

Drugs control raids quack's clinic in Siddipet, seizes illegal medicines

Hyderabad, Aug.25 The Drugs Control Administration (DCA), Telangana yesterday raided the premises of an unqualified medical practitioner H Ramesh at Thimmapur village of Jagdevpur mandal, Siddipet district, and seized illegally stocked drugs worth Rs 50,000. During the raid, the officials found 32 varieties of medicines, including antibiotics, steroids, analgesics and IV fluids, which are stored without a valid drug licence. The DCA warned that indiscriminate sale of antibiotics by unqualified persons may lead to 'antimicrobial resistance', while misuse of steroids poses serious health risks such as hormonal imbalance, cardiovascular issues and immune suppression.

CM Revanth invited for Ganesh Navratri celebrations



Hyderabad, Aug.25 The Khairatabad Ganesh Ad-Haq Committee, headed by MLA Danam Nagender, has invited Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy to participate in the Shri Vishwashanti Maha Shakti Ganapati-2025 Navratri celebrations. On Monday, members of the Khairatabad Ganesh Ad-Haq Committee visited the Chief Minister at his residence in Jubilee Hills to extend the invitation. In a similar manner, the Balapur Ganesh Utsav Samithi met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at his Jubilee Hills home to present their invitation for the Ganesh Navratri celebrations. The meeting was attended by former Mayor of Badangpet Corporation Parijatha Narasimha Reddy, Chairman of the Balapur Ganesh Utsav Samiti Niranjan Reddy, and several others.

SC DIRECTS PRABHAKAR RAO TO COOP WITH SIT IN PHONE TAPPING CASE:



Hyderabad, Aug.25 The Supreme Court on Monday directed former SIB chief Prabhakar Rao to appear before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) and cooperate with the probe into politically sensitive phone tapping case. The Apex court, while hearing the plea of the SIT, the counsel appearing for the Telangana government informed the bench of Justice BV Nagaratna that the prime accused Rao is not cooperating with the special investigation team (SIT) and had tampered with the electronic evidence. On the other hand, Rao's counsel argued that he had already attended the investigation for about 10 times and was cooperating with the probe. The Court adjourned the matter to September 22, and extended the interim protection given earlier to Rao to next date of hearing. While adjourning the case by four weeks, the Court directed Rao to cooperate with the SIT to complete the probe.

Harish Rao accuses CM Revanth of failing Asha workers' commitments

Hyderabad, Aug.25 Former minister and BRS MLA Harish Rao expressed strong criticism against the Congress government at the Asha workers' Mahadharna held at Indira Park, Hyderabad on Monday.

Addressing the gathering, he accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of betraying the promises made to Asha workers during the elections, particularly the assurance of fixed salaries. Harish Rao said Asha workers are not making any excessive demands, but are simply asking the government to fulfill the promises it made. "In the election manifesto, the Congress party clearly promised fixed wages to Asha workers. Revanth Reddy must honour his word," he said. He condemned the government for using police force to suppress the peaceful protests of Asha workers near the Health Directorate. "You gave time to the government, now you must demand answers. Are you going to keep your promises or push these workers to protest?" he questioned. Criticising the government's priorities, Harish Rao pointed out that while ₹50,000 crore worth of contracts have been floated across departments like HMDA, GHMC, Irrigation, and others, the government claims it has no money to pay salaries to Asha workers, Anganwadi workers, and midday meal staff. He alleged that CM Revanth Reddy is carrying scissors in his pocket, only to cut ribbons for projects initiated by the previous BRS government. "You have not built a single hospital or a building, yet you are touring with scissors to inaugurate structures built under KCR's leadership," Harish Rao remarked.



CM Revanth pledges to elevate OU to Stanford and Oxford standards

Hyderabad, Aug.25: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has affirmed the state government is committed to develop the Osmania University and bring back the glory of the prestigious university in the country. The university will be developed on par with the world's top Stanford and Oxford Universities, the Chief Minister declared. The Chief Minister inaugurated the newly constructed hostel buildings and laid foundation stones for various buildings in the Osmania University on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Revanth Reddy said that Osmania University is synonymous with Telangana since the university and Telangana are considered as conjoined twins.

In a move to strengthen the university, he ordered the constitution of an Engineers Committee to study the development of the university. "We will promote the Osmania University equal to Stanford and Oxford University". The Chief Minister asserted that the Osmania University should



be a role model and standing witness to the history. He instructed the authorities to prepare estimations for University development and submitted to him. "I will come to the University again and participate in a meeting at the Arts College. I will announce sanction of funds for university development in the meeting," Revanth Reddy announced. Further, the Chief Minister said that no police force will be deployed in the university during his next meeting. "Let the opposition parties stage protest in the university campus during his visit. I am also ready to answer those who are preventing me from vis-

iting the university", he said.

The Chief Minister took a swipe at the opposition parties. Some political leaders are in despair after losing power. The BRS top leadership worried about the political future of their sons. Appealing to the students not to fall in the opposition trap, the Chief Minister said that his cabinet colleagues and himself are available to students all the time and ready to address their grievances. Revanth Reddy criticised the opposition for conspiring against Kodandaram and removed him from the MLC post through Supreme Court directions. The opposition's

sadistic pleasure can be understood. The MLC post will be given to Kodandaram again, he announced. The Chief Minister cautioned the students not to get carried away by lies. The opposition was spreading misinformation about the government on WhatsApp and social media. They used artificial intelligence to spread the news that Lions and Elephants are living in the Central University. In fact, the Telangana State is not the home for lions and elephants, he said. Coming down heavily on opposition, the Chief Minister said that some beasts in human form are creating hurdles and they are the "termites" in the Telangana society and do not want Telangana development. He warned that the university will lose its existence if the opposition comes to power again. The Chief Minister also pointed out that the IAS officers are being appointed at 21 years of age and why should not the same age youth contest elections and enter the Legislative Assembly?

Supreme Court collegium recommends Justices Alok Aradhe, Vipul Pancholi for top court



GNS News Agency, August 25

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Monday recommended the elevation of Chief Justices of Bombay and Patna High Courts, Justices Alok Aradhe and Vipul Manubhai

Pancholi, as apex court judges. Justice Aradhe is ranked third in the list of High Court Chief Justices and Justice Pancholi is 19. Justice Aradhe's parent High Court is Madhya Pradesh and that of Justice Pancholi is Gujarat. Justice Aradhe, born in April 1964, was appointed as an Additional Judge of Madhya Pradesh in December 2009 and made a Permanent Judge of the High Court in February 2011. He was transferred to the Jammu and Kashmir High Court in 2016 and functioned as its Acting Chief Justice for nearly three months from May to August 2018. Justice Aradhe was transferred to the Karnataka High Court as judge and took over as its Acting Chief Justice from July to October 2022. He was appointed as the Telangana Chief Justice in July 2023 and later transferred to the Bombay High Court as its Chief Justice on January 21, 2025. Justice Pancholi was born on May 28, 1968 at Ahmedabad and was confirmed as a Permanent Judge of the Gujarat High Court in June 2016. He was transferred to Patna High Court in July 2023 and appointed its Chief Justice on July 21, 2025.

We can compete with world only through education: Bhatti



Hyderabad, Aug.25 "Society develops only through education. If we want to go beyond states and compete globally, it is possible only through education," said Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka. He spoke after unveiling a coffee table book prepared by a private organisation on the education sector at Jubilee Hills here on Monday. The Deputy Chief Minister stated that education is the only path to bring social change, eradicate backwardness, and establish an egalitarian society.

Referring to the legacy, he said that since the days of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru until today, the establishment of various educational institutions by many Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers has led the country on a fast track of progress. He mentioned that the establishment of institutions like IITs, RECs, and several universities under UGC enabled Telugu people to rise to the level of CEOs of leading global companies. He explained that privately established institutions too have grown into universities, now imparting advanced technology education. "Only when the syllabus evolves in tune with changing social needs will it be useful," he said, adding that under the leadership of Revanth Reddy, the entire cabinet envisioned and established a Skill University. The syllabus there has been designed to meet industry requirements. He further said that around 100 ITIs

set up decades ago have now been converted into advanced technology centers, and the syllabi suggested by industry heads have been incorporated into them.

Komatireddy inaugurates 4K advanced surgical facility at Nalgonda

Hyderabad, Aug.25 : In a major boost to healthcare in Nalgonda, a state-of-the-art Laparoscopic Unit was inaugurated at the government general hospital in Nalgonda on Monday. The unit, established at the cost of Rs.1.5 crore under the aegis of Prateek Foundation, was formally inaugurated by Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Nageshwar Reddy, with Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, attending as chief guest. Addressing medical students at a special interaction, the Minister highlighted the importance of accessible healthcare. He expressed pride in the new Laparoscopic Unit, stating that such advanced facilities are often unavailable even in some corporate hospitals. The Minister also mentioned that the state government is dedicated to deliver corporate-level healthcare to underprivileged patients. He reiterated his long-standing efforts to develop Nalgonda's healthcare infrastructure, including the establishment of a government medical college, a 40 crore nursing college, and systematically upgrading the district government hospital. He emphasised that minor surgeries will now be conducted locally, benefiting the poor through initiatives by Prateek Foundation. Dr. Nageshwar Reddy, speaking on the occasion, praised Minister Komatireddy as a dedicated and humane leader committed to the welfare of the underprivileged. He remarked on the 4K advanced technology in the newly inaugurated Laparoscopic Unit.

Seven nabbed in Kondapur rave party, drugs seized

Hyderabad: The Gachibowli police, along with Telangana's anti-narcotics wing EAGLE, raided a rave party at Kondapur and arrested seven persons. The police seized 20 grams of cocaine, eight ecstasy pills, and three grams of MDMA. Those arrested were identified as Teja (28, peddler), Vikram (28, peddler), Manne Neelima (41, consumer), Chandhan (20, transporter), Pushotham Reddy (36, consumer), Bhargav (31, consumer), and Rahul alias Sonu (supplier).

Acting on a tip-off, police raided Rajeswari Nilayam Service Apartments in Kondapur, where the group was found consuming drugs.

Governor distributes clothes to sanitary workers and outsourcing staff



Hyderabad, Aug.25 Governor Jishnu Dev Varma distributed dhotis, sarees, T-shirts, and blankets arranged by Bharat Sevashram Sangha, acknowledges the dedicated service of those who help keep the city clean, to outsourcing staff, garden malis, and sanitary workers at Raj Bhavan on Monday.

This annual initiative by Bharat Sevashram Sangha's Hyderabad Ashram to honour the "keepers of cleanliness" by distributing essential items. The gesture reflects respect for workers who contribute to a healthy and happy community through their tireless efforts in maintaining "Swachhata" (cleanliness). The event was attended by M. Dana Kirhsore, Principal Secretary to Governor, and Swami Venkateswarananda Maharaj of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, along with senior Raj Bhavan officials. The Governor praised the Ashram's selfless service and emphasised the value of collective responsibility in upholding cleanliness and dignity of labour.

KTR slams Modi-Revanth Reddy nexus for injustice to Telangana



GNS News Agency, August 25

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Monday alleged that the Congress and the BJP had entered into a secret pact to dish out systematic injustice to Telangana. He said despite being in power at the Centre and the State, both parties were spending their energy on criticising the opposition BRS, but never attacked each other and continued to benefit mutually. Addressing BJP leaders led by Aluri Vijayabharathi who joined the BRS at Telangana Bhavan, Rama Rao said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy had entered into a secret understanding with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, putting Telangana's future at stake. He alleged that the Congress government was deliberately neglecting repairs at Medigadda barrage of the Kaleshwaram project to benefit the BJP and TDP. "On Modi and Chandrababu Naidu's orders, Revanth Reddy is helping them in diversion of Godavari waters downstream to the Banakacherla project and eventually to Tamil Nadu," KTR alleged, claiming the BJP wanted Telangana to lose control over river waters. He equated Revanth Reddy with Modi, calling them "Bade Modi" and "Chote Modi", accusing both of failing to deliver on promises. "Their partnership will eventually hurt Rahul Gandhi," he remarked. The BRS leader said both national parties were equally responsible for injustice to Telangana on issues ranging from implementation of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act to development and welfare. He pointed out that while Congress and BJP won eight MP seats each of Telangana's

Telangana set to receive 35,000 tonnes of urea this week: Tummala

Hyderabad, Aug.25 Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageswara Rao announced that, due to the pressure from the State government on the Union government, Telangana is set to receive 35,000 metric tonnes of urea this week. During this announcement, the Minister instructed the Director of the Agriculture department, Gopi, to promptly distribute the urea supplied to the state to various districts based on their needs. In a statement here on Monday, Tummala Nageswara Rao criticised the Union government for its inability to import urea from other countries and its failure to adequately supply urea to the states, which he identified as a primary cause of the urea shortage. He further remarked that the Union government is attempting to deflect blame for the urea shortage in Telangana onto the state government while ignoring its own shortcomings. The Minister also shared that he has already reached out to the Managing Director of RFCL to ensure the supply of urea to Telangana, noting that a total of 7.32 lakh metric tonnes of urea has already been supplied to farmers, including the old stocks.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

On the state of Gaza

For months, international rights groups, aid organisations and doctors who served in Gaza have warned that the enclave was on the brink of famine. Heart-breaking stories and images of starvation poured out as Gaza's civil defence groups repeatedly told the world that children were dying every day due to malnutrition. But Israel, waging a genocidal war in Gaza for the past 22 months, dismissed these reports as lies, while its western allies did little beyond expressing token concerns. Last week, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a UN-backed body, confirmed that an entirely "man-made famine" is unfolding in Gaza's largest city and its surrounding areas, the first officially declared famine in West Asia. At least one in five households faces extreme food shortages, while a third or more of all children are acutely malnourished. The IPC also stated that at least two in every 10,000 people die daily from starvation or the deadly combination of malnutrition and diseases. Yet, if anyone expected such a devastating report by a reputed organisation to have had an impact on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's war-thirsty regime, they were mistaken. Israel has long imposed restrictions on goods entering Gaza, that has been under Israel's blockade since 2007; it tightened those restrictions after Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack. But in March 2025, after Mr. Netanyahu broke a ceasefire, Israel imposed a total three-month blockade on all goods entering Gaza. When it began allowing a limited amount of food, a new U.S. and Israel-backed organisation, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) replaced the previous UN-led food distribution system. The blockade, along with Israel's direct control of food distribution, plunged hundreds of thousands into acute hunger. When desperate, hungry Palestinians rushed to the limited food centres run by the GHF, they were shot down by Israeli troops and GHF volunteers in the name of crowd control.

Distribution of Clay Ganesha Idols at Hyderabad Press Club



Hyderabad: The Hyderabad Press Club committee appealed to everyone to worship clay Ganesha idols to promote environmental conservation. On Monday, at the Hyderabad Press Club in Somajiguda, with the cooperation of HMDA, Press Club Assistant Secretary Chilukuri Hariprasad and Treasurer A. Rajesh distributed clay Ganesha idols. Every year, on the occasion of Vinayaka Chavithi, HMDA provides clay Ganesha idols, and this time too, they were distributed to Press Club members. HMDA distributes up to one lakh clay Ganesha idols across the twin cities of Hyderabad. As part of this initiative, Joint Secretary Chilukuri Hariprasad and Treasurer Rajesh praised the distribution of two thousand clay idols at the Press Club for journalists as a commendable effort. The Press Club committee urged people to set aside Plaster of Paris idols, which harm the environment, and worship Ganesha idols made of clay instead.

Those who committed sexual assault on tribal women should be punished severely. BRS District President Rega Kantarao



Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, August 25, Indian Chronicle: BRS District President Rega Kantarao has demanded that the assailants who committed sexual assault on a tribal woman be punished severely. He strongly condemned the sexual assault on a tribal woman on Monday. A woman from Gollaguppa village in Chintur mandal of AP said that she was deeply disturbed to know about the rape of her tribal sister while she was in an auto to go to her aunt's house in Bodagudem, Chhattisgarh. She described the brutal rape of an innocent tribal girl by mixing drugs in a cool drink as an act of shameful humanity. She demanded that the government should not take this incident as a general case and should catch the culprits, no matter how old they are, and punish them under strict laws. On behalf of the BRS party, Rega demanded that legal action be taken to ensure that they are imprisoned for life and that action be taken against anyone who tries to protect the criminals.

PhonePe Launches New Home Insurance Offering



Hyderabad: PhonePe, today announced the launch of its latest home insurance product line, designed to offer homeowners a simple and affordable solution to protect their homes. With premiums starting as low as 181 (including GST) for coverage ranging from ₹10 lakhs going up to 12.5 Cr, buyers can insure both structure and contents of their homes, with the convenience of an end-to-end digital journey, directly on their PhonePe app.

While most home insurance plans come bundled with home loans, this often comes at a higher cost with limited flexibility and the additional burden of paperwork. PhonePe aims to bridge this gap with expertise by offering hassle-free, transparent and accessible solutions to homeowners, whether they have availed a home loan or not. Users can secure their homes and its contents (furniture, appliances, valuables, etc) against significant risks such as fire, floods, earthquakes, riots and theft, amongst others. This offers homeowners access to a trusted and competitive insurance experience, all within a few taps on the PhonePe app.

Key highlights of the plan include the following:

Premiums starting from just 181 per year (including GST)

Flexible coverage ranging from 10 lakhs to 12.5 crores; suiting every home and budget

Covering over 20 risks such as fire, floods, earthquakes, riots and theft, amongst others

Available to all homeowners with or without existing loans.

Accepted by all banks and lending institutions for home loan requirements

Instant policy issuance with zero paperwork or inspection

Commenting on the launch, Vishal Gupta, CEO at PhonePe Insurance Broking Services, said, "We believe India's homeownership aspirations are larger than ever, and PhonePe is eager to be a part of that journey, backed by its expertise. We are committed to making insurance accessible and affordable for every Indian. The launch of our new home insurance offering is a crucial step in this direction, empowering homeowners to protect their most cherished asset with complete ease. Our trusted solution represents the future of protection – comprehensive & affordable coverage, digitally accessible in minutes through the PhonePe app. We've built this to grow alongside India's ambitions, allowing customers to explore, and choose the right policy seamlessly online. We believe this will transform how consumers secure peace of mind for their homes, while eliminating financial barriers."

Myntra launches M-Now in Hyderabad, expands speed delivery footprint ahead of the festive season

Hyderabad: Following strong customer adoption in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi NCR, Myntra today announced the expansion of its speed delivery service, M-Now, to Hyderabad. This expansion is backed by Myntra's growing network of 60+ dark stores across the country.

Shoppers in Hyderabad can now access ~8K trend-first styles from over 500 brands, starting 30 minutes. Ahead of the festive season, the expansion into the city comes on the back of a growing customer base from Hyderabad and the increasing need for instant gratification and convenience. Myntra will operate through a dark-store-led fulfillment model in the city. This setup is designed to handle high-volume orders while maintaining reliable delivery timelines, even during peak shopping periods and festive surges. Popular brands customers can shop from include Levi's, USPA, MANGO, Jack & Jones, Tommy Hilfiger, Vero Moda, Mochi, United Colors of Benetton, Louis Philippe, Bata, L'Oréal, Maybelline, TRESemme, among others.

Speaking on the expansion, Sharon Pais, Chief Business Officer, Myntra, said, "Hyderabad is a fast-growing market with a vibrant and trend-conscious customer base, making it an ideal market for M-Now. Designed to serve those moments when immediacy matters most, the expansion of M-Now into the city strengthens our promise of convenience and raises the benchmark for speed in fashion, beauty, and lifestyle commerce." During the recently concluded Raksha Bandhan, M-Now witnessed a 3X surge in demand for gifting-related categories, with accessories spiking by 5X in Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore. The cities experienced an overall ~1.5 times increase in orders during the



festival. Popular new brands added to M-Now recently include Snitch, Anouk, Boldfit, YSL and Cava.

Over the past few years, Myntra has pioneered efforts to delight customers with speed in e-lifestyle through M-Express, which enables deliveries within 24-48 hours. Today, nearly 50% of Myntra's total orders are fulfilled in under 48 hours across 600+ cities in India, reflecting the rising appreciation for speed-led shopping experiences where they are opting for the best of brands and trends across premium fashion, beauty and lifestyle. By scaling M-Now, Myntra continues to raise the bar on delivery excellence in the e-lifestyle space, addressing both planned and impulse shopping missions while offering consumers the convenience and speed they increasingly expect.

Public issues to be resolved in Prajavani



"Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 25, Indian Chronicle: Additional Collector Venugopal has instructed the concerned officers to thoroughly examine every application received in the Prajavani program and resolve it immediately. On Monday, he held a public event along with Additional Collector of Local Bodies Vidya Chandana at the IDOC office conference hall. He endorsed the concerned officers to resolve the issues of the people from various parts of the district. Complaints received in Grievances* Employment for the unemployed: An unemployed person named Gummati Sagar from Kalyanapuram village in Ashwapuram mandal applied for an attendant or watchman job in any government office. The District Em-

ployment Department officer was endorsed to take appropriate action on this.* Gruha Jyoti Scheme: Talari Muthaiyya from Ravikampadu village in Chandrugonda mandal applied for free electricity under the Gruha Jyoti Scheme in the Prajapalana program. However, he still receives electricity bills at his home and requested that this scheme be applied to him. The Chandrugonda MPDO endorsed this.* Annapurna Card: Ghaus, wife of Mohammed Sadiq of Indiranagar, Illandu Mandal, said that her husband died ten years ago and the family's financial situation is not good. She applied to convert her white ration card to an Annapurna Card. The District Civil Supplies Officer was endorsed to take appropriate action on this.* New Livestock Building: The people of the village requested that the old livestock building in Kommugudem Gram Panchayat of Julurupadu Mandal be sanctioned and a new building be sanctioned. The District Animal Husbandry Officer was endorsed on this.* Issuance of TCs: Banothu Ramesh Nayak of Chunchupalli Thanda complained against the Lakshmedevipalli Mandal Triveni School for not giving TCs to his children. The District Education Officer was endorsed on this.* Village Problems: The people of Chintakunta village in Burgampadu mandal said that their village does not have roads, drinking water, or electricity facilities, and they are facing difficulties due to the absence of an Anganwadi center and school. The D Section Officer was endorsed to resolve these problems. District officers of all departments participated in this public address program.

IFTU Calls for Grand Success of Sept 7 Contract Workers' Conference in Hyd

"Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, August 25, Indian Chronicle: IFTU District Secretary J. Seetharamayya urged workers to attend the September 7 state conference in Hyderabad in large numbers. He demanded equal pay for equal work, regularization of contract and scheme workers, and a minimum wage of ₹26,000. "The conference will feature IFTU National President Dr. Aparna, National leaders Sadinini Venkateswara Rao, B. Pradeep, T. Srinivas, and Karnataka advocate Balan as speakers. "The district



meeting at Yellandu was presided over by Union District President Kokka

Sarangapani. Participants included M.D. Rasudeen, D. Prasad, Kondapalli Srinivas,

Ravuri Upender Rao, Pandirapalli Veeranna, Aderla Anjayya, and others.

CRI PUMPS wins 320 crore order for 10,714 Solar pumping systems under PM-KUSUM scheme in Maharashtra



Hyderabad: CRI Solar, a division of CRI Pumps and a pioneer in renewable energy-driven water solutions, has been awarded the Letter of Empanelment (LOE) by the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) for the design, supply, installation, and commissioning of 10,714 Off-Grid DC Solar Photovoltaic Water Pumping Systems (SPWPS) of 3 HP, 5 HP, and 7.5 HP capacities valued at ₹320 crores under "Magee Tyala Saur Krushi Pump" Yojana. The SPWPS features an inbuilt IoT-enabled Remote Monitoring System (RMS) and comes with a 5-year warranty covering repairs and maintenance.

This initiative will help ensure reliable water access in underserved and off-grid rural regions, significantly reducing dependence on conventional energy, enhancing irrigation reliability, and boosting agricultural productivity and rural prosperity.

Project execution will commence as per MSEDCL's stipulated timelines, with CRI Solar leveraging its proven expertise in large-scale solar deployments to ensure timely, efficient, and high-quality implementation.

Commenting on this key landmark, Mr. G. Soundararajan, Chairman of CRI, said:

"This empanelment from MSEDCL, worth ₹320 crores, is more than a business achievement—it is a mission-driven step towards empowering India's farmers with clean, reliable, and sustainable water solutions. We are proud to collaborate with Maharashtra in accelerating renewable energy adoption and delivering dependable irrigation to the heart of its agricultural economy."

CRI continues to drive India's transition to energy-efficient and sustainable water infrastructure, having commissioned over 1,81,000 solar pumping systems nationwide, supported by IoT-enabled smart monitoring solutions. These projects have saved more than 6,100 million kWh of energy and prevented 4.8 million tons of CO2 emissions, reflecting CRI's commitment to environmental stewardship, national progress, and rural upliftment.

With a portfolio that includes high-efficiency solar pumping systems, intelligent remote monitoring, and comprehensive after-sales support, CRI Solar remains a trusted partner for government-led renewable energy and irrigation initiatives, delivering reliable and eco-friendly water solutions to farmers and rural communities.

Enroll children in pre-primary schools: Collector Jitesh V. Patil.



"Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 25, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has urged the Telangana state government to enroll children in the newly introduced pre-primary schools. Speaking at a coordination meeting organized at the Collector's office after the government gave permission to start pre-primary classes in 21 schools in the district, he said that the Mandal Education Department officials, ICDS officials, and teachers should work hard to enroll four-year-old boys and girls in these 21 schools in pre-primary classes. He said that these children will be provided with the necessary uniforms, books, and sports equipment, and the school should be made attractive with colors to attract children. The Collector said that these children will be provided with a midday meal as well as breakfast. He directed the District Medical and Health Department Officer to conduct health checks on all the children and arrange for them to be provided with the necessary medical assistance. The Mandal Education Department officials were instructed not to show any laxity in providing all the facilities required for the children and to make arrangements so that there are at least 20 children in each school. He said that all arrangements should be completed by September 1st and the children should be admitted to schools in a festive atmosphere. District Education Officer Mrs. B. Nagalakshmi, Additional Collector of Local Bodies Vidya Chandana, District Welfare Officer Swarnalatha Leinana, and Mandal Education Department officials participated in this meeting.

13 members arrested for cyber crimes



8.5 crore transactions identified: District SP Rohit Raj***** Bhukya Ranjit Nayak, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 25, Indian Chronicle: District SP Rohit Raj revealed that 13 people have been arrested for cyber crimes. The police said that transactions worth about 78.5 crore were carried out in the last six months. Based on the complaints received by the District Cyber ??Security Bureau through the National Cyber ??Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP), the Tekulapally police and the District Cyber ??Crime Police jointly arrested 13 people from the Tekulapally Government Junior College on Saturday afternoon. According to the details revealed during the police investigation, a person named Boda Sridhar, who runs a Mee-Seva Kendra in Tekulapally, was introduced to the cybercriminals through the Telegram app. After being told that they would give a commission if they transferred money to others, Sridhar and 12 other youths from Tekulapally mandal became part of these crimes. They were found to be opening 60 current accounts with fake documents and transferring money from other people's bank accounts through their own accounts, earning commissions. Police said that 108 complaints have been received from across the country against their bank accounts. 12 cellphones and a bank passbook have been seized from the accused, and

a case has been registered. Details of the arrested accused* Boda Sridhar (27), Tekulapally* Boda Rajesh (25), Rampuram* Boda Rajanna (22), Tekulapally* Banoth Jagadish (27), Singhya Thanda* Tejavat Nareesh (25), Billudu Thanda* Polepogu Pawan Kalyan (27), Tekulapally* Bhukya Veeranna (26), Baddu Thanda* Jatoth Nareesh (24), Patha Thanda* Boda Jampanna (25), Tekulapally* Boda Rajaram (27), Rampuram Thanda* Bhukya Praveen (24), Baddu Thanda* Maloth Praveen (24), Maddirala Thanda* Urimala Bharat Krishna (27), TekulapallyThe arrested accused were produced before the judge and remanded. The police have been shifted. The senior officers have congratulated Tekulapalli CIB. Satyanarayana, SI A. Rajender, Cyber ??Crime CI S. Jitender, and the staff for their efforts in solving the case. Advice to the publicCurrently, cybercriminals are looting money from the accounts of innocent people in various ways. The police said that they are conducting awareness programs in all police stations in the district to create awareness among the people about these crimes. They warned that legal action will be taken if anyone directly or indirectly commits such crimes. If anyone loses money due to cybercrime, they should immediately call 1930 and complain, and if they do so, there will be a chance to get back the lost money.

Unit officials should take special care to ensure that the eligible tribals get welfare schemes: ITDA PO Rahul in Tribal Darbar****



*****Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, August 25, Indian Chronicle: ITDA PO Rahul said that unit officials should take special care to ensure that all eligible tribals get the welfare schemes provided by the government and ITDA. The PO received applications from tribals in the tribal Darbar held at the ITDA conference hall on Monday. He instructed the unit officials to take special initiative to provide government welfare schemes to the eligible tribals as soon as possible by resolving those within his jurisdiction on the spot and sending the remaining ones to the concerned officials. The petitions submitted by the tribals include land plots, personal and land issues, provision of seats in intermediate and fifth class in tribal gurukuls, permission to install boreholes through tribal development, permission to install boreholes,

electricity and motors through tricar, widow pensions, change of names of paddy fields, loans to set up grocery shops and fancy stores, chronic diseases, financial assistance for higher education, etc. The tribals have submitted petitions related to all the petitions submitted by the tribals, he said, adding that efforts will be made to ensure that all eligible tribals receive government welfare schemes in installments. APO David Raj, AO Sunnam Rambabu, Tribal Welfare DD Manemma, RCO Gurukulam Arunakumari, Tribal Welfare EE Harish, Deputy DMHY Saidulu, SV Bhaskar, Kondaredla Officer Raja Rao, APO Power Venu, Garden Officer Uday Kumar, Manager Adinarayana, HIO Langanayak, JDM Harikrishna, ICDS Supervisor Anasuya, and staff Mudiraj, Bhargavi, Mohan, Nageswara Rao, Swathi, and others participated in this program.

Bhadrachalam MRO office in dilapidated condition Mala Mahanadu demands sanction for new building.***



*****Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, August 25, Indian Chronicle: Mala Mahanadu has demanded that the Bhadrachalam Mandal Revenue Tashildhar office building, which was built 20 years ago during the British era, has fallen into dilapidated condition and a new building be constructed immediately. Speaking during a meeting of Mala Mahanadu's top leaders, District General Secretary Alladi Paul Raj urged the government on this issue. Paul Raj said that this ancient building, built of shells, has completely disintegrated and is in a state of collapse. He expressed his concern that important files in the office are getting wet due to rains and falling under the debris and getting damaged. He said that the employees are facing great difficulty in carrying out their activities, and the people are also afraid of when it will collapse. He warned that hundreds of people

come to the office every day for various needs, and their security is at risk. Mala Mahanadu demanded the construction of an integrated building in Bhadrachalam, the constituency center, so that all the government departments' offices can be located in one place. He asked the government to sanction 22 crore for this. Paul Raj made it clear that the struggle will continue until this demand is resolved. Degala Vamsi, Degala Shiva, Macharla Suresh, Satvik, Kanaka Raju, and others participated in this program.

Ganja hidden in secret chamber of car: Excise task force nabs two with 122 kg in Sangareddy

Sangareddy: Excise task force officials seized 122 kg of dry ganja and arrested two alleged peddlers near Cheriyal Gate on NH-65 in Kandi mandal on Monday.

The accused were identified as Abdul Wahab Sayyed (59) and Umakanth Sabhar (37). Officials said the duo was transporting the contraband from the Andhra-Odisha border to Beed district in Maharashtra using two separate cars.

Acting on a tip-off, the task force intercepted the vehicles and, on inspection, found packets of ganja concealed in secret chambers beneath the floor mats. One car carried 53.3 kg, while the other had 69.5 kg. According to officials, the accused were operating under the directions of a kingpin identified as Chacha, a native of Beed district. A manhunt has been launched to trace and arrest him.

Development Will Not Be Halted, Assures MLA Veerlapalli Shankar

“ “INDIAN CHRONICLE” “Shadnagar, August 25” “MLA Veerlapalli Shankar, during an inspection of development projects in Kothur Mandal, declared that no obstacles, even divine intervention, would halt the Congress government's commitment to progress in Telangana. He assured that all promised welfare schemes would reach the people, clearing misconceptions among the public and leaders.” “At the Kothur Mandal headquarters, accompanied by Municipal Councillor Veeramoni Hema Devender Mudiraj, Shankar reviewed the construction of Indiramma houses, engaging with beneficiaries and guaranteeing that every eligible individual would receive a house. He urged them to dismiss misinformation and report issues directly to him, earning gratitude from beneficiaries for the housing project's progress.” “Addressing infrastructure needs along the National Highway, Shankar highlighted the tragic loss of 35 husbands in Bandakunta



Tanda due to road accidents, noting the JP Darga Y-Junction's status as a dangerous black spot. “He recalled that the Kothur bypass was built during T. Balu's tenure as Union Minister, Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's time as Chief Minister, and his own stint as MLA, but technical issues prevented flyover construction then.” “The state government now plans to build four flyovers at Thimmapur Chowrasta, JP Darga Chowrasta, Kesampeta Road Chowrasta, and Burgula Chowrasta, with underpasses for all con-

nected villages to ensure connectivity. Shankar warned detractors that development would proceed relentlessly, emphasizing the government's focus on public safety and convenience.” “Describing Kothur Mandal as a “mini India” due to its industrial growth, he assured that flyovers and underpasses would be completed without delay, with instructions issued to officials. The inspection saw participation from Tahsildar Ravinder Reddy, Municipal Commissioner Balaji, Municipal Vice-Chairman Dolli Ravinder, senior

BRS leader Batuka Devender Yadav, Congress leaders Jeniga Jagan, Induri Srinivas, Kammari Janardhan, Janga Narsimha, Karrolla Surender, Enugu Janardhan Reddy, Chandra Pal Reddy, Jagan Goud, Kommu Krishna, Teegapur Anjaneyulu, Naveen Chari, Govind Naik, MMA Sattaiah, along with Kothur Mandal public representatives, Congress workers, and government officials, underscoring the government's dedication to inclusive development and welfare in the region.

Shadnagar Electricity Department Removes Unauthorized Cables from Power Poles to Enhance Safety

“ “INDIAN CHRONICLE” “SHADNAGAR, August 25” “In a significant move to enhance public safety, the Telangana Electricity Department has launched a drive to remove unauthorized cable and internet wires from electricity poles across Shadnagar town in Rangareddy district. The initiative, led by Divisional Engineer (DE) Shyam Sunder Reddy, follows strict directives from the state government and the Telangana High Court, which has issued a stern warning against the hazardous practice of attaching cables to power poles.” “DE Shyam Sunder Reddy informed that the removal of cables, internet wires, and related equipment from electricity poles in Shadnagar is being carried out as per instructions from higher authorities. The operation comes in the wake of recent electrical accidents across the state, including a tragic incident in Hyderabad's Ramanthapur, where a Sri Krishna Janmashtami procession turned fatal due to an electric shock, claiming five lives and leaving others critically injured. Authorities identified dangling cable wires on electricity poles as a key factor in the mishap, prompting the government to take decisive action.” “The Electricity Department has highlighted that unauthorized cables and internet wires not only pose a safety risk but also hinder their maintenance operations. Reddy noted that the haphazard installation of wires by cable and internet service providers has made it challenging for department staff to access poles for repairs, disrupting their own operations. The unchecked practice of wrapping wires around poles and abandoning them has led to widespread issues, necessitating urgent action.” “The Telangana High Court, addressing a petition filed by Airtel, strongly supported the government's decision to remove these cables. During the hearing, Justice Nagesh emotionally recalled the Ramanthapur tragedy, where a nine-year-old boy had to perform his father's last rites on his birthday due to an electrical accident caused by dangling wires. The court questioned the accountability of service providers, emphasizing that public safety cannot be compromised. The judge ruled that only cables with proper licensing from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) can be installed on electricity poles, reinforcing the need for stringent safety



measures.” “The cable removal drive, already underway in parts of Hyderabad, has now reached Shadnagar, causing concern among cable operators and internet service providers. The sudden disruption of services has led to a surge in customer complaints, prompting some providers to approach the High Court to challenge the government's decision. However, the court's firm stance underscores the priority of preventing further tragedies over commercial interests.

ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh provides financial assistance of Rs. 25,000 to a poor student.”



“ “Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, August 25, Indian Chronicle : Gundipudi Charmila, a poor student from Adarshnagar Colony, Bhadrachalam town, is studying in the second year of B.E.C.I.C. at Little Flowers Junior College in Bhadrachalam town. Despite her desire to study well, her financial situation has become difficult for her. For some time now, her parents have been facing financial difficulties due to poor health, which has made her studies difficult. Therefore, under the auspices of the Mother Teresa Charitable Trust, Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh provided Rs. 25,000/- to the poor student for her education. On this occasion, ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh congratulated the Trust administrators who came forward and provided financial assistance to the poor student who was in trouble. Also, addressing the poor student, ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh asked her to study hard with passion and be at a high level in the future. He said that the student will have a golden future with electricity. He asked her to study hard and fulfill her parents' aspiration of becoming a doctor. Also, he congratulated the owners of SLBT Paints, Setti Venu Raj and

VV Surya Teja, who provided financial assistance of Rs. 25,000 for the education of the poor student. Later, the Trust founder, Koppula Murali, said that when the poor student, who had a strong desire to study, was facing financial difficulties, the Mother Teresa Charitable Trust came to the notice of the school. Last year, the Mother Teresa Charitable Trust adopted the student and provided financial assistance of Rs. 25,000 for her first year of studies. In the first year, the student Charmila scored 415 out of 440 marks in the B.E.C. and showed excellent talent. When asked to provide financial assistance for the second year as well, they immediately responded and, with the support of SLBT Paints, provided Rs. 25,000 to the poor student for her second year of intermediate studies. He said that the Mother Teresa Charitable Trust will always support the student's education until her dream of becoming a doctor is fulfilled. The trust administrators expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Alagye S.L.B.T. Paints, who responded to the poor student's request for education and provided financial assistance. They urged the student to study well and achieve good grades.

Bhadradri Kothagudem Collector visits the Koju Pitta breeding unit, fish farming unit, and vegetable garden.



“Kukkadapu Naresh Kumar, Kothagudem constituency, August 25, Indian Chronicle: District Collector of Bhadradri Kothagudem Jitesh V. Patil on Monday visited the Pranaja Koju pitta breeding unit in Arunodaya Gram Samakhya of Durgambika Gram Sangam, which was selected as a pilot project in Seshagirinagar Gram Panchayat of Lakshmidivipalli Mandal. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector congratulated the women's groups for starting the

Koju pitta breeding unit for the first time in the district. He suggested that the members of the women's groups in each mandal should also raise Koju pitta and earn additional income through it. He said these can be sold every 40 days and are in high demand. Later, he inspected the fish farming unit and gave them several suggestions and advice. Later, he visited the Ravi Hybrid Seeds field in Sujathanagar mandal and inspected all types of vegetable gardens being cultivated by them. He called upon every woman farmer with at least 10 plots of land in the district to come forward to start vegetable cultivation.

For this, he instructed the officials to submit a detailed project report with details of the necessary infrastructure (GI wire, fence posts, polythene paper, seeds, fencing) at a low cost within two days. He suggested that 1000 women farmers in the district should be educated based on that project report. He suggested that vegetable cultivation, tunny cultivation, corramine fish farming and cowpea breeding should be undertaken and monitored under the auspices of women's associations in the Rythu Vedika in Lakshmidivipalli mandal as a pilot project. Later, the Collector congratulated Mrs. Mande Sravanthi, who is running a corramine fish unit in Nayakulagudem village of Sujathanagar mandal. It was suggested that additional income would be generated if vegetables and cowpeas were grown there. Trainee Collector Saurabh Sharma, Sujathanagar MPDO, MRO, Lakshmidivipalli MPDO, APY Farm, two Mandal APYs and CCs participated in this program.

Disney Land' students who won second and fourth places in the United Warangal District-level Chess Tournament...



“Warangal, August 25 (Indian Chronicle): “In the United Warangal District 3rd Ranking Chess Tournament held at TTD Kalyana Mandapam, Hanumakonda, Disney Land school students showcased outstanding talent. NIT Technical Principal N. Sudhakar congratulated the winners, Siddamsetti Kiran (9th class, District 2nd place) and

Dandigam Bhanu Prasanna (8th class, District 4th place), by presenting them with trophies and certificates. The school management members Dayyala Mallayya, Dayyala Sadayya, Balugu Lakshminivasam, Shobharani, Rakesh, and Dinesh also gave all the participating students and appreciated their coach Jeevan Raj.

FTCCI hosts global corporate summit on "Driving Resilience, Innovation & Global Collaboration"

Hyderabad, Aug.25 : Former secretary of ministry of external affairs Dr Ausaf Sayeed cautioned the industry sector saying that the "US reciprocal tariff regime" is being used as a political tool to pressure countries into negotiating for favourable deals. But India will not buckle down. While many countries continue to trade with Russia, India is being singled out. Our response must be to diversify and scout for new markets. We cannot put all our eggs in one basket. "Delivering the keynote address at the one-day "Global corporate summit" with the theme 'driving resilience, innovation and global collaboration', organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) at Red Hills here, Dr Ausaf Sayeed while expressing concern at the sector, observed that "Telangana is relatively safe since the Pharma sector is exempted from these tariffs. However, manpower-intensive sectors such as textiles, gems and jewellery would be adversely affected. The state government should immediately form a task group with trade bodies to devise strategies. I understand that Telangana's exports are about 90 billion dollars, of which

engineering goods and pharma contribute 39 and 31 percent, respectively." Welcoming the delegates, FTCCI president R. Ravi Kumar said that the success in today's interconnected world depends on "agility, foresight and innovation" in navigating trade, digital transformation and supply chain resilience. He reaffirmed FTCCI's role as a bridge between the industry, policymakers and global stakeholders.

The day-long summit featured high-powered sessions on the India-UK FTA, innovation and investment in emerging markets, AI-driven digital trade, and strategies for building resilient, sustainable supply chains. Eminent speakers included Siddharth Vishwanathan, Mubarrakka Lokhandwala, Ayub Shaikh, Kamal Jain and others. About 200 industry leaders from across the globe attended the summit. The summit featured high-powered sessions on: India - UK FTA: A new era of trade and investment; Innovation and Investment without borders; Digital trade and innovation: The AI Edge; and Resilient and sustainable supply chains.

Chairman and Principal have been summoned on August 28, 2025 for explanation.

In another case, the commission while taking note of non-compliance of its earlier order, summoned the Chairman and Principal of Sultan-ul-Uloom College of Pharmacy, Banjara Hills, for failing to return the certificates of 17 students. They must appear before the Commission at 11 am on August 28, 2025. The Commission reiterated that withholding the academic records denies the students educational and career opportunities, and warned that serious action will follow in cases of non-compliance.

Hyderabad, Aug.25 :The Telangana State Human Rights Commission (TGHRC), chaired by Justice Shameem Akther has issued strict directions in two cases relating to private colleges for withholding students' original certificates.

As for the case, the Commission directed the authorities of Gauthami degree college, Balanagar to immediately return a BBA graduate's certificate and to issue Transfer Certificate, and termed the act of withholding documents for pending scholarship reimbursement as violation of human rights and Article 21 of the Constitution. The college

CPM condemns party leaders' arrest

Hyderabad, Aug.25 On the occasion of the Anajpur land struggle, today, CPI(M) State Secretary John Wesley, Party District Secretary Pagadala Yadaya, District Secretariat Member E Narasimha, Rythu Sangham District Leader Bhaskar Reddy and the concerned farmers were illegally arrested by the police and taken to the Pahadisharif Police Station. The CPI(M) Telangana State Committee strongly condemned the arrest of the party leaders and termed it as a misdeed. It demanded the state government to immediately release the arrested, give patta passbooks to the affected farmers and implement all government schemes.

"In the year 1991, the then state government assigned 125 acres of ceiling land to 125 poor people in Anajpur's Revenue Survey Numbers 274, 275, 276, 277, 278 and 281 of Abdullapurmet Mandal of Rangareddy District and issued

certificates and land title passbooks. These farmers have been cultivating such lands since then till today. But the names of the farmers have not been registered in the Dharani portal online. The Dharani passbook has not been issued. Due to this, these farmers are facing serious problems due to the lack of Rythu Bharosa, Rythu Bhima, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi and bank loans," it said .

The party said that The affected farmers had met the District Collector, RDO and Tahsildar several times for the new passbooks but to no avail. "In this context, the CPI(M) Abdullapurmet Mandal Committee stood by the affected farmers. Today, along with CPI(M) State Secretary John Wesley, the party demanded that the state government should immediately intervene and provide justice to the affected farmers by stopping the police and illegally arresting them while they were going to the land.

BJP says "Not vote Chori, but it was Brain Chori of Rahul Gandhi by Telangana Congress leaders"

Hyderabad, Aug.25 Telangana BJP President N. Ramchander Rao dismissed TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud's allegations of "vote chori" by terming them as baseless, and instead described them as "Brain Chori of Rahul Gandhi by Telangana Congress leaders."

Speaking at a BJP booth-level meeting at Indur, Nizamabad yesterday, Rao said the Congress party had won the Assembly and eight MP seats with the same voter list and election machinery through which the BJP secured its victory in Telangana. He asserted that Telangana is on the verge of two major changes -political transformation and change of power in the state. The ruling Congress is treading the same path as the previous BRS government, by betraying the people and failing to meet their aspirations, he alleged and claimed that several Congress and BRS lead-

ers, including present and former MLAs, MLCs and MPs, are keen to join the BJP, which will soon trigger a political change. He appealed to the people to support BJP in the upcoming local body polls and that the party would capture power in 2028. Lashing out at the Congress-BRS nexus, Rao alleged that both parties struck secret deals to shield each other in the "Vote for Note" and "Phone Tapping" cases. The Congress government should hand over the Kaleshwaram project corruption and phone-tapping cases to the CBI to bring out facts before the people, he demanded.

On the issue of fertilizer shortage, Rao clarified that the Centre had supplied surplus Urea to Telangana and accused the state Congress leaders of creating artificial scarcity and indulging in black marketing, while trying to shift the blame onto the Modi government.

DEO ask parties to submit objections on polling station rationalization issue by Aug 26

Hyderabad, Aug.25 : The Hyderabad District Election Officer and GHMC Commissioner RV Karnan directed political parties to submit objections, if any, on the rationalization of polling stations in Jubilee Hills Assembly constituency by August 26. Karnan, at a special meeting with the representatives of national and state parties here on Monday, said that 408 polling stations have been proposed in 139 locations, compared to 320 stations in 132 locations earlier - an addition of 79 new polling stations. The rationalization report will be sent to the Election Commission by August 28. Booth Level Officers (BLOs) have been appointed for 329 stations, while officers for the new 79 sta-

tions will be notified shortly, he noted and urged the parties to immediately submit the list of their Booth Level Agents.

With regard to voter enrolment, Karnan said 19,237 applications were received from January 6 to August 15. Of these, 3,767 were rejected and 16 are pending. The said applications included 5,426 through Form 6, 3,453 through Form 7 and 10,358 through Form 8. The meeting was attended by LB Nagar Zonal Commissioner Hemant Keshav Patil, Additional Election Commissioner Mangatayaru, Jubilee Hills Deputy Commissioner Rajinikanth Reddy and local Tehsildars.

BC COMMISSION SEEKS EMPLOYEE DATA FROM DEPARTMENTS BY SEPT 15

Hyderabad, Aug.25 (NSS): The Telangana Backward Classes (BC) Commission on Monday directed all the Secretariat departments to furnish caste-wise details of government employees by September 15.

During an interaction with the Secretaries of various Secretariat departments here at Manjeera Hall, Haritha Plaza, BC commission chairman G Niranjana said the data was essential for reviewing the implementation of BC reservations and making recommendations for the social, educational and economic development of BCs. He pointed out that during the district visits by the commission members last year, members of smaller BC communities had complained that opportunities were being cornered by larger

communities. With some related issues pending before the Supreme Court, which has sought the Commission's opinion, the Chairman expressed dissatisfaction over the delay in receiving employee data despite repeated requests. Departments have now been told to submit the details annually by March 31. Member secretary Bala Maya Devi made a presentation on the meeting's purpose, while Commission members Rapolu Jayaprakash, Tirumalagiri Surender and Rangu Balalakshmi participated in the interactive session. Senior officials, including Special chief secretaries Ravi Gupta and Vikas Raj, Principal Secretary Shailaja Ramaier and several others attended the meeting and assured to extend full cooperation in the exercise taken up by the commission.

SCR GM PRESENTS "EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH" SAFETY AWARDS

Hyderabad, Aug.25 South Central Railway (SCR) General Manager Sanjay Kumar Srivastava today presented the "Employee of the Month" safety awards for July 2025 to eleven railway employees during a safety review meeting held at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad. The awards were given in recognition of devotion to their duty and alertness in preventing unsafe conditions. These awards would inspire others to maintain high safety standards in train operations, the GM noted while congratulating the awardees.

The awardees included two from Hyderabad Division, four from Guntur, four from Vijayawada and one from Guntakal Division, representing safety categories such as Loco Pilots, Points Woman, Gateman and Train Manager. Additional General Manager Satya Prakash, Principal

Heads of Departments and Divisional Railway Managers of all six divisions participated in the meeting. On this occasion, Sanjay Kumar reviewed safety protocols related to station redevelopment works under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, and directed the DRMs to enforce strict safety measures during monsoon and while handling heavy construction equipment. He emphasized vigilance at vulnerable Level Crossing gates, ordered the provision of voice loggers at NI gates, and stressed the need for effective use of track machines to ensure punctual and safe train operations. He further instructed officials to strengthen safety in parcel loading by adhering to norms, preventing booking of banned items, and ensuring special packaging for sensitive consignments.

How deployment of drone by sarpanch's friend helped locate, rescue 3 labourers stranded in river island amid heavy rains in Gujarat village

A team of fire personnel, a drone, and hope and prayers of scores of villagers: The rescue of three labourers stuck on a river island in Gujarat's Navsari took all this and more as the trio, who had spend over 17 hours without food and water, was brought to safety on Sunday afternoon. On Saturday evening, Sumitra Rathod (57), Gulaben Rathod (66) and Guddu Rathod (52), along with two other labourers, all residents of Aasana village in Jalalpore taluka of Navsari district, ventured out to cut wood and gather fodder for their cattle from the banks of Mindhola river. Sumitra, Gulaben and Guddu proceeded to a small island in the middle of the river and began cutting bushes when, due to heavy rainfall and inflow of water from the upper catchment area, the flow in the river increased all of a sudden. While the other two labourers, who were on the banks, managed to move to safety, Sumitra, Gulaben and Guddu were stuck. When the trio did not return home until late in the night, their families reached out to the other two labourers and learnt about their predicament. On Sunday morning, the family members of the three missing labourers approached the village sarpanch, Fuzel Patel, who informed the Maroli police about the incident. The village talati as well as Mamlatdar officials (key administrative posts in Gujarat) also reached the spot. Around 2pm, fire department officials went into the river

on a boat and brought back the three labourers while their family members and other villagers, who were closely watching the entire operation, erupted in celebrations. Talking to The Indian Express, Sumitra said, "We had gone to cut wooden logs and bushes on the banks when we spotted the island where there were green bushes. We went there and started cutting them. Suddenly, the water gushed in and engulfed us from all sides... We were hungry and thirsty throughout the night and until the afternoon. All that we could do was to pray to God to save us." She said, "None of us slept the entire night as we feared that the water would enter the island and we would be swept away. We also experienced a dip in temperature due to the rainfall and kept shivering all through the night with nothing but our courage by our side. On Sunday morning, we spotted a drone in the sky and heaved a sigh of relief that help was near." The deployment of the drone to locate the stranded labourers was the brainchild of village sarpanch Patel. "We reached the banks of the river but could not find them. Since the river is very long, I called up my friend Arshad Bham, a resident of the neighbouring village, as he had a drone. He arrived at the spot and we flew the drone that spotted the labourers. The fire department then turned up with a rescue boat, and they went into the river,"

Gurgaon civic body engages gunmen to curb illegal waste dumping, ‘no laxity will be tolerated’, says MCG Commissioner



GNS News Agency, August 25

The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) has deployed gunmen, clerks, helpers, and special police officers across its four zones to monitor and prevent illegal dumping of construction and demolition (C&D) waste and garbage. The MCG issued an order on Friday to station these personnel round the clock in eight-hour shifts.

“They will ensure that no dumping of C&D waste and garbage is done by illegal/private vehicles. All the expert gunmen shall upload geo-tagged photos and videos of unloading vehicles on the WhatsApp group while on duty. They will coordinate with police to impound confiscated vehicles and ensure further legal action,” the order stated. The order was part of the municipal corporation’s month-long campaign launched on Friday to address the problems of construction and demolition waste, stray cattle, and garbage vulnerable points (GVPs) across the city. MCG Commissioner Pradeep Dahiya, in a meeting held on Friday, emphasised the goal of making Gurgaon clean, safe, and organised. “No laxity or obstruction will be tolerated. Teams have been directed to achieve all targets within the stipulated time,” he said.

The civic body also warned of strict legal action, including vehicle seizures, registration of cases, and fines against those obstructing the drive or flouting regulations, a spokesperson said. The large-scale operation will seek to

clear C&D waste from areas such as Faridabad-Gurgaon Road, Sector-29, Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), and the auto market. Teams have been instructed to ensure no construction debris accumulates and to dispose of it in a time-bound manner. To tackle the stray cattle issue, the MCG has set a target of capturing at least 100 animals daily over the next month, with full support from the police department. Dairy operators and cattle owners have been directed to keep their animals off public spaces, with non-compliance leading to stringent legal action. To eliminate Garbage Vulnerable Points (GVPs) across the city’s roads and public spaces, alongside cleaning these points, action will be taken against individuals dumping waste at these locations.

The MCG, in its public notice issued on Friday, prohibited illegal dumping of waste in the city, enforcing strict penalties under environmental laws. Any person, bulk waste generator, agency, contractor, or vehicle operator found dumping waste at non-designated places within the MCG’s jurisdiction will be liable for prosecution, it stated.

The punishment includes a ₹1 lakh fine per violation (recoverable as per Section 15 of the Environment Protection Act), imprisonment up to five years, and additional fines and environmental compensation as determined by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), vehicle seizure/black-listing, and a bar from carrying out waste handling, transport, or disposal activities.

The notice mandates all bulk waste generators, RWAs, and institutions like hospitals, malls, schools, hotels, and business establishments to ensure strict compliance with waste segregation and disposal only through authorised channels. Bulk waste generators are mandatorily required to process their waste at source or hand it over to authorised collectors, with enforcement beginning Saturday. On July 28, MCG launched an intensive cleanliness drive spanning 36 wards. The drive targeted primary garbage dumping points, secondary collection points, roads, lanes, green belts, and public spaces across the city.

More trouble for NCP (SP) leader Eknath Khadse’s son-in-law, Pune police book him for taking nude videos of woman

GNS News Agency, August 25

More trouble for NCP (SP) leader Eknath Khadse’s son-in-law, Pune police book him for taking nude videos of woman. The police lodged a fresh FIR against Khewalkar at the cyber police station under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Section 77 (voyeurism) and provisions of the Information Technology Act. The Pune city police Friday booked Dr Pranjal Khewalkar, the son-in-law of former Maharashtra minister and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) leader Eknath Khadse, for allegedly taking nude videos and photographs of a woman in his cell phone without her consent.

Khewalkar, the husband of Khadse’s daughter Rohini Khadse, the NCP (SP)’s women’s wing chief, has been in jail after he was arrested along with four men and two women following a raid on July 27 on a flat in the Kharadi area where the police claimed a “rave party” was underway. A police press release on Friday said the woman filed a complaint with the cyber police station that Khewalkar, between 2022 and 2025, allegedly took her nude photographs and videos at different locations without her consent and with the purpose of misusing them in the future.

The police lodged a fresh FIR against Khewalkar at the cyber police station under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Section 77 (voyeurism) and provisions of the Information Technology Act. During the alleged rave party, the police claimed to have recovered 2.7 grams of substance suspected to be cocaine, 70 grams of substance suspected to be marijuana and other items, including ten cell phones, two cars, a hookah pot, liquor and beer bottles, all worth ₹s



41,35,400, from the spot. The FIR in that case was lodged against the accused at the Kharadi police station under sections of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (COTPA). Khewalkar’s lawyer then alleged that the police planted the contraband seized in this case for “political” reasons and that drugs were recovered from his possession. The police said analysis of Khewalkar’s mobile phone and laptop revealed multiple videos of his alleged obscene and objectionable acts with women during and after the parties. Rupali Chakankar, the chairperson of Maharashtra Women’s Commission, wrote a letter to the Pune police to investigate the matter thoroughly. Khadse accused the Pune police of defaming his family by leaking private photos through a conspiracy after arresting his son-in-law.

From pigeons to dogs and cows: how animals have sparked unrest in Mumbai

GNS News Agency, August 25

In recent days, pigeons have emerged as unexpected players in Maharashtra’s political discourse, triggering controversy that has pitted sections of the Jain and Marathi communities against each other. What began as a dispute over bird feeding has escalated into a flashpoint, drawing in leaders across the political spectrum and heating up the state’s polity. However, this isn’t the first time animals have catalysed socio-political turmoil in Mumbai. From pigeons to dogs to cows, animal-related issues have a long and often overlooked history of inciting public unrest and communal agitation in the city. In June 1832, Bombay, as the city was known then, witnessed one of its earliest recorded civil disturbances, sparked not by taxation or colonial policy, but by a dog-culling drive. The British colonial government had enacted a law in 1813 authorising the culling of stray, ownerless dogs between April 15 and May 15, and September 15 and October 15. However, in 1832, the government extended the culling period until June 15, citing a surge in stray dog numbers. “The diligence with which the cull was effected in 1832 excited attention. Special police dog-killers were paid the sum of eight annas for dispatching each dog. The dogs were either taken away and killed, or killed in the street and left as garbage...” Many of the dogs captured, however, were neither dangerous nor loose, but snatched from private enclosures,” Jesse S Palsetta writes in her paper Mad Dogs and Parsis: The Bombay Dog Riots of 1832. This aggressive enforcement coincided with a Parsi holy day and the Islamic month of Muharram. The Parsis, who regard dogs as sacred, were outraged by the indiscriminate killing. The payment incentive led to abuse, with dogs being seized even from private homes and sacred spaces. On June 6, violence broke out in Bombay’s Fort area. “In consequence of a Government order for the destruction of pariah-dogs... Two European constables, stimulated by the reward of eight annas for every dog destroyed, were killing one in the proximity of a house, when they were attacked and severely handled by a mob composed of Parsis and Hindus of several sects,” S M Edwards writes in The Bombay City Police: A Historical Sketch. Following this, shops shut down in protest and crowds gathered at the police station, demanding an end to the killings. Tensions escalated the next day. On June 7, as a citywide strike was enforced, shops and markets shut, Fort access was blocked, and the public harassed British officials. Supply lines to Brit-



ish garrisons were disrupted; carriages carrying British elites, including the Chief Justice, were attacked, and even water supplies were obstructed. By midday, a crowd of 5,000 people assembled near the Fort’s Central Police Station, forcing the British administration to read the Riot Act and deploy British troops to quell the trouble. The protest was forcibly dispersed, and several arrests followed. While casualties were limited, the political significance of the unrest was immense. The Parsi-led protest, backed by Hindu Varnias, Jains, and Ismaili Muslims, showcased the economic leverage of Bombay’s trading communities, who managed to paralyse the city’s supply chains and challenge colonial authority. Cows and communal flashpoints Over 60 years later, it was the issue of cow protection that pushed Bombay to the brink of communal violence in 1893. In the years leading up to the unrest, anti-cow slaughter sentiment was steadily building. The Bombay Gaurakshak Sabha had been actively organising rallies and disseminating pamphlets highlighting the sanctity of cows. R H Vincent, Bombay’s then police commissioner, said, “A large number of pictures and pamphlets showcasing the sanctity of the cow and the ills of cow slaughter were distributed in Bombay.” Public mobilisations became increasingly visible. In 1891, cows were paraded through city streets in processions. Protests even erupted over incidents where cows accidentally fell into roadside ditches and died, underscoring the heightened religious sensitivity surrounding bovine deaths. These tensions culminated in communal riots that broke out on August 11, 1893.

Why everyone — from Salman Khan to Azim Premji — stops by Worli’s iconic 80-year-old City Bakery



GNS News Agency, August 25

Businessman and philanthropist Azim Premji may be based in Bengaluru, but the former Wipro chairman makes a special pit stop whenever he visits Mumbai. On his way from the airport to his residence, he stops at the iconic City Bakery on Annie Besant Road in Worli, steps out of the car, and picks up fluffy pavs and jeera butter for himself — a ritual that, as we learn from the third generation running the bakery, has been going on for decades. Spend just ten minutes outside the bakery, and you’ll see a wide range of customers making quick dashes, some stocking up on daily essentials like bread, pav, and biscuits, others indulging in their beloved buttercream pastries.

The bakery, which boasts a now-defunct but iconic chimney with City Bakery boldly painted in red, was established in 1945 as a ‘pav bakery’ by an Iranian gentleman, Haji Mohammad Jarrahiam, a man of sharp business acumen who came to Bombay during World War II.

“Back then, every cross-section of the city had at least four Irani restaurants because Hindus considered the corner shops inauspicious and avoided setting up shop there. It was also common for one person to have small stakes in multiple restaurants, similar to owning shares in different companies,” shared Jafar Dashti, 60, who, along with his younger brother Mehdi, 53, represents the third generation custodian of the bakery. “My maternal grandfather was a visionary. Although very small, he had stakes in as many as 78 restaurants in the city. He built significant wealth through this model.” City bakery Jafar Dashti, 60, along with his younger brother Mehdi, 53, represents the third generation custodian of the bakery. But there was a supply issue — all those restaurants needed pav, and Jarrahiam was struggling with suppliers. “When he found a vacant plot (the current premises on Annie Besant Road), he and two Parsi bawas decided to set up their own bhatti and make their own pav. He had enough restaurants of his own that even without external customers, the bakery could do well,” Jafar

said.

Parallely, Jafar’s father — a young Habib Dashti — arrived in Bombay by train during Partition. “He did multiple odd jobs, including cleaning at restaurants, eventually made a name for himself, and earned some wealth using the same model of owning small stakes in multiple restaurants. It wasn’t as much as my grandfather’s, but it was still significant. When he proposed to marry my mother, my grandfather accepted,” said Jafar. He added that his grandfather also made another proposal: Sell all those small restaurant stakes and buy out the two Parsi partners in the bakery. Habib agreed and became a partner in City Bakery in the 1960s. From there, the bakery began to grow. The 1970s saw the addition of biscuits, and cakes followed in the 1980s, and the rest gradually expanded. Today, they sell around 95 items across categories like biscuits, breads, snacks, pastries, birthday cakes, tea cakes, all made in two shifts: one overnight for the morning batch and one through the day for the evening crowd. Among the most sold items are Chocolate Chip Cake (Rs 330 for 500 gm), Jam Shrewsberry (Rs 460/kg), Chocolate Eclair (Rs 70 per piece), and Palmier Biscuit (Rs 540/kg).

Although the original wood-fired ovens have long been replaced with PNG-run ones, the tall chimney still stands. “It’s free advertising,” Jafar laughed. “Whenever someone asks where exactly we are in Worli, we just tell them to look up!” City bakery worli The 1970s saw the addition of biscuits, and cakes followed in the 1980s, and the rest gradually expanded. The latest addition? Sourdough bread. “We’ve started making it recently,” said Jafar, who, along with Mehdi, began learning the ropes at the bakery during summer vacations as children. Today, City Bakery, which opens at 5 am and shuts by 10 pm, serves a wide range of customers: the common man who values both price and quality, office goers who stop by for a post-lunch treat or a quick sandwich before catching their train, and commercial clients — including caterers, restaurants, and hotels like Ginger Hotel and Thane’s Cafe Irani. “To be honest, everyone comes here. There are many people who park their cars and send their drivers to pick up an order. But our biggest customer base is still the grassroots. They’re the ones who suggested we stop giving plastic bags to keep costs low. They bring their own,” Jafar said with quiet pride. When we pushed him for an anecdote, he hesitantly shared one about Salman Khan and their coconut cookies. “It was right after Covid-19. Lockdown was being lifted, but we hadn’t resumed operations yet when we got a request for coconut cookies. We said, ‘Sorry, we’re not open.’ His team replied, ‘Bhai ko khaana hai (Bhai really wants to eat them). What’s the minimum order to make it happen?’ They placed an order for 5 kg of cookies,” Jafar chuckled as he signed off.

Court rejects clean chit to Kerala IPS officer: ‘Political executive has no role in inquiry’

GNS News Agency, August 25

Kerala IPS officer wealth assessment complaint, Kerala IPS officer wealth assessment case, wealth assessment case, Pinarayi Vijayan, Indian express news, current affairs There has been an apparent attempt to overcome the statutory provisions. Vigilance Manual and the Supreme Court’s judgments in the probe against the ADGP, the court said. Rejecting a vigilance report giving clean chit to a senior IPS officer M R Ajith Kumar in an alleged wealth assessment complaint, the vigilance court here has observed that “the political executive does not have a role in the enquiry initiated against an officer”.

The enquiry commissioner and special judge (vigilance) A Manoj said Thursday that the documents produced before the court would establish a prima facie case, which is fit to proceed further. The court decided to examine the complainant advocate P Nagaraj and others in the case before “taking cognisance of the anti-corruption charge”. The litigant had approached the vigilance court seeking that a case be registered against the ADGP under prevention of corruption act after the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) failed to act upon his petition. Known as a confidant of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, ADGP Kumar is now serving as excise commissioner. While defending the clean chit given to the ADGP, the vigilance bureau informed the court that the probe was complete and that the home department had accepted a report from the vigilance director stating that “it is also informed that the above decision has the approval of the chief minister”.

Referring to this point, the court said: “The question is: what is the role of the so-called constitutional dignitaries in the enquiry initiated against the high-ranking police officer? It is a fact that the vigilance department falls under the control of the Chief Minister of the State; it is solely for governance and nothing more. The political executive does not have a role in the enquiry initiated against an officer”. Facts of the case suggest that “there is an invisible penetration by



someone into the inquiry that leads to the preparation of a report favourable to the suspected officer, who holds a high position in the police department”, the court said. “The enquiry report is a subservient report prepared for those who need reports like the present one. This court cannot believe that the officers of the vigilance department and the super-power authority controlling them are unknown to the Lalithkumari case principle (police to register FIR upon information about a cognizable offence),” the court said. There has been an apparent attempt to overcome the statutory provisions, Vigilance Manual and the Supreme Court’s judgments in the probe against the ADGP, the court said. “Upon reading the entire report, it becomes clear that the facts collected were based on the statement provided by the suspected officer (ADGP).” Last year, the government had removed Kumar as ADGP law and order over his lapses in the conduct of Thrissur Pooram Festival in 2024 before the Lok Sabha election. Both Congress and Left Democratic Front ally Communist Party of India have alleged that Kumar’s meeting with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader Dattatreya Hosabale was part of a conspiracy that led to the “deliberate botching” of the festival.

Veto power for parents, accountability: Education Minister allays concerns over Bill to regulate school fee in Delhi

GNS News Agency, August 25

Days after the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Bill, 2025, was passed in the Delhi Assembly, Education Minister Ashish Sood on Friday allayed concerns among parents while maintaining that the Bill will put an “end to arbitrary practices” of private schools. Addressing a Town Hall event in Janakpuri, he said, “This Bill will put an end to arbitrary practices of private schools and ensure transparency in fee fixation, active participation of parents, and give them the veto power on hikes.”

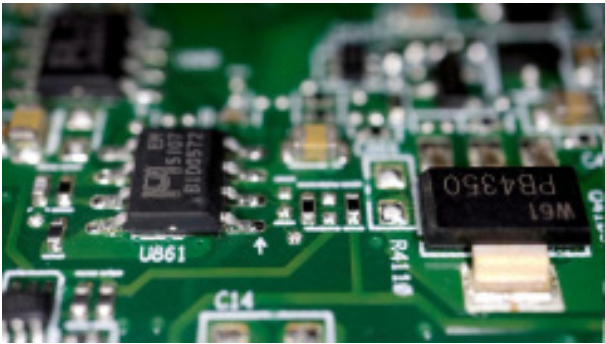
Calling it a “historic Bill”, Sood said the reform will safeguard 18 lakh parents, “restoring their trust, transparency and giving them greater control”. He also assured parents that their queries would be answered and that they would have a fair say in matters concerning their children’s education. According to a statement issued by Sood’s office, around 200 parents from Janakpuri participated in the event and “shared several important suggestions with the Minister and requested him to address their concern”. Ever since the Bill was proposed earlier this year, several protests have been held by groups of parents who have said that they were not included in discussions on the matter. The Bill, which has now been sent to Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena for his nod, seeks to bring both recognised and unrecognised private schools under a uniform oversight mechanism for regulating fees. The change, Sood said, is meant to correct a “loophole in the 1973 law”, under which only 300 of Delhi’s 1,700 private schools were covered.

He told parents, “If any school increases fees without

the government approval, it will face a fine ranging from ₹1 lakh to ₹10 lakh, and in case of failure to refund excess charges, double the penalty will be imposed.

The statement underlined that the Directorate of Education will be given “powers similar to that of an SDM to ensure uniform action against all schools”. At the event, plain sheets of paper were passed around to collect feedback. “One of the main concerns is the election of Parent Teacher Association members at the school level... to make sure that matters like fee hike will be taken up after giving due importance to the opinion of parents,” said Divya Matthey, a parent. The Bill lays out a three-tier fee regulation framework — the School Level Fee Regulation Committee, the District Fee Appellate Committee, and a Review Committee. At the school level, the committee will be chaired by a nominee of the management, including the principal as secretary, five parents drawn by lots from the PTA, three teachers, and a nominee from the Directorate of Education as an observer. At least two members must be women and one from a Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, or socially backward class. The committee must meet before August 15 each year to unanimously approve the school’s proposed fee for the upcoming academic year, with revisions allowed only once every three years. The official statement noted that the new process sets specific timelines “committee decision by 15 July, district-level decision by 30 July, and final decision by September.” If no decision is made within 45 days, the matter will be referred to the appellate committee.

Jairam Ramesh slams Modi govt over semiconductor project shift from Tamil Nadu to Gujarat



GNS News Agency, August 25

The Congress on Thursday (August 14, 2025) accused the Modi government of being "biased" against Opposition-ruled States in allocating semiconductor manufacturing projects. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh pointed out that the Modi government has green signalled four semi-conductor manufacturing projects in the country. "After doing detailed home work, a leading private company had submitted its application for a project in Telangana. This was approved on the condition that it relocates to Andhra Pradesh," he said on X. The Modi Govt has just green signalled 4 semiconductor manufacturing projects in the country. After doing detailed

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to return to India after ISS mission and US rehabilitation



GNS News Agency, August 25

New Delhi: After weeks of rehabilitation in the US, post his successful space mission, Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla on Saturday announced his return journey to India. He is expected to reach the country tomorrow. Taking to social media platform Instagram, Shukla shared an emotional post reminiscing about his journey and the excitement of meeting with friends and family. "As I sit on the plane to come back to India, I have a mix of emotions running through my heart. I feel sad leaving a fantastic group of people behind who were my friends and family for the past one year during this mission," Shukla wrote. "I am also excited about meeting all my friends, family, and everyone in the country for the first time post mission. I guess this is what life is – everything all at once," he added.

In June, Shukla became the first Indian to reach the International Space Station (ISS). He returned on July 15, after an 18-day mission, which was packed with several experiments led by ISRO and other activities on the orbital

‘Getting Rs 1,000 per day, safer place’: After Odisha detention, why Bengal migrant worker has moved to Tamil Nadu

GNS News Agency, August 25

Odisha migrant detention case, West Bengal migrant labour issue, Sainur Islam detention Odisha, It was on July 1 that Sainur and more than 400 migrants from Bengal were picked up by the Balikuda police in Odisha's Jagdishpur district as part of a drive to identify and deport illegal Bangladeshis. Detained in Odisha last month along with more than 400 others on suspicion of being illegal Bangladeshis, Sainur Islam, 34, became a talking point in the West Bengal migrant issue after his family moved the Calcutta High Court over the matter. Weeks later, however, Sainur left his home state and moved to Tamil Nadu.

"I heard that in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, there is no harassment of Bengali-speaking migrants. It is safe for us, unlike in Odisha, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and others," Sainur, who arrived in Chennai on July 28, said, speaking over the phone to The Indian Express. A resident of Hariharpara in Murshidabad district, he is currently working in Ayapakkam in Tamil Nadu's Thiruvallur district. It was on July 1 that Sainur and more than 400 migrants from Bengal were picked up by the Balikuda police in Odisha's Jagdishpur district as part of a drive to identify and deport illegal Bangladeshis.

The incident sparked a controversy in West Bengal, with Trinamool Congress MPs like Mahua Moitra and Samirul Islam highlighting the matter and threatening to go to court. While Sainur was released four days later, his father filed a habeas corpus petition at the Calcutta High Court with the help of the West Bengal Migrant Labour Welfare Board. The case is ongoing, and the high court has summoned the Odisha advocate general. "I returned home, but I could not find any jobs. I have been working in Odisha for the last 20 years as a construction worker," Sainur said. "I called up contractors and sought a job opportunity. I cannot sit idle at home. I stay with my wife and 14-year-old son, who is in Class 7. He gets private tuitions. I have to take care of my mother and father," he added. Saying that he had a pending loan of Rs 1 lakh, Sainur said, "Nine months (of EMI) is due. So when I got an offer of Rs 1,000 a day in Tamil Nadu, I accepted it. In Odisha, I got paid Rs 700."

Sainur's advocate Shabnam Sultana said the Calcutta High Court has directed the advocate general of Odisha to appear physically in court on August 29, when the next hearing will take place. "Our stand is that through the detention, the man's fundamental right has been violated. There has been a breach of legal process, since they were not produced to a local court within the stipulated time. They were detained for four days," Sultana said. Saying that Sainur was free to work anywhere, Sultana added, "Now the illegal de-

home work, a leading private company had submitted its application for a project in Telangana. This was approved on the condition that it relocates to Andhra...

"Much earlier similar transfer of locations were forced through. Two semiconductor manufacturing projects were compelled to shift their proposed location from Telangana to Gujarat. Similarly, another factory planned for Tamil Nadu got approval on the condition that it shifts to Gujarat," Mr. Ramesh claimed. "Need anything more be said? The PM speaks of competition among states that will make India strong. But if the umpire is so blatantly biased, the competition becomes a farce," the Congress leader said. His remarks come days after the Union Cabinet approved four semiconductor plants, including a unit backed by US technology major Intel and Lockheed Martin, entailing a total investment of Rs 4,594 crore in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. Speaking about the new semiconductor projects approved by the Cabinet, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had said two major projects will be set up in Odisha and one each in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. "Cabinet has approved four semiconductor plants that will be set up in Odisha, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh," Vaishnaw said. The Minister said Chief Ministers of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh spoke to him after the cabinet nod for the project and shared that the construction of plants will be started at the earliest. All these plants will be operational in 2-3 years, Mr. Vaishnaw had said.

lab. Since then, he has been undergoing rehabilitation in the US. Shukla stated that he is waiting impatiently to reach the country and share his experiences, which are going to be valuable for India's future space endeavours, especially the Gaganyaan – India's first human spaceflight mission, which is targeting a launch by 2027. "Having received incredible love and support from everyone during and after the mission, I can't wait to come back to India to share my experiences with all of you," Shukla said.

Looking back at his colleagues, Shukla noted that although "goodbyes are hard", "we need to keep moving in life". He also shared valuable advice from his commander, NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson: "The only constant in spaceflight is change". Stating that he "believes that it applies to life as well," Shukla shared a song from the Bollywood movie Swades, "at the end of the day Yun hi chala chal rahi – jeevan gaadi hai samay pahiya (loosely translated as just keep walking, traveller – life is a carriage, time is the wheel)". Meanwhile, his family also expressed excitement over meeting him after his successful space mission. "I am very excited. My son has successfully completed his mission and has come back. We are very excited that my son is coming back. We are trying to meet him as soon as possible. He is coming the day after tomorrow, and we will meet him in Delhi," Shukla's father, Shambhu Dayal Shukla, told IANS. Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Thursday said that the IAF Group Captain will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi before traveling to his hometown of Lucknow to see his family. Earlier on Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the mission, saying that Shukla has inspired a billion dreams and taken a significant step in advancing India's space ambitions. "IAF Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is back from the International Space Station (ISS). Soon he will return to India. We are working on becoming self-reliant in the space sector, preparing for the launch of Gaganyaan, which is India's flagship human spaceflight programme. We will make our own space station," the Prime Minister said, in his Independence Day address.



tention and compensation part will be heard in court. "It is only natural that a migrant will move out for better pay. Apart from the fact that there is no proper job for them here to match the standard they used to live, the state government is yet to announce any scheme for work and rehabilitation to those who have returned or are returning from other states," Arnab Pal, the convenor of the Paschim Banga Parijayi Samik Aikya Manch (Joint Platform of West Bengal Migrant Labourers), said.

Kerala man buried by mistake after body swap at palliative care centre

Kochi: In a shocking incident, two bodies kept at a palliative care centre in Palluruthy in Kochi were mistakenly interchanged, leading to the wrong burial of one man and forcing an exhumation under police supervision.

The confusion involved the bodies of Antony, a native of Kumbalangi, and Peter, a resident of Palluruthy, both in Kochi city. Antony's body had been kept in cold storage at the palliative care centre as his relatives living abroad could not reach home immediately. Peter's body was also kept alongside, according to a local media report. On Thursday, Peter's relatives collected what they believed to be his body and conducted funeral rites at a nearby church. Since the last rites were held directly at the church and not at his residence due to a lack of proper facilities and space, there was no public viewing of the body. The error came to light only the following day, when Antony's family members, who had returned from abroad, arrived to claim his remains.

Want GST 2.0 to be Good and Simple Tax not Growth Suppressing Tax: Congress



GNS News Agency, August 25

Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said that for well over a year and a half at least, the party has been calling for a radically transformed GST 2.0. Noting that a transformed GST 2.0 was a key pledge in the Congress manifesto for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Ramesh on Friday (August 15, 2025) said the Prime Minister seems to have finally woken up to the fact that economic growth will simply not accelerate unless this transformation takes place and increases private consumption and private investment. "Over the last seven years, the spirit of GST has been vitiated by an increased number of rates and the granting of multiple exemptions. The structure also seems to have facilitated evasion. There must be a drastic reduction in the number of rates," he said in a statement. The Congress leader said simplification of the rate structure is essential, but must be done in a manner that minimises revenue uncertainty to states and also eliminates the classification disputes that have become so common.

"The GST compensation cess expires on March 31, 2026. This must be extended to offset any revenue uncertainty from the rationalisation of the rate structure." Mr.

Sonia Gandhi has been India's daughter-in-law for 59 years, how long would BJP leaders continue malicious attacks? asks Jagga Reddy

Senior Congress leader and three-time MLA, T. Jagga Reddy, reminded the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders that Sonia Gandhi had become a daughter-in-law of this country 59 years ago, and wondered how many years the BJP leaders would continue malicious attacks on her. Speaking to reporters in Hyderabad on Friday (August 15, 2025), he accused the BJP of deliberately slinging mud at the Gandhi family, ignoring the sacrifices they made. "BJP leaders have no role in the freedom movement, yet they criticise a family that was a key player in leading the freedom struggle. If you ask the parents of PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, even they would acknowledge the greatness of the Gandhi family," Mr. Reddy said.

He ridiculed the BJP leaders for questioning the Gandhi family's heritage and spreading falsehood. "Rahul Gandhi belongs to a Kashmiri Brahmin family and Sonia Gandhi has been accepted by the people of India as one of their own 59 years ago" he said. "Sonia Gandhi respects the traditions of this country. After Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, she lived a reclusive life for seven years and only entered politics when the people wanted her to. She did not take up the Prime Minister position despite huge support and that is sacrifice, which the BJP would never understand," he said. Even Rahul Gandhi also declined the [Prime Minister] post and instead supported Dr. Manmohan Singh. "Tell me, would BJP leaders ever make such sacrifices?" he asked. Alleging that 'vote theft' was a reality and the BJP had been committing irregularities in the electoral rolls, he

Ramesh said the widespread concerns of MSMEs — the major employment generators in the economy — must be addressed meaningfully, he said, adding that apart from major procedural changes in GST, this will involve further increasing the thresholds that must apply to interstate supplies as well. Sectoral issues that have surfaced, for instance, in textiles, tourism, exporters, handicrafts and agricultural inputs, must be tackled, he said. In addition, States should be incentivised to move towards the introduction of State-level GST to cover electricity, alcohol, petroleum, and real estate as well, the Congress leader opined. "The Indian National Congress demands an official discussion paper on GST 2.0 very soon so that there can be an informed and wider debate on this vital and pressing national issue." GST 2.0 should be truly a Good and Simple Tax (GST) in letter, spirit, and compliance, not like the Growth Suppressing Tax (GST) it has become, "

Mr. Ramesh said. Soon after the Prime Minister's announcement from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 79th Independence Day, the Union Finance Ministry said it has proposed that most goods and services be taxed in two slabs — standard and merit — and a select few items be charged special rates. This is to replace the current goods and services tax (GST) structure, where sale of goods and rendering of services are taxed in four different brackets — 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% — with luxury and sin goods attracting a levy on top of the highest rate of 28 per cent. "This Diwali, I am going to make it a double Diwali for you," Modi had said in his address to the nation. Stating that over the past eight years, his government has undertaken major GST reforms, the prime minister said, "We have discussed with states and we are bringing next-generation GST reforms that will reduce the tax burden across the country." "Tax on items for the common man will be reduced substantially. Our MSMEs will benefit hugely. Daily use items will become cheaper, which will also strengthen our economy," he had said.



charged, "Houses where only two people live show over a hundred voters. The Election Commission has become a puppet in the BJP's hands." He dismissed the BJP's current leadership as lacking the values of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani.

Congress asks ECI to nullify 2024 Lok Sabha election citing BJP MP Anurag Thakur's allegation of fraudulent voting

GNS News Agency, August 25

The 2024 General Election should be nullified since the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Anurag Thakur had also claimed there was fraudulent voting in six Lok Sabha constituencies, the Congress demanded on Thursday (August 14, 2025) mounting a fresh offensive against the Election Commission of India (ECI) over alleged electoral malpractices. On Wednesday (August 13, 2025), Mr. Thakur had listed constituencies, including Rae Bareilly, Kannauj, Wayanad, and Diamond Harbour, where fake voters were allegedly present in large numbers. Addressing a press conference at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) office, party spokesperson and chairperson of the Congress's media and publicity department Pawan Khera claimed Mr. Thakur's press conference "validated, with evidence, what Rahul Gandhi had said a week ago". "Yesterday's press conference [by Mr. Thakur] proved that the last General Election was held on fake votes. Shouldn't that election be cancelled?" Mr. Khera said.

He demanded the ECI and Mr. Thakur also make public the electronic voter list data of Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency. "We know the Prime Minister does not deserve to be where he is as, based on fake votes, he barely managed to win the Varanasi seat in 2024. He was trailing for half a day but then got a booster dose of fake votes," Mr. Khera alleged. Alleging collusion between



the BJP and the ECI, he said that while the Congress had taken six months to collate the data of just one Assembly segment out of seven under one Lok Sabha seat, the BJP leader had "managed to get machine-readable electronic data of entire six parliamentary constituencies within six days". Why had no letter or notice been sent by the ECI to Mr. Thakur, Mr. Khera asked, since the poll panel had done so with Mr. Gandhi while the latter was still holding his press conference. "The slogan, vote chor, gaddi chhor (vote thief, vacate the seat) is reverberating in the entire country, and has become a mass movement now," Mr. Khera said.

Mahatma Gandhi made a mistake by making Nehru the PM, says Uddhav Thackeray

Congress or Mahatma Gandhi made a mistake by making Jawaharlal Nehru the Prime Minister of the country, Shiv Sena UBT leader Uddhav Thackeray said here on Thursday. "Had Vallabhbhai Patel been the Prime Minister, RSS would not have come up. The ban on the organisation would have continued," he added. Mr. Thackeray was speaking at the State-wide agitation of opposition parties and civil rights groups against the Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill. NCP SP president Sharad Pawar, MP Supriya Sule, Maharashtra Congress president Harshawardhan Sapkal were among the leaders present for the agitation.

The opposition parties of the Maha Vikas Aghadi an-

nounced three major programmes and promised to actively participate in the agitations against the Bill. "There will be a State-wide protest on September 10. Regional conventions will be held on October 2. Large public meetings will be held in the constituencies of all the MVA MPs and MLAs to create awareness campaigns. Such campaigns will also be held during the upcoming festival of Ganeshotsav," Ulka Mahaja, one of the convenors of the meeting, told The Hindu. "I looked up the Bill. It says, 'extremist left wing organisations' at two places. But our Constitution is secular. There is no distinction between right and left there," he said. "Whoever is involved in anti-national activities, hang them to death but the act has no mention of treason. I

Trump holds off secondary sanctions for China, claims India no longer buying Russian oil



The government did not react immediately to the inconclusive outcome of talks between US and Russian Presidents in Alaska, even as US President Donald Trump suggested he may put off implementing secondary or penalty tariffs as a result of the talks. The possible reprieve on a 25% extra tariff for buying Russian oil would be a relief for New Delhi, although Mr. Trump's other comments surrounding the day-long visit to meet Russian President Putin would not, as he suggested that India had already stopped buying Russian oil. He also repeated earlier comments on his role in mediating the India-Pakistan ceasefire — which India has denied — after the two countries were "shooting down aeroplanes" during Operation Sindoor in May this year.

In an interview to U.S.'s Fox News after the talks, Mr. Trump said that he would consider the question of the penalty tariffs on Russian oil in "two or three weeks", possibly indicating the August 27 deadline could pass for India without an implementation of punitive 25% tariffs over and above the 25% reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods that the U.S. has already put into place. When asked specifically about tariffs on China which imports even more oil than India, Mr. Trump said that "because of what happened today, I think I don't have to think about that now," adding, "I think you know, the meeting [with Putin] went very well". Speaking earlier, Mr. Trump claimed that India had already agreed to drop purchases of Russian oil. "Well he (Putin) lost an oil client, so to speak, which is India, which is doing about 40% of the oil, China as you know is doing a lot, and there are a few other countries," Mr. Trump told Fox News in an interview before the talks on Friday. "If I did what's called a secondary sanction or a secondary tariff, it would be devastating from their (Russia's) standpoint. If I have to do it, I will do it, maybe I won't have to do it," Mr. Trump added. India continues to purchase Russian oil Indian oil refining PSUs however have continued to purchase up to 2 million bpd (barrels per day) of Russian oil, and said that they had no instructions from the government to "buy or not to buy" from Russia, even after the US tariffs were announced.

Ahead of the Trump-Putin talks, which the Ministry of External Affairs had welcomed and "endorsed", officials were understood to be watching the talks in Alaska for three separate indicators. 1. To begin with, any agreement on a Russia-Ukraine ceasefire would be a positive, and would also mean the U.S. would lift objections to India's purchase of Russian oil. 2. The second would be that if the talks ended without agreement but cordially, the U.S. President could revise his announcement of a 25% penalty or secondary tariffs otherwise set to go into place on August 27 for Indian goods. On the other hand, if the talks ended badly, or with a walkout by either side, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had even threatened higher tariffs for buying Russian oil. 3. The third, that if talks were to end well, U.S. and India could resume trade talks for the Bilateral Trade Agreement, and possibly also negotiate a lower reciprocal tariff, which is currently at 25%. Last week, Mr. Trump had suggested that talks between India and US trade negotiators, due to hold the next round in Delhi on August 25, would be suspended until the Russian oil issue was "resolved". While Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin did not announce any agreement, a short press appearance after their talks showed the two leaders had held cordial conversations, and while there was no deal, Mr. Putin said that they did reach an agreement on some issues. The next few days may offer clarity on the future of the 50% tariffs that India now faces. Trump insists he brokered India-Pakistan peace

Mr. Trump did not, however, change his position on his involvement in the India-Pakistan conflict after the Pahalgam attacks, suggesting that whether he brokers a peace deal in Ukraine or not, he deserves the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in a number of conflicts, including Operation Sindoor.

"Take a look at India and Pakistan. they were shooting down aeroplanes already, and that would have been maybe nuclear. I would have said it was going to go nuclear, and I was able to get [a ceasefire] done," Mr. Trump said. Both India and Pakistan have claimed to have shot down each other's fighter jets during the May 7-May 10 conflict. In addition, Indian Air Chief Marshall A.P. Singh said that India had also damaged a number of US-made F-16 planes stationed at Pakistan's Jacobabad airbase. The government has not clarified about India's aircraft losses thus far, with a number of officials saying publicly that this was "not the time" to speak about exact losses. Mr. Trump also said that he dealt with India and Pakistan using trade as a leverage. "I deal with all of the countries for trade...[] So if there's a war going on, and if we're doing trade with one or both of them, I say we're not going to do a deal unless you make peace," Mr. Trump said.

Trump administration partially retreats from a takeover of Washington's police. Here's what to know



GNS News Agency, August 25

Federal troops are patrolling the National Mall and neighbourhoods across Washington while President Donald Trump's administration exerts extraordinary power over law enforcement in the nation's capital. But the administration backed down from an attempt to take over the city's police department by installing its own emergency police commissioner after a federal judge indicated she would rule against it. The partial retreat interrupted one aspect of the most sweeping uses of federal authority over a local government in modern times. How it will play out and whether the federal government will use this experience as a potential blueprint for dealing with other cities remains up in the air. Here's what to know about the situation and what might come next: The Republican President this week announced he's taking control over Washington's police department and activating National Guard troops to reduce crime, an escalation of his aggressive approach to law enforcement. But District of Columbia officials say the action isn't needed, pointing out that violent crime in the district reached historic 30-year lows last year and is down significantly again this year. D.C.'s status as a congressionally established federal district gives Mr. Trump a window to assert more control over the district than other cities. D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser didn't offer much resistance at first, allowing city workers to clear homeless encampments and work closely with federal immigration agents. But on Friday, the heavily Democratic district asked for an emergency court order blocking Trump officials from putting a federal official in charge of D.C. police.

Russia vows to present clear stance at Alaska summit with Trump

GNS News Agency, August 25

Moscow: Russia will make its position clear during the upcoming meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump, Russian media reported on Friday. "We are not planning anything. We know that we have arguments, a clear and understandable position," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the Rossiya-24 TV channel upon his arrival in Alaska, where the summit will take place. He added that they would make their arguments clear.

Significant groundwork had been laid during the visit of Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy, to Russia, he noted. "We hope to continue this very useful conversation tomorrow." Putin and Trump are scheduled to meet in Anchorage, Alaska, on Friday. Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov said the meeting will begin with a one-on-one session involving only the two leaders and their interpreters, followed by expanded talks joined by five delegates from each side, Xinhua news agency reported.

Ushakov said the talks will focus on resolving the Ukraine crisis, as well as addressing "broader tasks for ensuring peace and security, and current and most pressing international and regional issues." Trump on Thursday estimated that his upcoming meeting with Putin in the US

The Trump administration on Friday agreed to leave the Washington, D.C., police chief in control of the department. That came one day after Attorney General Pam Bondi said the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration would take over the police chief's duties, including authority over orders issued to officers. The two sides sparred in court for hours before U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes after the city sued to stop the order. The judge indicated the law likely doesn't grant the Trump administration power to fully take over city police, but it probably does give the president more power than the city might like. She pushed the two sides to compromise, promising to issue a court order temporarily blocking the administration from naming a new chief if they couldn't agree. But while Attorney General Pam Bondi agreed to leave the police chief in charge, she directed the District's police to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement regardless of any city law. The showdown in Washington is the latest attempt by Mr. Trump to test the boundaries of his legal authority to carry out his tough-on-crime agenda, relying on obscure statutes and a supposed state of emergency to speed up the mass deportation of people in the United States illegally. About 800 National Guard troops are being activated, with Humvees parked along the Washington Monument and near Union Station. Troops have been spotted standing outside baseball's Nationals Park and neighbourhood restaurants. The White House says guard members aren't making arrests but are protecting law enforcement officers who are making arrests and helping deter violent crime. Trump says one of the objectives will be moving homeless people far from the city. Trump has the authority to do this for 30 days and says he might look into extending it. But that would require congressional approval. Whether Republicans in Congress would go along with that is unclear. Some D.C. residents have protested against the increased police presence. For some, the action echoes uncomfortable historical chapters when politicians used language to paint predominantly Black cities with racist narratives to shape public opinion and justify police action. Washington is very different from any other American city, and the rules that govern it give the federal government much more control than it would have anywhere else. Whether Trump is using this as a blueprint for how to approach cities — largely Democratic cities — that he wants to exert more control over remains to be seen.



state of Alaska has a 25 percent chance of not being successful. In an interview with Fox News Radio, Trump said his meeting with Putin is like "a chess game," adding that he believes Putin is arriving to make progress toward reaching a deal on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He said if positive progress is made during the meeting, it would lay the groundwork for a second one, which would also include Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump on Wednesday warned that Russia would face "very severe consequences" if Putin refuses to agree to a ceasefire in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

Record violence marks Israel's push towards West Bank annexation

A day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel intends to take full control of the Gaza Strip, the country's security cabinet, on August 8, approved a plan to seize control of Gaza City. Israel then stepped up its bombardment. While Israel continues to pound one of Palestine's non-contiguous regions — Gaza — and push its society to the brink, it is slowly asserting "sovereignty" over the other — West Bank. Last month, the Israeli Parliament voted in favour of a historic declaration that officially supported the application of Israeli sovereignty to West Bank, which the Israelis refer to as Judea and Samaria. While the motion carried no immediate legal bearing, it is seen as a political step towards annexation. In July 2024, Israel had declared that it was opposed to the establishment of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan river. This time, as the Knesset voted in favour of the non-binding motion, its speaker declared, "In 1967, the occupation did not start, it ended. That is the historical truth, and the one and only way to reach genuine peace is from [a position of] power."

While West Bank has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, data shows that Israel's position of power over the West Bank has intensified since October 7, 2023, with a record number of displacements, settler attacks, and a stifled economy. Settler attacks in this analysis only involves incidents of violence, intimidation or trespass by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in West Bank. More than 600 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces or settler attacks in West Bank since 2024. This is 28% of all Palestinians killed in the region in nearly two decades. The chart shows the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces or settlers in the West Bank

The number of attacks by Israeli settlers, which either resulted in casualties or damages to property, surged post-2023. The chart shows the attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinians that resulted in casualties and/or property damage. West Bank has witnessed 3,500 such attacks since 2023. This accounted for 40% of all attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians in the last two decades. In 2024, this figure climbed to an all-time high in nearly two decades. Survey data from the Israel Democracy Institute, as shown in the table below, shows over 40% of Israelis think that settlers who engaged in violence are treated very leniently by the Israeli forces. Respondents were answering the question "How are the security forces and enforcement agencies treating settlers involved in violent acts against Palestinians in the West Bank/Judea and Samaria?" The region also saw a high number of displacements of Palestinians in the 2023-2025 period due to Israeli military operations, or



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settler violence, or access restrictions, or demolitions. The United Nations on July 15 this year said that displacement in West Bank had hit levels not seen since the start of Israel's occupation nearly 60 years ago. More than 4,000 people were displaced from West Bank in 2024 — the highest number recorded since 2009. Additionally, 29,338 Palestinians have been displaced due to operations by Israeli forces in the Jenin and Tulkaram camps in the northern region of West Bank in 2025. The chart below shows the number of Palestinians displaced in West Bank due to Israeli military operations or settler violence. Data also shows that more than 3,000 Palestinian homes and other structures have been either demolished, seized, or sealed since 2023 in West Bank. The chart shows the number of Palestinian homes/structures demolished, seized, or sealed in West Bank every year. More than a hundred outposts were newly built since 2023 in West Bank. Outposts refer to Israeli settlements, considered illegal even under Israeli law. In 2024 alone, 61 such outposts were built — the highest in a year since 1990. The chart shows the number of outposts established since the 1990s in the West Bank. With the number of illegal settlers increasing to more than 5 lakh in 2023, from less than 5,000 in 1977, the situation in West Bank already echoes the Knesset speaker's statement from last month. He said, "We are here to stay, and the Knesset has said this by a large majority."

Flash floods in Pakistan: 307 killed in northwest part of country

GNS News Agency, August 25

Residents walk next to damaged cars stuck to an electric pole following flash flooding due to heavy rains in a neighbourhood of Mingora, the main town of Swat Valley, northwestern Pakistan, on August 15, 2025. | Photo Credit: AP The death toll from the recent flash floods in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa rose to over 300, with those killed also including 13 children, provincial authorities said on Saturday (August 16, 2025). Torrential rains, which triggered flash floods in various districts of the province, are expected to continue intermittently until August 21, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).



11 completely destroyed, the PDMA said. It added that relief teams and district administrations are in close coordination and are continuously monitoring the situation. Relief funds have been released for flood-hit districts on the directives of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. He instructed all departments concerned to expedite rescue and relief operations in the affected areas. Instructions have also been issued to mobilise all available resources for the restoration of blocked highways and link roads in tourist areas. Tourists have been advised to remain updated on the weather conditions and take necessary safety precautions, PDMA said. On Friday (August 15, 2025), the PDMA spokesperson had said that the number of those dead or injured was expected to rise further as scores of people were still missing in affected areas. Since late June, the beginning of monsoon season, torrential rains have wreaked havoc across the country — especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and northern regions — deadly floods, landslides and displacement, particularly in vulnerable, poorly drained, or densely populated areas.

Contacts with the U.S. did not cease even during Biden's presidency: Senior Russian interlocutor on Russia-U.S. talks

GNS News Agency, August 25

Russia's back channel links intensified under President Donald Trump, but Russian representatives had maintained contacts even with the previous administration under President Joe Biden, said a senior interlocutor who has been part of the back channel negotiations that helped in maintaining dialogue tracks between Russia and the United States in the last three and half years since the Ukraine crisis began.

In a written interview to The Hindu, Nikolai Plotnikov, Head of the Center for Scientific and Analytical Information of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said the summit in Alaska is not just about Ukraine and that there is a sense of panic in Europe as Russia and the U.S. have made a fresh beginning. "Contacts with the U.S. did not cease even during Biden's presidency. With the start of Trump's second term, the situation began to change dramatically. Contacts resumed through the foreign policy departments, special services, and the military. Special representatives have been actively at work: Kirill Dmitriev on the Russian side and Steve Witkoff on the American side. One should also mention contacts at the expert and academic levels," said Mr. Plotnikov.

The summit in Alaska is the first in recent years when the top leaderships of Russia and the United States are meeting seven months after the return of President Donald Trump as the U.S. President. Formal communication between the two sides had broken down after the Biden administration imposed a slew of sanctions on Russia after

President Putin ordered a "special military campaign" against neighbouring Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

The Alaska summit has been opposed by the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy who has demanded that a discussion on the future of Ukraine must include Ukraine's leadership. That however did not prevent a number of countries, India included from welcoming the summit. Mr. Plotnikov said that Ukraine was not included in the summit as Mr. Zelenskyy has "no legal rights". "They voluntarily gave up their independence in favor of Washington, London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, and other Western capitals," said Mr. Plotnikov marking 2014 as the year when Ukraine according to him ceased to be independent after the removal of President Viktor Yanukovich in the so called "Revolution of Dignity". He further said that European Union's strategy on Russia has failed and that the European states had miscalculated their strategy of using a "blitzkrieg" of sanctions against Russia. "Judging by the plentiful statements coming out of various European capitals (except perhaps for Hungary and Slovakia), Europe is panicking. With his decision to meet President Putin, Donald Trump revealed who is really in charge," said Mr. Plotnikov. He further said that discussion between President Trump and President Putin would also make a difference in enduring conflict zones of the world including in Armenia-Azerbaijan and India-Pakistan.

"If the two world powers and leading members of the nuclear club find common ground in resolving existing issues, everyone will benefit," said Mr. Plotnikov.

Artificial Intelligence-enhanced surgery offers vision correction in 10 seconds



Removal of spectacles and vision correction through AI-driven technology is now possible in less than ten seconds per eye with the Centre for Sight (CFS) bringing LASIK laser surgery technology — AMARIS 1050RS with the software Foresight that is offering enhanced precision, and optimising patient outcomes. The technology allows eye surgeons to reshape and repair cornea for vision correction.

Explaining the technology and benefit for patients Mahipal S. Sachdev, chairman and medical director, CFS, said that the technology offering better quality of vision to all age groups uses a laser which comes with enhanced speed, better precision and real time eyes movement tracker. The entire surgery is done with only drop anaesthesia.“The AMARIS 1050 with the software Foresight allows surgeons to virtually visualize and predict the post-operative corneal shape of individual patient’s eye before performing the laser procedure, ensuring greater accuracy and treatment

planning precision. The technology records all movements that the eye can make and actively compensates for them at 1050 times per second – previously available technology offered this at 500 times per second. It can even anticipate and compensate for eye movements before they actually occur, making its accuracy and reliability unmatched among other lasers,” Dr. Sachdev explained.

He explained that technology - costing under ₹1.5 lakh for both the eyes - can be used to correct irregular and smoothen out the cornea by reshaping it. Also it can be used to correct negative, positive, cylindrical and all refractive errors. Due to its advanced technology the procedure offers quicker recovery, helping people return to their daily routines with ease, the doctors said.“Beyond standard LASIK, we are also expanding to treat complex corneal conditions such as keratoconus [a condition that affects the shape of the cornea] with FORESIGHT-driven solutions TREK [Topography Guided Removal of Epithelium for Keratoconus] and TCAT [Topography-Guided Custom Ablation Treatment],” the doctors added.TREK is a customised technique that enables simultaneous removal of epithelium and stroma, particularly benefiting patients with decentered cones, optimising corneal reshaping while preserving tissue while TCAT uses detailed corneal mapping to guide the laser, reshaping irregular corneas with pinpoint accuracy. This advanced technique enhances visual outcomes for keratoconus patients and can significantly reduce dependence on specialised contact lenses.Mr. Dominic von Planta, CEO of Schwind Eye-Tech Solutions, explained that the Amaris 1050 with a 7D eye-tracking system beyond being fast and safe, also enables a personalised treatment approach because every eye is unique.

Slowing down vitiligo

The current decade will probably be known as the decade of the gut, given the incredible number of significant biological connections we are making between the gut and human well being. However, this is not about the gut per se; this is about the role of gut-friendly bacteria in the process of re-pigmentation, particularly in persons with vitiligo.

Vitiligo is a chronic autoimmune disorder where the body’s defence system begins to attack the pigment-producing cells and causes de-pigmented white patches on the skin. While usually the condition is only cosmetic, these patches on the skin can be stigmatising for the patient, particularly if they are present on the face or arms, and thus obvious to others. New research from Northwestern University from a pre-clinical trial in mice has shown that a natural compound derived from gut-friendly bacteria significantly slows down the progression of vitiligo and may restore pigmentation. The findings, if substantiated through rigorous double blind random control clinical trials, could offer hope to millions affected by the autoimmune disease. It is estimated that vitiligo affects 0.5% to 2% of the global population and is linked to other health challenges, including for some persons, higher risks of cardiovascular disease, psychological distress, and endocrine disorders. The prevalence of vitiligo in India has been invariably reported to be between 0.25% and 4% of dermatology outpatients across studies in the country, and up to 8.8% in Gujarat and Rajasthan, as per a paper in the Indian Dermatology Online Journal. Studies and observations have recorded an erosion of self confidence among those with vitiligo, resulting in an impact on the mental health of the individual.Significant suppression of disease progression

“The results in our model were astonishing,” says I. Caroline Le Poole, professor of dermatology and microbiology-immunology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. “We found that administering a microbial compound weekly to vitiligo-prone mice significantly suppressed disease progression. It made a spectacular difference in an aggressive model of the disease.” The results of the study were recently published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology. “We are trying to understand the pigment cell and how it works. Vitiligo patches can be a big deal for patients, particularly during adolescence and youth,” Dr. Le Poole explains in a video call. While acknowledging the renewed global interest in what microbiomes can do for health, she adds that she was interested first in the effect of the gut microbiome on antibody-mediated autoimmune dis-



ease, here in the development of vitiligo patches. Dr. Le Poole and her colleagues administered a microbial product weekly to vitiligo-prone mice over an 18-week period. By the end, pigment loss on the mice’s backs was reduced by 74%. The product reduced killer T cells that attack the skin’s pigment and increased protective regulatory T cells, which are typically scarce in vitiligo patients. “This simple microbial compound could work as a standalone therapy or in synergy with existing treatments,” Dr. Le Poole says.

Early intervention vitalHowever, she adds that it is necessary to intervene as early as possible and that the effects might not be as dramatic or efficient in advanced disease. There are typically two peaks in persons with vitiligo — in adolescence, and then, again, during the 40s and 50s. Dr. Le Poole adds that the disease has been found to be more severe in people with darker skin tones, as found in the Indian population. Naturally, the visibility of the discoloration in people with darker skin can also amplify stigma and emotional distress. “Patients often feel powerless as they watch their disease progress, unsure how they will look next month. For many, stabilising the disease would be life changing,” she explains.The next challenge would be to adapt the microbial product for human use. “Weekly injections could work, but we need to explore simpler options, like a food additive or ointment,” according to Dr. Le Poole. “We also need to understand how long the effects last and the best timing for treatment.” She adds that the same microbial compound injected in mice could potentially treat other autoimmune conditions, particularly those involving killer T cells in the skin.The next step would be to collaborate with scientists from several institutions to refine the compound, understand its mechanisms, and determine whether it works alongside existing treatments for auto-immune disease.”

20% of traditional grocers in Chennai have shut up shops in five years, says Corporation

Over 20% of the traditional grocers in Chennai have shut up shop in the last five years and 30% of larger departmental stores selling groceries from more than 1,000 sq.ft. area have closed during the same period, according to Greater Chennai Corporation. The civic body has started holding talks with traders’ associations to facilitate welfare schemes for the traders and protect their livelihood.Chennai Corporation has already relaxed norms pertaining to trade licence. The number of licensed grocery stores measuring less than 500 sq.ft. has fallen from 10,645 to 8,476 retail outlets in the 426 sq.km. of Chennai Corporation.As many as 2,169 grocers closed down in the past five years in Chennai with the Royapuram zone, covering the Central Business District of George Town, accounting for the largest number. A total of 286 out of 1,342 grocers in Royapuram zone shut shops in the past five years.

In Kodambakkam zone covering commercial areas such as T.Nagar, 199 out of 645 grocers closed their outlet in the last five years. A total of 207 out of 695 grocers closed down in Teynampet zone while 183 out of 634 in Anna Nagar shut down during the same period after COVID-19 pandemic. In the Adyar zone, 171 grocery stores had closed while 537 trades were active as on March 5, 2025.While the average reduction in the number of grocers is around 20% in the 15 zones of the city, zones such as Perungudi, with many IT professionals in the vicinity of Rajiv Gandhi Salai, registered more than 34% reduction in the number of grocery stores.

Chennai Corporation has not maintained records of traditional grocers who closed the trade after demonetisation in 2016. According to data maintained by Greater Chennai Corporation, the licensed departmental stores (bigger supermarkets) in the 15 zones of Chennai came down from 577 to 388 in the last five years.Chennai Corporation has issued licences for the highest number of large departmental stores in Anna Nagar zone with 67 active licences as on March 5, 2025. As many as 27 out of 95 large departmental stores had been closed in the last five years in Anna Nagar. In Kodambakkam zone, 23 out of 89 departmental stores had been closed

S.Nagabushanam, a representative of traders in the Central Business District, said the business of more than

Can your brain lower stress, anxiety if you quit smartphone use for 3 days? Here’s what a study says



If you are reading this on your phone, just consider giving up this privilege for three days. New research shows that this practice can significantly alter brain activity and lower your anxieties.Researchers from Heidelberg University and the University of Cologne in Germany asked 25 young adults to restrict their use of smart phones as much as possible for 72 hours. Only essential communication and work-related activities were allowed. MRI scans before and after the experiment were done to determine changes phone hygiene had on neural patterns and activity. “Associations between changes of brain activation over time and addiction-related neurotransmitter systems were found,” the researchers wrote.During the scans run after 72 hours, the participants were tracked for their reaction to image prompts, including pictures of smartphones turned on and turned off, as well as neutral images like flowers. When phone images were shown, there were changes in parts of the brain linked to reward-seeking behaviour and cravings, indicating that phone dependence can be as addictive as nicotine or alcohol. However, cognitive tests showed no severe mood changes or craving despite the limited phone access. Some volunteers had a happier mood but not significant enough for data.

Why is this study significant?

The three-day phone detox showed there was a noticeable reduction in stress and anxiety levels without too

much sense of denial, according to Dr Shaunak Ajinkya, psychiatrist at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital, Mumbai. “Some participants initially experienced withdrawal symptoms, like restlessness and a compulsive urge to check their devices. However, after the first day, most reported feeling calmer and more present. The study showed that excessive smartphone use keeps the brain in a constant state of hyperarousal, contributing to chronic stress. Without this digital overload, our brains can relax,” he says.

Does digital detox work on young people?

Dr Ajinkya has tried this on Akash, a 19-year-old college student, who was addicted to watching short reels on YouTube for six to eight hours daily, affecting his studies. He even took his social life online, interacting with friends over messaging and video calls. “He said watching reels was quick entertainment. It helped him escape stress and negative emotions like low self-esteem or a constant desire for validation. He would check his phone frequently during meals, study sessions and social gatherings. His sleep timings had changed,” adds Dr Ajinkya.So he planned a gradual reduction of screen time, such as deciding upon a “phone detox day” followed by limiting phone use to specific time slots and turning off notifications to reduce triggers. He nudged Akash to take up more physical activities and develop hobbies that require sustained focus (such as playing the guitar, which he liked). Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) addressed Akash’s thought patterns and corrected errors about how he perceived himself and the world. “We even helped parents devise strategies to support Akash without being overly controlling. Over three months, Akash reduced his daily screen time to 1–2 hours and his academic performance improved,” says Dr Ajinkya.

Can smartphone overuse lead to brain changes?

A 2023 study found structural and functional changes, particularly in areas responsible for attention and impulse control. Another study the same year showed that it impacted sleep quality and how phone detox bettered it.

Can fish oil supplements help you control blood sugar? Here’s why a Brazilian study holds out hope

We know that consuming fish oil, rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, can help reduce cholesterol and blood pressureWe know that consuming fish oil, rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, can help reduce cholesterol and blood pressure We know that consuming fish oil, rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, can help reduce cholesterol and blood pressure. Now a study conducted by Brazilian researchers has said that taking fish oil supplements can suppress insulin resistance — when the body’s cells don’t respond to insulin properly, making it hard for it to use glucose for energy — in non-obese people.

The study, conducted on mice, shows how researchers administered 2 grams of Omega 3-rich fish oil per kilogram of body weight three times a week. The results showed a notable reduction in insulin resistance, along with improved levels of cholesterol and triglycerides.According to Dr Saptarshi Bhattacharya, senior consultant, Endocrinology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, the finding is encouraging but fish oil’s effects may vary based on genetic factors and pre-existing health conditions. “While it may aid insulin function, it should not be seen as a standalone cure but should complement diet, exercise and medical management. Its impact should be now studied across populations,” he says.

Can fish oil reverse insulin resistance?

Fish oil, rich in Omega 3, reduces inflammation, a key factor in insulin resistance. It reduces inflammatory cytokines, small proteins involved in cell to cell communication. In bigger numbers, these interfere with the body’s ability to use insulin effectively. Besides, fish oil helps insulin bind easily to cell membranes and boosts levels of adiponectin, a fat-derived hormone that helps cells use insulin better.

Why is the study significant?

That’s because insulin resistance in non-obese individuals is influenced by genetic factors rather than obesity-related inflammation. Fish oil seems an effective strategy for managing diabetes in these individuals without weight issues.

How does Omega 3 work in obese and non-obese people?

Fish oil affects insulin resistance differently in obese



and non-obese individuals. In the overweight, it helps control cholesterol, reduce abdominal obesity, waist circumference and improve waist-to-hip ratio. This leads to better insulin sensitivity.In non-obese individuals, insulin resistance may be linked more to genetic factors, sedentary behaviour or poor diet rather than excess fat. Here fish oil works on insulin efficiency itself.Every supplement must be taken on the advice of a healthcare provider, customised and used in moderation. While fish oil is beneficial, research suggests it may negatively impact sugar control in some people with diabetes. That’s because they can increase glucose production in the liver, raising fasting blood sugar levels in people with diabetes. Some studies indicate that very high doses of fish oil may impair pancreatic beta cells that produce insulin. Additionally, fish oil can have mild blood-thinning effects, which may be a concern for those on anti-coagulants. Other side effects include gastrointestinal discomfort, nausea and an increased risk of cell damage if poor-quality or rancid fish oil is consumed.

What’s better, consuming fish oil or fish?

Whole fish is better because it has additional nutrients like protein, vitamin D, selenium and iodine, which support overall health. Whole fish provides a more balanced intake of Omega 3 fatty acids. Moreover, eating fish ensures better bioavailability of Omega 3 and promotes satiety. Supplements are beneficial for individuals who do not consume fish regularly or have specific Omega 3 deficiencies.

Why Vitamin B6 is a super nutrient: Here’s how a deficiency made 32-year-old overweight and sluggish

Sarah, a 32-year-old marketing professional, struggled with low energy and unexplained weight gain for years. Despite eating what she thought was a balanced diet and exercising regularly, she felt like her body was working against her. After a visit to a nutritionist, she discovered her Vitamin B6 levels were lower than optimal.We recommended a B6-rich diet, including meals like grilled fish, roasted chickpeas and a side of steamed spinach, or a breakfast smoothie with banana, sunflower seed, butter and almond milk. Within weeks her energy levels soared, her mood stabilized and she even started shedding the stubborn weight she’d been unable to lose. When it comes to boosting metabolism, most people think about intense workouts, cutting calories, or drinking gallons of green tea. But what if I told you that this simple, often overlooked vitamin could be the secret weapon your body needs? A powerhouse nutrient, it not only supports metabolism but also plays a crucial role in energy production, brain health and



mood regulation.

What makes Vitamin B6 so special?

Vitamin B6, also known as pyridoxine, is a water-soluble vitamin that’s needed for over 100 enzymatic reactions in the body. It’s essential for metabolising proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, turning them into usable energy. Vitamin B6 also helps regulate hormones like serotonin and dopamine, which influence mood and stress levels. That’s why you feel sluggish and irritable

when you’re not eating well.Vitamin B6 supports glucose metabolism, regulating blood sugar levels, and aids in the production of hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout your body.Top Vitamin B6 foods you should be eatingWhile supplements are an option, getting your nutrients from whole foods is always the best approach.

1. Chickpeas: A cup of cooked chickpeas provides nearly 55% of your daily Vitamin B6 needs. Chickpeas

are also packed with fibre and protein.

2. Salmon: This fatty fish is not only rich in omega-3s but also a great source of B6. An 80 to 100 gm serving covers about 30% of your daily requirement.

3. Potatoes (with skin): A medium baked potato with the skin on offers around 25% of your daily B6 intake.

4. Bananas: A quick and easy snack, one medium banana provides about 20% of your daily B6 needs.

The day a village in Uttarkashi disappeared



Before August 5, 2025, when the first rays of the sun hit the houses of Dharali, a village situated 2,700 metres above sea level in the Himalayas, the sounds of conch shells and temple bells would fill the air.Hundreds of pilgrims travelling to the Gangotri temple — one of the Char Dhams, among the most sacred pilgrimage circuits in northern India with four holy destinations — would stop at Dharali to rest, sip tea, and take in the breathtaking views of snow-capped mountains.

On the afternoon of August 5, 2025, a deluge of rain led to a landslide. The Kheer Gad stream, which flows through the village, swelled up with debris. Within seconds, the floodwaters swallowed the multi-storey hotels and homestays offering river views. A blanket of sludge, piled as high as 30-40 m, now covers the village, which had a population of less than 1,000 and also a high floating population of tourists. The rumbling noises of earth movers and the thud of spades striking the ground reverberate through the air. There is only devastation as far as the eye can see.

Since the tragedy hit Dharali, the Uttarakhand government has been able to recover only one body. Sixty-nine people remain missing, including nine Army personnel and 25 Nepali workers. Rescue teams have airlifted around 1,400 people by chopper from the flood-hit site. The government said in a statement that around 150 hotels and homestays, several other establishments, and apple orchards have been destroyed. The State government has formed a three-member team to rehabilitate the residents of Dharali, the latest site to be affected by rain, landslides, and floods in the fragile Himalayan region.In this photograph taken on June 18, 2013, the Kedamath Temple (centre, foreground) is pictured amid flood destruction in the holy Hindu town of Kedarnath, located in Rudraprayag district in the northern Uttarakhand.Most roads on the way to Badrinath and Kedarnath have been washed away due to landslides in Uttarakhand on June 30, 2013.This handout photograph released on July 2, 2016 by the Indian Army shows soldiers searching for survivors of a landslide following torrential rains in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh area.Rescue and relief work is under way after several vehicles, including two buses were swept away by a massive landslide at Kotrupi in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district on August 13, 2017.A damaged bridge is seen as a heavy gush of flood water flows into the Ravi in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba on September 25, 2018.

An under-construction bridge on a river along a national highway between Pithoragarh and Champawat at Chalthi in Uttarakhand collapsed on October 19, 2021 following heavy rains.In this January 9, 2022 image, large cracks are seen on the walls and roads leading to Vishnupuram area in Uttarakhand's Joshimath.Stranded pilgrims board an IAF helicopter after they were rescued in landslide-hit Kedarnath on August 5, 2024.This handout satellite image provided by Maxar Technologies shows a general view of the town of Dharali almost four months before it was hit by floods.A drone view of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) officials attempting to build a makeshift bridge to reach Dharali village after the bridge connecting it was swept away during landslides in Gangnani Uttarakhand.Rescue teams say it is next to impossible to retrieve the bodies buried under the mountains of sludge, but they nevertheless persist. A team of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) holds thermal imaging cameras, which detect body heat, and walks through what was once a three-storey hotel. After searching for several minutes, they conclude that there are no signs of life. They proceed to the next location.

Lekhraj Singh's heart sinks when the team moves on. A labourer from the Bijnore district of neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, Lekhraj had come to Dharali to find his son, Yogesh, who had been working at a construction site in the village since May. "My wife and daughters have stopped eating since they heard of the disaster. Yogesh's phone is silent and he has been untraceable since then. I want my son back," Lekhraj says.Officials ask him to sit in a chopper so that he can be dropped at Uttarkashi town, about 70 kilometres away. Tears stream down Lekhraj's cheeks. "Bhala ho sarkar ka jo hume do din se roz yaha laati hai helicopter me taki hum apne bacche ko khoj sakein (I am grateful to the government for bringing me for the last two days by chopper here so I can look for my son)," Lekhraj says, as he picks up a mud-covered jute bag carrying two sets of clothes, warmers, and a postcard-sized picture of his son.Kali Devi, a construction worker, had gone to the market when the floodwaters hit Dharali. She says her son had dialled her husband when the disaster hit the village. In a video that went viral on social media, a dazed Kali says, "All he could say is that he won't survive. Since then, his phone is not reachable." She has been running from pillar to post to find her husband, her three sons, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren.

Some people have lost their kin and some have lost their land in the tragedy, but Jai Bhagwan Panwar has lost nearly everything he had. The waters swept away his nephew, Akash Panwar, in front of his eyes. His two-storey hotel is nowhere to be seen. His apple orchards have been washed away.Jai was attending an annual fair, the Hardu Mela, organised for the Hindu god Someshwar, on the outskirts of the village, when he heard the thundering noise of the waters from the Kheer Gad crashing into the village."The priest was all set to perform the aarti when we heard the noise. People started running and shouting for help. I made frantic calls to my nephew and to workers at my hotel, but I couldn't reach anyone. A girl from Rajasthan was the only guest at my hotel at that moment. She is also missing along with the others," he says. Jai performed the last rites of Akash at his house in Uttarkhasi's Barethi village.

Sanjay Panwar lost his entire life's savings in the floods. He has no idea how is going to repay a loan that he had borrowed from a bank to open an apple drying plant."It would have been better if I had died," Sanjay says. "At least my family would have got some compensation from the government to start life afresh."Villagers say that the floodwaters hit the village again and again, from 1:45 p.m. to 5 p.m., leaving them traumatised. People with complaints of anxiety and sleeplessness have started making a beeline for the temporary health check-up posts that have been set up by the government."The locals say whenever they close their eyes, they feel they are drowning. The trauma is not letting them rest," says Dr. Meghna Aswal, who was on duty at a health post till August 12.A pregnant woman who

was rescued from Dharali village being checked by doctors inside an ambulance at the Matli helipad in Uttarkashi. A pregnant woman who was rescued from Dharali village being checked by doctors inside an ambulance at the Matli helipad in Uttarkashi. | Photo Credit: Shashi Shekar Kashyap

Dr. Aswal found that several pregnant women were depressed thinking of delivery and childcare in the village. She prepared a list of 12 women whose delivery dates were approaching. The women were airlifted to Uttarkashi.Among them is Radhika Sai, 21, from Nepal, who is nine months pregnant. Radhika worked at an apple orchard in Dharali with her husband Gopal Sai. On the day of the tragedy, she was sitting in her room somewhere up in the hills.Radhika had planned to go to Nepal for her delivery, but she is now in Uttarkashi with no female family member around. She has developed a skin infection due to the dampness. With no undergarments left, Radhika has tied a red stole around her body to support her heavy breasts. She walks around in a daze and with a limp. Her husband Gopal, who is left with only a few hundred rupees, is struggling to find a way to earn some money to afford childcare.

The water in the Kheer Gad stream has not just destroyed Dharali, but also the Army camp in Harshil, another Himalayan village next to it. Officials say the continuous and heavy water flow from Kheer Gad has led to the formation of an artificial lake in Harshil.Arpan Yaduvanshi, chief of the Uttarakhand SDRF, says 120 Army personnel are working day and night to rescue people at Dharali along with 100 personnel from the National Disaster Response Force, 75 from the SDRF, and 70 from the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). The rescue teams, who have divided the spot into three zones, have deployed tools such as ground penetrating radars, victim locating cameras, and thermal imaging cameras to locate survivors. Dog squads, engineering and medical staff, and scientists and geologists are also at the spot.

Arpan says the biggest challenge in the rescue operation is the water. "It continues to flow beneath the debris. This poses serious risks for the rescue teams. This is also one of the reasons why we are unable to use heavy digging and excavation machines at the spot — their vibrations are too high to be used in this fragile area."Weather changes have also added to their woes. "Every day, we work for several hours to clear the sludge. Then it rains and everything goes back to being what it was. We keep coming back to square one," explains Arpan. The rains are also hampering helicopter services, leaving the rescue teams with scanty petrol, ration, and equipment for digging, he adds.The rescue teams are not just struggling in Dharali, but also across the hill in Uttarkashi. Incidents of landslides, and roads getting washed away due to incessant rains, are being reported from multiple spots every day since August 5.

A bridge connecting Dharali and Mukhba, another neighbouring village, has been declared unfit for use by the Army. As a landslide washed away a major portion of the road that connects Gangnani village to Dharali, people now have to trek 12-15 km to reach Dharali by road. Another landslide near Dabrani village halted vehicular movement from Uttarkashi for hours. During road construction near Dharali, an excavator toppled into the river with its driver inside. The driver remains missing.Amid the strenuous rescue efforts, helicopter pilots make multiple sorties every day, to pick up and drop people from Dharali to the Matli and Chilyanisaur helipads. There are 17 choppers involved in rescue efforts in the region at the moment — five from the Indian Air Force, nine from the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority, and three from the Army.

At the Matli village helipad, every time a chopper lands, SDRF and ITBP personnel, along with doctors, rush towards it to ensure that those disembarking are fine. The helicopters are filled with rations, bedding, and other essentials, which are distributed across the villages surrounding Dharali. The choppers also airlift critical and injured people to higher centres in Rishikesh and Dehradun.

Environmentalists believe that 'extremely heavy rains' up in the hills caused a landslide and flooding from the Kheer Gad. In their letter to the Environment Ministry after the Dharali disaster, Navin Juyal, a geologist, and Hemant Dhyani, convenor of the Ganga Ahwan Movement, wrote that there has been an influx of tourists in the upper Ganga catchment in recent years. To meet this demand, people have been constructing new hotels and home stays in the hills in defiance of all rules, they said. Both Navin and Hemant served as members of the expert body appointed by the Supreme Court after the 2013 Kedarnath disaster as well as the 2019 High-Powered Committee on the Char Dham road widening project.February 2021: An ice-rock avalanche occurred in the Tapovan area of Chamoli, resulting in a flood, claiming over 200 lives and destroying a hydropower project.October 2022: An avalanche at the Draupadi Ka Danda peak in Garhwal killed 27 experienced mountaineers from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi."Dharali and similar settlements along the Gangotri highway are built on the debris flow or alluvial fan deposit. In the upper reaches, say above 2,500 metres, the streams are fed by the cirque glaciers or ice packs and tend to carry large volume of paraglacial and landslide generated sediments," they stated. The two of them claimed that the disaster which struck the village was inevitable. During the Kedarnath disaster in June 2013 too, Dharali had undergone significant damage due to the sediments mobilised by the Kheer Gad, they said. Even after the 2013 disaster, people were not discouraged from going to locations near the stream. A reinforced cement concrete wall was constructed to prevent flood debris from entering the settlement. This encouraged people to build resorts and hotels next to the stream, which explained the extent of the damage, they wrote.

Landslides continued intermittently even a week after the Dharali tragedy on August 5, hampering relief work.Brijesh Sati, general secretary of the Uttarakhand Teerthpurohit Mahapanchyat, a body of priests of the Char Dham temples, believes that lives were saved because villagers had gathered at the Hardu Mela. "The aarti was being performed at the Mela site, so most of the villagers had come there. Had this been a normal day, the loss of lives would have been much higher," he says.

The debris that flowed into the village, which was surrounded by apple orchards, pine trees and mountains, also flattened the oldest monument, the Kalp Kedar temple. According to Hindu mythology, the temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, was built by the Pandavas during their exile. The story goes that Lord Shiva had refused to absolve the Pandavas of their indiscretions.Brijesh believes that the Kalp Kedar is now back to its original form. He says, "It is said that the Shivling (a symbolic representation of Lord Shiva, often depicted as a smooth, cylindrical stone with a rounded top) in this temple has been hidden beneath the ground for generations. It has never been fully seen. Several excavations were been done at this site, but the Shivling has always remained partially hidden. After the floods, Lord Shiva has again gone beneath the ground. Even the meaning of Kedar is sludge."

Coimbatore and the Freedom Movement



Prisoner no. 1541 arrived at the Coimbatore Central Prison on July 9, 1908. He spent two years, four months, and 22 days in the prison, a difficult period in his life. VO Chidambaram Pillai, the lawyer-businessman who took the British head on by starting the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, was arrested on charges of sedition and given two life sentences. Known as Kappalottiya Tamizhan, VOC grew to be a veritable leader in Thoothukudi, purchasing ships as a challenge to the monopoly of the British India Steam Navigation Company. After his arrest though, the company had to be shut down, and VOC himself suffered while in incarceration.Upon his arrival, VOC's hair was cut, and he was offered an aluminium plate to eat in; thick, white clothes to wear; his feet were chained, and he was lodged in a dark room and offered ragi koozh to eat. In a small memorial near the main prison building, is housed the wooden oil press that was operated by VOC himself. A board outside describes how the freedom fighter was tortured by the prison authorities.

'He was forced to pull the wooden oil press weighing 250 kilos in the hot Agni Natchathiram sun,' it reads, adding how even as he did so, VOC kept repeating 'Vande Mataram'. The leader was hence known with the epithet Sekkizhutha Semmal, that can be loosely translated to, 'the respected one who pulled an oil press.'Unable to see him suffer, his fellow prisoners staged a protest, resulting in the transfer of VOC to Kannur Central Prison in Kerala in 1910. Today, the memorial that houses the infamous press attracts political leaders who visit it on important occasions to remember VOC's contribution to the Freedom Movement.Mahatma Gandhi Memorial, Podanur

Until a few years ago, the tile-roofed house that belongs to the family of inventor and entrepreneur GD Naidu in Podanur, was just another building by the roadside. GD

How inclusive is the Election Commission of India's special revision exercise?

The ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar has led to a discussion that goes beyond a mere update to the voter list. As part of this initiative, discussions have been held on requiring certain proof of identity and citizenship — most notably, the birth certificate — for voter list verification. As the Election Commission continues to insist that its demand for documents is reasonable, and that most voters do have at least one of these documents, the issue has assumed critical importance, especially in light of the proposal to expand the SIR exercise to other States. Opponents of the SIR have been arguing that such an exercise will only lead to the exclusion of a large number of voters. In a democracy, the broadest possible inclusion of all eligible persons on the electoral rolls is the most basic requirement of a free and fair election system.

Therefore, finding out which documents voters actually possess, who are the ones less likely to possess such documents, and what might be the proportion of citizens likely to face exclusion from electoral rolls, are critical matters in assessing the feasibility and inclusivity of measures such as the SIR. In a country as socio-economically and geographically diverse as India, documentation access varies widely due to differences in administrative infrastructure, historical record-keeping, literacy levels, and public awareness. Above all, the State-level capacity and practice of record-keeping and the process of making documents easily available to citizens are variables that may result in exclusion in some States more than in others.Lokniti-CSDS conducted a study across the States of Assam, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal and the National Capital Territory of Delhi to understand the types of documents people possess and their views on making the birth certificate and similar other documents compulsory for voter verification.The larger picture

In spite of the ongoing debate in the media, only a little over one-third (36%) of respondents from our entire sample were aware of the SIR exercise or the documents that are required. More than half of the respondents said that they do not have a birth certificate. At least two in five did not have a domicile certificate or a caste certificate. As required by the SIR, those born after 1987 have an additional responsibility of having citizenship proof of at least one of their parents (and for both parents if born after 2003). Data from the survey show that this is a far more difficult condition to fulfil for the vast majority of the respondents. While at least two-thirds said they did not have their parents' birth certificates, a similar proportion said they had neither an Secondary School Certificate (SSC) certificate nor a caste certificate.

How does this lack of necessary documents pan out across the States?

Clearly, it will exclude some citizens and more importantly, citizens from weaker sections in particular will have to keep running from pillar to post to obtain the documents or face exclusion.India's no-document citizensRoughly 5% of respondents did not have any of the 11 documents mandated by the EC. While there are slightly more women than men in this category of "No Document Citizens", three-fourths of them are from the lower half of the economic order, while more than one-fourth are SC, and over 40% are OBC.The proportion of respondents having a birth certificate issued by a local or government authority varies widely, as highlighted in Table 4. At the lower end, Madhya Pradesh records only 11%, indicating large documentation gaps. Assam (36%) and Kerala (38%) fall in the mid-range, while Delhi (44%) and West Bengal (49%) are slightly better. Even in these States, at the higher end, at least half of the respondents do not have the document.Within households, as shown in Table 5, the coverage of birth certificates among members aged above 18 remains low. Only Kerala and West Bengal report that three in 10 households have all adult members with a certificate, while in Madhya Pradesh, just 2% reported the same, and close to four in 10 say none of the adults have it. Assam and Uttar Pradesh also show low full-coverage rates — 14% and 12%, respectively.Is it really easy to obtain a birth certificate? If the requirements were made mandatory, exclusion risks would be high in

House, however, is no ordinary place. It played host to Mahatma Gandhi during his visit to Coimbatore on February 6, 1934. Gandhi was travelling to collect funds for his Harijan Welfare organisation, and happened to halt there for the night.After going through his accounts late into the night and a two-hour sleep, he laid the foundation stone for Sri Ramakrishna Vidyalaya the next morning in front of the house. Back then, the Vidyalaya occupied the bungalow.Mahatma Gandhi Memorial at Podanur has been restored for public visit and features a library and photo gallery.GD House was renovated with its original architecture intact and was opened for the public as Mahatma Gandhi Memorial on October 2, 2022, the Mahatma's 153rd birth anniversary. It features an exhibition space that displays replicas of artifacts used by Gandhi, such as his charkha, footwear, spectacles, Ingersoll watch, among others. There are neatly-labelled photographs that detail his life story in a photo gallery in the premises. Photos from his childhood, his South Africa years, and his hand-written letters can be found as part of the display.A library houses books on Gandhi and there are also screenings of documentaries on his life. The Memorial also has a semi-open conference space, and a statue of Gandhi erected in remembrance of his visit 91 years ago.

Most of us in the city might have passed by the statue of trade union leader and freedom fighter NG Ramasamy at the Singanallur signal. He can be seen in a dhoti and kurta, a thundu over his shoulders. A Gandhian, he is an important leader from Coimbatore who participated in the Freedom Movement.The statue of freedom fighter and trade union leader NG Ramasamy seen at Singanallur in CoimbatoreA mill master himself, NG Ramasamy worked tirelessly for the welfare of his fellow mill workers. He formed a trade union that also fought against the British. Ondipudur was then a hub for trade union activity, and Ramasamy held many secret meetings at night in the outskirts of the neighbourhood to scheme against the British. Among the many plans he came up with, was disrupting flights at the Sulus Aerodrome and setting fire to liquor shops in the city.Despite his arrest the next morning, the trade union members acted as planned on August 13, 1942, torching a goods train passing through Singanallur on the way to Madras. Notably, after the aerodrome was set on fire, a thimiri vari was imposed on people in the locality.NG Ramasamy participated in the Quit India Movement and was a staunch follower of Gandhi's principles. He was imprisoned in Vellore, dying very young following ill-health, and sadly, was not alive to taste freedom from British rule.

some States, as highlighted in Table 6.In Kerala, four in 10 believe they would not be able to obtain the certificate, and in Madhya Pradesh, over one-third say the same. Even in States with somewhat higher current possession rates, such as Delhi and Assam, around one-fifth foresee being unable to comply. Difficulty in obtaining such certificates is most pronounced in Delhi (46% "very difficult"), followed by Kerala (41%), Madhya Pradesh (40%), and West Bengal (41%). Very few in any State report already having all necessary documents (Table 7).

When looking at other forms of identification, possession of educational and domicile-related documents varies sharply across States. The Class 10 certificate is most common in Kerala (85%), followed by Delhi (68%), West Bengal (66%), and Assam (61%). Uttar Pradesh is slightly lower at 56%, while Madhya Pradesh records the lowest share (40%). Domicile certificates show a similar disparity. The highest reporting is in Kerala (65%) and the lowest in West Bengal (35%), with Delhi at 57%, Uttar Pradesh (55%), Madhya Pradesh (51%), and Assam slightly lower at 49%. Caste certificates range from 65% in Kerala and 60% in Assam to just 19% in West Bengal, with about half of respondents in Madhya Pradesh (51%), Delhi (51%), and Uttar Pradesh (48%). National Register of Citizens documents are only relevant in Assam, where possession is near-universal (96%) (Table 8).Special-category documents such as forest rights certificates, land allotment certificates, or family registration certificates are unevenly distributed. Assam and Kerala show higher possession of some of these, while Delhi and States such as Uttar Pradesh have minimal coverage, implying that these cannot serve as universal substitutes (Table 9).

Government-issued identity cards or pension orders are most common in Kerala (74%) and West Bengal (50%), while it is 43% in Assam and 37% in Madhya Pradesh. Its possession is extremely low in Uttar Pradesh (10%) and Delhi (4%). Pre-1987 government or Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) identity documents are scarce in all States, with West Bengal recording the highest at 27%. followed by Assam (19%), Kerala (18%), Madhya Pradesh (13%), Delhi (3%) and Uttar Pradesh (1%) (Table 10).Overall, the possession of most documents varies sharply by State. Aadhaar is the only exception, being near-universal and consistent across regions, yet it was excluded by the EC from use in the SIR exercise in Bihar. This exclusion could create a significant barrier for voters, particularly in States where alternative documents are rare, region-specific, or unevenly distributed, making a fixed, nationally applied SIR-eligible list risk disproportionately disenfranchising certain populations.More difficult if born after 1987The absence of parental birth certificates is especially high in Madhya Pradesh (87% for both parents) and significant in Uttar Pradesh (72% mothers, 64% fathers) and West Bengal (68% mothers, 70% fathers). Assam and Kerala have comparatively lower absence rates, around 56% to 60% for mothers and 52% to 57% for fathers, but still represent more than half of the respondents. SSC certificate possession shows a similar pattern: Madhya Pradesh again records the highest absence (87% mothers, 78% fathers), with substantial gaps in Uttar Pradesh (68% mothers, 55% fathers) and Assam (64% mothers, 59% fathers). Kerala stands out with far lower absence for mothers (31%) and fathers (37%). For caste certificates, the highest absence is in West Bengal (76% mothers, 74% fathers) and Madhya Pradesh (72% mothers, 63% fathers). Assam and Kerala again record relatively lower absence rates (around 37% to 43%). (Table 11).Overall, the data show that in many States, large numbers of people lack these parental documents, particularly in Madhya Pradesh and parts of Uttar Pradesh, posing a serious obstacle in the SIR exercise, where such documents may be required to establish eligibility.Challenge of inclusivityThe above findings point to some important issues. As part of updating the electoral rolls and ensuring that errors of commission and omission are avoided, it is crucial that the review process offers a solution to the challenges faced rather than adding to the complications. Firstly, it is clear from the survey undertaken that there is significant variation across States on individuals having the documents required under the current SIR process

No deal or ceasefire: What the ‘failed’ Trump-Putin Alaska summit could mean for India



US President Donald Trump’s push for a ceasefire in Ukraine did not yield results, with Russian President Vladimir Putin clearly not yielding. In the run up to the highly talked-up meeting in Alaska, Trump rolled out the red carpet for Putin. In the end, though, the Russian President seems to have come out as a clear winner, having got his moment in the spotlight when he transformed from a global pariah to one who got to share the stage with the leader of the world’s most powerful country. In return, he gave pretty much nothing, at least for now, it would seem.

Previously Trump had threatened a tougher approach to Russia, with warnings of more sanctions if Moscow ignored calls for a ceasefire. He has not followed through yet, and it remains to be seen if he does anything now. There are no dates for a future summit, no agreement on whether anything at all was decided between the two sides. And in a briefing that followed, it was Putin who inexplicably got to speak first, and a weary-eyed Trump spoke later. The two leaders took no questions from the dozens of reporters present.

The apparent failure of the talks may come as a relief for Ukrainian and European leaders, who were worried that Trump would yield to Putin’s demands and follow up on his earlier talk of swapping land. New Delhi too had one eye on America’s frigid outpost over 15,000 kilometers away, to see if anything came out of the spectacle that could impact India’s prospects. President Donald Trump greets Russia’s President Vladimir Putin in Alaska on Friday President Donald Trump greets Russia’s President Vladimir Putin in Alaska on Friday. (Photo: AP)India caught in the cross-fire

There was some hope in India that if Trump and Putin reached a deal of some kind, that outcome would provide relief to New Delhi with respect to the secondary tariffs imposed on India. There was a belief here that the 25 per cent additional punitive tariff could possibly go away if the Trump administration believed that it was making some kind of progress with Putin on stopping the war. That hope, although relatively diminished, may still be there to some extent as both Trump and Putin—while saying there was no deal yet—indicated some progress in the Alaska talks. Only time will tell whether it was just lip service in front of the global media, or an indication that the needle actually moved a little. New Delhi would still be hoping for the best-case scenario—rollback of the 25 per cent additional tariff, or at least the postponement of the August 27 deadline when the extra tariff is slated to take effect.

On the flip side, there was also the worst-case scenario for India: if something came out of the meeting that looked really bad for Trump, personally or politically, then India would have to pay a price for that. This is despite the fact that the secondary tariffs, apart from being a tactic to exert pressure on Moscow through New Delhi, are also evidently about gaining leverage on India for not having concluded a trade deal with the US on Trump’s terms and for having publicly debunked the American President on his

claims of having brokered a ceasefire in the four-day India-Pakistan military conflict in May. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Moscow’s share in New Delhi’s oil imports was less than 2 per cent. With much of the West shunning Russian crude following the invasion, Russia began offering discounts on its oil to willing buyers. Indian refiners were quick to avail the opportunity, leading to Russia emerging as India’s biggest source of crude within a matter of months, displacing the traditional West Asian suppliers. Russia now accounts for 35-40 per cent of India’s total oil imports by volume. Notably, the US had encouraged India to buy Russian oil barrels at the time as it wanted energy markets to remain stable and well-supplied, according to various US officials who served in the Joe Biden administration.

But now, Indian refiners’ hefty imports of Russian crude have surfaced as a major irritant for a frustrated Trump administration in its relationship with India. Uncertainty on the road ahead There are two worrying statements for India that came in the context of the Alaska talks. Trump, in an interview with Fox News Friday, said that Russia “lost” India as an oil client (after he imposed secondary tariffs on New Delhi), while discussing on Friday the economic aspect of the Russian leader coming to the negotiating table. Earlier in the week, he’d said that the secondary sanctions on India had forced Putin to agree to the talks. “Certainly, when you lose your second largest customer and you’re probably going to lose your first largest customer, I think that probably has a role,” he said. India is Russia’s second largest customer for crude, while China, despite being the largest, has so far escaped secondary tariffs or sanctions. On Wednesday, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said that Washington could raise its current 25 per cent secondary tariff on India if Trump’s meeting with Putin failed to make headway on Ukraine. He also asked the European Union to impose a similar secondary levy on India. “We put a secondary tariff on Indians for buying Russian oil, and I could see if things don’t go well (in Friday’s Trump-Putin meeting), then sanctions or secondary tariffs could go up,” Bessent told Bloomberg Television. New Delhi has called the targeting of India over the purchase of Russian oil “unjustified and unreasonable” and said these imports began as its traditional supplies were diverted to Europe, with the US having “actively encouraged such imports by India for strengthening global energy markets stability”. India has maintained over the years that as a country that depends on energy imports, it will buy oil from wherever it gets a good deal, as long as the oil is not under sanctions. To be sure, Russian oil is not under sanctions, and is only subject to a price cap imposed by the US and its allies that applies if Western shipping and insurance services are used for transporting the oil. While there has been a slowdown in oil imports from Russia—India’s largest supplier of crude oil—in recent weeks, which was being seen by some industry watchers as a signal from New Delhi to Washington, officials in India’s refining sector maintain that the reduction is primarily due to discounts on Russian crude narrowing considerably, and not due to threats by the US or any other reason. Top executives at India’s public sector refiners have clarified that they have not received any direction or indication from the government with respect to oil imports from Russia, and the additional 25 per cent US tariff has had no bearing on their Russian oil import strategy, which continues to be guided purely by economic and commercial considerations. How India responds in the coming weeks and months would largely depend on how the US-Russia negotiations on Ukraine shape up, and the view Washington takes on its lately uneasy relationship with New Delhi.

US negotiators’ visit to India for trade talks uncertain, additional 25% US tariff to depend on geopolitics

Clarity on the next “negotiating round” with the US, earlier planned for August 25, would emerge “closer to the date”, a senior government official said on Thursday, reaffirming that India and US remain “engaged” at various levels including at the diplomatic and commercial levels. The official added that the levy of the additional 25 per cent penalty by the US — over and above the 25 per cent reciprocal tariff that is already in effect — would depend on “how geopolitical developments unfold” over the next few days. The official said they are going to keep a close watch on the developments around Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump scheduled meeting in Alaska to close a deal to end the Ukraine war.

“If you look at the US tariffs. One set of tariffs have come into force from August 7. Another set of tariffs have been announced and will come into effect on August 27. That has not come into force yet. The additional 25 per cent is not related to trade, it is because of geopolitical issues. Since a lot of geopolitical developments are happening, it [additional tariff] would depend on how geopolitics unfolds in the next 21 days,” the official said. “Last time when the negotiating team [for the US trade deal] had gone from India, they had decided that in the last week of August there will be another round of talks. We are fully engaged with the US on the trade negotiations...,” the government official said.

For the ‘negotiating rounds’, the official said that many things are happening in the US. “Russia, EU, Ukraine are coming. I think closer to the date, which is the end of August, you would be able to know how that round will be progressing,” the official said. The Indian Express had reported on August 8 that India-US negotiations for a trade agreement have hit a pause after US President Donald Trump dramatically escalated trade tensions between the two countries by doubling tariffs on India to 50 per cent. The arrival of the US trade team is uncertain, as no formal communication has been received by the US side, this paper reported, quoting government officials. The pause in talks, after months of discussions, had come after New Delhi decided to dig in its heels over market access in the agricultural sector.

Meanwhile, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has warned that the secondary tariffs on India could go up if “things don’t go well” during talks between Trump and Putin in Alaska on Friday. “I think everyone has been frustrated with President Putin. We expected that he would come to the table in a more fulsome way. It looks like he may be ready to negotiate. And we put secondary tariffs on the Indians for buying Russian oil. I could see, if things don’t go well, then sanctions or secondary tariffs could go up,” Bessent said in an interview with Bloomberg on Wednesday. When asked about China, the main buyer of Russian crude, Bessent said he is “not going to get ahead of the President, but the President is the best at creating leverage for himself, and he will make it clear to President Putin that all options are on the table.” On whether sanctions can go up or loosened, Bessent said, “Sanctions can go up, they can be loosened. They can have a definitive life. They can go on indefinitely. You know, there’s this Rus-



sian shadow fleet of ships around the world that I think we could crack down on.” He added that even as Trump is meeting with Putin, the Europeans “need to join us” and need to be willing to “put on these secondary sanctions.” Bessent recalled that at the G7 meeting in Canada this year, when he asked the leaders at the table whether they were willing to put a 200 per cent secondary tariff on China. “And you know what, everybody wanted to see what kind of shoes they were wearing.” He added that Trump is committed to ending the bloodshed in the Ukraine war. “It’s put up or shut up time. The President is creating his own leverage. We need the Europeans to come in and help create more leverage,” Bessent said. Responding to the tariffs, the Ministry of External Affairs has said that the targeting of India is unjustified and unreasonable. “Like any major economy, India will take all necessary measures to safeguard its national interests and economic security,” it said.

Streamline India’s tax regime

The Income Tax Bill, 2025, which aims to replace the Income Tax Act, 1961, was reintroduced in the Lok Sabha on August 11, 2025, and passed without any discussion, followed by its passage in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill proposes April 1, 2026, as its implementation date. Since the Income Tax Act, 1961, came into operation, it has been amended nearly 65 times, with more than 4,000 amendments, resulting in 819 sections and many exemptions and deductions. The Income Tax Act has been subjected to severe criticism due to the lethargy that has permeated this taxation regime. The core of transformation lies in enhanced stakeholder transparency, for which citizens provided 20,976 inputs, and these should be put on public dashboard. Moreover, in an era of accelerated technological advancements, green compulsions, and a thriving startup ecosystem, this decades-old law was increasingly out of touch with the economic realities of today’s era. The new Bill sets a direction for a streamlined, transparent, and improved tax regime to address the challenges and modernise the Indian tax system.

The organs you didn’t know one could donate while alive



When people hear “living organ donation,” they usually think of a kidney or part of a liver. However, medical progress now allows living individuals to donate parts of other organs. This can save lives without putting your own health at risk. The powerful impact of these donations is clear. Recipients benefit greatly, and donors often consider the experience as one of the most meaningful acts in their lives. Beyond kidney and liver, here are some of the lesser-known living donations. Currently, it is not possible to survive after donating an entire lung. However, in specific cases of severe lung disease, a patient can receive a lobe from a healthy donor. While the donor may face a slight reduction in lung capacity in some circumstances, the recipient can often stop relying on constant oxygen support, leading to a quick improvement in their quality of life. This procedure is

usually considered when no donor lungs are available from deceased individuals and the patient is in critical condition. A pancreas transplant, or a partial transplant, can be life-changing for patients with serious Type 1 diabetes, especially when they cannot control their blood sugar despite intensive treatment.

Donors go through thorough screening to ensure their remaining pancreas can still produce insulin and digestive enzymes at normal levels. Although recovery takes several weeks, the reward is knowing that you have given someone the chance to live without needing daily insulin injections. A segment of the intestine. Small bowel transplants are uncommon but can be essential for patients with severe intestinal failure who struggle to absorb nutrients through regular digestion. Donors can donate a section of their small intestine. The recovery period is longer compared to other procedures, but most donors manage well due to the intestine’s impressive ability to adapt.

In medical perspective, living organ donation is a serious commitment. Every potential donor goes through a careful evaluation process, which includes -- medical screening, to check for any existing health issues that could put the donor at risk. Psychological assessment, to ensure the donor is fully informed, emotionally ready, and willing to donate without pressure. Surgical Planning, in order to reduce risks and achieve the best outcomes for both the donor and recipient. Post-operative care is just as vital. Donors are closely monitored, tracking their physical recovery and offering long-term health checks. A doctor’s responsibility is to save two lives—the recipient’s and the donor’s. Living organ donation brings up important ethical questions. Informed consent is crucial; donors must understand the risks and long-term effects. Coercion, even from caring family members, is not acceptable. Donors need to be aware of possible health impacts, even if they are rare. As doctors, we must ensure that the decision to donate is genuinely voluntary and that no potential harm outweighs the benefits. These donations can mean the difference between life and death, or between being tied to medical machines and living fully. While living organ donation is not a decision to take lightly, it is important to learn about the intricacies of the procedure. Under the right circumstances, one may find that they can gift a life without sacrificing their own health.

Upasana Konidela takes us inside Ram Charan and her stunning South Indian-style Hyderabad villa

Upasana Kamineni Konidela, Vice Chairperson – CSR – Apollo Hospitals, and wife to Telugu superstar Ram Charan, recently opened up her house for a rare visit. The power couple, who generally like to keep away from public and media scrutiny, took host and interviewer Kamiya Jani around for a tour around their luxe Hyderabad house, flanked by manicured gardens and lush greenery. Soft white exteriors juxtaposed with glass accents give it a modern-day royal palace look. Despite being located in the middle of a bustling city, their home manages to retain a vintage, earthy feel. The fact that the couple enjoys nature is well reflected in the bits and pieces scattered all around. The seating area outside features plush patio furniture, perfect for enjoying breezy evenings and a cup of tea. Their garage is well concealed in the exterior with creepers replacing a heavy gate.

Step inside the house and you are welcomed by a living room that transports you back to a traditional South Indian home, with rich upholstered sofas and chairs and black and white flooring. Old school windows allow sun rays to peek through and bathe the room in light and shadows. A blend of modern design and a nod to their cultural roots. Catching a break in between the house tour, Upasana spilled the tea on who among the two can tolerate spicy food, and Charan’s love for rasam. “We used to go to the best restaurants in the world, and then he would come back and say, ‘Okay, now, I need Indian food, where are we go-



ing to find Indian food?’ She shared how any of his meals of the day have to be Indian, and South Indian in particular. From antique wooden artifacts, traditional showpieces, and unique collectibles sourced from travels around the world, the interior decor is an amalgamation of their travels and lived experiences. A larger-than-life black horse statue takes up space in the living room, complemented by lush green indoor plants, antique lamps, and an antique clock. The house also draws inspiration from South Indian culture, with ventilation and wooden panels that allow just the right amount of privacy while opening up the space to neighbours and guests. A grand dining hall features a large dinner table sitting underneath a chandelier, which throws off warm golden light.

Wolf spiders are already a force of nature but Australia takes it a step further with their two-toned ones

When you picture Australia’s wildlife, giant spiders and bold colours might come to mind. But among the lesser-known (and far more elegant) residents of the continent is a spider that doesn’t just live up to those stereotypes—it redefines them. Meet Hoggicosa bicolor, the two-toned wolf spider that’s been quietly crawling through the Australian landscape for well over a century. Originally described by British-born zoologist Henry Roughton Hogg in 1905, this species is part of the wolf spider family, or Lycosidae—famous for their sharp eyesight and fast, ground-hunting instincts. Unlike your average web-weaving spider, these hunters chase down prey with stealth and speed.

What sets Hoggicosa bicolor apart at first glance is its dramatic colouring—especially in females and younger males. Imagine a rich contrast of black and creamy white running along the body, making the spider look almost painted. Adult males, on the other hand, shed that striking contrast as they mature, taking on more subdued hues. It’s a rare reversal of roles in the animal kingdom, where males are often the flashier sex. This natural split in appearance isn’t just for show—it likely plays a role in how these spiders interact with their surroundings and possibly even with each other. It’s one of those subtle but fascinating quirks that tells you evolution had a clever plan. You won’t find Hoggicosa bicolor lurking in your average urban garden. These spiders seem to prefer the quieter side of life—sundrenched patches of earth along riverbanks, roadside verges, and open woodlands. Their range stretches across



large parts of southeastern Australia, including Queensland, Victoria, and even Tasmania. They favour firm, compacted ground where they can blend into their surroundings, making their bold markings as much about camouflage as they are about statement. Wolf spiders don’t rely on webs to catch their dinner. Instead, they pounce on prey with cat-like agility. Their eyes are some of the best in the arachnid world, and their speed gives them a serious edge. Hoggicosa bicolor uses both its keen senses and clever colouring to stay ahead—whether it’s stalking an insect or avoiding becoming a meal itself. Although they don’t attract the same level of attention as more famous Australian critters, Hoggicosa bicolor and its relatives play a crucial role in balancing ecosystems. They help control insect populations and are part of a much bigger story about biodiversity.

Indian boxing team for international meet in China

HYDERABAD: A 59-member Indian contingent has arrived in Urumqi, Xinjiang, China to participate in the 3rd “Belt and Road” International Youth Boxing Gala under-17, 19 and 23 age groups International Training Camp and Tournament, scheduled from August 15–30. The squad comprises 20 boys and 20 girls, supported by 12 coaches, 6 support staff, and 1 Referee & Judge (R&J). Organised by the Chinese Boxing Federation and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Government, the event begins with a training camp from August 17 to 25 in Urumqi, followed by the competition phase from August 26 to 29 in Urumqi and

Yili. Only under-17 boys and girls are representing India at this edition.

The boxers were selected from the 6th under-17 Junior Boys & Girls National Boxing Championships 2025, with gold and silver medalists in the Asian Youth Games weight categories and gold medalists in the Non-Asian Youth Games weight categories making the cut. Participation in this international training camp and competition is expected to provide India’s young boxers with valuable exposure and experience against strong global opponents.

How three images during England tour captured Indian cricket's seamless transition into Shubman Gill era



GNS News Agency, August 25

Three arresting images, during the 50-day chase of the Indian team all over England, came with a reminder of life's transient nature and the fleeting nature of fame. It also underlined the futility of overthinking potential problems. But before talking about the frames worth many thousand words, a bit of background. At the start of the five-Test series, India worried themselves silly. They weren't sure about dealing with the trauma of watching cricket without the two recently retired stars Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma on the field.

For over a decade, Virat and Rohit had decided the biorhythm of a nation, their batting form dictated a million moods. Early reports from England said that the usual fan frenzy was missing when India, under new captain Shubman Gill, landed in England. Very few turned up at the airport, not many were checking where they were staying. Did the 25-year-old with the face and voice of a teenager have it in him to lead India in a long away Test series against the tough-talking Bazballers? How all those fears turned out to be unfounded. Though the human race keeps forgetting, life keeps posting periodic reminders of its cyclic nature and the impermanence of things. There would be departures that threaten doom but this England tour was a reminder they could well be a false signal and turn out to be the foreword to a story of some grand arrival. Given Indian cricket's acrimonious succession history, this one was surprisingly without intrigue or public heartburn. Prince Shubman would settle on the throne with ease, as if he was born to rule. King Kohli, if reports are to be believed, called the new captain at his London home, for a meal. He would tweet a small loving note when he scored the double hundred. "Well Played Star Boy. Rewriting history. Onwards and upwards from here. You deserve all of this." Rohit Sharma would land up at The Oval on the penultimate day of the final Test and cheer for the team from the VVIP boxes. Everybody seemed happy, at peace with the role they were playing, or not playing. Indian cricket's transition was so seamless and smooth that it took some time for it to sink in. The three images helped.

First was a chance sighting. The intention, at the time of getting into the London tube, was to shop for shoes at an Oxford Circus shop that is known for deals to die for. Stepping out of Green Park station you run into the crowd flowing out of Hyde Park – London's sprawling meadow that's a melting pot of runners, walkers, joggers, picnickers, families with young kids and all kinds of outdoor enthusiasts.

Among the wave of happy smiling humanity was Rohit with his wife, kids and nannies. Bending to speak to his daughter, he seemed to be enjoying his family time. He was dragging a plastic kiddie scooter while wife was pushing a pram. Headed towards their place of stay, they had to pass the point where the tube commuters and those leaving Hyde Park converged. It was something very mildly, just as a concept, similar to the Churchgate terminus where the sea of office-goers meet the Azad maidan regular. Rohit could do in London and what he could never experience in

Mumbai. The mega stars seemed pleased to be one of the many enjoying a lovely day with their loved ones. The second picture is of Virat at Yuvraj Singh's charity dinner, again in London. He landed at the venue after the Indian team left early. Before he was invited on the stage, he seemed pleased to interact with other former Test cricketers like him. Around him were mostly his seniors, Virat seemed to be pleased to catch up with them. In the past there have been reports of bad blood between Yuvraj and Kohli. There were allegations that Kohli didn't want Yuvraj in the team on fitness grounds. But those seemed like bygones. Everyone had grown up and was ready to move on. Kohli too seemed happy with his life in London, he too has spoken about family time, parks and kids. Was he missing the Indian team? – the show's MC would ask him. "I just coloured my beard two days back... when you start doing that after every four days, it is time," he said, stroking his chin wisely. One of the greatest batsman to have played the game had found his closure.

London seems to be the perfect getaway, and permanent home, for Indian cricket stars perpetually under threat to be mobbed when in Indian public spaces. Celebrated painter Stuart Pearson Wright, who painted Sachin Tendulkar's stunning portrait that hangs at the Lord's museum, had a chat with the batting great on this issue. "There is one thing in our conversation that has stuck in my mind. He started by asking me where I was from. And at the time I lived in London. He said, 'I love London because when I'm there I can walk in the park with my children. It gave me a snapshot of his life in Mumbai,'" recalled Stuart. "He can't even leave his house without a team of people ... it's something that most of us take for granted, just the freedom to wander ... particularly with our families, our children. I didn't have children at that stage. So, I've got two kids now. Okay. And that resonated with me." London parks and kids – it seems Virat and Rohit have found their own new meadows and teammates. They would help them to get over the pain of missing the stadium, dressing room and green pitches. What about Shubman, the new inheritor of the crown of thorns? The third frame is of him from Manchester, midway through the series with England leading 2-1. In the previous Test at Lord's the skipper had lost his cool during the tense final minutes of the Day 4 when India wanted wickets and the English players were trying to waste time to avoid facing Jasprit Bumrah under fading light. That's when Shubman snapped and shouted at opener Zak Crawley. He told him to show some guts but in his utterance he mentioned 'balls' and how he needs to grow them. The English press had a field day. They headlined Shubman's sledge, not even missing the "“%&king” that the Indian captain had thrown in for impact. At the next press conference, Shubman knew what was coming. An English reporter did rake up the issue and the Indian captain's eyes lit up like he had spotted a ball that was well short of good length. "A lot of people have been talking about this so let me clear the air for once and for all" – it was the emphatic and authoritative 'enough is enough' prelude to his strong statement about English players abusing the spirit of the game that perked the ears of the reporters. Shubman's eyes blank and the nostrils flared, this was not the boy with dimples and rom com star looks. This was a batsman who had broken records, played a match-winning innings and stared the opponents in their eyes. This was a moment when doubts flew out the window and got lost in the muggy Manchester air. It was when you realised that you were watching a captain who would be at the helm for a long time. A relaxed Rohit at the park, a satisfied Virat on stage and Shubman's show of gravitas at the press conference helped to process the change. It helped convince the mind that Rohit isn't the captain, Kohli isn't the King. And henceforth, Shubman will do everything that Rohit and Kohli used to do.

'Tiger's name shouldn't have been removed': Sachin Tendulkar, BCCI should have said 'no' to renaming Pataudi Trophy, says ex-India pacer



GNS News Agency, August 25

Former India seamer Karsan Ghavri expressed his displeasure over batting legend Sachin Tendulkar's inability to "put his foot down" and object to the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) decision to rename the Pataudi Trophy ahead of the 2025 summer series against India. Established in commemoration of 75 years of India's first Test match appearance during the 2007 series, the ECB honoured the Trophy in the name of Iftikhar Ali Khan Pataudi, who represented both countries, and his son Mansur Ali Khan (aka "Tiger") Pataudi, who was regarded as one of India's finest-ever captains, leading in 40 of the 46 matches in his Test career.

However, with the name and the trophy coming under the ECB's discretion, the board decided to rechristen the series earlier this year, replacing Pataudi's name with Tendulkar and England pace legend James Anderson enjoying the honours. Speaking on a YouTube show with Vicky Lalwani, Ghavri expressed his disbelief over how such a move came into fruition. A new-look India Test side under Shubman Gill featured in the inaugural Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy, drawing level with Ben Stokes' England 2-2 in a thrilling five-match series. "That is very wrong. Number one, the Australia-West Indies series is always called the Frank Worrell Trophy. The India-Australia Trophy is always called the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. If its name changed, Gavaskar poore India ko hila ke rakh dega (Gavaskar will shake the whole of India)," Ghavri said. The 74-year-old Ghavri, who represented India in 39 Tests and 19 ODIs, criticised the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Tendulkar for their silence in rebranding the Pataudi Trophy. Tendulkar himself later revealed that he had proposed an idea to address the criticism over the renaming of the trophy, urging that the Pataudi Medal of Excellence be given to the series-winning captain. "In the same context, when it came to Sachin Tendulkar, that this trophy would

be changed, and this trophy would be named after you and Anderson, Sachin should've said no. Objection is different," Ghavri added. "In the first place, you should've put your foot down and should've said 'No, I don't want to use my name because Tiger Pataudi's name is already there. He's a legend of Indian cricket. If you want to give medals, use our name. Trophy's name should remain the same,'" Ghavri remarked.

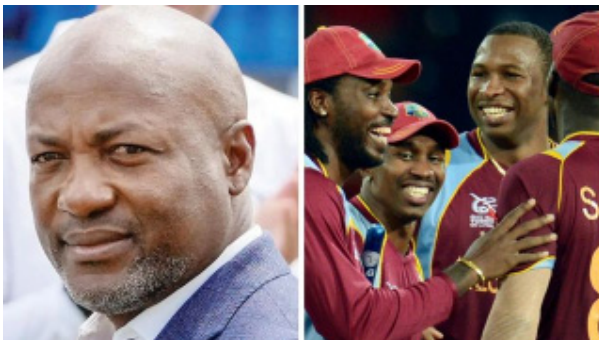
Ben Shelton storms into Cincinnati quarterfinals, will face Zverev next

GNS News Agency, August 25

Cincinnati: Ben Shelton continued his red-hot streak at the Cincinnati Open, where he ousted Czech Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 to reach the quarterfinals. The 22-year-old became the first American man to reach the last eight in Canada and Cincinnati in the same season since Mardy Fish in 2012. In a warm conditions in Cincy, Shelton's booming serve raced through the court. The lefty dropped just six points behind his first delivery, including a 141 mph ace when serving out the match. He crucially broke Lehecka's serve at 4-4 in each set and the fifth seed advanced after one hour, 21 minutes, ATP reports.

"I'm hungry. I'm in a good rhythm. I'm playing good tennis and my body feels good. I think the confidence along with not being satisfied, wanting to prove myself over and over every time that I'm out on the court, and having things that I want to get better at is a huge motivation for me and it pushes me every match," Shelton, who is on nine-match winning streak, said. Shelton has not dropped a set across three matches this tournament. The three-time tour-level titlist is determined to keep raising his level. "Tennis is a game that's not about perfection. You lose almost every week you play. You lose almost half the points you play. For me, I'm just trying to find those one-percents, get a little bit better every day," Shelton said. "I love playing here in Cincinnati, so it's a huge opportunity for me to compete against some of the best players in the world." Shelton will next aim for his maiden win against third seed Alexander Zverev, who leads the American 3-0 in their ATP Head-to-Head series, including two meetings this year. If Shelton defeats Zverev, it would also guarantee his Top 5 debut in the ATP Rankings.

Brian Lara urges board to rope in Chris Gayle, Kieron Pollard and Dwayne Bravo to boost younger generation



GNS News Agency, August 25

West Indies legend Lara said that modern-day stalwarts Gayle, Bravo and Pollard bring in a better understanding of the younger generation, and the trio could improve communication. (AP/X) West Indies legend Lara said that modern-day stalwarts Gayle, Bravo and Pollard bring in a better understanding of the younger generation, and the trio could improve communication. With West Indies cricket slipping into a deep-rooted crisis, batting legend Brian Lara has appealed to Cricket West Indies (CWI) to bring former cricketers Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo and Kieron Pollard on board to help elevate the standards of the current generation of players. "An honour to be called upon to contribute to the future of West Indies cricket, particularly at a time as pivotal as this," Lara said immediately after the end of the

CWI conference following the team's debacle against Australia, losing two Tests and five T20Is. Lara added, "I do not take lightly the responsibility of offering whatever insight or assistance I can. The opportunity to serve is something I embrace wholeheartedly, and I remain committed to the cause." Bring in Gayle, Bravo and Pollard Lara insisted that it is time for West Indies to opt for a more "expansive and inclusive approach", while stating that the issues did not just confine to on-field tactics and technique. "We must recognise that the challenges confronting West Indies cricket extend far beyond inconsistent performances on the field. They are deeply rooted in cultural, psychological, and structural shifts that have evolved over the past two decades. If we are truly committed to reversing this decline, then we must be prepared to draw from a wider pool of lived experience and contemporary insight," Lara wrote on Instagram. Lara said that modern-day stalwarts Gayle, Bravo and Pollard bring in a better understanding of the younger generation, and the trio could improve communication. "In particular, I believe former players such as Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo and Kieron Pollard possess a unique and timely perspective that can prove invaluable. These men have not only played at the highest level, but have done so in an era that reflects the modern athlete's psyche, ambitions, and motivations. Their proximity to today's players — in terms of generational alignment and shared dressing rooms — gives them an authentic understanding of what drives, distracts, or disillusion the modern West Indian cricketer.

Amid IPL trade talks Sanju Samson sparkles in KCA exhibition match, hits fifty in team's one-wicket win

GNS News Agency, August 25

Amid growing reports and chatter around his IPL trade/transfer from the Rajasthan Royals, India wicket-keeper Sanju Samson returned to competitive action through an exhibition match held at the Greenfield Cricket Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday. The Kerala Cricket Association hosted the friendly T20 match comprising the top stars from the state on Independence Day after the inauguration of the revamped floodlight system at the venue. Samson was named captain of the KCA Secretary XI, while veteran Sachin Baby led the KCA President's side. Playing his first match of note since a sour end to the IPL 2025 campaign with Rajasthan, Samson stood up in a tall chase of 185 against the President's XI. Moving down to No. 4, away from his recent position in India's T20I set-up, Samson had a tepid start in the chase. Walking in after the Powerplay, Samson slowly upped the scoring rate, slamming two fours and three sixes.

Samson eventually fell on 54 off 36 balls with three runs required in as many deliveries. However, the Secretary's XI squeezed past Baby's men by one wicket, thanks to pacer Basil Thampi's winning first-ball six. Samson had not featured in a match under the aegis of the Kerala Cricket Association following the controversies that had emerged last December when the 30-year-old was dropped from the Vijay Hazare Trophy after failing to turn up for a preparatory camp. While Samson was in contention to re-



turn for the Ranji Trophy knockout fixtures in February, the explosive right-hander was ruled out after a fracture he sustained in a T20I against England. The Indian Express had previously reported that Samson had expressed his desire to part ways with the Rajasthan Royals franchise. Reports have since emerged with Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders marked as firm favourites to sign him up. With reports suggesting that the Thiruvananthapuram venue could replace Bengaluru's M Chinnaswamy Stadium as one of the hosting venues for the forthcoming Women's ODI World Cup, the Greenfield Stadium received a massive upgrade comprising four towers and 392 LED lights on Friday. KCA secretary Vinod S Kumar said that the project was completed at Rs 18 crore rupees.

India's Divya Deshmukh to feature in Open section at FIDE Grand Swiss 2025 in September

GNS News Agency, August 25

India's teenage chess sensation, Divya Deshmukh, will feature in the Open section of the forthcoming FIDE Grand Swiss 2025 event in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, in September. Confirming her wildcard entry, Divya wrote on Instagram: "So, the news I posted yesterday about was that I will be participating in the open Grand Swiss this year."

FIDE confirmed that, in addition to Divya, Russia's Aleksandra Goryachkina will also compete in the Open category. "Both Deshmukh and Aleksandra Goryachkina, who have already qualified for the FIDE Women's Candidates, chose to request wild cards for the FIDE Grand Swiss Open rather than compete in the FIDE Women's Grand Swiss," read a FIDE post on social media.

After making headlines with her historic Women's World Cup triumph over compatriot Koneru Humpy to become a Grandmaster, Divya was in action during the Women's Speed Chess Championships this week. Taking on world no. 1 Hou Yifan in the quarter-finals, Divya went down after a stiff battle against the seasoned Chinese GM, losing out in the final tie-breaks after scores stood level at 9.5-9.5. Moving on to the Open category at the fourth edition of the FIDE Grand Swiss event, Divya will be up against a stacked field led by fellow Indians Arjun Erigaisi and world champion D Gukesh, who are seeded as the top two. 19-year-old R Praggnanandhaa and Nihal Sarin are the other



Indians among the top 20 seeds in the Open category.

International Master and leading chess pundit Tania Sachdev recently urged more women chess players to take up the Open category field to enhance their skills. "I feel like young girls should play in as many open tournaments as possible. They should train and compete against men and not focus only on women-only tournaments," Sachdev recently told reporters during the Chennai Grand Masters 2025. "But I also feel that there is no need to take away women's titles. Because, for many players, that is an aspiration, encouraging young girls to take up the sport. [Doing that] will take away an entire generation of chess players," added Sachdev.

Aussies mourn legend Bob Simpson's demise

GNS News Agency, August 25

HYDERABAD: Cricket Australia (CA) is mourning the passing of former Australian captain and coach Bob Simpson aged 89. One of the greats of Australian cricket, Simpson made an indelible mark on the game as a champion opening batter, brilliant slips fielder and handy leg spinner; and as a respected and long-serving coach including of the Australian men's team. Robert Baddeley Simpson played 62 Tests for Australia between 1957 and 1978 scoring 4869 runs at 46.81 including 10 centuries, 27 half-centuries with a top score of 311. He took 110 catches and 71 wickets at 42.26 with two five wicket hauls and best figures of 5/57. Simpson was just 16 when he made his first-class debut for New South Wales against Victoria. He went on to play 257 first class matches including for New South Wales and Western Australia, making 21,029 runs at 56.22 with 60 centuries and 100 half centuries and a top score of 359. He took 383 catches and 349 wickets at 38.07 with best figures of 5/33. An opener renowned for his sound technique and ability to accumulate scores under pressure, Simpson's epic maiden Test century – 311 in Australia's score of 8/656 in the fourth Test at Old Trafford in 1964 to ensure retention of the Ashes, is long-remembered. Captaining Australia in 39 of his 62 Tests, Simpson's long-time opening

partnership with Bill Lawry was recognised as one of the most significant in Australian Test history and included a record 382 run opening stand against the West Indies in 1965.

Simpson is renowned particularly for his decision to come out of retirement aged 41 to lead Australia upon the advent of World Series Cricket, captaining a team devoid of many established players to an eventual 3-2 home victory over India and on a difficult tour of the West Indies. As national coach from 1986 to 1996, Simpson was instrumental in the revival of the Australian team's fortunes, including victory in the 1987 World Cup, the 1989 Ashes series victory in England and an away series victory over the previously dominant West Indies in 1995. Simpson was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1978 and an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2007. He was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 1985 and the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame in 2006. The Australian team will pay tribute to Bob Simpson with a moment's silence before tonight's one day international against South Africa in Cairns and will also wear black arm bands. Mike Baird, CA Chair said that Bob Simpson was one of the greats of Australian cricket and this is a sad day for anyone fortunate to have watched him play or who benefited from his wisdom.

Married at 12 and mother at 17, Bollywood’s favourite mausi refused to play heroine, insisted on acting even after suffering paralysis



Any commercial film has hundreds of people working behind the scenes. Actors and directors are obviously the first ones to bear the fruit of their labour in the case of a Saiyaara or the first ones to be blamed in the case of a Loveyapa (Aamir Khan must have felt that one). The crew too get their due at some point, but there are certain faces that, despite being on the screen, aren't talked about that often. Some actors play very specific character roles, but the need for such roles keeps changing with the time. For example, the role of the comedic best friend died out by the time the 2000s rolled in, as the lead stars now wanted to dip their hands in all facets of the job, including comedy. But there are certain roles that are seeped so deep within the psyche of the Indian consumer that they can never be abandoned. The caring, mostly helpless, 'just wants her kids to be married' maternal figure is probably the best example of this, and Leela Mishra, the actor who played the character of Mausi (aunt) in Sholay, is its best vessel.

Let's give some background about Mishra herself, and then we will begin dissecting some of her best roles. She was born into a rich family, and her father was a wealthy landowner. She was married at the age of 12. Having received no formal education growing up, she was already a mother to two children by the time she was 17. Interestingly, this marriage, which was undoubtedly a product of what the society thought was status quo back in the day, gave her the chance to join the movie business, as her husband, Ram Prasad Mishra, was an actor. He introduced her to Mama Shinde, who was an employee of the Dadasaheb Phalke's film company, and Shinde suggested that Mishra should get into acting herself. Slowly but surely, Mishra started her cinematic journey, but according to an old interview, she never wanted to be the 'heroine' of any film.

Actor and host Tabassum once recalled on her YouTube channel that she had interviewed Mishra in the 70s, and that's when the actor told her that she found it very difficult playing the role of leading lady. Tabassum said, 'Mishra told me that, 'Because of the way I have been brought up and due to the values that have been instilled in me, I could never romance a stranger and confess my love for him. These things just don't sit well with me, and that's why I decided that I will only do character roles.' Now this revelation completely flips the entire script, because we see so many actors who wish to play bigger and more important roles, but here was Mishra, who refused to be the leading lady because she didn't feel comfortable. So this then becomes not a story of negligence, but a story of a choice and how that choice affected her career and made her into Bollywood's most beloved mausi, dadi and nani,.In the same interview, Mishra admitted that Sholay (1975) changed the game for her. Mishra was part of some of the most iconic scenes of the Ramesh Sippy film, including the much-remembered water-tank scene. But that was Dharmendra's time to shine, and he played the drunk, in-love, and quite honestly self-combustible Veeru to perfection. Despite all

the red flags, Mishra did what Preeti's father did in Kabir Singh, and she decided to give her blessings to Basanti and Veeru's union. However, the scene in which she truly shines is when she and Jai (Amitabh Bachchan) are having a conversation about Basanti and Veeru. The two begin a discussion which slowly paints a very grim and problematic picture about Veeru (like it mattered). The entire film is filled with action, drama, songs, and Thakur flaunting his cloak, and this particular scene is the perfect comedic relief. The two actors feed off each other's energy; that gives birth to a genuine and fathomable conversation. To this date, if you search for the scene on YouTube and read the comments, the people aren't talking about Big B; it's just Mishra. Her concerned and inquisitive demeanour goes insanely well with Bachchan's sarcastic and playful tone, and the two give a masterclass on how to create unforgettable moments without relying on explosions, bombastic BGM or slapstick.

Another great performance by Mishra comes in the Sai Paranjype film Chashme Buddoor (1981), where she plays Deepti Naval's grandmother. Apart from the fact that the film remains one of the best ways to transport yourself back to New Delhi of the 80s, it does this with the help of three great actors who play some of the most delinquent characters you will ever see on the screen. The trio of Farooq Shaikh, Rakesh Bedi, and Ravi Baswani play three roommates named Siddharth, Omi, and Jai, respectively. Mishra's still obsessed with getting the young girl from her household married, and while executing this obsession, she meets the three suitors. Director Sai, who herself is an inspiring woman, talked about Mishra in a recent interview with Filmfare. She said, "She was professionalism personified; I had never met anyone like her. I hope I am not doing her wrong, but she wasn't educated, but she knew every aspect and nuance of filmmaking. While shooting Chashme Budoor, she improvised the scene where she is climbing up the stairs to get to the house of the boys."

Mishra discovering the cave of the three men and then stumbling upon an issue of the Playboy magazine is comedic gold. Mind you, she was there to recruit Omi and Jai for a mission to bring her granddaughter and Siddharth together, and the ones who have seen the film must realise that their house didn't exactly give the best first impression (it did have an Amitabh Bachchan poster though). Sai had also revealed why she thought Mishra was the most professional actor she had ever met and told how the actor persevered through life-threatening conditions just to get the right shot. "I heard a story that when she was doing her very last film, she got a paralytic attack while shooting. Half of her body became paralysed, and the shooting stopped. People got in a frenzy and were making plans to send her back to Mumbai, but she said, 'No, we still have one shot left.' She told the crew to shoot her from the side that was still mobile, and she finished that scene." The director said that Mishra was taken to Mumbai right after that scene, where she passed away.Mishra's career was legendary, and her presence was almost ubiquitous. She was prolific and set in her ways, and she became every director's first choice for when certain roles came around. Her comments on never wanting to be a heroine are quite interesting if you think about it, because in most of the scenes where Mishra got even a modicum of a true chance to showcase herself, she was brilliant. She was the silent, strong type who didn't want to be in the spotlight, but her art made it clear that if she wanted to, she could. If a person who can't reach the peak decides to not climb the mountain, that's not a choice; that's the limitation of that particular being. But if the one who could climb it backwards and descend faster than air chooses not to, then there is virtue in that choice. Mishra could have gone down as one of the greatest, most loved actors of this industry; she just didn't want to, she never felt the need for it. For Mishra it was more important to be moral than successful, and while the beliefs that she was defending might have been forgotten now, the thinking behind their protection is commendable, and something we could do with a lot more of.

Are married Superman stars David Corenswet and Rachel Brosnahan having an affair? Her husband likes cryptic post, fuelling buzz

Actor Rachel Brosnahan's husband may have sparked rumours of trouble in paradise. Jason Ralph reportedly "liked" a cryptic Instagram comment about his wife and her co-star David Corenswet's rumoured affair. The pair recently starred in James Gunn's DC reboot of Superman, with Rachel as Lois Lane and David as the Man of Steel. Their on-screen chemistry grabbed attention, fueling speculation and rumours of an affair.

The Instagram post that Jason liked accused him of being a "cuckold" and suggested he should leave Rachel if she wanted to be with David. Instead of replying or ignoring it, Ralph simply left a "heart" on the post, which surprised fans. Some thought he was mocking the comment, while others felt it was disrespectful to Rachel. The Instagram post read, "It's genuinely sad to see your career being tucked out to be remembered as a cuckold because your wife couldn't handle herself with her co-actor. Like bro, let's have some self-love and stand up for yourself man, leave her to be with him if she wants that much at the end of the day."Minutes after Ralph liked the post, the comment section was flooded with debates. Some defended the chemistry between actors, saying it's normal and shouldn't be blown out of proportion. Others criticised him for engaging with the comment, claiming it only added to the speculation instead of shutting down the claims. Rumours of the affair began after a behind-the-scenes video surfaced. The off-camera clip, not part of the official promotional material, went viral. It showed Rachel and David continuing to kiss even after the director yelled "cut." Representatives for both actors have not commented, while social media has already started eye-rolling. Some even said that divorce laws in America should change to prevent men from enduring repeated public humiliation. Rachel had previously addressed the kissing scene herself. Promoting the movie with Gunn, she said, "It did help that our first scene together, we made out for like four hours and then shot the rest of it." Gunn quickly clarified, "On screen, yes!"

Rachel and Jason have been married since 2016, having met while working on a project together. In 2019, Rachel confirmed their marriage, clarifying they had actu-



ally been married for several years by then. "I have been quite private about my personal life for a few reasons. The first being that it's just that: personal," Rachel told People in 2019, while confirming her private wedding to Jason. "Jason and I also noticed early on that, while we are both the leads of successful television series, he has almost never been asked about our relationship, while I have been asked on almost every red carpet I have walked in the last two years. We both find this double standard problematic and frustrating, and opted to redirect those conversations to our work."David Corenswet, meanwhile, is married to Julia Warner, and the couple welcomed their first child in 2024. The actor revealed that he learned about his wife's pregnancy while he was preparing for a screen test for Superman. "She told me that she was pregnant two days after I found out I was going to screen test for Superman," Corenswet told People in June 2025. "For the first several months of her pregnancy, as is sort of protocol, we weren't telling anybody. We had these two quite huge secrets that we just had between the two of us. And that was intense."

‘Anu Malik would beg, borrow, and steal for work’: Brother Daboo denies career being sabotaged, admits Anu could ‘go to war’ over work



Apart from a stellar career as a big-time Bollywood composer, Anu Malik's life has been plagued by accusations of plagiarism and sexual assault. Moreover, the composer has often been accused of being manipulative and cruel towards his own family, especially his brothers Daboo Malik and Abu Malik. Daboo recently talked about how his exit from Bollywood came to be and whether his own blood, Anu, had anything to do with it.

Daboo said in a recent interview that he's glad his sons haven't inherited their uncle's ruthless hunger for success, which can often come at the cost of others. "One of the limitations of my kids is that they don't hustle for opportunities. In the case of my brother Anu, he will leave no stone unturned to get work. If he wants work, he will beg, borrow, steal and run. Diplomatically speaking, when you bring competition for work in a family, it brings distance between the

members. Everyone is competitive about their work, and everyone wants to surpass people in their lane and be better. Several music directors compete for a project, and if he gets it, he isn't just beating us to get there," he told Vickey Lalwani.Just a few weeks back, Daboo's son Amaal Malik had told Siddharth Kannan that Anu had sabotaged his father's career. He said, "They have had issues with each other on the professional front. Anu Malik was overly competitive with my father. He wanted to prove that he is the best composer from his family and often tried to sabotage my dad's career." Responding to his son's comments, Daboo said, "Over the years, I think I said a lot of things during family dinner, which the kids heard and interpreted in a way which isn't exactly right. It wasn't right for me to say those things because of the frustration that I felt. I would never target my brother. I still call him, and we talk about a lot of things. He called me when he read Amaal's comments and said, 'I keep hearing a lot of things from a lot of people, but when kids of one's own family say this stuff, it hurts more.' He told me that he doesn't want to be targeted unnecessarily, which is fair."

He clearly stated that his brother doesn't have that kind of sway in the industry, where he can just swoop in and take someone's work for them. "He isn't capable of sabotaging my career, or anyone else's for that matter. Both my kids have made over 120 songs in the past few years, and it's not as if the people in the industry have changed; it's the same Salman Khan, the same Bhushan Kumar, and the same actors and producers who have been working for the past few decades. It's not possible to sabotage someone's career, and once Amaal makes the song, the director would never choose anyone else. Anu loves me, and he is obsessed as a big brother, but whenever it came to work, family or friends didn't matter. He would go to war to get work," said Daboo.

Anita Advani claims that she secretly married Rajesh Khanna, met him even before his marriage to Dimple Kapadia: ‘He applied sindoor...’

Rajesh Khanna, India's first true superstar, led a life marked by dramatic highs and lows, both professionally and personally. At the peak of his success, he married actor Dimple Kapadia in 1973, just months before her debut film Bobby released, the couple eventually separated in the 1980s. What remains relatively unknown to the public, however, is his long-standing and deeply personal relationship with actress Anita Advani. Now, in an interview with Meri Saheli, Anita revealed that she and Rajesh Khanna were not only in a relationship but had also married privately.

"We got married privately, but in the film industry, no one talks about such things openly. Everyone says 'we're friends' or 'we're in a relationship' or something else. But it was already reported in the media that I was with him, so neither of us felt the need to go and publicly announce that we were married. We never felt that need." She went on to recount how the private ceremony took place: "We had a small temple in our home. I had a mangal sutra made, gold with black beads. He made me wear it. Then he applied sindoor and said, 'From today, you are my responsibility.' That's how our wedding happened one night, just like that."

In the same conversation, Anita disclosed that her relationship with Rajesh began well before he met Dimple Kapadia: "Yes, I came into his life before Dimple Kapadia. But we didn't get married at the time because I was so young. Eventually, I went back to Jaipur." Despite the deep connection she shared with him, Anita revealed the pain of being excluded from his final rites. She claimed she was barred from attending Rajesh Khanna's chautha (a prayer meeting held on the fourth day after death): "They had bouncers stationed there to stop me from coming in, I learned this from friends. When I told them I planned to go, they warned me that I would not be allowed inside. Still, they said, 'If anything happens, we're here for you.' But I was stunned and asked, 'Why all this?' Some of my staff and close friends encouraged me to go, even suggested I carry a camera and record what they do. But I thought, how can I do such a thing on such a solemn day? So I didn't go. I held my own chautha for him alone at a temple."

She broke down while sharing how deeply the incident affected her: "It would have been beneath my dignity to go there after everything. And frankly, it was beneath theirs to treat me that way, to call bouncers for me. One of my friends who did attend told me that they were blocking seats to ensure I wouldn't have a place to sit. They even told one of our family lawyers to 'handle me' if I showed up.



What does that even mean? I was shocked. I would never go to Kakaji's chautha to create a scene. I would never even think of it. That's why I didn't go. And what happened there? It was all just a show. No one had any real feelings for him."Another controversial moment unfolded at the time of Rajesh Khanna's funeral. Reports suggested that Anita attempted to climb into the vehicle carrying his body but was asked by family members to step down immediately. For nearly eight years, Anita Advani claimed she was in a live-in relationship with the superstar until his death in 2012. Describing herself as his "surrogate wife," she said she managed his household, the famed Aashirwad bungalow, and cared for him during his declining health. She also observed rituals like Karva Chauth for him. Following superstar's passing, Anita Advani filed a legal case against his family, seeking maintenance and formal recognition of her relationship with the late actor. He always remained married to Dimple, even after their separation, meaning that he couldn't legally have married Anita.

Amitabh Bachchan hails Abhishek as ‘pride and honour’

Mumbai: A proud father, Amitabh Bachchan has showcased his pride in his son Abhishek Bachchan, who was feted with the Best Actor for "I Want To Talk" at THE Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025, and said that he is the honour of their family.Taking to the blog, Amitabh expressed: "The happiest Father in the entire Universe ..Abhishek you are the pride and honour of the family .. you fly the flag that Dada ji established , and have carried it through with valour and hard work .. consistency, never giving in and an attitude of : "Tum mujhe jitna giraoge, main apne parishram se fir khada ho jaunga, aur, aur bhi uncha khada houna. Samay laga lekin tumne haar nahi maani. Apne bai par duniya ko tumne dikha diya."(The more you try to bring me down, the more I will stand again with my hard work—stronger, taller, and higher. It took time, but you never gave up. With your own strength, you showed the whole world your worth.)Amitabh called his son Abhishek his greatest gift.He wrote: "Melbourne mein tumhe sarvapratnam kalakaar ghoshit kiya gaya. Isse badha uphaar ek pita ke liye nahii ho saktal! (In Melbourne, you were declared the first and finest kalakaar. For a father, there can be no greater gift than this!)"The icon said that even though recognition for Abhishek's talent first came from Melbourne, he is sure that one day his own country will celebrate him.

"They that have recognised your talent and creative contribution, may have been several 'ocean waters' away



.. but trust me, in time our own surrounded 'water ways of oceans' shall envelope you in their surging waves .."Amitabh recalled how years ago when he praised his son's performance in a film, critics mocked him for being a biased father."Some years ago I had flown with surging ecstasy about a masterpiece film of yours and your performance .. They that command the informative wood derived paper work, had ridiculed me and my paternal flamboyance of selfish promotion .. and sniggered at my advertised pride ... The sly and scornful laugh has been silenced by respect and admiration, applaud and admiration," he said.Heaping praise on his son, Amitabh concluded: "Winning is the ultimate answer to many binding ropes and chains .. !The price of victory is high , but so are the rewards ... :