

# INDIAN CHRONICLE

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## NGT halts Kodangal lift irrigation project

Hyderabad, Aug.26 (NSS): The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has delivered a significant setback to the Telangana government concerning the Narayanapet Kodangal lift irrigation project. On Tuesday, it issued a directive stating that no work is to proceed at the site until environmental clearance is obtained. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has taken the Narayanapet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation project very prestigiously and this initiative is designed to supply irrigation water to the Narayanapet and Kodangal constituencies within the former Mahabubnagar district.

The Kankurthi reservoir will play a crucial role in this lift irrigation project. Its construction is planned to occur in two phases, with the government aiming to enhance the scheme's implementation capacity through the development of the Kankurthi Reservoir. The state government has planned to supply irrigation water to the drought-stricken regions of Narayanpet, Kodangal, and Maktal by drawing water from the Krishna River.

## FAKE LIQUOR LABELS AND HEALS SEIZED

Hyderabad, Aug.26 (NSS): The Telangana task force team busted a fake liquor brand labels and duplicate Heals (Holographic excise adhesive labels) racket at Kushaiguda of Malkajigiri division, and seized a flexo printing machine, plates of top liquor brands (Royal Stag, AC Black, Old Admiral etc.), 31,900 liquor pouches, and thousands of fake holographic excise adhesive labels. Two accused - Gaddameedi Prakash and Nenavath Rajesh were arrested, while the key accused Naveen Goud is already in custody in the Huzurnagar spurious liquor case. The arrested persons used to supply fake liquor packaging across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

The raids were conducted as per instructions of Excise commissioner Harikiran, director of enforcement Shawnawaz Khasim, Joint commissioner Qureshi and assistant commissioner P Pranavi.

## Telangana Congress leaders, including CM Revanth, join Voter Adhikar Yatra

## GOVERNOR AND CM EXTEND VINAYAKA CHAVITHI GREETINGS

## PM flags off first 'Made in India' e-Vitara, to be exported to 100 countries



Hyderabad, Aug.26 : Congress leaders from Telangana, including Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, on Tuesday participated in the ongoing Voter Adhikar Yatra (Voter Rights Yatra) in Bihar alongside Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha.

The gathering included notable figures such as TPCC president

Mahesh Kumar Goud, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Ponnampet Prabhakar, Seethakka, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, and Vakati Srihari, as well as MP Anil Kumar Yadav and DCC President Rohin Reddy. During the event, the Telangana leaders also met Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi at Paras in Bihar to

convey their support for the Yatra. This Yatra is part of the INDIA bloc's statewide initiative aimed at promoting awareness regarding electoral rights and addressing issues of alleged vote suppression, featuring significant involvement from senior leaders of Congress and other opposition parties. The 'Voter Adhikar Yatra,' spanning 1,300 kilometers, began on August 17 in Sasaram, Bihar. This journey will take place over 16 days, visiting more than 20 districts, and will culminate in a rally in Patna on September 1. The campaign, led by the Congress party, emphasises issues related to voter suppression and the importance of democratic accountability, presenting the Yatra as a "struggle to safeguard electoral rights."



Hyderabad, Aug.26 Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma conveyed festive greetings to the people on the occasion of Vinayaka Chavithi to be celebrated tomorrow (August 27). The Governor wished peace, progress, prosperity and happiness to the people of Telangana and the nation. He prayed to Lord Ganesha to remove all obstacles and guide the State on the path of unity and development. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy also extended heartfelt greetings, praying to Lord Vigneshwara to bless people with happiness, health and wealth. He urged the devotees to celebrate the festival with devotion and grandeur, and directed the police to ensure smooth traffic and safety during festivities.

GNS News Agency, August 26

Ahmedabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a two-day visit to his home state Gujarat, inaugurated and flagged off a 'Made in India' 'e-Vitara', the first global strategic Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) of Suzuki, on Tuesday. The inauguration by the Prime Minister took place in the presence of Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and the Ambassador of Japan, Keiichi Ono.

The rollout of 'Made-in-India' BEVs marks the country's big strides towards self-reliance and underscores the nation's ambitious plans to move towards green energy. Before flagging off the first unit of the e-Vitara, PM Modi also



termed it a 'special day' in India's quest for self-reliance and also informed that the production of hybrid battery electrodes will begin at a plant in Gujarat soon, giving a big boost to the country's battery ecosystem.

These 'Made in India' BEVs will be exported to more than one hundred countries, including ad-

vanced markets such as Europe and Japan. PM Modi will also inaugurate the next phase of India's battery ecosystem with the start of local production of hybrid battery electrodes at TDS Lithium-Ion Battery plant in Gujarat. The plant, a joint venture of Toshiba, Denso and Suzuki, will boost domestic manufacturing and clean energy innovation.

## Revanth Reddy faces heat in Bihar over old 'DNA' remark



GNS News Agency, August 26

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's maiden campaign for the Bihar Assembly polls has triggered sharp criticism, with people in the State questioning what they described as his "hatred" towards Biharis.

Reddy, who campaigned in Bihar on Tuesday along with Congress MPs Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, faced strong reactions to his past remarks against people from Bihar, including IAS officers serving in Telangana. His presence in Bihar drew flak from political leaders and citizens alike. Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor openly questioned Reddy's participation in the campaign. "Who is Revanth Reddy and what is his contribution to Bihar? He has abused Bihar people and said labour work is in the DNA of Biharis," Kishor said.

Reddy's controversial comments, made soon after assuming office in 2023, had sparked a political row, with parties including the JD(U) and BJP condemning them as divisive and arrogant. Criticising top officials who served during former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's tenure, Reddy had then declared: "My DNA is Telangana and it is better than Bihar DNA." Recalling the statement, Kishor warned: "What is his status in Bihar? If Revanth Reddy visits any village, people will chase him with sticks." He also targeted Rahul Gandhi for inviting Reddy to campaign, saying, "This shows Rahul Gandhi's mindset. He invited a person who abused Bihar people." Reddy wound up his trip and returned to Hyderabad late in the evening. Apart from accompanying the Gandhis, he barely addressed the public in Bihar.

## Congress government now uses PDS carry bags to push publicity for 'Six Guarantees'

GNS News Agency, August 26

Karimnagar: The State government has decided to distribute carry bags with the Congress Six Guarantees logo and photographs of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy along with PDS rice from September. The move comes after the government tried to draw political mileage from introducing fine variety rice through fair price shops and is now seeking to extend publicity of its flagship promises. The eco-friendly jute bags, with a capacity of 15 kg, will be filled with rice and handed over to card holders at PDS outlets. Though September quota rice has already reached ration shops, the bags are yet to be supplied. Each bag carries the Six Guarantees logo - Mahalakshmi, Gruhalakshmi, Yuva Vikasam, Indiramma houses, Cheyutha and Rythu Bharosa - besides photographs of the Chief Minister and the Civil Supplies Minister. A slogan, "Andariki Sanna Biyyam Praja Prabuthvamlone Sadyam" (fine variety rice to all is possible only under Congress government), is printed on the bags along with the tagline, "Pragathi Patham Sakalajana Hitham Mana Praja Prabuthvam."

## CONG GOVT ENSURING 365 DAYS WORK FOR WEAVERS: MINISTER TUMMALA

Hyderabad, Aug.26 (NSS): Minister for agriculture, handlooms and textiles Tummala Nageswara Rao today asserted that the Congress government is ensuring 365 days of work for weavers through various welfare schemes. About Rs. 1,000 crore has been released for the sector since the Congress government came into power, he noted.

Addressing a gathering in Rajanna Sircilla, Tummala highlighted the "Handloom Abhayastam Scheme", where the workers' savings are matched by the government's contributions, with Rs.290.09 crore deposited into 36,133 workers' accounts in 2024-25. Similarly, power loom workers benefited with Rs.34.07 crore deposits. Under "Netanna Bharosa", handloom weavers get Rs. 18,000 annually, and allied workers get Rs.6,000, with Rs.12 crore allocated this year. The "Netanna Bhadrata Scheme" provides Rs. 5 lakh insurance cover to weavers' families, with Rs.20.05 crore disbursed to 401 families so far, he explained.

The minister further said the "Indira Mahila Shakti Sarees Scheme" is providing continuous work, with two sarees given free of cost to about 65 lakh self help group (SHG) women annually. Establishment of "Konda Laxman Babuji Indian Institute of Handloom Technology", a yarn



depot in Vemulawada, is labelled as a special Telangana Handloom brand. The institute would provide a 3-year diploma course in the field of handloom textiles to the children of the weavers in the state and currently about 120 students were studying in the institute, he claimed.

## KTR criticises CM Revanth for prioritising Delhi dreams over urea shortage



: BRS working president KT Rama Rao strongly criticised Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and his cabinet members for their focus on "Delhi dreams" while farmers in Telangana are facing an increasing shortage of urea. He raised concerns about the government's priorities, stating, "Farmers are struggling here, but where are the Chief Minister and ministers? The issues are in Telangana, yet the CM and his ministers are in Delhi and Bihar!"

In a statement here on Tuesday, KTR emphasised the difficulties that farmers are encountering, accusing the government of neglect and pointing out that while farmers are desperately seeking urea, the Chief Minister and his team are occupied with travel to states conducting elections. He also expressed disappointment with Congress and BJP MPs for their lack of action regarding the crisis, stating, "Congress MPs are unaware when it comes to urea, and BJP MPs do not even attempt to address the situation." The BRS leader accused national parties of putting electoral gains ahead of the well-being of the people. He stated, "National parties focus on winning votes, while it is the people of Telangana who suffer."

KT Rama Rao cautioned that the public is attentive to the government's lack of action and the apathy of national parties. The BRS working president urged for prompt measures to tackle the urea shortage and resolve the issues faced by farmers. "The government needs to take rapid steps to address the challenges confronted by farmers," he emphasised, highlighting that citizens are scrutinizing the State's leadership and expect accountability.

## NCLAT judge alleges pressure from 'revered' higher judiciary member, recuses from insolvency case

GNS News Agency, August 26

New Delhi: In a rare incident, a judicial member of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has alleged being "approached by one of the most revered members of the higher judiciary", seeking an order in favour of a party, and has recused himself from hearing the matter. The Chennai-based bench of the appellate tribunal has even recorded the incidence in a two-paragraph order passed on August 13. Justice Sharad Kumar Sharma, the judicial member of the NCLAT, has recused himself from hearing the matter.

"We are anguished to observe, that one of us, Member (Judicial), has been approached by one of the most revered members of the higher judiciary of this country for seeking an order in favour of a particular party. Hence, I refuse to hear the matter," the NCLAT bench said in the order. It requested that the matter be placed "before the Hon'ble chairperson for nomination of an appropriate bench" for hearing. The two-member bench comprised Justice Sharma and Technical Member Jatindranath Swain. The bench was hearing an appeal filed by A S Reddy, suspended director of Hyderabad-based KLSR Infretech, which is facing Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

## Telangana Assembly Sessions likely from August 30 Commence

GNS News Agency, August 26

Hyderabad: At a time when the PC Ghose Commission has pointed fingers at BRS chief K Chandrashekar Rao and the government is looking to discuss the report in the Assembly, the big question in the political circles is whether KCR will come to the Assembly and defend himself. While many party leaders are tight-lipped on this issue, some leaders said in hushed tones that the BRS chief should effectively counter the ruling party in the Assembly with facts and figures.

However, some other party leaders said that Rao might not be keen on coming to the House for varying reasons, especially on health grounds. Moreover, senior leaders like K T Rama Rao and T Harish Rao could answer every question raised in the Kaleshwaram report dexterously, they added. The government is looking to discuss the Kaleshwaram report in the Assembly during a special session likely to be held during the third week of August. The BRS chief has skipped Assembly sessions since the elections except for important occasions like taking oath as a member and on the first day of the budget session. However, he did not participate in any discussion. Now with allegations levelled specifically against the Leader of the Opposition, there is pressure on the BRS chief to attend the Assembly and defend himself. A senior leader, who did not want to be named, said that KCR is the architect of irrigation projects in the state and it is better if he himself counters Revanth Reddy in the House instead of making others speak on his behalf.

## BJP will prepare Hindu vote bank in Telangana, says MoS Bandi Sanjay



GNS News Agency, August 26

Hyderabad: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said on Tuesday that the BJP will definitely prepare a Hindu vote bank in Telangana and unite Hindu society. He told media persons in Karimnagar that he won the election from Karimnagar Lok Sabha constituency with a Hindu vote bank. "I say this openly and proudly that I won because of Hindu votes," he said. The minister reacted strongly to the remarks made by state Congress chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud over BJP misusing religion for the sake of votes. "Election or no election, BJP always works for Sanathan Dharma and Hindu Samaj," he professed.

During the ongoing Janahita padyatra in Karimnagar, the Telangana Congress president threw a challenge to Bandi Sanjay to win the election without bringing in religion. He had said that begging for votes in the name of god was the bankruptcy of BJP leaders. "You wear caps, offer namaz and attend iftar parties for Muslim votes."



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Dharmasthala: Much ado about nothing, literally . . .

Acrimonious, combative politics too has its limits. But what has happened in Dharmasthala continues to be a hot topic in media circles, nearly six to seven weeks after the first sensational report about 'hundreds of bodies buried between 1995 and 2014' surfaced initially. While it was a trending topic all through these days as the case took its own twists and turns, it finally ended as a badly botched up build-up for a political battle which seemed a trump card in the hands of the ruling party but now boomeranging on it as a political controversy. It had all the elements of a cat and mouse game to begin with. A revered Hindu institution, the world over, Dharmasthala was accused of being a centre of a horrible controversy, which was the handiwork of a masked whistleblower who had started the blame game well. Aided by a legal protection which guaranteed his anonymity, his statements alleging that the bodies he had buried bore traces of strangulation and sexual assault hit the bull's eye, virtually immediately. Out came the rent-a-cause activists and bleeding hearts pleading for justice for the hapless female devotees subjected to such inhuman treatment.

The Mr. Anonymous (subsequently identified as Chinnaiah) also declared that he had to live in hiding for 12 years in neighbouring Tamil Nadu after all this devastation took place, which was what he saw and reported. There was no way that this sensational outbreak of 'exclusive' news items would not spiral out of control in the days that followed. After an initial round of wait-and-watch, but came the knives from both sides as the saffronites and secularists clashed with each other in a no-hold-barred fashion.

## ECO-FRIENDLY GANESHA DRIVE

Hyderabad, Aug.26 : The "World Environmental Organization", under the leadership of Dr CH Bhadra, has organized awareness seminars and distributed clay Ganeshas in various schools across Hyderabad city. Everyone should enjoy the festival while also protecting the environment. "Due to the Plaster of Paris idols, our lakes, rivers, ponds and oceans are becoming heavily polluted, endangering the biodiversity in these water bodies", he warned. Inaugurating the programme with Ganesha Pooja, performed by the chief guest Krishna Chamundeshwari Swamiji, Head of Chamundeshwari Peetham said that their Peetham has been conducting this wonderful initiative for over four decades with the slogan: "Let's worship clay Ganesha, let's worship Maha Ganesha" to promote environmental conservation among students and their parents. Renowned international environmentalist and Global Chairman of the Center for Environment Education and Research, Dr. Ramesh Naidu stated that the World Environmental Organization has achieved remarkable successes in its environmental protection mission. In 2017, a massive rally was organized near Khairatabad giant Ganesha idol with the slogan "Clay Ganeshas are sweet, Plaster of Paris idols – No, No". Following an appeal to the Khairatabad Utsav Committee, even the now world-famous Maha Ganesha idol was made with clay - a testament to the commendable efforts of the World Environmental Organization, he noted.

## CM REVANTH REDDY SHOULD APOLOGISE TO KCR: BRS LEADERS DEMAND

Hyderabad, Aug.26 : Several BRS leaders on Tuesday demanded that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy should tender an apology to BRS party chief K. Chandrashekar Rao for making derogatory remarks at Osmania University in the city. Yesterday, the CM said that there were 'human beasts' in the farmhouse. The BRS leaders condemned the language used by the CM against KCR. Leader of opposition in Legislative Council Sirikonda Madhusudanachari, former minister Jogu Ramanna and other senior leaders strongly condemned the CM's comments by terming them as "unbecoming of his office". Madhusudanachari alleged that Revanth was resorting to "derogatory language" as he had failed to fulfil his poll promises. The BRS leader described KCR as "another Gandhi" who had achieved Telangana state through non-violence, and accused the Congress for alleged "historical atrocities, Emergency excesses and the 1969 Telangana movement deaths". Former minister and BRS leader Jogu Ramanna said Revanth Reddy, while inaugurating various projects built during the previous BRS regime, was "damaging the state's reputation" by repeatedly targeting KCR. Other leaders, including G. Devi Prasad, Dudimetla Balaraju Yadav, Palle Ravikumar and Upendra Chari, said it was inappropriate for the CM to use such language at a premier institution like OU.

## M. Ghanashyam Krishna of UoH honoured as Academician of Asia Pacific Academy of Materials

Hyderabad, Aug.26 Professor M. Ghanashyam Krishna, Senior Professor in the Centre for Advanced Studies in Electronics Science and Technology, School of Physics, University of Hyderabad (UoH) has been elected as Academician of the Asia Pacific Academy of Materials (APAM) for his contributions to the areas of thin films, nanostructured materials and sensors. APAM is a scientific society oriented on problems of promotion of close co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region in the field of advanced materials with members from Australia, Russia, India, China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Prof. Ghanashyam Krishna is only the second faculty member of the University of Hyderabad after Prof. T. P. Radhakrishnan of the School of Chemistry to be elected as Academician of APAM.

## Let's work together to save people's lives. District Collector Jitesh V. Patil at the District Level Road Safety Committee meeting.““



\*\*\*\*\*Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 26, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has ordered the concerned officials to take strong measures to prevent road accidents in the district. The District Level Road Safety Committee review meeting was held at the IDOC office meeting hall on Tuesday under the chairmanship of District Collector Jitesh V. Patil. As part of this meeting, details were first sought from the concerned department officials about the measures being taken regarding road safety. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said, "Road accidents are increasing day by day in the wake of increasing use of motor vehicles in the district." He said that accidents are happening more and more due to the poor condition of vehicles, speeding, negligence of drivers, and failure to obey traffic signals. He said that the family members of those who are involved in accidents are becoming orphans. He said that the police, R&B, and medical department officials should work in coordination to reduce the number of deaths in road accidents. He said that cases should be registered against those who drive vehicles after consuming alcohol and steps should be taken to ensure

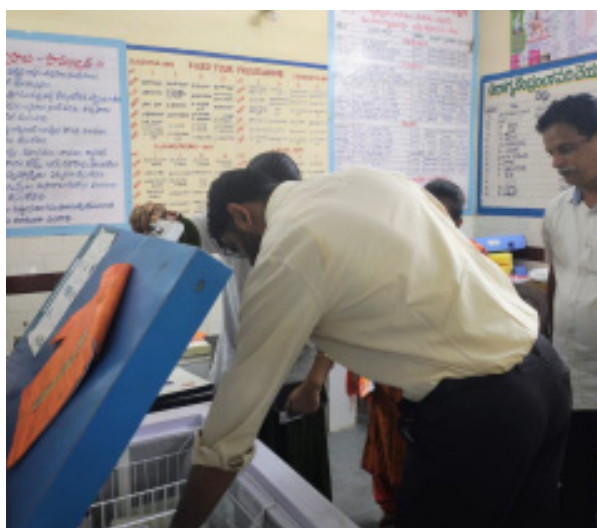


that they are punished in jail. He said that the places where accidents often occur should be identified and precautions should be taken to prevent them. He said that every two-wheeler rider should wear a helmet. He ordered the police department to conduct a special drive on these. He ordered the transport department to install rubber speed controllers and hazard indicators to prevent accidents on the national highway. He suggested that steps should be taken to install CCTV cameras at road junctions, dhabas, and restaurants. The collector said that all departments should work together in coordination to save the lives of the people. In this meeting, Trainee Collector Saurabh Sharma, Additional Collector Local Body Vidya Chandana, ZP CEO Nagalakshmi, Tribal Welfare E E Bhadrachalam Chandrasekar, R&B E E Kothagudem Venkateswarlu, DE Nageswara Rao, NP DC L. S. E. Mahender, Panchayat Raj E E Srinivasa Rao, Municipal Commissioner Ilandu Srikanth, Kothagudem Municipal Commissioner Sujatha, RTO Venkataramana, Kothagudem National Highway DE Shailaja, Medical Department Veerababu, Ramesh, and others participated.

## People coming to the primary health center should be provided with better medical care—District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.



\*\*\*\*\*Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 26, Indian Chronicle : District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has ordered the doctors to provide better medical care to people coming to the health center with various problems. On Tuesday, the Collector conducted a surprise inspection of the Urban Primary Health Center in Shekharam Banjara village of Palvantha mandal. As part of this inspection, the Collector monitored all the departments of the health center and closely examined the patient records, registers, drug stocks, vaccine safety, and lab facilities. During the inspection, the Collector spoke to the doctors and nursing staff and ordered them to treat the patients coming to the health center with courtesy and provide good medical care on time. He specifically advised the doctors and staff to be punctual and not neglect their duties with discipline. He clarified that special attention should be paid to pregnant women, young children, and the elderly, and that there should be no lapse in services. The Collector paid special attention to the cleanliness, distribution of medicines, and attendance records at the health center. He personally inspected the vaccine storage freezer and checked whether the cold chain was being maintained properly. He advised the medical staff to take precautions to prevent any lapses in vaccine safety. On this occasion, the Collector, who noticed the problem of roof slab leakage in the building, ordered the concerned officials to undertake immediate repairs. He wanted to provide all facilities so that the people do not face any difficulties. The Collector suggested that every primary health center in the district should become a reliable medical service center for the people and that the medical staff



should work with dedication. He urged the people to use government medical services with more confidence. Similarly, he clarified that strict steps would be taken to improve health services in the district, and the goal is to provide quality medical services to the people. He wanted to improve basic medical facilities in every village and provide better medical facilities to the people. Dr. Krishnakumari, PHO Srinivas, LT Shruti, Staff Nurse Ramulamma, Pharmacist Lalitha, Medical Assistant Sudhakar, Primary Health Center staff, and relevant officials participated in this inspection along with the Collector.

## Public participation is needed in environmental protection: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil“““

“ Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem Bureau, August 26, Indian Chronicle: The Telangana Pollution Control Board (TSPCB), as part of its annual programs aimed at environmental protection, successfully organized the distribution program of clay Ganapati idols this year as well. The main objective of this program is to increase environmental awareness among the people and reduce the use of plaster of Paris idols, especially on the occasion of Vinayaka Chavithi, said District Collector Jitesh V. Patil. On the occasion of Vinayaka Chavithi on the 27th, two thousand clay Ganapati idols were distributed free of cost in the Kothagudem and Palvantha areas. This program was undertaken on the orders of



the Member Secretary of the Telangana Pollution Control Board and the District Collector. As part of this distribution program, the idols were given to the people in front of Singareni School at Kothagudem Post Office Center. The program was

officially inaugurated by District Collector Shri Jitesh V. Patil I.A.S. He unveiled wall posters and clay Ganapati idols and explained the importance of environmental protection to the people. Telangana Pollution Control Board Environmen-

tal Engineer Shri B. Ravinder and other office staff participated in the program. Through this program, the message of celebrating festivals in an eco-friendly manner went out to the people. This is a crucial step in preventing plastic and chemical pollution.

## MAJOR DRUG RACKET BUSTED AT MAHINDRA UNIVERSITY

Hyderabad, Aug.26 : Sleuths of EAGLE team, Telangana have cracked down on a major inter-state drug peddling racket that was supplying narcotics to University students in Hyderabad. Based on a credible information, the team conducted a raid yesterday at Shivalayam colony, Suraram in Jeedimetla area. Four accused were arrested who included - Nevelle Tongbram, Ambati Ganesh, Boosa Shiva Kumar and Mohd. Ashar Jawed Khan and seized about 1.15 kg ganja, 47 grams of OG weed, and drug paraphernalia. The racket linked Delhi, Bidar and foreign suppliers, with at least 50 students under probe. Couriers like DTDC and Maruthi were misused to deliver narcotics. Students Bhaskar and Dinesh allegedly sourced MDMA from a Nigerian contact 'Nick'.

During the investigation of Malnadu Restaurant case, it was revealed that drug parcels were booked through one Rajesh Enterprises, a franchise of Maruti Couriers. Eagle Team obtained the list of parcels sent by Maruti Couriers to Hyderabad. On further investigations, it was seen that the receiver mobile numbers were that of one Indian Mobile number which was being used by a Nigerian from Nigeria. We reached a dead end due to the gross malpractice of Rajesh Enterprises (a franchise holder of Maruti Couriers). The same Nick had earlier provided Drugs worth Rs.1.3 Lakhs and 80,000 on two occasions to Surya of Malnadu case.

Based on the payments made through banking channels, the Eagle team could identify some 50 students who might have been consuming drugs. Investigations revealed that the accused had set up a well-structured supply chain connecting interstate suppliers, local peddler and university students. Drugs were procured from Delhi and Bidar, smuggled into Hyderabad through courier and transport networks, and then pushed into Mahindra University through student distributors. The probe further established that at least 50 student consumers were regularly buying and using drugs from this network, and legal action will follow against all of them under the NDPS Act. Besides Ganja and Weed, the sleuths seized multiple high-end smartphones which were used for handling orders, UPI payments and courier tracking. The seizures confirm that the accused were running a commercial-scale narcotics business with organized supply and retail mechanisms. A case has been registered at Cyberabad Narcotic PS under various sections of the NDPS Act. In the last one year, the EAGLE team has successfully conducted raids in various institutions and colleges - Symbiosis College, Osmania General Hospital (OGH), Guru Nanak Engineering College, Culinary Academy of India, Kundanbagh, Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology (CBIT), IIIT Basara, JNTU Jogipet, Medicity Medical College, ICFAI and Osmania University.

## Bandi Sanjay's attitude still reflects a corporator's mindset : Chamala

Hyderabad, Aug.26 Congress MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy has criticised Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay for his remarks about TPCC President Mahesh Kumar. He suggested that Bandi Sanjay has not yet moved beyond his experience as a corporator and still perceives himself as operating at that same level.

In a statement made on Tuesday, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy noted that while TPCC Mahesh Kumar Goud raised concerns regarding vote theft, Bandi Sanjay dismissed the issue and shifted focus to a different topic. "Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi provided a detailed PowerPoint presentation addressing vote theft. In one household, there are 100 votes, while 78 votes are registered under a pub's name. This information was presented alongside evidence, highlighting irregularities that also occurred in Bengaluru," Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy remarked. He raised concerns about the Union government's reluctance to engage in a discussion on the issue within Parliament. The Congress MP stated that if there were truly no incidents of vote theft, a debate should be held. He noted that during a press conference, the Election Commissioner spoke solely about political matters and failed to address any of the questions posed by journalists.

## Good Darshan or not: Beware of Scam!!

Hyderabad, Aug.26 : Unscrupulous elements are changing their tactics with each passing day off-late to cheat the gullible people, and loot their hard earned money. The latest one is in the name of the phone from Andhra Pradesh chief minister's office.

The calls are coming from numbers such as 8645319423, 8645361973, and others. The caller says in Telugu: "we are from Andhra Pradesh chief minister's office. If you had good Darshan, please press 1, if not press 2, or if you have any complaints about Prasadam, press 3. One person said he has received two calls today, and the number display that it is from Mangalagiri. Beware: these are calls from cyber crooks who plan to rob you of your money from bank accounts. As soon as you press the number as suggested by the scammers, all details about your bank accounts, etc., will go to their hands and they will loot your money. If you receive such calls or messages, don't press any number, but disconnect the phone and be safe. Also, inform 1930 the phone number and details

## ACB ARRESTS ENGG CONSULTANT FOR TAKING BRIBE

Hyderabad, Aug.26 Telangana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials on Tuesday caught red-handed Bandakindi Parushuramulu, Engineering consultant for MGNREGS, posted at the office of MPDO, Maddur Mandal in Siddipet district.

At 2.20 pm, the officer was apprehended while accepting a bribe of Rs.11,500 from a complainant for doing an official favour i.e. for verifying and completing check measurements of MGNREGS files and forwarding them to higher authorities for sanction of bills.



# Efforts by Officials Needed to Provide Basic Amenities in Remote Tribal Villages Bhadradri Kothagudem District Collector Jitesh V. Patil orders““



““Bhukya Ranjith Naik,Bhadradri Kothagudem Bureau,August 26,Indian Chronicle, District: The District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has ordered officials to provide necessary basic amenities to the tribals living in the dense forest areas of the Agency area, as part of the PM Dharti Abajan Rashtriya Gaurav Utkarsh Abhiyan scheme.““On Tuesday, he held a special meeting with ITDA Project Officer B. Rahul, Additional Collector Venugopal, and other officials at the Collectorate conference hall. During the meeting, they discussed the action plan to ensure the success of the PM Dharti Abajan Rashtriya Gaurav Utkarsh Abhiyan program. He then administered an oath to all the officials.““The Collector stated that special training has been provided to district-level officials at the NINSMIC center in Hyderabad to strictly implement this scheme in 134 villages across 19 mandals with a high concentration of remote villages in the Agency area. He instructed the district-level committee members to form block-wise committees at the Mandal level, provide them with training, raise awareness among the villagers about the required basic amenities, and prepare plans accordingly.““He urged them to conduct special camps through departments like Education, Medical

and Health, Rural Development, ICDS, Forest, Jal Jeevan Mission, Tribal Welfare, and RWS to provide the necessary basic amenities to the tribals in these villages, ensuring that all people benefit from these departments.““He suggested that the Mandal-level committee members go door-to-door to raise awareness about these schemes among the tribals and gather village elders and tribals to hold Gram Sabhas (village meetings). In these Gram Sabhas, they should be made aware of the basic amenities they need, especially education, healthcare, drinking water facilities, electricity, village roads, Podu land titles related to the forest department, welfare schemes through Tribal Welfare and Rural Development, and facilities for tribal farmers through the Jal Jeevan Mission. He emphasized that officials from every department must take special responsibility to participate in this program and take strict measures to ensure that tribals receive all kinds of facilities.““The event was attended by DRDO Vidyachandana, Assistant Project Officer General David Raj, DMHO Vijayalakshmi, DEO Nagalakshmi, AO Sunnam Rambabu, ICDS PD Swamalatha Lenina, RWS DE Harilal, and other departmental officials.

# Four Sentenced to Jail in Attempted Murder Case““

“““Bhukya ranjith naik,Bhadradri kothagudem Bureau,August 26,Indian Chronicle: Kothagudem Principal Assistant Sessions Judge K. Kiran Kumar on Tuesday sentenced four individuals to jail and a fine in an attempted murder case stemming from a land dispute.“On February 11, 2019, Talluri Bharathi of Sarapaka village in Burgampadu Mandal filed a police complaint. According to her statement, her husband Jagadeeswar Rao and brother-in-law Sarveswara Rao were attacked while working on their land. The attackers, identified as Sunnam Muthaiya, Sunnam Tulasamma, Sunnam Gopalakrishna (alias Gopal) of Iravandi village, and Komaram Anjaiah of Chinthiyya in Ashwapuram Mandal, along with others, assaulted them with knives and axes in an attempt to murder them. Bharathi stated that a long-standing land dispute was the motive for the attack.““Witnesses to the attack, including villagers Bhukya Balaji, Bhukya Zakri, Badawat Balakrishna, and Darawat Suresh, were interrogated by the police. The injured victims were immediately taken to the Burgampadu Government Hospital. The then-Sub-Inspector, B. Balakrishna, registered a case, and after completing the investigation, he submitted a charge sheet to the court. The court considered the statements of 14 witnesses during the



trial.““Following the investigation, Judge K. Kiran Kumar sentenced the accused—Sunnam Muthaiah, Sunnam Tulasamma, Sunnam Gopalakrishna (alias Gopal), and Komaram Anjaiah—to three years in prison and a fine of ₹2,000 each.““Another accused in this case, Sunnam Ajay, is a minor, and his trial is ongoing in the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court.“The case against another accused, Sunnam Chenchiah, was dropped after he died during the trial.“ The prosecution was led by Assistant Public Prosecutor K. Raja Rao. Court Nodal Officer D. Raghavaiah, Liaison Officer M. Srinivas, and Duty Officer PC J. Suresh assisted in the case.

# 50 Youths from Keshampet Join BJP, Urged to Promote Central Schemes“



“INDIAN CHRONICLE ““SHADNAGAR, August 26 ““In a significant boost to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Telangana, 50 young members from Keshampet Mandal, led by Pawan Kumar Reddy, left the Congress party and joined the BJP on Tuesday. The event took place at the Mahabubnagar MP office, where Palamuru Parliament Member DK Aruna and Rangareddy District BJP President Panthangi Raj Bhupal Goud welcomed the new members by presenting them with party scarves.““Addressing the gathering, MP DK Aruna emphasized the importance of ensuring that central government schemes reach every household. She urged party workers to work unitedly in the upcoming local body elections to secure victories from ward members to ZPTC positions, hoisting the BJP flag across the region. Aruna criticized the Congress party’s failures and called on members to educate the public about Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s welfare initiatives.““The group of new BJP members included Pawan Kumar Reddy, Krishna, Srisailam, Shiva, Raju, Mahesh, Mallesh, Ramakrishna, Ramu, Shankar, Vamshi, Praveen, Prasad, Rajasekhar, Siddu, Akhil, Mallayya, Ramesh, Pawan, Jangayya, and others. The event saw participation from BJP Mandal In-Charge Chendi Mahender Reddy, OBC Morcha District Vice-President Pasula Narsimha Yadav, Kanchukota

Mahesh, Karedla Narendra Reddy, Palle Anjayya, Shivaji, Tirupati, Satish, Dasharath, Mallesh, Bhaktavatsal, Ganesh, Vimal, Madhu, Kumar Gupta, Gopal Reddy, and other party leaders.

# Migrant worker from Bihar assaulted in Bengaluru ‘for wearing saffron towel’; 3 held

GNS News Agency, August 26 Three men were arrested in Bengaluru on Tuesday for allegedly assaulting a migrant worker from Bihar for wearing a saffron towel, the police said. The incident occurred at 9.30 pm on August 24, opposite the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation bus stand in Kalasipalya. The police identified the accused as Tabrez, 30, a mechanic from Nagawara, Imran Khan, 35, a radium-cutting worker from Banashankari, and Ajeez Khan, 47, a real estate worker from Tilak Nagar.

# CITU Dharna Demanding Wage Hike for Scheduled Workers at Yellandu Labor Office““

“ “ “ R a y a l a Kishore,Yellandu Constituency, August 26, Indian Chronicle:“A dharna was staged in front of the Yellandu labor office on Tuesday under the leadership of CITU, demanding wage hikes and basic facilities for scheduled category workers.““Shop assistants, petrol bunk staff, gas godown workers, mill workers, private school teaching and non-teaching staff, private hospital and lab workers, security guards, hotel and bakery staff, helpers, brick kiln workers, contract laborers, and construction workers participated in the protest.““The agitators demanded revision of wages, implementation of insurance, PF, ESI benefits, and immediate resolution of workers’ issues. A representation was submitted to the labor officer.““Speaking at the gathering, CITU district leaders Abdul Nabi and Talluri Krishna criticized successive governments for neglecting workers, stating that while prices keep ris-



ing, wages are being reduced under new government orders. They urged the government to revise wage structures and ensure fair support to the entire working class.““Leaders including Boyina Shekar, Kama Nagaraju, Mahmood, Shiva Krishna, Raju, Bhaskar, Satish, Pawan, Satyanarayana Kori, Suresh, Naresh, Aditya, Sailu, Daniel, and Dilip participated in the protest.

# BRAOU CELEBRATES 44TH FOUNDATION DAY

Hyderabad, Aug.26: Dr. BR Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Hyderabad, celebrated its “44th Foundation Day” at its campus here today. The event is marked with a lecture by Prof. Sanjeev Sonawane, Vice-Chancellor, YCMOU, Nashik, on “Transforming Open and Distance Learning through AI (Artificial Intelligence).” Participating as a chief guest, Prof. Sonawane said that “AI is reshaping ODL” through personalized learning, adaptive systems, immersive AR/VR technologies, and generative AI tools. He stressed that the ethical concerns such as privacy, equity and digital inclusion should be taken care. Calling the AI as a “catalyst for democratizing education at scale”, he urged for investments in training, connectivity and inclusive policy.BRAOU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani, presiding over the event, announced

the setting up of a “Digital Resource Center” and spoke about the initiatives like MoUs with Telangana Police and WE-Hub, micro-credential courses and collaborations for women empowerment. He cautioned that the private universities are sidelining ‘open education’.On this occasion, an MoU with Anuvadini translation services was signed, micro-credential courses were launched, and a collection of research papers were released. BRAOU’s “MBA (Hospital & Healthcare Management) was recently ranked among the top 10 in India by Academic Insights.Prof. Chakrapani donated 1,100 books to the University Library. Noted artists Ele Laxman and Dr. Gone Linga Raju were felicitated. Former VCs, senior professors, staff and association representatives participated. Floral tributes were paid to the portraits of Dr. BR Ambedkar and Prof G Ram Reddy.

# Farmers should not worry about urea supply : Minister Jupally Krishna Rao

Hyderabad, Aug.26 State Minister Jupally Krishna Rao on Tuesday conducted a review at IDOC on the current urea stocks and supply available in Mahabubnagar district. MLC Damodar Reddy, MLAs Yennam Srinivas Reddy, Madhusudhan Reddy, Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy, Parnika Reddy, Megha Reddy, Kasireddy Narayana Reddy, Dr. Rajesh Reddy, Dr. Vamsi Krishna, DCCB Chairman Vishnuvardhan Reddy, District Collectors, SPs, Agriculture Officers, and others participated in this review meeting .

Speaking on the occasion , he said that the district Collectors should coordinate with the district officials in the matter of the urea and ensure that there are no problems in supply. He advised the officials to take steps to immediately sell the urea stocks held by private dealers to farmers. He instructed the officials to register cases against traders selling fake seeds and fertilizer shop dealers , who are selling the urea at high prices and take action to punish them. He wanted the officials to take strict action against those , who create artificial shortages and spread rumors. Rao said that the Collectors should hold press meets to reassure farmers, disclose stock details and remove the anxiety among the farmers.He said that the respective district collectors should take steps to ensure that the stock held by the private dealers was supplied properly.

He said that Until the end of the ongoing crop season, an officer should be appointed for each fertilizer shop, P. A. C. S. and Agro Seva Kendras and added that they should

be given responsibilities . He said that such matters should be monitored closely. The Police officials have been instructed to coordinate with agricultural department officials and the officers appointed for each shop to ensure that there are no problems in the supply of the urea.He said that the officials should estimate the amount of the urea required by the farmers for the upcoming Rabi season, prepare proposals according to the actual figures and send an indent to the state government district-wise, and added that the state government would send an indent to the center based on those proposals.

Minister Jupally said that the allocation of the urea to the states was under the purview of the central government and alleged that the center, which should supply urea according to the needs of the states, was not cooperating with Telangana. “The center should supply 9.8 lakh metric tons of urea to Telangana for the Kharif season, but so far it has supplied only 6.6 lakh metric tons of the urea and more than 3 lakh metric tons of urea still needs to be supplied, due to which there is a shortage of the urea in the state,” he said . Rao was angry that the opposition parties were spreading false propaganda and throwing mud at the Congress government and added that they were spreading misinformation on social media against the state government .He said that the state government was taking all possible steps to increase the supply of the urea and urged farmers not to worry. He assured that necessary steps would be taken to meet the needs of the farmers.

# NGT takes suo motu cognisance of buffer zone reduction around lakes in Karnataka

GNS News Agency, August 26 The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has stepped in to scrutinise the Karnataka Government’s recent move to reduce the buffer zones around lakes and tanks, taking suo motu cognisance of a media report dated July 28 highlighting the Cabinet’s approval of revised norms for lake conservation.In notices issued on August 8, a bench of Justices Prakash Srivastava and A Senthil Vel sought responses from the environment department and made the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority, the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, the Bangalore Development Authority, and the Central Pollution Control Board parties to the case.

The matter, transferred to the Southern Zonal Bench, will be heard next on September 26.The tribunal’s intervention comes against the backdrop of the passage of the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority (Amendment) Bill 2025, which seeks to amend the Karnataka Tank Conservation and Development Authority Act 2014.The Bill, which was passed in the Assembly and the Legislative Council recently, introduces area-wise buffer zones for tanks and lakes, effectively moving away from the earlier uniform restrictions. According to the new table of norms, the buffer zone will now vary with the size of the waterbody—ranging from 0 m for very small tanks (up to 0.05 acre) to 30 m for large lakes of more than 100 acres. Mid-sized tanks will have proportional buffer limits, such as 3 m for tanks between 0.05 and 1 acre, 6 m for those between 1 and 10 acres, 12 m for tanks of 10–25 acres, and 24 m for those between 25 and 100 acres.This area-based categorisation marks a significant departure from the broader protective zones recommended in earlier guidelines, which many conservationists had argued were essential for maintaining the ecological health of lakes and their catchments.

Alongside buffer reclassification, the Bill introduces provisions to permit certain public utility works within tank areas and their buffer zones. These include roads, bridges, water supply lines, sewage treatment plants, underground

drainage systems, pump houses, electrical infrastructure, and allied works. Such permissions will be conditional on ensuring that the tank’s original capacity is not reduced and that there is no obstruction to the natural inflow or outflow of water.

Further, the Bill allows industrial, recreational, and commercial activities within these zones, again with prior approval from the authority. However, it clarifies that these permissions are subject to compliance with existing siting guidelines and pollution control norms under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Rules 1976. Healthcare establishments and new infrastructure projects, however, are excluded from these relaxations.

The Government has justified the amendments by citing the recommendations of a technical committee headed by the chief secretary. The committee had argued for more practical, size-based norms, contending that a blanket buffer requirement was neither feasible in urban areas nor necessary for small waterbodies. The Bill’s statement of objects and reasons notes that the aim is to facilitate development while still ensuring water conservation.Residents petition Governor Thaawarchand GehlotMeanwhile, a residents’ delegation under the banner of Bengaluru Town Hall met Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Monday and submitted a memorandum opposing the Bill. The group urged him to return the Bill for reconsideration, arguing that it weakens lake protection norms and violates constitutional and environmental safeguards.The memorandum highlighted that the Bill reduces lake buffer zones to a maximum of 30 m—far below what experts recommend. Hydrology and environment specialists, at a public consultation held by Bengaluru Town Hall on August 9, advocated 100–300 m buffer zones to safeguard ecosystem integrity, biodiversity, flood control, and water quality. They warned that the amendment would pave the way for reckless real estate development, endanger water security, and undermine the ecological balance of urban and rural lakes. The delegation alleged that the Bill was passed without adequate public or expert consultation, amounting to a violation of constitutional provisions related to environmental protection.











# Sanitation drives in Delhi’s slum clusters, commercial hubs, public toilets: How MCD’s campaign removed 12,000 tonnes waste daily



GNS News Agency, August 26

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi’s cleanliness campaign ‘Freedom from Garbage’ saw participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including school children, resident welfare associations, market traders, and youth. During this two-week initiative, which ran from August 1 to August 14, around 12,000 tonnes of municipal waste were collected daily, engaging more than 2.6 lakh residents. The corporation also conducted 917 drives in government and office premises, removing 10,692 kg of waste.

It conducted special sanitation activities across 1,138 public toilets to ensure hygiene and odour control, and 166

drives in slum clusters for targeted sanitation. Along with this, the drive also cleared 689.63 metric tonnes of waste along railway tracks, while commercial hubs saw 404 night-sweeping drives. The campaign also swept waste along the back lanes, parks and gardens with an average of 3,624 tonnes of construction and demolition waste collected daily.

Officials reported an increase of 1,000 tonnes in waste collection daily, bringing the total collection from 11,000 tonnes per day last month to 12,373 tonnes per day this month. In the lead-up to Independence Day, 138 plog runs were conducted, combining jogging with litter picking, engaging 16,691 youth and 1,26,881 students. To enhance the visual landscape of the capital, more than 35,000 posters and banners were removed from public spaces. Additionally, 160 wall beautification projects, including murals and thematic messages about cleanliness, were completed. Alongside garbage cleaning efforts, community awareness drives were held to discourage single-use plastics and promote compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules of 2016. Additionally, 29,737 plantation drives were carried out from August 6 to 8. The corporation stated that a clean city needs behavioural change. “The lack of civic sense among many in public who continue to litter garbage and use single use plastic remains a major challenge for the corporation,” read the official statement.

# Bhiwani teacher murder case: Kin demand ‘fresh postmortem report’; failure of law & order, says Former CM

GNS News Agency, August 26

The murder of a 19-year-old playschool teacher in Bhiwani’s Singhani village has caused public outrage in the area with protests entering its third day on Saturday and shopkeepers observing shutdown against alleged police inaction. While the protestors have lifted the blockade of the Delhi-Pilani road in Loharu, the deceased’s family has refused to claim the body. Manisha, a resident of Dhani Laxman village in Loharu, had gone missing on August 11 and her body was found on August 13. On Saturday, Manisha’s father Sanjay told the media: “The police personnel told me that if my daughter has gone missing, she must have eloped and she will come back in two days.” Manisha’s uncle Kuldeep also spoke to the media: “Protests will continue until all our demands, including the arrest of all the accused, are met.” He also demanded a different board of doctors to conduct a fresh and thorough postmortem, alleging that: “There were multiple lapses in the postmortem examination.” The family alleges that the post-mortem report doesn’t “conclusively” indicate the murder. In response to the ongoing protest, the Haryana government, on Friday, transferred Bhiwani SP Manbir Singh and suspended Loharu police station in-charge Ashok, Assistant Sub-Inspector Shakuntala, Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) team ASI Anoop, constable Pawan, and Special Police Officer (SPO) Dharmendra. The government posted Sumit Kumar as Bhiwani SP, who will supervise the investigation now. Reacting to the incident, former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said on Saturday: “All the accused should be arrested at the earliest and justice must be ensured for the victim’s family. We demand the strictest possible punishment for the culprits so that no criminal dares to even think of committing such an act in the future.” In Bahadurgarh, Hooda told the media: “Law and order has completely collapsed across Haryana. Traders are receiving threats on a daily basis. Businessmen, employees, poli-



ticians, common people, and even the police no longer feel safe. It seems like there is no government in the state, and criminals have taken control of the entire system... This crime has exposed not just the brutality of the culprits, but also the failure of the law and order system... If the police had acted in time, her life could have been saved.”

According to Manisha’s family, on August 11, she left home to go to a nursing college in Singhani to enquire about her admission. As she failed to return by evening, her father informed the police via Dial-112 (Haryana police emergency response support system). According to Manisha’s family, police accompanied them to the college to inquire, where they questioned three drunk men. The men denied seeing Manisha and said the college had closed at 1 pm. On August 13, a farmer found a young woman’s body in a field near a canal in Singhani. Police, who reached the spot after being informed, identified the deceased as Manisha. Police said that, “Special Investigation teams have been constituted to identify and nab the accused. We are in constant touch with the victim’s family members.”

# CBI arrests advocate, aide for seeking Rs 30-lakh bribe to secure favourable verdict in divorce case



GNS News Agency, August 26

According to the FIR, the case was registered under Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and Section 7-A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018). According to the FIR, the case was registered under Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and Section 7-A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018). The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Anti-Corruption Branch, Chandigarh, has arrested advocate Jatin Salwan and his aide on allegations of demanding Rs 30-lakh bribe to secure favourable judicial orders in a divorce case pending before a Bathinda court. As per a CBI official, Salwan was arrested and produced before the CBI court which sent him to judicial custody. Salwan’s aide Satnam Singh was caught by the CBI, following the complaint from Sector 9, Chandigarh, while he was allegedly accepting amount of Rs 4 lakh. He was also produced in the court with Salwan, and sent to judicial custody by the Chandigarh CBI court. According to the FIR, the case was registered under Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and Section 7-A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018). The FIR has been registered on a written complaint filed by Harsimranjit Singh, a resident of Firozpur. He alleged that Salwan demanded a bribe of Rs 30 lakh in exchange for ensuring a favourable order in the divorce case of his cousin, by misusing his personal influence on the judicial officer posted at Bathinda. The complaint was marked to Inspector Sonal Mishra, CBI, ACB Chandigarh, for verification. During verification, the allegations were substantiated.

In a recorded conversation, Salwan allegedly demanded Rs 30 lakh for securing the court’s order in favour of the complainant’s cousin. He reportedly insisted that the complainant pay the bribe in full but later agreed to accept Rs 5 lakh as the first instalment. Salwan informed the complainant that someone on behalf of the judicial officer would collect the token money. During the conversation, he is specifically quoted as saying: “rishwat de paisa kade ghat nahi

honde (bribe amounts are never negotiated or reduced)”. The CBI noted that the complaint and its verification prima facie disclosed the commission of offences under the BNS and Prevention of Corruption Act. In 2016, advocate Salwan was also arrested by the Chandigarh Police. At that time, the police had caught a businessman, Sukhbir Singh Shergill’s driver, with 2.6 kg opium and Rs 15 lakh in counterfeit currency. During investigation, it was revealed that this was part of a conspiracy to falsely implicate Shergill, in which Salwan’s name also surfaced. In this case, Salwan and others were booked under the NDPS Act, though he was later granted bail. The case against Salwan and the other accused is still pending before the High Court.

# Gunmen on motorbike open fire at YouTuber Elvish Yadav’s home in Gurgaon

GNS News Agency, August 26

Unknown assailants opened fire early Saturday morning at the residence of YouTuber Siddharth ‘Elvish’ Yadav in Gurgaon, the police said. No one was injured in the incident. According to officers, the firing was directed at the first floor and still area of the Sector 56 house, while Yadav, who lives on the second floor, was away from Haryana on personal business.

“Initial findings suggest that the attack was carried out by three individuals riding a motorcycle,” a police spokesperson said. “Further details are awaited as the police continue their probe into the motive and circumstances surrounding the incident.” Hours after the incident, one Bhau Gang, via a post on Instagram, claimed responsibility for the attack saying that they did so as the YouTuber promoted betting platforms. Gunmen on motorbike open fire at YouTuber Elvish Yadav’s home in Gurgaon pic.twitter.com/uvyJ8URdPK Today the bullets that were fired at ELVISH YADAV’s house were fired by us NEERAJ FARIDPUR and BHAU RITOLIYA, today we have introduced ourselves to him, he has ruined many homes by promoting betting and all these social media bugs are being WARNED, if anyone is found promoting betting, he can get a call or a bullet at any time, so all those who are into betting, be ready,” the post in Hindi read. A police official said they are looking into the authenticity of the post. The attack marks the second such episode in recent weeks targeting celebrities popular among the city’s youth. Last month, singer and rapper Rahul Fazilpuria came under fire near Sector 71’s Southern Peripheral Road.

# Six-month police op dismantles cybercrime syndicate in Delhi targeting SBI credit card holders



GNS News Agency, August 26

In a six-month-long operation, Delhi Police said it dismantled what it described as a major cybercrime syndicate that defrauded State Bank of India credit card holders across the country, siphoning off more than Rs 2.6 crore. The Police said Saturday that 18 people had been arrested, including the alleged masterminds, insiders at a Gurgaon call centre, SIM card suppliers, cryptocurrency handlers and field operatives. The network was operating out of Kakrola and Uttam Nagar in Dwarka, the police added.

The case began with a complaint tied to a call centre in Kakrola, police said. What followed was months of surveillance, analysis of digital trails, monitoring of cryptocurrency transactions and field operations before the scheme was exposed. The police said the syndicate was run much like a company, with divided roles and responsibilities. The scheme began with employees at a Gurgaon-based call centre, which had authorisation to handle SBI’s Card Protection Plan services. Those employees, police said, leaked customer information — including names, registered mobile numbers and partial card details — with particular focus on clients enrolled in the protection program. The data was passed on to callers who posed as bank executives. According to police, those callers used scripted conversations to persuade victims that they were dealing with genuine customer service representatives. “The pretext for these calls commonly involved offering assistance, renewal,

or verification of CPP benefits, thereby creating a facade of legitimacy and instilling trust in the victim,” said Vinit Kumar, deputy commissioner of police with the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations unit. During the calls, the accused deployed fabricated terms such as One Time Permission and Customer Value Verification Code to manipulate victims into handing over authentication details like one-time passwords and card verification values. “The process was executed in real time, allowing the syndicate to immediately utilize the stolen credentials to conduct unauthorized online transactions,” Kumar added.

The stolen data was then used to purchase electronic gift cards from platforms including EaseMyTrip and Wothoo. Those gift cards were sold to travel agents and intermediaries, who used them to buy domestic airline tickets. The gang was paid in cash or cryptocurrency, often in the form of Tether, police said. The cycle was repeated across multiple states, with callers deliberately avoiding customers in Delhi to avoid drawing scrutiny. In the crackdown, the police seized 52 mobile phones, dozens of SIM cards and sensitive customer data. Police identified the alleged ring-leaders as Ankit Rath, Waseem and Vishal Bhardwaj. Two call centre employees, Vishesh Lahori and Durgesh Dhakad, were accused of leaking customer information. Others arrested included operational handlers Rahul Vishwakarma, Pawan Bisht, Kailash Purohit, Himanshu Chugh and Ravin Saini, as well as finance operatives Akhilesh Lakhota and Harsh Chauhan. Another man, Shivam Sehrawat, was accused of supplying SIM cards to the group. “It is a matter of grave concern that sensitive data has been consistently leaked by employees of a major call centre,” Kumar said. He added that employees hired as far back as 2019 had been systematically leaking company data for years. “This alarming breach not only exposes the company’s inability to safeguard confidential information but also raises urgent questions about the adequacy of its security protocols and monitoring systems,” he said. “Given that the call centre holds critical data of major banks in India, this breach represents a severe financial risk and positions the company as a significant source of data leakage leading to cyber financial frauds.”

# London School of Economics graduate among 3 arrested in Delhi cyber-extortion case

GNS News Agency, August 26

The three accused in Delhi had sent a QR code for cryptocurrency transfer as part of the extortion attempt. The three accused had sent a QR code for cryptocurrency transfer as part of the extortion attempt. (AI-generated image) Three men, including a 31-year-old graduate of the London School of Economics, were arrested in Delhi on Thursday for allegedly attempting to extort Rs 2 crore from a businessman by using the name of a notorious gangster, the police said. The case began on August 11, when the complainant reported receiving an international WhatsApp call from an unknown number. The caller, identifying himself with the gangster’s name, threatened to kill the complainant’s children if the money was not paid. A QR code for cryptocurrency transfer was also sent as part of the extortion attempt, the police said.

A case under Section 308(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was registered at the Desh Bandhu Gupta Road police station. The cybercrime unit, working with the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre of the Ministry of Home Affairs, traced the call and the QR code. Investigators said the cryptocurrency trail led to Thailand, where the accused had purchased an international SIM card in an effort to disguise their location. “Simultaneously the field level surveillance team kept a close watch on the suspects’ addresses in India. Once the suspects landed back in India, they were immediately apprehended,” said Nidhin Valsan, deputy commissioner of police for the Central district. “During interrogation, the accused persons revealed that all three of them



were heavily debt-ridden, and to pay off their debts in an easy way, they chose this extortion plot. One of the accused, Sumit, who works in the jewellery business, was well acquainted with the complainant and his family. To instil fear, they used the name of a well-known gangster. The men were identified as Sumit, 42, a commerce graduate from West Punjabi Bagh; Prince, 35, a school dropout from Roshanara Road; and Nitish, 31, a master’s degree holder in software management from the London School of Economics who resides in Moti Nagar. Police said they recovered two mobile phones: one used to generate the cryptocurrency QR code and another to place the international WhatsApp call. The police added that the three conspired in India but travelled to Thailand to avoid detection before placing the extortion calls.

# Admit cards, candidate lists found after police arrest man accused of leaking Bihar constable recruitment exam

GNS News Agency, August 26

The accused, Rajkishore Kumar (35), carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh, said DIG (EOU) Manavjeet Singh Dhillon, adding that multiple admit cards and detailed candidate lists for various recruitment examinations were allegedly recovered from his possession. The documents seized included names, roll numbers, districts, dates of birth, exam dates, category details, and booklet numbers of several aspirants in exams such as the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET), the electricity department recruitment test, and the CSBC constable examination.

Sources say that Rajkishore is allegedly an associate of 2024 NEET-UG “mastermind” Sanjeev Mukhiya, who is also booked for orchestrating at least three competitive exam question paper leaks. According to the officer, more than Rs 1.5 crore was traced to his bank accounts, believed to be proceeds collected from candidates. The Central Selection Board of Constables had advertised 21,391 constable vacancies in the Bihar Police on June 9, 2023, for which more than 18 lakh candidates applied, and the written examination was scheduled across 37 districts on October 1, 7, and 15, 2023, in two sittings on each day. Following the October 1 session, allegations surfaced on social media platforms about large-scale malpractice, paper leaks, and “centre setting”. Several Telegram channels, such as “Bihar Police Question Quiz,” “Bihar Police Question Out 2023,” and “Prime Education (Leak Questions),” circulated answer keys. “The first-shift answer key was leaked on Telegram by 7:59 am, and the second-shift answer key by 12:05 pm, before the exam had even begun in certain centres,” according to the FIR lodged with the EOU. In light of confirmed irregularities, the exam scheduled for October 1 was cancelled by CSBC after investigation. Following multiple complaints to the EOU via email and helpline number, an official FIR was registered at the Economic Offences police station in Patna on October 31, 2023. Investigators had found that organised syndicates had been active since June 2023, promising candidates “guaranteed success” in exchange for payments ranging between Rs 80,000 and Rs 90,000. The groups circulated material using Telegram and WhatsApp, arranged electronic devices for cheating, and colluded with some exam cen-



tres, police said. Police said that multiple FIRs and arrests had earlier been made statewide in the same leak, and as the probe widened, it uncovered an organised racket targeting competitive exams.

# Andhra’s Polavaram project works face setback again: Upper cofferdam suffers major slide

Hyderabad: The Polavaram Project under construction on the Godavari River has once again faced structural issues, with a major slide reported at its upper cofferdam. The incident, reported on Friday, affected an area about 10 feet wide and 7 to 8 feet deep, marking yet another setback for the project. Repeated structural issues are raising concerns about its construction quality in the backdrop of recurring floods in the Godavari River.

The slide occurred on the upper side of the cofferdam, a structure designed to divert water until the main reservoir is completed. Emergency repair works were swiftly undertaken and officials claimed that the damaged section had been stabilised.

They said the issue was confined to the upper cofferdam only, with no downstream impact, as the buttress dam remained intact. The Godavari water level at Polavaram currently stands at ±28 metres







# The man who serves the dead at Chennai Central



Amidst the hustle and bustle at Chennai's MGR Central Railway Station, a man in his 50s sits quietly, absorbed in his phone. On this humid afternoon, he is wearing a yellow T-shirt and khaki shorts, a sandalwood tilak smeared across his forehead, with kumkum at the centre. Behind this unassuming exterior lies a lifetime of confronting the unimaginable. N. Selvaraj, known to all at Central railway station as "Central Body Murugan", has been retrieving bodies from the railway tracks for 36 years. For more than three decades, this station has been his place of work, his refuge, and in many ways, his home. His job is as grim as it is underappreciated, demanding a fortitude most would recoil from. Yet Murugan speaks of it with quiet pride, regarding it as his solemn duty.

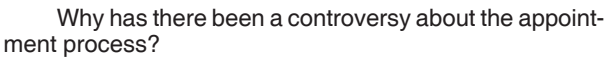
"I ran away from home when I was 15," he recalls. "I have been here ever since." Drawn into the company of older men who performed this daunting task, Murugan gradually became part of a world where death was a constant companion. His earliest days were far from easy. "The body parts would be scattered, I would not even feel like going near it," he admits. Senior hands advised him to drink before attending to a body, a habit he took up to dull his senses. Back then, the pay was meagre. "In total, they paid ₹8, and four of us would work together, so we shared the money," he says. The work was relentless, often with no rest between calls. Over the years, the payment structure changed, and the responsibility for paying him shifted from railway officials to the police. "Inspector James helped increase our pay from ₹100 to ₹500 for unknown bodies and ₹250 for known ones," Murugan recalls. Even today, the amount is inconsistent, and his monthly earnings hover between ₹5,000 and ₹6,000. The job includes lifting mangled remains, sometimes reassembling and stitching the limbs, and in one instance, placing brain matter back into a skull.

## What are the challenges confronting the EC? | Explained

The story so far: At a press conference on August 7, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi accused the Election Commission (EC) of massive electoral roll manipulations in Mahadevapura Assembly constituency in Karnataka. Mr. Gandhi's presser capped a series of allegations of deliberate voter roll discrepancies by the EC beginning with the Maharashtra Assembly polls. This, coupled with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, which is under judicial scrutiny, has put the poll body in the eye of a storm.

What is the mandate of the EC?

The Election Commission of India is a permanent constitutional body. The Constitution has vested in the EC the superintendence, direction and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to Parliament and the legislature of every State, and to the offices of President and Vice-President of India. Originally, the commission only had a Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). It was expanded to include two Election Commissioners (ECs).



Parliament passed a new law governing appointments to the EC, namely the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023. In accordance with the new law, the ECs are selected by a three-member selection committee, comprising the Prime Minister, a Union Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The Opposition had objected to this, saying the committee gave little room for dissent as the Prime Minister and the Union Minister are part of the government and could rule 2:1 in favour of their candidate.

Why is the EC's role in the spotlight?

Last year, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance had alleged that lakhs of new voters had been added to Maharashtra's electoral rolls in the time period between the Lok Sabha polls in May and the Assembly elections in October. The Congress had made the same allegations about Haryana, and later the Aam Aadmi Party alleged that voter rolls were tweaked in Delhi before Assembly polls. Even as the EC was grappling with these claims, CEC Gyanesh Kumar announced the SIR in Bihar which aims at cleaning up electoral rolls. The EC said the SIR exercise will be carried out across the country. At his press conference, Mr. Gandhi alleged large-scale discrepancies in the Mahadevapura Assembly segment under the Bangalore Central Lok Sabha constituency in Karnataka which he claimed helped the BJP win the seat. Mr. Gandhi said his party had carried out an investigation which spanned over six months before reaching this conclusion. He claimed that the voter list had manipulated entries, including duplicate voters, invalid addresses, and bulk registrations of votes at single locations. Following this, Mr. Gandhi reiterated his demand for machine readable voter rolls to be provided to all political parties for proper verification. The EC stated it has not been providing machine readable or "text-searchable" voter lists for concerns over cyber-security. The Supreme Court (SC) had upheld it in a petition filed by former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath in 2018.



When was a revision announced in Bihar?

On June 24, the EC ordered a SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar, barely five months before the Assembly elections. As per the SIR orders, every voter in Bihar who had not been listed in the 2003 voter rolls would have to submit documents proving their date and place of birth to determine whether they were Indian citizens. Those born after 1987 would also have to submit proof of their parents' date and place of birth. However, after the completion of the first phase of the SIR exercise, the EC released a draft electoral roll on August 1, which saw a drop in the number of voters in Bihar by 65 lakh. There were 7.89 crore voters registered in the 2025 electoral list before the SIR exercise; after the recount, it slid to 7.24 crore electors. The EC said that most of these 65 lakh "missing" voters have died; are registered in two locations; have migrated out of Bihar; or are untraceable. Civil society organisations, Opposition parties as well as NGOs approached the Supreme Court challenging the SIR



There is a ban on the production and use of single-use plastics in nearly 20 States. These are the category of plastic goods that are the least re-usable and difficult to recycle. Given that they constitute a waste management problem, India has a range of administrative process meant to push companies towards ensuring that a proportion of plastic that is used are collected back. However, this has had limited effect. India doesn't yet recognise the impact of plastics and chemicals on health. In international negotiations on the global plastics treaty, India and other countries have expressed reservations on including discussions on health in the plastic treaty and said that these are matters to be taken up at the World Health Organization. Thus, plastics is primarily a waste management problem, as far as India is concerned.

## References

## Corbyn | ft's second act

## It's second act



notes, was willing to tolerate domestic policy changes such as nationalising water companies but "if a government was going to compromise nuclear weapons or NATO or even support for Israel, those would be red lines". This foreign policy stance became a focal point of opposition, with allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party being used to attack his leadership. While Mr. Murray acknowledges there were genuine issues that needed addressing, he and others have argued that the controversy was inflated into a smear campaign with the aim of discrediting Mr. Corbyn's critique of Israeli policies. The accusations created a "moral damage" that paralysed Mr. Corbyn's leadership and drained energy from his team, even if they weren't the primary factor in his eventual electoral defeat.

The issue that ultimately proved fatal to Mr. Corbyn's leadership was Brexit. Initially, he managed to straddle Britain's fundamental political divide by promising to "respect the referendum result" in 2016 while delivering a different Brexit than the Tories. This position helped maintain support amongst traditional Labour voters in working-class constituencies who had voted Leave, while not completely alienating Remain supporters. However, mounting pressure from a newly energised pro-EU movement and overwhelming Remain sentiment among Labour members forced him into an increasingly untenable position. By 2019, Labour had committed to a second referendum — a stance that proved electorally catastrophic. As Mr. Murray predicted, this position cost Labour dozens of seats in traditional working-class strongholds and failed to deliver equivalent gains in Remain-supporting areas. The Brexit debate starkly exposed the deep division within Labour's electoral coalition, pitting its liberal and urban supporters against the party's traditional working class constituency in seats that voted to leave the EU. This split mirrors similar divisions affecting left-wing parties across the developed world, where globalisation has created divergent interests between different segments of the progressive coalition, particularly seen in the Democratic Party in the U.S. with the rise of Donald Trump's populism. Following Labour's 2019 defeat, Mr. Starmer systematically dismantled Mr. Corbyn's legacy within the party. Mr. Corbyn was suspended and eventually expelled, while many of his allies were marginalised or forced out. Mr. Starmer's centrist approach proved electorally successful in 2024, delivering Labour its largest parliamentary majority in decades. However, this victory hid a glaring statistic — Labour actually received fewer votes than Mr. Corbyn had achieved in his 2019 defeat, winning primarily due to the collapse of Conservative support and vote-splitting on the Right between the Tories and Reform UK. With a historically low vote share for a winning party, Mr. Starmer's government has struggled to maintain public support.



Murugan says he waited for that promise to materialise. "Now, I have given up hope that it would ever come true," he says. A railway official who has known Murugan for years says: "Murugan has been working here for many years. Nobody knows him outside of this railway station, but he is a person who truly deserves everything. Nobody can do what he does for a living. He has grown up here." The official explains that while Murugan is not an official porter, he sometimes carries luggage. His main work, however, is retrieving bodies, for which there is no official record. "The police receive 75,000 from the railway for shroud cloth and body bags, and from this, they give Murugan a portion. Labour cost is never included. The sad thing is there is no official record that he has served Chennai Central for 36 years doing the unthinkable." The certificate he received for his service during the 2014 bomb blast The certificate he received for his service during the 2014 bomb blast | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement This absence of documentation means no benefits, no pension, and no security for his family should anything happen to him. "People who do normal work get job benefits. But for us, if we lose our life, there is no one to take care of our family," Murugan says. Today, Murugan cannot work as before. A recent accident left him with a shoulder injury. When the police call him after a fatal accident or suicide, he now rings a few younger men he has trained over the years. If they cannot bring themselves to approach the body, Murugan steps in himself. The crowds at Chennai Central may not even notice him, but Murugan remains a constant presence there, carrying the weight of the dead so that the living may move on.



process.

What has the SC directed EC to do?

In an interim order on August 14, the Supreme Court directed the EC to publish an enumerated, booth-wise list of the 65 lakh electors not included in the draft roll. A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joyymalya Bagchi instructed the EC to provide reasons for the deletion — death, migration, untraceability, duplicate registrations — against each name. The court also asked EC to accept Aadhaar as proof of identity for an elector to include his or her name in the rolls. "That it has taken the Supreme Court to nudge the EC towards following basic norms of natural justice and fairness in the Bihar SIR exercise reflects poorly on an organisation which takes pride in collecting and counting every last vote. While errors can creep into voter lists over time, the answer to that is not mass disenfranchisement as the EC is attempting," said Alokh Kumar Prasanna, Advocate and Co-Founder of Vidhi Centre for Public Policy.

### What about migrant voters?

Migrant voters still have to return to the place where they are on the rolls to vote. This is a huge cost and depresses turnout, notes Mr. Prasanna. "There is no simple solution to this currently. The solution will have to be cheap, secure and transparent to work. Solutions which work in richer societies and for richer migrants will not work for poor migrants from States like Bihar," he added.

### What has been the political fallout?

After Mr. Gandhi's press conference, the Opposition jumped the ante and tried to hold a march from Parliament to the Election Commission headquarters. They courted arrest when stopped. The ongoing monsoon session of Parliament has also been virtually paralysed over demands for a discussion on the Bihar SIR. The government has, however, not conceded to the Opposition's demand. The issue has brought Opposition parties together and protests are likely to continue when Parliament reconvenes on August 18.

## Catholic priest's presence at RSS event in Pala raises eyebrows

At a time when the Catholic Church in Kerala has been voicing concern over attacks on Christians in central and northern States of India, the participation of a priest from the Pala diocese of the Syro-Malabar Church at an event of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has raised a few eyebrows.

Father George Nellikunnu Cherivu Purayidom, director of Care Homes project under the Pala diocese and Deepika Friends Club, presided over Shankholi 2025, a student summit jointly organised by the Poonjar, Meenachil and Ramapuram units of the RSS on Friday (August 15).

Addressing the gathering, Father Purayidom said that it was the generation inspired by India's spiritual heritage and the freedom struggle that went on to shape modern India. Today's younger generation must strive to project the nation's glory on the world stage, making effective use of organisation and technology.





# Atre, Pu La and now Kamra: A look at how satirists found themselves in political crosshairs in Maharashtra



The Shiv Sena’s ongoing campaign against comedian Kunal Kamra for his political satire, where he allegedly referred to party chief and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as “gaddar (traitor)”, has brought to light the delicate and uncomfortable relationship between the state’s politics and humour. However, Kamra is not the first humorist to clash with politicians in a state where interplay between politics and humour has long been an integral part of the conversation. Humorists in Maharashtra have frequently played a key role in both critiquing and reflecting on the political environment, often at the risk of facing backlash for their remarks.

One of the most prominent figures who drew political ire was Pralhad Keshav Atre (Acharya Atre), a journalist, politician, and humorist, whose sharp wit and satire led him into several run-ins with Maharashtra’s politicians, including Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray. Atre, through his writings in his newspaper “Maratha” and public speeches, often used humour to lampoon various political leaders. One of his most memorable satirical pieces targeted then President V V Giri, who had fourteen children. Maratha published a piece with a family photograph of Giri and his children, titled “Giri yanchi kamgiri”. The humour arose from the dual meaning of the word “kaam”, which could imply both “work” and “sexual desire”, while “giri” referred to the President’s surname and his performance (number of children).

Atre’s wit was also evident during the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement in the late 1950s. When the popular slogan “Mumbaicha samyukta Maharashtra zhalach pahije (Mumbai must become part of united Maharashtra)” came under criticism from then Chief Minister Yashwantrao Chavan. In response, Atre said: “Remove the “Ch” from your surname and see what remains—”vhan”, which means

footwear!” This became a staple example of Atre’s satirical brilliance.

Atre’s most significant verbal duels were with Bal Thackeray, whose rise to prominence in the state’s politics in the 1960s was met with Atre’s vocal criticism. Atre used satire to criticise the Shiv Sena’s regionalist and nativist stance, which he believed to be divisive. He was particularly critical of the party’s anti-migrant rhetoric and its aggressive political tactics. Through his columns and public speeches, Atre’s humour challenged the party’s approach to Marathi pride, highlighting the polarising effect of their politics. This conflict with Thackeray, a satirical cartoonist himself, led to Atre being depicted as a pig in the Shiv Sena’s mouthpiece Marmik, with the Shiv Sena founder even referring to Atre as “Worli cha dukkar” (The pig of Worli). Atre’s sharp criticism also provoked violent reactions from Sena activists, culminating in an assault on him. Despite their tumultuous relationship, after the Sena came to power, the Shiv Sena honoured Atre by erecting a full-size statue of him at Worli. Another notable satirist who faced the ire of Maharashtra’s political class was Purushottam Laxman Deshpande (Pu La Deshpande). Deshpande, known for his iconic contributions to Marathi literature and humor, found himself at odds with the Shiv Sena when he openly criticised political violence. In 1995, while accepting the Maharashtra Bhushan Award, Deshpande took a jibe at the growing “goondaism” in the state’s politics, condemning political parties that used hooliganism to gain power. Thackeray responded sharply, remarking that awarding him had been “their folly.” Thackeray hit back with his own wordplay, commenting on how “old bridges are falling, but new ones must come up”, a dig at Deshpande’s name “Pu La” (which resembles the Marathi word for “bridge”). However, the duo later buried their differences. A clash also occurred in 2003 over the satirical show “Ghadle Bighadle (Done Undone)”, which aired a skit that mocked NCP leader and then state Home Minister Chhagan Bhujbal. The skit, which parodied Bhujbal with a character named “ArmStrong” (a play on Bhujbal’s name), angered the NCP, leading to Bhujbal’s supporters vandalising the channel’s office. Bhujbal eventually resigned from the Cabinet in wake of the controversy. The latest episode in Maharashtra’s long history of political clashes derived from humorous comments involves Kamra and his outspoken remarks against Shinde. While many past conflicts between humorists and politicians have been resolved with reconciliations, the Kamra incident continues to simmer in Maharashtra.

# After Nalanda, another Bihar university now set to rise from the ruins

A decade after Nalanda University came up in the foothills of Rajgir, work is on to revive another ancient centre of learning in Bihar — Vikramshila. While the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has, since December last year, been developing the site of the ancient Vikramshila university to attract more tourists, the Bihar government recently identified 202.14 acres at Antichak village in Bhagalpur district for the Central university.

Though the Centre had approved the project in 2015 and sanctioned `500 crore, with the state government unable to identify a suitable land for the project, there had been little progress until now. Speaking in Bhagalpur on February 24, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “At its peak, Vikramshila University was a centre of knowledge for the world. We have already fused ancient Nalanda university’s glory with the new Nalanda University. After Nalanda, it is the turn of Vikramshila as we are opening a Central university.” On a weekend morning, workers at the site of the ruins of the ancient Vikramshila Mahavihar weeded out vegetation and carefully brushed off the soil to expose the underlying features. As part of the conservation and preservation process, the entire site has been divided into grids. Rising above the ruins, glistening in the sun, is a cruciform brick stupa, the centrepiece of the Vikramshila site. All around the stupa are the cells — 208 of them, 52 on each side — where student-monks of one of the most splendid universities of its times practised Tantrayana, the last of the three great vehicles of Indian Buddhism after Hinayana and Mahayana. Tantrayana, which incorporated tantric practices and rituals, is what the scholars at Vikramshila excelled in. Founded by Pala king Dharmapala of the Pala dynasty in the late 8th to early 9 Century AD, Vikramshila Mahavihar existed and flourished at the time of Nalanda. “While Nalanda university flourished from the Gupta Period (320-550 AD) to the 12th Century, Vikramshila thrived during the Pala Period (8th to 12th century). While Nalanda got more international fame for teaching varied disciplines, Vikramshila was the only university that specialised in tantric and occult studies. In fact, during Dharmapala’s reign, Vikramshila reigned supreme and is known to have controlled Nalanda’s affairs as well,” said ASI Superintending Archaeologist (. While Nalanda is the older of the two universities, at one point, the two centres of learning, who had a common patron in King Dharmapala, exchanged knowledge and even teachers, who were called Acharyas. At its peak, subjects such as theology, philosophy, grammar, metaphysics and logic were taught at Vikramshila. But the most important branch of learning were the tantras because Vikramshila flourished in the days of tantricism, when occult sciences and magic were subjects of study both in Buddhism as well as Hinduism. The university produced several eminent scholars, among them, Atisa Dipankara,



who played a key role in the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet. The institution prospered for about four centuries before fading out along with Nalanda around the 13th century — a decline that experts attribute to a combination of factors, from the rising of Hinduism and the decline of Buddhism to the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khalji.

The ruins — from the stupa to the remains of the cells and a vast library — bear witness to this rise and fall of Vikramshila. It was in the library, the ruins of which are at the south-west of the site, that teachers and students are known to have engaged in copying and translating manuscripts. According to ASI’s Sujit Nayan, the rectangular structure, now partially exposed, had a cooling system, as part of which water from the adjoining reservoir would be channelled into the building. “The cooling system was perhaps meant for preserving delicate manuscripts,” he said. Nayan said they are trying to preserve and conserve the site by maintaining the original form of the excavated structure. The initial excavation at Antichak was conducted by Patna University (1960-69), following which the ASI took over. A museum at the site displays several antiquities found during the excavation — from a carved limestone sculpture that depicts the eight major events of Buddha’s life to sculptures of Buddhist and Hindu deities such as Avalokiteshvara, Loknath, Ganesh, Surya, Vishnu, etc. Less than 3 km away, at Antichak village, the idea of a new university is taking shape. The Bihar government has approved `87.99 crore for land acquisition at Antichak village. Bhagalpur District Magistrate Nawal Kishore Choudhary said “The district administration has identified 202.14 acres, three km from the ancient Vikramshila site. Of that, 27 acres belong to the state government but are occupied by some families.” Bihar Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary said: “Project Vikramshila has started. The land acquisition process will be completed soon. Construction and repair of NH-80 (connecting Vikramshila to Bhagalpur, 50 km away) is on. The time is not far when the new Nalanda and Vikramshila universities will collaborate — just the way they did in ancient times.”

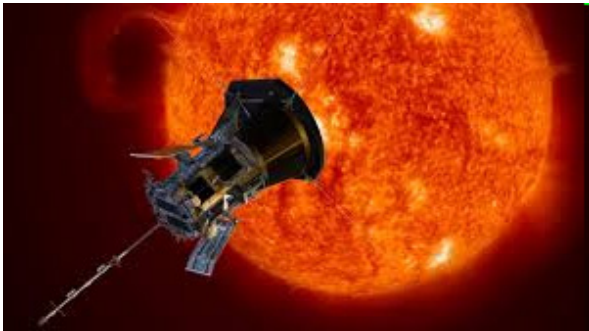
# Karimnagar’s Satavahana University gets engineering, law colleges

EMS News Agency, March 28 Karimnagar: The State government has sanctioned an engineering college and a law college to Satavahana University. Government orders regarding this were issued on Monday. Both the colleges will be operated from the academic year 2025-26. While the university college of engineering will be established at Husnabad, the university college of law will be on the Satavahana university premises. The Engineering college will have four B.Tech programmes including Computer Science and Engineering, CSE (Artificial Intelligence) Information Technology, Electronics and Communications Engineering. The college will be started with an intake of 60 students in each programme. Rs 44.12 crore was sanctioned for the construction of the college and other expenditure. Meanwhile, the three years LLB course will be



started with two sections with an intake of 60 students each and LLM (intellectual property law) with one section with an intake of 20 students. Rs 22.96 crore was sanctioned for the development of the law college.

# Why is the Parker Solar Probe trying to ‘touch’ the sun?



Among the various places humans have aspired to visit in the solar system, the sun remains the most foreboding. On December 24, 2024, NASA’s Parker Solar Probe arrived within 6.1 million km from the star’s surface. This is a short distance to be from the sun: no spacecraft has ever made such a close approach. Even the Parker Solar Probe took seven years to get here. The probe made another approach to the sun on March 22 and will do so again on June 19 this year. Sunlight is the main source of energy for earthlife. The sun’s core produces this energy using nuclear fusion. The star also has strong, dynamic magnetic fields crisscrossing its surface, and sudden changes in the way they’re arranged give rise to intense explosions called solar flares. Numerous electrons, protons, and heavy nuclei are spit out of the solar corona — the uppermost layer of the sun’s atmosphere — at about 900 km/s.

These particles carry an enormous amount of energy and sometimes rush towards the earth at tremendous speed in an event called a coronal mass ejection. Their effects on the earth constitute a solar storm, including electric grid failures, loss of telecommunication channels, and damage to the ozone layer. They can also damage instruments onboard satellites. To understand the dynamics of the corona over time and their effects on the solar system at large, scientists need to observe the sun closely. This is also why the Indian Space Research Organisation launched and is currently operating the Aditya-L1 probe, stationed at about 150 million km from the star. Around six decades ago, a scientist named Eugene Parker predicted the existence of the solar wind: a stream of charged particles flowing out from the sun in all directions. NASA named the Parker Solar Probe in his honour. The probe was launched on board a Delta IV rocket from Cape Canaveral in Florida in August 2018. Once in space, the probe’s maximum speed was an astounding 692,000 km/hr. To protect against the sun’s intense heat, the probe has an 8-foot-wide, 4.5-inch thick carbon-carbon composite material shield that can withstand

up to 1,370° C while weighing only 73 kg. This shield was built by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. It consists of a carbon composite foam sandwiched between two carbon plates. Its sun-facing side is coated with white ceramic paint to reflect as much sunlight as possible instead of absorbing it. Just a few metres behind the shield, in its shadow, the ambient temperature drops to 29° C, allowing the probe’s scientific instruments to operate without special provisions to maintain the temperature. The probe also has two sets of solar power arrays: one in the shield’s shadow that supplies power to the instruments and the other on the sun-facing side, which uses a special fluid pump to cool itself while powering the probe during its close approaches. Touching the sun

Curiously, the first obstacle to the mission’s success wasn’t the sun’s heat but its gravity. Since the probe flew through space at a very high speed, it had to decelerate significantly as it got close to the sun. If it didn’t, the sun’s gravity would have encouraged it to dive right into the star. This is why Parker’s first mission profile had the probe fly towards Jupiter and swing around the gas giant to achieve an optimal speed to fly towards the sun. This idea fell out of favour because of the large travel distance. The probe’s final mission profile was more direct: to use the combined gravitational forces of the earth and Venus to slowly spiral closer to the sun’s surface, in the process spending more than 2,000 hours flying through the corona and 24 times along the solar equator. The probe has four scientific instruments:IELDS, Integrated Science Investigation of the Sun (ISoIS), Wide-Field Imager (WISPR), and Solar Wind Electrons Alphas and Protons (SWEAP). IIELDS measures the electric and magnetic fields of the sun’s atmosphere; ISoIS observes the energetic particles that cause solar storms while SWEAP records their properties; and WISPR takes pictures as it passes through the corona. A ‘sun-touching’ event occurred in April 2021 when Parker moved closer to the sun than its Alfvén surface — the height beyond which the solar wind can’t affect the star’s surface — as ascertained by the IIELDS and SWEAP instruments. A fifth instrument, called a Faraday cup, lies outside the shadow of the heat shield and measures the density of ions and electrons in the solar wind. It is made of a molybdenum alloy with a melting point of 2,349° C. Blowin’ in the (solar) wind Parker data has already revealed many new details about the sun. The solar system is ceaselessly coated in dust particles created when space rocks weather and scientists believed the dust ought to be everywhere. Yet Parker revealed dust-free pockets near the sun. The probe also detected magnetic switchbacks: parts of the solar wind where the magnetic field (created by the collective of charged particles) abruptly bent back on itself.

# Is the new Income Tax law more accessible? | Explained

The story so far: The Income Tax Bill 2025, which seeks to replace the Income Tax Act of 1961, was passed by Parliament in the ongoing monsoon session. The Bill is significantly shorter, more concise, and has clearer legislation. However, it also incorporates some new elements that could be problematic.

Why was a new law needed?

The Income Tax Act, 1961 is outdated, and over the years has been amended numerous times, leading to income tax legislation in India being convoluted and difficult for an average citizen to understand. It also provided tax officials ample scope for harassment due to the discretion the law afforded them. In the new Bill, the number of chapters has been brought down to 23 from 47 in the Income Tax Act, 1961, and the number of Sections to 536 from 819. Moreover, in order to provide greater clarity, the new Bill has increased the number of tables to 57 from 18 and the number of formulae to 46 from six. Most importantly, the language has been greatly simplified. Jargon has been removed as much as possible, and examples have been provided where needed.

Why was a second version of the Bill needed?

The original version of the Income Tax Bill 2025 was introduced in Parliament in February this year. However, given the importance of the legislation and the ambitious nature of what it was trying to do, it was decided to refer it to a Select Committee. The committee was headed by Baijayant Panda and comprised Members of Parliament from across political parties. The Select Committee submitted its report in July this year. It was a mammoth report, and while it retained much of the language in the new Bill, it also recommended several changes. On August 8, 2025, the government withdrew the Bill to incorporate the suggestions made by the committee. The reason for the withdrawal was to avoid confusion through multiple versions of the Bill and to provide a clear and updated version with all the changes incorporated. That new version was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 11, 2025 and was passed the same day without debate.

What has changed in the new Bill?

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was clear from the outset that the purpose of the new legislation was to simplify and rationalise the existing law, not to change the rates or slabs through it. Those changes are made periodically by the government, such as in Budget 2025, when the income tax slabs and rates were substantially changed. Most of the changes will not impact the average income tax payer, and are more technical in nature. For example, the provisions of Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) and Alter-



nate Minimum Tax (AMT) have been separated into two sub-sections. However, the new law has codified some taxpayer-friendly features. For example, taxpayers can now update their income tax returns up to four years from the end of the relevant assessment year. This means mistakes can be rectified without any penalty or tax incidence. Notably, the period for which assessments could be reopened has been reduced to five years.

Are all the changes positive?

No. The provisions relating to searches by income tax officials have been tweaked to include some concerning features. The original Income Tax Act 1961 required anybody found to be in control or possession of any documents in electronic form to provide the authorised officer “the necessary facility to inspect such books of account or other documents”. It also authorised the tax official to “break open the lock of any door, box, locker, safe, almirah or other receptacle” in case their keys were not available. The new law takes these concepts a step further. It now says that anybody in possession or control of electronic documents or information must not only provide the tax officer “reasonable technical and other assistance”, but also share passwords. As the law sets no limits on what electronic information the tax officer may need to assess, this means the assessee must also share passwords of social media and personal emails, if required. Further, the law also empowers the tax official to “override the access code to any computer system” if the password is not provided.

What is the justification?

While a few members of the committee called for the dilution of these sections in their dissent notes, the Select Committee as a whole accepted the government’s argument that a lot of relevant financial information is shared over messaging services or stored in personal emails, and so recommended that these sections be included.

# NCC cadets to undertake fresh expedition soon, peaks shortlisted: DG

New Delhi: A newly constituted NCC expedition team consisting of 20 cadets, is set to embark on a mountaineering adventure post monsoon when they will attempt to scale a peak in northern India, the Corps’ director general said. Two peaks have been shortlisted by the NCC — Mt Yunam (6,111 m) in Himachal Pradesh and Mt Shalang Dhura (5,678 m) in Uttarakhand. “One of the two peaks will be selected based on weather conditions. The team has equal number of male and females cadets, and the planned mission is in line with promoting a spirit of adventure among the youth,” DG of NCC, Lieutenant General Gurbirpal Singh said.

“We are now looking for the next expedition. We are still to decide on a peak, but it will be either Mt Yunam located in Lahaul in Himachal Pradesh or Mt Shalang Dhura, located in Uttarakhand,” Singh said. An NCC team has earlier scaled Mt Yunam but, it will be the “first attempt” by cadets to summit Mt Shalang Dhura, he added. This will be

a post-monsoon expedition, so depending on rainfall and other weather conditions, it is likely to begin around either end-September or October, he added. The NCC DG said the Corps has already put together a team for this upcoming expedition. Around fifteen days ago, nearly 150 cadets had come to Delhi after being shortlisted by their respective directorates, and from that pool, the 20 cadets were finalised, he said. The NCC has 17 directorates spread across the country, with a total sanctioned strength of 20 lakh. It has two divisions — Junior Division and Senior Division. After they join, in the first year of Senior Division, the cadets are made to train at various training academies as part of different courses, and mountaineering is also part of their training. After selection for a mountaineering expedition, they get trained for 7-10 days in Uttarakashi generally, but due to natural disaster there recently, “we are trying to do this at another place in Uttarakhand”, the DG said. Lieutenant General Singh expressed pride that 2,000 NCC cadets along with 500



## Heart attack risk goes up by 41 per cent in women who are stalked: Harvard study reveals new risk



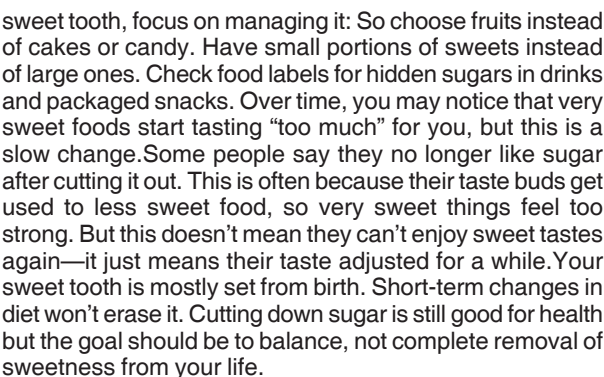
Can being stalked affect your health? Yes, it can increase your risk of heart attack or stroke, suggests a new study recently published in the journal 'Circulation'. Stalking is one of the commonest forms of inter-personal violence, with one in three women experiencing it in their lifetime, as per the study. These findings are based on around two decades of data from the cohort being followed under the Nurses Health Study II — a series of long-term research projects focusing on understanding risk factors for major chronic diseases.

### What did the study find?

The study found that women who reported being stalked — especially those who went on to obtain restraining orders — were more likely to get heart attacks and strokes later in life. Women who reported stalking were 41 per cent more likely to get cardiovascular diseases as compared to those who did not. And the risk increased to 70 per cent in women who obtained restraining orders. The researchers found the correlation the other way around as well. Women who had heart attacks or strokes as per their medical records were more likely to have experienced stalking in the past. The study found that nearly 12 per cent of the women had reported stalking, while 6 per cent had reported obtaining a restraining order. "Stalking is often seen

# Is your blood sugar going up because of your sweet tooth? A new study has answers

It seems that your love for sweet taste doesn't really change, no matter how much or how little you eat. It seems that your love for sweet taste doesn't really change, no matter how much or how little you eat. Most of us have heard this advice: "If you stop eating sugar, you'll stop craving it." Many people believe that the more sweets you eat, the more you will want them. But new research shows that this might not be true. It seems that your love for sweet taste doesn't really change, no matter how much or how little you eat. Humans are born liking sweet tastes. This comes from our ancestors, who looked for sweet fruits and honey for energy. This liking for sweetness is built into our body and brain. Yes, our cravings can go up and down depending on mood, stress, or hunger, but our basic "sweet tooth" stays mostly the same. That means eating a lot of sweets for a short time won't make you like sugar more, and cutting it out for a while won't make you stop liking it. The new study followed people for several months. Some ate a lot of sweet-tasting foods, some ate less, and some ate only a little. In the end, their preference for sweet taste stayed the same in all groups. From my medical experience, this is believable. Taste preferences in adults—especially for basic tastes like sweet or salt—don't change easily unless something major happens, like illness or certain medicines.



If you enjoy sweets, you should still try to control how much sugar you eat for your health. Too much sugar can increase the risk of obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay. But you don't expect your sweet tooth to disappear just because you stopped sugar for a month. Instead of trying to "kill" your

The Centre is learnt to have factored in at least three meetings of the Group of Ministers (GoM) before a final proposal is put before the GST Council. Indications are that a rollout is being targeted well ahead of Diwali, since the industry needs time to reconcile to the new rate structure and any disruption ahead of the festive season would need to be avoided. The multiplicity of rates in the current GST regime, officials said, had triggered problems of implementation, confusion of interpretation, and disputes. "So, we wanted to make it simple. Ideally, one tax rate would have been the best solution, but it is not practical. Currently, we have five rates, alongside the exempt items and special rates for items such as jewellery or diamonds. Now we would have two rates (5 per cent and 18 per cent). The third rate (40 per cent) is exceptional. You need to justify why something should go there. Currently, 28 per cent is part of the structure. 40 per cent in the new regime is not. That is the difference," the source said. The PM's announcement has to be seen in the context of it being a proposal for states to consider, the source said. "A reform like this should have everybody on board for it to work best. The GoM on rate rationalisation has been working on this issue for the last four years... The Centre has now taken a leadership position on this, and put this proposal for consideration of the panel," a source said. The Centre, sources said, is convinced of the buoyancy from the rate rationalisation taking care of the worries stemming from revenue loss, unlike an earlier attempt in 2018 when rate cuts did not result in revenue gains. "There were problems then (2018), since it (the cut) led to inversions in duty rates in multiple sectors and that led to some amount of gaming of the system by players to avail of input tax credits. Evasion grew... This move to revamp the rate structure (now) is to avoid inversions and inversions-related problems," an official said. "Technically, the states should be convinced. Politically, one has to see how they respond," the official said.

## John Abraham shares fitness mantra and how he trains with a 74-year-old cancer survivor: 'There is no age to get fit. You just have to be goal-oriented'



Actor John Abraham, a strict disciplinarian when it comes to his diet and fitness, has said there is no age bar when it comes to exercise and anybody can start it anytime. In fact, he exercises mostly in the company of elderly women. Speaking during an "Idea Exchange" session at The Indian Express, the 'Tehran' actor even said that diet could change the trajectory of one's health. John is known to have stayed away from sugar for 25 years and has turned vegan over the years. He has also gone on record earlier on how he loves a simple farmer's meal, comprising all kinds of millets. "Anybody can do anything provided you are goal-oriented," he said. Listen in.

### Can anybody start exercising anytime?

Absolutely. So I'll start by saying this, my training partner, the woman who trains with me in the gym, is a 74-year-old woman who is battling stage two cancer. She comes back to exercise after gaps, obviously, after a chemotherapy session. She's hopefully going to go into remission. So the point I'm going to make is there is no age to get fit. There's really no age. It may sound very clichéd but it's a mindset. A lot of women feel that their life post-menopause is over and tell themselves, 'I just can't do it anymore.' Please throw such thoughts out of your head. You can get fit at any point of time in your lives. And most of the people I train with or I train or I give advice to are women. So very contrary to the image I have, where people think I hang out only with dudes. I don't.

## What's the mantra of longevity?

I just speak about living a good life. If you want longevity, quality of life, you've got to eat the right things, think about the right things, and be very, very disciplined. And a

Users of polluting cooking fuels like charcoal, kerosene, crop residue, wood or dung cake and those preparing food over an open fire pit may be at a higher risk of cognitive impairment (a decline in memory, thinking and reasoning ability) like dementia, according to a new analysis. Published in the *Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia*, the analysis was based on data from rural Karnataka. The participants were part of the ongoing prospective cohort study, Centre for Brain Research-Srinivasapura Aging, Neuro Senescence, and COgnition (CBR-SANSCOg). Researchers from the Centre for Brain Research, Indian

Institute of Science, Bengaluru, which funded the study, told The Indian Express that the aim was to investigate the relationship between household air pollution (HAP), cognitive functions (thinking, reasoning, memory-building, language, perception and decision-making) and brain structure. They found that the group that used polluting cooking fuels had poorer cognitive functions than those using clean cooking fuels.

### Why is this study significant?

As dementia becomes a global burden and a significant challenge for India, the study helps in identifying house-

lot of people come up to me and say, 'Oh, you know, work is so intense and we have no time to work out.' I ask the men if they have a girlfriend or if they take out time to meet her. They say, 'ya, ya, we do.' I then tell them, 'Think of your body as your girlfriend. Think you're having an affair with your body. You find the time to take care of your body.' The same applies to women too.

You are a vegan. Do plant proteins suffice in maintaining a balanced nutrition?

Yes, but not completely. I'm not an expert. I'm sure there are many dieticians out there who probably know much more than I do. But combine different plant-based protein sources through the day under guidance. I think what really matters is a combination of good sleep, good exercise and good food. It's a tripod stand. Without one leg, you will collapse. So just do everything in a healthy balance. And you'll find your way. It's as simple as that.

hold air pollution as a modifiable risk factor and prevent onset of such conditions. About 153 million individuals aged over 60 live in India. Altogether 19.1 per cent of the country's population will comprise older people by 2050. The burden of dementia is, therefore, expected to increase exponentially, significantly challenging the current healthcare capacity. With recent statistical data showing that 57% of rural households still use polluting cooking fuels, changing fuels could lower risk in the rural Indian population (which has been found to have a significantly higher prevalence of dementia than the urban Indian population).



## Jasprit Bumrah informs selectors he is available to play in the Asia Cup



GNS News Agency, August 26

India's star fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has made himself available to play the forthcoming Asia Cup in Dubai, a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) source said. Bumrah had spoken to the selectors a few days ago and informed them about his readiness to play. The senior selection committee headed by former all-rounder Ajit Agarkar is expected to meet on August 19 in Mumbai to pick a 15-member squad for forthcoming Asia Cup, which is scheduled to be played from September 9 to 28 in UAE in the T20 format.

"Bumrah has informed the selectors that he will be

available for Asia Cup selection. The selection committee will meet and discuss it when they meet next week," the source said. Bumrah was released from the Test squad for the fifth and final Test of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy at the Oval keeping in mind his workload. Bumrah had played in the first Test at Headingley, skipped the second Test at Edgbaston, which India won, and played in the third and fourth Tests at Lord's and Old Trafford. During the Test series, he had two-five wicket hauls and bowled 119.4 overs. With Asia Cup to be played in T20I format, Bumrah won't have to bowl longer spells and the team management can even pick and choose his games. Bumrah will get a gap of nearly 40 days between the last Test he played in England and the start of the Asia Cup. Bumrah's last T20I appearance was in the 2024 T20 World Cup final against South Africa in Bridgetown that India won by seven runs. He took 2 for 18. The Indian team will be travelling early to UAE for the Asia Cup. Most of the players will be going to the Asia Cup without any match practice game. The BCCI had asked team management whether they were in favour of a short camp in Bengaluru. However, the team management felt that it would be better to fly early so that players can get used to the conditions. "Instead of having a camp here, the team will fly three-four days early so that they can get decent practice before the tournament starts," the source said.

## Why does Aakash Chopra think MS Dhoni will not take up Indian Head Coach job in future?

GNS News Agency, August 26

Former Indian cricketer Aakash Chopra predicted that MS Dhoni would not want to become the Head Coach of the Indian side. Chopra reasoned that it might have to do with the non-stop schedule of the Indian side throughout the year and Dhoni would not want to be away from his family. "That is a big one. I don't think he is interested. Coaching is a difficult job. Coaching keeps you as busy as you were when playing, and sometimes even more than that. You have a family, and you say that you have done the same thing your entire life, you have lived your life out of a suitcase, and you don't want to do that job now," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. "That is why a lot of players don't get into coaching, and even if they do, it's a two-month IPL stint. However, if you become a full-time Indian head coach, it's a commitment of 10 months in a year. I don't know whether Dhoni would have that much time. I will be amazed if he has that much time," he added. Dhoni on CSK's next season

Dhoni, who was stand-in captain in the last IPL season where Chennai Super Kings finished at the bottom of the table for the first time, has admitted that the franchise has holes in the squad which they would try to plug in at the upcoming mini-auctions. With just 4 wins from 14 matches, in the absence of regular skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad, the five-time champions had an underwhelming campaign with Dhoni taking over the captaincy mid-way through the season. Ahead of next season, with most teams already having a settled unit, Chennai do have a tough challenge ahead in terms of building a strong outfit. Dhoni, who turned 44 this July, still remains their frontline keeper with Urvil being the lone other gloveman in the set-up. While Dhoni's future as a player still remains in doubt, the former captain said they are more or less sorted on the batting front. "There were certain holes that we need to plug in. I think our batting order is quite sorted out now. Rutu (Gaikwad) will be coming back. A small auction is coming in December. You know some holes are there, and we will try to plug those in. But



again, you have to be at your best at the start of the tournament. You have to get the planning right. You have to use the resources in the best possible manner. Even the fans feel disappointed, but also the fact is the players always feel more disappointed than the fans. So we do talk about the processes. But at the same time here. We do want the result to come to our side. Last year wasn't there. But looking ahead we will try to sort out most of the things. And we will hopefully be at our best," Dhoni said at the launch of Maxvision Eye Super Speciality hospital in Chennai. Dhoni, who led the franchise to five IPL titles as captain, revealed that the franchise hasn't been up to the mark in the last two seasons. "The beauty of sport is how good you look on paper doesn't matter. Because what you actually do on the field is the stuff that really matters. And in a tournament like IPL, what you do consistently over a period of time matters. And then pull your socks up once you get into the knockout stage and come out with another beautiful maybe two or three performances. And that's how you win trophies. The last couple of years have not been good for us. We have not, you can say, up to the mark. Whatever the reasons may be. What is important is to see the learnings. It's not about what you have done in the past 15-16 years. Next year when you turn up again, you have to start from scratch," Dhoni said.

## Why playing World No 1 Shi Yuqi earlier in Round 1 rather than later, is better for Lakshya Sen

GNS News Agency, August 26

It's not unprecedented. Lee Chong Wei and even Viktor Axelsen have exited World Championships early as top seeds in last decade. But Shi Yuqi is on a hot streak of 3/3 Super 1000 titles this year, and 9/9 tournament finals since start of 2024. So, Indian badminton fans can be excused their morose mugs at the sight of the World No 1 drawn against Lakshya Sen in the Badminton World Championship draw. It's a depressed fan base, long-suffering since Paris Olympics, and prone to dunking own players at slightest hints of Top 10 opponents lining up early. Sen, however, has no such luxuries to sit and mope. And all things considered Round 1 might be the best time to go up against the toughest opponent in the draw. Shi Yuqi is not ideal to face in the first round, but when dreaming of a World Championship medal, isn't having to beat big names inevitable? It's how India won its last medal – Prannoy playing a masterfully strategic game, plotted by Pullela Gopichand and Gurusaidutt, to down Viktor 'The Axelsen' at home in Copenhagen in 2023.

Ask Sindhu, Saina, Sai Praneeth, Srikanth or Satwik-Chirag, and they will reel off all the 'big names' they roiled against, to earn their medals. For Sen – there's Shi Yuqi, and hopefully Christo Popov, Alex Lanier and Li Shifeng, though plenty hinges on how his back, shoulder hold up and what Sen's stamina reserves, are at. Go back a year, and there was similar mourning and muttering over Lakshya Sen's Olympic draw. He was placed in a group where he had to play an extra match, and which had Indonesian Jonatan Christie, at that point, looking good for a podium, if not gold. Jojo had beaten Sen the last couple of times, and would start as favourite. But it was some steely nerves and a pinpoint tactical game that helped the Indian get past the Indonesian, top the pool and get out of the group.

But even before the draw, Anders Antonsen had made a pertinent point: he said Sen was a dangerous floater that everyone wanted to avoid early, and Christie felt the KO punches, as did Chou Tien Chen later. Sen's meltdowns against Viktor Axelsen and Lee Zii Jia which denied him a medal, deserve a separate piece. Not so much the tactics (though those can be threadbare in hindsight), but his inability to summon a certain kind of heavyweight game, when smashing or killing at the net, at the business end in Paris, and letting himself down psychologically, cost Sen those matches. But early in a tournament, when he was not tired in the mind, and fresh and motivated, Sen could snatch momentum away from Christie, a clear favourite.

It's why playing Shi Yuqi – if he must, and he needs to – is a better proposition in Round 1 than in quarters, with a medal on the line. Let's call it the best of the worst-case scenarios. Sen is prone to over-training, putting inordinate pressure on his back and shoulder in needlessly rough training sessions, and exerting in the gym more than some think he ought to. He does this to be best prepared. But the back



can backfire. He goes into the Paris Worlds with a massive hit on his confidence after the Olympics and first round exits on Tour, but as any coach would tell him, there's literally nothing to do about past disappointments.

Yuqi is no slam-bang, impetuous hitter – but neither was Jojo. But the Chinese' vulnerability – the tiniest one – might be his eagerness to win a World title, which he hasn't all these years, but can this time. With Viktor Axelsen having pulled out, everyone will have breathed a sigh of relief, but Yuqi will be under some pressure to make that count, so having the devilishly disruptive Sen across the net, might be equally unpleasant for him, as his visage and elegant game will be for Sen.

All of Kodai Naraoka, Loh Kean Yew, Li Shifeng and Alex Lanier are bunched in Sen's half, so it's going to be one painful ride if he gets past Yuqi to run into aggressive playing styles that he struggles against. But a badminton World Championship medal never came easy to anyone. The bitter-better, clutching-at-straws way of looking at things might be to glance at the draw, and thank the heavens for Kunlavut Vitidsarn for being in the other half.

There's a similar toughening-up brief to be delivered to Satwik-Chirag. Satwik woke up on his birthday on Wednesday and was gifted Liang Weikeng-Wang Chang in Round of 16, and Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik potentially if they get past the Thais, in quarters.

The Indians tend to start well these days, and should back themselves against the Chinese first up. The results aren't dizzying great, but the game is far more prepared for what Liang-Wang can throw at them. If the shoulders are alright, the Indians ought to think of Paris before the Olympic disappointment, when it was their favourite venue, where they won their last title. Aaron-Soh are fantastic players, but not unbeatable by the Indians. Luck can have its way with them, but even on a downturn, Satwik-Chirag make tournament semis, and can play the big game at will. Form book says India could end up with a second straight wretched August at Paris, and no medal for first time since 2010. But there's scores to settle with Paris, redemption arcs to traverse, and miles to go before Indian fans turn crabby.

## Pakistan squad for Asia Cup 2025: Salman Agha to lead 17-member team; Babar Azam, Rizwan overlooked



GNS News Agency, August 26

Pakistan have announced their squads for the upcoming T20I tri-series and Asia Cup scheduled to take place in the UAE from 29 August to 28 September. Salman Agha will continue to lead the side as the team coached by Mike Hesson continued to snub senior pros Muhammad Rizwan and Babar Azam from the shortest format. Pakistan are placed in Group 'A' alongside India, Oman and UAE. They will begin their campaign on September 12 against Oman

followed by the highly-anticipated India clash on September 14 at the same venue. Having been drubbed in the ODI series decider by 202 runs in the West Indies last week, Pakistan will aim to regroup and brace for the continental rigours when they travel to the UAE for a tri-series T20 tournament between August 29 and September 7. The tri-series, featuring Afghanistan, Pakistan and UAE will be played at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. While Babar and Rizwan continued to be overlooked, the senior players who earned a spot are pace bowlers Shaheen Afridi and Haris Rauf, as well as dependable batters such as Fakhar Zaman and Khushdil Shah. Star wicket-keeper Mohammad Haris also kept his spot. The selectors have also reposed their faith in young names like Hasan Nawaz, Salman Mirza, and Sufyan Moqim.

Pakistan's Asia Cup 2025 squad Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hasan Nawaz, Hussain Talat, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haris (wicket-keeper), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Waseem Jnr, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Salman Mirza, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Sufiyan Muqem.

## ‘Sometimes his legs are tied’: Aakash Chopra on KL Rahul’s India T20I comeback chances in Asia Cup 2025

GNS News Agency, August 26

The battle for spots in India's T20I set-up is heating up with the Asia Cup T20 in September and the next edition of the T20 World Cup only six months away. India are set to announce their squad for the forthcoming Asia Cup on August 19, and former India batter Aakash Chopra has weighed in on the long list of opening and wicket-keeping options. Speaking about the possibility of KL Rahul's return to the squad, Chopra felt that the general perception of his slow batting may go against the Karnataka batter. Chopra also stressed that Rahul cannot dream of a comeback in the opening position despite making amends through a prolific IPL 2025 season with the Delhi Capitals.

"If you see his IPL numbers, they are outstanding. In the recent past, no player has been a 600-run bank like him. However, a reputation has developed that he plays very slow at times," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. Chopra added that Rahul can often get into streaks and phases where his batting scoring rates may hit a roadblock. "If something is stopping him, it's his own mindset. Sometimes his legs are shackled, and when the mindset is right, he flies with wings. I feel he has the game. I remember a shot, it was the Indore ground, and he hit Jasprit Bumrah for a six over cover, and I was like wow. However, then you also get knocks when you feel that he should hit, but he thinks differently," he observed. With the likes of Sanju Samson, Abhishek Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill in the fray, Chopra said that Rahul could not be considered for the opener's slot. Ahead of his superb Test series in England, where he had scored over 500 runs for the first time in a Test series, Rahul made amends to



his T20 profile with 539 runs in the IPL, including a century and three fifties while predominantly batting in the middle-order role. "He cannot play as an opener because the opening story has ended, unfortunately, for the time being. Sanju Samson is there with Abhishek Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal is behind them, and I am putting Shubman Gill's name also at the fourth spot. Four people are standing in the line," Chopra added. With wicket-keeping slots also receiving cut-throat competition, Chopra suggested that Rahul's chances for an imminent T20I return remains bleak. "Ishan Kishan is saying that he is also there. Everyone wants to open. So there is no place for an opener. You will have to play in the middle order, and there, Jitesh Sharma is one, who has done very well, played an excellent IPL, and made his team win. Sanju Samson is opening at the moment. So a keeper is not required. Dhruv Jurel is also standing behind," Chopra observed.

## ‘I wasn’t a natural’: How Rahul Dravid became one of cricket’s greatest slip fielders with help from Bob Simpson

GNS News Agency, August 26

Former India captain Rahul Dravid had evolved from a wicket-keeper batter at the age-group level in Karnataka to an all-time great Test No. 3 for India. Even in India colours, Dravid had stepped up as the makeshift glovesman behind the stumps, but his legacy as one of the finest slip fielders in the game also remains firmly in place. Dravid held the world record for most Test catches for nearly 13 years since his retirement until England's Joe Root surpassed him during the recent Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy. The legendary batter had once put down his snappy reflexes in the slips to a fruitful stint with legendary Australia cricketer and coach, Bob Simpson, who passed away aged 89 on Saturday. Dravid's evolution from wicket-keeper to the slips

"I wasn't a good enough bowler to be able to contribute with the ball. I tried my best. So I sort of figured out 'How do you contribute to the team? What do you do?'. I mean, sitting there as a batsman, what can I do really well, and one of the things was, if I catch well, it's a contribution. You feel you're involved, you're playing a part," Dravid had once said on the Lessons Learnt with the Greats podcast. "I had to work on it, I don't think I was as much a natural, but I had to practise a lot of slip catching, and one of the really good pieces of technical advice that I received early on was to ensure that the weight was on the balls of my feet and ensuring that my balance was really good as a fielder, and ensuring I got into a really good position." Dravid recollected how a stint with Simpson between 1998-1999 helped him ace the slip fielder's technique and went on to break Mark Waugh's world record to become the first designated fielder to collect 200 Test catches. Simpson, who coached Australia to the 1987 World Cup title, joined the Indian national side on a consultant basis only two years after Dravid made his Test debut. "I remember Bobby Simpson came and spent some time with the Indian team in 1998/99 and he took us through a lot of slip catching drills. And one of the things he stressed on a lot was having your feet bent a little bit so that you could get your weight into the balls of your feet. That was something I took to heart and practised a lot." Even watching someone like Mark Waugh, the way he stood, in some ways I used to watch that. It was a really good Australian slip-catching unit: you had [Mark] Taylor, Waugh, they were really, really good, and you used to sort of watch them." An out-and-out trier, Dravid had said that his 210 catches in 164 Tests was a product of diligence, exhorting that slip fielding was an art that got better with practice. "Slip catching, a lot of it, is about practice – the more practice you can do, the variety of practice you can do – it's not mindlessly taking catches. I think catching [to] spinners was a very important thing for India, about a hundred of those catches are off two spinners – [Anil] Kumble and Harbhajan [Singh], I took about 60 of them playing in India – we do prepare turning tracks!" Regarded as one of the pioneers of modern-day Australian cricket, Simpson's transition from a great leader and astute slip fielder to coaching ensured



that he unearthed a horde of stars during his coaching tenure. As one of the great slip fielders of his time, he is credited with training drills that helped Mark Waugh become one of the great catchers and more importantly turn David Boon into one of the sharpest short-leg catchers of all time. Simpson played 62 Tests for Australia from 1957 to 1978, scoring 4,869 runs at an average of 46.81, including 10 centuries and 27 half-centuries. He captained Australia in 39 Tests and was their head coach for 10 years from 1986, helping them win the 1987 World Cup in India, the famous 1989 Ashes in England and an epic away series win in West Indies in 1995.

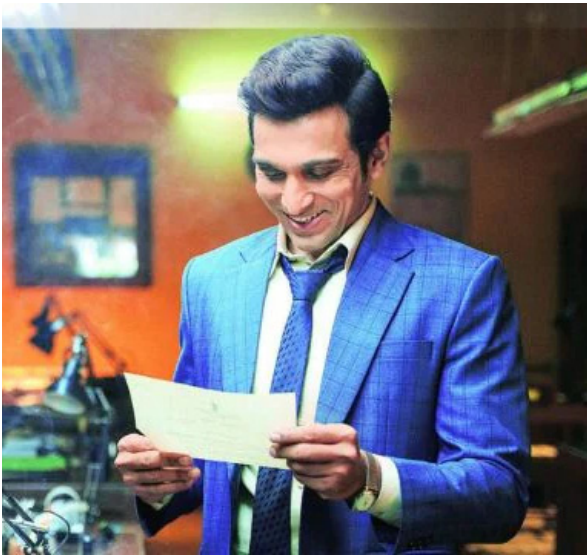
## Suryakumar Yadav clears fitness test ahead of Asia Cup selection meeting

GNS News Agency, August 26

India's T20 International captain Suryakumar Yadav cleared a fitness test at the Centre of Excellence (COE) in Bengaluru ahead of the Asia Cup team selection, which is to be held on August 19. Yadav had undergone surgery for a lower-right abdomen hernia in Munich, Germany, in June. "He has cleared his fitness and will be available to captain the Indian team during the Asia Cup. He was at the COE till a few days ago, where he underwent a rehab programme and has now been declared fit. He will be attending the Indian team selection meeting," a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) source confirmed. The Asia Cup is to be played in Dubai from September 9 to 28 and India is scheduled to play Pakistan on September 14. The senior selection committee will meet in Mumbai on Tuesday to pick the squad. In June, Yadav posted on Instagram about the successful surgery. "Life Update: Underwent surgery for a sports hernia in the lower-right abdomen. Grateful to share that after a smooth surgery,



## Why the cast of ‘Saare Jahan Se Accha’ has the stage to thank for their roles on the screen



Set in the volatile 1970s, when a single move could tip the balance of power and trigger a global nuclear war, Saare Jahan Se Accha unfolds as India's R&AW and Pakistan's ISI clash in a deadly game of strategy. R&AW agent Vishnu Shankar (Pratik Gandhi) must outwit ISI agent Murtaza Malik (Sunny Hinduja) in a race against time to prevent a major catastrophe. As Saare Jahan Se Accha, created by Gaurav Shukla and directed by Sumit Purohit, streams on Netflix, actors Pratik Gandhi, Sunny Hinduja and Anup Soni talk about being part of a stellar cast and how that enriches their experience. Pratik Gandhi: During our growing up years, the only spy we knew of was James Bond, who had swag and cool gadgets. But a real spy works differently. They can't afford to have any kind of attention on them. Nobody knows what a real spy looks like. The way the writer-director visualised this is what adds to the uniqueness of the series. Sunny Hinduja: I would give credit to Gaurav Shukla and the team for the way they have visualised the plot, along with the nitty

gritties of their personal lives. Pratik as R&AW agent may not want the spotlight on him but Sunny as an ISI agent has swag. Pratik Gandhi: That reflects the basic difference between how the agencies of different countries work.

From what we have read, the R&AW works with a lot of restraint. Ultimately, they are working for their country and can kill for it. But when do they take such an extreme step is a key question. Sunny: You don't find interviews of agents. But the functioning and recruitment of ISI is different from how the R&AW goes about it. So, whatever I could gather from the script and learnt from the research, I tried to use that in my performance. Pratik, you played Harshad Mehta in Scam 1992 and now the titular protagonist in the new series Gandhi. What's your approach while essaying these characters?

Pratik: When I am playing a real-life character, the ups and downs of their lives are usually known but what's going on in their mind when they are taking a major decision is not. That's open for interpretation and that's what I focus on. Vishnu's character in Saare Jahan Se Accha is fictional but we can assume that it is the blend of several real-life characters. Since he is fictional, I got a free hand to portray him.

Anup, you made your screen debut with Shanti (1994-98) nearly 30 years ago. How was that experience?

Anup: Those days we just wanted to act, irrespective of the format. Shanti was unique as it was the first daily soap opera on Doordarshan. I tried for a role a couple of times but was not selected even though many of my friends were acting in it. I got a role in it in 1995 after its 100 episodes were over. Pratik: I feel alive on stage. You constantly calibrate yourself while performing in front of a live audience. Even though you play the same character several times, after 500 shows you may come up with something new — a nuance, a pause or a meaning. It teaches you that excellence is not a point, it's a constant journey. Anup: While performing in a play — I act in two running plays, Ballygunge 1990 and My Wife's 8th Vachan — one may believe that the eighth show was the best but later, the 40th show may appear to be the best. You constantly keep learning.

## The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood first look: Aryan Khan goes all Shah Rukh Khan from Mohabbatein, says ‘Picture toh saalon se baki hai, show ab shuru hoga’

The first glimpse of The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood kicks off with familiar music — the theme song of Aditya Chopra's 2000 hit romantic drama Mohabbatein, starring Shah Rukh Khan. But as the silhouetted figure steps into the spotlight while narrating a tragic love story, it turns out to not be Shah Rukh, but his son Aryan Khan, who will make his directorial debut with the Netflix India show. Aryan, dressed in all black, is spitting image of his father as he introduces the anticlimactic tone of his show — a series about Bollywood, which will be a mix of “bahut saara pyaar (lots of love)” and “thoda sa vaar (a little bit of a roast)”. As he concludes his pitch, Aryan promises, yet again in trademark Shah Rukh Khan style: “Picture toh saalon se baki hai, par show ab shuru hoga.”

The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood will be headlined by Lakshya and Sahher Bambba, and will boast of an ensemble cast including Mona Singh, Manoj Pahwa, Manish Chaudhari, Raghav Juyal, Anya Singh, and Gautami Kapoor. The preview of the show will be on August 20. The official synopsis of the series reads, “An ambitious outsider and his friends navigate the larger-than-life yet uncertain world of Bollywood. The series blends self-aware humour with a high-stakes narrative — and promises a host of unforgettable cameos, blockbuster thrills and an adventurous ride into the world of Indian cinema.” Produced by Red Chillies Entertainment, the series is rumoured to feature cameos by Bobby Deol, Ranbir Kapoor, and several other big names. However, the release date remains tightly under wraps for now. It is co-created by Bilal Siddiqi and Manav Chauhan, who also share writing credits with Aryan Khan.

In an Ask SRK session on X on Saturday, Shah Rukh Khan confirmed that many “friends from the industry” have given cameos in the film, and that he'd also pop up for a special appearance in the show. “Lots of lovely friends from the industry have participated in Aryan's series. They've been very gracious and loving toward him. Main toh hun hi... Haq se (I'm obviously there too... rightfully so),” Shah Rukh tweeted. Everyone from Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos, filmmaker Karan Johar to actor Anil Kapoor has vouched for Aryan Khan's talent after watching The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood. While Ted called the show “really fun,” Karan



proclaimed “prince” Aryan would surprise everyone. Anil even called him a “young Manmohan Desai.” Even the cast of The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood have lauded Aryan's directorial voice and commitment, from Manoj Pahwa to Manish Chaudhari.

Prior to The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood, Aryan lent his voice to Simba, while his father Shah Rukh Khan voiced Mufasa, in the Hindi dubbed version of Disney's new live-action The Lion King franchise. Shah Rukh revealed that Aryan doesn't want to be an actor like him not only because filmmaking is his calling, but also because he would always face the threat of comparisons with his father. Aryan's sister Suhana Khan also made her debut a couple of years ago, playing Veronica in Zoya Akhtar's 2023 coming-of-age period musical The Archies, which also dropped on Netflix. She'll be next seen making her theatrical debut in Siddharth Anand's crime drama King, in which she'll share screen space with her father Shah Rukh. The filming of King is currently on hold, as Shah Rukh recovers from a shoulder injury he sustained while shooting an action sequence for the film.



She is great at web stories, galleries, and Express Archive's photo stories. She is good at spotting stories from social media posts. She makes the copies well-loaded with content, photos, tweets, and other related social media posts to make it interesting for the readers. An alumnus of Asian College of Journalism, Chennai (Specialization in New Media), Kriti has been a part of

## Fans call Aryan Khan ‘Xerox copy of Shah Rukh Khan’ after The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood teaser drops: ‘SRK relaunching himself’



The first look of Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan's much-awaited show The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood is finally here, and fans can't keep calm. While fans are excited for the series, which is written and directed by Aryan, they have also taken to social media to point out how eerily similar Aryan sounds to his father Shah Rukh.

In the video, instead of staying behind the scenes, Aryan makes an appearance in front of the camera and introduces his show with the line, “Picture toh saalon se baki hai, par show ab shuru hoga.” Aryan's cameo in the teaser shows him delivering Shah Rukh's famous dialogue from Mohabbatein, but of course, the star kid added his own twist. After the teaser was released, fans took to social media to point out how Aryan looks like a “Xerox copy

of SRK,” with his voice, mannerisms, looks, and even his acting and dialogue delivery resembling Shah Rukh's very closely.

A fan wrote on Reddit, “I genuinely thought it was Shahrukh doing the voiceover. CRAZZY HOW THEIR VOICES R SOOO SIMILAR.” Another comment was along similar lines, “His voice also is similar to SRK, I thought SRK was doing dub for whole time.” Another user joked, “SRK relaunching himself. That's it.” One more comment read, “Dude how is he the Xerox Copy of SRK???? Never understood the hype until now but Aryan Khan is actually really hot??” Another fan pointed out, “The way he smiled is exactly how Shah Rukh smiles.”

The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood features Lakshya, known for his lead role in Karan Johar's critically acclaimed film Kill, and Sahher Bambba in the lead roles. The show also boasts an ensemble cast including Mona Singh, Manoj Pahwa, Manish Chaudhari, Raghav Juyal, Anya Singh, and Gautami Kapoor. The preview of the show will be out on August 20. Earlier, Shah Rukh Khan had announced the title of Aryan Khan's web show through a video. The clip featured a light-hearted banter between Aryan and Shah Rukh, and that video too saw Aryan make a cameo. The official synopsis of The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood reads, “An ambitious outsider and his friends navigate the larger-than-life yet uncertain world of Bollywood. The series blends self-aware humour with a high-stakes narrative — and promises a host of unforgettable cameos, blockbuster thrills and an adventurous ride into the world of Indian cinema.”

## Salman Khan's Sikandar tanked because I couldn't execute it well, says AR Murugadoss: ‘I pulled off a Ghajini because it was a remake’

Salman Khan's Sikandar was expected to be his Jawan moment, but the outcome was far from it. The superstar collaborated with acclaimed South filmmaker AR Murugadoss, the man behind hits like Ghajini and Holiday. Having already created magic for Aamir Khan and Akshay Kumar, Murugadoss raised sky-high expectations when he announced a big-budget project with Salman. However, instead of delivering a blockbuster, Sikandar flopped at the box office, leaving fans disappointed.

Initially, Murugadoss attributed Sikandar's underwhelming performance at the box office to a language barrier. However, in a recent interview with Velaipachu Voice, the filmmaker admitted that the real issue lay in his own execution. “Actually, the base story is very emotional,” he said, adding, “It's about a king who doesn't truly understand his wife. We are all like that — whether it's with our mother, friend, or wife, we often don't value relationships. Only when someone leaves us forever do we feel the weight of guilt. In the film, when the king loses his wife, her organs are donated to three different people. He then seeks them out, trying to fulfill the things he couldn't do for her. In the process, he befriends an entire village. The story was emotional, but I couldn't execute it well.” AR Murugadoss also reflected on the difference between Ghajini and Sikandar: “I could pull off Ghajini because it was a remake, not an origi-



nal script. I had already done it before, so I had complete command. With Sikandar, that wasn't the case. I'm not saying I won't return to Hindi cinema; I definitely will if I find my comfort zone. But when the audience can't connect with my thinking, it affects me deeply.” Despite the hype, Sikandar managed to collect only Rs 184.6 crore worldwide in 22 days, against an estimated budget of Rs 200 crore, making it one of the most underwhelming outings in Salman Khan's career.

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The first glimpse of The Ba\*\*\*ds of Bollywood, which marks the directorial debut of Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan, has been unveiled by Netflix India.

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