throng Hyderabad lakes after rains fill water bodies

GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad: With the lakes and tanks around the city brimming following heavy rains, the anglers are rushing to the water bodies to net a fish. Several anglers are reaching the lakes and tanks at Jalpally, Bandlaguda, Balapur, Shamshabad and other areas of the city. Carrying a rod, reel, line, hook, and any one of a wide range of baits, those into recreational fishing are spending hours at the lakes and water bodies.

In a video widely circulated on social media platforms, men can be seen lined up at the Jalpally lake. Holding an umbrella in one hand and the fishing rod in the other, they can be seen fully focused on netting fish.

The Jalpally lake and Umda Sagar lake, also known as ‘Nawab Sahab ka talab’, attract anglers from across Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts. There are also big lakes in Kandukur, Balapur and Maheshwaram mandals in Ranga Reddy district that are also attracting anglers.

MCD identifies land to build stray dog shelters in Delhi following Supreme Court order



GNS News Agency, August 23

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has identified land to build stray dog shelters following a series of marathon meetings since Monday in the wake of the Supreme Court order directing authorities in Delhi-NCR to remove all stray dogs from public spaces and permanently relocate them to shelters within eight weeks. An MCD official said the municipality has vacant lands available for shelters, which can be constructed after Thursday’s hearing on the matter.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan on August 11 directed the relocation of stray dogs to shelters. The suo motu matter was Wednesday referred to a three-judge bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N V Anjaria, which is set to hear it Thursday. The MCD official said the process of relocating stray dogs has already started. “In phase 1, we caught around 150 aggressive dogs after identifying them and upon receiving complaints from

the resident welfare association. We can accommodate at least 2,000 dogs in the existing facility of Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres (facilities for sterilising and vaccinating stray dogs to control their population).”

“If the Supreme Court orders to relocate the dogs, we will build a shelter on 3 acres of MCD land located in Dwarka which can easily accommodate up to 2,000-3,000 dogs,” the official said, adding that majority of the dog can be relocated in phase 3 by building a shelter on the 82 acres of land in the Ghogha village. “However, this can start only if we can get funds from the Centre or the Delhi government since it will require taking permanent care of the dogs, including food, shelter and treatment,” the official added. As of Wednesday night, approximately 300 dogs have been picked up from the Red Fort area over the past three days, and verbal orders have been issued to the ABC centres not to release them back.

“We have stationed our vans around the clock at the Red Fort and instructed the ABC centres not to release any dogs,” said the MCD official. While pronouncing the August 11 order, the Supreme Court said that “there should not be any compromise in undertaking any exercise” and warned that “if any individual or organisation comes in the way of picking up stray dogs or rounding them up, we will proceed to take action against any such resistance”. This order has received mixed reactions; some welcome it as a necessary measure for public safety, while animal rights activists and welfare groups termed it impractical. They stated that the order violated the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2001, which require that after vaccination, dogs should be returned to the same locality from where they were picked up.

Nirmithi Kendras fall under RTI Act ambit, rules Karnataka HC

GNS News Agency, August 23

The Karnataka High Court ruled last week that Nirmithi Kendras, which were set up to develop construction skills and carry out state civil contracts, are subject to the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The order was passed by a single-judge bench of Justice Suraj Govindaraj on August 6. The bench also imposed an additional cost of Rs 50,000 on the Nirmithi Kendra in Chitradurga district, which had approached the high court against a State Information Commission order directing it to pay a cost of Rs 25,000 and submit certain documents sought by an RTI applicant in 2017. The petition argued that a Nirmithi Kendra is a private society, and this being the case, does not count as a “public authority” under the RTI Act. Unless a body is a public authority, they are not bound to provide such information, the petition claimed.

The opposing counsel argued that the Nirmithi Kendra was established to carry out the activities of the state, and the state government had substantial control and financed it, making it subject to the RTI Act. He also argued that even if it was an NGO, this would still apply as it was financed by the government. The bench observed that Nirmithi Kendras were established on the recommendation of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, and government officers, including IAS and Karnataka Admin-



istrative Service officers, ran their daily operations. It also pointed out that the source of funding was the Housing and Urban Development Corporation, a public sector entity. This being the case, the court ruled, the Kendras were subject to the RTI Act. “It is not expected of a governmental authority and the officers of the Nirmithi Kendra, who are government officers, to have taken such a stand that a Nirmithi Kendra would not come within the purview of the RTI Act,” the bench said. “The attempt made by the officers of Nirmithi Kendra to suppress such transparency leaves much to be desired and does not inspire confidence. By way of such conduct, the petitioner Nirmithi Kendra has successfully avoided disclosure of information and details,” it added.

Stringent KCOCA invoked in Bengaluru realtor murder case in which BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj is an accused

GNS News Agency, August 23

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Karnataka Police recently obtained government clearances to invoke the provisions of the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act (KCOCA), 2000, in the case of the murder of real estate dealer Bikla Shiva alias V G Shivaprakash on July 15 at Bharathinagar in Bengaluru, in which the BJP MLA Byrathi Basavaraj is an accused. “Clearances have been obtained for invoking KCOCA in the Bharathinagar murder case,” said a police source.

A group of more than eight people allegedly killed Shiva, a resident of Halasuru, when he was standing outside his home in Halasuru with his driver and a friend on July 15. The Bengaluru police have arrested 16 people in the murder case and Basavaraj, the Krishnarajapura MLA, is among the five people named in the First Information Report (FIR). The police have questioned the MLA even as the Karnataka High Court has provided protection from arrest to him following a petition for the quashing of the case against him. A key accused in the case, Jagadish alias Jaga, a former gangster who is a close associate of the BJP MLA, is still at large and is suspected to have fled to Dubai shortly after the murder. CCTV visuals gathered from his apartment block show him leaving in an Audi car within 10 minutes of the murder.



The CID moved Interpol to issue a Blue Corner Notice to locate Jagadish, who is alleged to have orchestrated the murder of Shiva over a real estate dispute in the Kithaganur area of East Bengaluru, police sources said. Jagadish featured in gangster lists in East Bengaluru till a decade ago before being removed allegedly under the influence of an MLA. The police are investigating calls received by a personal assistant (PA) of the MLA from the mobile phone of Jagadish after the murder, as well as a series of calls in the run-up to the crime between the PA, two of the accused in the murder, and two associates of the MLA, who were previously gangsters. The investigation of the murder case by the Bengaluru police before it was handed to the CID revealed that Shiva, who also had a criminal record, complained on multiple occasions of being harassed by a gang led by a former history-sheeter, Jagadish P alias Jaga, an associate of the K R Pura BJP MLA, over a 1.5-acre property. According to the police, the name of Basavaraj was added in the FIR after Vijayalakshmi, 68, mother of Shiva, who claimed to have witnessed the murder from the balcony of her house, said her son had been complaining about receiving threats from the close associates of the MLA. Kiran K, 34, and Vimal Raj, 31, two key henchmen of Jagadish, and their associates Pradeep K, 27; Madan R, 27; Samuel V, 24; Arun Temu, 25; and Naveen K, 24, are the men arrested for allegedly hatching the conspiracy to execute the murder. Kiran and Vimal are named in multiple criminal cases in East Bengaluru, said the police. KCOCA is used to control organised crime on account of its stringent provisions for police custody of arrested persons, stronger norms for the grant of bail, provisions for the use of phone inter-

BSNL launches default SMS phishing protection for customers nationwide

GNS News Agency, August 23

Hyderabad: BSNL on Thursday announced the nationwide roll-out of its network-side Anti-Spam and Anti-Smishing protection for mobile customers—no app to install, no settings to change. Suspicious and phishing URLs in SMS are detected in real time and withheld at the network edge, so spurious links are not delivered to BSNL users, while legitimate OTPs, banking alerts and government messages continue to flow under TRAI’s DLT/UCC framework. The solution was previewed during India Mobile Congress 2024 and is now being extended across BSNL circles as part of ongoing cutovers. Built with a leading India-based cloud communications platform, Tanla, the system combines AI/ML, NLP, reputation intelligence and link expansion to score messages at line-rate, and works in concert with an industry blockchain DLT stack already adopted by Indian telcos to curb unsolicited commercial communication. The underlying technology has been recognized for 99 per cent plus efficacy against smishing and operates at a national scale, with ecosystem integrations (e.g., major web and messaging platforms) to rapidly neutralise new campaigns.

Zelenskiy in London as Ukraine braces for Trump-Putin meet



LONDON/KYIV, GNS News Agency, August 23, With just one day to go until a U.S.-Russian summit on ending the war in Ukraine, its president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, visited London on Thursday to shore up European support for efforts to prevent any agreement that would carve up Ukrainian land.

Friday's Alaska summit comes at one of the toughest moments for Ukraine in a war, the largest in Europe since World War Two, that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. On the backfoot on the battlefield against Russian forces, Zelenskiy and his allies are keen to avoid any deal between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin that leaves Ukraine more vulnerable to Russian attacks.

Zelenskiy met British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to build on momentum from virtual talks on Wednesday with European leaders and Trump to try to set red lines for the talks between Trump and Putin in Anchorage, Alaska. Zelenskiy and Starmer embraced before heading in to their meeting in Downing Street. On Wednesday, Trump threatened "severe consequences" if Putin does not agree to peace in Ukraine and while he did not specify what the consequences could be, he has warned of economic sanctions if his meeting on Friday proves fruitless.

"Yesterday was a pivotal moment for reinforcing European and transatlantic unity," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on X. "We need peace through strength as a foundation for the future of global security and stability." Zelenskiy said he warned Trump that Putin was "bluffing" about his desire to end the war. The Ukrainian

leader also said Trump had supported the idea of security guarantees in a post-war settlement. Politico cited people familiar with the situation as saying that Trump had said the U.S. could provide guarantees with some conditions. A source familiar with the matter told Reuters security guarantees were discussed on the call. "We have no details of his (Trump's) view on this but now he is more open for some kind of U.S. support for the guarantees," the source said, adding that Trump understood that a U.S. backstop was needed for guarantees to be workable. "So he mentioned it (on the call) and maybe everyone will work on it," the source said. Item 1 of 6 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer walk out of 10 Downing Street, in London, Britain, Zelenskiy confirmed this week that Russian forces had advanced by about 9-10 km (6 miles) near the town of Dobropillia in the Donetsk region. Ukraine, suffering manpower challenges, was forced to move in reserves to stabilise the situation.

Trump's comments and the outcome of the virtual conference on Wednesday could provide encouragement for Kyiv. Trump described the aim of his talks with Putin in Alaska as "setting the table" for a quick follow-up that would include Zelenskiy. However, Russia is likely to resist Ukraine and Europe's demands strongly and previously has said its stance had not changed since it was first detailed by Putin in June 2024. Trump has said a deal could include what he called a land swap. Russia controls around a fifth of Ukraine and a land swap within Ukraine could cement Moscow's gains. Zelenskiy and the Europeans worry that would reward Putin for nearly 11 years of efforts to seize Ukrainian land and embolden him to expand further west in Europe. A source familiar with the matter said Russian Special Envoy Kirill Dmitriev will participate in Friday's summit. Dmitriev, who heads up Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund, has previously held talks with Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy, and has spoken of possible business cooperation between Moscow and Washington. Trump's agreement last week to the summit was an abrupt shift after weeks of voicing frustration with Putin for resisting the U.S. peace initiative. A Gallup poll released last week found that 69% of Ukrainians favour a negotiated end to the war as soon as possible. But polls also indicate Ukrainians do not want peace at any cost if that means significant concessions. As conditions for a ceasefire and the start of talks, Putin has demanded Ukraine withdraw its forces from four regions that Russia has claimed as its own but does not fully control, and formally renounce plans to join NATO.

Israeli forces step up Gaza City bombardment as Egypt hosts Hamas

CAIRO, GNS News Agency, August 23- Israeli forces demolished houses in eastern areas of Gaza City overnight, killing at least 11 people in aerial and tank fire, local health authorities said, as the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas told mediators it was ready to resume ceasefire talks. Residents and medics said eight people were killed when Israeli tank shelling hit a house in Zeitoun neighbourhood, while a man was killed in an airstrike on a building in the nearby Shejaia suburb. Two other people were killed in tank shelling in Tuffah, a third Gaza City suburb.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Local health authorities said they had received desperate calls from families trapped in the Zeitoun area, including from people saying they were wounded, and that ambulance vehicles could not reach them. "The explosions are almost non-stop in eastern Gaza areas, mainly Zeitoun and Shejaia. The occupation (Israel) is erasing homes there, as we hear from some friends who live nearby," said Ismail, 40, from Gaza City. "At night, we pray for our safety as the sounds of explosions get louder and closer. We hope Egypt can secure a ceasefire deal before we are all dead," he told Reuters via a chat app.

Four more people died of starvation and malnutrition in the territory in the past 24 hours, Gaza's health ministry said on Thursday. That took the total to 239, including 106 children, since the war began, it said. Israel disputes malnutrition and hunger figures reported by the health ministry in Gaza, which Hamas took control of in 2007. Israel's planned seizure of Gaza City - which it took in the early days of the war before withdrawing - is probably weeks away, officials say. In an effort to avert the planned military escalation, Egypt has been trying to revive a push for a



ceasefire in Gaza, hosting a Hamas delegation led by the group's chief negotiator Khalil Al-Hayya.

He told mediators in Cairo on Wednesday that Hamas was ready to resume ceasefire talks to achieve a temporary truce, and was open to discussing a comprehensive agreement that would end the war, Egyptian and Palestinian sources said. The latest round of indirect talks in Qatar ended in deadlock in late July with Israel and Hamas trading blame over the lack of progress on a U.S. proposal for a 60-day truce and hostage release deal. Gaps between the sides appear to remain wide on key issues, including the extent of any Israeli military withdrawal and demands for Hamas to disarm. The war began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages, according to Israeli figures. Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza since then has killed more than 61,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials.

Pakistan to create new force in military to supervise missiles after India conflict



GNS News Agency, August 23

Pakistan will create a new force in the military to supervise missile combat capabilities in a conventional conflict, apparently a move to match India. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced the creation of the Army Rocket Force late Wednesday (August 13, 2025) at a ceremony held in Islamabad to commemorate the worst conflict in decades with India in May. The ceremony was held a day ahead of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day. "It will be equipped with modern technology," Mr. Sharif said in a statement from his office, adding that the force will prove to be a milestone in strengthening the combat capability of Pakistan's army. A senior security official, however, said that the force will have its own command in the military, which will be dedicated to handling and deployment of missiles in any event of a conventional war. "It is obvious that it is meant for India," he said. The two nuclear-armed nations have kept upgrading their military capabilities in the wake of a longstanding rivalry since their independence from British rule in 1947. The latest tension between the two countries soared in April over the killing of 26 civilians in Kashmir, an attack New Delhi has blamed on Islamabad. Pakistan has denied involvement. A conflict then erupted in May,

the most serious fighting between the two countries in decades, which saw both sides using missiles, drones and fighter jets before it ended with a ceasefire. Islamabad acknowledges the U.S. role in the ceasefire, but India denies it, saying it was agreed directly between the two militaries.

Four amendments to Income Tax Act to apply from FY26

New Delhi: The government has introduced four amendments to the Income Tax Act, 1961, relevant for FY 2025-26, but included in the Income Tax Bill, 2025, applicable for FY 2026-27, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said. The major amendment grants tax exemption on dividends, interest, and long-term capital gains to sovereign wealth funds and pension funds investing in infrastructure from April 1, 2020, to December 31, 2030, subject to notification. The Public Investment Fund (PIF) and its wholly-owned subsidiaries will be named directly in the section for exemption. The second major clarification involved the abatement of all assessments for block periods in search cases until there is a block assessment order. It will be a major reform for ease of doing business.

Further, the Minister said that the amendment provided clarity about the standard deduction of Rs 75,000 that applies to salaried individuals under the new tax regime. The Finance Act, 2023, introduced Section 115BAC(1A), offering new income tax slab rates for taxpayers choosing the new tax regime, but a drafting error crept in, as a clause (clause iii) was omitted from Section 115BAC(1A). The enhanced standard deduction of Rs. 75,000 under the new tax regime then became unavailable for the financial year 2025-26 due to this omission.

Which Donald Trump will negotiate with Putin in Alaska?



WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency, August 23 When U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in Helsinki in 2018, the pair alarmed allies with a friendly encounter where Trump sided with the Russian leader over his own intelligence agencies on election interference. Trump flies to a meeting in Alaska with Putin on Friday in a different public mood - impatient with the Russian's unwillingness to negotiate an end to his war in Ukraine and angry over missile strikes on Ukrainian cities.

The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. The world is waiting to see if it will be this tougher version of Trump who shows up in Anchorage or if it will be the former real estate tycoon who has sought to ingratiate himself with the wily former KGB agent in the past. The answer could have deep implications for European leaders concerned that Russia, if allowed to absorb parts of Ukraine, will be more aggressive toward NATO allies near Russia like Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. It matters even more for Ukraine, which has been losing ground to Russian forces after three-and-a-half years of grinding combat.

Despite his harsher tone toward Putin over the past months, Trump has a more extensive history of trying to placate the Russian leader. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Trump declined to directly criticize Putin. The Russian president, shunned by multiple presidents, praised Trump for working to improve Russian-U.S. relations. Kremlin watchers are looking to see whether Trump will be enchanted by Putin again and swayed by his argument that Russia has a right to dominate Ukraine. "It's a reasonable concern to think that Trump will be bamboozled by Putin and cut a terrible deal at Ukraine's expense," said Dan Fried, a diplomat for several U.S. presidents who is now at the Atlantic Council. But a different outcome is also possible, added Fried. "There's a reasonable prospect that the administration will wake up to the fact that Putin is still playing them." The Trump administration has sought to temper expectations, with White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt telling reporters on Tuesday the meeting would be a "listening exercise." Trump told reporters on Wednesday that he might broker a second meeting that includes both Putin and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy if the Alaska session goes well. Russia has given no indication it is prepared to make concessions amid Ukrainian worries that Trump might make a deal without their input. Zelenskiy says he would like to see a ceasefire first followed by security guarantees.

Trump ally Erik Prince plans to keep forces in Haiti for 10 years to fight gangs and collect taxes

GNS News Agency, August 23

The prominent Donald Trump supporter and private security executive Erik Prince says he plans to keep his forces in Haiti for 10 years under an arrangement that will eventually give his firm a role in the country's tax-collection system. In an interview with Reuters, Prince said his company, Vectus Global, had reached a 10-year agreement with the Haitian government to fight the country's criminal gangs and set up a tax collection system. After the security situation is stabilized, the firm would be involved in designing and implementing a program to tax goods imported across Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic, he said.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. He said he expected to wrestle control of major roads and territories from the gangs in about a year. "One key measure of success for me will be when you can drive from Port-au-Prince to Cap Haitien in a thin-skinned vehicle and not be stopped by gangs," Prince said in the interview. Prince would not comment about how much the Haitian government would pay Vectus Global, nor how much tax he expects to collect in Haiti. The new president of the transitional council, Laurent Saint-Cyr, who was inaugurated on August 7 as part of a planned rotation of council leaders, did not respond to requests for comment. Haiti's former council president and prime minister also did not respond to requests for comment. Vectus began operating in Haiti in March, deploying mainly drones in coordination with a task force led by the prime minister, but the long-term engagement and the involvement in tax collection have not been previously reported.

A person familiar with the company's operations in Haiti told Reuters that Vectus would intensify its fight against the criminal gangs that control large swathes of Haiti in the coming weeks, deploying several hundred fighters from the United States, Europe and El Salvador who are trained as snipers and specialists in intelligence and communications, as well as helicopters and boats.

Prince, a former U.S. Navy Seal, founded the Blackwater military security firm in 1997. He sold the company in 2010 after Blackwater employees were convicted of unlawfully killing 14 unarmed civilians while escorting a U.S. embassy convoy in Baghdad's Nisour Square. The men were pardoned by Trump during his first term in the White House. Since Trump's return to the White House, Prince has advised Ecuador on how to fight criminal gangs and struck a deal with the Democratic Republic of Congo to help secure and tax its mineral wealth.

"It's hard to imagine them operating without the consent of the Trump administration," said Romain Le Cour Grandmaison, head of the Haiti program at Geneva-based Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. When asked for comment about Le Cour Grandmaison's assertion, a State Department spokesperson said it has not hired Prince or his company for any work in Haiti.

A senior White House official said: "The U.S. government has no involvement with the private military contractor hired by the Haitian government. We are not funding this contract or exercising any oversight." It's unclear whether Prince's contract would be affected by the change of leadership in Haiti earlier this month.

When Trump assumed office again in January, the Republican president tried to revive the warmth between the two leaders from his first term, expressing sympathy for Putin's isolated position in the world and vowing to end the war in Ukraine in 24 hours. As the administration eased pressure on Russia, some Trump aides parroted Russian talking points to the dismay of Ukraine's backers. In March, U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff implied in a podcast interview with conservative commentator Tucker Carlson that Russia had a right to capture four mainland regions of Ukraine - Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson - because "they're Russian speaking." And in a dramatic White House meeting in February, Trump and Vice President JD Vance berated Zelenskiy for his handling of the war, to the delight of hardliners in Russia. Despite all the sweeteners, the Russian leader has refused to play along with Trump's efforts to steer the two sides into a peace deal. Putin has talked to Trump regularly but has kept up deadly bombing raids against Ukraine. The ongoing bloodshed prompted Trump to shift to a tougher stance in July and complain that Putin was stalling him. Trump has agreed to send new weapons to Ukraine - that Europe will pay for - and has threatened new financial penalties for Moscow. Trump last week imposed a 25% tariff on India for buying Russian oil - indirect pressure on Moscow - but has held back from following through on his threats to impose stiffer sanctions. On Wednesday, he threatened "severe consequences" if Russia will not make a deal. "While the tone coming out of the White House has shifted, it has not yet been followed up with an expansion of U.S. sanctions - Trump's deadlines for additional sanctions keep getting pushed back - or new financial commitments from Washington to strengthen Ukrainian security," said Nicolas Fenton, of the Europe, Russia, and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. On Monday, Trump said he should know within two minutes whether Putin is willing to make concessions. "I may say, lots of luck. Keep fighting. Or I may say, we can make a deal," he said.

For Trump, who is drawn to the spectacle of a high-profile summit with the world watching, the lure of making a deal is strong. He has engaged in an open campaign for a Nobel Peace Prize this year, pointing to what he has claimed as his diplomatic victories, and has unnerved U.S. allies with his eagerness for a Ukraine peace deal that they fret could embolden Putin. In recent days, Ukrainian and European leaders have protested Trump's assertion that Russia and Ukraine will have to engage in land swaps in order to reach a peace deal. While Russia occupies Crimea and large swathes of eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainians no longer hold any Russian territory, raising the question of what, exactly, could be exchanged. Trump insists that, given his personal relationship with Putin, he is the only one who can bring the war to an end. John Bolton, who was one of Trump's national security advisers in his first term and is now a sharp critic, said he was concerned that Putin was "beginning to work his magic" on Trump. "Personal relations obviously have a place in foreign affairs, just like they do in everything else. But when you're one of the world's hard men like Vladimir Putin, this is not a matter of emotion, this is a matter of cold calculation. Trump doesn't get that point," Bolton said. In a social media post on Wednesday, Trump complained that "very unfair media is at work on my meeting with Putin," citing the use of quotes from "fired losers" like Bolton.



In an August 7 televised address, Saint-Cyr said he welcomed more international support to fight the gangs. "I am inviting all the international partners to increase their support, send more soldiers, provide more training," he said. "Help us with a more robust international force." The crisis in Haiti has worsened in recent years, as armed gangs gained territory and attacked hospitals, police stations and prisons, taking control of strategic transport routes and extorting funds from the population. Rights groups accuse the gangs of massacres, rapes, kidnappings and arson. About half the population is food-insecure and over 8,000 people in displacement camps face famine-level hunger. Haiti used to collect half of its tax revenue at the border with the Dominican Republic, but gang control of key transport routes has crippled trade and cut off state income, a report commissioned last year by Haiti's government and several multilateral organizations found. This has undermined the government's ability to respond to the crisis or deliver basic services, the report said.

The Dominican Republic is a key source of grains, flour, milk, water and other food staples for Haiti, according to customs data. Haiti also relies on imports from the Dominican Republic for textiles, consumer goods, and medical supplies.

Security contractors working in Haiti have faced challenges operating in a country with entrenched links between the gangs, local police and some factions of the government. Earlier this year, a team from American security firm Studebaker Defense abandoned their mission in Haiti after two of their members were abducted, likely due to corrupt police officials, the New York Times reported. Mounir Mahmalat, who serves as a country coordinator of the World Bank's Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, said that it was virtually impossible to ensure the safe transport of goods or the security of people working in Port-au-Prince. Other security firms working in Haiti have raised questions about how Vectus would hold onto cleared gang territory as well as the wisdom of channelling resources to private security firms instead of the country's own security forces. "Resorting to private military companies cannot be seen as a solution to insecurity in Haiti," said Gedeon Jean, head of Haiti's Center for Human Rights Analysis and Research. "The use of private companies has often resulted in human rights violations." While a private force could help police restore security, Jean warned against large spending on a foreign company while Haiti's own security forces lack funds and equipment.

Fighting rare genetic disorder, 31-year-old will attempt a push-ups world record



His feet securely placed in the foot cradles of suspended TRX straps, 31-year-old Sagar Brahmabhatt ensures that his elbows are aligned with his head and spine and his core muscles, glutes and quadriceps, braced for 35 Atomic push-ups in a go. Brahmabhatt may pass off as just another Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fanatic, but his tenacity is the result of a year-long journey of determination to conquer a genetic disorder that has affected his family line, including his grandfather, father and a paternal uncle — Spinocerebellar Ataxia (SCA).

Brahmabhatt is testing his endurance as he attempts to create a new Guinness World Record in the category for persons with disabilities, becoming the first SCA case to perform 35 TRX Atomic Push-ups. Apart from being a personal milestone, the attempt is meant to raise awareness about living with SCA and how turning to Tai Chi, a form of ancient Chinese martial arts for low-impact exercise involving flowing movements, has helped him walk back in balance. Soon after recovering from COVID-19 in 2020, Brahmabhatt began experiencing symptoms he recognised from his father's illness: impairment of coordination, slurred speech and loss of control of gait. His father had passed away at 51, around 13 years ago, after battling the disease.

SCA, caused by a genetic mutation, is passed from parents to their children and impairs nerve cells and fibres, leading to degeneration of the cerebellum and affecting coordination and related body functions. For close to three years, Brahmabhatt lived in denial as his condition became visible. He struggled to climb or descend stairs without support, and dealt with chronic dysarthria (slurred speech). It was only in December 2023 that he sought a formal diagnosis. "I had suffered mild Covid-19 too and I dismissed it for after-effects... I had seen my father suffer through and pass away at the age of 51. I had guessed that the symptoms were the same but I lived in denial for a long time. That is because my family had come to believe that only the married men had been affected by SCA; my unmarried paternal uncle had not been affected and I was unmarried too. I dragged on," says Brahmabhatt.

"I knew my mother and sister would be shattered if they learned that I have also been affected by the genetic disorder in the family. My father's passing away had already impacted them much... and so, I tried to pull on but as things began to get out of hand with my movement and speech getting affected, I took the test in December 2023," he adds. Diagnosed with Spinocerebellar Ataxia type 1 (SCA1) — a rare, genetic neurodegenerative disorder affecting the cerebellum that causes lack of coordination, difficulty with gait and slurred speech — Brahmabhatt recalled his neurologist's warning that he might eventually be wheelchair-bound.

"Since I could not share about my condition with my immediate family, I used to talk to my distant cousin, a physiotherapist based in the US. I also had done a lot of scientific research to understand what would work and help me

Clear the myths, recognise organ donation as a lifeline

Organ transplantation is one of modern medicine's greatest triumphs. A miracle of 20th century medicine, organ transplants are the gold standard treatment for terminal and irreversible organ failure. Yet, in India, more than half a million lives are lost every year for lack of a suitable donor organ. This is despite the number of transplants performed every year, from 4,990 in 2013 to 18,378 in 2023. However, this number includes only 1,099 deceased organ donors after brain death. The Indian organ donation rate per million population is only 0.8, which is much lower than the highest rate of over 45 per million population in Spain and the United States. As I have often said, losing a fellow Indian due to the lack of an organ for transplant is a preventable fatality we cannot, and must not accept.

The reasons for this gap between demand and supply include deep-seated myths and misconceptions that discourage families from consenting to donation after a patient's death. To change this situation, we must launch sustained education and awareness campaigns. Many families believe that donating one's organs disfigures the body, preventing proper funeral rites. Families worry about the deceased person's physical integrity being affected or of violating religious traditions. In reality, organ retrieval is performed with the utmost respect and care, ensuring that the donor's appearance is preserved for viewing and final ceremonies. Health-care teams work within the framework of cultural practices, and leaders across faiths have publicly affirmed that organ donation is an act of compassion aligned with spiritual values espoused in all religions.

Another widespread myth is the fear that some families harbour that hospital staff might prematurely declare brain death just to harvest organs. This is a complete falsehood as a declaration of brain death requires strict adherence to a structured legal and clinical framework established under the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994. This involves strict medical criteria, a multidisciplinary board of experts, defined clinical assessments repeated after a stipulated interval, and thorough documentation on prescribed forms. The procedure is robust, transparent and ethically sound to ensure an unbiased confirmation of irreversible neurological death, an upholding of ethical standards, and the enabling of timely organ retrieval for transplantation. The issue of age and healthAge and health status often give rise to another misunderstanding — that only young accident victims can donate organs. While certain organs perform best when recovered from younger donors, many organs and tissues, such as the kidneys, liver segments, the lungs, and the corneas can come from older donors or those who die of natural causes. Every contribution counts, with even donations of bone, skin and heart valves able to save or dramatically improve lives. Addressing these myths requires a sustained focus. Audio-visual campaigns on television and social media can reach younger audiences. Using real donor families and transplant recipients in communication can show how transplants save real lives. Community work-

eventually; my father in his days had relied on spiritual intervention and it had not helped him... I used some time to also improve my financial condition by focusing on my business, a luxury my father did not have... My cousin told me about several Ataxia patients in the US taking up Tai Chi... So, when my consulting neurologist saw my diagnosis and told me, 'You will have to prepare yourself for a life in a wheelchair', it crushed my ego. I told my doctor that I will never use a wheelchair," he said.. He struggled to climb or descend stairs without support, and dealt with chronic dysarthria (slurred speech). It was only in December 2023 that he sought a formal diagnosis. . He struggled to climb or descend stairs without support, and dealt with chronic dysarthria (slurred speech). It was only in December 2023 that he sought a formal diagnosis.

Brahmabhatt is the owner of Mechman Solution, an authorised Autodesk channel partner of CAD-CAM products. Determined to take control of his life, he began training under Babloo Sawant, a Tai Chi master, originally from Assam, who runs the centre of Mixed Martial Arts Association Gujarat in the Vadsar area of the city. Over a year, tailored Tai Chi exercises helped improve his posture and balance. "When I first began training, it was difficult for me to walk straight. Today, I can walk almost straight but if you ask me to carry a glass of water, I will spill it. I can manage myself, drive my car and continue to work on my business uninterrupted... It is because of Tai Chi, which has been extremely beneficial for me in recalibrating the body coordination with the help of mindful movements," he says. Sawant says, "Tai Chi is not just martial arts, it's the yin and yang of everything; it is mindful awareness and focuses on the inner elements that make up our bodies... It elevates the aura of an individual, allowing a deeper connection with the mind. It helps the posture and strengthens the legs and upper body coordination, bringing a much better blood flow within the body. Whatever Sagar ji has achieved is a result of his will power. I was only a catalyst but I am proud that he has come this far." Brahmabhatt says his record attempt in the Special Persons' section is as much about awareness as it is about personal motivation. "When my diagnosis was confirmed, I studied my scans to understand the brain markings of the damaged cerebellum. I also met other patients whose scans did not show as much damage as mine but (lack of action) damaged their case to a great extent... My goal is to go further ahead and try to make myself fitter." Sawant explains, "The atomic push-ups appear to be simple, but they involve engagement of multiple muscle groups and require focus and coordination. Core strength, stability and control are enhanced for people with this condition. Once he is through with the record, we will set a renewed goal for him." Ahmedabad-based neurologist Dr Arvind Sharma says Brahmabhatt's case shows how patients with Ataxia can lead "fruitful lives" through physical therapy and nutritional mindfulness. "We all know that SCA is not curable. It is a genetic disorder and SCA has a huge domain from Type 1 to Type 12. SCA 1, 2 and 12 are common in India. In some forms of Ataxia (like Brahmabhatt), where the cerebellum is affected and the balance is impaired, physical therapy and meditation definitely helps slow down the degeneration," he says. "People who take to these kinds of low-impact exercises that involve gait control, and maintain a positive mindset and do not get depressed, they may overcome the disorder and since there is no involvement of cognitive decline or bladder and renal functions, they can do well in their jobs. No one wants to be dependent on anyone for their day-to-day activities... If nutrition is taken care of including Vitamin D3, B12 and protein intake, patients with some types of Ataxia can lead a good, fruitful and independent life for up to two-three decades," Dr Sharma said.



shops, led by trained counsellors, can provide safe spaces for questions and discussions, directly addressing concerns about funeral rites, medical protocols, and donor eligibility.

Donation awareness must be instilled in schools and colleges from a young age. By integrating organ donation education into the life sciences and ethics curriculum, we can nurture a culture of giving. Peer-to-peer education empowers students to take ownership of the message, fostering empathy and debunking myths through relatable storytelling. Health-care professionals themselves must also become champions of organ donation. Regular training sessions can equip physicians, nurses and other health-care staff with the knowledge and the skills to initiate compassionate conversations with families of potential donors. At Apollo Hospitals, we have dedicated transplant coordination teams who guide families through the complex decision-making process with sensitivity and clarity. Steps to ensure public confidence

I strongly believe that India needs a collective national will to bridge the massive gap between organ supply and demand. The push given to organ donation on this day must be sustained going forward through policy reforms and grass-roots engagement. One promising policy proposal is presumed consent, adopted in countries in Europe such as Spain and Croatia, with significant success. Under this system, every adult is considered an organ donor unless they register an objection. Alongside presumed consent, robust family support systems and grievance redress mechanisms are vital to ensure public confidence and ethical oversight. Organ donation is not just a medical procedure. It is a profound act of charity. And to donate one's organs so that others may live is perhaps the noblest legacy one can leave. The time to act is now. Every eligible adult must register as a donor, and every family must pledge to respect their decision. For patients with end-stage disease where an organ transplant is the only treatment, organ donation is a lifeline. By busting myths and with an unwavering commitment, we can ensure that no Indian loses their life for want of an organ. Today, on World Organ Donation Day, let us all pledge to embrace this cause as a shared responsibility.

The ceding of academic freedom in universities



Everyone engaged in higher education recognises that academic freedom is primary because universities are the places for raising doubts and asking questions about everything. Exploring ideas, debating issues and thinking independently are essential in the quest for excellence. After all, knowledge develops only if we question existing knowledge. This means that students must have the freedom to ask questions just as faculty must have the freedom to question received wisdom in their respective disciplines. Indeed, universities, as institutions, must have the freedom to raise questions, express opinions or articulate criticisms in the wider context of economic, social and political spheres.

In fact, the development of knowledge is central to university education. Students enter the world of higher education to learn. Understanding existing knowledge is a first step. The ability to ask relevant questions, a capacity to critique conventional wisdoms, and the confidence to resist the authority of the spoken — even printed — word are the next successive steps. Of course, learning is a continuous process that never stops. Thus, it is for universities to decide what is taught to students, which must not be controlled from elsewhere. There should be no restrictions on who is invited to address a student audience. Circumscribing this space, in any way, can only stifle learning, which, in turn, can hurt economic and social progress. The world of research needs similar freedoms. It is for universities to decide their research priorities. It is for faculty members to decide their research agenda. Of course, financial support for research must be based on peer review without preference or prejudice. Dissenting opinions or unorthodox thinking, irrespective of disciplines, should be encouraged for that is how knowledge develops. In fact, fundamental research needs far more in terms of not only freedoms but also resources and time. Such an environment is essential for brilliant scholars or thinkers to surface, blossom and flourish.

The unfolding reality in India is disturbing. Curricula are regulated and straitjacketed. Readings are prescribed. Indeed, what is excluded or what is included in prescribed reading lists is decided elsewhere, not necessarily by the teachers. Some readings are explicitly excluded. Promising research, which departs from the mainstream, particularly in social sciences or humanities, is stifled. Research funding is controlled, directly or indirectly, by the central government through its research councils and departments. In this milieu, fundamental research in universities in India is rare if not impossible. It is no accident that our universities have not produced any Nobel laureates. Even the freedom for students and teachers to organise discussions or debates on campus, which are perceived as critical of the Bharatiya Janata Party or its governments at the Centre and in States where it rules, is circumscribed everywhere, often by administrative fiat or penal action. Freedoms are curbed further, as social media posts sometimes lead to disciplinary action by universities or legal action by governments. At many central Universities, if a faculty member applies for duty leave to participate in a conference abroad, he/she has to provide a written undertaking which says: "I will not participate in any anti-Government activities... while I am abroad whether on official duty or a personal visit, I shall be subject to all the provisions of Government Servants Conduct Rules including those relating to connection with the press and criticism of Government... Further I understand that... any breach of these provisions whether committed in India or abroad shall render me equally liable to disciplinary action." Such intrusion, in different forms, is now being extended to private universities. Dissenting or critical voices of students or faculty members are silenced with disciplinary action. In some cases, it goes much further, essentially because risk averse promoters fall in line, since they do not wish to displease or

Why multiple sclerosis remains under-diagnosed in India, and what needs to change

Multiple Sclerosis, by its core definition, is an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system. This disease leads the immune system to mistakenly attack the myelin sheath, the fatty layer responsible for giving the brain's white matter its distinctive colour, disrupting the transmission of signals across motor, sensory, visual, cognitive, and autonomic systems. This leads to commonly-experienced symptoms such as unexplained weaknesses, tingling sensations, sensitivity to heat and numbness in the feet- and due to easy dismissal arising from the commonality of these symptoms, many individuals with multiple sclerosis remain undiagnosed, further worsening the brain and body's condition. These unchecked symptoms could lead to them experiencing a relapse - a sudden onset of these symptoms, the intensity of which differs from case to case.

The issue is lack of awareness around this rare disease: as estimated by the Multiple Sclerosis Society of India (MSSI), the approximate number of persons with MS in India is close to 1.8 lakh. However, only about 35% of these cases are diagnosed and registered through organisations such as MSSI. Therefore, a whopping 65% of this number may be living with undiagnosed multiple sclerosis, suggesting that they suffer silently, without proper support, and are uninformed about the root cause behind their symptoms. Studies indicate that both physical and mental aspects of health are deeply affected, causing depression, physical disability and fatigue, leading to an overall drop in quality of life.

According to a 2024 survey, 80% of Indians between ages 18 to 50 experience at least one symptom of stress on a regular basis, with women being disproportionately affected. This, coupled with India being geographically positioned in a high temperature zone, and the fact that women are more susceptible to MS suggests that Indian women between the ages 18 to 50 may have the highest chances of suffering from undiagnosed multiple sclerosis. MS also afflicts males, and they too may suffer relapses worsened by the same triggers, though generally at a lower prevalence and with varied presentation across age groups and

antagonise the central government, or the State governments where their universities are located.

Just as important, the autonomy of university spaces is also sacrosanct in the wider context of political democracy, where universities perform an important role in addition to imparting higher education. In the economy, they are a source of ideas for science, technology, research and development, innovation, and economic or social policies. In society, they are the conscience-keepers as public intellectuals, from among the faculty, who engage with the public domain, informing citizens in their columns or lectures. In the polity, their evaluation or assessment of the performance of governments fosters accountability. Of course, this autonomy must have a corresponding accountability. But it is essential for governments to recognise that the provision of resources to universities does not endow them with a right to exercise control.

The resources are public money for public universities, which are accountable to students and society through institutional mechanisms that exist or can be created. For this purpose, it is imperative that structures of governance in universities are appropriate for, and conducive to, accountability. Good governance is necessary but not sufficient. There must also be checks and balances in the public domain. Rankings of universities perform an important role in this context. Such rankings, despite their limitations, provide students, their parents and society at large, such an institutional mechanism for accountability.

It is absolutely essential that regulatory structures provide complete autonomy — administrative, financial and academic — to universities. Liberation from the shackles of the University Grants Commission is a necessary condition. The existing parliamentary or legislative acts that created our universities also have many constraints and fetters. Thus, as an approach, it would be far better to reform regulatory structures, provide autonomy to universities and ensure accountability through systems — rather than interventions or controls — to create an environment that encourages freedom of thought and is conducive to learning. The quest for uniformity is the worst enemy of thinking, creativity, understanding and knowledge, which can thrive only in open societies. One-size-fits-all is a flawed presumption. Indeed, diversity and differentiation are an integral part of the quest for excellence in higher education.

Governments and their quest to control Academic freedom in universities is circumscribed not only in India but also in countries such as Argentina, Hungary and Türkiye which have democratically elected governments. Of course, academic freedom is highly restricted in countries that are ruled by dictators in Africa and Asia. It is also curbed in countries that have one-party rule, for example, China, Russia and Vietnam. China is somewhat different. Even if the freedom for academics — especially in the social sciences and humanities — to write or to speak in the public domain is highly restricted, there is no compromise, driven by preference or prejudice, in the quality of academic appointments at leading universities and research institutions. The real surprise is the United States, where academic freedom in universities has been sacrosanct for more than a century. The federal government of U.S. President Donald Trump is slashing research grants and imposing curbs on its leading public universities. If this continues, the leading edge of American universities in education, research, science, technology and innovation is bound to erode.

Governments seek to control universities essentially because they are worried about criticism or dissent. Just as important, there is a sense of discomfiture, if not insecurity, since universities, empowered by academic freedom, ask questions that are perceived as difficult. Of course, in some countries, governments just want ideological conformity. Most universities cede their autonomous space because they are largely dependent on government grants to support their teaching and research. The reasons why academics, as individuals, are often silenced are because of fear or compromise, while a few are willing to trade their beliefs for rewards. The moral of the story is simple. The absence of academic freedom in universities will inevitably harm the teaching-learning process just as it will stifle thinking and creativity in research. Students and teachers will obviously be the worse-off. Ultimately, however, the economy, society and polity will be the losers. Deepak Nayyar is an economist, Professor Emeritus at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, and former Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi



heat exposure. Adding to this, men with MS may experience more severe neurodegeneration and cognitive symptoms - although the root cause remains unclear. Men are shown to have higher chances of being diagnosed with primary progressive MS (PPMS). This type of MS is characterised by a lack of remissions and symptoms that don't improve. Most Indians therefore, undergo MS relapses triggered not just by stress, but also by infections, and prolonged heat. Dismissal of symptoms due to their commonality in nature is not the only factor behind the high ratio between diagnosed and undiagnosed populations affected by MS; lack of awareness among the public and healthcare providers, uneven access to specialist neurologists and MRI diagnostics, and limited data systems for tracking the disease nationwide all contribute to the problem. To bridge this gap, especially in rural settings, one scalable solution is through using the National Health Mission's Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) worker network. Nearly one million ASHAs already engage with rural communities, track symptoms, and help people seek care. Training ASHAs to spot red-flag neurological signs, such as persistent numbness, tingling, and unexplained fatigue that worsens in heat, can greatly reduce missed diagnoses. At the same time, improving primary health centres (PHCs) and community health centres (CHCs) under initiatives such as the Aardram Mission in Kerala to include basic neurological screening tools and MRI referral pathways can boost early detection in underserved areas.

When the crows came together



It was a little past dawn. The sun hadn't fully risen yet, but there was that soft, golden light beginning to seep over the Attappady Hills. Mist still clung to the trees, and everything felt damp and fresh. We were on one of our road trips — no real destination, just a familiar route winding through the woods. The windows were down, and that earthy, rain-soaked smell drifted in. Somewhere out there, birds were singing — nothing dramatic, just the quiet music of a forest waking up. I was half-awake, sipping black coffee from a thermos, letting my thoughts wander. The road curved ahead, and then the driver, a local man, slowed down. He pointed towards a massive banyan tree by the side of the road. At first, I did not notice anything unusual — but then I

caught a flutter of black wings.

A crow was making quite a scene. It flapped and cawed, darting around the branches like something was wrong. We looked closer — and there it was. A snake. Long, still, and sunlit, curled around a thick branch not far from a fragile little nest. The crow must have been the parent. It kept diving at the snake, trying to drive it away. We stepped out, careful not to disturb anything, and just stood there watching. The snake did not seem to be in a hurry. It moved slowly, creeping toward the nest, while the crow kept attacking. You could feel the tension build. Then, one by one, more crows showed up. Maybe they had heard the call, or maybe they just knew something was happening. They joined in, attacking from different angles.

It got loud. Wings beating, caws echoing, the snake twisting and striking back — but the crows did not stop. They were fierce. Finally, the snake hesitated. It paused, then slowly began to retreat, slipping back down the tree into the undergrowth. The crows did not chase it far, just hovered above, crying out like victors. We stood there for a while, not saying much. Just taking it in. There was something powerful in that moment — not just the drama, but the way those birds came together. That tree must have seen countless stories like this one. And for some reason, watching it all unfold made the world feel a little wilder, a little more connected.

Creating a humane police force



Even as the Global Week Against Torture was being observed, newspapers reported on June 25 that a constable was suspended for assaulting three women inside a police station in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu. Another report on the same day published an order of the State Human Rights Commission in *V. Priyadharshini vs K. Santhamoorthi*, directing the State to pay ₹50,000 as compensation for human rights violation by Santhamoorthi, who, as Inspector of Police, C2 Race Course police station, Coimbatore City, disrespected and harassed a woman complainant.

On the same day, The Hindu reported about the “threat of moral policing shadowing young couples in Chennai’s public spaces”. These are just a sample of the excesses committed by the police in their routine everyday interactions with the larger public, especially women. V. Kanadasan, SHRC Member, in the order in the Coimbatore case, quoted Section 58 of the Police Act, 2006, enunciating the social responsibilities of the police, assigning special duties with regard to the vulnerable sections of society: “Behave with the members of the public with due courtesy and decorum, particularly in dealing with senior citizens, women and children. Ensure that in all situations, especially during conflict between communities, classes, castes and political groups, the conduct of the police is always governed by the principles of impartiality and human rights norms, with special attention to protection of weaker section including minorities. Preserve, promote and protect human rights and interests of weaker sections, backward classes, poor, weak and the downtrodden.”

Hence, the duty of the police officials is to behave with the members of the public with due courtesy and decorum. The higher officials in the Police Department may be well-mannered and well-trained to behave courteously. But they are not available for interactions with the general public. In 1998, a 21-year-old homemaker, Chitra, was found dead after being taken to the Aminjikarai police station in Chennai at night for investigation of an offence of theft allegedly committed by her husband, Ravi. She was humiliated at the station. After her death, the then City Police Commissioner had initiated sensitisation training for all police personnel and it percolated to the entire State police force.

As an advocate, I have personally visited various police stations. My experience is that it is a hierarchical place that is drunk with power. The personnel view complainants as a nuisance and a spoke in their wheels. The accused

are seen as inhuman slaves at their mercy. The words spoken are generally insulting, rude with no respect or culture. There is an atmosphere of fear that makes people afraid of stepping into a police station. Policemen generally think that they are above the law. They are still in a colonial mindset. They are more adept at protecting the elite and more dutiful in maintaining law and order at the cost of the common man. They stop the entire traffic, even ambulances, to give way for a VIP convoy on roads. Crime investigation and victim justice are not their priority. Policing have turned against the common man’s interest and dignity. Pedestrians, two-wheeler users and autorickshaw drivers are at their receiving end forever on the roads as the policemen vent their power and authority on them using vulgar language and physical intimidation. It is just not custodial violence or murder but torture simpliciter. Even as we find fault with the functioning of the policemen on duty at the police stations and outside, it is essential that we look at and advocate reforms. While the higher police officers are educated, trained and protected by service laws, the lower officials are definitely exposed to all imaginable vagaries. They are on duty round the clock, with very little rest or humane conditions of service. They are treated with contempt by the superior officers, politicians and the rich and powerful.

As early as 2006, the Supreme Court in the *Prakash Singh* judgment has suggested wide reforms in the police. One of the most important reforms suggested is separation of investigation and law-and-order wings. In 2010, the Common Wealth Human Rights Initiative, in one of its report on “Seven steps to police reforms”, said the problem was “Investigations are poorly mounted, slow, done by inadequately trained and unspecialized staff and frequently subject to manpower deflection into other pressing law and order duties”. “Both investigation and law and order are vital and specific police functions. In order to encourage specialization and upgrade overall performance, the Court has ordered a gradual separation of investigative and law and order wings, starting with towns and urban areas with a population of one million or more. It is felt that this will streamline policing, ensure speedier and more expert investigation and improve rapport with the people,” it said. As the police were seen with suspicion and not as part of the community for whose welfare they exist, in 1993, Philip V. Prateep, an IPS officer, founded the Friends of Police (FoP), a community policing initiative in Tamil Nadu. It was to focus on promoting crime awareness, preventing crime, and enhancing fairness and transparency within the police force. But sadly, it was disbanded in 2020 after allegations of its members abusing their powers. The need of the hour is to ensure that the police force is revamped with sensitive, friendly, and honest people. Reward the best ones publicly, promote constant people-friendly interactions with the local police and citizens of the neighbourhood. A few years ago, in every zone, there used to be a police-citizens meet which was attended by the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the locality and police officers from every police station in the zone. It gave room for healthy interaction and introspection. With CCTV cameras and smartphones in everyone’s hand, the police could be harnessed and sensitised to have a human face with compassion and empathy.

Why is Trump taking aim at BRICS?

The story so far: U.S. President Donald Trump’s threat to impose 10% tariffs on members of the BRICS grouping that held a summit in Rio de Janeiro this week is the latest in a series of similar threats.

Why is BRICS in Mr. Trump’s cross-hairs?

Even before he was sworn in as U.S. President for the second time, Donald Trump had made it clear that he saw the BRICS grouping as “anti-American” and a threat to the dollar that he needed to neutralise. On November 30 last year, Mr. Trump said the U.S. would require BRICS members to commit that they would not create a new BRICS common currency, “nor back any other currency to replace the mighty U.S. dollar”, threatening 100% tariffs on them. It’s a threat he has repeated several times since. Mr. Trump’s irritation appears to stem from BRICS declarations in South Africa in 2023 and Russia in 2024, where members that now also include Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the UAE, discussed a BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative that aims to facilitate trade and investment within BRICS countries using local currencies and other mechanisms. The initiative built momentum due to the problems Western sanctions on Russia have meant for trading partners in the Global South.

What has the U.S. threatened to do?

Last Sunday (July 6, 2025), just as BRICS leaders gathered in Rio for the 17th BRICS summit, Mr. Trump said in a social media post that any country aligning with BRICS would face a 10% added tariff. The penalty was “just for that one thing” of being a member, Mr. Trump said later. It is unclear why the tariff rate was dropped to a tenth from the original threat of 100%, and even whether Mr. Trump will go through with the BRICS tariffs along with other reciprocal tariffs planned for August 1. But there seems little doubt that Mr. Trump wants BRICS de-fanged. “You can tell the (U.S.) President is (upset) every time he looks at the BRICS de-dollarisation effort... (and) Rio didn’t help,” said Steve Bannon, Trump’s former White House chief strategist, according to *Politico* magazine. In addition, the Trump administration has slapped 50% tariffs on Brazil after accusing President Lula da Silva of a “witch-hunt” against former Bra-

zilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who faces charges of attempted coup. It has also imposed 30% tariffs on South Africa after accusing it of unequal trade, as well as expressing concerns over the treatment of Afrikaners (White South Africans). Republican Senators close to Mr. Trump also plan to bring a bill called the Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025 that seeks to place 500% tariffs on imports of oil and sanctioned Russian products, which would hurt Russia, as well as India and China, its two biggest importers.

Are Mr. Trump’s concerns valid?

Mr. Trump’s concerns about de-dollarisation have been denied by practically every BRICS member. The South African Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a detailed statement explaining why the BRICS attempt to use national currencies within the grouping is not the same as replacing the dollar as the global standard. While anti-U.S. rhetoric of some BRICS leaders has been harsh, the wording of the BRICS Rio declaration 2025 issued this week does not directly challenge the U.S. or the dollar. In the operative Paragraph 50, the leaders said they resolved to task ministers of finance and central bank governors “to continue the discussion on the BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative and acknowledge the progress made by the BRICS Payment Task Force (BPTF) in identifying possible pathways to support the continuation of discussions on the potential for greater interoperability of BRICS payment systems.” Paragraph 13 expressed “serious concerns” over the rise of unilateral tariff and non-tariff measures but didn’t name the U.S.

Where does India stand?

The Modi government, hopeful of clinching a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., has strenuously objected to Mr. Trump’s categorisation of the BRICS as “anti-American”. In a parliamentary response on December 2, 2024, the MoS (Finance) Pankaj Chaudhury made it clear that the U.S. allegations referred to a report prepared by Russia during its chairmanship of BRICS, where it had spoken of “possible alternatives relating to cross-border payments” and “leveraging existing technology to find an alternative currency”.

In Frames: Stampede country



According to the International Institute for Population Sciences, India’s population clocked 1.45.48.50.455, some time around the afternoon on July 11, World Population Day. These masses of people go to work squeezing themselves inside packed suburban trains, celebrate festivals as a community, elect governments by the sheer might of their mandate, and carry their heroes on their shoulders. However, there have also been occasions when their numbers were overwhelming and went out of control, leading to stampedes. In the past 12 months, dozens lost their lives in multiple such tragedies. On July 2, 2024, in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, followers gathered in large numbers to see a self-styled godman. As they rushed to collect sand from his footsteps, which they considered sacred, there was a stampede and 121 followers lost their lives. Worn-out and broken slippers strewn around reflected the gravity of the tragedy.

In Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, six people died and 20 others were injured on January 8, 2025, while trying to collect tokens at counters for the Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan at the Tirumala temple. The tragedy struck despite 94 counters having been set up in Tirupati to avert crowding. Dozens sleeping on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh were trampled to death during the Kumbh Mela on January 29, 2025, when thousands converged here to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya, considered auspicious by devotees. While the official death toll is put at 37, a BBC Hindi investigation counted it at much higher 82. On June 4, 2025, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team members were to attend a celebratory event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru after lifting their first ever IPL trophy. Already basking in celebration and amid an emotional outburst, RCB fans started flocking to the yet unopened stadium gates, in

How is Mizoram handling the refugee crisis?

The story so far: Mizoram has been grappling with a refugee crisis since the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar. After months of lull beyond the State’s borders, some 4,000 refugees crossed over from Myanmar in the first week of July following a fratricidal battle between two rival armed groups. Mizoram is now caught between pushing back the refugees who are ethnically related to the State’s dominant Mizos and letting them stay despite limited resources and a tepid response from the Centre.

What triggered the fresh inflow of people?

Within a week from July 3, some 4,000 from Myanmar’s Chin State crossed into Mizoram’s Champhai district. This was after a fierce gunfight between two anti-junta armed groups, the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) and the Chinland Defence Force-Hualngoram (CDF-H). The two groups are part of the People’s Defence Force aligned with the pro-democracy National Unity Government of Myanmar, which has seized control of large swathes of the Chin State from the junta over the last few months. They are said to have turned against each other to control areas in the region deemed strategic for trade with India. Indian intelligence officials said the CNDF prevailed over the CDF-H and captured its camps. While the sounds of gunshots have ceased across the Tiau river, which marks a segment of the 510-km border between the two countries, the refugees have not mustered the courage to return to Khawmawi, the village facing Mizoram’s Zokhawthar. Champhai district authorities recorded 3,980 Myanmar nationals in Zokhawthar, a major border trade village, and Saikhumphai on July 6.

When did Mizoram’s refugee crisis begin?

Present-day Mizoram has been used to Myanmar nationals moving in and out of the State even before the Free Movement Regime (FMR) between the two countries came into existence in 1968, allowing residents along their 1,643-km-long border to travel up to 40 km inside. The limit was reduced to 16 km from the border in 2004, and additional regulations were enforced in 2016. The Centre announced the suspension of the FMR in February 2024, but there has been no official notification or bilateral agreement in this regard, apart from the Ministry of Home Affairs bringing in a fresh protocol in December 2024 to limit the free movement to 10 km. The regulations had little impact on the ground until the February 2021 military coup in Myanmar drove thousands into Mizoram. The State’s government, civil society groups, and villagers provided food, shelter, and security to the refugees on humanitarian grounds, although the Ministry of Home Affairs asked the northeastern States bordering Myanmar not to let the refugees in. The refugee crisis deepened when some 2,000 Bawm people sought refuge after fleeing persecution in Bangladesh’s Chittagong Hill Tracts in 2022, and thousands of Kuki-Zo people displaced by the ethnic clash in Manipur crossed over. Mizoram houses more than 40,000 shelter-seekers from Bangladesh, Myanmar and Manipur.

How is the State dealing with the situation?

The dominant Mizo community of Mizoram shares ethnic and familial ties with the Chins of Myanmar, the Bawms of Bangladesh, and the Kuki-Zos of Manipur. All belong to the greater Zo ethnic group. In 2024, Chief Minister Lalduhoma told the Centre that ethnic affiliations and humanitarian reasons prevent his government from pushing the refugees back to where they came from. Influential organisations such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), church bodies, and resourceful individuals have been con-

numbers not anticipated by the police, from the morning. By afternoon, the crowd was uncontrollable. In the resultant stampede, 11 people died and many others were injured. Except for the Bengaluru stampede and one at a Hyderabad theatre for an Allu Arjun film’s premiere which occurred in cities, other tragedies struck during mass gatherings observing an act of faith. In New Delhi railway station, 18 people died during a rush of devotees to catch a train headed to the Kumbh Mela. Pall of gloom: Family members gather after the death of their loved ones during a stampede at a religious gathering of a godman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh on July 2, 2024. Rushing to help: Devotees’ belongings lie scattered on the ground as rescue personnel carry away a victim after a stampede at the Sangam in Prayagraj on January 29, 2025. Me before you: Devotees at a counter for tokens to attend a religious event at the Tirumala temple, minutes before the stampede on January 8, 2025.

Fatal charm: Actor Allu Arjun being shifted to a hospital after his statement was recorded in connection with a stampede at a movie theatre in Hyderabad that claimed a life in December 2024. According to the International Institute for Population Sciences, India’s population clocked 1.45.48.50.455, some time around the afternoon on July 11, World Population Day. These masses of people go to work squeezing themselves inside packed suburban trains, celebrate festivals as a community, elect governments by the sheer might of their mandate, and carry their heroes on their shoulders. However, there have also been occasions when their numbers were overwhelming and went out of control, leading to stampedes. In the past 12 months, dozens lost their lives in multiple such tragedies. On July 2, 2024, in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, followers gathered in large numbers to see a self-styled godman. As they rushed to collect sand from his footsteps, which they considered sacred, there was a stampede and 121 followers lost their lives. Worn-out and broken slippers strewn around reflected the gravity of the tragedy. In Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, six people died and 20 others were injured on January 8, 2025, while trying to collect tokens at counters for the Vaikunta Ekadasi darshan at the Tirumala temple. The tragedy struck despite 94 counters having been set up in Tirupati to avert crowding. Dozens sleeping on the banks of Sangam in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh were trampled to death during the Kumbh Mela on January 29, 2025, when thousands converged here to take a dip in the Sangam on the occasion of Mauni Amavasya, considered auspicious by devotees. While the official death toll is put at 37, a BBC Hindi investigation counted it at much higher 82. On June 4, 2025, IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) team members were to attend a celebratory event at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru after lifting their first ever IPL trophy. Already basking in celebration and amid an emotional outburst, RCB fans started flocking to the yet unopened stadium gates, in numbers not anticipated by the police, from the morning. By afternoon, the crowd was uncontrollable. In the resultant stampede, 11 people died and many others were injured. Except for the Bengaluru stampede and one at a Hyderabad theatre for an Allu Arjun film’s premiere which occurred in cities, other tragedies struck during mass gatherings observing an act of faith. In New Delhi railway station, 18 people died during a rush of devotees to catch a train headed to the Kumbh Mela.



Who are the Chins? What led to the fresh inflow? What ties does the dominant Mizo community of Mizoram share with the Chins of Myanmar, the Bawms of Bangladesh, and the Kuki-Zos of Manipur? How are foreigners identified in the State?

tributing in cash and kind to take care of the basic needs of the refugees, Myanmar government officials and politicians among them. Initially reluctant, the Centre provided ₹8 crore as assistance to provide relief for the refugees. However, some villagers began to feel the pressure of handling waves of refugees. In March, the Farkawn village council in Champhai district issued an order asking all Myanmar refugees to stop trading by March 31 and desist from moving out of their designated camps. Civil society groups issued similar diktats in Melthum, a village in Aizawl district, and Lawngtlai town later. In a departure from the hospitality extended since 2021, the refugees were threatened with eviction if they did not comply with the order. Almost simultaneously, Aizawl-based activist V.L. Thlamuanpuia wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, underlining the churning in the State over the refugee issue. He stated that the uncontrolled movement of Myanmar refugees was threatening national security, changing the demography, and draining local resources.

How is the government responding?

India is neither a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention nor does it have a specific national law on refugees, and it usually deals with them under laws related to foreigners. The country, however, has a history of hosting refugees from neighbouring countries and often works with the United Nations to determine refugee status. New Delhi has been talking tough on the refugee problem along the India-Myanmar border. Of late, the Mizoram government has been showing signs of feeling the pressure of influx from the civil war-torn Myanmar. In March, the Chief Minister said the FMR was one of the factors responsible for a rise in smuggling activities in the State. A month later, he said some refugees were taking advantage of the crisis in Myanmar to repeatedly cross the border by violating Indian laws. His government has also prodded the Centre to obtain presidential assent for the Mizoram (Maintenance of Household Registers) Bill, that seeks to identify foreigners in the State.

India-EFTA trade deal to come into effect on Oct 1, Oman deal signing soon, fast-tracking EU: Official



According to Crisil estimates, in the last fiscal year, the US accounted for 20 per cent of India's merchandise exports and 2 per cent of its overall GDP. According to Crisil estimates, in the last fiscal year, the US accounted for 20 per cent of India's merchandise exports and 2 per cent of its overall GDP.

Amid steep US tariffs on India, the Commerce and Industry Ministry has begun fast-tracking trade deal negotiations with the European Union and is set to sign a trade deal with Oman, a government official said on Thursday, adding that the India-EFTA trade deal is set to come into effect on October 1. "We have requested the UK to fast-track and implement the trade deal. The trade deal talks with Oman have concluded and it will be signed when both countries mutually agree on a day. We have also begun fast-tracking EU trade deal negotiations," the official said.

India and the four-nation EFTA – an intergovernmental grouping comprising Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and

Switzerland – signed a trade pact in March 2024, under which EFTA countries have committed to investing \$100 billion in India over a 15-year period. This comes amid stress in the Indian export-driven industry due to fear of 50 per cent US tariffs on India, highest globally. According to Crisil estimates, in the last fiscal year, the US accounted for 20 per cent of India's merchandise exports and 2 per cent of its overall GDP. The 25 per cent reciprocal tariff on India already in effect exceeds those applicable to many competing Asian countries, except China. "As a result, the diamond polishing, shrimp and home textiles sectors may see sales volumes decline due to high reliance on US trade, and costs rise due to partial absorption of tariffs, ultimately affecting their earnings," the Crisil report said. The report said that for diamond polishers, exports to the US accounted for 25 per cent of total revenue last fiscal year, and the tariff will also put further pressure on the already modest operating margin of the sector. "Working capital cycles will elongate as inventory moves slowly and customers stretch payment cycles," the report read. The US accounts for 48 per cent of revenue for Indian shrimp exporters. With applicable reciprocal tariffs, countervailing duty, and anti-dumping duties in place, India is now one of the highest-taxed major shrimp exporters to the US, the report said, adding that this could drag down export volumes, even as players look for alternative markets to support their exports. Home textiles and carpets are both significant export-oriented sectors, with exports accounting for 70–75 per cent and 65–70 per cent of total sales respectively for these sectors; of this, the US accounts for 60 per cent of exports for home textiles and 50 per cent of exports for carpets.

Textile industry seeks short term cash flow support to ease US tariff pain

The labour intensive-textile industry has asked the government for immediate cash support and moratorium on repayment of loans to endure the shock of steep 50 per cent US tariffs that could lead to job losses in industry. The industry during a key meeting at the Ministry of Textiles on Tuesday also sought a fast-tracking of free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with the EU that could act as a cushion for losses in the US market. "The industry is seeking support from the government to at least absorb 20-25 per cent tariffs hit from the US so that they can retain the market share as US buyers have stopped placing fresh orders and are asking the Indian exporters to absorb the tariffs," a source told. The apparel manufacturers have asked for re-introduction of Interest Equalization scheme and a focused textile market scheme," the person quoted above said. The meeting, chaired by Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh, was called to discuss the challenges being faced by exporters in their order flows, especially amid the widening tariff differentials with other competing Asian countries after the recent imposition of secondary tariffs by the US on India.

The Ministry of Textiles said in a statement that it has announced the constitution of four committees, comprising industry representatives, to submit time-bound recommendations on fiscal and ease-of-doing-business measures, structural reforms in the textile value chain, enhancing cost competitiveness and innovation, and achieving a target of \$100 billion in exports by 2030. With the US being India's largest export market for the labour-intensive textile and apparel industry, textile exporters are under stress after the hike in import tariff to 25 per cent from August 7 by the Trump administration, which is set to rise further to 50 per cent on August 27. Textile and apparel exporters have been asking for support from the government as their orders have been hit with buyers either asking them to share the tariff hike burden or pausing the orders till further clarity emerges about the trade deal negotiations between India and the US. One of the major concerns raised by textile and apparel exporters in their representations to the government has been about a disruption in their cash flow with a reduction in orders by buyers from the US, officials said. "Exporters are asking for sops. They are asking for soft loans or



interest subvention schemes or focused market schemes. Their concern is that they should get cash in hand," an official told

Exporters are hoping that the tariff hike is temporary and they are able to retain the orders as buyers are already shifting to other countries with lower tariffs such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, with India's 25 per cent reciprocal tariff exceeding those applicable to other competing Asian countries, except China. If the higher levies continue, there's also a worry in policy circles that the distress in the textiles and apparels sector could result in job losses. The government is engaging continuously with exporters to understand the evolving situation. "Exporters have been communicating their issues. The government is taking their feedback and will provide the necessary support to them," another official said. Impact on India's merchandise exports

The Ministry of Finance has estimated that more than half of the country's merchandise exports to the US will be subject to the higher reciprocal tariff. The US is a key market for Indian Ready-Made Garments (RMG) exports; its share in India's total garment exports in 2024 stood at 33 per cent, as per the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC). Home textiles and carpets are also significant export-oriented sectors, with exports accounting for 70-75 per cent and 65-70 per cent of total sales, respectively, for these sectors. Of this, the US accounts for 60 per cent of exports for home textiles and 50 per cent of exports for carpets. US President Donald Trump had announced a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods in a post on social media platform Truth Social on July 30, with an additional but unspecified "penalty" for importing energy and defence items from Russia. On August 6, the penalty was clarified to be an additional 25 per cent tariff that will be effective from August 27.

RBI committee recommends measures for AI adoption in financial sector

AI adoption in financial sector, financial sector, rbi, artificial intelligence, Reserve Bank of India, Indian express business, business news, current affairsRegulated entities should augment their existing business continuity plan (BCP) frameworks to include both traditional system failures as well as AI model-specific performance degradation.

To encourage the responsible and ethical adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the financial sector, a Reserve Bank of India (RBI)-constituted committee has recommended several measures, including the establishment of financial sector data infrastructure, data lifecycle governance, consumer protection and cyber security measures. These proposals were put forward by an RBI committee, set up in December last year, to develop a Framework for Responsible and Ethical Enablement of Artificial Intelligence (FREE-AI) in the financial sector. The committee has given 26 suggestions which are based on six pillars – infrastructure, policy, capacity, governance, protection and assurance.

"A high-quality financial sector data infrastructure should be established, as a digital public infrastructure, to help build trustworthy AI models for the financial sector," the committee said. This may be integrated with the AI Kosh – India Datasets Platform, established under the IndiaAI Mission. The committee has recommended the establishment of an AI innovation sandbox, development of indigenous financial sector-specific AI models, adaptive and enabling policies and adoption of AI liability framework.

It has suggested that regulated entities should develop AI-related capacity and governance competencies for the board and C suite. Regulators and supervisors should also invest in training and institutional capacity building initiatives to ensure that they possess an adequate understanding of AI technologies and to ensure that the regulatory and supervisory frameworks match the evolving landscape of AI. To ensure the safe and responsible adoption of AI within institutions, the committee has proposed that regulated entities should establish a board-approved AI policy which covers key areas such as governance structure, accountability, risk appetite, operational safeguards, and consumer protection. Regulated entities should augment their existing business continuity plan (BCP) frameworks to include both



traditional system failures as well as AI model-specific performance degradation. The committee has recommended that REs should implement a comprehensive, risk-based, calibrated AI audit framework, aligned with a board-approved AI risk categorisation, to ensure responsible adoption across the AI lifecycle, covering data inputs, model and algorithm, and the decision outputs.

Improving paediatric bone health through growth modulation

When it comes to children's health, two key terms are often used together – growth and development. While growth refers to physical changes like height and weight, development looks at milestones such as walking, talking and behaviour. Together, they are used to track a child's overall physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural progress from infancy to adolescence. It is a well-accepted fact that no two children are alike, hence the pace of their growth and development stages differ. Some children may develop conditions like knock knees, bow legs and other such deformities. Informed parents of these children now often ask about growth modulation. Let us understand what growth modulation means, how it works and what outcomes to expect.

What is growth modulation?

Growth refers to an increase in dimension, such as

Cognizant to give November pay hikes to 80 per cent of eligible staff



Cognizant announced that around 80 per cent of its eligible employees will receive a salary hike from November. The company indicated that the hike will be in a "single high digit" (7 to 9 per cent) of the employees' current salary. During its second-quarter earnings, the company had indicated plans to award merit-based pay rises to the vast majority of staff in the second half of 2025.

"Cognizant today said that approximately 80 per cent of its eligible employees will receive a salary hike, effective November 1, 2025. This aligns with its announcement during its second-quarter earnings that it plans to award merit-

based salary increases for the vast majority of employees during the second half of 2025," a company spokesperson said.

"The salary hikes will be delivered up to, and including, the Senior Associate levels. The amount of these increases will vary, depending on individual performance rating and country. In India, pay increases for our consistently highest performers will be in the high single digits," the company said. "Top performers will receive the highest increases. Earlier this year, Cognizant paid most of its associates their highest bonuses in three years," it further said. Last week, India's largest IT services firm, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), also announced a wage revision for around 80 per cent of its workforce, largely covering mid to junior-level employees. The move came even as the company is preparing to lay off about 12,000 staff, or 2 per cent of its workforce, in 2025. Cognizant has reported a 7 per cent Year-on-Year (YoY) decline in bookings in the first quarter of the calendar year (Q1 CY25). However, trailing 12-month bookings rose 3 per cent YoY to \$26.7 billion, boosted by four large deals, each worth over USD 100 million. The company reported revenue of USD 5.1 billion for the first quarter of 2025, representing a 7.5 per cent increase compared to the same period last year (Q1 CY24).

India can reshape Southeast Asia's semiconductor and rare earth supply chains

New Delhi: As Southeast Asia emerges as a transformative critical player in the global semiconductor and rare earth mineral industries, India can play a significant role amid the reshaping of the world trade and supply chain order as US tariff tensions escalate. Although no single silver bullet exists to overturn decades of Chinese dominance, yet the combination of US defence funding, EU market regulations, JOGMEC diplomacy and Indian exploration is already reshaping the supply map, said a new report.

JOGMEC diplomacy refers to the strategic use of the Japan Organisation for Metals and Energy Security (JOGMEC) to secure Japan's energy and resource needs, while also contributing to global resource development. "Countries that combine capital, creativity, and credible standards stand the best chance of navigating the rare-earth era without succumbing to strategic chokeholds," according to a latest report published by Politeia Research Foundation (PRF), a non-profit initiative. India's ongoing renegotiation of the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) has a significant potential to reshape the trade dynamics and supply chain movements between India and Southeast Asian nations, according to the report authored by Madhav Maheshwari, a lawyer and independent policy consultant.

India had offered duty concessions on 71 per cent of its tariff lines, whereas ASEAN countries provided significantly lower market access, with Indonesia opening only 41 per cent of its tariff lines, Vietnam 66.5 per cent, and Thailand 67 per cent. The report further mentioned that this imbalance led to a substantial disparity and led to a significant increase in India's trade deficit with ASEAN, rising from just \$5 billion in 2010–11 to \$43.57 billion in 2022–23, with semiconductors constituting a major component among the imports

"India has significant trade volumes from Southeast Asian countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Such imbalance and the exploitation of the rules of origin provisions, which are also the main drivers of the ongoing renegotiation," the report emphasised. The India-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, signed in September 2024, provides for a specific memorandum of understanding on semiconductor ecosystem partnership, which establishes



frameworks for strategic bilateral cooperation. The fresh renegotiated agreement aims to tackle the Chinese problem faced by India while also facilitating Singapore's participation in the fast-growing Indian market. Malaysia is also one of the largest trading partners for India, with a total trade of \$20 billion in 2023–24. "The trade imbalance between Malaysia and India also suggests that Malaysia may need to offer greater market access in the renegotiation phase. Vietnam's position is also important because it represents the type of manufacturing hub that India is competing with," said the report. "Both Thailand and Indonesia also play an important role in reshaping the dynamics, considering intensified competition and essentially trying to serve themselves as alternatives to China-dependent supply chains and products. This reflects a broader shift in global semiconductor geopolitics. ASEAN's strategic position in global semiconductor trade networks..." the report emphasised. In order to break the Chinese monopoly on rare earth processing, particularly dealing with Myanmar, "India could latch on to this opportunity, being the neighbour and help deal with the Chinese monopoly." The report further stated that India and the Southeast Asian countries should prioritise upgrading their investments in Myanmar. "Initiatives like the G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan, which are widely endorsed by Australia, India and South Korea, should provide an expanded scope to provide targeted support for Southeast Asian processing capabilities and infrastructure development," the PRF report noted.

The urgent need to democratise India's heart transplant programme

Heart transplantation is a life-saving procedure for patients with end-stage heart failure. While medical advancements have made it a viable long-term solution with high survival outcomes, access to this treatment remains uneven, particularly in east India. The path to democratising heart transplants lies not only in medical capability, but also in streamlining infrastructure, administrative processes, and public awareness. India's organ transplant system functions through a structured hierarchy - State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO), Regional ROTTOS, and the National NOTTO. This network is responsible for maintaining waiting lists, coordinating transplants, and matching organs to recipients. However, logistical and procedural barriers often limit the timely use of available organs, especially hearts, which must be transplanted within four hours of harvest. One of the major challenges is the retrieval and transportation of organs. Many hospitals have potential donors, but are not designated as Non-Transplant Organ Retrieval Centres (NTORCs), which means they cannot harvest organs or maintain potential donors. Combined with this is limited air connectivity in east India and long distances from hospitals to airports, creating significant delays in transporting donated hearts. While "green corridors" created by police support ground transport, air travel infrastructure and emergency air evacuation systems need significant enhancement.

The diagnosis of brain death, a prerequisite for organ donation, is itself another critical hurdle. Although protocols are well-established, delays can occur due to procedural complexities, limited training in some centres, and the sen-



sitive nature of initiating conversations with families about organ donation. Misunderstanding the concept of brain death and the emotional toll on families often results in missed opportunities for donation. Public education and sensitive communication are essential to increase acceptance and consent for organ donation. Potential for growth

Despite these systemic challenges, the potential for growth in India's transplant programme is promising. In 2023, over 1.7 lakh people lost their lives in road accidents, and many of these were potential organ donors. Yet, only 221 heart transplants were conducted nationwide, far below the estimated annual need of 50,000. Interestingly, surveys show that Indians display a high willingness to donate organs, highlighting a disconnect between public intent and systemic execution.

Improving paediatric bone health through growth modulation

height or length, while modulation means controlling, altering, or regulating something. When parents discuss growth modulation, it implies they are seeking to guide or influence certain aspects of their child's growth. Growth modulation is an orthopaedic technique used to align bones and soft tissues in children with misalignment or deformities. Children have growth plates—soft areas at the ends of bones—where new growth such as gaining height occurs till adolescence. If one side of the growth plate is damaged or restricted, the other side continues to grow, which can result in a deformity. Growth modulation uses this principle, but for correction rather than causing damage. For example, in genu valgum (knock knees), there is inward angulation at the lower end of the femur (thigh bone). By slowing growth on the inner side of the growth plate and allowing the outer side to grow, the deformity gradually corrects itself over a period of about eight or nine months. Types of growth modula-

tion and tools usedGrowth modulation can be achieved either permanently or temporarily. Permanent growth modulation (hemiepiphyodesis) involves completely stopping growth on one side of the plate. However, as this is irreversible, it is now rarely used. Temporary growth modulation is a more advanced technique that uses implants (plates or screws), which can be removed after correction to allow normal growth to resume. The procedure is performed using several tools. Staples were once common, but are now rarely used due to their rigidity and risk of bending or breaking. The 8-Plate, a specialised tension band plate popularised by Peter Stevens in 2007, is effective but requires a 1.5–2 cm incision and can sometimes be prominent. The PET Screw is currently the preferred method. Made of titanium, this screw is inserted through a single stitch. Being minimally invasive, it allows faster recovery with less discomfort. .

Arne Slot must focus on man management at reinforced Liverpool else all the money spent will go down the drain



GNS News Agency, August 23

In Marvel's Multiverse saga, the big bad Thanos used to collect Infinity Stones and place them in a glove called the Infinity Gauntlet to harness the powers of the aforementioned stones. Ahead of the new season, the big English clubs have all embodied the Mad Titan, hellbent on collecting huge names from all around the globe to compete for their holy grail, the glistening glory of the iconic Premier League Trophy. In the recent past, the race for the trophy had but only one destination. The Etihad with a ruthless Manchester City team refusing to relinquish their vice-like grip from the title, winning it a record fourth time in a row from the 2020-21 season to the 2023-24 season. Last season though, Liverpool under new manager Arne Slot, successfully broke the streak and won the title for the 20th time in their history.

So, it was natural that the Reds would do everything in their might to hold on to the silverware for the second year running, something they haven't done since 1984. So, they needed reinforcements. In came Jeremie Frimpong and Florian Wirtz from Bayern Leverkusen, Milos Kerkez from Bournemouth and Hugo Ekitike from Eintracht Frankfurt, while names such as Trent Alexander Arnold, Luis Diaz and Darwin Nunez left for pastures anew. With the transfer window still active, Liverpool are also circling around stars like Parma's Giovanni Leoni, Crystal Palace's Marc Guehi and the biggest of them all, Alexander Isak from Newcastle.

Slot Liverpool's Alexis Mac Allister, right, celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's second goal during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield in Liverpool, England, Sunday. With so many signings in a single window, it does strengthen the squad but the club will also have to be adept in man management while dealing with them as the players bed in to the system. This has the potential to be a Man City-like evolution or a complete disaster of epic proportions. Only time will tell.

Man City, meanwhile, are going into the new season with an air of uncertainty around them. Last year's meltdown is still fresh on everyone's minds and not even the most ardent of City haters must have had City finishing trophyless in their bingo card. But that is exactly what happened. Pep Guardiola's side suddenly sputtered, spewed and combusted, relinquishing the EPL title while also get-

ting eliminated from the Round of 16 of the Champions League. Many will point out that the absence of Ballon d'Or winner Rodri might have been the source of City's miseries but while that might have been one of the issues, the signs were already there in the 23-24 season when they had been winless in the league for a whole month. They had recovered back then but last season with Liverpool firing on all cylinders, there was no comeback. The Citizens looked to address the concerns with new signings Rayan Ait-Nouri from Wolves, Rayan Cherki from Lyon and Tijjani Reijnders from AC Milan ahead of the expanded Club World Cup. But after an initial flurry, the malaise of conceding came back to haunt them when they lost 4-3 to Saudi club Al Hilal in another Round of 16 exit. Now if you come to Arsenal, they have been the most consistent team in the league for the past few seasons, regularly finishing second from 2022-2025. This might be a make-or-break season for manager Mikel Arteta who has been in charge since 2019 and has just a FA Cup to show for it. However, his philosophy has resonated with the squad with the Gunners playing their best football in quite some time, the culmination of which came last season when they knocked out the mighty Real Madrid from the UCL quarter finals. But they still needed a proven No.9 to get that final push to glory. And they have that in Viktor Gyokeres, who last season scored 97 goals in 102 games for Sporting, more than even Kylian Mbappe, Erling Haaland and Mohamed Salah. They have also reinforced their midfield and defence with huge signings like Martin Zubimendi from Real Sociedad, Christian Norgaard from Brentford, Nono Madueke from Chelsea and goalie Kepa Arrizabalaga from Bournemouth to name a few. However, the path to the title won't be easy with Arsenal given a fixture from hell where they face Manchester United in their very first match, followed by Liverpool, Man City and Newcastle, all within their first 6 matchdays.

United and recent Club World Cup winners Chelsea have also made signings that plug in the gaps in their respective problem areas with the Red Devils set to field a new look front three with Matheus Cunha from Wolves, Bryan Mbeumo from Brentford and Benjamin Sesko from RB Leipzig while also chasing Brighton's Carlos Baleba in order to secure their mostly leaky midfield. As manager Ruben Amorim looks to recover from their lowly 15th place finish last term, even he knows it's going to be a long way back with United having to navigate through a tough opening period with clashes against Arsenal, City and Chelsea lined up in their first 5 fixtures. Chelsea, meanwhile, seemed to have found their mojo after a couple of underwhelming seasons, finishing 4th in the league in the 2024-25 season and also thrashing Champions League winners PSG 4-0 in the Club World Cup final. This was courtesy of an inspired signing of Joao Pedro from Brighton who has started life at Stamford Bridge with a bang. His partnership with Cole Palmer looks almost Kevin de Bruyne-Haaland-esque which might pose a problem for the rest of the teams. The Blues, however, have also signed Liam Delap from Ipswich Town, Jorrel Hato from Ajax and Jamie Gittens as their squad depth looks formidable heading into the new season.

‘Football is not NFL’: Wayne Rooney ‘disappointed’ about Tom Brady’s comments on his work ethic

GNS News Agency, August 23

Former Manchester United and England great Wayne Rooney said that he was left disappointed about comments made by NFL star Tom Brady, also the minority owner of English club Birmingham City where Rooney was coach for a 83-day stint, in a recent docuseries. In the documentary titled "Built in Birmingham", Brady said he was "a little worried about our head coach's (Wayne Rooney) work ethic." Rooney branded the comments as a little unfair.

"Tom came in once, which was the day before a game, which is a little bit lighter anyway," Rooney said in an interview with the BBC published on Thursday, "and I don't think he really understood football that well at the time. Maybe he does now," he said on BBC. "But what he does understand is that he's a hard worker. We know that. So that's why I'm really disappointed with the comment, because football is not NFL. NFL works for three months in a year, players do need rest as well, so I think he was very unfair in the way he's come out and portrayed that," he added. The England forward, however, said that he still had a lot of respect for Brady as well as the club. "Listen, I respect Tom Brady massively — he's one of the greatest, if not the greatest athlete of all time," Rooney said. "And Birmingham do look like they



are getting it right now, which is good." In the campaign when Rooney was manager, Birmingham slipped down the second-tier Championship. They, however, secured immediate promotion last season and is back in the Championship — one league away from the Premier League. After Birmingham, Rooney had taken the charge at Plymouth but was relieved of his duties in December 2024, lasting just 7 months with the club winning just 4 out of 23 matches this season. He's also been the coach at MLS team DC United and Derby County.

Yuvraj Singh lauds Shubman Gill's performance in England tour: ‘There were a lot of question marks over his overseas record’

GNS News Agency, August 23

India's player of the series India's captain Shubman Gill on day five of the fifth cricket test match between England and India at The Kia Oval in London, Monday, Aug. 4, 2025. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth) India's player of the series India's captain Shubman Gill on day five of the fifth cricket test match between England and India at The Kia Oval in London, Yuvraj Singh heaped praises on captain Shubman Gill and Team India for their remarkable performance at the recently concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy where a young unit, bereft of the talents of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and R Ashwin, managed to tie the 5-match series 2-2. "There were a lot of question marks over his overseas record. The guy (Gill) became the captain and scored four Test hundreds. It's just unbelievable that when you're given responsibility, how you take it," Yuvraj told ICC Digital. "So, very proud of them (Indian team). I certainly feel it's a win for us, although it's a drawn series, because it's a young team. And it's not easy to go and play well in England and prove yourself," he added. Gill, who had faced a lot of questions for his overseas numbers before the tour commenced, shut all naysayers when he slammed four centuries and finished as the leading run-scorer with 754 runs. It also made him the first Asian batter to score 700-plus runs in a Test series in a SENA country. "It's just fan-



tastic because I felt when you have a young team going to England, it's a lot of pressure. You're filling the boots of somebody like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, it's not easy. The guys took it head-on," he said. "The moment in the tournament was when India drew the Test series. I've never seen, in a very long time, Washington and Jadeja got hundreds and drew a Test match.

That speaks volumes. Obviously Jadeja has been there for a long time. But I think Washington Sundar, as a youngster coming into the team, it was incredible to do what he did," added Yuvraj. India, who had to contend with injuries to Rishabh Pant, Akash Deep.

Ravi Shastri lauds Virat Kohli: Some of the innings he played in Australia, South Africa, England...unreal



GNS News Agency, August 23

India, under Ravi Shastri and Virat Kohli, was a force to be reckoned with in the red-ball format. Kohli led the side from the front as captain, and in their tenure, they have pulled off some remarkable results in the SENA countries, which have always been an Achilles heel for the Indian units in the past. Shastri, recalling his tenure, lauded Kohli the batter and captain. "I would say Kohli, the batsman in his pomp, was unbelievable because in those five years when India were No. 1 in the red-ball format. Some of the innings he played in Australia, South Africa, England, across formats were unreal," Shastri said speaking on Sky Sports.

Boston Celtics sold to Bill Chisholm-led consortium in huge NBA deal

GNS News Agency, August 23

The Boston Celtics logo is seen at center court on the parquet floor before an NBA basketball game between the Boston Celtics and the Atlanta Hawks Sunday, Feb. 13, 2022, in Boston. (AP Photo) The Boston Celtics logo is seen at center court on the parquet floor before an NBA basketball game between the Boston Celtics and the Atlanta Hawks Sunday. For the largest price ever paid for an American professional sports team, a consortium led by private equity mogul Bill Chisholm will take at least 51 percent control of Boston Celtics, the most successful franchise in the history of the National Basketball Association (NBA). The NBA has approved the sale for a record sum of \$6.1 billion, and Chisholm will get full control in 2028, when the total valuation of the deal could come to \$7.3 billion. Previous owner Wyc Grousbeck led the ownership group that bought the Celtics in 2002 for \$360 million.

However, it's the second-largest sale price for a US sports franchise, behind the \$10 billion valuation for the Los Angeles Lakers when Mark Walter, the CEO of Guggenheim Partners, purchased that team in June, but it's not yet clear how much the new buyer will own. Chisholm is the managing partner of California-based Symphony Technology Group. The new ownership group also includes Boston businessmen Rob Hale, who is a current Celtics shareholder, and Bruce Beal Jr, according to the Associated Press. Chisholm outbid at least two other groups, one led by previous Celtics minority partner Steve Pagliuca. "The NBA Board of Governors has unanimously approved the sale of the controlling interests in the Boston Celtics to an investor group led by Bill Chisholm," the NBA said in a statement. "The transaction is expected to close shortly."



Grousbeck is expected to serve as alternate governor and remain the CEO of the franchise through 2028. He will cease to remain in the role when he no longer has the required ownership stake of at least 15 percent. The previous record for a US sports franchise was the US\$6.05 billion paid for the National Football League's Washington Commanders two years ago. The record price for an NBA team was the US\$4 billion mortgage firm owner Mat Ishbia paid for the Phoenix Suns in 2023. The Celtics have won a record 18 NFL championships, the most recent of which came in 2024, defeating Dallas Mavericks in the finals. They won eight consecutive titles from 1959 to 1966, and after a break of one year, clinched back-to-back titles in 1968 and 1969. Bill Russell was the cornerstone of this dominance. Some of their other famous players in subsequent years include Larry Bird, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish in the 1980s and Paul Pierce, Ray Allen and Kevin Garnett in the 2000s.

R Ashwin explains why Sanju Samson's CSK trade will not work out this time, ‘Chennai don't believe in...’

The Sanju Samson IPL 2025 transfer/trade continues to spur interest with latest reports intending that the Rajasthan Royals have indeed begun negotiations with multiple franchises after the Kerala batter had expressed his intention to leave the side. The Rajasthan skipper has since been closely associated with a move to Chennai Super Kings, with the five-time champions expressing interest in a transfer. had previously reported that after the conclusion of the IPL, Samson even met with the CSK management and head coach Stephen Fleming during the Major League Cricket season in US. Chennai were open to the idea of bringing the 30-year-old to Chepaunk through a trade deal via cash. But it has hit a roadblock, with Rajasthan preferring an exchange of two players from Chennai. The five-time champions as a CSK policy have traded players with other franchises. When they bought Robin Uthappa ahead of the 2021 season from Rajasthan it was an all-cash deal. Why the deal might not go through, explains Ashwin

Samson's former RR teammate R Ashwin, who is also understood to have expressed his interest to leave the CSK franchise, explained that Samson's move to Chepaunk may not come to fruition ahead of the 2026 IPL season. "Why the CSK-RR trade won't work is because if Sanju is traded to CSK, and RR then try to trade with other teams, they're unlikely to get valuable players in return. For example, if



RR want a spinner like Ravi Bishnoi and approach LSG, the problem is that if LSG acquire Sanju and give away Bishnoi, they also have to manage the remaining purse required to retain Sanju — which becomes LSG's responsibility," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel. Ashwin further explained that Chennai do not generally incline towards trading players and will not certainly give away players worth Rs 18 crore to match a Samson deal. "CSK generally don't believe in trading. They aren't going to trade players like Ravindra Jadeja or Shivam Dube. So, in all likelihood, Sanju coming to CSK is bleak, for the reasons I've explained. RR don't have much to gain from this kind of trade," said Ashwin on his Youtube Channel.

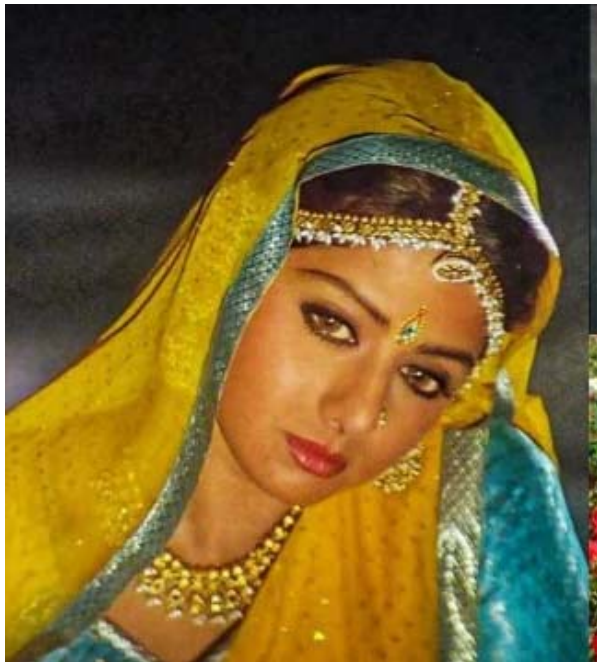
How Gukesh turned around losing position for 4th win in row against Fabiano Caruana

GNS News Agency, August 23 Call it the miracle of St Louis. Or call it the luck that the patron Goddess of chess, Caissa, bestows upon its world champions. In the final round of the rapid section of the St Louis Rapid and Blitz tournament, Gukesh Dommaraju pulled off a heist against tournament leader Fabiano Caruana to hand the American grandmaster his only defeat of the event so far before the tournament heads into the fast and furious two-day-long blitz section starting from Thursday. Caruana had a massively advantageous position early on in the clash against Gukesh. But the world champion not just found a way to extricate himself out of trouble, but also claim another victory, his fourth in a row over Caruana. His ability to keep on battling, no matter how hopeless the situation on the board, before converting it into a win is becoming an increasingly evident trait of Gukesh — one that has been highlighted by Magnus Carlsen as well after that headline-making defeat in Norway Chess. While Caruana heads into the blitz portion sitting on top of the standings with 14 points, Gukesh is fourth

with 10 points. Gukesh had a forgettable first two days at St Louis, with two losses and two draws besides two wins. On the final day of rapid, before the Miracle of St Louis against Caruana, Gukesh also managed to take down Wesley So. The teenager from Chennai was in trouble early, from the 15th move itself when Caruana played 15...f4. That moment was pivotal, because it was the first time that Caruana gained an edge on the board.

"Once I allowed f4 it was just... I quickly realised it was just too bad," Gukesh admitted on the broadcast later. Caruana's pawn sat there on the f4 square like an illegal squatter parked eye-sorishly right in front of Gukesh's castle of three pawns and two knights, behind whom the world champion had parked his king. It was only on the 42nd move, that the pawn which was making life uncomfortable for Gukesh's king was evicted by a knight. Caruana tightened his grip on the game until finally Gukesh got a free pawn on move 30 (30... Rag8). That was in fact the first time that a piece from Gukesh had ventured into Caruana's half of the board and survived to tell the tale.

GenZ reacts to Sridevi-Anil Kapoor's 1991 film Lamhe: A twisted plot my brain still can't process; cult classic, how?



'Yeh Lamhe, Yeh Pal Hum, Barson Yaad Karenge' is a song I always heard from my father, but never took interest to ask what he was actually singing, until I saw the film and was already deep into it. On late legend Sridevi's 62nd birthday, I, a GenZ, watched one of her most beloved films, Lamhe. Featuring her as Pooja Bhatnagar and Pallavi, the film also starred Anil Kapoor as Virendra Pratap Singh, Deepak Malhotra as Siddharth Kumar Bhatnagar, Anupam Kher as Prem Anand, and Waheeda Rehman. Before sitting through the entire three-hour film, I decided to catch up with the trailer. My jaw-dropped, and I am not saying this in a good way. Like, it literally dropped to see how trailers were treated during the 90s. Without giving any clear glimpse, it was just high-paced background score with the female lead roaming around in the garden. Despite Sridevi's double role as

both mother and daughter and being YRF's production, the film tanked badly at the box office. GenZs are always bashed by Boomers and Millennials for watching wild content on the OTT medium. Are we forgetting that they watched the controversial film Lamhe during their era? If I tell my dad today, that I am watching a Netflix film in which the plot is about a man falling in love with a woman, and then years later falling for her daughter (who looks exactly like her), he would freak out. For 1991, considering it was a pre-social media era, this still feels like a taboo in the 'family WhatsApp group'. When Yash Chopra made Lamhe, the world wasn't ready. Neither was my brain in 2025. Keeping the plot's questionable ethics aside, the love and romance shown in Lamhe surely gave me a feeling of, 'Is this what love is?' GenZs are surely too busy in making quick and rash decisions when it comes to starting a new relationship or discarding an old one. Sridevi and Anil Kapoor in a way can give a fresh (though dark, twisted) perspective to today's generation – Love takes decades, not dates. The layered romance wasn't accepted in India at that time, but the film performed decently abroad.

If we draw a crystal clear comparison of Yash Raj Films' productions in the 90s to now, there has been a significant shift, and not a good one necessarily. The way there was a pretty mood board in every scene – for example, when Pallavi met Viren in Rajasthan, there was golden light, camel bells, and chiffon, all in a similar tone or shade. Everything coming together in sync, all at once, made many moments in Lamhe special in my view. Where did that cinematic vision and magic go away?

Too much drama, which is expected from typical daily soaps, was a big turn off in the film. At the turning point where Sridevi aka Pallavi and her husband die is over-the-top melodramatic. As a GenZ, its not a sizeable element while consuming content now, which might have been otherwise during that time. For a second, my first thought was, 'So we are just moving to the daughter now? Okay!' More than three decades later, Lamhe is not everyone's cup of tea. Its flawed but bold, and that's what made it a cult classic after years of its release. Despite being ahead of its time back in 1991, I still can't register the film's messy plot in my mind!

Coolie enters Lokesh Cinematic Universe: The genre cinema of Lokesh Kanagaraj



A young bank employee hailing from Coimbatore used to jot down story ideas on his train journeys back and forth from work in the city, while listening to his favorite movie soundtracks. A stranger to the film industry, the only constant in his life was his undying devotion to superstar Kamal Haasan, and his film Sathya (1988), a film that altered his life choices and personality traits at an impressionable age. He made up bonkers scenarios in his head starring his idol Kamal Haasan and smaller films he could make with his friends during his time off from work. He kept chipping away at his mundane job, even as he consumed from a smorgasbord of late 80s and 90s action fare, which were telecast on HBO. The humble fanboy in question is none other than Lokesh Kanagaraj is the humble fanboy in question whose rough-on-the-edges, macho action vehicles have been enthralling a whole new generation of filmgoers with their visceral thrills and impeccably written action blocks.

Another of his trademark films, now grouped under Lokesh Cinematic Universe, is ready to land – Coolie, starring Rajnikanth in the lead role alongside an ensemble supporting cast featuring Nagarjuna, Aamir Khan, Upenendra, Shruthi Haasan, Soubin Shahir, and Sathyaraj. The trailer and marketing material put out by the team include all the 'essential signifiers' of what makes his work tick among younger filmgoers. There is the obvious bloodshed, the zany English verses accompanying the pop-sounding EDM score by his regular collaborator Anirudh Ravichandar, gore and gratuitous violence, and a sweaty, rough-on-the-edges genre sensibility in terms of his action set pieces and the sprawling scope of his peculiar brand of high-octane cinema, high on testosterone

The director with only six films under his belt has already developed a keenly personal style of action that owes its debt to the macho cinema of 80's Hollywood, where the economic writing, studio mandates, and more than capable genre filmmaking combined to produce some of the finest action films ever made. Lokesh follows strictly in that tradition. In an interview with Baradwaj Rangan recently, the director admitted, "I want all my heroes to be lone wolves like Clint Eastwood characters from his films. They exist on their terms and don't heed whatever societal trends or codes are in vogue at the time. They simply exist as they are without repentance." This gives us an idea of the kind of storytelling tradition the 39-year-old falls under and aspires to in his male-centered puzzle boxes.

Few filmmakers get 'cinematic universes' attributed to them, and Lokesh is the one who spearheaded the idea of the adoption of the multiverse model in our films. 'LCU' is known for its shared cinematic worlds, recurring characters, and side players that run across his filmography. This is not an overnight career move, but from Kaithi, his sophomore outing, you can sense the impulses of an ambitious action cinema aficionado trying to replicate the screenwriting rhythms and visual texture of better Hollywood films from the past. Drawing from a well of inspirations ranging from films starring Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, to major grimy B Action movie titles of the 90's, opened up his purview of a cinematic language

where the side characters and arc get equal care to that of the hero. The well of inspirations goes back to the starter pack of action films like Rambo: First Blood, Die Hard, and a healthy dose of Tarantino riffs and Nolan's Dark Knight Trilogy, as a sort of his landmark obsessions.

Lokesh is your average urban action cinema lover filled with a handful of Hollywood references, who has been given studio budgets and action stars to play around his little genre mashup sandboxes. These are not mere reference points for Lokesh but artistic north stars towards which he has been building his action figures. The director, through his stories of reluctant heroes forced to pick up the gauntlet against approaching evil, has made a thematically consistent and visually visceral filmmaking philosophy that values gratification over substance. There is sometimes too much going on in films, and side players from one film may pop up impromptu in other films, merging all the individual films into a sort of cinematic petri dish of interlinked stories, all taking place within a supposed shared universe. This shared universe character swapping is not done with the incessant glee of 'Marvel Cinematic Universe's' callbacks or cameos, but with much better restraint in his films. The director never indulges in overt tributes or self-congratulatory callbacks. He is too smart and knows that repetition and monotony can hamper the latitude he has been given for his stacked action potboilers. 'Dilli', an ex-convict recently released from Prison, is eager to go back to his estranged daughter but is forced to help the cops in a daredevil mission, with only a friendly cop on his side. This logline from his Karthi starrer 'Kaithi' might seem all too familiar for the fans of Jerry Bruckheimer-produced Nick Cage B-movie classic 'Con Air' (1997), and it is. Lokesh works within a similar genre playing ground but strips back much of the excess and campiness inherent in Con Air in his loose adaptation, to make it an emotionally resonant little action adventure that is grounded enough to make the local hybrid flavour work. Lokesh is known to take familiar stereotypes of the unshaken, emotionally distant at first (only to be revealed otherwise) men with murky pasts who are called upon to salvage a current crisis in the most unexpected of ways. Lokesh Kanagaraj is one of the most prominent pop culture figures in South Indian action cinema, and the young filmmaker, who specializes in blood-soaked, edgy action tent poles, has created a fan following for sculpted hero figures and the unbridled dynamic staging of set pieces. There is a clear attention to the camera moves, blocking of actors in frame, and you can see a tendency to locate the volatile rage of men caught in worlds of crime. The incessant 'say no to drugs' messaging in his films feels more like a mere footnote to greater genre pleasures on display.

The women are not the centre of attention of Lokesh films, and he dutifully plays with their placement in his 'action-break-action' structure as secondary players moving the protagonist's journey forward. This is the world of men clawing, kicking, and storming their way out of trouble. Lokesh's scenes don't so much end, but bleed into one another, and you can see the kinetic splicing together of temporality, an offshoot of his well-established love for filmmakers like Christopher Nolan and Tarantino, his spiritual forefathers of sorts in genre image making. The unpredictable beats of his non-linear screenplay work best when the character arcs and exposition merge as opposed to flow linearly, as in films like Master and Leo, where the conventional structures take away the charm of his peculiar world-building. There is not even an iota of flab in Lokesh's films, which center the action and use setups to build on the momentum of the writing, which winds up suspense, dropping one revelation at a time. Kanagaraj is an aspirational figure for your filmmakers trying to make action cinema rooted in our tradition. But sometimes his over-reliance on drug use and overt immersion in the world of crime has been criticized for fetishizing that life. The director does no service to himself by being an originator of pulpy, invigorating genre material that amounts to little substance at the end of the day. But the moments of total immersion

Prajakta Koli on diving into horror with Andhera: 'It's good to feel uncomfortable'



Prajakta Koli couldn't believe her luck when she was cast in a romantic film produced by Karan Johar. In 2022, she played Ginny, the sister of Varun Dhawan and daughter of Anil Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor, in Raj Mehta's hit family comedy Jugjugg Jeeyo, backed by Dharma Productions. "When you grow up a very filmy kid, working with Dharma and Excel is a dream you have. You've loved them, and these are people you want to work with," she tells SCREEN in an exclusive interview.

But when Farhan Akhtar and Ritesh Sidhwani's production house Excel Entertainment approached her, it wasn't for the buddy comedies they're best known for — Farhan's 2001 directorial debut Dil Chahta Hai, Zoya Akhtar's Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara (2011), and Mrigdeep Singh Lamba's Fukrey franchise. What fell in Prajakta's lap was Andhera, a horror show created by Gaurav Desai and directed by Raaghav Dar, which is now streaming on Amazon Prime Video.

"Even in Andhera, there's a lot of importance given to the relationships between characters, whether it's my character Rumi and Karanvir's (Malhotra) character Jai, or Rumi's relationship with her mom," points out Prajakta. She plays a paranormal YouTuber who connects with Jai because of the 'andhera' that's enveloping their city Mumbai. "Again, this is a space of not only storytelling, but also content I've never explored. I learnt a lot about creators who are actually in this space. We had the pleasure of shooting this amazing podcast Khooni Monday with Divay Agarwal, which I didn't expect I'd enjoy as much as I did," admits Prajakta.

Even though she played a content creator, much like in real life, Prajakta Koli found the experience to be very different from her zone. "It was just weird to have scripts for your YouTube channel with very big words, like some demons from Australia," says Prajakta, laughing. "But when you see a production like this... I'd never shoot like this as a content creator. I'd go near the window and put my camera up there, that's it," she adds.

Andhera is also a stark departure from the show she's most famous for — Akash Khurana's young adult drama Mismatched on Netflix India, full of hope and sunshine. "There's no sunshine in Andhera, that's for sure," remarks Prajakta with a chuckle. "There was so much communication happening during every scene we were shooting. Literally after every other take, we'd go to Gaurav or Raaghav sir because inhone toh show ghol ke peeya tha before we started shooting. We asked them for the motivations, why

Jimmy Fallon uses Taylor Swift songs to explain Trump-Putin equation, says the two are 'never ever getting back together'



U.S. President Donald Trump has once again become the butt of a joke, with the latest quip, like many in the recent past, delivered by a late-night talk show host. Jimmy Fallon, host of The Tonight Show, talked about Trump's meeting with Russian president Vladimir Putin on August 15. After making a comment on the president's recent decision regarding the famed Kennedy Centre, Fallon chose quite an interesting and unique way to explain to his audience what the meeting is going to be about.

Jimmy Fallon started the monologue talking about this year's honourees of The Kennedy Centre, including names like actor Sylvester Stallone, band KISS, country singer George Strait, and disco legend Gloria Gaynor. He said, "Well, after naming himself chairman of The Kennedy Centre, President Trump announced this year's honourees, like Stallone and the band KISS. Stallone makes sense because he deserves it, and when you think of Trump's first 7 months in office, the word 'Rocky' does come to mind. Trump picked KISS because they are one of the greatest rock bands of all time, and they also wear the same amount of makeup as he does."

Fallon stated that the two biggest news of the moment were Trump's meeting with Putin and Taylor Swift announcing a new album. To give the audience a laugh and show some love to Swift, who is a regular guest on the show, Fallon jumped into a segment where he described the relationship between the two presidents using titles of Taylor's previous songs. A part of it went something like, "For a long time Trump would look at Putin and think, 'You Belong With Me,' and when people told him to stay away, he would just 'Shake It Off.' Recently they have had some 'Bad Blood', and Americans are worried that Trump isn't 'Ready For It' since his mind is just a 'Blank Space'. Putin could tell Trump that 'You're Losing Me' and 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together.'" The jokes continued as Fallon said, "With Trump's meeting coming up, the president warned

a character is reacting that way, what's going to follow, what happened 15 years ago that led to this. So it was made very easy for us to adapt to this new space," she adds, heaping praises on the creator, director, and crew, who she considers the "pillars" of the show. "I always say, as actors, we're the last people to get involved in the process. There are writers, showrunner, and directors working on it for a lot of years. We actually got to be a part of the show when everything was laid out for us. So it became very easy for us as actors to trust everything seeing the phenomenal work everyone else has done. I feel very grateful I got to do this," says Prajakta, who admits that in her early days as an actor, the long gestation period used to bother the content creator in her. "This used to annoy me or make me uncomfortable five years ago. I was like, 'What do you mean we shoot for 60 days and it releases one year later?' I'd rather upload 60 videos in those 60 days," argues Prajakta. "But when you actually spend time on a set, you find it's the easiest for the actors because everything is put in place already. You're told when to come on set, someone does your hair and makeup, someone dresses you up, and then you even get a mark where you just have to stand and say the lines they give you. I'm not taking away from the art of the skill. Obviously, it's a collaborative effort. Now, I've spent a lot of time on set so I understand it. I just feel I've done my job, it'll come when it'll come," she adds. However, Prajakta recalls it wasn't all hunky-dory on the set of Andhera, like it'd be on a Mismatched.

"It was very different to be on this set from the word go. Also, we just nosedived into shooting. There's nothing in this show that starts soft. Aisa nahi ki chalo, shururat mein inko thoda halke lena do so that they gel with each other. Nah! I remember one of the first scenes we were shooting was so intense. It was very new, but as artistes, I feel it's good to feel uncomfortable when you don't expect it. We knew when we were getting into this that we'd do many scenes which we haven't done before. So it was exciting and challenging, but we're finally feeling the nerves now that it's coming out," explains Prajakta. The woman in her is glad that Hindi entertainment has come a long way, from Andhera, Ramsay Brothers' 1975 B-horror flick, to her show Andhera, an investigative supernatural thriller with two women (Prajakta and Priya Bapat) at the forefront, laced with social messaging like Amazon Prime Video's previous horror drama Khauf. She's particularly glad that the days of the horrex (horror + sex) movies are gone. "There've always been attempts when it comes to being progressive in telling stories, whether it's this year, 20 years ago, 50 years ago and beyond that as well. I think where it boils down to is where we've reached as consumers. We've had some brilliant stories being told where women were the protagonists without making a show of it, flagging it, or sensationalizing it. But there's a reason why the audience is the mai baap. Unhi ki vajah se chalta hai," insists Prajakta. Unlike her character in Andhera, Prajakta isn't afraid of the dark. "I'm not scared of the dark, honestly. I find a lot of peace in it. I'll sleep in a pitch-dark room. I'll wear an eye mask even if there's a little bit of light," reveals Prajakta, who associates darkness not with despair, but with tranquility. She even credits countless late hours for helping her become an author with the romance novel Too Good To Be True earlier this year. "I do most of my writing after 11 pm because the world goes quiet. I love that your phone doesn't ring and nobody's knocking on your door," she says, taking a pause, before adding, "Unless they are, then you should get scared."

his Russian contemporary that his country will face severe consequences if they don't end the war on Ukraine. Putin must have been like, 'What consequences? A second meeting?' Also, Trump is hosting Putin at a US military base because he says that 'it is peak tourist season in Alaska and the options were limited.' I mean, this meeting could end a war, and Alaska is like, 'Sorry, the Marriott conference room is all tied up with the Rotary Club salmon retreat.' I mean, what are you doing?"

Shilpa Shetty and Raj Kundra booked in Rs 60 crore cheating case

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty Kundra, her businessman husband Raj Kundra, and an unidentified individual have been booked by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) for allegedly defrauding a Mumbai-based businessman of Rs 60.4 crore in a loan-cum-investment deal linked to their now-defunct company, Best Deal TV Pvt Ltd, police said on Thursday.

According to Mumbai Police, businessman Deepak Kothari has accused the couple of jointly cheating him of more than Rs 60 crore. He alleged that the money, given between 2015 and 2023 in the name of business expansion, was instead used for personal expenses. The investigation has now been handed over to the EOW.

The offence was initially registered at Juhu police station under relevant sections related to cheating and forgery. However, since the amount involved exceeded Rs 10 crore, the matter was transferred to the EOW. The FIR was lodged after a preliminary enquiry into Kothari's complaint. Kothari, a Juhu resident and director of Lotus Capital Financial Services, stated that one Rajesh Arya had introduced him to Shilpa Shetty and Raj Kundra, who at the time were directors of Best Deal TV Pvt Ltd, a home shopping and online retail platform. The couple reportedly held 87.6 per cent of the company's shares.

The accused allegedly sought a loan of Rs 75 crore at an interest rate of 12 per cent but later convinced him to channel the money as an "investment" to avoid higher taxation, while promising monthly returns along with repayment of the principal.

Kothari claims he transferred Rs 31.9 crore in April 2015 under a share subscription agreement, followed by another Rs 28.53 crore in September 2015 under a supplementary agreement. The FIR states that despite offering a personal guarantee in April 2016, Shilpa Shetty resigned as director in September 2016.