

Challur Panchayat Secretary caught Red-handed by ACB

Karimnagar, Aug.29 (NSS): The sleuths of Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB), Karimnagar unit on Friday caught red-handed the Panchayat secretary Kumakam Nagaraj of Challur village in Veenavanka mandal of the district for demanding and accepting a bribe amount of Rs 20,000 from the complainant for doing an official favour relating to allotment of a house number to the newly constructed house. Based on the complaint, the ACB arrested the accused officer at his gram panchayat office in Challur village and recovered the tainted bribe amount of Rs 20,000 from his possession. It is alleged that the officer performed his duties improperly and with dishonesty to obtain undue advantage.

40th Senior Officers' Study Period Concludes at the College of Air Warfare

Hyderabad, Aug.29 The College of Air Warfare (CAW), Secunderabad, conducted the 40th Senior Officers' Study Period (SOSP) from August 18 till today. The SOSP was attended by 19 officers of the rank of Air Commodore and equivalent from the three services.

The strategic level interactive programme was aimed at increasing awareness on global and regional security issues while enhancing integration among the three services. Eminent guest speakers with impeccable credentials in their respective fields enlightened the course participants on diverse topics.

Russia's Putin to visit India in December

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay an official visit to India in December, the Kremlin said Friday (August 29, 2025), as ties between the countries grow closer and after the United States imposed tariffs on New Delhi over its purchases of Russian oil. Mr. Putin will also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a regional summit in China on Monday, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters, including AFP, saying the pair would discuss "preparation for the December visit". U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed tariffs on Indian goods as punishment for New Delhi's massive purchases of Russian oil, part of a campaign to pressure Moscow into ending its offensive in Ukraine.

Energy incomes are a key source of revenue for Moscow's state budget. Russia is also one of India's top arms suppliers, and the warm ties between the two countries date back to the Soviet era. Ukraine's Western allies have sought to cut Russia's export earnings since Moscow launched its military assault in February 2022. But Russia has been able to redirect energy sales away from Europe to countries including India and China, ensuring the



multi-billion-dollar flow of funds has continued. India has argued it imported oil "from Russia because traditional supplies were diverted to Europe after the outbreak of the conflict". Mr. Putin has significantly curtailed his foreign travel amid the offensive on Ukraine, for which he was slapped with an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant. India is not a party to the ICC and therefore not obligated to detain Mr. Putin.

INTRODUCE "FACIAL RECOGNITION" IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: CM TO OFFICIALS

Hyderabad, Aug.29 In order to overhaul the education infrastructure and to have accountability, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy today directed the officials concerned to strengthen the quality standards of education across Telangana by upgrading infrastructure in schools, colleges and universities. Besides improving teaching facilities, he ordered for the mandatory introduction of "facial recognition" for students, faculty and staff in all institutions to ensure better attendance and accountability, the CM stressed.

At a high-level review meeting of the Education department here on Friday, the chief minister while highlighting irregularities, noted that multiple departments were handling construction of classrooms, kitchens, toilets and guard houses, which hindered the progress. To streamline the process, all education-related constructions be brought under the "Education and Welfare Infrastructure Development Corporation (EWIDC)", which has already taken care of Young India Integrated Residential Schools. Required staff will be deputed from other departments, he added.

Further, the CM instructed the officials to clear pending "Mid-Day Meal" programme bills and sanitation dues under the Amma Adarsha Schools without delay, while expediting the construction of urinals, toilets in women's colleges, and solar-powered container kitchens. Emphasizing the state's commitment to sports, CM said "Physical Education Teachers (PETs)" could be hired on contract basis if required. He also proposed appointing 'female counselors' in Gurukul schools to guide girl students. Expenditure on



education should be treated as an "investment, not spending". Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka had already appealed to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to exempt education development loans, including those for residential schools, from FRBM limits, the CM added. The CM further directed the officials to prepare a "10-year report" on students belonging to BC, SC, ST and minority communities who studied in government institutions, noting that they constitute over 90% of enrolments. The meeting was attended by government advisor Vem Narender Reddy, Special Secretary B. Ajith Reddy, OSD Vemula Srinivasulu, Principal Secretary Yogita Rana, Higher Education Board Chairman Prof. Balakishtha Reddy, Technical Education Commissioner Sridevasena, School Education Director Naveen Nicholas and others.

Assembly special session starts today: Expect fiery debates

Hyderabad, Aug.29 (NSS): The upcoming special sessions of the Telangana Legislative Assembly and Council are set to feature an intense discussion regarding the PC Ghosh Commission's findings on the Kaleshwaram project and the issue of BC reservations.

The Assembly will begin its session on Saturday, aiming to address both the Kaleshwaram Committee report and the BC reservation topic. The session is scheduled to kick off at 10:30 AM, and it is anticipated that proceedings will be suspended after honouring the late BRS MLA Maganti Gopinath. Following this, a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) will take place. In the afternoon, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will lead a cabinet meeting. It is expected that the Assembly sessions will continue for four or five days, depending on circumstances. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and his cabinet members have resolved to reveal irregularities related to the Kaleshwaram project as indicated by the PC Ghosh Commission's report, and to present these findings in the Assembly before taking any necessary action against individuals involved in the project's execution. At the same time, there are signs that K Chandrashekar Rao, the former chief minister who is currently facing allegations related to the Kaleshwaram



project, will refrain from participating in this discussion. On Friday, former minister and BRS MLA Harish Rao met KCR at the Erravalli farmhouse in Siddipet district to strategise for the upcoming Assembly debate. The BRS leaders have resolved to mount a strong opposition against the government and have requested that the Speaker allocate sufficient time for them to address the report. Conversely, under the guidance of party state unit president Ramchandra Rao, BJP MLAs and MLCs have been engaged in discussions to formulate their approach for the Assembly sessions.

Apologise for 'abusing' Modi: Amit Shah to Rahul Gandhi



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday (August 29, 2025) asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to apologise to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his late mother for abusive language allegedly used against them from a Congress platform during the Voter Adhikar Yatra (Voter Rights Rally) in poll-bound Bihar. Speaking at an event in Guwahati, Mr. Shah said Mr. Gandhi had taken his "politics of hatred to the lowest level." "Twenty-seven countries have honoured Modiji by conferring their highest civilian awards on him.

Modiji is respected across the world, but in India, Rahul Gandhi demonstrated the lowest level of his politics of hatred and negativity during his Ghospathiya Bachao Yatra (Intruder Protector Rally)," he said. Mr. Shah criticised Mr. Gandhi for alleged offensive words used during a Congress programme against the Prime Minister and his late mother. He said the politics of hatred and negativity started by the Congress leader "would not take public life any higher." "The Union Minister said the Prime Minister had been facing such attacks since his tenure as Gujarat Chief Minister." "Soniji, Rahulji, Mani Shankar Aiyar, Digvijay Singh, Jairam Ramesh, Renuka Chowdhury - every Congress leader used abusive language against Modiji. They called the Prime Minister 'Maut Ka Saudagar,' 'Jehrla Saap,' 'Ravana,' 'Bhasmasura,' 'Virus,' and whatnot," Mr. Shah said. "Do the Congress leaders think they will get the mandate by using such language? I want to tell them that the more they abuse Modiji, the larger the lotus will bloom and touch the sky," he said. Stating that elections are the soul of democracy, Mr. Shah asked how the nation could be safe if infiltrators were allowed into voters' lists. "I want to tell Rahul Gandhi that if you have a little shame left in you, apologise to Modiji, his late mother, and the people of the country," he said.

'AP has a world class food processing ecosystem', highlights CM

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Visakhapatnam: Andhra Pradesh has a world class food processing ecosystem. Expansion of the sector through global brands from India is the target, emphasised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Delivering a keynote address as chief guest at the third edition of the India Food Manufacturing conference organised by the Trade Promotion Council of India in Visakhapatnam on Friday, the Chief Minister highlighted that the state has a capacity of nine integrated food parks, 17 lakh metric tonnes of cold storage capacity, 33 lakh tonnes of godowns and recommended value addition for food products in global market.



Hyderabad, Aug.29 GHMC has completed all the arrangements for the smooth and safe conduct of Ganesh immersion program in the state capital. In coordination with the Police Department, HYDRA, Traffic, Revenue, Irrigation, Water Board, Medical and Health Department, R&B, Tourism Department, Electricity and other government departments, a robust operation has been prepared to ensure that the immersion program takes place without any untoward incidents.

Gear up for future challenges: Governor suggests universities

Hyderabad, Aug.29 : Governor Jishnu Dev Varma on Friday urged higher education institutions to gear up to meet the emerging challenges in the education sector and prepare the younger generations to seize future opportunities. He was inaugurating a day-long national conference on "India@2047: Role of Higher Education in Making India a Developed Nation", organised by the Education Protection Society for India (EPSI) and hosted by MNR University.

"To achieve the dream of Viksit Bharat, higher education will undoubtedly play a central role. India already has one of the world's largest higher education systems with more than 1,100 universities and nearly 35 million students. We should ensure quality, innovation, inclusivity, and global competitiveness," the Governor said. Highlighting the

transformative vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he stressed the need for multidisciplinary learning, research, innovation, skill development, digital education, and internationalisation of curricula. He also underlined five focus areas for universities: global competitiveness, skill development and employability, equity and inclusivity, research and innovation, and value-based education. The Governor observed that Hyderabad set a "shining example" in leveraging education, technology, and innovation to emerge as global hubs of knowledge and growth. MNR University Chancellor, Manthana Ravi Varma, in his welcome address, said that universities are the "hubs of nation building" and must integrate "the topics of tomorrow into the curriculum of today." He said: "We must also focus on access and equity."

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Illegal migration a big concern but shouldn't be communalised

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has raised an important issue by pointing out that demographic changes in India's border areas can have serious implications for national security. Speaking at a meeting with district magistrates of border districts in New Delhi, he underscored the possibility that such demographic shifts could be part of a "deliberate design." As a corrective step, he urged officials to ensure that all illegal encroachments within a nearly 30-kilometre radius from the borders are removed.

His comments are certain to elicit predictable responses across the political spectrum: those aligned with Right-of-centre views will support the statement wholeheartedly, while Left-liberal voices are likely to dismiss it as alarmist or politically motivated. Yet, as with many issues that touch both politics and security, the reality often lies somewhere between the two extremes.

Illegal immigration is a universally recognised challenge. It is not confined to India's borders but is an issue faced by many countries, developed and developing alike. The United States, for instance, has seen illegal immigration emerge as a central theme in its domestic politics. In fact, it was one of the pivotal factors behind Donald Trump's electoral victories, as he capitalised on public unease with open borders.

Similarly, European nations have also experienced political upheaval on account of illegal migration from Africa and the Middle East. Against this backdrop, Shah's call for stronger vigilance and corrective measures in India cannot be seen as unusual or objectionable. It is, in fact, a natural response to a problem every sovereign nation faces.

There Is No Diesel For The Ambulance!

Indian Chronicle" kumrambheem, Asifabad.District Reporter Jade Srinivas.August, 29. "“ MLA furious over the plight of government hospitals The diesel- fueled ambulance at the Asifabad District Hospital in Komurambheem has caused a stir.BRS MLA Kova Lakshmi expressed her anger at the hospital staff for not providing immediate medical treatment to a tribal woman who attempted suicide. The MLA replied that there was no diesel for the ambulance, so she was taken to Mancherla by paying for the diesel.

People Should Cooperate With The Police: CI Santhosh Kumar“

““Indian Chronicle" kumrambheem, Asifabad.District Reporter Jade Srinivas.August, 29. "“Kumrambheem: A police community contact program was organized in Lakshimpur village of Sirpur Tea Mandal under the leadership of District SP Kantilal Patil. On this occasion, 36 vehicles without proper documents were fined. 10 liters of Gudumba and 500 liters of jaggery were destroyed. Awareness was created on cyber crimes, marijuana trade, and women's safety. CI Santosh Kumar requested the public to cooperate with the police.

Speaker reviews arrangements for special Assembly, Council sessions

Hyderabad, Aug.29 : Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar has instructed officials to implement necessary steps to facilitate the smooth conduct of the special Assembly and Council sessions without any issues. The Speaker on Friday convened a review meeting with senior officials at his Assembly chamber to assess the preparations for the upcoming special legislative sessions of the Assembly and Council, set to commence on Saturday.

Speaker Prasad Kumar, along with Legislative Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy, Deputy Chairman Banda Prakash Mudiraj and Legislative Secretary Dr. V. Narasimha Charyulu, Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, GAD Secretary Raghunandan Rao, Additional Secretary (Finance) Raya Ravi, Director (Protocol) Sivalingaiah, Special Chief Secretary (Home) Ravi Gupta, DGP Dr. Jitender, ADG, Law and Order Mahesh Bhagwat, Additional CP (Law & Order) Vikram Singh Mann, Cyberabad, Rachakonda Commissioners Sudheer Babu, Avinash Mahanthi, Intelligence IG- Karthikeya, Assembly Chief Marshal- Kamakar, Council Chief Marshal Sanjeeva Reddy and others were present.Speaking on the occasion, the Speaker said that as in the past, the state government and officials should provide cooperation to these sessions as well and the information asked by Members should be provided as soon as possible.

"When the discussions related to the departments are going on, the officials of the concerned departments should be available and should cooperate by providing appropriate information to the Ministers and Members," he said.The Speaker further stated that steps should be taken on behalf of the police department to ensure that the sessions of the Assembly and Council are held smoothly without any problems.He also mentioned that, in light of the ongoing celebrations for the Vinayaka Chavithi festival, appropriate precautions should be implemented. Prasad Kumar pointed out that some roads have suffered damage due to heavy rainfall, and he urged traffic officials to work together to facilitate timely access for Members attending the sessions."Information should be received in advance to prevent any protests and agitations during the meeting, so that the meetings can be held smoothly," Prasad Kumar added.Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy stated that officials from all departments need to collaborate to effectively carry out the sessions. He emphasized the importance of appointing the necessary nodal and liaison officers and insisted that any outstanding questions must be addressed promptly.

Overview of Honda Exhibits at the Japan Mobility Show 2025



Hyderabad: Honda Motor Co., Ltd. today announced plans to exhibit a wide variety of Honda mobility products, including motorcycles, automobiles, power products and aircraft, as well as related technologies and concept models at the Japan Mobility Show 2025 (Press days: October 29 – 30, Public days: October 31 – November 9, 2025). Honda is planning to share more information about the exhibit in stages leading up to the start of the show. Today, Honda unveiled the concept of the Honda booth and some of the models that will be included in the exhibit, and introduced the outline of Honda exhibits for the "Main Programs" to be organized by the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc. (JAMA).

Images of Honda booth*Note: Vehicles/exhibits shown in these images differ from the actual exhibits.

Honda Japan Mobility Show 2025 special website: <http://global.honda/en/japan-mobility-show/2025/Honda> to exhibit a wide variety of mobility products and technologies for land, sea and skies created by "The Power of Dreams."

Since its founding, Honda has always been driven by

the dreams of Honda associates and creating mobility products using its original technologies and ideas. As a comprehensive mobility company, Honda continues to take on challenges to augment possibilities for people and society through its mobility products and services. At the Japan Mobility Show 2025, Honda will exhibit a wide variety of its mobility products for land — mostly automobiles and motorcycles — as well as mobility products for the sea and skies, which represent Honda dreams realized with its latest technologies.

The exhibit will include Honda 0 Series EV models, scheduled for global market introduction in 2026, as well as motorcycle and automobile models which are already on the market. In addition, Honda will bring back the full-size interior mockup of the HondaJet Elite II light business jet, which was exhibited at the Japan Mobility Show 2023, welcoming visitors to step into the mockup to experience the spacious interior of HondaJet. The Honda booth is designed to enable the visitors to experience dream-inspiring mobility products Honda created with its original technologies and ideas while being driven by its own dreams. The complete list of items to be included in the Honda exhibit will be shared toward the end of September, via news release and the Honda Japan Mobility Show 2025 special website.

23rd Death Anniversary Of MLA Kova Lakshmi's father Bheemrao Celebrated With Great Pomp“



““Indian Chronicle" kumrambheem, Asifabad.District Reporter Jade Srinivas.August, 29. "“The 23rd death anniversary of Kotnaka Bheemrao, father of former minister and Asifabad MLA Kova Lakshmi, was celebrated in a grand manner at the BRS party office premises in Wankidi mandal center. On this occasion, floral garlands were placed at his

portrait and tributes were paid. BRS Mandal President Ajay Kumar said that Bhimrao, who served as the tribal representative and tribal welfare minister in the united Andhra Pradesh, was an ideal for today's generation of leaders and that he inspired many as the first tribal minister from a remote area.

Grand Celebration of National Sports Day at Disneyland High School“



“Damera, August 29 (Indian Chronicle): ““On Friday, 29th August 2025, National Sports Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Disneyland High School, Oglapur, Damera Mandal, on the occasion of Major Dhyan Chand's birth anniversary. ““The program began with the floral tribute to the portrait of Major Dhyan Chand by the school's chief advisors Mr. Dayyala Mallayya, Mr. Dayyala Sadayya, and Mr. Balugu Lakshmi Nivasam. ““Addressing the students in the meeting organized on this occasion, the chief advisor Mr. Dayyala Sadayya stated that those who engage in sports stay away from diseases. He emphasized that every student should involve in physical activities daily,

and make walking and running a habit to remain healthy, as health is the greatest wealth. He motivated students to excel in the game of their choice and bring glory to the nation, just as Major Dhyan Chand brought fame to our country. ““School directors Mrs. B. Shobharani, Mr. Dayyala Rakesh Bhanu, and Mr. Dayyala Dinesh Chander also participated in the event. “

“The school management appreciated the efforts of Physical Education Teachers Mr. B. Raj Kumar, Mr. M. Tirupathi Reddy, Mr. T. Srinivas, Mrs. B. Sunitha, and Mrs. Gouthami for making the National Sports Day celebrations a grand success.

CPM team inspects incomplete Rajiv Gruhakalpa houses in Yellandu

““Rayala Kishore, Yellandu Constituency, August 29, Indian Chronicle: “The CPM team inspected the long-pending Rajiv Gruhakalpa housing constructions near RR Colony in Yellandu Municipality, which have remained incomplete for nearly 20 years. They alleged that although over 72 houses were started after collecting ₹7,000–₹8,000 from each beneficiary, the project was left unfinished and has now become a shelter for drunkards and antisocial activities. “CPM district committee member Abdul Nabi and mandal secretary Aleti Kiran demanded that the houses be completed and



allotted to the eligible poor immediately. They also criticized the halt in Indiramma double-bedroom housing works due to non-payment to contractors, leaving many

beneficiaries helpless. The leaders warned of protests if the government does not act quickly. “Participants in the inspection included CPM

leaders T. Krishna, Mannem Mohan Rao, Madarapu Venkateswarlu, Vajja Suresh, Pawan Pasi, along with local residents.

BRS seeks Assembly approval for Kaleshwaram project presentation

Hyderabad, Aug.29 As the State government prepares to present the PC Ghose Commission report in the Assembly, legislators from the BRS have urged Speaker Gaddam Prasad to permit a thorough presentation on the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme during the Assembly session starting Saturday.

A group of BRS members, including Whip KP Vivekananda and MLA D Sudheer Reddy, met the Speaker and submitted a formal request regarding this matter. In their request, the BRS emphasised its responsibility as the main opposition party to provide the public with accurate information on issues crucial to Telangana's welfare. They contended that false information was being circulated about Kaleshwaram, which serves as a vital resource for the state by eliminating drought conditions and enabling irrigation for numerous acres of land.

The party expressed that they should be afforded a chance to provide a detailed, step-by-step overview of the project's construction, technical details, and advantages. The BRS also indicated that there are efforts by the Central government and the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh to compromise Telangana's rights to the waters of the Godavari River under the Godavari-Banakacherla interlinking project. The BRS delegation remarked, "Considering the Assembly's previous practice of allowing presentations, the main opposition should also be granted a fair opportunity to share their information."

RPF Recovers Stolen Gold & Electronic Gadgets Worth Rs. 2,76,000 at Raichur Railway Station

Hyderabad, Aug.29 :The Railway Protection Force (RPF) along with Government Railway Police staff apprehended one accused and recovered stolen property including Gold, Laptop, Tab & 3 mobile phones worth Rs. 2,76,000 at Raichur Railway station on Thursday.

During confidential watch at Raichur Railway station, Asst. Sub Inspector Railway Protection Force/Detection & Investigation Wing/Raichur, Guntakal Division along with GRP staff detained one suspect on arrival of Train No. 09093 Bandra Terminus – Velankanni Special. On checking his bag, stolen items were found viz Gold Mangalsutra – 04 gms worth Rs.40,000; Dell Laptop – Rs.1,30,000; Three Mobile Phones – Rs.47,000 and Apple Tab – Rs.59,000. During enquiry, the accused confessed to thefts committed in different trains and is being produced before Hon'ble JMFC-III (Judicial Magistrate First Class), Raichur for remand. Sanjay Kumar Srivastava, General Manager, South Central Railway (SCR) commended the RPF & GRP personnel for their alertness and timely action which resulted in apprehending a regular ToPB (Theft of Personal Belongings) offender. He stated that the Railway Protection Force is committed to passenger welfare and security.

Cong govt cheated Telangana people on poll promises: BJLP leader

Hyderabad, Aug.29 BJLP leader A. Maheshwar Reddy today alleged that the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government has been cheating the people of Telangana by backtracking on promises made by it during last assembly elections and has been misleading the citizens with 'diversionary dramas'.

Addressing newsmen after the BJP legislative council and assembly members meeting at the state BJP office here today, Maheshwar Reddy said, "We have discussed several issues concerning the people of Telangana. Revanth Reddy has ignored his own commitment made in the Assembly that he would implement 420 promises and six guarantees. Instead of fulfilling them, the government is distracting people by raising issues like BC reservations in local body polls and corruption allegations on Kaleshwaram project without taking any legal action."

The BJLP leader questioned as to why the Chief Minister, despite claiming to have full reports on corruption in Kaleshwaram project, has not initiated a CBI probe or registered cases even after nearly two years in power. "Not a single rupee has been recovered, and none of the corrupt have been booked, despite tall promises of action within 100 days," he pointed out. BJP legislators Payal Shankar, Dhanpal Suryanarayana, Venkataramana Reddy, BJP Legislative Council Party Leader AVN Reddy, MLC Anji Reddy, Malka Komuraiah and others were present.

FIRE DEPT CLARIFICATION ON RESCUE EFFORTS:

Hyderabad, Aug.29 (NSS): With severe floods affecting six Telangana districts - Kamareddy, Medak, Nizamabad, Nirmal, Rajanna Sircilla, and Siddipet — over the last 48 hours, the Telangana Fire and Disaster Response Department said that the backwaters from projects and breaches in tanks had inundated low-lying areas, agricultural lands and residential colonies, leaving the bridges and roads cut off. Maximum available manpower and equipment has been deployed as part of rescue efforts, it noted.

Issuing a clarification on its extensive rescue efforts, the authorities stated that a total of 1,646 people who included farmers, shepherds, children, elderly persons and pregnant women, and livestock were rescued in 31 operations across the affected districts. Despite challenging conditions, firemen continued rescue operations at Kamareddy's GR Colony and nearby areas until late Wednesday night. Two fire personnel in a Light rescue vehicle were washed away in Kamareddy town, but survived due to their training. Some rescue equipment, including life buoys, jackets and IRBs were damaged during operations. The Director General of Fire Services personally inspected the flood-hit areas in Kamareddy, and confirmed all rescue operations were completed by Thursday noon. Further, the department has clarified about an incident where one resident of a flooded apartment refused evacuation late Wednesday night, despite repeated efforts by fire crews. "I

The Flood Water Problem Must Be Solved Permanently. District Collector Venkatesh Dautre Collector's visit to Flood- Hit Ntr Colony“



“Indian Chronicle” kumrambheem, Asifabad. District Reporter Jade Srinivas. August, 29. “Rebbena As flood water enters the houses every time it rains in NTR Colony in the mandal center, District In-charge Minister Jupally Krishna Rao recently visited NTR Colony and took a petition from the colony residents. District In-charge Minister Jupally Krishna Rao conducted a review in this regard and instructed the Collector to visit the flood-affected areas, so on Thursday, District Collector Venkatesh Dautre visited the flood-affected areas in NTR Colony. The flood water coming from the catchment area and the Vattivagu project canal, where flood water comes, was dredged and the flood water coming from the colony residents was permanently resolved by the colony residents and the Congress party leaders.

On this occasion, the District Collector instructed the Irrigation Department officials present there to resolve the flood problem immediately. He told the officials that the necessary funds are being sanctioned immediately. The program was attended by Rebbena Mandal Tahsildar Suryaprakash, Rebbena CI Sanjay, SP Chandrasekhara, Ara Lu Soumya, Udayakiran, District Gowda Sangam President Modern Sudarshan Goud, Congress Party leaders Chiranjeevi Goud, former Deputy Sarpanch Maddi Srinivas Goud, Avidapu Gopi, Gogarla Rajesh Godisela Bhargava, Durgam Rajesh, Beddu Ramesh, Kotrangi Ganavati, Nikode Ravi, Rama Rao, Maddela Varakrishna, Gram Panchayat Secretary Ravinder, Kalani Kadda, leaders and officials. [20:06, 29/8/2025] +91 99485 55073: End..

21-yr-old held in Pimpri Chinchwad after his video with gun goes viral

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Pimpri Chinchwad police arrest, Om alias Nanya Vinayak Gaikwad arrest, Sangvi youngster viral gun video, Police have booked both Gaikwad and Waghmare under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Indian Arms Act. Pimpri Chinchwad police arrested a 21-year-old man after a video of him holding a gun in his hands went viral on social media.

Police identified the youngster as Om alias Nanya Vinayak Gaikwad, a resident of Sangam Nagar in Old Sangvi. Police recovered a country-made pistol along with a live cartridge from his possession. Police constable Akash Khandagale lodged a first information report (FIR) against Gaikwad at Sangvi police station on Thursday. Police said a probe was launched into a video of a youngster holding a

gun, which had been widely circulated on social media. A probe confirmed the youngster seen in the video was Om Gaikwad. The police nabbed Gaikwad for investigation. Police said Gaikwad admitted it was his video and the pistol belonged to his friend Ashish Waghmare of Navi Sangvi. Fearing police action, Waghmare allegedly gave the pistol and a cartridge to Gaikwad, who in turn hid the firearm near an electricity distribution panel in Aundh Hospital area. A police team recovered the pistol and cartridge from the spot, a press release issued on Friday stated. Police booked both Gaikwad and Waghmare under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Indian Arms Act. Police sub-inspector Sandip Khalate, the investigation officer, said, “Gaikwad has been arrested. Search is on for Waghmare. Further investigation is on to know from where and why the illegal pistol was procured.”

After 57 days in ICU, 11-year-old boy recovers from tetanus after tireless efforts by Pune’s state-run Sassoon General Hospital doctors

At Pune’s Sassoon General Hospital (SGH), the state’s largest government hospital, an 11-year-old boy from Parbhani who was in a critical stage after contracting tetanus, once a major cause of death, from a minor wound, was successfully treated for complications and, despite the odds, was weaned off the ventilator after two months and discharged recently.

“My son is much better and I am grateful to the doctors at SGH,” said Rani (name changed), who earns a minimum of Rs 200 daily by selling handcrafted baskets at bus stations. Hailing from Parbhani, Rani is a widow and stays with her husband’s family. “My child was hurt while playing on the road, and we took him to the hospital. But he did not improve, and we brought him to Pune for advanced care,” she said. According to doctors at SGH, the boy had not received routine immunization, developed frequent spasms, and had difficulty breathing. He required mechanical ventilation for 57 days in the paediatric intensive care unit. “His course was complicated by pneumonia, nutritional deficiencies from prolonged illness, and constant spasms that demanded daily adjustment of medications,” Professor Dr Aarti Kinikar, Head, Department of Pediatrics, B J Government Medical College and SGH, told Dr Uday Rajput, PICU In-Charge, pointed out that there is a misconception that tetanus happens only with big injuries.

“In fact, even a small wound can cause it. The first step is always to wash the wound thoroughly with soap and clean water, remove dust or soil, and never use tight bandages or home remedies. Depending on the child’s immunization status, a booster or immunoglobulin may be required as per Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) guidelines,” he said. Nurses provided round-the-clock care for the boy, and after two months, he was weaned off the ventilator. After 15 days of supportive care, he was discharged from the hospital. Rani stayed in the hospital for the entire duration, and the Pediatric Department and the Medical Social Work team supported her with food, accommoda-



tion, and essential needs, ensuring she could focus entirely on her child’s recovery.

“The successful outcome was the result of coordinated efforts,” Dr Eknath Pawar, Dean, B J Government Medical College SGH, said. He explained that tetanus is a completely preventable disease. “Timely vaccination saves lives. This case is a reminder to every parent that immunization is not optional; it is lifesaving.” In 2019, India had the highest number of incident tetanus cases at 16,579, followed by nations like Pakistan, Indonesia, and Nigeria. A global trend analysis from 1990 to 2019 shows that tetanus burden has significantly decreased overall — though incidence remains higher in low-SDI regions, especially among newborns. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) data in 2021, India reported 1,240 tetanus cases, which included 81 neonatal and 1,159 non-neonatal cases. According to Dr Kinikar, neonatal tetanus still occurs in some areas because mothers miss their vaccines or deliveries happen in unhygienic conditions. “Vaccinating mothers, ensuring clean deliveries, and giving children timely booster doses are critical. If the mother has not been vaccinated, neonatal tetanus immunoglobulin can be given, but prevention is always better than cure,” Dr Kinikar said.

Farmers oppose land survey for Narayanpet-Kodangal lift project

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Narayanpet: Tension prevailed in Damaragidda after farmers and land owners opposed land survey for Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation project here on Friday. Raising slogans against the government and worried over losing lands, farmers obstructed the officials from conducting the survey. In the melee, a woman lost consciousness and was shifted to a nearby hospital. In a video that is circulating on social media, a farmer is seen pleading the revenue officials not to acquire their lands for Kanukurthy reservoir. He even fell at the official’s feet and pleaded not to conduct survey and take over his lands.

The farmers charged that officials had arrived in their lands at around 3 a.m. without any intimation. Police personnel also accompanied the officials as a precautionary

measure. After arguing with the officials, the farmers squatted on the roads and fields raised slogans against the Congress government. The farmers said they were eking out their livelihood through cultivation and after government acquires lands, they would lose their livelihood. To make matters worse, the farmers complained that the government was not offering fair compensation to them. They demanded the government to offer a minimum of Rs.30 lakh per acre. Later, the police took Narayanpet-Kodangal Oustees Association president Venkat Ramireddy and a few other leaders into custody. Protesting their arrest, the farmers and villagers staged protest at Utukoor mandal and submitted a representation to Revenue Divisional Officer Ramchander Naik. They demanded that illegal arrests should not take place and wanted the leaders, who were taken into custody, to be released immediately.

Cataract, dialysis, gall bladder surgery: What Delhi’s Ayushman Bharat patients are getting treated for

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Gall bladder surgery, coronary angioplasty, cataract surgery, dialysis, and cancer treatment: these are among the top procedures performed at private hospitals providing services under the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Delhi. In the last six months since the Centre’s flagship scheme was launched in the city, a total of 137 hospitals — 36 government and 101 private hospitals — have been onboarded. This includes 29 private eye care centres. The scheme promises health coverage of up to Rs 10 lakh per family per year. It was the BJP’s biggest poll promise in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly polls. Several hospitals The Indian Express spoke to said that so far, those availing the scheme are mostly from outside Delhi. At Abdul Hakim Centenary Hospital, there has been a threefold increase in the number of patients availing services under the scheme.

According to Medical Superintendent Dr Sandeep Kumar, the hospital has been providing services under Ayushman Bharat to patients from outside Delhi — mainly from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jammu and Kashmir. “Now we have started getting patients from Delhi as well; they mainly include patients above 70 years of age,” he said. He said in the last three months, the top five procedures at the hospital include: laparoscopic cholecystectomy (gall bladder surgery); cataract; orthopaedic procedures, including fractures; tympanoplasty; and non-surgical procedures where admission is required such as cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pneumonia, chronic kidney disease and congestive heart failure. Sources from the hospital’s Ayushman Bharat implementing authority said that 50% of patients visit for dialysis under a daycare package, a facility introduced a year ago. “More than 4,000 patients have been treated under Ayushman Bharat. Since April, we have been seeing local patients as well,” said an official.

At the National Heart Institute, CEO and Chief Cardiac Surgeon Dr O P Yadava said the hospital has been offering coronary angioplasty, balloon valvuloplasty, bypass surgery, and valve replacement surgery under the scheme. He, too, noted that most patients are from outside Delhi. “Very few are from Delhi; the majority come from other states,” he said. At Sanjeevani Hospital, patients are accessing services under the scheme for procedures not available at many government hospitals, said Dr Prem Aggarwal, founder of the hospital and senior cardiologist and interventionalist. “We are treating patients with conditions like stroke, heart attacks, cancer — including chemotherapy — and providing neonatal care,” he added. Sources at Dharamshila Narayana Super Speciality Hospital said the facility is offering services under the Ayushman Bharat in cardiology, urology, and cancer treatment. “Currently, we are only providing inpatient (IPD) care,” a source said. The



hospital spokesperson was unavailable for comment. At Sharp Sight Eye Hospital, CEO Deepshikha Sharma said the most common procedures performed at its Delhi facilities under the scheme include cataract surgeries with intraocular lens implants; retinal procedures for diabetic retinopathy and other degenerative diseases; glaucoma treatment through surgery and laser therapy; and oculoplastic surgery for eyelid and orbital disorders. At Dr Shroff’s Eye Hospital, the most commonly performed surgeries are for cataract, glaucoma, and retinal conditions. “Cataract is the top procedure being conducted across all our centres under Ayushman Bharat,” said Manish Lal, deputy manager at the centre’s branch in Daryaganj. The status quo on private hospital empanelment remains unchanged, with larger hospitals demanding higher tariffs and assurances of timely payments. Hospitals have said high-cost surgeries and complex interventions are financially unsustainable under current packages. “The package includes pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses, consultation, diagnostics, and medicines — making the net reimbursement unfeasible...,” stated a letter submitted to the State Health Agency by the Association of Health Care Providers (India) (AHP) last week. According to the AHP’s Delhi State Chapter and the DMA Nursing Home Forum, there are delays and pending dues even in other states. “Reimbursements are delayed for months, with many hospitals reporting dues pending for over 12 months. For example, in Haryana, over Rs 500 crore is pending across 650 hospitals, leading to widespread threats of withdrawal,” the letter said. The letter added that such delays disrupt cash flow and day-to-day operations, especially in small and mid-sized hospitals. It further stated that claims are often rejected or only partially paid due to clerical errors (mismatched dates or minor documentation issues). It also said deductions are made even after pre-authorisation is granted, undermining trust and discouraging hospital participation. Additionally, there is no effective appeals mechanism for hospitals to contest these deductions, it added.

Delay by cyber fraudsters in withdrawing Rs 1.26 crore help police recover most of it

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

cyber fraud Police said between August 18 and 26, the 72-year-old woman, who lives in Mumbai’s western suburbs, was contacted by a fraudster. If cyber fraudsters manage to transfer money from your account, the first hour, also called the ‘golden hour’, is critical. If the authorities are alerted within this hour, they can prevent the fraudsters from withdrawing your money or further transferring it through multiple accounts. However, in a recent case, nearly a week after cyber fraudsters took Rs 1.26 crore from the account of a 72-year-old woman, the money was still lying in their account, enabling the police to recover Rs 1.23 crore and arrest two persons from Jalgaon.

Police said between August 18 and 26, the 72-year-old woman, who lives in Mumbai’s western suburbs, was contacted by a fraudster. The accused made a call from a WhatsApp number and claimed to be ‘DCP Sanjay Arora’. Along with ‘Arora’, there were some other people “who claimed to be High Court judges, an officer from Mumbai police and CBI officers”. They told the senior citizen that her account had been used for illegal transactions. They also sent across “arrest warrants in her name”.

They told the woman to transfer money from her bank to various accounts of “law enforcement agencies to confirm whether the money was legitimate”. Over a week, the senior citizen transferred Rs 1.26 crore following which the accused stopped messaging. When the woman realised she had been duped, she approached the cyber police station. Senior inspector (west region, cyber) Suvarna Shinde said



as soon as they received the complaint, they checked the accounts where the money was transferred. “Usually, the money is withdrawn soon after the fraud. In this case, we found that the money was still lying in the bank account of a Jalgaon-based person and had not been transferred,” Shinde said. The police then sent a team to Jalgaon on Thursday, where they arrested Rohit Sonar (33), whose account was used to transfer the money, and Hitesh Patil (31), another Jalgaon resident, who provided Sonar’s account to a fraudster in Thailand. Police said the main accused, a Jalgaon resident who had moved to Thailand, knew the two other accused. “As the duo was known to the main accused, they were not asked to immediately transfer the money, which is done in case of account holders whose accounts are used in exchange for commission. This delay helped us recover the money,” Shinde said.

Telangana High Court halts construction of high-rise project citing major regulatory lapses

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

The Telangana High Court Tuesday issued an interim order halting further construction on the ‘Namitha 360 Life Project’, a high-rise residential complex in Hyderabad, citing concerns over alleged violations of sanctioned building plans. The much-publicised 25-floor high-rise project by Shreemukh Namitha Homes is touted as India’s first vertical forest apartments.

The order was passed by Justice B Vijaysen Reddy in response to a writ petition filed by Vijay Kumar Yerram against M/S Shreemukh Namitha Homes Pvt Ltd, the developer of the project. The petition also names several government bodies as respondents, including the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), the state of Telangana, and the Telangana Fire Disaster Response Emergency and Civil Defence Department. On May 30, 2019, original permission was granted for two cellars, three stilts, 25 upper floors, and amenities split between the 1st and 2nd floors. In 2024, M/S Shreemukh Namitha Homes Pvt Ltd applied for a fresh construction proposal for two cellars, four stilts, and 28 upper floors. On May 11, 2024, the GHMC issued a shortfall intimation letter, pointing out 18 violations, including a lack of Fire Department NOC, Airport Authority clearance, and deviations from the approved plan. The GHMC, specifically, directed the builder not to commence any type of construction till the shortfalls are complied with. The petitioner, through his counsel K Pratik Reddy, brought to the court’s attention an order dated June 11, 2025, issued by the GHMC. This order revalidated the construction permission for the project for another two years. However, the petitioner argued that this revalidation was illegal and arbitrary, as it was granted despite a prior “shortfall intimation letter” from the GHMC dated May 11, 2025.



This letter had noted several objections and explicitly stated that no construction should commence until the developer complied with the stipulated requirements within 15 days. The court noted that the impugned revalidation letter made no reference to the prior shortfall letter or to any rectification measures taken by the developer. In light of these submissions, the court granted an interim direction, instructing M/S Shreemukh Namitha Homes Pvt Ltd to immediately cease all further construction on the project until the next hearing. Justice K Vijaysen Reddy questioned GHMC’s move to extend permissions for two more years in June 2025 without addressing the earlier stop-work order issued in May 2025. The court observed that allowing such lapses would lead to unauthorized construction and pose serious risks to public safety. Rahul V Pisharody is an Assistant Editor with the Indian Express Online and has been reporting from Telangana on various issues since 2019. Besides a focused approach to big news developments, Rahul has a keen interest in stories about Hyderabad and its inhabitants and looks out for interesting features on the city’s heritage, environment, history culture etc.

Mumbai to get Singapore-styled bird park at Nahur, BMC floats Rs 166 crore tender



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday floated an ambitious Rs 166 crore tender to construct an exotic bird park or aviary at Nahur in the eastern suburbs. This aviary will house exotic as well as indigenous birds. According to the civic authorities, the aviary is being planned on the lines of Singapore's Jurong Bird Park, which is a massive crowd puller and houses 400 species of birds.

At present, there is an aviary inside the Byculla Zoo (Rani Baug) in Mumbai. Civic officials said that after the proposed facility becomes operational at Nahur, some of the birds from Rani Baug will be transferred to the second centre, while new birds will also be procured for the facility. The proposed centre will be an extended recreational space for residents of Mumbai, as it will comprise a lush green public garden along with a swimming pool, basketball court, and tennis court. The proposal of constructing an aviary was mooted last year. Following this, two different proposals were sent to the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) for acquiring birds as well as for the approval of the layout of this park. "This park will be dedicated specifically for birds and is going to be a massive crowd puller once it becomes operational. The plan seeks to develop zones of different continents where the birds of that particular zone will be

kept. These zones will emulate the habitat and the cultural aspects of the different regions, which will also educate the visitors," said an official.

The aviary will be sprawled over an area of 17,150 square metres or 6.5 acres, and the BMC has set up a 24-month contract period with a target to open this facility by early 2028. The aviary will be divided into multiple sections, including the Africa Zone, Australia Zone, and the USA Zone, among others. These zones will specifically house birds from these regions. Alongside this, the aviary will also have an interpretation centre for bird watchers and ornithologists. According to the tender document, the facilities will have 22 different species of birds, and some of the birds that will be housed in the aviary include – Sun Conure, Golden Conure, Eclectus Parrot, African Grey Parrot, Ostrich, Toco Toucan, and Black Swan, among others. Besides housing the birds, the project will also include heavy infrastructure work, which includes the construction of an underground parking system that will operate automatically with the help of rotors. The tender document states that this facility will be able to accommodate 60 cars at a time.

For accommodating birds like Pelican, Ducks, Crane, and Ostrich, the authorities will also create dedicated holding areas that will comprise artificial water bodies and similar objects replicating the natural habitat of these birds. "We will maintain a dedicated life support system (LSS) which will be responsible for the maintenance of a healthy and stable environment for the birds in the enclosure by ensuring optimal water quality, filtration, temperature regulation, and nutrient balance," an official said. Besides this, the facility will also have a seating area and an amphitheatre, along with walkways and a restaurant. The interpretation centre will include artificial rockwork, along with thematic representation of multiple cultures. Inside the aviary, the authorities will also construct an artificial waterfall.

‘Not terrorists...they are in Mumbai for legitimate rights’: Uddhav slams Mahayuti for backing out on reservation promise

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Amid Maratha activist Manoj Jarange Patil's hunger strike in Mumbai demanding reservation for his community, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief and former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday criticised the ruling Mahayuti government over the ongoing protest, urging it to resolve the issue through dialogue. "They are not terrorists. They have come to Mumbai for their legitimate rights, not to create chaos. If the Marathi people are not going to protest in Mumbai, where else—Surat or Guwahati? Mumbai is the capital of the Marathi people," Thackeray said, speaking at a press conference.

Thackeray said the Maratha community had been "used and deceived" in the past, and now that the Mahayuti is in power, their demands should be fulfilled. He specifically mentioned Jarange Patil, stating that he had been forced to protest in Mumbai to demand justice. Thackeray criticised Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who took office in December 2024, and Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, who was the CM for the preceding 2.5 years. Thackeray said Shinde had taken an oath to provide reservation to the Maratha community, yet the promise remained unfulfilled. "Despite repeated assurances and holding power, Jarange Patil has not received justice. Only back-and-forth politics is happening. The government must act," he said. Thackeray also addressed questions about whether Marathas should be given OBC reservation. "Such questions should be asked



of those who promised it (Eknath Shinde and Fadnavis). I may comment, but what will they do? The Marathas have been deceived so far. It was said that reservation would be given, taking an oath in the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. All responsibility lies with the government. I have already stated my position to Jarange, but it is up to the government to act," he said. Further referring to Shinde's pledge at his Dussehra rally, where he promised reservation for the Maratha community, he said, "Those who had pledged to provide reservation have now retreated. There is currently infighting within the alliance. I have no role in granting this myself. The government must resolve this issue. Marathi people attending protests during Ganeshotsav are here to demand justice, not to create disturbances."

‘Everyone knows who’s firing from Jarange Patil’s shoulder’: Fadnavis says govt won’t yield to politics behind Maratha stir



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

While the Maharashtra Government is committed to the socio-economic upliftment of Marathas, it cannot buckle to political pressure on unreasonable demands that would lead to doing injustice to the OBCs, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said Friday. His statement came after activist Manoj Jarange Patil launched an indefinite hunger strike at Azad Maidan in Mumbai, reiterating his demand for reservation benefits for the community and vowing to continue the protest until the demands are met.

Launching a scathing attack at his political opponents, Fadnavis said, "By now, everyone knows who is firing from Manoj Jarange Patil's shoulder. Such political plots will not work. Nor will they benefit electorally." Though Fadnavis refrained from taking the name of any political party or individual, the message appeared to be directed against the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) led by Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT).

Fadnavis said, "All those who are questioning the Mahayuti government should tell us what they did during their tenure. The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government led by Uddhav Thackeray should show us at least one decision taken for Marathas' interest during its 2.5-year tenure." "The Maratha community received maximum support and help from our government. For the first time, it was during my term as chief minister that we revived the Annabhau Sathe Arthik Mahamandal which helped create 1.5 lakh Maratha entrepreneurs. The mandal, led by Narendra Patil, played a major role in the empowerment of Marathas," he said. "Even Maratha reservation was first given during my tenure (2014-2019). From the construction of student hostels to scholarships, training of shudders for IAS, IPS, UPSC through the SARTHi scheme were all taken by our government," he added. While reiterating that reservation for Marathas under OBC was irrational,

Fadnavis said, "We have to understand that OBCs constitute 350 communities. We cannot dilute their reservation." The government has already given a 10 per cent separate quota for Marathas.

According to Fadnavis, the government has always cooperated and stood by the community, and remains committed to its upliftment. "If the agitation is for the upliftment of the poor within the community socio-economically, we are willing to consider. But if it is for political purposes, it cannot be entertained." He added that the government has nevertheless given permission to Jarange Patil to hold the latest protest. "We are not imposing any restrictions. The guidelines were in accordance with the Bombay High Court's directions," he said, while stating, "The state government has always viewed the Maratha agitation from a socio-economic perspective. For us, the upliftment of the poor within the community remains an important aspect."

2 floodgates of Sukhna Lake opened after water level crosses danger mark

Officials said one floodgate was opened at around 3.30 am and another at 4 am, each raised up to 1 ft to release excess water into the Ghaggar River through the Sukhna Choe. This is the second time this monsoon season that two floodgates have been opened. The earlier instance was on August 19. A single floodgate was operated on August 6, 8, 15 and 17. The UT Engineering Department has deployed officials at the lake's regulator end, with CCTV cameras installed to monitor the water level continuously. A dedicated control room has also been set up to coordinate with the district administrations of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula for timely communication during such operations.

Officials confirmed that neighbouring districts were alerted in advance before the release of water. In recent years, the floodgates were operated four times in 2023, six times in 2022, and five times in 2021. Notably, the opening of two floodgates in August 2020 led to widespread flooding in low-lying areas of Zirakpur. Earlier, on September 24, 2018, the floodgates were opened after a gap of nearly a decade.

Maratha reservation won't affect OBC quota, all measures to be within legal framework: Eknath Shinde



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde Friday clarified that any reservation for the Maratha community will be implemented strictly within the legal framework and will not come at the expense of existing quotas for Other Backward Classes (OBC). "We cannot snatch the rights of one community to give them to another. This is neither the stand of the government nor that of the Marathas," he said, emphasising the government's commitment to equitable development and social harmony. On Friday morning, Maratha activist Manoj Jarange Patil began an indefinite hunger strike at Azad Maidan in Mumbai, reiterating his demand for quota benefits for the community and vowing not to withdraw the agitation until the demands are met.

Shinde highlighted that during his tenure as chief minister, a 10 per cent reservation for the Maratha community was implemented and it is actively benefitting the community. He also pointed to the ongoing work of a committee led by Justice Sandeep Shinde, which continues to verify Kunbi records. "Lakhs of Kunbi records have been found, and the community is being given those benefits as well,"

he said at a press conference in Thane. The deputy chief minister noted that several government schemes, including SARTHi and the Annasaheb Patil Economic Development Corporation, are providing additional support, including educational and economic benefits. "All the work done in the past 2.5 years of government is in front of the Maratha community," Shinde added. Recalling the grant of reservation to Marathas under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis during 2016-17, Shinde said, "Earlier too, reservations were given to the Maratha community, and it stood in the high court as well. But later some people went to the Supreme Court. At that time, the MVA (Maha Vikas Aghadi) government could not present the side of the Maratha community properly, and hence it could not stand in the SC." "When I became CM, again I gave 10 per cent reservation. We have done all that is possible and will continue to do everything feasible. This is the stand of the government," he said, urging communities to maintain social harmony. Responding to Maratha activist Manoj Jarange Patil's statement that he would not leave Mumbai even if the government "shoots him down," Shinde said, "It is not the government's job to shoot someone. This is the government of the common people." Shinde's statement comes even as the activist has appeared to target Fadnavis while exhibiting a softer stance towards the deputy chief minister. Last week, Jarange Patil had even praised Shinde, saying Fadnavis was not allowing him to work for the Maratha community. Shinde said the government is considering all suggestions for further benefits, provided they are legally justified. "The government is positive about everything that fits under the law. No one's reservation or rights can be snatched away," he said. Stressing the importance of social harmony, Shinde emphasised on that equitable development remains the government's priority, while benefits continue to reach the Maratha community through existing schemes and the 10 per cent quota.

After govt flip-flop, HC restores pension under old scheme for absorbed staff of Punjab agri marketing board

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Punjab Haryana High Court The high court subsequently ordered the release of full pensionary benefits within three months, along with 6 per cent interest for delays, and directed that past service be counted for Assured Career Progression (ACP) benefits. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has quashed government instructions that denied old pension scheme benefits to employees absorbed in the Punjab State Agricultural Marketing Board, holding that statutory rules cannot be overridden by executive orders.

Ordering the release of full pensionary benefits to the petitioners, the bench of Justice Harpreet Singh Brar observed on August 19, "The 1987 rule does not create any distinction between an employee who was directly appointed by the respondent-Board and an employee who was absorbed after deputation." The judgment, which was made available on Friday, came on petitions filed by six engineers and overseers — Sukhdarshan Singh, Prabhat Kumar Goyal, Inderjit Singh, Kamaldeep Singh, Jaswinder Singh and Rupinder Singh — who began their careers in state public sector undertakings such as the Punjab State Tubewell Corporation, Sugarfed, Milkfed and co-operative sugar mills between 1984 and 1990. They joined the Marketing Board on deputation after January 1, 2004, and were permanently absorbed between 2009 and 2013.

Initially, their pensionary benefits were governed by the Punjab State Agricultural Marketing Board and Market Committees Employees' Pension, Provident Fund and Gratuity Rules, 1987, which applied uniformly to Board employees. Sukhdarshan, for instance, retired in May 2017 with his pension fixed under these rules. However, policy shifts began in 2012 when the state government made the New Defined Contributory Pension Scheme (NDCPS) compulsory for those appointed after January 1, 2004. This was modified in 2017 to protect employees appointed between



2004 and 2012, but a 2018 circular scrapped the old pension entirely for post-2004 appointees.

Acting on this, the Board issued an office order on December 22, 2020, halting pensions of deputed employees without notice or hearing. A committee later ruled that the absorbed staff were ineligible for the old scheme because they joined the Board after 2004. Challenging the move under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution, the petitioners argued it violated natural justice and Article 300A (Right to property). They contended that once absorbed, they were governed by the 1987 Rules, which make no distinction between direct recruits and deputed staff. Justice Brar underlined the settled law that "executive instructions cannot override statutory provisions." The court cited Supreme Court precedents, including B N Nagarajan v State of Mysore (1966) and Union of India v Somasundaram Vishwanath (1988), holding that administrative directions have no force of law when contrary to statutory rules. The high court subsequently ordered the release of full pensionary benefits within three months, along with 6 per cent interest for delays, and directed that past service be counted for Assured Career Progression (ACP) benefits.

In Punjab's Sultanpur Lodhi, a flood relief camp offers aid to humans and animals alike

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

On a bridge over the Beas River in Punjab's Sultanpur Lodhi is a flood relief camp that has been operating for more than two weeks, with volunteers tending to both people and their livestock. The heaps of animal fodder and water bottles stand testament to the volunteers' belief that here, all victims of floods—whether human or animal—are equally important. "Right now, the crops are underwater. It is not known when the water will recede or what the condition of the land will be, so the only resource people are left with is their livestock," said Rajinder Singh Khemkaran, a volunteer associated with Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh. "It is important that the livestock survive so people have some hope to rebuild their lives after the water recedes. So, we have been focusing on livestock fodder and relief material for people," he added. Punjab has witnessed severe flooding this month following heavy rainfall. The relief camp near Baupur Kadim village has been operational since August 12. All the relief material has been collected from



the Majha and Malwa regions via Tam Taran. Initially, the camp operated from the slope of the Beas river bridge, but with the water levels rising and a part of the slope submerged, the space for storing relief material has shrunk. Rising water levels have also forced parts of the camp to be shifted further back from the riverbank. Relief work is now being managed from two locations, as volunteers continue to support 32 flood-hit villages of Sultanpur Lodhi, among the first to face the floods when waters rose in Punjab. "We were first to establish this camp, as this area was the first hit due to

the floods. Politics is not on our mind. We have received support from all parts of Punjab," Rajinder said. Contributions have poured in from across the state, from Fatehgarh Sahib to Bathinda to Mansa, volunteers said.

Every day at 4 pm, volunteers at the camp, named 'Tuhada Apna Camp', distribute rations—fodder for cattle and supplies for households. Household supplies generally include flour, pulses, sugar, salt, and oil, although the exact distribution varies daily. Drinking water bottles are also a part of the supplies. "We brought fodder from Barnala. We had watched videos about the

flood relief, so we collected funds and arranged fodder for animals," said Sukhwinder Singh, unloading a trolley of supplies. Apart from the rising water levels, the camp has faced a diesel shortage—it is needed for generators, transport, and machinery—and lacks its own boats. Locals staying near the river have been ferrying supplies using their boats and a large barge. "We had asked the administration for boats, but they said that their boats operate only in 10 ft water. Some of the villagers around here have their own boats, and they are using these to take the supplies from us," said Rajinder.

‘Bulldozer has run amok’: Siswan ‘hills flattened and over 500 trees’ axed, BJP slams Punjab Govt



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Siswan village illegal hill leveling, tree cutting in Siswan Punjab, Punjab BJP Vineet Joshi statement, illegal deforestation in Siswan.Panchayat members of the Siswan village along with BJP leader Vineet Joshi at the site where 500 trees were allegedly cut. Hills spread over several acres in Punjab’s Siswan village, adjoining New Chandigarh, are being illegally levelled and more than 500 trees have been cut, panchayat members and BJP leaders alleged on Tuesday, adding that despite repeated complaints, the forest, wildlife, panchayat departments and Punjab Police failed to act.Punjab BJP media head Vineet Joshi, who visited the site along with Sarpanch Sanjeev Sharma, panchayat mem-

bers, BJP leaders Mohit Gautam, panch Amandeep Sharma, and lambardar Sher Khan, accused the Government of turning a blind eye to the environmental destruction.“All pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The bulldozer has run amok while officials remain mute spectators,” Joshi said.

Joshi highlighted that the land in question, falling under Khasra number 453, is notified under section 4 of the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA) 1900. Under this Act, no farming, excavation, mining, tree cutting, or even cattle grazing is permitted. “If the law clearly prohibits any activity, then how have these hills been flattened and hundreds of trees destroyed?” he asked.Joshi further said that the forest and wildlife protection department had already declared this region as the Siswan Community Reserve Forest. “This means no activity can be allowed that harms flora, fauna, or the ecology. Yet everything prohibited has been carried out openly,” he added.Joshi demanded immediate registration of FIRs under the PLPA, the Wildlife Protection Act, the Forest Act, and criminal provisions for illegal trespass and encroachment on panchayat land. “Those who have cut the hills and felled over 500 trees must face strict action. If authorities fail to act, the BJP will raise this issue at higher forums,” he said. Villagers echoed Joshi’s concern, alleging that despite repeated representations, the administration has “remained silent spectator”, allowing large-scale environmental damage in Siswan.

HC expresses concern over shabby condition of National Company Law Tribunal complex in Chandigarh, directs UT Administration to find alternative site

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Tuesday expressed serious concern over the dilapidated condition of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) building in Sector 27B, Chandigarh, after its roof caved in and seepage led to short-circuits, forcing indefinite closure of court proceedings.Hearing a public interest litigation, a Division Bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry took note of a notice issued on August 19 by the NCLT Registrar stating that proceedings had been suspended due to severe water leakage and structural damage in the premises.



Chief Justice Nagu ordered the Chandigarh Union Territory Administration to identify an alternative premises where the NCLT Chandigarh Bench could function during the repair period after the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has sought exclusive possession of the premises for at least 30 days to complete waterproofing and electrical safety work, warning of possible extension depending on monsoon conditions.Lawyers appearing in the matter informed the Bench that not just litigants but even judicial and technical members of the tribunal faced safety risks, with reports of electrical sparks inside the courtrooms.

Counsel for the petitioners stressed that repeated assurances about repairs had proved misleading. “Every submission and statement given earlier was wrong,” he told the Bench, pointing out that the roofs of the ground-floor rooms housing the court and members’ chambers had collapsed in recent days.He argued that the situation had

reached a stage of “grave urgency,” since the entire working of the tribunal had come to a halt, affecting hundreds of corporate and insolvency cases pending before it. The plea sought either immediate shifting of the Bench to an alternative location or urgent structural intervention to restore minimal functioning.Additional Solicitor General Satya Pal Jain, appearing for the Central Government, acknowledged that the building had become unsafe. He explained that the roof was left exposed during waterproofing work, leading to seepage. A new contractor has now been engaged, but the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has sought exclusive possession of the premises for at least 30 days to carry out urgent repairs. The petitioners also placed on record a CPWD letter requesting suspension of proceedings for 30 to 45 days.Directing immediate remedial action, Chief Justice Nagu observed that court work could not come to a standstill for such a prolonged period. The matter will be heard on Monday.

‘First-generation lawyers overlooked’: Allahabad HC flags ‘entitlement culture’ in state counsel appointments

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Criticising the prevailing entitlement culture in the appointment of counsel for state corporations, wherein opportunities are extended predominantly to scions of influential families, the Allahabad High Court observed that a considerable number of first-generation lawyers seldom receive an opportunity to represent such corporations.The court made the observation while hearing a petition filed by one Jubeda Begum and others against the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC).



The order stated that the writ petition arose due to prima facie disobedience of the court’s directions. Upon inquiry, the respondent Corporation found that the situation resulted from professional negligence or incompetence on the part of the counsel representing it before the Labour Court. The Corporation has since initiated appropriate action in this regard.The court observed, “Appointment of meritorious counsel by a fair and transparent procedure is central to good governance of a government corporation and is consistent with the mandate of constitutional law. Hitherto, an entitlement culture has taken root in appointments of counsel for State corporations, where only scions of influential families are given opportunities to represent (them). This observation does not take away the competence of any counsel appointed by the Corporation, but highlights the decay in the system where these offices are appropriated by those who can peddle influence in the corridors of power.”“The matter is not res integra. The Supreme Court, in Kumari Shrilekha Vidyarthi vs State of UP... enjoined the State to adopt a transparent and fair procedure while appointing State counsel. The said mandate applies in equal measure to various government corporations, including the UPSRTC.”

Making the observation, the court said only scions of influential families are given opportunities to represent state corporations, and highlights the decay in the system

The court said that several first-generation lawyers are very competent, possess unimpeachable integrity, and are industrious by disposition. “Counsel of the aforesaid class rarely get a look in when appointments of State counsel or counsel for the Corporations are made, as they are not able to curry any influence with the powers that be. Modes of appointment of counsel which accord weight to accidents of inheritance and neglect achievements of merit cannot be countenanced in State Corporations.”It further added that, “This culture of appointments has also degraded the professional representation of the Corporations. In many cases, this Court has found that the counsel for the Corporations who are appointed through the spoils system receive notices and do not appear in court. They simply sub-delegate the files entrusted to them.”

prevents members of the Bar from developing and contributing to the rule of law. The unjust nature of the system has serious adverse consequences on governance by law. The justice delivery system becomes weak and unable to serve... common citizens due to systemic deficiencies.”The court added that, “The responsibility of all State authorities is to uphold the rule of law and fairness. Selection of counsel can only be made by independent and dispassionate observance of court proceedings by officials of the Corporation who are regularly present incognito in court. The procedure thereafter demands a rigorous system of checks and balances on the professional competence and integrity of counsel. This may also require a formal interface with the authorities concerned. However, selection methods are a matter of details which the authorities can evolve based on institutional experience as well.”

UPSRTC Managing Director Masoom Ali Sarvar, who was present in court, assured that all endeavours shall be made by the Corporation to ensure that the best talent from the Bar is looked at while making such appointments.The court stated that a system which adopts transparent procedures, promotes merit, and gives a fair look at young first-generation lawyers while appointing counsel to represent UPSRTC in court has to be devised by the Corporation.For this purpose, a meeting of the UPSRTC Board shall be held before the next date of listing — September 9 — and the scheme shall be finalised to be presented before the court.On a prayer filed by the petitioners’ counsel, the court granted time to file an amendment application. The court also directed the UPSRTC Managing Director to file an affidavit on the next date of listing. The counter affidavit shall also be filed before the next date of listing, it added.

The court also observed that in the currently existing system, young first-generation counsel “who are not well-connected politically or do not belong to influential families” are overlooked in appointment as counsel for the State or State-run Corporations despite their competence and scholarship.“The failure of the State instrumentalities to discern merit in such a class of counsel can be disheartening to young first-generation lawyers... Such an environment

How 2 students built a defence-tech startup out of a hostel room



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Starting with little more than ideas, personal experience, and a 3D printer in a small hostel room, two students from BITS Pilani, Hyderabad, ventured on a journey that few in their 20s would imagine: building drones for India’s defence sector.Jayant Khatri, 20, a mechanical engineering student from Ajmer, and Sourya Choudhury, 21, an electrical engineering student from Kolkata, are the co-founders of Apollyon Dynamics, a defence-tech startup that has already secured its first clients.The duo’s product lineup — including trainer drones, multi-role drones, tactical drones with waypoint navigation, and their flagship kamikaze drones — all took shape within the confines of their campus dorm. Their kamikaze drone is particularly impressive, hitting speeds over 300 km/h, is radar-proof, and capable of delivering a 1 kg payload.The build-upFor Khatri and Choudhury, the decision to enter defence technology wasn’t a sudden pivot, it was a culmination of years of passion and planning. “The two-month part is what’s recent,” says Khatri, referring to the launch of their company. “We had been making drones for a long time before that. I have been making robots since Grade 5.”Since the start of their college careers, the duo knew they wanted to build a business together.This shared ambition led them to establish ‘Team Vidrohi,’ a defence-tech society on the college campus last year that not only attracted other youngsters but also trained them. Through this group, they honed their skills by participating in international drone races and building a range of projects, from racing drones and robots to prosthetic limbs and hovercrafts. They even created their racing drone league, Apollyon, to test their creations in a competitive environment.But it wasn’t until March of this year that they decided to focus on defence technology. “We knew drones were all the rage, and we saw how effective they were in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Since we were already so interested in drones, it was the perfect area for us to specialise in,” says Choudhury.

Their early efforts started on their campus. With a 3D printer and access to the college workshop, the duo spent

days cutting frames, which they would then bring back to their hostel room to finish. “We’d put on N95 respirators and use a Dremel to smooth them out,” Choudhury explains. “It was a lot of work at first, but once we got the hang of it, things started to come together.”

Their initial funding was pieced together from different sources. Khatri invested Rs 2 lakh he had won from a grant in his first year, and their professor, Sanket Goel, provided some additional financial support and, crucially, access to his lab. This move to the lab marked a significant turning point, allowing them to streamline their production process.The students’ limited budget at the start was also a key factor in their choice of technology. “We chose drones because they’re comparatively cheaper than other tech,” Choudhury notes.“Sitting in a hostel room and soldering iron in hand, tinkering with the circuits, and getting the 3D printer to work. This was a whole different experience. We got to learn it from scratch,” says Choudhury, adding, “Had we got all the resources and a lot of funding straight away, we would not have a fair idea of what all could go wrong.”Their persistent cold emails paid off when the Indian Army invited them to Chandigarh to demonstrate their drones in March. “They were really happy after the demonstration,” Khatri said, “and asked us to stay longer so more units could see our work. We even tested our drones with live detonators and proper bombs.”“Like a subway sandwich”

Their success lies not only in the drones but also in the philosophy behind them — they are designed to be easy to mass-produce, economical, and modular. Choudhury says their products aren’t meant to compete with expensive drones that the Army currently uses. Instead, their business model focuses on providing affordable, customisable drones for individual units.To illustrate this, Choudhury uses an analogy: “We’re like a Subway sandwich. You pick the base bread and add whatever fillings and seasonings you want. We are the drone company equivalent of Subway.”This approach allows for a swarm-like deployment of drones, which can be tailored to the specific terrain and environmental needs of each unit, providing a more versatile and cost-effective solution.

The team is already planning its next phase, focusing on jammer technology, fixed-winged drones, and VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing) unmanned aerial systems. “We want to provide a lot of value,” Khatri says. “We want to work on actual problems and not find a problem for a solution that we make.”This problem-solving philosophy is already showing results. Their startup has successfully delivered its indigenous unmanned aerial vehicles to Indian Army units in Jammu, Chandimandir (Haryana), Panagarh (West Bengal), and Arunachal Pradesh.For Khatri and Choudhury, the journey from soldering circuits to supplying drones to defence forces is just the beginning.

Maharashtra inks deal with IIT Madras startup to build hyperloop between JNPT, Vadhavan Port



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Hyperloop, a transport technology still being tested in labs across the world, may soon debut on Maharashtra’s coastline as a high-speed cargo corridor from Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) in Navi Mumbai to the upcoming Vadhavan Port in Palghar district.The state government Tuesday signed a strategic pact with TuTr Hyperloop Pvt Ltd, a deep-tech startup incubated at IIT Madras, to build a Linear Induction Motor (LIM)-based hyperloop mobility system between JNPT and Vadhavan Port.Unveiled in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at Mantralaya, the government’s administrative headquarters, the project is part of a larger investment push that saw Maharashtra sign 10 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 42,892 crore with the potential to generate 25,892 jobs.But amid various commitments in solar, steel, real estate and data centres, it was the hyperloop pact that stood out — not just for its scale, but its ambition to test a technology that no country has yet deployed commercially.

Hyperloop a disruptive idea: Devendra FadnavisFadnavis called the hyperloop pact a symbol of Maharashtra’s willingness to embrace transformative infrastructure. “Hyperloop is not merely a transport system. It is a disruptive idea that can redefine logistics, mobility and economic geography. With IIT Bombay and IIT Madras supporting the effort, Maharashtra will lead the country in testing and scaling this transformative technology,” he said.

He added that the state would ensure “end-to-end support” to investors, and positioned the project as part of a larger push to make Maharashtra a hub for digital, green and futuristic industries.Hyperloop, first popularised by entrepreneur Elon Musk in 2013, is an ultra-high-speed transport system where pods carrying passengers or cargo move through low-pressure tubes. By cutting air resistance to near zero and using propulsion technologies like magnetic levitation or Linear Induction Motors, Hyperloop promises airline speeds on the ground — theoretically over 1,000 kmph — but with lower energy use and minimal emissions.So far, hyperloop remains largely experimental, with test tracks in the US, Europe and the Middle East. No country has built an operational corridor yet. Maharashtra’s pact with TuTr therefore places it among the earliest government-backed testbeds worldwide.Officials said ports were chosen because they represent India’s most pressing logistics challenge: moving cargo quickly and efficiently.Linking largest container port, future-ready maritime hubLocated in Navi Mumbai, JNPT is India’s largest container port, handling over 55 per cent of the country’s containerised cargo. Congestion on road and rail links has long slowed the evacuation of goods from the port, pushing up costs and delays. A hyperloop corridor could allow containers to move to logistics hubs in minutes rather than hours, reducing turnaround time dramatically.Vadhavan Port, planned as a deep-draft greenfield port in Palghar, is being designed to handle 250 million tonnes of cargo annually and berth the world’s largest container vessels. Integrating hyperloop from the start, officials said, would give Vadhavan a world-class, future-ready edge — positioning it as one of the most advanced maritime hubs in Asia.The TuTr Hyperloop startup was founded by researchers and engineers and incubated at IIT Madras, one of India’s top engi-

neering institutions. TuTr is among the few Indian companies attempting to build indigenous hyperloop technologyIts pact with Maharashtra is its first major applied project, with the potential to showcase India’s ability to develop futuristic mobility solutions rather than import them. Officials said IIT Bombay would also lend expertise to the effort, alongside IIT Madras.Turning Maharashtra into a digital, green hubAlongside the hyperloop pact, the state signed a clutch of agreements across solar, data, steel, energy and real estate, reflecting the government’s push to project Maharashtra as both a digital and green hub.The largest single commitment came from Prestige Estates Projects Ltd, which pledged an investment of Rs 12,500 crore to develop data centres, logistics facilities and real estate projects — a move expected to generate 8,700 jobs. In the renewable sector, Jupiter International Ltd signed an agreement worth Rs 10,900 crore for setting up solar panel manufacturing, bringing with it more than 8,300 new jobs.

The data centre ecosystem — which the government hopes will cement Maharashtra’s tag as “India’s data capital” — saw three significant investors: Webmint Digital Pvt Ltd (Rs 4,846 crore, 2,050 jobs), Rovison Tech Hub Pvt Ltd (Rs 2,564 crore, 1,100 jobs) and Rochak Systems Pvt Ltd (Rs 2,508 crore, 1,000 jobs).In heavy industry, Vow Iron & Steel Pvt Ltd committed Rs 4,300 crore to expand steel capacity, promising 1,500 jobs, while Swedish multinational Atlas Copco will invest Rs 575 crore in the state’s industrial equipment sector, generating 3,400 jobs. Clean energy player LNK Green Energy signed up for Rs 4,700 crore, aimed at developing green power projects that could employ 2,500 people.Together, these commitments — worth Rs 42,892 crore and spread across traditional manufacturing, renewables, real estate and cutting-edge digital infrastructure — underline the state’s attempt to balance immediate job creation with futuristic bets like hyperloop.

Headmasters urge Telangana govt to cancel complex meetings



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Hyderabad: The Telangana Gazetted Headmasters’ Association has urged the School Education department to cancel the proposed complex meetings scheduled for the month of August, citing disruption of classwork due to holidays.In a representation to School Education director, Dr E Naveen Nicolas, association president P Raja Bhanu Chandra Prakash and general secretary G Hema Chandrudu said schools’ functioning was severely affected due to regular and optional holidays, along with additional closure owing to heavy rains. Furthermore, academic instructions were affected for multiple days due to conduct of the teaching-learning material melas.“Now, another two days of interruption are being scheduled in the name of complex meetings. In these circumstances, it has become extremely difficult for teachers to ensure uninterrupted teaching and to complete Formative Assessment-II by the stipulated deadline of September 20.

‘Feudal mindset to service attitude’: Frontline Delhi police personnel to get a soft skills makeover



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

On Monday, Delhi Police Commissioner S B K Singh launched a 15-day etiquette and skill training programme for 2,000 personnel from over 200 police stations at the headquarters. The trainees included duty officers, who take the call from the police control room and first communicate with the complainants, and integrated public facilitation officers, who man the public facilitation desk, listen to the complainants’ problems in detail and provide counselling, if required.

Hon’ble @CPDelhi Shri S.B.K. Singh inaugurated a two-day “Courtesy & Skill Training Programme” at Police Headquarters today for police personnel working as ‘Duty Officers’ and ‘Integrated Public Facilitation Desk Officers’.

Emphasising the importance of etiquette, professionalism, and sensitivity when dealing with the public, Singh said the initial interaction between the police and the public sets the tone for the entire experience and is crucial for building trust and confidence. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” he advised the personnel. Singh also highlighted the need for a fundamental shift in mindset, saying, “A transition from a feudal mindset to a service-oriented attitude was required.” The police personnel will be trained by experts as well as experienced faculty from the Delhi Police Academy. “The training will cover crucial behavioural aspects, including professional conduct, legal knowledge, and soft skills essential for effective public engagement,” an officer said. Singh also unveiled two handbooks specifically designed for the training programme. By focusing on service-oriented skills and a shift in mindset, the training aims to enhance the capacity of Delhi Police frontline officers and ensure every interaction is professional and compassionate.

Play areas, libraries, car cleaning services: Coming soon in Delhi — under a flyover near you

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Play areas, open gyms, public libraries, and even car cleaning services: these amenities could soon spring up under a flyover near you. Under a new project, the Public Works Department (PWD) has kicked off preliminary work to transform neglected, garbage-strewn areas beneath several flyovers into vibrant, safe, and inclusive public spaces.

Officials said the Delhi government plans to revamp these spaces under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. “Each flyover space will feature a themed design,” an official stated. There are over 93 flyovers in the city — three under the Flyover Zone, 38 in the South Zone, and 25 in the North Zone. The PWD has now floated tenders to appoint a consultancy service for the project. Once selected, the consultancy will provide a range of services: preparation of a detailed design brief in consultation with the client, evaluation and analysis of the proposed site, and identification of thematic guidelines for each location. The consultant will also frame architectural and signage development guidelines to shape the overall look and feel of the space, officials said.

Officials added that after the plan and detailed project report are prepared, the department will invite bids from private companies for beautification and maintenance. Officials said the under-flyover areas may be developed into play areas, open gyms, or libraries for public use. The department may also explore options like setting up car cleaning services in these spaces, allowing companies to generate revenue while maintaining the site. They also clarified that while the repair and strengthening of flyovers will continue to be managed by PWD, the selected agency will be responsible for maintaining cleanliness, removing encroachment below the flyovers, increasing greenery through plantation, and removing defacement and posters from flyover



walls. “This initiative seeks to transform these underutilised areas into functional public amenities that encourage community interaction and improve urban livability. The objective of this exercise is to propose sustainable, inclusive, and context-sensitive design solutions that not only reflect the unique character of each location but also contribute to the broader urban fabric of Delhi,” said an official. Earlier in April, PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh had said the department was planning to come up with a policy called ‘Adopt a Flyover’. “We noticed that huge spaces under several flyovers are in poor condition, with garbage and waste, and many of them are encroached upon... So, we are planning an ‘Adopt a Flyover’ policy to utilise these areas through CSR initiatives by private companies and institutions,” he had said. “Beautification through paintings and street art on pillars and flyover walls will also be done under these initiatives... This initiative will give an aesthetic look along with beautification. It will also showcase Delhi’s roads in a positive light and enhance the experience for commuters traveling on these stretches,” Singh had also said.

Outflow from Karnataka’s Krishnarajasagar dam crosses 1 lakh cusecs, 221-year-old Wellesley Bridge closed for vehicles

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Following incessant rain in the Cauvery river basin, 1.20 lakh cusecs of water had been released from the Krishnarajasagar (KRS) dam till Monday, resulting in a flood-like situation in parts of Karnataka’s Mandya district. The water had reached the brim of the 221-year-old iconic Wellesley Bridge in Srirangapatna town. The dam, whose full capacity is 124.80 ft, had water up to 123.25 ft on Monday morning, while the outflow stood at 91,330 cusecs and the inflow at 70,954 cusecs, according to Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Limited. By noon, as the inflow was increased, the authorities increased the outflow to 1.20 lakh cusecs, which included canal and water supply.

Dr Kumar, Deputy Commissioner, Mandya, has urged people living in low-lying areas near the Cauvery river banks to remain alert and said that they will be evacuated if necessary. The public and tourists have been warned against swimming in waterbodies and visiting bridges and waterbodies in the district. Many of the temples, including the Srirangapatna, Ganjam, and Nimishamba temples, have been closed. Tourist places like Balamuri and Edamuri have also been closed. Following incessant rainfall in the Cauvery river basin, by Monday, 1.20 lakh cusecs of water had been released by Krishnarajasagar (KRS) dam, resulting in a flood situation. The water had reached the brim of the 221-year-old iconic Wellesley Bridge. pic.twitter.com/u8I91ctHTi On Monday, the police barricaded the Wellesley Bridge. According to a local, the water level has reached the height of the base of the upper part of the bridge. One of the oldest road bridges built across the Cauvery, it con-



nects Kirangur village and Srirangapatna town. Vehicle movement is usually allowed on the bridge despite its age, with renovation and strength checks undertaken periodically. The bridge has been built using limestone, small stones, and burnt bricks. It is 20 ft wide, 22 ft high, and 500 m long. According to historians, the bridge was built during the rule of Dewan Poornaiah under Mumtaz Ali. The situation in Belagavi district was also no different, as many bridges were submerged, cutting links to several villages. With an increase in the Krishna river outflow from Maharashtra, a few parts of Chikodi taluk faced a flood-like situation. Villagers from the Malaprabha basin in Gadag district were being shifted to safer places following the flood-like situation.

Murder, burial, and an exhumation: In South Delhi, cops uncover sinister plot

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Shabab Ali had been suspicious that his wife was having an affair — and decided to get rid of her. On August 2, the 47-year-old allegedly gave her sleeping pills and weedicide, killing her. Then, along with three of his friends, he buried the body in a graveyard in South Delhi’s Chandholla, said police. According to police, Ali, a painter, has been arrested. His two friends who aided him in committing the crime, Shahrulkhan (28) and Tanveer (25), have also been arrested by the police. The body of the victim was exhumed after 11 days on August 15. The couple has two children — a daughter (11 years) and a son (5 years).

DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan said, “On August 10, a missing person’s complaint regarding a 30-year-old woman, a resident of T-Block in Mehrauli, was lodged by her female friend. She also suspected wrongful confinement. Based on her complaint, a case of kidnapping was registered at Mehrauli police station.” The DCP said they carried out technical surveillance and CCTV analysis, in which it was revealed that Ali, along with his associates, was transporting the woman in an unconscious condition in a car. “On sus-



tained questioning, Ali broke down and admitted that on August 2, suspecting infidelity, he killed his wife by administering sleeping pills and weedicide. He further disclosed that with the help of his associates, he transported the body later that night and buried it in a graveyard at Chandholla,” DCP Chauhan said. Later, police took approval from the sub-divisional magistrate, and the body was exhumed on August 15 in the presence of policemen. The car used to transport and dispose of the body was recovered from the accused Shahrulkhan.

Maharashtra CET Cell launches grievance redressal system for fee complaints, but parents question its effectiveness



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Maharashtra CET Cell grievance redressal system, CET Cell fee complaint portal, In Maharashtra, the Fee Regulating Authority (FRA) sets fees for professional courses such as Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy, Architecture, MBA, MCA, and Law, among others. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Maharashtra State Common Entrance Test (CET) Cell launched a dedicated grievance redressal system last week, allowing students to report colleges that charge more than the government-approved fees for professional courses. However, students and parents — especially those seeking admission to medical courses where fee structures are already sky-high — are raising serious concerns about the system’s practical effectiveness. The move by CET Cell comes amid growing complaints that several colleges are collecting fees under unofficial heads like “development fund,” “campus maintenance,” or “lab upgrades,” despite strict regulations for capping tuition fees. The CET Cell has now made it possible for students to register complaints online or via a dedicated helpline, in order

to bring transparency and protect students’ rights during admissions.

In Maharashtra, the Fee Regulating Authority (FRA) sets fees for professional courses such as Medicine, Engineering, Pharmacy, Architecture, MBA, MCA, and Law, among others. The new system is aimed at addressing grievances if any college is charging additional fees, over and above the regulated fee structure. But parents argue that the system may not offer real relief, with colleges charging more on non-tuition fee components, where there are no regulations. A parent representative, Sudha Shenoy, highlighted that the said system only addresses tuition fee discrepancies, leaving non-tuition components unchecked and unregulated. “The tuition fees may be regulated, but colleges are charging exorbitantly for hostel, mess, and other services. This nearly doubles the actual cost of education,” she said.

Shenoy pointed out how many candidates and parents come to know of hidden costs increasing overall expenditure, only after reaching the college to confirm admission to the allotted seat. “For example, a candidate may select a college based on the tuition fee fixed by FRA, only to know that hostel and mess charges are more than the tuition fee, after reaching the college to confirm admission,” she said. Aspirants raised concerns over having to pay the entire fee upfront to confirm admission, despite the grievance, which is then subject to investigation by the CET Cell. One of the candidates said, “In the absence of regulations for non-tuition components of fees, the grievance system becomes meaningless.” Complaints can be submitted online at <https://portal.maharashtracet.org> by selecting the ‘Open a New Ticket’ option under the ‘CAP Enquiry ? College Fee Complaint’ category. Alternatively, students can call the helpline at 7700919894 between 10 am and 6 pm on working days. To lodge a valid complaint, students must upload supporting documents such as fee receipts, notices, and relevant correspondence. The complaint must clearly state the student’s name, the college’s name, the course, and a breakdown of the excess fees charged.

how We Idliwale grew from a 150 sq ft shop to a culinary brand while reshaping the idea of South Indian cuisine

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The doors of We Idliwale Barroom in Baner take you out of a bustling, congested street and into the pockets of South India. The heritage of Athangudi in Tamil Nadu greets one in the form of black-and-white tiles on the floor. The décor of colourful beads, offsetting liquor bottles, comes from Channarayana in Karnataka, home to some of India’s most-loved traditional toys. The classic rock music that pours into the room conveys the moods of Bengaluru’s pubs. Pune is miles away from Kerala where toddy shops serve drinks with mutton pepper fry, but We Idliwale Barroom brings alive the spirit of such traditions. The Barroom is the culmination of the company’s business model that revolves around introducing little-known aspects of South Indian food to an upmarket clientele.

South Indian cuisine is among the most commonly available fare across India but only a true foodie is aware that there is more to it than idli. Even when it comes to idli, the only way it has been popularised is with sambhar and chutney, leaving many of its variants unknown. In many areas, for instance, idli is eaten with non-vegetarian curries as a staple. Chirag Jadhav, a Pune-based entrepreneur whose roots are in Karnataka, grew up eating idli-chicken curry and idli-mutton curry. Abhishek Joshi, a chef, was fed the same by his aunt who married into a family from Kundapur in Karnataka. “Anywhere in South India, one can find these small messes that are run by families or these hole-in-the-wall places that serve idlis and non-vegetarian curries,” says Jadhav. Joshi and Jadhav, who have been friends since childhood, soon realised that they could plug a gap in the market. A lot of Indians might be well-versed with aglio olio or quesadilla but have little knowledge of regional cuisine. When Joshi, who had trained at Michelin-starred restaurant Folly in Dubai, among others, and Jadhav, whose family is in the hospitality business, decided “to do something of our own”, the idli turned into their mystery-hero dish. In 2019, We Idliwale was born.

They started humbly, with a 150 sq ft shop in Baner. The investment was so small that it would not burn a hole in their pockets. There were just four dishes on the menu — idli-chicken, idli-mutton, idli-sambar-chutney, and filter coffee. There was no seating; people ate standing against two ledges. The concept took off immediately. There were times when people would be sitting on the stairs, waiting to be served. “We were very confident that this would work, but the response of the people of Pune took us by surprise. A few people tried the combination and instantly loved it. They became our regulars,” says Jadhav. Since then, We Idliwale has expanded to outlets at Viman Nagar, NIBM, and the barroom in Baner, serving 3,000 portions of idli-chicken curry every month. We Idliwale began by pricing the idli-chicken, idli-mutton dishes around Rs 130, while neighbourhood shops sold idlis for less than a tenth of the rate. However, the hit food combinations explained it, clinch-



ing all arguments. Joshi led from the kitchen. The curries are a combination of recipes by himself and his aunt — rich, layered, and with deep flavours. It translated into an old, traditional food that was also new to the palate of Pune. Staying authentic amid a growth spurt The lockdowns pushed up demand further, with orders coming from across the city. “That’s how we decided, during the second lockdown, to open a bigger outlet in Viman Nagar. This one would have seating,” says Jadhav. In 2022, Neha Anand of Kings Group Ventures invested in the company. The entrepreneurs ensured that every outlet that We Idliwale opened was bigger than the previous one. “A business that seeks to bring regional cuisine to the mainstream must be honest and start small,” says Jadhav. Even in the Barroom, the menu of signature cocktails, Haldi Highball, Tamarind Whisky Sour, and Kachampuli Highball, has ingredients from a South Indian kitchen.

This year, We Idliwale will explore different cities in India before going global. “We put in a lot of effort to stay as authentic as possible in our sourcing of ingredients to the ethos of our service,” he adds. The food industry is, however, battling issues, such as high rentals and tax regimes, they say. “GST in restaurants and eateries was reduced to 5 per cent without Input Tax Credit (ITC, which is the tax businesses pay on purchases that can be claimed as a deduction while paying output tax) in the GST Council meeting held at Guwahati in 2017. This decision adversely impacted several restaurants, primarily those who operate on leased premises in larger cities,” says Jadhav. “These are all from the organised sector and contribute taxes to the state exchequer. This denial of ITC also results in additional capital outlay of up to 20 per cent on every new project, which in turn adversely impacts investment sentiments in the sector,” he adds. Jadhav points out that the changing eating habits of people, with deliveries being more popular than eating out, have made restaurants dependent on online aggregators. “They charge a huge commission. We have no option but to go with it, as they have a major chunk of customers. At present, restaurant associations are in talks with online aggregators for a fair deal,” he says.

Karnataka’s Shakti Scheme enters Golden Book of World Records with over 500 crore ticketed women journeys

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Karnataka Government’s flagship Shakti Scheme, which provides free bus travel for women across state-run transport corporations, has entered the Golden Book of World Records for catering to a record number of passengers. Between June 11, 2023, and July 20, 2025, the scheme facilitated over 500 crore ticketed journeys by women passengers across the state, according to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who formally announced the recognition in Bengaluru on Monday. They credited the programme for empowering women socially, economically, and educationally. Under the Shakti Scheme, implemented on June 11, 2023, women residing in Karnataka are allowed to travel for free in non-premium buses run by the four state-run transport corporations. Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who was also present on the occasion, noted that the achievement came despite financial and operational challenges faced by the state transport corporations. “Since the launch of Shakti, the state government has added 5,800 new buses, recruited 10,000 staff, and extended Rs 2,000 crore in financial assistance to clear debts of transport corporations,” he said. Citing a study by the Sustainable Mobil-

ity Network, Reddy stated that the scheme has had a measurable economic impact. “Women’s employment rose by 23 per cent in Bengaluru and 21 per cent in Hubballi-Dharwad, contributing to higher state income levels,” he said. “It is a proud moment that the Shakti scheme has entered the Golden Book for World Records. The fact that Shakti is being implemented in different states across the country under different names is a testament to the success of the scheme,” Reddy added. Meanwhile, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has recently added a feather to its cap by winning two prestigious awards at the Asia’s Best Employer Brand Awards — 2025, held at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Singapore. KSRTC was honoured with the awards for ‘Institution Building’ and ‘The Best Inclusion Recruitment Programme’, bringing global recognition to the corporation’s innovative and transparent recruitment practices. After a gap of six to seven years, KSRTC successfully resumed its recruitment process, appointing 300 technical assistants, 2,000 driver-conductors, and 292 employees under Compassionate Grounds. What made the process stand out was its commitment to fairness — carried out with zero human intervention, relying instead on a fully computerized system for counselling and staff placement across depots.

Focus turns to security guarantees after Ukraine summit leaves path to peace unclear



LONDON/KYIV, GNS News Agency, Aug 29 - Ukraine and its European allies have been buoyed by Donald Trump's promise of security guarantees for Kyiv to help end the Ukraine war but face many unanswered questions, including how willing Russia will be to play ball. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy hailed Monday's extraordinary summit at the White House with Trump as a "major step forward" towards ending Europe's deadliest conflict in 80 years and towards setting up a trilateral meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin and the U.S. president in the coming weeks. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Flanked by the leaders of allies including Germany, France and Britain at the summit, Zelenskiy's warm rapport with Trump contrasted sharply with their disastrous meeting at the Oval Office in February. But beyond the optics, the path to a lasting peace remains deeply uncertain and Zelenskiy may be forced to make painful compromises to end a war that analysts say has killed or wounded more than 1 million people. And despite the temporary sense of relief in Kyiv, there was no let-up in the fighting. Russia launched 270 drones and 10 missiles in an overnight attack on Ukraine, the Ukrainian airforce said, the largest this month. The energy ministry said Russia had targeted energy facilities in the central Poltava region, home to Ukraine's only oil refinery, causing big fires. "The good news is that there was no blow-up (at the White House). Trump didn't demand Ukrainian capitulation nor cut off support. The mood music was positive and the trans-Atlantic alliance lives on," John Foreman, a former British defence attache to Kyiv and Moscow, told Reuters. "On the downside, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the nature of security guarantees and what exactly the U.S. has in mind." Zelenskiy said on Tuesday his officials were working on the content of the security guarantees. Russia has made no explicit commitment to a meeting between Putin and Zelenskiy. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday Moscow did not

reject any formats for discussing the peace process in Ukraine but that any meeting of national leaders "must be prepared with utmost thoroughness".

President Putin has warned that Russia will not tolerate troops from the NATO alliance on Ukrainian soil. He has also shown no sign of backing down from demands for territory, including land not under Russia's military control, following his own summit talks with Trump last Friday in Alaska. Trump has not specified what form U.S. security guarantees could take, and backed away from insisting that Russia agree to a ceasefire before any peace negotiations kick off in earnest. The U.S. president has also told Ukraine to forget about regaining control of Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, or joining NATO. "It is hard to imagine there being any deal today that is acceptable and that respects the red lines of the Ukrainians and Europe as well as the red lines of the Russians," said Matthias Matthijs, senior fellow for Europe at the Council on Foreign Relations. Europe's dealings with Trump are similar to the fraught negotiations on tariffs, Matthijs said: "Having avoided the worst outcomes, they come to some sort of agreement. It's better than they feared, but it's always worse than the status quo." Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Zelenskiy and his allies had "failed to outplay" Trump. "Europe thanked & sucked up to him," Medvedev wrote on X. The last direct talks between Russia and Ukraine took place in Turkey in July while Putin also declined Zelenskiy's public invitation to meet him face-to-face in May. "President Trump has now opened the door to the negotiating room for him, and Putin must now enter it," German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul told the Deutschlandfunk radio broadcaster. If not, he said, sanctions must be intensified. Ukraine's allies will hold talks in the so-called "Coalition of the Willing" format on Tuesday to discuss the way forward. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who also attended Monday's talks, said NATO membership for Ukraine was not under discussion but that there was a discussion on "Article 5"-type security guarantees for the country. Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty enshrines the principle of collective defence, in which an attack on any of its 32 members is considered an attack on all. "There is, of course, the question of what Russia will accept. But also, what western countries are willing, and able, to do for Ukraine," said a note by Eurointelligence. Orysia Lutsevych, a research fellow at Chatham House, said the worst case scenario "of Trump selling Ukraine out to Putin was avoided" at Monday's talks, but she added: "A bilateral with Putin is dangerous for Zelenskiy. Even if it happens, which is highly unlikely, Putin will blame him for obstructing peace, being unreasonable. In such a case, the question is: who Donald Trump will trust and blame for his failed peacemaking efforts." Graphic: Map of Ukraine shows the eastern oblasts and the areas under Russian control

Israel studying Hamas reply to Gaza ceasefire proposal

JERUSALEM/CAIRO, GNS News Agency, Aug 29 - Israel is studying Hamas' response to a Gaza ceasefire proposal, two officials said on Tuesday of a potential deal for a 60-day truce and the release of half the Israeli hostages still held in the battered enclave. Efforts to pause the fighting gained new momentum over the past week after Israel announced plans for a new offensive to seize control of Gaza City, and Egypt and Qatar have been pushing to restart indirect talks between the sides on a U.S.-backed ceasefire plan. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

The proposal includes the release of 200 Palestinian convicts jailed in Israel and an unspecified number of imprisoned women and minors, in return for 10 living and 18 deceased hostages from Gaza, according to a Hamas official. Two Egyptian security sources confirmed the details, and added that Hamas has requested the release of hundreds of Gaza detainees as well.

The proposal includes a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces, which presently control 75% of Gaza and the entry of more humanitarian aid into the enclave, where a population of 2.2 million people is increasingly facing famine. Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Majed Al Ansari said the 60-day truce deal would include "a pathway to a comprehensive agreement to end the war." Israel had previously agreed to the outline, advanced by U.S. special Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, but negotiations faltered over some of its details. The last round of talks ended in deadlock in late July. Israel's plans to seize control of Gaza City in the heart of the Palestinian enclave have since stirred alarm abroad and among the estimated one million people presently living there. On the ground, there were no signs of a ceasefire nearing as Israeli gunfire, tank shelling and airstrikes killed at least 20 Palestinians on Tuesday, according to Gaza health officials. Tanks completed taking control of the Zeitoun suburb, an eastern neighbourhood on Gaza City's outskirts, and continued to pound the nearby area of Sabra, killing two women and a man, medics said. Local health authorities said dozens of people had been trapped in their houses because of the shelling. The Israeli military said it was checking the report. On Friday, it said its forces were operating in nearby Zeitoun to locate weapons, tunnels and gunmen. "It has been one of the worst nights in Sabra and Gaza City as the explosions are heard throughout the city," said Nasra Ali, 54, a mother of five, who lives in Sabra.



"I was planning to leave my house when I heard there is a possible ceasefire. I might stay for a day or two, if nothing happens, then I will run away with my kids," she told Reuters via a chat app. Thousands of people are estimated to have fled the area in the past few days. In Israel, the threatened offensive prompted tens of thousands of Israelis on Sunday to hold some of the largest protests since the war began, urging a deal to end the fighting and free the remaining hostages held in Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to convene discussions about the ceasefire proposal soon, the two Israeli officials said. A response was expected in the coming two days, a Palestinian source close to the talks said. Netanyahu faces domestic political pressure from his far-right government partners who object to a truce with Hamas. Ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir have demanded to keep the war going until Hamas' defeat, and annex Gaza. Hamas official Izzat El-Reshiq said that the truce proposal it has agreed to is an interim accord that would pave the way for negotiations on ending the war. A source close to the talks said that, unlike previous rounds, Hamas accepted the proposal with no further demands. But prospects for agreeing an end to the war appear remote, with gaps remaining on the terms. Israel is demanding the group lay down its arms and its leaders leave Gaza, conditions which Hamas has so far publicly rejected. The war began when Hamas-led fighters stormed into Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages. Israel's offensive has since killed more than 61,000 Palestinians, plunged Gaza into humanitarian crisis and displaced most its population.

Canada opposition leader Poilievre wins seat, to take on Carney over tariffs

GNS News Agency, Aug 29
OTTAWA, Aug 19 (Reuters) - The leader of Canada's official opposition Conservatives, Pierre Poilievre, secured a return to Parliament and a chance to grill Prime Minister Mark Carney over U.S. tariffs, staging a comeback after unexpectedly losing his seat in an April election. Unofficial results from Elections Canada on Tuesday showed Poilievre had easily won a special election on Monday in the parliamentary constituency of Battle River-Crowfoot in the western Canadian province of Alberta, a Conservative stronghold. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Poilievre, who accuses the Liberal government of botching its handling of U.S. relations, will be able to confront Carney when the House of Commons returns on September 15. Carney, who took over as prime minister in March, secured a strong minority government in April's federal election, while Poilievre lost the Ottawa-area seat he had held for 21 years. Carney won on a promise to stand up to U.S. President Donald Trump but has since moderated

his approach even as Washington imposed more tariffs. "Mark Carney has been failing. He's failed, he's backed down, he's made concession after concession vis-a-vis the Americans," Poilievre told a press conference last Thursday. Carney, however, is in no immediate danger politically. Although the Liberals fell three seats short of a majority in April, they should be able to rely on the support of smaller parties to survive confidence votes. A Nanos Research poll earlier this month put the Liberals at 44% popular support compared with 33% for the Conservatives. Carney has pulled the Liberals more to the center and Poilievre will find it harder to draw a sharp contrast, said pollster Nik Nanos, CEO of Nanos Research. "Poilievre needs to articulate what he learned from the last federal election and how his government would be different than a Carney government," he said via email. At the start of the year the Conservatives looked set for a crushing election victory over the Liberals of then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who were far behind in polls after more than nine years in power.

Somalia faces diphtheria surge amid vaccine shortages and aid cuts



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

MOGADISHU, Diphtheria cases and deaths have risen sharply this year in Somalia, where the response has been curtailed by vaccine shortages and U.S. aid cuts, Somali officials said. More than 1,600 cases, including 87 deaths, have been recorded, up from 838 cases and 56 deaths in all of 2024, said Hussein Abdulkar Muhidin, the general director of Somalia's National Institute of Health. Keep up with the latest medical breakthroughs and healthcare trends with the Reuters Health Rounds newsletter. Sign up here. Diphtheria, a bacterial disease that causes swollen glands, breathing problems and fever and mostly affects children, is preventable with a vaccine that became widely available in the mid-20th century. Childhood immunisation rates in Somalia have improved over the past decade, but hundreds of thousands of children are still not fully vaccinated.

After fleeing fighting between government forces and Islamist militants in the central Somalia town of Ceeldheere three months ago, all four of Deka Mohamed Ali's children, none of whom was vaccinated, contracted diphtheria. Her 9-year-old daughter recovered, but her 8-year-old son died and two toddlers are now being treated at a hospital in the capital Mogadishu. "My children got sick and I just stayed

at home because I did not know it was diphtheria," she told Reuters from the bedside of her 3-year-old son Musa Abdullahi whose throat was swollen to the size of a lemon from the infection. Health Minister Ali Haji Adam said the government had struggled to procure enough vaccines due to a global shortage and that U.S. aid cuts were making it difficult to distribute the doses it had. Before President Donald Trump cut most foreign assistance earlier this year, the United States was the leading humanitarian donor to Somalia, whose health budget is almost entirely funded by donors.

"The U.S. aid cut terribly affected the health funds it used to provide to Somalia. Many health centres closed. Mobile vaccination teams that took vaccines to remote areas lost funding and now do not work," said Adam. Muhidin separately echoed his comments about the closures. Overall U.S. foreign assistance commitments to Somalia stand at \$149 million for the fiscal year that ends on September 30, compared with \$765 million in the previous fiscal year, according to U.S. government statistics. "The United States continues to provide lifesaving foreign assistance in Somalia," a U.S. State Department spokesperson said when asked about the impact of its aid cuts in the country.

"America is the most generous nation in the world, and we urge other nations to dramatically increase their humanitarian efforts." Aid group Save the Children said last month that the closure of hundreds of health clinics in Somalia this year due to foreign cuts has contributed to a doubling in the number of combined cases of diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, cholera and severe respiratory infections since mid-April. Besides the U.S., Britain, France, Germany and other major Western donors are also cutting aid budgets. Somalia's government has also faced criticism from doctors and human rights activists for its limited funding of the health sector. In 2024, it allocated 4.8% of its budget to health, down from 8.5% the previous year, Amnesty International said. The health ministry did not respond to a question about that criticism. It has said it is planning to launch a vaccination drive but has not given details when.

China pledges to address India's rare earth needs, Indian source says

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

NEW DELHI, There is an upward trend in India-China relations and Beijing has promised to address New Delhi's needs on rare earths, a top Indian official and a source said on Tuesday, as the neighbours rebuild ties that were damaged by a 2020 border clash. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is visiting India for the 24th round of border talks with Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and is also due to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, days before Modi travels to China for the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

"There has been an upward trend. Borders have been quiet. There has been peace and tranquillity," Doval told Wang as he opened the talks. "Our bilateral engagements have been more substantial." "The new environment that has been created has helped us in moving ahead in the various areas that we are working on," he said. Wang told Doval that "the stable and healthy development of China-India relations is in the fundamental interests of the two countries' people," according to a readout of the meeting released by China's foreign ministry. The two sides "should enhance mutual trust through dialogues and expand cooperation," Wang said, and should aim for consensus in areas such as border control and demarcation negotiations. Earlier on Tuesday, an Indian source said that China had promised to address three key Indian concerns. Wang, the source said, had assured Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar that Beijing is addressing India's need for fertilisers, rare earths and tunnel boring machines. The Indian foreign and mines ministries did not respond immedi-



ately to Reuters requests for comment. China's commerce ministry also did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It was not immediately clear whether China had agreed to approve export licenses faster or grant blanket exemptions for India. China has previously committed to speeding up export licenses for Europe and the U.S. without actually dismantling the control regime. China's exports of rare earths and related magnets jumped in June after these agreements and as the commerce ministry worked through a huge backlog of applications.

However, rare earth magnet exports to India were still down 58% compared to January levels, according to Chinese customs data. June is the last month for which country-level data is available. India has the world's fifth-largest rare earth reserves, at 6.9 million metric tons, but has no magnet production and relies on imported magnets, mainly from China.

Bay Area marks India's 79th Independence Day with grand 'Swades' Parade and cultural festival



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

The streets of downtown San Jose turned into a vibrant tapestry of color, music, and tradition as the Association of Indo Americans (AIA), in partnership with Bollywood 92.3, hosted Swades 2025 to celebrate India's 79th Independence Day. The daylong festivities drew an estimated crowd of over 25,000, making it one of the largest Indian American gatherings in Silicon Valley this year. A parade of culture and unity

The highlight of the celebration was the grand India Parade, featuring more than 75 floats supported by over 50 community organisations. Each float showcased the cultural richness of India's states — from traditional dances of Gujarat and Haryana to depictions of Ramayana and Kerala's temple arts. Participants dressed in colourful attire brought the streets alive with patriotic songs, drums, and folk performances. Flag hoisting and dignitaries The ceremonial flag-hoisting was led by popular Indian actress Ameesha Patel, who served as Grand Marshal, along with Srikanth Bolla, Founder of Earth Cleanse, and Rakesh Adlakha, Deputy Consul General of India in San Francisco. San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan hoisted the American flag and praised AIA's efforts, calling the event "a growing tradition that will only get bigger in the years to come". More than 50 elected officials across Silicon Valley, including Mayors, Council members, and State representatives, attended to show solidarity with the Indian American community. Music, dance, and festivities

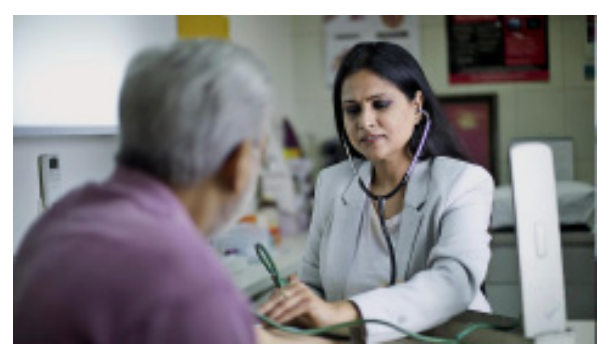
The festival continued late into the night with Vijay Bharat, a cultural showcase featuring classical and contemporary dances, a live concert by Jhoom Productions,

and patriotic music performed by BATA/AIA karaoke singers. A special Dhol-Tasha performance set a powerful rhythm, drawing crowds into celebration. The evening concluded with fireworks that lit up the San Jose skyline. Community spirit and recognition Throughout the day, stalls offered regional delicacies, handicrafts, and games like carrom and chess, while children took part in traditional dance competitions. On stage, community leaders honored volunteers and sponsors whose support made the event possible. AIA extended thanks to its sponsors, including Sanjiv Gupta CPA (Grand Sponsor), Lavanya Duvvi (Platinum Sponsor), Travelopod, and ICICI Bank, along with media and cultural partners. Looking ahead With Swades marking another successful milestone, AIA announced preparations for its next flagship event, the Dussehra Diwali Dhamaka, scheduled for October at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. The program will feature a grand Rath Yatra, Mahamangala Aarti, fireworks, and the dramatic burning of a 35-foot effigy of Ravan. Preserving heritage abroad For the Bay Area's Indian diaspora, Swades has become more than just a parade. It's a living reminder of their roots, a platform for youth to embrace culture, and a bridge of friendship with the wider American community.

HCLTech to offer TechBee to Hyderabad students

Hyderabad: HCLTech, a technology company, plans to offer its TechBee Early Career Programme to high school graduates in Hyderabad and give them the opportunity to build careers in the technology industry. TechBee is an initiative designed for high school graduates. It offers a unique 'earn while you learn' model that blends hands-on technology training with access to higher education. It equips students with industry-relevant skills and enables them to pursue academic advancement, laying the foundation for global careers in technology. The programme is set to introduce specialised tracks in Generative AI and Cybersecurity, developed in collaboration with premier educational institutions. These initiatives are designed to expand access to high-quality technology careers across India, a press release said.

The role of preventive health screenings in achieving a healthier India



As India celebrates Independence Day each year, the issues of economic development, technical innovation, equal rights and education come up. What, however, should also top the nation’s list of priorities is freedom from preventable ailments, an aspect of independence to which we seem to pay little regard.Enabling citizens to live productive and healthy lives free from the burden of disease is the essence of true national independence. Preventive health screening is one of the most effective ways to accomplish this.

India continues to face a dual disease burden: infectious diseases on the one hand, and a fast-expanding wave of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular problems, and certain malignancies on the other. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs account for more than 60% of all deaths in India. Yet, many of these disorders can be detected and managed years before they become life-threatening.Although our healthcare system has begun to focus on prevention, it is still not free from the malaise of relying mainly on reactive care, responding only when symptoms show or consequences develop. This reactive approach is expensive and less effective. Late diagnosis not only harms health outcomes, but also depletes household savings, lowers workforce productivity, and places an unnecessary strain on the healthcare system.Preventive health screenings, whether a simple blood sugar test, lipid profile, mammography, or full-body health check, serve as an early warning system. They assist in identifying risk fac-

tors before they develop into major disease.Regular screenings allow early detection. For instance, diabetes and hypertension can be efficiently managed if detected early, avoiding consequences such as renal failure or stroke. Equally important is risk reduction which entails recognising high cholesterol or pre-cancerous changes that allow for lifestyle adjustments or focused therapies that significantly reduce long-term risk. Another factor in the ambit of prevention is lower healthcare costs. Preventing chronic illnesses is significantly less expensive than controlling them, both for the individual and the healthcare system.In effect, preventive screenings are not just a medical tool but a form of health security — protecting individuals and the nation as a whole.

A key challenge is cultural. For many Indians, consulting a doctor when you’re feeling fine appears superfluous. Preventive screenings are sometimes viewed as a discretionary luxury rather than necessary investments in healthcare.We need a shift in thinking, where preventative care is viewed as a responsibility rather than an afterthought. This demands concerted actions.The government must incorporate screenings into national health programmes and fund tests for vulnerable groups. For employers, offering yearly health screenings could be a job benefit, not a perk. Healthcare providers meanwhile, should simplify and package screening programmes to make them more accessible.As for individuals, taking personal responsibility for frequent check-ups should be paramount, just as we would for car maintenance or financial preparation.Independence via health

A healthy India means a more independent India. Preventive screenings enable people to enjoy longer and more fruitful lives, free of the financial and emotional burdens of preventable sicknesses. They preserve the breadwinner’s earning capacity, shield families from exorbitant medical bills, and maintain community resilience.If we can instil a preventive care culture in our collective psyche, each Independence Day will not only represent political independence, but also the freedom to live without the shadow of undiagnosed sickness. Because, in the end, a nation is only as strong as its citizens’ health.

Cow Economy, and Diplomacy

(This is the latest edition of the Political Line newsletter curated by Varghese K. George. The Political Line newsletter is India’s political landscape explained every week. You can subscribe here to get the newsletter in your inbox every Friday.)

Culture influences market and diplomacy. But how much is too much on this count?

A slice of the stalemate in trade talks between India and the U.S. is related to the U.S. demand for opening up India’s farm sector. The U.S. wants to export more of its dairy and poultry products to India. India resists this demand. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he would make personal sacrifices, if required, to ensure that farmers are protected. The proportion of population dependent on agriculture reveals one of the most striking differences between India and the United States, highlighting their vastly different economic structures and development stages. India has nearly half of its workforce engaged in agriculture, while the United States has only less than two percent directly employed in farming — representing a 32-fold difference in agricultural employment dependency. In India’s case, agriculture contributes roughly 18 percent of GDP but nearly half of the population is dependent on it. Farmers are a powerful political constituency in both India and the United States. Food is also a question of national security. Post-Covid fears related to self-sufficiency in critical areas have further strengthened the case for national food markets insulated from global disruptions.

India’s resistance to allowing American farm produce in its market rests on three reasons. The first, as mentioned above, is that too many people are dependent on agriculture, and opening up the sector to American products could render them vulnerable. The second is national security. The third concerns apparently cultural reasons — American cows may be fed meat products such as chicken waste, and this is unacceptable to India. Milk and other products from a cow whose food chain is not clearly plant-based do not meet Indian standards. Whether such determination is consistently applied across all milk produced within India is beside the point. Cultural reasons are relevant to market decisions in all societies. For instance, some Muslim countries or shops may not sell pork; among the GCC countries, pork is available in the UAE and Bahrain, while in others it is not. In large parts of India now, beef is legally banned; in many parts, such as southern India, West Bengal, and the northeastern states, it is widely consumed by all social groups including Hindus. Cultural barriers to global trade are not new in India. Crossing the seas was once taboo — Gandhi had to do penance to be readmitted to his Modh Vaniya caste, which had ostracised him for doing so.Of the three issues at play in trade in agriculture, perhaps the easiest to change is the competency of the sector. But the cultural politics around the cow and the requirements of the agriculture sector often come into conflict. At least 20 out of 28 states have some form of laws to protect cows, which effectively translates into restrictions on the trade and transportation of cattle, including buffaloes. In the last decade or so, many states have enforced these laws aggressively, and vigilantes targeting even legal cattle trade often go scot-free. Simultaneously, a whole network of rent-seeking has emerged in the guise of cow protection, as the state spends massive amounts to shelter unproductive cows that farmers do not want to keep. It is not the case that meat production has ended; India’s export of buffalo meat has been growing in the last three years at around four percent annually. What has happened is that cattle and leather trade have been pushed into a grey zone of legality, inflicting costs and losses for all involved and creating new rent-seeking opportunities.You can read about a sample of such restrictions here.Farmers are paying a huge price for this — on the one hand, the difficulty in disposing unproductive cattle, and on the other, the problem of free-roaming cattle destroying their crops.

Cow protection in India was linked historically to farming practices of an earlier era. Those factors have changed due to technology and other developments. Yet, productivity in India’s agriculture sector remains entangled in the religious association many people have with cows. The cow has long functioned as a symbol in Hindu-Muslim rivalry in the subcontinent. Hindu leaders such as Dayananda Saraswati made cow protection a tool for popular consolidation antagonistic to Muslims in the 19th century. Some Muslim leaders, such as Pir Abu Bakr in Bengal in the early 20th century, argued that cow sacrifice was an essential practice of Islam. Whether cow sacrifice is indeed an essential practice of Islam has been the subject of several litigations in independent India as well.While India grapples



with global uncertainties created by political and technological upheavals, it might also make sense to review its priorities at home.The Fear of the Future People

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has now raised the spectre of a demographic threat to India in his Independence Day speech. He said there was a conspiracy to change the demographic profile of India.You can read The Hindu editorial on this speech here.Does demographic composition determine the character of a nation? Leaving that question for a future discussion, here are some quick adjacent thoughts.Variations in population growth across communities and geographies pose challenges for governance and national identity. It is one thing to say that everyone is an individual citizen regardless of social location, faith, or ethnicity. But India’s governance structure acknowledges the principle of group identities while providing special protections for religious and linguistic minorities, Dalits, backward classes, tribes, etc. Collective identities are not anathema to India’s constitutional scheme; in fact, they are central to it.

Political contestations have historically been framed in India around the numerical strength of communities. That history warrants discussion separately, but to cite a well known example, the 15% and 7.5% reservations for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities, respectively, were based on their proportion in the population. As the proportion of their population changes, so will their representation. This will be among the issues in the next delimitation of parliamentary constituencies in India.Currently, there are two distinct divergences in population growth in India. First, the north-central regions have higher birth rates than peninsular and western India. Second, Muslims have a higher birth rate than Hindus. Among Hindus, upper castes have lower birth rates compared to other groups. While the BJP and its supporters try to highlight the Hindu-Muslim divergence in population growth, many others, particularly parties in the South, are more worried about the regional divergence in population growth. It is this regional divergence that makes the next delimitation an unsettling prospect for many regions. Population management has to be a secular task, and all communities should participate in it.While the BJP constantly talks up an Islamic demographic threat, there

Amoeba found in well water at house of girl who died due to amoebic encephalitis in Kerala

Health officials said on Tuesday (August 19, 2025) that amoeba was found in the well water at the residence of a nine-year-old girl who died last week due to amoebic encephalitis, a rare brain infection, in Kozhikode district of Kerala.A senior health official said that following the detection of the amoeba, a fever survey was carried out among all those who used the water from the well.

Following the survey, the deceased girl’s brother is at present under observation as he had a fever.However, he has not shown any other symptoms associated with the brain infection, caused by a free-living amoeba found in contaminated waters, the official said.

The girl, a resident of Thamarassery, was admitted to a hospital due to fever on August 13, but as her condition worsened quickly, she was shifted to the Kozhikode Medical College Hospital on August 14 where she died the same day.A test carried out at the microbiology lab of the medical college hospital revealed on August 15 night that the cause of her death was amoebic encephalitis.It was probably the fourth case of the rare brain infection reported from Kozhikode district this year, according to health officials.

Major states warn of Rs 7,000-9,000 crore annual loss under new GST structure



Major states warn of Rs 7,000-9,000 cr annual loss under new GST structureStates claimed that as per their internal assessment the revenue growth rate could slow to 8 per cent. “As per our assessment, revenue growth could be 8 per cent after these GST reforms.With the proposed overhaul of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime expected to kick in from the middle of the ongoing financial year, multiple states have expressed concerns over the substantial loss in their share of revenues once the next-generation reforms come into effect. States are worried that the annual loss in revenues, likely to range between Rs 7,000-9,000 crore for most major states, could leave them with less to spend on social development and state administration given the limited powers with them to raise revenues, top state government officials told States claimed that as per their internal assessment the revenue growth rate could slow to 8 per cent. “As per our assessment, revenue growth could be 8 per cent after these GST reforms. This is going to be sharply lower than the 11.6 per cent growth rate seen a few years ago and over 14 per cent just before the start of GST in July 2017,” a top state government official said.The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in a report in September 2019 had said that the weighted average GST rate fell from 14.4 per cent at the time of inception to 11.6 per cent in 2019, reflecting the impact of a series of tax cuts between November 2017 and December 2018. To put this in perspective, a report submitted in December 2015 by the then Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian had also estimated the revenue neutral rate at a higher level of 15.5 per cent.

States claimed that the major loss of revenue for them in the proposed GST reforms would be from the removal of items from the 28 per cent slab to the lower rate of 18 per cent, another state’s top official said. The top three items

that account for the major chunk of the GST revenue source for most states include automobiles, construction items such as cement, along with white goods, and all three categories of these goods are going to see a cut in rate to 18 per cent and thus, result in significant revenue loss, the official said.The official said that another major concern about the proposed GST rate cuts is whether the benefits will get passed on to the consumers or whether the gains will be pocketed by manufacturers. “We studied over two dozen items including some white goods that had seen rate cuts earlier under GST. And we have found that customers have hardly benefited from those rate cuts in the form of significant price cuts, maybe just a reduction of Rs 1,000 or so,” the official said.Major states warn of Rs 7,000-9,000 crore annual loss under new GST structure

As per the GST reforms proposal, the government has proposed a broad two-slab structure — 5 per cent and 18 per cent — in addition to a 40 per cent special rate for sin and demerit goods. The special rate of 40 per cent would be levied on only about 5-7 items as the Centre has proposed shifting cement and white goods into the lower tax bracket of 18 per cent.A few states have also expressed concerns about the proposal on additional levy in the form of excise by Centre to bridge the gap in tax incidence on tobacco when the base rate for it would be brought down to 40 per cent. Last week, central government sources had said tobacco, as a sin good, will continue to face the same tax incidence of 88 per cent (28 per cent plus cess) that exists today.Economists have estimated that the GST changes-led general government revenue loss could be around 0.4 per cent of GDP on an annualised basis, with states expected to bear a disproportionate hit. “Our ballpark estimates suggest that the proposed rate rationalisation could cost the exchequer more than Rs 1.2 trillion on an annualised basis (over 0.4 per cent of GDP). Assuming implementation from October 2025, the FY26 fiscal impact for general government finances owing to GST changes would be around 0.2 per cent of GDP. Assuming gross loss will be shared equally by the Centre and states, this would imply gross revenue loss of around 0.1 per cent of GDP from GST changes for the Centre, for FY26,” Madhavi Arora, Chief Economist, Emkay Global Financial Services said in a note.“This would put added pressure on the Centre’s gross tax revenue — already trailing budgeted growth (GTR growth for Q1 FY26 is tracking -5% vs 13% BE), making the budget estimate tax buoyancy of 1.1x appear too ambitious,” she added.

Former diplomat Navtej Sarna: ‘Two-state solution is dead. If Trump wants true peace, he has to get real about Palestine issue’

It depends upon what you think were the objectives: whether it was to avenge [the massacre of Israeli citizens by Hamas] October 7 [2023]; the killing of the Hamas leadership and destruction of its military infrastructure; release of hostages; or to get Gaza vacated of Palestinians. The Israeli military brass is saying that the military objectives are over, essentially because all major Hamas leaders have been killed, whether in Gaza or outside, and the ability of Hamas to attack Israel has been significantly depleted for a very, very long time.But it has not been eradicated. Now, how does Hamas get eradicated? A very senior Israeli army officer has said in an interview that Hamas can only be eradicated once 100 per cent of the territory of Gaza is taken over and there’s nobody there. That means when Gaza has been ethnically cleansed, to put it bluntly. I think that quite deliberately the goalposts have been kept movable. I don’t think [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is going to say that it’s all done and dusted and we’re walking off.

On the disproportionate Israeli response to the October 7 terrorist attackIt was expected that Israel would respond disproportionately to the October 7 terrorist attack because that is the Israeli doctrine. But I don’t think it was imagined that this response would continue for 21 months in the face of increasing international pressure. It has continued because of the real objective that Netanyahu probably has — which is not just revenge. The objective is to use this opportunity to make sure that Gaza is taken over, that Palestinians are put into a situation in which the entire paradigm of the two-state solution becomes unachievable. If Gaza becomes uninhabitable, where are the Palestinians going to return to? And Israeli ministers have said as much. If the US, both under [Joe] Biden and [Donald] Trump, had wanted, this would have ended a very long time ago.Israel has planned and practised this for years. With the first circle of Hamas and Hezbollah degraded, and [Bashar al-] Assad’s regime in Syria, which was another proxy of Iran, ousted, there would never be a better window of opportunity for Netanyahu. All he needed was the green signal from the White House and he got it from Trump. Now Trump had campaigned for America to stay away from forever wars but this was an opportunity to take a huge amount of credit, which he could not resist. He obviously thought that if somebody has already done the heavy lifting, I can go in when they really need me, make it short and sweet, claim victory and [get] out, and that’s exactly what happened.It has now emerged that he gave the green signal for the Israeli attack in June and said that you’ll have my support if it goes well. And it did go well, there were exceptionally effective air strikes which completely took over the Iranian airspace and the Israelis could hit everything at will.

It’s very difficult to assess exactly who did how much. Jordan and possibly Saudi Arabia gave airspace clearance but the other countries were a bit ambivalent because for the last few years the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have been trying to build bridges with Iran. But at the same time, they don’t want a nuclear Iran, they don’t want an overpowering Shia presence cutting across Sunni heartlands. This ambivalence came out more post the conflict because Iran attacked the US base in Qatar, and this was all signalled in advance, there was nobody at the base. Iran had to do it to save face and Qatar was warned but Qatar made a very strong statement and then immediately the Iranians expressed regret. They also called up everybody else in the region and expressed regret. So it was all a kind of well-calibrated little cameo...But the fact remains that this conflict really does not help the other countries.They have been in the last few years trying to concentrate on reforming themselves... Saudi Arabia is trying to change everything about its image, the UAE has done a considerable amount, normalisation with Israel under the Abraham Accords has been done. Despite what’s happened in Gaza, none of them has actually broken relations [with Israel] or gone back. This conflict, particularly Gaza, has put a spanner in the works.One, there is economic turmoil within Iran. The 12 days [of war] resulted in a substantial loss of oil revenue, and a very large number of people could not get any income. This builds on the unrest which is already there



among the poor, who are probably the strongest base of the clerical regime. Two, politically, the leadership has pivoted away from its pan-Islamic revolutionary rhetoric. The average Iranian has a positive view of the US. But now there is also a growing sense that you can’t trust America. It is that Iran was negotiating in good faith and [the US] walked away and attacked us.This is another shift, more towards nationalism. The average Iranian may want regime change but they don’t want it [done] by foreign powers. If there is a regime change, it will be done on their own terms, and by themselves. This [war] would have also given rise to a very strong lobby for a nuclear weapon. Because nobody says anything to countries who have nuclear weapons... So this may actually go the other way.

However, this is easier said than done because they are completely penetrated in intelligence terms, and it would be very difficult to pick up the fissile material if they still have it, and to actually do what they need to weaponise. If Iran were to walk out of the NPT (nuclear non-proliferation treaty), it would be a good signal that they’ve figured out that they can’t be a threshold state. At the moment the focus will be on the regime’s survival.A lot of the hand-wringing [about Gaza] in Europe is [the] easing of their guilt for the uncompromising support to Israel for decades, and also domestic considerations.I think the two-state solution is pretty much dead at the moment. The second state needs land. It needs people to govern that land and Gaza is clearly not something on which a Palestinian state will ever be allowed by the Israelis. In fact, they are saying that a Palestinian state is an existential threat to Israel. A majority in [Israel’s] Parliament is in favour of annexation of the West Bank. Unless there is a massive move by the US, by Donald Trump to completely rejig the Middle East, it [the two-state solution] is [only] a statement of intent.We have been fairly consistent that we are not in favour of a humanitarian crisis and the killing of civilians, we would like a two-state solution. We are very conscious of our very strong bilateral relationship with Israel and, therefore, we have been treading gently on this. But when even [Israel’s] allies or the Europeans protest, when you are faced with a man-made famine situation in the 21st century, then India, as the putative leader of the Global South, will begin to speak up. As things get more drastic, the Indian situation will be constantly under review. When it comes to starvation, when it comes to forced displacement of Palestinians which Israeli ministers are talking about and which is a war crime, the situation will have to be met with the appropriateness it deserves.The ideal solution would be a two-state solution. Sending the Palestinians away to another country is not a solution; it is an admission that there is no solution. You need a rethink within the Israeli leadership, the Palestinian leadership and the American leadership, and only then can you have a true two-state solution. The 2020 plan of Donald Trump was not a true solution. Israel will never leave the West Bank, settlers will continue, Jerusalem will be the capital of Israel...that is not a solution. There has to be a deep rethink.

The US is India's largest export market. According to rating agency Fitch, there is only "a minimal direct tariff impact" on Indian IT service companies and domestically focused sectors such as upstream and downstream oil and gas, cement and building materials, engineering and construction, telecoms, and utilities. If US tariffs are, however, sustained at levels significantly higher than in other Asian markets, there could be moderate downside risks to India's growth projection of 6.5 per cent in FY26, it said. This, according to Fitch, would weigh on the operating performance of more Indian companies and India's corporates could be affected if US tariffs divert supplies to other markets, which could present downside risks to the domestic price assumptions made by the rating agency for some products, such as steel and chemicals. The problem, though, is that while the tariff impact on Indian companies might be limited, the employment intensiveness of India's export sectors that are focused on the US market, including sectors such as textiles and garments, leather, gems and jewellery, engineering goods and electronics, is disproportionately high, and that is a worry for policymakers. Much of these sectors are dominated by small and medium enterprises and their labour intensiveness is typically higher than corporates while their ability to cope with an external shock of this kind is way lower than big companies. Another senior government official said the impact of reforms to India's foreign trade sec-

Waterlogging in Indian cities: Every monsoon, a downpour is followed by the same scene playing out across most of urban India — knee-deep water on roads, long traffic jams, stranded vehicles afloat in the waterlogged areas and sometimes even the death of commuters and pedestrians. Just a single bout of heavy rain exposes the big gap in the very foundational infrastructure of Delhi-NCR or any city across India — their roads and drains. In suburbs such as Gurugram, touted as a showpiece of India's economic prowess, most roads periodically turn into waterways.

Similarly, in case of transverse 'Gradient of Pavement or Camber', a balance is required between steep gradients for quick dispersal and flatter gradients for driver comfort and safety. The report says that a cross slope of 2 per cent — a gentle tilt of the road surface from the centerline to the edge — will have a minimal effect on driver comfort or vehicle stability. It means for every 100 ft of road width, the elevation change would be 2 ft. It also says that shoulders should be sloped to drain away from the pavement, with cross-falls of at least 0.5 per cent steeper than the pavement and paved footpaths should have a cross-fall of 3 to 4

India's direct automotive exports to the US, including parts, are limited, it said, adding that America is a key export destination for Indian pharmaceutical companies. Fitch said it currently assumes "a minimal direct tariff impact" on Indian IT service companies and domestically focused sectors such as upstream and downstream oil and gas, cement and building materials, engineering and construction, telecoms, and utilities. "However, if US tariffs are sustained at levels significantly higher than in other Asian markets, we see moderate downside risks to our projection that the economy will grow by 6.5 per cent in FY26. This would weigh on the operating performance of more Indian companies. India's corporates could also be affected if US tariffs divert supply to other markets, including India, as this could present downside risks to our domestic price assumptions for some products, such as steel and chemicals," it said.



per cent, sloping away from the carriageway. The cross-fall on a road, or the camber, is essentially the transverse slope of the road surface, or the slope from the center of the road towards the edges. When water level increases on the road, the drainage capacity of the tyre tread pattern and pavement surface is exceeded and the water begins to build up in front of the tyre, the occurrence of this phenomenon is called hydroplaning. Hydroplaning can occur at speeds of 80-90 kmph with a water depth of 2 mm, and can force vehicles to skid and trigger accidents. The report says that the effective drainage construction will reduce the hydroplaning potential of the road surface. In the road surface drainage element, according to the IRC, the minimum desirable longitudinal gradient for satisfactory drainage of pavement shall not be less than 0.50 per cent. In the road surface drainage element, according to the IRC, the minimum desirable longitudinal gradient for satisfactory drainage of pavement shall not be less than 0.50 per cent. Urban drainage systems, an official said referring to the IRC Code, should be designed to promote infiltration of storm water into the ground starting from street-level drains and continuing through tertiary, secondary, and primary drains. This can be achieved by redesigning existing drainage cross-sections and providing filter mediums (e.g., gravel, sand, perforated polyester fabric like geotextile) or filter beds at alternate junctions, according to the guidelines. "For efficient functioning of the storm water drainage system, certain appurtenant structures are essential. Storm water drain inlets are used to collect run-off and discharge it to the drainage system. These are the devices meant to admit the surface runoff to the drain and form a very important part of the system. Their locations and design shall, therefore, be given careful consideration. Inlets are typically located in gutter sections, paved medians, roadside and median ditches," says the IRC code. Rainwater on flyovers should be drained through an efficient piping network (down-take pipes or pipes embedded in piers) to rainwater harvesting systems or drains, avoiding direct discharge onto the road below. Valley curve areas where ramps meet ground level should have finger plate drains across the pavement. The underlying pavement should have a downward longitudinal gradient towards the valley junction for efficient discharge into the edge drain. The junction level should be slightly higher than meeting roads to direct water to traffic islands (which can act as rain gardens) and then to the main drainage system. The IRC code also suggests drainage through pumping in low-lying areas, underpasses, roads under bridges, and certain flyovers where storm water cannot flow by gravity.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a single, small, round, clear contact lens. The lens is held delicately between the tips of the thumb and index finger. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

According to Bhuvan Chanana, head and senior consultant, Retina Services, Bharti Eye Foundation and Hospital, "Cases of myopia are increasing in children and the sole reason today is the sudden increase in screentime both for entertainment and educational purposes." Myopia is a vision condition in which people can see close objects clearly, but objects farther away appear blurred and, the condition is becoming increasingly common in children, say doctors.

Aeshal Fatima, a 21-year-old law student started wearing contact lenses while she was in school. Replacing spectacles with lenses was a huge relief for her. "The lenses were hassle free and gave me confidence in my appearance. I started wearing lenses at the age of 15 during a school function and there was no going back," she says, adding however, that incidence of small tears or losing a lens are issues one has to learn to deal with. Doctors say that while lenses are a go-to choice for youngsters and older adults alike, they come with some small risks. While many enjoy the ease of wearing contact lenses, sometimes, their proper care and maintenance is overlooked. What are the risk factors for lens wearers and what preventive measures can be taken? Unhygienic practices lead to infections. If you do not clean, care and disinfect your contact lenses correctly, you have a high chance of contracting an eye infection.

Research shows that older aluminum models of pressure cookers, particularly when made from unregulated metal sources, can allow lead to seep into food during cooking. Research shows that older aluminum models of pressure cookers, particularly when made from unregulated metal sources, can allow lead to seep into food during cooking. (Source: Wikimedia Commons) Recently, a man in Mumbai was diagnosed with lead poisoning after eating food prepared in a 20-year-old pressure cooker. Last year too, authorities in Tamil Nadu had analysed cookers at large-scale food preparation sites such as hostels and meal programmes and found them to contain traces of lead. Pressure cookers are sturdy enough and continue to be used for decades. However, now research shows that older aluminum models of the pressure cooker, particularly when made from unregulated metal sources, can allow lead to seep into food during cooking.

Lead does not eliminate from the body quickly, and its effects may only become apparent after it has been stored in tissues for long periods. Problems linked to long-term exposure include interference with brain function, reduced kidney efficiency and changes in bone health. Children can experience slower learning and behavioural changes, while adults may develop memory lapses and other chronic conditions. For pregnant women, lead can pass to the foetus, posing health risks. The symptoms do not show up immediately. But over time there are a few signs which overlap with other conditions as well. These could be stomach cramps, learning and behavioural changes, nausea, fatigue,

On the face of it, you would never expect someone like 38-year-old Kemil Koshie to be having high blood pressure (BP). A physiotherapist who knows about human anatomy is rarely expected to not understand his own body. A person whose blood tests indicate his basic parameters, like blood sugar, cholesterol, liver and kidney function, to be in range is not expected to be at high risk. That too a person without a family history of chronic illnesses. So the day he had a headache and had a high BP of 169/100 mmHg, this young man from Bengaluru thought the machine had malfunctioned. His next reading was 166/98 mmHg. Later readings also never went down below 160/95. He had Stage 2 hypertension. "At first, I had a headache and some discomfort in the neck. I thought I had a muscle spasm. But somebody asked me to record my BP. I then approached a cardiologist," says Koshie. Dr M Sudhakar Rao, interventional cardiologist at Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru, is no stranger to severe hypertension in the 35s to 40 age group. "Many think a high BP patient needs pills straightaway. Of course, medication is needed when the readings go upward of 175/110 mm Hg. Otherwise, it is important to assess the type of hypertension the patient

Experts also advise caution while travelling and sleeping. Dr. Rashmi emphasises that “wearing contacts overnight is a bad idea. When the whole cornea is covered with a contact lens, the cornea may swell up, which can lead to infections.” Users of coloured lenses should be cautious too. Wearing coloured lenses, a trend fashionable about a decade ago, has come back into fashion, with social media promoting its use as well. The risks associated with coloured lenses are not very different from regular contacts. However, “when you buy coloured contacts from a store, you may not know about their quality approvals or they may not be the right fit which can lead to scratches on your eye and may increase the chance of infections,” says Dr. Rashmi. The American Academy of Ophthalmology states that the chemicals used to colour over-the-counter tinted contact lenses include chlorine and can be toxic to eyes. Whether you are new to using contact lenses or are using them for cosmetic purposes, proper care and hygiene are key.



To lower the risk, replace cookware that is scratched, corroded or has peeling layers. Choosing stainless steel or high-quality hard-anodized aluminium with a smooth surface reduces the likelihood of leaching. Acidic foods should be transferred to non-metallic containers for storage, and prolonged cooking in older vessels should be avoided. For facilities preparing food in bulk, regular checks of utensils are essential. Screening tools such as X-ray fluorescence can detect contaminated items. Sourcing utensils from manufacturers who meet Bureau of Indian Standards and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India requirements is an important preventive measure.

Hypertension is currently defined as a blood pressure reading higher than 130/80 mm/Hg. "There are two kinds, essential and secondary. The first is because of genetics and lifestyle, the second one is secondary, mostly found in young people and is reversible," says Dr Rao. Secondary hypertension in young people is triggered by underlying medical conditions like kidney disease, obstructive sleep apnea (when you stop breathing during sleep because of a blockage in your windpipe), narrowing of kidney arteries (which reduces blood flow and increases blood pressure) and narrowing of the main artery of the heart, which increases blood pressure, especially in the arm. Sometimes endocrine disorders, like excess production of the hormone aldosterone from the adrenal glands, lead to sodium retention and potassium loss, raising blood pressure. Excess stress hormones like cortisol and thyroid disorders can all either constrict or thicken blood vessels.

Swiatek to face Paolini in Maiden Cincinnati Open final showdown



Cincinnati: Iga Swiatek reached the Cincinnati Open final for the first time in her career with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Elena Rybakina at the Lindner Family Tennis Center. Having lost in the semifinals in Cincinnati the last two years, the No. 3 seed rallied from 3-5 down in the first set to claim victory. The Polish star won 10 of the last 13 games to secure her fourth straight win over Rybakina and her sixth win in 10 tour-level meetings against the Kazakh, WTA reports.

The Wimbledon champion took time to find her rhythm on P&G Center Court. After six consecutive holds of serve, Rybakina surged ahead with three straight games, but Swiatek responded strongly to turn the match around.

This marks Swiatek's third final in her last four tournaments, after going more than a year without reaching one. With the victory, she also booked her place at the WTA Finals in Riyadh and climbed back to No. 2 in the PIF WTA Rankings, ensuring a favorable seeding at the upcoming US Open. Swiatek will face No. 7 seed Jasmine Paolini in Monday's title clash, as she targets her 11th career WTA 1000 crown.

Paolini also advanced to her first Cincinnati Open final by defeating Veronika Kudermetova 6-3, 6-7(2), 6-3. It is Paolini's second WTA 1000 final of the season and the third of her career. She has won both of her previous two finals. Notably, Paolini became the first Italian woman in the Open Era to reach the singles final in Cincinnati. Swiatek holds a perfect 4-0 head-to-head record over Paolini, including their most recent meeting at the 2024 French Open final. Their upcoming showdown will be their fifth career meeting. "She's an amazing player and it's always tough to play her. She defends really well, and her serving is good too, so it's going to be tough, but I'll try to do my best in the final. I like the conditions here, so hopefully it's going to be a good match," Paolini said. Swiatek praised her opponent as well: "Jasmine plays fast, with a lot of spin, and she mixes it up with variety by coming to the net. I'll prepare tactically, but I'll mainly focus on myself."

Shreyas Iyer's exclusion from Asia Cup squad a confirmation of India's vast talent pool in T20s

GNS News Agency, Aug 29

The highest run-getter of last IPL edition, Sai Sudharsan, couldn't break into the Asia Cup squad. Neither could the highest wicket-taker, Prasidh Krishna, the most influential captain and the second highest six-hitter, Shreyas Iyer, and the thrilling Rishabh Pant. The ultra-talented Yashasvi Jaiswal, highly-versatile KL Rahul and the utilitarian Washington Sundar too would be left wondering which box they had left unticked to be sitting outside the squad. But India's depth in the shortest format is so dizzying that none of them could begrudge a rough deal. There are many names, but only 15 to choose.

So much so this was a meeting where the selectors did not fret over the deficient commodity; rather they sweated on filtering the list of excess to the finest parts. A line by Ajit Agarkar, chairman of selectors, on Shreyas Iyer's non-selection neatly summed up the deep reservoirs of India's talent. "With regard to Shreyas, who can he replace? No fault of his, nor is it ours. At the moment, you can just pick 15." It is akin to the West Indies in the late 70s and 1980s or Australia in the aughts. The supply exceeds the demands. Several cricketers, with the quality to walk into any team in the world, found rationed game-space.

All of the aforementioned names could make a case for themselves, feel dejected undoubtedly and form a parallel team quite capable of beating the chosen 15 on their day. But it is hard to argue against those that would feature in what captain Suryakumar Yadav succinctly said, "the tournament where the journey to World Cup begins". Inevitably, Shubman Gill would grab the headlines. But it was not so much of a comeback as it was about him returning to reclaim his spot. "He was the vice-captain when we played in Sri Lanka. But after that, he was busy with Test cricket," Yadav stressed. The implication was crystal-clear — Gill was always there in the scheme but was just away from the blur of T20s that India had played after winning the World Cup. To omit Gill would have been terrible optics too. To keep away the torchbearer of Indian batting in post Virat Kohli-Rohit Sharma era, to turn a blind eye to the wave of popularity he has been riding since the prolific series in England, where he established his leadership chops as well as enhanced his batting reputation, to blink at his star value. "We obviously see some leadership qualities in him, and his form in England was what we were hoping for. [He] exceeded all our expectations, which is a great sign when there's so much pressure as captain," chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar said. Gill's T20 numbers are, by no metrics, inferior either. In 21 outings for the country, he had maintained an average of 30.42 at a strike rate of 139.27. He has a hundred on his ledger, and a profitable IPL too. Against high-class bowlers in the World Cup, rather than the second-string outfits that Indian batsmen encountered in routine bilateral fixtures, Gill's superior batsmanship and adaptability could prove invaluable. In short, the selectors picked a generational batsman over one that is ascending to Gill's levels (Jaiswal), or one that could provide more dimensions (Rahul). But if Gill were not picked, effigies of the selectors would not have been burned or vitriol be spat against them on social media. He would have been consid-



ered plain unlucky, as Jaiswal and Rahul could feel.

Where will Samson bat?

His return comes with a structural shake-up, Sanju would either have to bat down the order, or make way for Jitesh Sharma, more accustomed to lower-order duties than Sanju. "That's the headache of you guys," Agarkar would say, chuckling at Yadav. It would be a complicated call. Sanju has three hundreds in his last 10 outings as an opener. But in the era of talent-affluence, cricketers would tune their minds to perform any difficult role, lest they be quickly rolled over by the chasing pack. Abhishek Sharma provides a classic example. Until last year, Rahul and Yashasvi were ahead of him, but he smacked a hundred in just his second game and continued the rich vein of form. His last outing was a mayhem of sixes that powered him to 135 runs off merely 54 balls. He boasts a strike rate of 193.84, chimes in with handy left-arm spin. Sanju has been the designated wicket-keeper too. So the openers, apart from being batting dynamites, carry multi-utility firepower too, a component the coach Gautam Gambhir highly values. Similarly, Shreyas Iyer, for all the explosiveness and the white-ball smarts, cannot dislodge Tilak Varma at No 3. His last seven innings had produced a pair of hundreds and an exhilarating 72 on a sluggish Chepaunk track. He can roll his arm over too. Glance beneath Varma, Suryakumar. He is the captain and undisputedly the country's most prolific T20I batsman. Following him is Hardik Pandya, arguably the most indispensable member of India's first-choice eleven. Then comes Axar Patel.

The excess of all-round riches confined Washington to the standbys' list. It must have been minuscule margins, a case of Rinku being a cleaner hitter, him able to contribute with a couple of innocuous off-breaks. Or Dube's usefulness as a medium pacer, in case Hardik gets injured. A fourth spinner would have been redundant. "We have a mystery spinner, a wrist spinner and left-arm spinner," Agarkar clarified. Likewise, Prasidh would gulp the non-selection with a pinch of salt. He is a vastly improved short-form bowler but Yadav promptly pointed out that Harshit Rana took three wickets in his only T20 game. "He came as a concussion substitute and bowled brilliantly," Yadav said. That Pant's name barely entered the conversation duly reflected the bewildering options of selectors. It's the age of excesses in India's T20 cricket. There are many names, but only 15 to choose.

FPAI to confirm the ISL schedule and provide a clear road map for the season to commence.

Additionally, it called on clubs to continue to meet all contractual obligations to players. Last week, 11 ISL clubs had warned the AIFF that they "face the real possibility of shutting down entirely" if the ongoing impasse regarding the future of the top-tier domestic competition is not resolved soon. In a letter addressed to AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey, the clubs said the crisis arising out of the non-renewal of the MRA between the national federation and the ISL organisers has "paralysed professional football in India". At the root of the matter is the FSDL and AIFF not being able to agree upon a new Master Rights Agreement (MRA) for running the league, with the current one, which was signed in 2010, ending in December this year. Its expiry date would've come around the midway point of a regular league season. Some ISL clubs have either suspended first team operations altogether or paused salaries of players and staff in the first team amid the uncertainty. AIFF's Supreme Court U-turn The negotiations between the FSDL and AIFF has been paused due to a verbal order to the latter to not make any major decision until the Supreme Court announces its final order in a case concerning the federation's constitution. The ISL clubs had urged the AIFF to mention their plight and ask for a swift resolution.

Levon Aronian, the soul of chess, and popular at 42, rediscovers his prime years again



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Levon Aronian, the all-sizzle, all-steak veteran of chess, is on a roll these days. Having beaten the likes of Magnus Carlsen, Arjun Erigaisi, Hikaru Nakamura and Hans Niemann to claim the Freestyle Chess title at Las Vegas last month, he conquered the St Louis Rapid and Blitz event last week — which had a strong field comprising players like world champion Gukesh and Fabiano Caruana — with two rounds to spare. In a sport of young prodigies, the 42-year-old Aronian is still marching stride for stride with the best in the world. And showing that he is capable of beating them at the same time. "The world is a better place when Aronian is playing well," former world champion Garry Kasparov had tweeted when Aronian won the Sinquefeld Cup in 2015. The same holds true to this day 10 years later.

At Las Vegas, things got heated between players at the technical committee meeting before the tournament started since they could not agree to some regulation or another. Aronian stepped in, playing elder brother, trying to mediate peace. "When I was growing up, the chess world was so divided. Now I feel it's a good moment to unite people because chess is becoming more popular. The sport has a chance to become bigger than ever. This is a moment to let go of our egos and think about the sport," he told ChessBase India after winning the Las Vegas event.

It is hard to find someone in the sport as liked as Aronian. He doesn't need the Las Vegas slots machines to look like a man who has won the lottery. He sports the most flamboyant shirts seen in the chess arena, often complemented by the widest smile you will see a player sport before and after games. And in his interviews he veers away from shallow concepts to talk about his dreams, principles and avoiding temptations that come with playing elite sport. No matter how hard a loss he has just suffered on the board, he's the kind of player who will spend time obliging fans. Other players might scribble and walk away in the span of a second, but Aronian serves his autographs with a wide smile and a nod of the head, like he's now become an acquaintance. "Sometimes I get upset that he doesn't even see how brilliant he is," Aronian's wife Ani recently told ChessBase India. "He always greets all the fans, always signs everything no matter what mood he is in or how much of a hurry he is in. I sometimes ask him if I should tell fans that he needs to go and prepare, and he will say 'no, no, I will do it because these people waited for me for so long. It's so important to them,'" she added. Aronian, of course, is no people-pleaser. He often speaks his mind, no matter how thorny the issue. At the peak of the Magnus Carlsen

vs Hans Niemann cheating scandal in 2022, Aronian was asked for his opinion. It was a time when most grandmasters had chosen to stay tight-lipped about the controversy.

"It quite often happens when young players play very well there are accusations towards them. I mean all of my colleagues are pretty much paranoid. Quite often I was the one telling them, 'come on, guys. I know I'm an idiot myself and I'm still a good player.'" Aronian said before continuing: "If the young players are not playing very well or not occasionally beating us, then what can we learn from them? It also shows that we haven't taught them anything. I've played against Magnus when he was very young and I've learned a great deal from him. If I was sitting there and thinking that there's something suspicious about how strong he plays, I don't think it would be very beneficial for me. I could never learn from him." Just earlier this year, when former world champion Vladimir Kramnik continued his years-long crusade against perceived cheating in online chess, Aronian had written long posts on X beseeching his 'chess parent' to rethink his opinions. Those social media posts were the finest acts of tight-rope walking you will see from an athlete: like a man coaxing his elder brother to see reason, while also taking care not to offend him.

At Las Vegas, Vidit Gujrathi was impressed by Aronian. Bibisara Assaubayeva, the lone female competing in the field, was actually rooting for him. Even Carlsen couldn't help but feel happy for a man who had played a role in denying the Norwegian the freestyle title at Las Vegas. "Levon's win (at Las Vegas) was incredibly impressive. Very well deserved as well. I'm very happy for him. He has been probably the biggest fan of freestyle among the top players for many years. He's still very good, but even in his most prime years, that was kind of his favorite mode of play. So to see him win, as long as I'm not winning, then I'm happy for him. And you know, there is always some consolation in having lost to the tournament winner — clearly the deserved one," Carlsen commented after Aronian's win at Las Vegas last month. When Carlsen speaks of Aronian's 'most prime years' he's referring to the heady decades at the turn of the century, when Aronian won his first FIDE World Cup title in 2005 and then repeated the feat in 2017 to become a rare chess player to win the event two times. It's a feat so hard that even Carlsen has not matched it. He was also the talisman leading the Armenian national team to three Olympiad gold medals in 2006, 2008 and 2012. With his daughter Zabelle being born in 2022, he's spent plenty of time over the last two years playing consummate family man while still playing in whatever events he could spare time for. "At some point last year, especially when I didn't have so many events to compete in, I realized how unhappy it gets me not to play chess," Aronian said after winning St Louis.

"Playing a lot is of course very hard when you have a small child and family, but they support me because they know that it brings me joy. My daughter is always saying, 'Go kill them,'" he joked. That he certainly has at Las Vegas and St Louis in the span of two months as he rediscovers his 'prime years'. And as Kasparov said, this can only be good for the sport. Magnus Carlsen might be the face of the sport, Vishy Anand might be its voice. The Indian prodigies are the sport's beating heart, pumping lifeblood into it. But in the form of Levon Aronian, chess finds its flamboyant and principled soul.

: Pakistan won't travel to India for Hockey Asia Cup due to 'security concerns', Bangladesh named replacement



GNS News Agency, Aug 29

Pakistan's sports board had ordered that the federations should not 'commit to participate in any sporting event in India', according to reports. (File) Pakistan's sports board had ordered that the federations should not 'commit to participate in any sporting event in India', according to reports. Pakistan won't be travelling to Bihar for the Hockey Asia Cup, the continental body confirmed on Tuesday, ending months of speculation. Bangladesh have been named as Pakistan's replacement for the tournament, which will be held from August 29 to September 7 in Rajgir.

Oman, originally a part of the eight-team competition, too, withdrew with Kazakhstan taking their spot. The winner of the Asia Cup will earn a direct spot for the 2026 World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium. Hosts India are in Pool A along with Japan, China and Kazakhstan. The Harmanpreet Singh-led side will open its campaign against China on August 29, before taking on Japan (August 31) and Kazakhstan on September 1. Pool B comprises defending champions South Korea, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Chinese Taipei. The second stage of the championship — called Super 4s, comprising the top

two teams from each group — will begin on September 3, with the final on September 7.

Bangladesh and Kazakhstan were named replacements based on their performances in the AHF Cup, a qualifying competition for the Asia Cup. Bangladesh finished third in the tournament after losing to eventual champions Oman 5-4 in the semifinals in Jakarta on April 25. The two finalists, Oman and Chinese Taipei, had already earned direct berths for the main championships. However, after Oman, too, pulled out, fourth-placed Kazakhstan were offered a spot. Pakistan's participation in the World Cup qualifying tournament had been in doubt ever since the Pahalagam terror attack. In the aftermath of the attack, which claimed 26 lives, the Indian government revoked visas for Pakistani nationals. However, the government later underlined that the hockey team won't be stopped from travelling to India to ensure the Olympic charter wasn't violated. Days later, though, the Pakistan Hockey Federation informed the International Hockey Federation (FIH) and Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) that it would be 'difficult' for them to send a team to India for the Asia Cup because of 'security concerns', despite being given assurances by their Indian counterparts.

Soon after, Pakistan's sports board ordered that the federations should not 'commit to participate in any sporting event in India', according to reports. The Pakistan Sports Board cited 'security situation' as the reason for issuing the directive last month. "In view of the current security situation, no national federation shall make any commitment or agreement regarding participation in sports events in India without prior permission from PSB," the circular said, as per Dawn. Pakistan's withdrawal from the Asia Cup also raises question marks over their participation in the Junior World Cup, which will be held in Chennai and Madurai from November 28 to December 10.

National Sports Governance Bill becomes an Act after President Murmu's assent

New Delhi: The National Sports Governance Bill has become an Act after President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the legislation that promises to overhaul India's sports administration and has been described as a path-breaking reform by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandavia. The Presidential assent came on Monday, stated a Gazette notification by the central government. "The following Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 18th August, 2025 and is hereby published for general information — The National Sports Governance Act, 2025," it stated. The legislation that was ultimately passed by the Parliament carries two major amendments to the bill that was originally presented. The scope of Right to Information (RTI) has been narrowed to include only those sports bodies that rely on government funding and support, effectively keeping the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) out of its purview. The cricket board had been opposing com-

ing under RTI as it is not dependent on government funding. "A recognised sports organisation, receiving grants or any other financial assistance from the Central Government under sub-section (1) or from a State Government, shall be considered as a public authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005, with respect to utilisation of such grants or any other financial assistance," the Act states. In addition, aspirants for the top positions in national federations will be required to serve just one term in the Executive Committee, instead of the "overly restrictive" eligibility rule of two terms prescribed earlier, to encourage "younger administrators and athlete-leaders". "...a person shall not be qualified to contest for election or seek nomination to, the posts of the President or the Secretary General or the Treasurer, unless such person is a sportsperson of outstanding merit or, has previously served as a member for at least one full term in the Executive Committee of the National Sports Body or as the President.

‘Karisma Kapoor a very good mother, she let our family be one’: Ex-husband Sunjay Kapur’s sister defends actor, says she’s ‘looking out for kids’ amid Rs 30,000 cr family feud



Sunjay Kapur's sister Mandhira called Karisma Kapoor a very good mother who is looking out for children Samaira and Kiaan's best interests. Sunjay Kapur's sister Mandhira called Karisma Kapoor a very good mother who is looking out for children Samaira and Kiaan's best interests. The sudden death of 53-year-old business tycoon Sunjay Kapur due to cardiac arrest in June this year left India shocked. Since the Sona Comstar Chairman's demise, who headed the Rs 30,000 crore mobility tech company, there has been an international investigation and family feud regarding its control. Amid the legal dispute, Sunjay's sister Mandhira Kapur praised his ex-wife and actor Karisma Kapoor for being a 'good mother' and 'looking out for her kids'. Karisma was trolled by a few on social media, claiming the actor was trying to get a part of the massive fortune. In a recent interview with NDTV, she said, "She is a mother. She is a very good mother, I have to give her that. She has done a very good job of letting

the family be one, which is...you know..I commend her in that. I think the kids have been close, and they've had a great relationship. Hopefully somehow, we can carry that on and let the family be one again because she is looking out for her kids like any mother would, and that's what she is doing." When asked if she is in touch with Karisma after Sunjay's death, Mandhira replied, "Yes, of course. I am sure she is in touch with Priya (Sunjay's widow Priya Sachdev Kapur) too. The fact is we've all had a good relationship. The kids have been coming to see mom. We are all in touch. This is not meant to be a family feud," she revealed. She further added, "We should find a way to make sure that the head of the family should keep her space, really. At the end of the day, we are children, no matter how old we are. I think the respect factor needs to stay. I don't think this is what mom's intention or my sister and my intention is. We just want to have peace of mind. We want to carry on my father's dreams and we want to respect my brother, because I think it comes down to that." In another interview with India Today, she reiterated Samaira and Kiaan's right to the fortune, "My father and mother have been obsessed with their grandchildren. Samaira and Kiaan are always a big part of this family. We are very proud of them and have a lot of love for them. Dad used to dote on them, my mom dotes on them. They are a part of our family and will always be, there's no question about it. My brother doted on them. They come over, they have come and met mom. We are all together." In a letter to the board of Sona Group, Rani Kapur, the mother of Sunjay and Mandhira Kapur, alleged that she is the sole beneficiary of Surinder Kapur's (her husband) empire and the majority shareholder of the group, including Sona Comstar. Rani also claimed that she was forced to sign documents to appoint her daughter-in-law Priya Sachdev Kapur, as the non-executive director on the board. Later, the company issued a cease-and-desist notice to Rani Kapur, claiming that she has not had any role in the company since 2019. In an interview with ANI earlier, Mandhira Kapur also claimed that the family has been treated like strangers. "Within days, everything has been taken away from the family. There should have been some respect given to my mother who is one of the founders with my father. Sona Comstar was built because of my father," Mandhira said.

Geeta Basra put one condition before marrying Harbhajan Singh; actor says Yuvraj Singh helped Bhajji: ‘The day you score 300 wickets...’

Geeta Basra made her acting debut with Aditya Datt's 2006 romantic thriller Dil Diya Hai opposite Emraan Hashmi, when she was 21. She reunited with him in the crime thriller The Train next year. Around the same time, she met her now-husband and cricketer Harbhajan Singh who wanted to marry her right then. "He was very clear. He saw my poster, and it was probably love at first sight for him. He asked Yuvi (Yuvraj Singh) for my number. Obviously, Yuvi has a lot of friends," said Basra, hinting at Harbhajan's teammate Yuvraj's past relationship with actors Deepika Padukone and Kim Sharma. Harbhajan then messaged Basra, but she didn't reply initially because she was clueless about cricket and cricketers.

"They'd just won the World Cup. So a couple of days later, I'd messaged, 'Well done! Congratulations!' That's it. We got in touch again. When we met, he was very clear he didn't want friendship and said, 'Tere se hi shaadi karunga' (I'll marry only you). I said, 'Shaadi?' I was only 21," recalled Basra on BHARTI TV. "I'd just stepped into the industry. Fifteen years ago, it was a very different time for women. Even if you were spotted with someone, your career was over. I lost out on four films because of the news that I was getting married. So I always say maybe I came to India so I could meet my partner and soulmate," confessed Batra. While she was born in England, she moved to Mumbai to pursue a career in acting. "For him, it was love at first sight. But I took 10 months to say yes. I told him the day you'd score 300 wickets, I'd say yes. A couple of days later, he got 300 wickets. So I said let's give it a shot. Because all my friends told me he's a very good guy. He's a star, but doesn't have the attitude of a star. He's humble. He's also a Punjabi like me. That matters a lot because he can gel with my family, like my nani (maternal grandmother) who speaks only in Punjabi. So that sense of unity enters



your family," explained Batra. Basra and Harbhajan got married in 2015. "Sometimes, we just need to know, can I spend the rest of my life with this partner? Because we're from different countries so there's a cultural difference. Then he's so known so I was wondering if he's loyal. Because I never wanted to marry an actor because there's a perception. But he's beyond that. He's a very grounded person," added Basra. While she appeared in a few films around that time, she hasn't acted since 2016. Basra gave birth to daughter Hinaya Heer Plaha in 2016 and son Jovan Veer Singh Plaha in 2021. Post that, Harbhajan announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. On the podcast, Basra also joked that Harbhajan wants as many kids as a "cricket team." "He's very fond of kids. So am I. But it's not possible today. We've to go through a lot with pregnancy, post pregnancy," added Basra.

Actors, politicians and fans welcome Mammootty back to the movies: ‘Your strength and resilience are truly inspiring’

Malayalam megastar Mammootty is set to return to the big screen after a brief hiatus. He had reportedly stepped away from the limelight due to health concerns, with some reports suggesting a break for cancer treatment. On Tuesday, much to the relief of fans, several celebrities across Kerala warmly welcomed Mammootty back to films. Mammootty's long-time associate George shared a photo of the actor with folded hands and wrote, "With eyes brimming with joy, I stand before you with folded hands. To those who prayed for me, stood by me, and reassured me that nothing would go wrong—my dearest ones, thank you with endless love." Sharing a photo with the superstar, CPM leader John Brittas wrote on X: "Dear Mammukka, your strength and resilience are truly inspiring! We're overjoyed to see you back, and we need your vibrant presence, charm, and leadership for many years to come. With love ?? JB." Producer Anto Joseph posted on Instagram, "Prayers from countless people around the world have been answered. Thank you, thank you, thank you, God."

Actor Mohanlal, who will share screen space with Mammootty in Mahesh Narayanan's upcoming film Patriot, shared a candid photo of the two together with a heart emoji. Director Ratheena PT, who helmed Mammootty's Puzhu, posted a picture with him, captioning it: "Double Ok." Veteran actor Maala Parvathi took to Facebook and



Malayalam superstar Mammootty's return to cinema has stirred excitement among fans and colleagues alike.

wrote: "There is no greater news than this. Mammookka has completely recovered." With Patriot gearing up to go on floors this September and Kalamkaval nearing release, all eyes are now on Mammootty as he prepares to make a powerful comeback to the big screen.

Bollywood’s most iconic vamp blamed Raj Kapoor’s film for ruining career; once struggled for food but became 1st Indian actor to own Rolls Royce



There are some actors in the Hindi film industry who forge a path and break stereotypes so powerfully that generations of actors follow in their footsteps. The late star Nadira was one such trailblazer. Who can forget her seductive yet charming gestures in "Mud Mud Ke Na Dekh" from Raj Kapoor's Shri 420, or her commanding performance as Sridevi's angry mother in Julie? Nadira became Bollywood's first vamp — a character type that many actors avoided in the 1950s and 60s. While playing the vamp wasn't her first choice, she took the opportunity and turned it into a legacy. Nadira built a body of work that became a reference point for aspiring actors and, in the process, brought respect and credibility to the edgy and often misunderstood negative role. Nadira's lineage and Bollywood beginnings

Nadira was born into a Baghdadi Jewish family on December 5, 1932, as Florence Ezekiel in Baghdad, Iraq. She was an infant when her family moved to Mumbai (then Bombay) in search of business opportunities. Nadira started her career with the 1943 film Mauj as a child artist. She was only 10 or 11 years old at the time. Her big break came when filmmaker Mehboob Khan's wife, Sardar Akhtar, discovered her and offered her the role of a Rajput princess in Dilip Kumar-starrer Aan (1952). This was a strong debut for Nadira, who got to act alongside Dilip Kumar in a film by Mehboob Khan, who would years later be celebrated for directing Mother India. Nadira recalls buying food and furniture with her first earnings

Coming from an immigrant family, Nadira had seen tough times growing up, but Aan changed that for her and her family. In an old interview, she recalled, "I started Aan with Rs 1200 a month in 1949, which increased to Rs 2500 in the second year and Rs. 3000 in the third year. When I got my first three-monthly instalment of Rs 3600, I didn't know what to do with it! That day I asked Mehboobji if I could be dropped home in his car because I was afraid to carry so much money!" Nadira shared that after seeing the money, her mother thought she had stolen it. She later used it to buy food and other necessary items for her house. "When my mother saw it, she asked if I had stolen it! I remember going out immediately and buying furniture — which still occupies my bedroom — and a full gold-set complete with 12 gold bangles. Thereafter, every night I'd

count the bangles and cover them with a handkerchief before sleeping. I would count them again in the morning! We'd bought such a lot of food that day, since we had not eaten well in a long time. Ultimately we had to give away half of it to the neighbours," she said in an old interview in 1999. Despite her good debut, Nadira did not land many lead role offers and was cast in supporting parts. However, one call from Raj Kapoor changed the trajectory of her career — though not necessarily in the way she had hoped. Nadira blamed Raj Kapoor's Shree 420 for destroying her career. Nadira blamed Raj Kapoor's Shree 420 for destroying her career. Turning point in Raj Kapoor's Shri 420

Though Nadira desperately wanted to achieve heroine status and bag lead roles, when Raj Kapoor asked her to play a negative role in Shri 420, she readily agreed. Like any young girl at that time, she had dreamt of working with Kapoor, and when the opportunity came, she could not refuse. What worked in her favour was that her character of Maya was substantial and remembered for years to come. However, Nadira later called it the 'Waterloo' of her career as she became typecast in similar roles. She said in the interview, "I took up Shree 420 for a lark but it became my Waterloo. I took up the role as a challenge, to prove my versatility, and it ruined my career." Producers typecast her. After Shri 420, Nadira tried to pursue positive roles and is said to have rejected around 200 films because filmmakers only offered her vamp roles. But after a point, she had no choice but to accept what came her way. She recalled, "After Shree 420, I starved for a year and a half because everybody wanted me to wear the same black fitting dress and hold the cigarette the same way." Though unwilling at first, Nadira went on to make her negative roles iconic. Even Jaya Bachchan once praised her openly. The two starred together in Ek Nazar (1972), in which Nadira played the role of an intimidating madame of a brothel. Jaya described Nadira as "a scene-chewing marvel" and admitted how intimidating it was to work with her in the film. She said in an old interview with Subhash K Jha, "She played a tyrant in Ek Nazar. As we shot, I remember becoming actually intimidated by her. Nadiraji was a very powerful actress with an imposing screen presence. She couldn't play the frail chiuimui kind of girl that audiences liked to see." Nadira acted in around 73 films during her career. Known for her larger-than-life personality, she lived lavishly, loved her expensive alcohol, and was fond of cars. She also became India's first actor to own a luxury Rolls Royce. Nadira lived alone, never married

Shah Rukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's Josh (2000) was Nadira's last onscreen performance. After stepping away from the limelight, Nadira initially lived with her family in Mumbai, but she never married. Later, when her family moved overseas, she continued to live alone in a Mumbai flat with only her house help. In the interview, she admitted to suffering from insomnia. When asked if she had any regrets, she said, "Not really. I'm extremely grateful to God for every-thing he has given me. At times I cry because I am very lonely but then I guess you can't get everything in life. I suffer from insomnia so I have more hours to kill than other people. Since there is no-one to really talk to me, I listen to music, knit and read to pass my time, when I'm not working. The only thing I ask God is to keep me fit enough to work, till I'm alive. I don't ever want to be dependent on anyone in my life!"

‘South stars are humble, simple as compared to Bollywood’: Shruti Haasan says they have ‘higher level of awareness’



Actor Shruti Haasan is currently basking in the glory of her recent film Coolie, which has crossed Rs 200 crore domestically. Like many actors who transition to Bollywood after tasting success in the film spheres of the south, Shruti did the same, but her Hindi film journey was quite short-lived. In a recent interview, Shruti talked about the various unique things about the Tamil and Telugu film industries and how Bollywood is a very different place when it comes to the psychology of the individual working there.

She told THR that people in the south, especially the bigger actors, are very concerned that if they don't remain humble, 'Saraswati ka haath sar se uth jayega' (Goddess Saraswati will withdraw her blessings). She commented on the importance of being humble and god-fearing and said, "I mean, it's hard to talk about being pious or anything of that sort in my home because my father doesn't believe in anything of that sort. But when I started working, I noticed those small things, like having coconut in the morning or having a photo of a deity sitting in the corner. There were rules regarding what was and wasn't allowed on set, and the actor and their staff were always very aware of how they presented themselves. I found there to be a higher level of awareness and consciousness in the South, compared to when I worked in the Hindi film industry."

She explained her observations further and credited a completely different art form for making her humble and aware. "I think it's just a South Indian thing to do; you know, many people who have a lot of money won't dress up very flashy. They will still have that old Ambassador car for many years. It's just the psychology of the place, and it's very important to realise that we are merely vessels for the art. We aren't a conduit of any kind; the conduit is a good film, a good script or even a good song. We just receive that art, and we are supposed to spread it outwards. "Learning music very early in my life and working with people in close

quarters for hours on end teaches you to just play your bits, to not try to surpass anyone else, and to be humble," said Shruti. Talking about her stint in Hindi film, Shruti admitted that she hasn't been able to pinpoint exactly what went wrong and said, "I really don't know why it didn't work. I went to the places where, whatever I wanted from a film, I got. But somehow the focus shifted, because I have always had enquiries from Hindi, and sometimes I didn't have the dates, or in some cases I made wrong decisions in films, which everybody suffers the price of. The Hindi film space is also very different now, and with OTT coming into play, I think I get offered a lot of things which I am more interested in, and I will do more of." Shruti has worked in Hindi films such as Ramaiya Vastavaiya (2013), Luck (2009) alongside Imran Khan and Sanjay Dutt, and Behen Hogi Teri (2017) with Rajkumar Rao.

Friendship with Prabhas remains unchanged despite his stardom, says Sridevi Vijayakumar

Chennai: Actress Sridevi Vijayakumar, who is making a comeback to the big screen with director Venkatesh Nimmalapudi's upcoming Telugu film 'Sundarakanda' featuring actor Nara Rohit in the lead, has now disclosed that her friendship with Prabhas, who was her co-star in her first film as heroine, was still the same despite the actor having gone on to become a huge pan Indian star.

For the unaware, actress Sridevi Vijayakumar was the heroine in actor Prabhas's debut film called 'Eeswar', which was directed by Jayanth C Paranjee. Although Sridevi made her acting debut as a child artiste, Eeswar marked her debut as a film's lead heroine.

At a press conference called by the unit of 'Sundarakanda', actress Sridevi was asked about her friendship with Prabhas to which the actress said, "The friendship with Prabhas is still the same. Prabhas is now a big star. However, he hasn't changed one bit."

Stating that Prabhas even now smiled and talked with the same innocence of a child, Sridevi said everybody in her first film unit Eeswar itself got the feeling that Prabhas would go on to become a huge star. "We all thought that he would become a big superstar even during the time of Eeswar. When we were part of a success tour, huge crowds would turn up. Prabhas has become a bigger star than we expected. It is truly a blessing."