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Consensus is a prerequisite for ONOE -

BJP MP PP Chaudhary, chairperson of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the Bills on simultaneous polls, has stated that the proposed 'One Nation, One Election' (ONOE) reform could become operational by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. According to him, the panel has found that "almost 99 per cent of stakeholders, particularly from civil society and various organisations, favour simultaneous elections." A balanced assessment of ONOE requires looking beyond political rhetoric to gauge its constitutional, administrative and democratic implications. The proposal continues to draw strong objections from some Opposition parties, constitutional experts and advocates of federalism. The challenge is to develop a mechanism that is acceptable to all concerned. The case in favour of ONOE rests largely on economic efficiency and smoother governance. Frequent elections involve substantial financial costs, leading to repeated imposition of the Model Code of Conduct. The JPC has cited studies estimating that synchronised elections could save nearly Rs 7 lakh crore by reducing disruptions to administration, industry, tourism and public services. Supporters also argue that uninterrupted five-year cycles would enable governments to focus on long-term development, policy implementation and investment. However, there is much more to elections than potential gains in terms of money and governance. ONOE risks diluting India's federal structure by subordinating state-level political priorities to national narratives. The constitutional mechanism proposed to synchronise electoral cycles, particularly the possibility of curtailing or extending the tenure of legislatures or holding elections only for the remainder of a term, needs to be discussed thoroughly.

Albendazole Tablets Can Prevent Intestinal Worm Infections: Collector Haritha



"Indian Chronicle, Sisfabad, July 13: District Collector K. Haritha said that intestinal worm infections can be effectively prevented by administering Albendazole tablets to children and adolescents below 19 years of age. "On the occasion of National Deworming Day on Monday, the Collector, along with officials from the Health Department, participated in a deworming tablet distribution programme held at the Tribal Welfare Girls Gurukul School in the district headquarters. "Addressing the gathering, Haritha stressed the importance of providing deworming tablets to all children and adolescents under the age of 19 across the district. She said that regular deworming helps prevent intestinal worm infections, improves nutrition, promotes healthy growth, and contributes to the overall well-being of children. Improved health, she noted, enables students to attend school regularly, concentrate better on their studies, and build a brighter future. "The Collector called upon parents, teachers, Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, healthcare personnel, and medical staff to actively support the deworming programme and ensure maximum coverage among eligible children. "Later, Haritha sat with the students and shared their midday meal. She interacted with them and enquired about the quality and taste of the food being served. She instructed school authorities to provide meals strictly according to the government-approved menu and to use fresh vegetables and quality ingredients in food preparation. "The Collector also directed teachers to ensure effective and student-friendly teaching methods, maintain cleanliness on school premises, and remain vigilant about the health and well-being of students. "District Deputy Medical Officer Nagendra, medical staff, the Gurukul School Principal, teachers, and other officials participated in the programme.

Spinny Hosts Go-Kart Racing During Breakfast Drive



"Hyderabad, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): Spinny organised a go-kart racing experience as part of its Breakfast Drive to bring together automobile enthusiasts, said Mr. Biswajit Bose, Cluster Head-Telangana, in a statement on Monday. He said the drive began from the Spinny Car Hub at Phoenix Trivium in Hyderabad and culminated at the FNF Arena Go-Karting track near Nanakramguda, where participants were surprised with an exciting go-kart racing session. Spinny customers Tukaram, Santosh Kumar, and Madhu appreciated the unique experience. Mr. Bose said Spinny currently operates four Car Hubs in Hyderabad and one Spinny Park in Visakhapatnam. He added that the company sells over 10,000 cars every month through its network of more than 57 Car Hubs across 76 cities in India.

Strict Action Against Tractors Running with Cage Wheels on Roads: Police Commissioner



"Khammam, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): "Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt has warned that operating tractors fitted with cage wheels on public roads is a violation of the law and that strict action will be taken against those who flout the rules. He said the government spends substantial public funds to build and maintain roads, and it is everyone's responsibility to protect them from damage. "He explained that while cage wheels are commonly used for agricultural operations, they must be removed after field work is com-

pleted and replaced with regular tyres before the tractor is driven on public roads. Alternatively, farmers should adopt methods that do not damage road surfaces. "The Commissioner said that, based on a complaint from the Roads & Buildings (R&B) Department, cases were registered at Sathupalli Police Station against tractor drivers and owners Sara Krishna, Pammi Krishnaiah, Gutthi Muthyala Rao and Bosi Korraju for allegedly operating tractors with cage wheels on the Kakarlapalli-Rudrakshapalli R&B road in Sathupalli mandal, causing severe damage to the road. The tractors involved have also been seized. "Stating that protecting the lives and property of the public is the foremost responsibility of the police, Sunil Dutt appealed to farmers and tractor owners to strictly comply with the rules. He urged the public to report any such violations or emergencies immediately by calling Dial 100 or informing the nearest police station. "He also directed police officials to create awareness among tractor drivers and owners at the field level regarding the legal provisions and the importance of protecting public roads."

BJP COMMENCE SINGARENI BHAROSA YATRA



Hyderabad, July 13 : Telangana State BJP unit today launched "Singareni Bharosa Yatra" to explain importance of allocation of "Tadicherla-II" coal Block to The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and expose previous BRS and present Congress governments' negligence attitude towards strengthening the SCCL. "A two-days yatra commenced from state party headquarters here and continued in an enthusiastic atmosphere led by BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao and under the supervision of Union Minister for Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy. "On arriving in Kothagudem, N Ramchander Rao and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy were accorded a grand welcome by BJP cadres, Singareni workers, and local residents who turned up in massive numbers. "BJP National Vice President and MP Smt. DK Aruna, MLCs Anji Reddy, Malka Komuriah, and other key leaders, among others, are participating in this yatra. "The central government has recently allotted the Tadicherla-II Coal Block to The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), marking another important milestone in strengthening the country's coal sector and reinforcing the future of SCCL. This decision is a testimony to the unwavering commitment of the Government of India towards strengthening India's energy security, empowering our Public Sector Undertakings, and ensuring the long-term growth of strategically important institutions such as SCCL. "Addressing a meeting of SCCL workers and intellectuals at Kothaudem club, Rao said the central government's decision to allocate the Tadicherla-II coal block to Singareni to SCCL) is highly beneficial for Telangana and good news for SCCL workers and their families and all the people of the region spanning from Kothagudem to Mancherial where Singareni's operations extend. "Criticising both previous BRS and present Congress government of neglecting the SCCL and pushing it to on the path of losses, he alleged that although the previous BRS government gave numerous promises to Singareni workers, it completely



failed to implement them while Congress government showing absolutely no sincerity towards the welfare of Singareni. It has completely ignored the measures needed to bring this loss-making institution back on track, he accused. "The Congress government's attitude mirrors the saying "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." While Singareni workers are shedding their blood and sweat, working hard for the institution, it is unfortunate that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is ignoring Singareni's financial situation and spending the company's funds on football games instead, Rao alleged. "Singareni is a great wealth, a gemstone of Telangana. The primary reasons for such an organization sinking into losses are the negligence, corruption, and commission-based politics of the BRS and Congress governments. Singareni has reached this state because they prioritized personal interests over public interests, he lamented. "Allocation of Tedicherla -II coal block to SCCL without any tender process is a historic decision which was possible with the support and efforts of union minister G Kishan Reddy, Rao said adding that It would create an opportunity to conduct mining operations for nearly 40 to 50 years and would also generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for thousands of people."

Taking a dig at CM Revanth Reddy, BJP state chief said shifting his government failures onto the central government has become a habit for the Revanth Reddy government. But in reality, it is the decision taken by the central government for the interests of Telangana and the future of Singareni that are breathing new life into this organization."

Rao assured that BJP would always stand by the development of Singareni and welfare of its workers. This yatra would continue for nearly 1200 kms across all Singareni region and directly meeting Singareni workers, employees, their families and the local public."

BJP national Vice-President and MP Dr K Aruna and BJP legislative party leader A Maheshwar Reddy also spoke on the occasion.

TWJF to Organise 'Chalo Parliament' Protest on July 27



"One-Day Dharna at Jantar Mantar to Press for Journalists' Demands "Khammam, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): "The Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) will organise a "Chalo Parliament" programme on July 27 in New Delhi, demanding that the Central Government immediately address long-pending issues concerning journalists. The announcement was made by TWJF State President Mamidi Somayya and General Secretary Tanneeru Srinivas. "With the Parliament's Monsoon Session scheduled to begin on July 20, the federation has decided to intensify its efforts for the fulfilment of several pending demands. A one-day protest will be held at Jantar Mantar, following which a memorandum will be submitted to Union Ministers and Members of Parliament. "Journalists and TWJF representatives from all districts of Telangana are expected to participate in the protest. Leaders of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and other states will also extend their support. "The federation demanded the immediate restoration of the 50% railway fare concession for accredited journalists, which was discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic and has not yet been revived. It also urged the Centre to enact a Journalists' Protection Act, introduce a National Pension Scheme for retired journalists, and establish a National Media Commission in place of the Press Council of India to address the evolving needs of the media sector. "TWJF further called for legal recognition and comprehensive regulation of the electronic and digital media sectors. It appealed

to journalists across Telangana to participate in large numbers and make the "Chalo Parliament" programme a success.

90 Lakh Sanctioned for Development of Ramanthapur Bajrang Gymnasium:



PARAMESWAR REDDY "Modern gym equipment, additional rooms, borewell and other infrastructure to be developed" "Sanction letters handed over to gym management by Parameshwar Reddy "RAMANTHAPUR, JULY 13 (Indian Chronicle): "The historic Bajrang Gymnasium in Ramanthapur is set for a major upgrade after Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy fulfilled his commitment to the youth of the area by securing 90 lakh for its development. "Out of the sanctioned amount, 748 lakh will be utilized for the purchase of modern gym equipment, while the remaining 742 lakh will be spent on the construction of additional rooms, drilling of a borewell, and the creation of other essential infrastructure facilities. "On Monday, Parameshwar Reddy handed over the official sanction letters to the management of the Bajrang Gymnasium. "The programme was attended by Ravinder Reddy, Burra Narasimha, Dayakar Reddy, Janardhan, G. Ramesh Prasad, Anand, Madhu, Lakhan, S. Ramesh, Ramanthapur Division President Sandeep, Rafiq, Vallapu Srikanth Yadav, Naam Raji Reddy, Jaleel Pasha, Sachin, Satish Goud, Bullet Ashok, Chintu and others.

MP Vaddiraju Participates in SIR Enumeration



"Submits Family Members' Details to BLO "Khammam, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): "BRS Parliamentary Party Leader and Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra participated in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls by submitting the duly filled enumeration forms of his family members to the concerned Booth Level Officer (BLO). He urged all voters to return the completed forms to their respective BLOs and obtain an acknowledgement receipt. "On Monday, at his camp office in Burhanpur, Khammam, the MP personally filled out the SIR enumeration forms of his family members and handed them over to the concerned BLO, Magi Savitri. "During the interaction, he enquired about the digitisation of the enumeration forms and the measures being taken to identify duplicate voters and voters whose addresses could not be verified. "Ravichandra appealed to all eligible voters to make proper use of the SIR exercise by submitting their own details as well as those of their family members. He also said that if anyone faces difficulties in filling out the forms or completing the registration process, local BRS leaders and Booth Level Agents (BLAs) would be available to provide assistance. "Former Corporator Sheelamshetty Veerabhadram and others were present on the occasion.

ABVP Calls for Statewide College Shutdown Over Fee Reimbursement Dues OU



JULY 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) has called for a statewide shutdown of junior colleges, degree colleges, and universities on July 14, demanding the immediate release of pending fee reimbursement and scholarship dues. "ABVP National Executive Member Jeevan alleged that the Telangana government has been negligent in clearing the pending fee reimbursement and scholarship amounts, leaving thousands of students under severe financial stress. He urged the government to release the dues without further delay and ensure that students are not deprived of their right to education due to financial constraints. "Jeevan appealed to all government, private, aided, and unaided educational institutions to extend their support to the bandh and stand in solidarity with the students' demands. "The ABVP also called upon students, parents, faculty members, and educational institution managements across the state to cooperate and make the statewide college bandh a success.

Reviving Dried-Up Wells... Water Supply Starts Today: Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand



"Narsampet, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): Two wells in Madannapeta, within the Narsampet municipality limits, had completely dried up due to a water shortage. Acting on the instructions of Narsampet MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy, Municipal Chairperson Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand, accompanied by local councillor Kothakonda Meghana-Shyam, inspected the wells on Monday. "Speaking on the occasion, the Chairperson explained that the wells supplying water to Madannapeta had dried up due to the lack of rainfall over the past few weeks. She stated that, with the support of MLA Donthi Madhava Reddy, the municipality undertook the task of filling the wells by pumping water from the Madannapeta tank using motors and pipelines. She noted that the work began today and that adequate water would be available to the residents of Madannapeta starting Tuesday. "Superintending Engineer (SE) Chandramouli, councillors Beeram Bharat Reddy, Punnam Narasimha Reddy, and Eepuri Srinivas Reddy, along with Youth Congress leaders, party activists, and local residents, participated in the event.

Historic Allocation of Tadicherla Coal Block to SCCL Sparks Celebrations Across Khammam



"Khammam, July 13 Indian Chronicle: "The Central Government's decision to allocate the Tadicherla coal block to the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has been widely welcomed across the undivided Khammam district. The move, described by BJP leaders as a significant step for strengthening South India's premier coal-pro-

ducing company, was celebrated with enthusiasm by party workers and supporters. "Marking their first visit to Khammam after the announcement, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, BJP Telangana President N. Ramchander Rao, MP D.K. Aruna, and MLA Yeleti Maheshwar Reddy received a grand welcome at several locations across the district. "A festive atmosphere prevailed at the Nayakunigudem Toll Plaza in Kusumanchi mandal, where BJP Khammam District President Nelluri Koteswara Rao led party workers in welcoming the leaders with flower garlands and traditional shawls. The leaders later interacted with party members during a breakfast gathering. "As the convoy moved towards Khammam city, supporters greeted the leaders with flower showers. Similar enthusiastic receptions were organized in Wyra, featuring traditional drum performances and folk dances, while in Tallada, BJP workers celebrated the visit with fireworks and large public gatherings. "The celebrations reflected renewed enthusiasm among BJP cadres in the undivided Khammam district following the allocation of the coal block. "Several senior BJP leaders participated in the programme, including MLC Mulkam Komaraiah, State General Secretary Gautham Rao, State Secretary Badda Mahipal Reddy, State Vice Presidents Raghunath Rao and Anji Reddy, State Treasurer Devaki Vasudeva Rao, senior leader Kondapalli Sridhar Reddy, State spokespersons Vakadhani Pulla Rao Yadav, Namburi Ramalingeswara Rao, Sunny Uday Pratap, Galla Satyanarayana, Gongura Venkateswara Rao, Rudra Pradeep, and several other party functionaries, along with thousands of BJP workers.

Former MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar Meets District Collector Seeking Double-Bedroom Houses for Ramanthapur Hut Dwellers



"RAMANTHAPUR, JULY 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former Uppal MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar met Medchal-Malkajigiri District Collector Manu Choudhary at the Collectorate on Monday and submitted a memorandum requesting the allotment of double-bedroom houses to poor families who have been living in huts for nearly four decades in the Ramanthapur Pedda Cheruvu area. "Representatives of the hut dwellers, along with Somasekhara Goud, Raghupathi Goud, and others, accompanied the former MLA during the meeting. Prabhakar ex-

plained the long-pending hardships faced by the families and urged the Collector to provide permanent housing to the eligible residents who have been living in the area for decades. "Responding positively to the representation, District Collector Manu Choudhary stated that necessary steps would be initiated for the allotment of double-bedroom houses to eligible beneficiaries. He also directed the Housing Board officials to take the required action at the earliest. Hut dwellers, local leaders, and other public representatives were also present during the meeting.

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Keeps Promise

1.80 Crore Sanctioned for Goud, Mudiraj and Kummari Community Graveyard



"UPPAL, JULY 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): In a major boost to the Goud, Mudiraj and Kummari communities, ₹1.80 crore has been sanctioned for the development of their common graveyard located in Beerappagadda Division. Leaders of the Uppal Goud Association met MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy at his residence and felicitated him, along with BRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, by presenting them with shawls in recognition of their ef-

forts in securing the funds. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said he remains committed to the overall development of the Uppal constituency and is steadily fulfilling the promises he made during the elections. He stated that the sanctioned ₹1.80 crore will be utilized to transform the Goud, Mudiraj and Kummari community graveyard into a model facility. The MLA informed that construction works will begin with the release of the first installment of ₹45 lakh. The remaining funds will be released in phases to complete the project. He further said that the inauguration of the works will be held jointly with leaders of all three communities immediately after the completion of the tender process. Among those who felicitated the MLA were Goud Association members Bazaar Krishna Goud, Bingi Bikshapathi Goud, Bingi Sriramulu Goud, Bazaar Muralikrishna Goud, Potagani Balaraju Goud, Nerdham Bhaskar Goud, Boothkuri Sai Kumar Goud, Mincha Krishna Goud, Bandaram Ramu Goud, Bingi Bharat Goud, Panjala Shraavan Kumar Goud, Baddam Gnaneshwar Goud, Bandaram Lakshman Goud, Boothkuri Naveen Goud, Boothkuri Ganesh Goud, Venkatesh Goud and other representatives of the Goud Association.

Retaining Wall and Steel Girder Bridge to be Constructed Near Raghavendra Colony Ganesh Temple-Parameshwar Reddy Secures 80 Lakh Funds for the Project

Fund Sanction Letters Handed Over to Colony Welfare Association "UPPAL, JULY 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy has secured ₹80 lakh for the construction of a retaining wall and a steel girder bridge near the Ganesh Temple in Raghavendra Colony, located in Beerappagadda under the Uppal Circle. "On Monday, Parameshwar Reddy handed over the fund sanction letters to representatives of the Raghavendra Colony Welfare Association. "Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy said that development works are being undertaken across all colonies in the Uppal constituency to address long-pending civic issues. He stated that the retaining wall would strengthen the canal embankment, prevent soil erosion, and protect nearby roads and residential areas during heavy rains. "He further said that the proposed steel girder bridge would ensure safe and convenient movement for both pedestrians and vehicles, improving connectivity and transportation facilities for local residents. He added that these development works would significantly contrib-



ute to the area's overall development while enhancing public safety and convenience. "The programme was attended by Division President Agam Reddy, senior Congress leaders Chen Reddy Raghupathi Reddy, Rajesh Mudiraj, Mahesh Mudiraj, and local residents Gangadhar Goud, Ajay

Kumar Gupta, Sudhakar Reddy, Rajeshwar Rao, Murali Krishna, Kiran, Bhatkeer Jangaiah, Mallesh Yadav, Venu Gopal, and others.

Uppal Velugugutta Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple Packed with Devotees



"Special Pujas and Abhishekams Performed on the Occasion of Masa Shivaratri "UPPAL, JULY 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "The Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple at Velugugutta in Uppal witnessed a massive turnout of devotees on Monday as Masa Shivaratri, Krishna Chaturdashi, and Arudra Nakshatra coincided on the same day, which also fell on a Monday, creating a highly auspicious Shiva Yoga. "Thousands of devotees began arriving at the temple from the early hours of the morning to offer prayers, perform special pujas, Panchamruta Abhishekams, and Archana rituals, and fulfil their vows.

The temple premises echoed with the chanting of Lord Shiva's name throughout the day. "The temple authorities made special arrangements to ensure the smooth darshan of devotees and to prevent any inconvenience during the celebrations. Among those present were Temple Chairman Gorige Pedda Mallesh Kuruma, Executive Officer Srikanth, Founder Trustee and High Court Advocate Gorige Mallesh Kuruma, Temple Director Srikanth Reddy, Srinivas Goud, Murali, Raju, Bandari Manjula, and others.

Keeravani Inaugurates Voice & Performance Clinic

"Hyderabad, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): Oscar-winning composer and Padma Bhushan awardee M.M. Keeravani inaugurated the Continental Voice & Performance Clinic at Continental Hospitals, a dedicated facility for singers, artists, teachers, broadcasters, and other voice professionals. The clinic was inaugurated in the presence of Dr. Guru N.Reddy, Founder and Chairman of Continental Hospitals, and Padma Shri Shobha Raju. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Guru N.Reddy highlighted the importance of voice training and speech therapy in maintaining vocal health and enhancing professional performance. Keeravani appreciated the initiative and emphasized the need for specialized centres focused on voice care and preservation. Later, the Department of ENT and Laryngology conducted a workshop for more than 70 aspiring singers and voice professionals. During the session, Dr.Dushyant Ganeshuni and



Dr.Reshmi Anna Alex educated participants on voice hygiene, vocal modulation, and other essential aspects of vocal care.

Every Voter Must Participate in the SIR Process: Vemula Sambaiah Goud

"Narsampet, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): As part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls, a document verification drive was conducted on Monday at Polling Booths 159, 160, and 161 in the 29th Division of Narsampet town. "Speaking on the occasion, former Municipal Floor Leader Vemula Sambaiah Goud urged the people of Telangana to make the best use of the SIR programme by updating and correcting their voter details within the stipulated time. He said that ensuring accurate voter information in the electoral rolls is the responsibility of every citizen and warned that negligence could result in the loss of voting rights. "He further advised that if a person has voter registration in two different locations, they should retain only one and get the other deleted. He cautioned that maintaining duplicate voter registrations is a violation of the law and may invite legal action. "The programme was attended by BLO Kakkarla Devamani (Booth 159), BLO Moola Triveni (Booth 160), BLO Bonkuru Haimavathi (Booth 161),



Congress Party leaders Tokala Srinivas, Nampally Venkateswarlu Goud, Jeejula Karthik, Vemula Bikshapathi, Kondla Karthik, Kodiripaka Ganesh, ASHA worker Vadlakonda Saritha, and residents of the division.

Game Changer Awards Presented to Outstanding Players



-BBG Group Reaffirms Support for Sports Development Through TG-20 "Hyderabad, July 13 (Indian

Chronicle): BBG Group, the official sponsor of the Sreenidhi University TG-20 League 2026, presented the 'Game Changer Awards' to the tournament's best-performing players during the closing ceremony. In a statement issued on Monday, BBG Group Chairman and Managing Director Mallikarjuna Reddy said the company has reaffirmed its commitment to the development of sports in Telangana through its support for the TG-20 League. He said sports play a vital role in instilling discipline, teamwork, and leadership qualities among young people. BBG Group remains committed to supporting initiatives that contribute to the overall development of society, he added. Mallikarjuna Reddy also noted that the group has been actively working for the empowerment of girls through the Bangaru Thalli Foundation. He reiterated that BBG Group would continue to extend its support for the growth of sports culture in Telangana in the years ahead.

Minor Girl Sexually Assaulted; Accused Arrested in POCSO Case: ACP Venkatesh, CI Vishweshwar

Geesugonda, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): Geesugonda Police have arrested a 21-year-old man for allegedly repeatedly sexually assaulting a minor girl under the false promise of marriage and causing her miscarriage. "According to the police, the victim, a resident within the jurisdiction of Geesugonda Police Station, came into contact with the accused, Boddu Bunny (21), a resident of Dharmasagar, through a friend while she was studying in Class 10 in 2023. The accused allegedly befriended the victim by professing his love for her and remained in regular contact. "Police said that in March 2023, during the victim's SSC examinations, the accused allegedly took her to a nearby venture on the pretext of marriage and sexually assaulted her. The victim stated in her complaint that he continued to sexually assault her on multiple occasions until 2024 under the same promise. "The complaint further alleged that in March 2025, after the victim became pregnant, the accused secretly mixed abortion pills into her birthday cake. She later developed severe abdominal pain and was admitted to a hospital by her family members, where doctors confirmed that she had suffered a miscarriage. "Police said the accused allegedly continued to harass the victim by forcing her to meet him, abusing and assaulting her when she refused, and issuing death threats. A few days ago, he allegedly attacked the victim in Warangal and damaged her mobile phone. "Following the victim's complaint, Geesugonda Police registered a case, launched an investigation, arrested the accused, and re-



manded him to judicial custody under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. "ACP Venkatesh said that the police would deal sternly with offenders involved in crimes against women and children and that stringent legal action, including the opening of rowdy sheets wherever warranted, would be initiated against such offenders. "The investigation was carried out by ACP Mamunooru Venkatesh, Geesugonda Inspector Visweshwar, SI Kumar, and other police personnel.

MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra Offers Prayers at Katrapalli Shiva Temple, Unveils Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Statue“

Khammam, July 13 | Indian Chronicle:“ Raja Sabha BRS Parliamentary Party Leader and Member of Parliament Vaddiraju Ravichandra on Monday unveiled a statue of Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar at Katrapalli village in Kesamudram mandal of Mahabubabad district.”“The statue was installed under the auspices of the Ambedkar Youth Association.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by Raja Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra, MP Vem Narender Reddy, Lok Sabha MP Porika Balaram Naik, local MLA Dr. Murali Naik, and Agricultural Market Committee Chairman Ganta Sanjeeva Reddy as chief guests.”Prior to the event, MP Ravichandra, accompanied by his elder brother Vaddiraju Kishan, younger brother Vaddiraju Venkateswarlu, and other family members, visited the historic Kakatiya-era Shiva temple in the village. The family performed special prayers in the name of their gotra.”During the visit, Vedic priests and local residents accorded a warm welcome to MP Ravichandra and felicitated him with traditional shawls.



Harinath Reddy (HNR) Inspects SIR Programme in 11th Division, Appeals for Public Cooperation



““BODUPPAL, KISHORE, JULY 13(INDIAN CHRONICLE): Harinath Reddy (HNR) on Monday inspected the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) programme for the electoral rolls being conducted at the Anjaneya Nagar

Ganesh Mandapam for Booth Nos. 456, 457, 458 and 459 in the 11th Division of the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC).“Speaking on the occasion, Harinath Reddy urged residents to cooperate with the ongoing SIR exercise to ensure that the names of all eligible voters continue to remain on the electoral rolls.

He stressed that officials and field staff should visit every household and work diligently to ensure that no eligible voter's name is deleted from the voter list.”He also advised residents of Booth Nos. 456, 457, 458 and 459 to approach the SIR Help Centre set up at the Anjaneya Nagar Ganesh Mandapam for any clarification or assistance regarding the voter list revision process.”Among those present were Anjaneya Nagar Association Vice-President Venkatayya, Narasayya Goud, Sameer, Guruva Reddy, Lingeshwar, Satish, Ramya, Balaraju and other colony residents.

Collector Directs Officials to Resolve Public Grievances Promptly

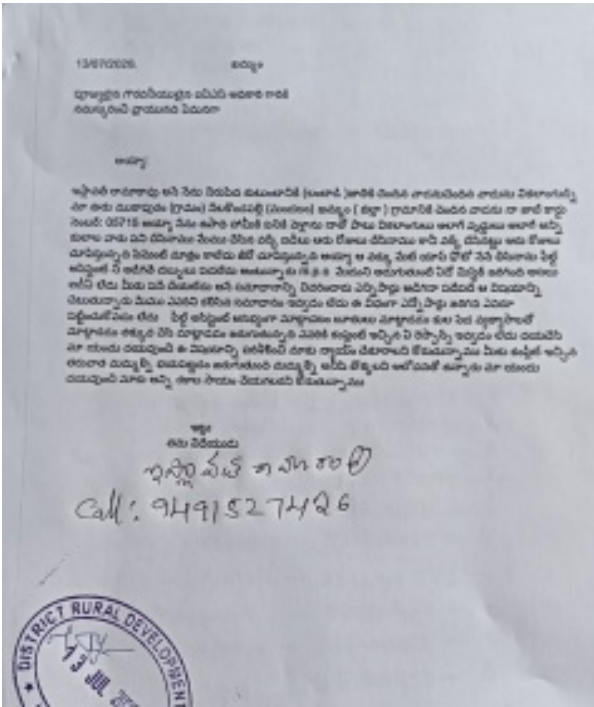
““Khammam, July 13 Indian Chronicle:“Khammam District Collector T.S. Divakar has instructed district officials to resolve public grievances received through the Prajavani programme at the earliest.”“The Collector, along with Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Sreeja, Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, and Trainee Assistant Collector Paras Kumar, received petitions from the public during the Prajavani programme held at the Collectorate Conference Hall on Monday.”Among the petitions received:“Residents of Paleru village in Kusumanchi mandal requested the sanction of a second ration shop, citing the village's growing population. The Collector directed the District Civil Supplies Officer to take necessary action.”Amarlapudi Vasantha Rani from Vandanam village in Chintakani mandal stated that although her name appeared in the merit list for a vacant Pre-Primary Aya post, she was not appointed. The Collector instructed the District Education Officer to examine the matter and take appropriate action.”G. Suresh from Gollagudem village in Thallada mandal sought admission for his son Gundla Sathvik in the BC Mahatma Jyotiba Phule School at Wyra. The Collector referred the petition to the BC Welfare authorities for necessary action.”D. Upendra from Gollagudem village in Khammam Rural mandal submitted that he had lost vision due to black fungus and requested sanction of a disability pension. The Collector directed the concerned officials, in-



cluding the DPM and SADAREM authorities, to process the request.”District-level officers from various departments, Collectorate superintendents, and other officials attended the Prajavani programme.

Worked Under MGNREGS, But App Shows No Work Done

Differently-Abled Workers Submit Complaint to District Collector



MGNREGS field assistants had behaved negligently, used abusive language, and intimidated them after they raised complaints.”The group appealed to the District Collector to conduct an inquiry into the matter, rectify the records, ensure payment for the work completed, and provide them with justice.

Prompt Disposal of Grievance Petitions Urged“



“Khamm Nelakondapalli, July 13 Indian Chronicle:“Nelakondapalli Tahsildar P. Ram Prasad directed officials of all departments to ensure the prompt resolution of petitions received during the weekly grievance redressal programme.”“Speaking at the grievance meeting held on Monday at the Tahsildar's office, he said applications related to land disputes, Panchayat Raj issues, and other departmental matters were received from residents of various villages in the mandal.”The Tahsildar instructed officials to give special attention to every grievance petition and take necessary steps for their speedy disposal. He also stressed the importance of punctuality and regular participation by officials in the weekly grievance programme.”He further appealed to all officials to actively participate in the ongoing SIR (Special Intensive Revision) programme in the mandal.”The programme was attended by MPDO M. Yarraiah, Deputy Tahsildar Kanakam Narasimha Rao, Mandal Revenue Inspector Alasya Madhusudhan Rao, and officials from various departments.

Khammam Nelakondapalli July 13 Indian Chronicle:“A group of differently-abled workers submitted a complaint to the District Collector during the grievance meeting on Monday, alleging that although they had completed work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the official mobile application incorrectly showed that they had not worked.”According to the complaint, the group, led by Islavath Rama Rao, a differently-abled resident of Motapuram village in Nelakondapalli mandal, worked for a week under the scorching sun as part of the employment guarantee scheme. However, due to what they suspect could be a technical error or negligence by field staff, the app recorded that they had not performed any work.”The workers stated that they had repeatedly approached the local Field Assistant and mandal-level officials to resolve the issue, but no action was taken. They also alleged that

Were Illegal Shed Construction Works Halted Only for a Settlement? Locals Allege Lapses by Boduppall Town Planning Officials



“BODUPPAL, KISHORE, JULY 13(INDIAN CHRONICLE): Residents have expressed serious concern over the functioning of Town Planning officials in the Boduppall Circle, alleging inconsistency in the enforcement of action against illegal constructions.”According to local residents, an allegedly unauthorized shed was being constructed opposite Free Village Colony on the Boduppall–Chengicherla main road, near Bangaru Maisamma Temple. Following complaints from residents, Town Planning officials reportedly intervened and temporarily halted the construction. This led many to believe that strict action was being initiated against unauthorized structures.However, residents now claim that the same shed construction has resumed and is progressing rapidly within a few days, with no further action from the authorities. They question whether the work was genuinely stopped because it was illegal or merely suspended temporarily before being allowed to continue.Locals further allege that the lack of action despite



the resumption of construction has raised several questions about the enforcement process. They have urged the authorities to take uniform action against all illegal constructions without discrimination and to ensure transparency in the implementation of building regulations.Residents have also called upon the Boduppall Circle Town Planning officials to clarify the legal status of the construction and place the facts before the public.

Khammam Police Intensify Crackdown on Drug Trafficking; 450 kg of Ganja Worth 2.24 Crore Seized in Six Months

““Khammam, July 13 | Indian Chronicle:“Khammam Police have intensified their crackdown on narcotics trafficking and sale, with a special focus on protecting the youth from drug abuse, Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt said on Monday.”“Addressing the media, the Commissioner stated that the police have strengthened surveillance along interstate border routes and are conducting continuous vehicle checks on highways to curb the illegal transportation of ganja and other narcotic substances. Special teams comprising the Task Force, Eagle Force, and local police have been carrying out intelligence-based operations to identify and dismantle drug trafficking networks.”“Over the past six months, the police registered 55 cases, seized 450 kilograms of ganja valued at approximately ₹2.24 crore, and arrested 123 persons involved in various drug-related offences.”“According to the Commissioner, legal action has been initiated against 20 persons involved in transporting ganja, 60 individuals engaged in its sale, and 70 consumers under the relevant provisions of law.”“Sunil Dutt said the department has formed dedicated teams to identify the source of drug supply and eliminate trafficking networks at their roots. Secret operations and field-level raids are being conducted regularly based on credible intelligence, and investigators have already identified key supply routes. He expressed confidence that the police would dismantle the organised networks behind the illegal trade.”“He urged parents and family members to remain vigilant about the activities of young people and help prevent them from falling prey to drug addiction. Citizens were also requested to share information regarding the cultivation, transportation, or sale of ganja, assuring that the identity of informants would be kept strictly confidential.”“The Commissioner ap-



pealed for public cooperation in making Khammam a drug-free district. He warned that cases are being registered under the NDPS Act against those involved in the sale of ganja, while habitual traffickers may also face detention under the Preventive Detention (PD) Act.”“He noted that drug addiction often leads to criminal behaviour and stressed the need for extensive awareness campaigns to prevent substance abuse. Police officers have also been instructed to strengthen community policing by visiting villages and building stronger public relations.”“As part of the ongoing anti-drug drive, police teams in plain clothes are monitoring lodges, bus stations, colleges, libraries, and other public places to identify drug suppliers targeting youngsters and students. The Commissioner reiterated that the Khammam Police are committed to completely eradicating the illegal trade and consumption of narcotic substances through sustained enforcement and intelligence-led operations.

Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy Should Issue a Public Apology to the Yadav Community:

Vanga Ramesh Yadav““Hanumakonda, July 13 (Indian Chronicle): Telangana Yadav Mahasabha district leader and senior journalist Vanga Ramesh Yadav strongly condemned the alleged inappropriate and derogatory remarks made by Youth Congress president Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy against Pochaboyina Eshwaramma Yadav, who was recently appointed as a member of the Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam Trust Board.”“In a statement released on Monday, Vanga Ramesh Yadav said that the remarks were not only an insult to Eshwaramma Yadav personally but also an affront to the self-respect and dignity of the entire Yadav community. He demanded that Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy immediately withdraw his comments and issue a public apology to the Yadav community.”“He asserted that the Yadav community would not tolerate any remarks that demean its dignity and self-respect. He also advised that individuals holding responsible positions should exercise restraint and speak responsibly.”“Vanga Ramesh Yadav further warned that if a public apology is not issued, the



Yadav community would launch strong protest programs and Jakkidi Shivacharan Reddy would have to face the consequences.

National Deworming Day Launched in Khammam

“Khammam, July 13 Indian Chronicle:“District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) Dr. D. Rama Rao formally inaugurated the National Deworming Day programme at Kalavoddu Nayabazar School in Khammam on Monday.”On the occasion, Dr. Rama Rao administered Albendazole tablets to students and highlighted the importance of deworming and maintaining good personal hygiene. He advised children to wash their hands with soap before meals and after using the toilet, keep their nails trimmed, eat hygienic food, and drink only safe and clean water.”Addressing the gathering, Dr. Rama Rao said that intestinal worm infections can lead to anaemia, malnutrition, stunted growth, and reduced concentration in studies among children. He urged officials, teachers, and health staff to work in coordination to ensure that all 2,87,579 eligible children aged 1–19 years in the district receive Albendazole tablets under the government's National Deworming Programme.”He further stated that by 5:00 PM on Monday, 2,82,196 children had been administered the tablets, achieving 91% coverage across the district.”The programme was attended by District Immunization Officer Dr. Pratap Sampath Kumar, Programme Officer Dr. Lakshmi Narayana, Deputy District Mass Education and Media Officer K.V. Raju, District Vaccine and Logistics Manager Ramana, Venkateswara Nagar Urban PHC Medi-



cal Officer Dr. Devi Sri, Health Supervisor Jayapal, ANM Sharada., and students.

‘Gold-plated’ lies: How Karnataka gang cheated banks of Rs 27 lakh for over a year



GNS News Agency, July 13

The Karnataka police have cracked a large-scale fraud network that duped nationalised banks and various cooperative societies by pledging fake gold ornaments to secure loans worth lakhs of rupees. The Shivamogga police said on Sunday that they arrested B J Lokesh, 39, and H Sudha, 35, both residents of Shivamogga district, in connection with the fraud. The police have also launched a manhunt for S Y Ravishankar, a gold appraiser at Punjab National Bank; Rahul, 26; and Sharath, 35, who runs a jewellery store.

Shivamogga Superintendent of Police Nikhil B said that it was a larger network and that the accused made Rs 27-28 lakh by pledging fake gold ornaments. Nikhil said that a

complaint was filed by a manager of Punjab National Bank alleging that some people pledged gold ornaments and took loans. But a thorough check during an auction revealed that the ornaments just had a gold coating of 10 per cent. “Banks usually do an acid test in which they don’t get clarity about the amount of gold involved. It was discovered later when a machine test was conducted,” he added. The police found that the accused had similarly pledged gold in other cooperative and nationalised banks. According to a police officer, Rahul and Lokesh targeted banks that conducted only acid tests. To make the ornaments appear authentic at first glance, the fraudsters even had fake “hallmark” stamps affixed to them — ensuring bank staff and appraisers had no reason for suspicion, allowing loans to be sanctioned smoothly. “It has been quietly running for more than a year and has an inter-state link too. Sharath reportedly flew in fake gold-coated ornaments from Chandigarh but never approached the banks directly. He used Rahul and Lokesh to pledge the gold,” the officer said. The Doddapete police have registered the case. Nikhil said the police could seize ornaments weighing 419 grams, which were pledged for loans of Rs 27-28 lakh. The accused never repaid the loan. The banks realised they were cheated only when the gold ornaments were put up for auction and the tests were done using machines, he added. “The banks need to test the gold to prevent such frauds in future. The appraisers must use the best possible way to check the genuineness of the gold,” Nikhil added.

Nagpur Ram Mandir trust’s ‘no protest’ diktat ahead of Uddhav’s ‘Andolan’

GNS News Agency, July 13

Ahead of Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray’s proposed ‘Ram Raksha Andolan’ in Nagpur on July 18 over the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya, the trust managing the historic Ram Mandir in the Ram Nagar area of the city has explicitly stated that no political programme, sloganeering and agitation will be allowed inside the temple premises. The devotees, however, can recite the Ram Raksha Stotra (a Sanskrit hymn dedicated to Lord Rama), the trust said. On July 5, the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief launched the state-wide ‘Ram Raksha Andolan’ protest in Mumbai’s Dadar with the recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa. Taking the battle to the city which houses the headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the programme is likely to include the recitation of the Ram Raksha Stotra at the temple. The trust officials have, however, said that the programme details on Uddhav Thackeray’s visit only mentions one ‘Aarti’.



Speaking to The Indian Express, temple committee president Ravi Waghmare said that while the trust has not yet received any formal application from the Shiv Sena (UBT), MP Sanjay Raut had contacted him, seeking cooperation for the proposed programme. “So far, we have not received any official letter. Sanjay Raut called me today and said they wanted to organise a programme. I told him, ‘You are Hindus, we are Hindus. You are devotees of Lord Ram and so are we. Why do you need my permission to recite the Ram Raksha Stotra? Come, offer your prayers, recite it,’” Waghmare said. He asserted that no political activity would, however, be permitted. Waghmare told this newspaper that Sanjay Raut is expected to meet him on Wednesday. “He told me that he will meet me in a day or two to discuss this.” “I made it clear that this should not become a political battleground. If they hold a programme, it must be purely religious. There should be no sloganeering or political speeches. They are welcome to recite the Ram Raksha Stotra, but they should not indulge in politics inside the temple,” he said. The trust’s position, Waghmare said, remains unchanged, no matter which party is organising the event. “People and leaders from all political parties visit this temple. We have never differentiated between the Congress and the BJP because Lord Ram belongs to everyone,” he said. Referring to the temple’s long association with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and him being the lifetime member of the temple trust, Waghmare said, “He has been associated with this temple since he

was a corporator and has been visiting since his childhood. We don’t see him here as the chief minister but as a devotee of Lord Ram.” The trustee also recalled when BJP MP Navneet Rana and MLA Ravi Rana wanted to organise a huge Hanuman Chalisa recital at the temple alongwith 4,000 supporters.

“They initially wanted to bring around 4,000 supporters. I told them there was no need for such a large gathering. We sat together, recited the Hanuman Chalisa and they left. There were no political slogans, no speeches and no party flags,” he said, adding that even the ruling BJP wasn’t allowed to organise a similar programme inside the temple premises. “Even the programme held on January 22 by BJP was organised outside the temple premises. We did not allow the BJP to hold that event inside the temple. The temple is registered as a trust with the Charity Commissioner’s office,” Waghmare said. Ravi Waghmare further informed that under the rules of the Charity Commissioner’s Office, the property of religious or public temples cannot be used by any political party for meetings, campaigns, or protests. They are meant for religious rituals, worship, and spiritual activities. Under the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988, the use of any religious institution or place of worship for political propaganda or political purposes is strictly prohibited. Under the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act, temple trustees have a legal obligation to preserve the sanctity of the temple and protect its property. If trustees permit a political party to use the temple premises for political activities, they may face legal action for violating their statutory duties. “Our first and last stand is the same — anyone can recite the Ram Raksha Stotra. But no one should turn it into an agitation. If anyone wants to protest, they should do so outside the temple,” Waghmare said.

Bodies of 9 fishermen recovered from sunken trawler in Bay of Bengal



Police in South 24 Parganas district have recovered the bodies of nine fishermen from a trawler that capsized in the Bay of Bengal near the Sundarbans earlier this month. Teams from Gobardhanpur police station, along with the forest department and the Indian Coast Guard, identified a sunken trawler near the Raktachara area on Sunday. The trawler was later salvaged and brought to Sitarampur in Gobardhanpur, where nine bodies were recovered from it. There were 15 people aboard the trailer; the six others remain missing.

The ill-fated trawler has been identified as ‘FB Maa Kali’. On July 2, the trawler with 15 fishermen had set out to sea from the Digha Shankarpur fishing harbour in Purba Medinipur district. Due to adverse weather conditions, the trawler got lost at sea a few days ago, and had been untraceable since then. “Contact with the trawler was lost on July 5. After a continuous eight-day search, the trawler was recovered near Bagherchar, about 35 kilometers off the Bakkhali coast. Upon searching the trawler, the police recovered the bodies of the fishermen,” said a local police officer at the coastal police outpost. “Furthermore, it was impossible to establish any contact with the 15 fishermen aboard this trawler. Consequently, the matter was reported to the local fishermen’s association, the police, and the Coast Guard. A joint search operation was then launched across various parts of the river and the sea. After an extensive search, the trawler was spotted submerged in the

deep sea,” said the officer. Arriving at the spot, Minister of State for Sundarban Affairs, Dipankar Jana, said, “This is an extremely tragic incident. I informed the Chief Minister about the news, and I have come here on his instructions. The rescue operation is underway. A total of nine bodies have been found. The bodies of some fishermen might still be trapped inside the trawler. I offer my condolences to the families of the deceased.” The recovered bodies have been sent to the Kakdwip Sub-divisional Hospital for post-mortem examination. The joint search operations continued Monday to locate the six missing fishermen. Police, however, suspect the death toll to rise.

Three arrested for administering anesthesia drug to ganja consumers in Adilabad

Adilabad: Three persons were arrested for allegedly administering an anaesthetic drug meant for surgeries to ganja consumers here on Monday. Four more persons were absconding. Police seized 190 syringes, 50 bottles of the drug, two mobile phones and a scooter from the accused. SP Akhil Mahajan, in a statement, said that Sindhe Jagannath, an RMP, Syed Kamaruddin, the owner of a medical shop, and Mushraff were apprehended for their involvement in injecting the drug, Mephentermine Sulphate, into consumers at a bus stand at night. Ramesh, Sameer, Irfan and Mukeed were still at large. During interrogation, the three confessed to committing the crime to earn easy money. They admitted to purchasing the drug for Rs 390 per vial from medical stores and selling it to consumers for Rs 1,500 per vial. Selling the drug directly to the public and administering it is an offence. Stern action would be taken against those involved in the illegal sale of the drug, Akhil warned.

Pilot flying into Surat reports laser flash in cockpit, second such incident in 15 days



GNS News Agency, July 13

Around 11 pm on Saturday (July 11), the pilot of an Air India Express flight from Delhi to Surat with 168 passengers on board reported a distraction as the aircraft came in to land. A powerful beam of coloured light, similar to the laser beacons that are sometimes used at outdoor parties and concerts, swept through the night sky above Surat, momentarily lighting up the flight deck. This was the second time in a fortnight that a pilot coming in to land in Surat had reported a laser beam distraction on the flight path. On both occasions the source appeared to be Katargam, a bustling suburb of the city about 17 km northeast of the airport. Police are now investigating the source of the beams on both nights.

“We do not yet know who was responsible for the lasers on the flight path,” S C Bhalse, Director of Surat International Airport, told. “There may have been a party or a marriage event in the Katargam area where these lights may have been used, and they may have fallen on the aircraft in the sky. We have intimated the Katargam police to probe. After the person or place is identified, we will take strict action,” Bhalse said. Laser beacons, which are also known as sky lasers or landmark lasers, are high-power, very low-divergence laser systems that project bright, tightly focused beams into the night sky which, especially in the absence of fog or haze, can be seen up to 10 kilometres away. Sky laser beams are often a fluorescent yellow-green, which is the colour most visible to the human eye, and are commonly used to attract attention from far away. The previous incident was reported on June 27, police and airport officials said. The pilot of an IndiGo flight, also from Delhi and coming in to land in Surat late in the evening, saw the

Incentives, waivers part of Delhi’s plan to phase out old trucks and buses, curb pollution

With an aim to phase out old trucks and buses in the Capital to curb air pollution, the Delhi government has started the process to implement Centre’s ‘Naya Safar Yojana’ and promote vehicles compliant with stringent BS VI emission standards and electric trucks through tax concessions, registration fee waivers and other incentives, Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh said on Monday.

The ‘Naya Safar Yojana’ aims to address the issue of vehicular pollution in Delhi-NCR through a combination of financial incentives, tax concessions and scrappage-linked benefits. It targets owners of BS-IV (emission norms enforced across India from April 2017 to March 2020) vehicles and older trucks and buses, encouraging voluntary fleet modernisation while strengthening the region’s efforts towards cleaner and more sustainable transport. BS-VI norms officially went into effect nationwide on April 1, 2020, to significantly reduce vehicular pollution. “By working in close coordination with the Centre, we are creating an enabling framework that encourages voluntary fleet modernisation while contributing to long-term economic growth and a greener future for Delhi and the entire NCR,” said the Minister.

What is offered under the scheme Under the scheme, the Delhi government will extend 100% Motor Vehicle Tax concession for eligible new vehicles, and 50% concession for eligible used vehicles for 10 years. It also offers discounts on registration fees, and waiver of pending road tax and fitness penalty liabilities for eligible vehicles. “These benefits will complement incentives being provided by the Central government, including interest subvention, fuel vouchers or one-time EV benefits, and discounts from participating vehicle manufacturers... It is expected to benefit nearly 2.07 lakh private truck and bus owners across Delhi-NCR, while promoting scientific scrapping of old commercial ve-

laser — reported at the time as a beam of brilliant green light — as the aircraft approached the runway. “It is not clear whether any individual is responsible, or whether the laser was from an event, party, or social gathering in an open plot. We have contacted all the open party plots in the Katargam area, and are investigating the details of the events that took place on June 27 and July 11, Katargam Police Inspector L R Gohil said. Surat International Airport is located on the Magdalla-Dumas Road, about 7 km from the famous black-sand Dumas beach in the southwestern part of the city, close to where the Tapi river falls into the sea. Katargam is a residential and commercial neighbourhood bound by the Tapi on three sides, and is home to several diamond cutting and polishing units. The new airport terminal was inaugurated in 2009, and serves the 6 million people of Surat city, as well as large parts of South Gujarat, with an estimated population of 12 million.

Air India Express officials in Surat were not available for a comment on Saturday evening’s incident. Sky lasers are large, fixed-installation beam systems that are used for visual signalling over long distances; they are not the same as handheld laser pointers that are easily available on the Internet and in shops for about Rs 1,000. However some handheld pointers — which are typically used in presentations — too can reach up to 5 km away. Sky lasers can be a serious hazard to aviation. A laser beam striking the flight deck of a low-flying passenger aircraft can cause temporary flash-blindness for the pilot, which can be dangerous during critical flight phases such as takeoff and landing. A laser beam that is narrow at the source can, due to atmospheric scattering and beam divergence, light up a much larger area thousands of feet up in the air. Aiming any laser at an aircraft is illegal in most countries. In the United States, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations provide for fines and imprisonment for violators. The Air Navigation Order in the United Kingdom and the Aviation Safety Rules of the European Union impose similar restrictions. The National Aviation Safety Plan 2024-28 of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) says: “Laser interference during critical phases of flight poses a significant hazard and can jeopardize the safety of the aircraft. It can cause distractions, temporary blindness, and startling effects for the pilot. A total of 144 cases of laser interferences were reported in India for the year 2023 during landing and take-off in India.”



hicles through Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities,” the Minister underlined. He said that special provisions have also been made for Delhi, under which light goods vehicles purchased through the scheme must be electric vehicles, while buses must be BS-VI compliant, CNG or electric vehicles.

The total outlay of the scheme is Rs 9,585 crore, with the Central government contributing Rs 5,041 crore through National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The scheme will be implemented through a fully digital Naya Safar Portal, enabling real-time eligibility verification, automated benefit disbursement and end-to-end monitoring. It will remain open for eligible beneficiaries for a period of two years, said the Minister. The Delhi Transport department will issue the necessary notifications and formulate the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in coordination with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and other agencies concerned to ensure smooth implementation of the scheme across the Capital, the Minister added.

Villagers chase away Bidadi township survey officials with stones and brooms



A protest against the Greater Bengaluru Integrated Township project turned violent on Monday when residents of Mandalahalli village in Bengaluru South district attacked government officials over a land acquisition survey. Around 7,400 acres of land are to be acquired in nine villages for the project, popularly known as the Bidadi township project.

Though the protesters blocked the main road leading to the village, officials from the Joint Measurement Committee (JMC) reportedly used alternative roads to reach the site. As word spread, several women from the village hit the streets with brooms. They gathered at the survey spot, resulting in an altercation. As more people started arriving there, the officials had to leave fast, even as their vehicles were pelted with stones. Videos also showed women hitting survey officials with brooms. Another video showed residents chasing away an official. In yet another video, a villager is heard telling a JMC member that none of their objections against the land acquisition process was being considered. “Wait till we have a discussion with the government and arrive at a decision,” the villager said, asking officials not to intimidate the villagers.

The Opposition JD(S) posted a video of the incident online, condemning the decision to carry out the survey allegedly without informing the villagers beforehand. “It is most

unfortunate that the government, having failed to understand the farmers’ sentiments, is now attempting to implement this project by any means. I demand that the government immediately release the farmers it has already taken into custody and abandon the Bidadi Township project,” JD(S) youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy said in a post on X. Considered a pet project of Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, the township project has attracted opposition since the preliminary notification for acquiring around 7,400 acres of land near Bidadi was issued last March.

Electors face problems in filling enumeration forms in Mancherial

Mancherial: Even as officials claimed that awareness had been created and elaborate arrangements had been made, electors are facing problems in filling enumeration forms as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Officials said that 6.61 lakh electors were eligible to fill the enumeration forms as part of the revision in the district. While Mancherial Assembly constituency accounted for 2.83 lakh voters, Chennai and Bellampalli Assembly constituencies had 1.97 lakh and 1.80 lakh electors respectively. Enumeration forms were distributed to eligible electors through booth level officers (BLOs), who were tasked with the exercise in the three constituencies. However, eligible migrant electors in urban areas claimed that they had not received the forms so far. They said they were forced to approach local BLOs to obtain the forms. They alleged that the forms had been dumped recklessly with the BLOs. They also said they were clueless about how to fill the forms once they received them.

Balcony collapses at Gurgaon condo, two schoolgirls escape falling debris



Two girls on their way to school had a narrow escape on Thursday morning after the balcony of a flat at a residential high-rise in Gurgaon collapsed and the debris fell just metres away from them. The incident occurred around 6.15 am at Imperia Esfera in Sector 37C. The balcony that collapsed was on the second floor of Tower E. The tower is partially occupied and still incomplete, residents said. Videos from the spot show chunks of concrete and plaster strewn across the ground near parked scooters and cars. Residents said the girls had just crossed the area when the balcony structure gave way. "The school kids escaped," Tower E resident Surinder Singh said. "This is a part of long-standing issues we've had with the builder, who only tend to provide band-aid solutions. Possession has been delayed despite most buyers having paid 90% of the cost, and there are still no amenities," he claimed. He said residents are in touch with the builder and the local estate manager for an im-

diate resolution. The developer of the society is Imperia Structures Limited. Its Chief Executive Officer Amrit Pal Singh told The Indian Express that the issue is being looked into.

"The balcony was already under repair by the company at the time of the incident; the flat was still in the company's possession and had not been handed over," Singh stated. "Due to exceptionally heavy rainfall, water ingress affected the already weakened repair area, resulting in the collapse. Fortunately, the incident occurred within an under-repair unit, and the matter is being addressed with due diligence," he said. Former Residents' Welfare Association president Rinky Singh said only 10-12 families lived in Tower E, which has 19 floors, since a lot of work is left. "The builder is yet to get an occupation certificate for at least two floors, and the EWS blocks are also pending," she said. A guard posted near the tower in question said there was a loud thud at the time of the incident, and pillars near the balcony too appear bent. In a similar incident on Monday morning, mounds of plaster had fallen off in the basement of Tower H at Adani Oyster high-rise in Sector 102 off the Dwarka Expressway. That incident had led to a Hyundai sedan being significantly damaged. While no injuries have been reported so far in either of the incidents, it has raised concerns among residents over construction quality of high-rise residential societies in Gurgaon. In February 2022, a portion of a sixth-floor apartment in Tower D of Chintels Paradiso collapsed to the first floor, killing two women and injuring a man. At least six towers of the 9 in the society in Sector 109 were later declared unsafe for habitation and slated for demolition.

Ravneet Singh Bittu inspects Jalandhar Cantt Railway Station ahead of PM Modi's July 17 visit



GNS News Agency, July 13 Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu visited Jalandhar Cantt Railway Station on Wednesday to review the final stages of the redevelopment project ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's likely visit to inaugurate the project on July 17. The PM is supposed to inaugurate the project during his proposed visit to Punjab, with the Indian Railways making final preparations for the event. The Union Minister of State for Railways, Bittu, told the media that Indian Railways is giving the finishing touches to the arrangements for the inauguration, which will be carried out by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The PM's proposed visit to Punjab is a matter of pride for the state, he said. During the inspection, he held a meeting with Railway Board officials to assess the progress of construction work. The station is being redeveloped at an estimated cost of Rs 125 crore under the Indian Railways; station modernisation programme. Bittu also talked about minor shortcomings in the ongoing work, and said it is natural for large-scale and historic infrastructure projects to have some initial deficiencies.

With officials saying the project has entered its final phase, Bittu also assured that all pending issues are being addressed and resolved in a timely manner. The redevelopment of Jalandhar Cantt Railway Station is part of Indian Railways' nationwide initiative to modernise around 1,500 railway stations that are over 100 years old by equipping

them with upgraded passenger amenities and modern infrastructure. Jalandhar Cantt, which is more than a century old, is among the key stations being transformed under this ambitious programme. While on Wednesday, Bittu refuted the recent allegations that the BJP or the central government was behind the OTT-takedown of the movie, calling them completely baseless, misleading and devoid of facts. He said government certification and regulatory provisions relating to films primarily apply to theatrical releases, while satellite television and cable broadcasts are governed under separate statutory and regulatory frameworks. Consequently, attributing the removal of Satluj from ZEE5 to the BJP or the Centre has no factual or legal basis, he said. Bittu also criticised actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh and the makers of Satluj. He alleged that the film's creators were attempting to create unrest in Punjab and asserted that no individual would be allowed to undermine the state's peace and harmony. The BJP leader said his concern is not about suppressing any film but ensuring that Punjab's history is presented in its entirety and not through a one-sided narrative. He has consistently maintained that any discussion on the years of militancy must acknowledge allegations against the state, and the immense suffering inflicted by terrorism on thousands of innocent civilians, police personnel, public servants, elected representatives and ordinary families. Bittu also accused the actor of sending contradictory messages, claiming that while he publicly distances himself from pro-Khalistan elements at his concerts, he simultaneously lends support to what the minister described as a narrative linked to extremism. Bittu also referred to the late human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira, alleging that Khaira was detained by the police in the aftermath of the assassination of his grandfather, former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh. He also said the government led by Beant Singh inherited a Punjab devastated by years of terrorism, with its foremost responsibility being the restoration of peace, law and order, and democratic governance. The return of normalcy, revival of democratic institutions and restoration of public confidence remain an integral part of that historical period and deserve equal recognition.

AI no less than colonisation, it's driven by Western minds, ideas: Humans in the Loop director

Aranya Sahay on Wednesday said that his debut feature film, *Humans in the Loop*, was inspired by the reality of technology entering lives. Addressing how its core idea came from studying sociology and history and observing the realities of Adivasi communities in Jharkhand, Aranya Sahay on Wednesday said that his debut feature film, *Humans in the Loop*, was inspired by the reality of technology entering lives.

Sahay also believes that the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) today is deeply linked to history. During an exclusive interaction with The Indian Express, Sahay said, “AI is no less than colonisation.” He added, “It (AI) is meant for everyone, but it is driven by Western minds and Western ideas.” The film, which recently transitioned from independent grassroots screenings to a global release on Netflix, explores AI and bias through the story of an Indigenous Adivasi woman. It was released internationally and became eligible for consideration at the 2026 Academy Awards for Best Original Screenplay. Sahay, who comes from a sociology and politics background, sees himself first as a writer and storyteller.

Speaking about his entry into cinema, Sahay noted that it was completely unplanned. Raised in a home where education and the arts were highly respected, his father encouraged him to pursue cinema. He realised filmmaking was the perfect space to combine his love for music, writing and visual art. Making the film, however, came with several challenges. Sahay shared details of the “micro-budget production”, which faced financial shortages, location permission issues and crew scouting hurdles. With only three trained actors, the rest of the cast comprised local residents in Jharkhand and the entire shoot was completed in a tight 12-day window.

The hardest part came after production, said Sahay. Recalling the journey to land a global streaming partner, Sahay laughed. "Thoda nahi, kaafi mushkil tha," he said, noting how tough it was to get a "starless indie film" on board a platform such as Netflix. Instead of waiting for traditional distributors, the team built a movement. They travelled the country holding nearly 100 grassroots screenings. They built a support network of more than 7,000 people, including journalists and critics. According to the film's official profile, this momentum eventually caught the attention of filmmaker Kiran Rao, who came on board as executive producer, helping the film secure a global release.

Asked if he expected this journey to end up on the Oscars campaign trail, Sahay sought to clarify a common misconception. "We became eligible for the Oscars. There



Sahay also believes that the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) today is deeply linked to history. During an exclusive interaction with The Indian Express, Sahay said, "AI is no less than colonisation." He added, "It (AI) is meant for everyone, but it is driven by Western minds and Western ideas."

is a difference,”

he said, explaining that the film was under consideration rather than being a final nominee. Apart from filmmaking, Sahay is focused on promoting other independent creators. He announced plans to launch a creative fellowship for marginalised filmmakers, specifically in Jharkhand. The initiative will give five filmmakers financial support alongside access to professional post-production facilities such as editing, colour grading, and sound design.

Sahay has a word of advice for young and emerging filmmakers, underlining that a good story alone is not enough to succeed. He stressed that a catchy logline, proper synopsis, clean paperwork and global networking are essential. He urged creators to look far beyond regional cinema. "If I'm making a film, I'm competing with (Hollywood filmmaker) Christopher Nolan," Sahay stated, pushing filmmakers to tell global stories. He noted that Indian cinema is finally starting to think on a larger scale, pointing to ambitious projects such as S S Rajamouli's forthcoming film 'Varanasi' as a sign of progress. Sahay advised young creators to trust their instincts when dealing with criticism. He explained that building a good crew happens through a chain reaction, where meeting one person, like a costume designer, naturally links you to an art director and the rest of the team. For him, filmmaking is about "pushing past rejections and making connections so that unheard stories can finally find their place on the global map."

96 'mule accounts' in one Delhi bank branch: Inside a cybercrime trail



During Delhi Police's Cyber Hawk operation in April, investigators identified 96 suspected mule accounts linked to a single private bank branch in Northeast Delhi, making it one of the biggest concentrations of suspected money-laundering accounts uncovered during the city's crackdown on organised cybercrime. Every cyber fraud needs somewhere for the money to go. Before it reaches overseas operators or cryptocurrency wallets, it usually passes through several "mule accounts" belonging to ordinary people who have either rented out their accounts for a commission or surrendered control of them without understanding how they would be used. This Northeast Delhi branch became one such concentration point. And one of those 96 accounts belonged to a 30-year-old unemployed resident of northeast Delhi. A 'chance meeting' at GTB Hospital In March, while visiting his uncle, undergoing treatment for tuberculosis at GTB Hospital, the 30-year-old was approached by a stranger in his 40s who introduced himself as 'Shiva'. Claiming that his mother was ill and that he urgently needed cash, but could not withdraw money from his own account, the man requested help. Trusting him, the 30-year-old allowed around Rs 30,000 to be transferred into his account. He withdrew Rs 25,000 from a nearby ATM — the maximum withdrawal limit — handed it over to the stranger, and added another Rs 5,000 from his own pocket. Two days later, Shiva contacted him again, saying another Rs 24,000 had been transferred to his account "by mistake". The man initially refused to return it if such transfers continued, but later met Shiva again at GTB Hospital and handed over the money.

Weeks later, his bank account was frozen and he was detained after police said he was linked to two cyber fraud complaints from outside Delhi involving Rs 30,000 and Rs 24,000 — the same amounts that had passed through his account. Police said the man later admitted he had accepted Rs 2,500 as commission for allowing the transactions, although he maintained he did not know the money was linked to cyber fraud.

After completing legal formalities, he was bound down and released. The man lives in Northeast Delhi with his wife and their two-and-a-half-year-old son. He studied up to Class X and earlier sold mobile phone chargers in Chandni Chowk until the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted his livelihood. He later drove a battery-operated rickshaw and has now been surviving on occasional daily-wage work. Investigators said his experience matches a pattern they have repeatedly seen. Police said cyber financial fraud typically operates in two parts — one that cheats victims and another that manages and launders the stolen money. A key role is played by facilitators — several of them are unemployed — recruited through platforms such as Telegram, Signal and

Himachal HC drops suo motu proceedings initiated against hotelier Nishant Sharma's representation



The Himachal Pradesh High Court on Wednesday disposed of the proceedings initiated on the basis of a 2023-representation filed by a hotelier, granting him liberty to issue notice and raise objections before the competent Magistrate against a police cancellation report. The court also allowed former Director General of Police (DGP) Sanjay Kundu to challenge the cancellation report filed in the cross-case and pursue remedies available under law.

The court granted liberty to the complainant, Palampur-based hotelier Nishant Sharma, to contest the cancellation report submitted in his complaint after receiving notice from the Magistrate. It also clarified that the ex-DGP Sanjay Kundu was free to file objections against the cancellation report in the FIR registered on his complaint or institute a complaint under the relevant provisions of law, if so advised.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Gurumtee Singh Sandhawalia and Justice Bipin Chander Negi held that no further orders were required in the matter. The bench observed that the dispute had now reached a stage where it was for the jurisdictional Magistrate to examine the cancellation reports filed by the investigating agencies and decide whether to accept them, order further investigation or take cognisance in accordance with law. "Resultantly, we do not wish to further comment upon the matter and leave the parties to agitate their rights before the court of competent jurisdiction, namely the Magistrate," the Bench observed while disposing of the proceedings. The bench said, "Keeping in view of the above, we are of the considered opinion that no further orders are required in the matter which was initiated on the representation filed by the complainant and the proceedings are necessarily to be dropped herein with liberty to give notice to complainant – Nishant Sharma. Sanjay Kundu is also free to file objections against the cancellation and it is open to him to file a complaint as such under the relevant provisions of law... The proceedings are disposed of accordingly with the aforesaid liberty." The proceedings stemmed from an email and representation dated October 28, 2023, addressed by Nishant Sharma to the then Chief Justice of the High Court, alleging intimidation by the then DGP and seeking judicial intervention. Taking serious note of the allegations, a Coordinate Bench had sought a status report on November 10, 2023, as the complaint alleged that the state's highest-ranking police officer had attempted to intimidate the complainant.

On November 5 in 2023, the then DGP, Sanjay Kundu, had lodged an FIR against the businessman Nishant Sharma with the district police Shimla for the alleged act of forgery, false charge and defamation. Shimla police filed a cancellation report in this case before a Shimla court on

Instagram. Police said they provide bank accounts to cyber criminals and help launder the proceeds through hawala channels: The money is withdrawn from the banking system, handed over to hawala operators in cash, and ultimately settled through cryptocurrency transactions, particularly using USDT.

To set up 'mule accounts', facilitators identify unemployed youth, daily wage labourers and financially distressed individuals in their localities and persuade them to let their bank accounts be used. Some account holders knowingly rent out their accounts for a commission of 2-3% of the money routed through them. They hand over their SIM cards, banking credentials and account access altogether in exchange for a fixed monthly payment, allowing the accounts to be operated remotely. Others are falsely told the transactions relate to online gaming or investment activities. In this case, police said the facilitator, 'Shiva', allegedly paid the 30-year-old Rs 2,500 for allowing Rs 54,000 of suspected fraud proceeds to pass through his account. Meanwhile, a probe was launched into the bank's activities.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northeast) Rahul Alwal constituted a special team led by Inspector Rahul Kumar of the Cyber Police Station and Inspector Vijay Kumar to investigate the network under Cyber Hawk. Using complaint data from the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP), transaction analysis and other digital intelligence, investigators identified 96 suspected mule accounts linked to the private bank branch. They also found two complaints from outside Delhi linked to the 30-year-old's account and discovered that the digital credentials used to access it originated from Tamil Nadu. Teams sent there found linked bank accounts that had allegedly been opened using fake Aadhaar cards. Investigators also found several accounts opened using fake addresses and forged documents. A case has been registered under Sections 112(2) and 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Why did one branch have so many mule accounts?

The concentration of suspected mule accounts in a single branch raised immediate questions for investigators. Police said bank officials claimed the branch was authorised to open accounts online, a facility available at select branches nationwide, allowing customers to open accounts remotely without visiting the branch. Investigators then looked at whether insiders had knowingly facilitated account openings, whether the online onboarding process had weakened customer verification, or whether fake Know Your Customer (KYC) documents had bypassed checks. However, no evidence has yet emerged establishing the involvement of any bank official, police said, adding that the investigation is ongoing. Delhi Police has now written to the bank, recommending changes in its online account-opening process and seeking mandatory physical verification of customers. The trail doesn't end with 'Shiva'. Police have so far been unable to identify or locate the man who introduced himself as 'Shiva'. "We tried to identify the person who transferred the money to the 30-year-old, but the mobile number used had been obtained using fake documents. Our team is still working to trace the chain. He identified himself as 'Shiva', though that name could also be fake," the officer said. The only clue they have? The 30-year-old told police that Shiva's accent sounded South Indian.

March 26, 2025. The businessman, Nishant Sharma, lodged an FIR alleging he was attacked by unknown assailants in Mleodganj on November 16, 2023. An investigation team moved a cancellation report in this case before a Dharamshala court in September, 2025. The controversy itself had its roots in an earlier incident on August 25, 2023, when armed assailants allegedly fired outside Sharma's parents' residence in Gurgaon. Later, the Gurgaon police had also filed a cancellation report in the matter. The HC noted that the investigating agency had reached a "logical conclusion" after examining the available material.

The bench also observed that the investigation indicated the alleged incident appeared to be “an afterthought or dilatory tactic” arising out of business disputes between the parties, and found no infirmity in the justification recorded by the investigating agency while recommending cancellation. In respect of the FIR lodged by the former DGP, the HC noted that the complaint primarily was related to emails, which were allegedly circulated by Sharma against Kundu. However, the investigating agency concluded that Sharma had neither interfered with Kundu’s official functions nor obstructed him in the discharge of his professional duties. It found that, at best, the allegations disclosed offences relating to criminal defamation under IPC Sections 499 and 500, for which prosecution can only be initiated through a private complaint before a Magistrate and not through police investigation. The Bench accepted that the investigating agency had not acted with any ulterior motive, and that the investigations in both cases had been conducted fairly without leaving any significant loose ends.

Hyderabad police chief meets Ganesh Utsav organisers, stresses idol transport safety

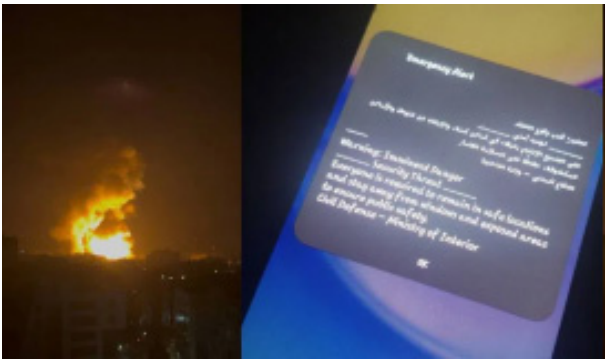
Hyderabad: City Police Commissioner, VC Sajjanar on Wednesday held a meeting with the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Committee organisers and urged them to ensure that idols are kept within safe height limits to prevent electrocution and other accidents during transportation and immersion processions.

Addressing a meeting with representatives of the Samithi members, the Commissioner stressed that safety measures should begin at the idol manufacturing stage rather than after the idols are completed.

Recalling previous incidents, Sajjanar said two persons had lost their lives due to electrocution in the Bandlaguda police station limits when an oversized Ganesh idol came into contact with overhead power lines. He also cited another incident in which a Ganesh idol got stuck beneath the Panjagutta flyover because of its excessive height.

Explaining the rationale behind the height restriction, the Commissioner said overhead power lines in most city roads are generally around 22 feet above the ground, while the trolleys used for transporting idols are about four feet high. To maintain a safe clearance, he advised organisers to limit the height of Ganesh idols to 15 feet.

Gulf states sound missile alerts after US strikes on Iran



GNS News Agency, July 13

Dubai: Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar sounded missile alert sirens early Thursday morning warning of an Iranian attack after the United States launched a new round of airstrikes targeting Iran. There was no immediate word of damage in the three Gulf Arab countries. Kuwait's military said it was actively intercepting incoming drones and missiles. On Wednesday, Iran launched attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait over an earlier round of U.S. airstrikes against Iran. The latest US strikes began Wednesday, hours after President Donald Trump said that recent Iranian attacks on ships in the Strait of Hormuz signalled the end of the fragile ceasefire. The action raised fears that the war in Iran could reignite, coming just a day after the US military hit a variety of military sites and port facilities following Iran's targeting of several merchant vessels off the coast of Oman. Military officials said in a social media post Wednesday that the latest strikes were intended to "further degrade" Iran's ability "to threaten freedom of navigation" in the strait, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and natural gas passed before the war began with US and Israeli attacks on Feb 28. Iranian state media reported explosions in several locations, including Bushehr, home to Iran's nuclear power plant complex, and the southern port cities of Chabahar, Konarak, Bandar Abbas and Sirik. Trump warns that it will get 'much worse' if attacks on shipping happen again

After leaving a NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey, Trump posted several videos on his social media site of what he said were explosions in Iran and issued another warning to the Islamic Republic. "This is in retribution for yesterday's bombing of ships by Iran. If it happens again, it will get much worse!" Trump wrote. Trump had said earlier in the day that the latest back-and-forth fighting would not result in "long-term" military action. "Anything that happens is going to happen very fast," Trump said, though he also suggested the US military might "just finish the job." Trump also renewed his past threats to hit Iran's civilian infrastructure, including electric plants and desalinisation plants, and to seize the oil-production hub of Kharg Island. After three tankers were hit Tuesday, the US launched strikes on Iran, and Iranian forces retaliated by attacking American military

US launches major H-1B visa fraud investigation; official names Indian IT firm



Washington: The US on Wednesday launched an investigation into alleged fraud in the H-1B and PERM work visas by several companies, with a federal labour official saying that Indian IT firm Cognizant is among the companies under scrutiny. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) under the Department of Labour has uncovered widespread schemes in which employers and labour brokers submitted fraudulent applications, exploited foreign work-

China tech firms reduce workforce by 1.3 lakh amid AI transition

New Delhi: China's major technology companies have trimmed nearly 1.3 lakh jobs over the past year as rapid adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) and corporate restructuring reshape the sector, with a new report criticising the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) for remaining silent over the large-scale workforce disruption. The report from Sri Lanka-based Daily Mirror said Alibaba, Tencent, ByteDance, Meituan and Baidu have announced tens of thousands of job cuts with some divisions — notably travel, content and e-commerce support — reporting cuts of 30 per cent to 50 per cent. Over the past 18 months, the five major internet companies collectively have laid off more than 1.3 lakh staff, the report said. Alibaba's headcount fell from about 194,000 to 128,000, a decline of around 34 per cent, while Baidu cut nearly 10,000 employees; and JD.com is planning about 12,000 job cuts, the report added.

"What makes this round of layoffs particularly unsettling is that it is happening even as profits grow. In the past, companies cut staff to survive; now they cut staff to optimise," the report said. Companies announced the cuts as part of a shift to AI-driven products and services. "Beijing's 'AI Plus Action Plan' aims for 70 per cent AI penetration in key industries by 2027 and 90 per cent by 2030. Tools like Alibaba's Wukong platform promise to automate entire departments, offering 'one-person company' capabilities for e-commerce, live streaming, and software development," the report said.

Experts estimated that roughly 70 million jobs or 9.6 per cent of China's workforce are at high risk of being replaced by AI, with younger workers facing higher risk. A "35-year ceiling" for remaining employed has unofficially emerged, the report said, alleging that workers in their mid-30s, often married with mortgages and children, are being dismissed en masse. "Younger workers are no safer. A 26-year-old ByteDance employee, laid off after six years in content operations, admitted that while the company's name once carried prestige, the reality was relentless overtime

sites in the Persian Gulf. Iran has asserted that the interim ceasefire deal gives it the right to manage traffic through the strait. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, a key negotiator in talks seeking a permanent end to the war, was defiant in a post on X: "The era of bullying and extortion is over. It leads nowhere. We don't fold."

Trump fuelled concerns that the war could restart by saying the interim agreement to pause fighting was "over," although he added that he would allow negotiations to continue. Attacks have repeatedly threatened the shaky ceasefire, but Trump's comments added new uncertainty, and oil prices shot up after he spoke. A renewed conflict could engulf the wider Middle East and would likely again halt energy shipments through the strait. "For me, I think it's over," Trump said when asked about the status of the ceasefire. He added that U.S. representatives can continue negotiations, but he cast doubt on the outcome. "They can talk, but I think they're wasting their time," he said. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, also a top negotiator, retorted on X that Trump's remarks "are not a sign of power but an admission of the failure" of US policy toward Iran. Trump has threatened to seize Kharg Island at previous points in the war, including last month, when he also questioned whether the US "has the stomach for it." Some 90 per cent of Iranian oil exports pass through the island. The new attacks on ships in the strait, despite the negotiations, could reflect a divide among Iran's leadership. Hard-liners seek lasting control over the waterway, which is a globally important conduit for fuel shipments and has become a critical lever in confronting the West. Pragmatists want a permanent peace deal to lift international sanctions and provide desperately needed economic relief. Negotiations to reach a final deal had been due to start after the dayslong funeral for Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed Feb 28 in the war's first moments. The funeral, which ends Thursday, was supposed to be a period of lower tensions. The talks are meant to focus on the toughest matters, including fully reopening the strait and rolling back Tehran's disputed nuclear programme.

On Tuesday, the US military's Central Command said American forces hit Iranian targets including air-defence systems, radars and over 60 small boats used by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. Those boats have been key to threatening ships in the strait. Iran's ability to bring shipping in the waterway to a near halt during the war proved its greatest strategic advantage. On Wednesday morning, both Bahrain, home to the US Navy's 5th Fleet, and Kuwait, home to US Army forces, sounded missile alerts. The Revolutionary Guard issued a statement acknowledging targeting US military installations in both countries. Kuwait said it intercepted two ballistic missiles and 13 drones launched by Iran. The Kuwaiti Electricity Ministry said a number of lines were out of service after shrapnel fell on them.

ers through coercive wage-kickback arrangements, and undercut American workers by flooding the market with below-wage labour, an official statement said. "We've already started to issue dozens of subpoenas; we are going to make sure that we track down every lead. We have whistleblowers talking about some of the biggest companies like Cognizant, who have been sort of, you know, in the chatter of issues with PERM and H-1B visas," Labour Department Inspector General Anthony D'Esposito told Fox Business on Wednesday.

The action has been taken under the Task Force to Eliminate Fraud led by Vice President J D Vance. "These abuses undermine the integrity of Department of Labour programs designed to address genuine labour shortages — not to line the pockets of bad actors at the expense of American jobs," the statement said. This investigation reflects the OIG's unwavering commitment to dismantling human trafficking and forced-labour networks that exploit the foreign guest worker visa system, the statement added. The OIG is determined to root out every scheme that preys on vulnerable workers and takes jobs from American workers, it said.

China's leading technology firms have reportedly cut around 1.3 lakh jobs amid AI adoption and restructuring. Companies including Alibaba, Tencent and ByteDance are reducing staff while shifting toward automation. A report criticised the Chinese government for not addressing workforce disruption or retraining needs

and crushing competition. Now, even the resume boost of a big-tech brand offers little protection," the report noted. The media house said that the government refrains from implementing policies to protect workers or retrain employee and instead lauds automation as a symbol of progress.

US military carries out fresh strikes on Iran, prompting Iran attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain



ANKARA/DUBAI, The U.S. military said on Wednesday it launched fresh strikes on Iran to keep the Strait of Hormuz open to shipping, triggering Iranian attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain in the latest escalation to derail efforts to end the war. The latest round of attacks, which the U.S. said was carried out in response to Tuesday's assault on three cargo ships transiting the strait, came hours after President Donald Trump said he believed an interim ceasefire with Iran to be "over." The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. "U.S. Central Command forces have started conducting additional strikes against Iran to further degrade their ability to threaten freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz," CENTCOM, the U.S. military's Middle East command, wrote on X. "The United States is holding Iran accountable for recent unjustified aggression against commercial shipping and civilian crews freely navigating a vital international waterway." The U.S. strikes rattled several cities along Iran's southern coast and left some areas without power. Iran responded with a second day of attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain, both home to U.S. military bases. Kuwait's Defense Ministry said it was intercepting missiles and drones, while Qatar briefly issued an "elevated security threat" alert before later giving the all-clear.

The U.S. strikes against Iran on Wednesday will be greater in number than the ones carried out on Tuesday, a U.S. official told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity. "This is in retribution for yesterday's bombing of ships by Iran. If it happens again, it will get much worse!" Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. Control of the strait, through which a fifth of global oil supplies passed before the war, has given Tehran immense leverage, effectively allowing it to force a stalemate with the world's most powerful military. While Iran has not claimed responsibility for the ship attacks, analysts say Tehran uses such actions to gain leverage in negotiations. "The U.S. has yet to learn that bullying and breaking its commitments no longer come without a cost. Let me be clear: If you strike, you will be struck back," Iran's top negotiator, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, wrote on X.

"The Strait of Hormuz will be reopened only under Iranian arrangements, not through U.S. threats." The latest exchange of strikes appeared to dim hopes of turning a memorandum of understanding signed on June 17 into a permanent deal to end the war, which began with U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran on February 28. Item 1 of 5 People ride past a mural depicting the late leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the late Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on a street in Tehran, Iran, June 3, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via REUTERS/File Photo

People ride past a mural depicting the late leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the late Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on a street in Tehran, Iran, June 3, 2026. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West

Trump wants to leave the Iran war behind. That won't happen soon

WASHINGTON, July 8 (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump's struggle to extricate himself from the unpopular Iran war has hit a new roadblock with the latest exchange of attacks between the two sides, leaving him with few good options and a faltering ceasefire. Trump declared that an interim agreement to end the conflict was "over" and ordered fresh strikes on Wednesday after Iran targeted U.S. military sites in Bahrain and Kuwait following the U.S. bombing of Iranian targets in response to attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. More than three weeks after the signing of a "memorandum of understanding" to begin a truce between the U.S. and Iran, the flare-up has highlighted the difficulties Trump faces in forging a comprehensive peace deal and a face-saving exit from the war. Any heavy escalation beyond tit-for-tat strikes could risk a return to full-fledged war, even though Trump insisted on Wednesday that the latest events would end "very quickly" as global oil prices spiked around 7%.

However, backing down in the face of Iranian defiance could add to Tehran's sense that it can assert leverage over the world's most important oil-shipping channel, anytime it sees fit. Trump may be hoping he can bomb Iran back to the negotiating table for talks about the fate of its nuclear program, which he set as his main war objective, but most experts see little sign that Tehran will make the kind of deep concessions he is seeking. "Trump has put himself in a box," said Aaron David Miller, a former Middle East negotiator for Democratic and Republican administrations. "Whether through military or diplomatic means, he doesn't look likely to gain much from Iran." The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. TRUMP UNDER PRESSURE Trump's pursuit of an exit plan has come as he faces pressure to permanently end a war that has killed thousands, inflicted economic pain at home and driven down his approval ratings just months ahead of November's U.S. midterm elections. A June 23 Reuters/Ipsos poll showed Trump's approval rating falling to 34%, returning to the lowest level of his second term and dimming his Republican Party's chances of retaining control of Congress.

The latest attacks, which overshadowed a NATO summit that Trump attended this week in Turkey, dented hopes of turning the memorandum signed on June 17 into a final peace deal to end the war, which began with U.S.-Israeli airstrikes on February 28. Most analysts are skeptical the two sides can craft a comprehensive settlement within the 60-day negotiating window laid out in the document. It kicked the hardest issues down the road to on-again-off-again discussions that have made little if any progress, and the next round of talks remains uncertain. Iran, which has suffered heavy damage to its economy and military capabilities, also faces mounting pressure after Washington revoked a waiver allowing Tehran to sell oil internationally, undoing one of its

Asia News Agency) via REUTERS/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab Asked before a NATO summit in Turkey on Wednesday whether the memorandum of understanding was over, Trump said: "It's a very interesting question. To me, I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them." "If we make a deal with Iran I'm not sure that will stick," Trump later said. "I found them to be very dishonourable people." But Trump, who has repeatedly threatened to escalate military action before backing off, said he did not expect a return to full-fledged war, and that it was not clear whether the negotiations on reaching a permanent deal would continue. Also on Wednesday, Trump said he did not think the war would restart: "Anything that happens is going to be over very quickly ... and will only make it safer, including for oil." Wednesday's attacks pushed oil prices higher, with Brent crude futures rising about 1% to \$78.80 a barrel by 0054 GMT. Even so, prices remained well below the late-April peak of more than \$120 a barrel.

MAJOR IRAN PORT CITY HIT BY STRIKES Iranian media reported strikes primarily along Iran's southern coast, from the Strait of Hormuz to the Gulf of Oman. Among the locations hit were Bandar Abbas, home to Iran's largest port and key navy and Revolutionary Guards facilities on the Strait of Hormuz, as well as Konarak and Chabahar, neighbouring coastal cities near Iran's border with Pakistan. Electricity had been restored to most areas of Chabahar after strikes knocked out power for some in the city. Mehr news agency reported, citing the local utility. Media also reported that a maritime traffic control tower in Chabahar was hit. A firefighter was killed in a strike on the airport in the southeastern city of Iranshahr, state media reported. In northern Iran, a U.S. attack hit a railway bridge near the town of Aqqala, according to Press TV. Prior to the fresh U.S. attacks on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei had said U.S. strikes had violated the memorandum by challenging a clause that "emphasizes the Islamic Republic of Iran's responsibility in determining arrangements for the safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz". A spokesperson for parliament's National Security Commission had said options for retaliation included withdrawing from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), changing Iran's nuclear doctrine, and closing the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait at the mouth of the Red Sea, another crucial global shipping route. In a letter to the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, Iran's mission to the U.N. accused the United States of "blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and its international obligations" and said its attacks violated the memorandum of understanding signed by the two countries. Reporting by Reuters team in Tehran and Reuters bureaux; Writing by Stephen Coates and Timothy Heritage; Editing by Alex Richardson, Sanjeev Miglani, Stephen Coates and Michael Perry Humeyra Pamuk is a senior foreign policy correspondent based in Washington DC. She covers the U.S. State Department, regularly traveling with U.S. Secretary of State. During her 20 years with Reuters, she has had postings in London, Dubai, Cairo and Turkey, covering everything from the Arab Spring and Syria's civil war to numerous Turkish elections and the Kurdish insurgency in the southeast. In 2017, she won the Knight-Bagehot fellowship program at Columbia University's School of Journalism. She holds a BA in International Relations and an MA on European Union studies. Gram Slattery is a White House correspondent in Washington, focusing on national security, intelligence and foreign affairs. His work covers how key U.S. foreign policy decisions are debated, shaped and executed. He was previously a national political correspondent, covering the 2024 presidential campaign. From 2015 to 2022, he held postings in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Santiago, Chile, and he has reported extensively throughout Latin America.



biggest gains under the interim agreement. Even so, its headline rulers appear willing to withstand further blows and some analysts suggested this week's strikes by both sides may have been aimed at staking out positions for future negotiations. Jonathan Panikoff, a former deputy U.S. national intelligence officer for the Middle East, said this pattern was likely to continue for the foreseeable future. "The situation is not going to revert to full-scale war," said Panikoff, now at the Atlantic Council think-tank in Washington. "But the default setting is now managed instability - recurring violence with no permanent off-ramp." Trump, who campaigned for a second term on promises to avoid foreign interventions and focus on Americans' economic concerns, has framed the interim agreement as a resounding U.S. victory - even as Iran has made similar claims. Still, most analysts agree that Trump, who once demanded Iran's "unconditional surrender," has been stymied on many of his often-shifting goals for the war. STRAIT OF HORMUZ At the root of the latest outbreak of hostilities are differing interpretations of what the preliminary deal means for control of the strait, where Iran showed its ability during the war to choke off one-fifth of the world's oil shipments. Iran sees itself having a future role in managing the waterway, possibly even charging fees or tolls, while Trump and U.S. Gulf allies insist on a return to free and safe passage. "The Iranians have judged that Trump doesn't want to get sucked into an open-ended war, and the Gulf is desperate for normalcy," said Jon Alterman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington. "Their bet is that Trump will fight for a few days (and) the Gulf Arab states will push for him to stop." The looming U.S. midterms, and concerns that high gasoline prices driven by the war could turn voters against his Republican Party, are also widely seen as a pressure point for Trump. "Haunted by former U.S. President Hoover's failed economic stewardship, Trump knows he needs to focus on the economy," said Laura Blumenfeld, a Middle East expert at Johns Hopkins University, referring to Trump's assertion that by continuing the war he would risk becoming like the president who governed at the start of the Great Depression.

Surya Namaskar may help reverse key diabetes nerve disorder, says new study



New Hepatitis B drug may prevent cirrhosis, liver cancer with functional cure in 20% patients: Liver Doc explains breakthrough

Today's drugs (tenofovir, entecavir) are taken for life and rarely cure anyone — under 1% achieve a functional cure. Bepirovirsen, in 24 weeks, cured about 20% (25–28% in low-t antigen patients) versus zero on placebo. That's a big jump. As for safety, it's harder on the body than a daily pill. Side effects hit 91% versus 73% on placebo; serious ones 7% versus 4%; severe ones 16% versus 3%, mostly liver-enzyme flares in about 6%, and 3% stopped because of them. Liver, kidney and platelet changes need close

Surya Namaskar is not a substitute for medicines, glucose monitoring, nutrition therapy or regular medical follow-up. Rather, it may serve as a complementary lifestyle intervention when practised under appropriate supervision. Larger randomised and long-term studies are needed to determine whether the observed improvements can be sustained and translated into better cardiovascular outcomes. The future of diabetes care lies not in choosing between modern medicine and traditional wisdom, but in integrating evidence-based elements of both. Consult your treating doctor before starting Surya Namaskar, especially if you have diabetes complications, heart disease, joint problems, dizziness, eye disease or high blood pressure. Practise only under a qualified yoga trainer or trained physical instructor, at least in the beginning. Start slowly. Surya Namaskar should be modified according to age, weight, flexibility, balance and medical condition. Do not stop diabetes medicines unless advised by your doctor.

There are three problems. It suits only a small group — low-antigen, no cirrhosis, already diagnosed and treated with antivirals. The real gap is diagnosis, not cure. Of the 254 million people with hepatitis B, only about 13% are diagnosed and roughly 3% are on treatment. Most of the burden is in countries like India and China, where most people are never tested. A drug for already-treated patients can't reach them. No price yet but these drugs are expensive and it's expected to be a blockbuster, over \$2 billion in peak sales. Likely affordable in rich systems for the right patient, but probably out of reach for the poorer countries that carry most of the disease, which also often lack the injection-and-monitoring set-up. So, yes, a genuine breakthrough but not yet a fix for the global epidemic without affordable pricing and far better testing.

“We are working to retrieve data from the phone, which is expected to provide vital clues regarding the circumstances leading to the death. More details would be revealed once the forensic examination is completed and the deceased is identified,” said Tarun Joshi. He said bus tickets and cash was found with the Raj Kumar, and also one litre of pesticide bottle was lying near the body. “It would take some time to ascertain whether the deceased had travelled after the incident or was residing locally, as the investigation is still at a preliminary stage. A bottle was recovered from the scene.

‘First their grades fall... then their behaviour changes’: How screen addiction is impacting Delhi’s young adults



— A 12-year-old boy, once active in sports and school, began retreating into himself — skipping meals, ignoring friends — while spending nights glued to a glowing screen.— A nine-year-old, overwhelmed when his phone was taken away, picked up a kitchen knife and slashed his arm.— A 19-year-old boy, who spent over 12 hours a day gaming, developed a spinal deformity so severe that he lost control of his bladder and had to undergo complex corrective surgery. These real-life cases, shared by child psychologists and school heads, reflect just a fraction of a larger problem. In hospital wards and counselling rooms across Delhi, more children are presenting with issues that trace back to the same source — the screen. The Indian Express speaks to school heads, experts and children themselves on the gravity of the crisis and how it can be managed. According to Anjali Kharbanda, Principal, N K Bargodia Public School in Dwarka, it usually starts with slipping grades. “The children then withdraw from social spaces, there is a loss of interest in participating in school activities, and their behaviour changes.” However, the drop in grades, she explains, is rarely the problem — more often, it’s a symptom. Take the case of the 12-year-old whose struggles began long before his report card reflected them. He had stopped waking up for school, his appetite reduced, and he withdrew from friends and sports. Nights were spent in front of a screen. When his parents brought him to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, the diagnosis was clear: “emerging depressive features strongly linked to excessive screen use”. Treatment involved parental training, cognitive behavioural therapy “to address negative thought patterns”, a fixed digital curfew, and routines to restore sleep. “Gradually, with better sleep and reduced screen exposure, his mood and energy levels improved, as did his school engagement,” says Dr Bhavna Barmi, senior child psychologist at Fortis Escort Heart Institute. At the same clinic, parents of a 15-year-old girl, who was a class topper once, rushed to seek help. Their daughter was into “late-night video streaming and chatting” — until 3 or 4 am — but it soon disrupted her sleep cycle entirely. She became irritable, disengaged, and began experiencing auditory hallucinations. Doctors diagnosed her with chronic insomnia induced by prolonged screen exposure, which had altered melatonin production and impacted her cognitive and emotional regulation. She was prescribed behavioural sleep therapy, short-term pharmacological support, and sessions to address academic anxiety and social isolation. Other real-life instances highlight the severity of the problem and what could happen if it’s left unchecked — like in the case of this nine-year-old boy. He regularly spent three to four hours unsupervised on a phone, flew into uncontrollable rage when it was taken away. In a moment of distress, he found a kitchen knife and slashed his arm. His actions, doctors say, were classified as a form of behavioural addiction, mirroring withdrawal-like symptoms — “emotional dysregulation, impaired impulse control, and agitation”.

He was rushed to the emergency room at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and later referred to the child psychiatry department. Finally, gradual device weaning, therapy to build frustration tolerance, and counselling for his parents helped address the issue. In a similar case, a Class 4 child in Dwarka began throwing violent tantrums and using abusive language after being left unsupervised — his mother was often preoccupied with filming YouTube reels. The child, doctors say, had to be hospitalised and shifted to a new school. The most alarming case from this year involved a 19-year-old who had been addicted to mobile gaming for more than a year. He spent over 12 hours a day on his phone, playing games like Battlegrounds Mobile India. He became sedentary, socially withdrawn, and over time developed kypho-scoliosis, a spinal deformity, worsened by undiagnosed spinal tuberculosis. By the time he was brought to the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, he had lost bladder control and could barely walk. Doctors performed a complex spinal surgery involving navigation, decompression, and implant stabilisation. “They were able to reverse his bladder dysfunction and restore partial mobility within days,” says Dr Barmi. Research from around the world also points to similar issues with screen addiction among children. According to an international study published in June, in the medical Journal JAMA, researchers analysed screen use among 4,285 children from 10 years of age in the United States; they screened them for compulsive use

and distress when denied devices. The study found that by the age of 14, those with high addictive behaviour were two or three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts. It also found a direct link between “high and increasing addictive screen use trajectories” with “suicidal behaviours and ideation and worse mental health”.

“Banning phones makes no sense at all,” says Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal, DLF Foundation schools chairperson and former principal of Springdales School. “Many use it as a teaching and learning device. Before Covid, there were very stringent measures in place in schools. Phones were confiscated.” But she acknowledges the dangers. She recalls an incident from Springdales a few years ago, of a teenage girl being bullied. A mock parliament session was held at the school for her. “She stood up before her classmates and shared her story: she had been digitally bullied, her images morphed and circulated without consent.” “She had the strength to open up,” Wattal says. “That kind of honesty doesn’t happen overnight — it takes time, and trust. We have to build those ecosystems inside schools.” In February, the Delhi High Court, responding to a PIL, issued a set of directives for managing smartphone use in schools. It stopped short of imposing a ban, instead urging institutions to strike a balance between regulation and responsible access. Students, the court said, should not be barred from carrying smartphones, but schools must regulate their use — encouraging safe deposit systems at entry and prohibiting devices from disrupting classrooms, school discipline, or being used in common areas and vehicles. “Schools must educate students on responsible online behaviour, digital manners, and the ethical use of smartphones. Students must be counselled that high levels of screen-time and social media engagement can lead to anxiety, diminished attention spans and cyber-bullying,” the court stated. While smartphones could be permitted for safety and coordination, their use for entertainment or recreational purposes should be explicitly disallowed, the order further read. Following this, the Directorate of Education in April issued a circular to all government school heads, directing them to begin drafting institution-level smartphone usage policies. The circular acknowledged that no formal provision for managing smartphones existed in government schools. A vice-principal of a Delhi government school, who is drafting the policy in her school, says her staff agreed to allow only basic keypad phones — enough for emergencies. “There have been several cases of misuse,” the vice-principal adds. In 2022, twins Samaya and Samhara Chauhan, who study in Class XII at Pushp Vihar’s Amity International School, launched an anti-bullying initiative after seeing how mental health and cyberbullying are major concerns in their peer groups. “We realised the intensity of the issue and formed a team of four for an anti-bullying project,” says Samaya. In 2023, their initiative evolved into PLANY — a campaign focused on girl child education, AI in classrooms, and online safety. “From the data we collected, we found that maximum cyberbullying happens in international servers on Discord (a social platform),” they say. “Strangers befriend kids and share pictures, memes...” According to the twins, dedicated lockers for phones, structured time windows for digital use, and clear policies that promote equitable tech access without deepening the digital divide can help solve the crisis. Dr Nitin Verma, Director (Paediatrics) at Madhukar Rainbow Children’s Hospital in South Delhi, says he has seen a worrying rise in suicide attempt cases in recent years among school-going children — many of them directly linked to screen addiction issues. “We have seen at least three or four such cases in recent months,” he says. “The Covid pandemic made even younger children dependent on screens. Since classrooms have switched to a hybrid model, there are no concrete guidelines on what needs to be done.” What troubles him most is the lack of adult supervision. “In almost 60% of cases, the child is unsupervised. Most families are nuclear... grandparents are involved in very few cases,” he adds. He has also observed an alarming spike in obesity and emotional distress among children aged 8 to 16, both of which he links to prolonged screen exposure. “Screen usage is rampant. And when children as young as two years are exposed to screens — whether a television, tablet, or laptop — it significantly raises the risk of Autism Spectrum Disorder,” he adds. The entry of Artificial Intelligence (AI) hasn’t helped matters. “AI has impacted students, leading to more smartphone usage,” says Pavan Duggal, a leading cyber law expert. He cites cases of teens caught in hallucinated interactions and blurred digital boundaries — like a boy who recently asked ChatGPT how to manage his relationships. Online trends are also deepening the problem. “Young teens had been mindlessly sharing their photos for the Ghibli trend,” he says, referring to AI mimicking Japan’s famous Studio Ghibli style of animation. He also highlights a sharp rise in cyberbullying, trolling, stalking, and online harassment — though most cases, he says, go unreported. The silence is often rooted in stigma and fear. “Most people who seek help don’t want to officially report the incident. Some youngsters even run anonymous confession pages on social media, which can create serious issues,” Duggal says.

Drone swarming to smarter war rooms: Army’s AI roadmap for ops by 2026-27

Drone swarming to smarter war rooms: Army’s AI roadmap for ops by 2026-27 Task force to be set up under DGIS, to oversee implementation of niche tech. From coordinated drone missions (or drone swarming) and real-time battlefield monitoring to combat simulations for troop training, information warfare, and data-backed decision-making — the Indian Army is learnt to have drawn up a detailed roadmap identifying key areas where it plans to deploy Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Big Data Analytics by 2026–27. According to sources, one of the immediate priorities is to improve battlefield awareness using AI tools that can process large volumes of information quickly. These include text summarisers built on Large Language Models (LLMs) to scan and condense long reports, AI-powered chatbots, voice-to-text systems, facial recognition, and tools that can detect unusual patterns or threats. AI will also be used to analyse feeds from drones, satellites, aircraft and ground sensors, and fuse this data in real time to support faster, more informed decision-making. Although the use of AI has been discussed by the Army in the past, it is now being fast-tracked, in the wake of lessons learnt from Operation Sindoor — the Army’s cross-border operation in May targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. As part of this push, an AI task force under the Directorate General of Information Systems (DGIS), with representatives from other Army directorates, will soon be set up to oversee the implementation of niche technologies across the force. This will include areas such as training and capacity building, data



sharing, maintenance and support, integration, promoting research and development, and incorporating these technologies into procurement processes. Sources said the roadmap — which sets specific tactical, operational and strategic goals to be met by 2026–27 — includes deploying AI across a wide range of functions, including decision support systems that can generate counter-intelligence, enhance surveillance, manage logistics and supply chains, analyse Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) and social media, map adversary capabilities, and run wargaming simulations. These technologies will also be used for better positioning and targeting of equipment, predictive maintenance, and AI-based navigation in environments where GPS access is denied. Decision support systems will further assist in operational planning and threat detection.

To improve both crop and human nutrition, India needs a paradigm shift



Who would have imagined that India, which lived from “ship to mouth” with heavy dependence on food aid under the US PL-480 programme in the 1960s, would emerge as the world’s largest rice exporter? In 2024-25 (FY25), India exported 20.2 million tonnes (MT) of rice in a global market of 61 MT. The country also runs the world’s largest food distribution programme, the PM-Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY), which provides 5 kg of free rice or wheat per person per month to more than 800 million people. Yet, the Food Corporation of India holds about 57 MT of rice — the highest stock in 20 years and nearly four times the buffer norm of 13.54 million tonnes as of July 1, 2025.

Poverty, too, has receded significantly. The extreme poverty head count (those earning less than \$3/day at 2021 PPP) dropped from 27.1 per cent in 2011 to just 5.3 per cent in 2022. Notwithstanding these achievements, malnutrition amongst children remains a challenge. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS 5) (2019–21) reports that 35.5 per cent of children under five years of age are stunted, 32.1 per cent are underweight, and 19.3 per cent are wasted. Food security in India has evolved beyond merely ensuring caloric sufficiency; it must now encompass nutritional security as well.

One critical, and often overlooked, factor here is the health of soils. Soil micronutrient deficiencies not only impair agricultural productivity but also degrade the nutritional quality of crops. Crops grown on nutrient-deficient soils often mirror those deficiencies, leading to a silent but pervasive form of malnutrition in humans. Take zinc. Its deficiency in soils translates into low zinc content in cereals like wheat and rice, which in turn is linked to childhood stunting — a condition that affects the physical development, long-term cognitive health, as well as the professional life of a person. Let us now turn to the status of Indian soils. Of more than 8.8 million soil samples tested under the Soil Health Card Scheme in 2024, less than 5 per cent have high or sufficient nitrogen (N), only 40 per cent have sufficient phosphate (P), 32 per cent have sufficient potash (K) and just 20 per cent are sufficient in soil organic carbon (SOC) (see graph).

To improve both crop and human nutrition, India needs a paradigm shift

Importantly, SOC is a critical parameter defining the physical, chemical, and biological properties of soil — these govern its holding capacity and nutrient use efficiency. These

What is cognitive shuffling, and can it actually help you fall asleep? Sleep experts explain

EMS News Agency, June 17

Melbourne: If you’ve been on social media lately – perhaps scrolling in the middle of the night, when you know you shouldn’t but you just can’t sleep – you might have seen those videos promoting a get-to-sleep technique called “cognitive shuffling”. The idea, proponents say, is to engage your mind with random ideas and images via a special formula: focus on the first letter of the word (in this case, C) and list a bunch of words starting with that letter: cat, carrot, calendar and so on – visualise each word as you go along – when you feel ready, move onto the next letter (A) and repeat the process – continue with each letter of the original word (so, in this case, K and then E) until you feel ready to switch to a new word or until you drift off to sleep.

It’s popular on Instagram and TikTok, but does “cognitive shuffling” have any basis in science? Where did this idea come from? The cognitive shuffling technique was made famous by Canada-based researcher Luc P Beaudoin more than a decade ago, when he published a paper about how what he called “serial diverse imagining” could help with sleep.

One of Beaudoin’s hypothetical examples involved a woman thinking of the word “blanket”, then thinking bicycle (and imagining a bicycle), buying (imagining buying shoes), banana (visualising a banana tree) and so on. Soon, Beaudoin writes, she moves onto the letter L, thinking about her friend Larry, the word “like” (imagining her son hugging his dog). She soon transitions to the letter A, thinking of the word “Amsterdam”: and she might very vaguely imagine the large hand of a sailor gesturing for another order of fries in an Amsterdam pub while a rancid accordion plays in the background.

Sleep soon ensues. The goal, according to Beaudoin, is to think briefly about: a neutral or pleasant target and frequently [switch] to unrelated targets (normally every 5-15 seconds). Don’t try to relate one word with another or find a link between the words; resist the mind’s natural tendency toward sense-making. While the research into this technique is still in its infancy, the idea is grounded in science. That’s because we know from other research good sleepers tend to have different kinds of thoughts in bed to bad sleepers. People with insomnia are more focused on worries, problems, or noises in the environment, and are often preoccupied with not sleeping. Good sleepers, on the other hand, typically have dream-like, hallucinatory, less ordered thoughts before nodding off. Sorting the pro-somnolent wheat from the insomnolent chaff Cognitive shuffling attempts to mimic the thinking patterns of good sleepers by simulating the dream-like and random thought patterns they generally have before drifting off to sleep.

In particular, Beaudoin’s research describes two types of sleep-related thoughts: insomnolent (or anti-sleep) and pro-somnolent (sleep-promoting) thoughts. Insomnolent thoughts include things such as worrying, planning, rehearsing, and ruminating on perceived problems or failings. Pro-somnolent thoughts on the other hand involve thoughts that can help you fall asleep, such as dream-like imagery or having a calm, relaxed state of mind. Cognitive shuffling aims to distract from or interfere with insomnolent thought. It offers a calm, neutral path for your racing mind, and can reduce the stress associated with not sleeping. Cognitive shuffling also helps tell your brain you are ready for sleep. In fact, the process of “shuffling” between different thoughts is similar to the way your brain naturally drifts off to sleep. During the transition to sleep, brain activity slows. Your brain starts to generate disconnected images and fleeting scenes,

is also a debate as to how much SOC is considered sufficient. As per the Indian Institute of Soil Science (IISS), SOC in the range of 0.50- 0.75 per cent is adequate. But the World Food Laureate, Rattan Lal, who has worked on soil health throughout his career, prescribes that the carbon content in soils should be at least 1.5 to 2 per cent. Our soils also suffer from a deficiency of sulphur, as well as micronutrients like iron, zinc and boron. These deficiencies range from moderate to severe. It won’t be an exaggeration to say that many parcels of Indian soils need to be immediately taken to an intensive care unit (ICU) to restore them to normal health so that they can produce nutritious food on a sustainable basis. We have also observed that in some parts of the country, nitrogen (N) is overused while phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are underused. For example, in Punjab, nitrogen use exceeds recommendations by 61 per cent, while potassium use is short by 89 per cent, and phosphorus use is short by 8 per cent. Telangana also mirrors this imbalance — it overuses N by 54 per cent but its use of K is 82 per cent less, and that of P is 13 per cent less. The situation is similar in several other states. The highly imbalanced use of N, P and K and the neglect of micronutrients leads to suboptimal agricultural productivity. Nationwide, the fertiliser-to-grain response ratio has declined significantly from 1:10 in the 1970s to a mere 1:2.7 in 2015.

Moreover, the application of granular urea results in substantial nitrogen losses, with only 35-40 per cent of the nitrogen being absorbed by the crops. The remaining nitrogen is either released into the atmosphere as nitrous oxide — a greenhouse gas that is 273 times more potent than carbon dioxide — or leaches into groundwater, contaminating it with nitrates and making it unsafe for consumption. So, in a way, the imbalanced use of N, P and K is also increasing the pollution, rather than increasing grain yields. Additionally, a significant portion of urea is diverted to non-agricultural uses and also finds its way to neighbouring countries. This needs to change. To restore soil health and improve both crop and human nutrition, India needs a paradigm shift — from indiscriminate use of fertilisers to tailored and science-based soil nutrition management. This calls for more precise and customised fertilisation strategies, which are informed by rigorous soil testing and aligned with the nutritional needs of different soils and crops. Only when soils receive the nutrients do they produce food that nourishes rather than merely fills stomachs. This is no longer just an agricultural issue; it is a public health imperative. Recognising the urgency of this challenge, the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and OCP Nutricrops have committed to collaborating to improve soil health in India and beyond. OCP Nutricrops brings cutting-edge expertise in soil nutrition and fertiliser solutions aimed at addressing global challenges in sustainable food production. The collaboration aims to develop, implement, and scale region-specific, data-driven soil nutrition solutions that enhance crop productivity while improving their nutritional profile. Thus, to truly move from plate to plough — and back to plate — we must start by healing Mother Earth. Only then can we walk as a healthy nation.



known as hypnagogic hallucinations, without a conscious effort to make sense of them. By mimicking these scattered, disconnected, and random thought patterns, cognitive shuffling may help you transition from wakefulness to sleep. And the preliminary research into this is promising. Beaudoin and his team have found serial diverse imagining helps to lower arousal before sleep, improve sleep quality and reduce the effort involved in falling asleep. However, with only a small number of research studies, more work is needed here.

It didn’t work. Now what?

As with every new strategy, however, practise makes perfect. Don’t be disheartened if you don’t see an improvement straight away; these things take time. Stay consistent and be kind to yourself. And what works for some won’t work for others. Different people benefit from different types of strategies depending on how they relate to and experience stress or stressful thoughts. Other strategies to help create the right conditions for sleep include: -keeping a consistent pre-bedtime routine, so your brain can wind down – watching your thoughts, without judgement, as you lie in bed – writing down worries or to-do lists earlier in the day so you don’t think about them at bedtime. If, despite all your best efforts, night time thoughts continue to impact your sleep or overall wellbeing, consider seeking professional help from your doctor or a trained sleep specialist.

French Trio Alright Mela set to perform in Hyderabad as part of Fête de la Musique 2026

Hyderabad: As part of Fête de la Musique 2026 and the wider Month of Music celebration, French trio Alright Mela will tour India this June with a powerful live act built around rhythm, trance, movement and collective energy. The tour schedule includes Hyderabad on June 21 at The Moonshine Project/ EXT.

Alright Mela brings together Mediterranean influences, Gnawa traditions, oud, electronic beats and psychedelic synth textures to create a sound that is both rooted and contemporary. Their music carries the energy of the dance floor, but also the urgency of the world around us, with songs that reflect on migration, discrimination, war, identity, tolerance and the possibility of living together.

Credit card boom accompanied by delinquencies, borrower stress and multiple unsecured loans: CIBIL



India's decade-long credit card boom is beginning to enter a more challenging phase. As millions of consumers embrace easy access to unsecured credit, rising delinquencies, increased borrowing across multiple loan products and emerging "pockets of stress" are pointing to evolving challenges for lenders and borrowers alike, according to a TransUnion CIBIL report. While the industry has celebrated a sharp rise in credit card issuances — from 1.4 crore to 5.2 crore in ten years — and spending, the report says consumers are likely to hold multiple credit cards and multiple unsecured products in their wallet, creating "distinct growth and risk opportunities for card issuers to manage effectively". This is at a time when consumers juggle multiple card and credit products and younger borrowers enter the market with more aggressive borrowing habits.

Outstanding credit card balances have surged more than eight-fold over the past decade to Rs 3.1 lakh crore, but the rapid expansion has also coincided with a deterioration in asset quality since 2022. After a period of improving repayment behaviour before the pandemic (2016 to 2020), delinquency levels have begun rising again as unsecured lending accelerated across the financial system. "Since 2022, as growth resumed, the system witnessed a rise in delinquencies alongside stabilisation in balances, indicating 'pockets of stress' emerging within a rapidly expanding unsecured ecosystem," said CIBIL, a credit information company registered with the RBI, in its white paper on credit cards. Delinquency level in 180 dpd (days past due) category since 2022 has gone up from 5.8% to 8.1% in March 2026. A significant shift is that credit cards no longer operate in isolation. "Cards are now part of a broader unsecured credit landscape. The share of open credit cards within unsecured credit products has declined over time, from 56% in 2016 to 38% in 2026," said CIBIL. Card issuers are now "increasingly competing with small-ticket personal loans — loans below Rs 50,000 — and consumer durable loans for lifestyle financing by consumers." Consumers are increas-

ingly using several credit products simultaneously rather than relying primarily on credit cards. "Credit card consumers are more likely to hold multiple credit cards and multiple unsecured products in their wallet as compared to the last decade. The share of consumers holding other consumption-led credit in their wallet has doubled from 16% to 32% in the last decade," CIBIL said. CIBIL said the share of consumers with three or more cards in their wallet has increased from 12% to 22% during the same period. This growing overlap of products creates competing repayment obligations and makes it harder for lenders to assess borrower risk using a single product in isolation. High exposure users Another worry is the emergence of "high exposure users," who account for around 10% of cardholders. High exposure users are known for high utilisation, use multiple unsecured credit products and have higher exposure to risk across wallets, it said. Consumers in this segment who missed two or more repayments across products were substantially more likely to become seriously delinquent on their credit cards than other customer groups. Delinquency worsens as highly leveraged borrowers gain more credit experience. "Diversified credit users with 4 plus years of card experience have 40 to 60 bps higher delinquencies than the overall delinquency for the persona," CIBIL said. Borrowers with multiple personal loans accumulated over recent years are particularly vulnerable. "22% of consumers with 4 years plus card experience have opened more than three personal loans in the last 24 months and have delinquency of 8.7%," CIBIL said.

Another highlight is the behaviour of younger borrowers. Gen Z consumers (those born between 1995 and 2010) opened new unsecured loans post first card at a higher rate compared to millennials (those born between 1980 and 1994), it said, adding that Gen Z consumers are entering the credit card ecosystem with more existing loans than millennials did at the same age. CIBIL said borrowers with consumer durables and high-ticket personal loans (HTPL) in their wallet need close monitoring for competing payment priorities. Another notable trend is that consumers today do not rely solely on credit cards for borrowing. "The share of consumers who hold only a credit card as their unsecured credit product has declined from 50% to 33% over the same period. This indicates that sources of credit have become more diversified and complex," said Bhavesh Jain MD & CEO, TransUnion CIBIL. The next phase of growth will be driven by the next generation of consumers. These consumers are now entering the cards ecosystem with more active borrowing behaviour as compared to the same age group a decade ago. Their early trajectory of card usage, credit expansion and payment prioritisation will determine both lifetime value and systemic risk.

New EPFO portal to enable auto interest credit, centralised database



The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has launched a revamped portal with a centralised database by merging information across all regional offices. The portal enables automated processes, including crediting of interest, claim verification and informing members about the amount they are eligible to withdraw, aimed at reducing claim rejection rates. Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday said the annual interest of Rs 1.44 lakh crore will be auto-processed on the new portal and verified by field authorities before being credited to 34 crore EPF accounts by July 15.

"Field verification is currently ongoing to ensure that any account does not receive incorrect interest. After the process is over, over 34 crore EPF accounts will receive interest worth over Rs 1.44 lakh crore by July 15. Earlier, interest credit used to happen in October or November after the rates were announced," Mandavya said at a press briefing. This comes after the Ministry of Labour and Employment implemented the CITES (Centralised IT Enabled Services) project, an initiative to modernise EPFO's service delivery through automation and rule-based processing. The Ministry said the project is designed to improve EPFO's operational efficiency.

"Before CITES, EPFO had a decentralised architecture with separate databases at each field office. CITES has now enabled a single centralised architecture with one national database. EPFO has completed the process of migrating its entire database of member records to the new centralised database. Earlier, the services were tied to a particular regional office. Now, a member's service request can be processed from any authorised location across the country," Mandavya said. This centralised database will be helpful for employees who move across cities during their employment. For instance, if an employee has worked in Chennai and moves back to their hometown in West Bengal, they will be able to access their records and resolve any issues at the EPFO office in West Bengal instead of travelling to the Chennai regional office. The Ministry said claim payments will be processed through a centralised payment architecture and routed through faster electronic payment channels, ensuring secure, efficient and timely credit of settlement amounts directly into members' bank accounts on the day of settlement.

"Under the revised system, interest on final PF settlements will now be calculated up to the date of payment authorisation. Earlier, interest was calculated only up to the last day of the previous month. This ensures that members receive the benefit of additional interest for the intervening period," a statement said. The EPFO's Central Board of Trustees had recommended an interest rate of 8.25% for financial year 2025-26 in March, which was ratified by the Ministry of Finance last month. In the new portal, members will be able to view their membership details, provident fund balances, claim status, pensionable service records and benefits availed. This, the Ministry said, will ensure transparency and provide access to information about their PF accounts and claim submissions. "Earlier, members' information was not available on a unified portal and remained scattered across different systems," the Ministry said. Member claims will undergo automated pre-validation before processing at EPFO offices, and any deficiencies or discrepancies will be identified upfront and communicated

to members through SMS and the portal, helping reduce claim rejections and improve first-time acceptance rates. "Members will also be able to know what the eligible amount is, which they can apply for withdrawal from their PF account under the different types of withdrawals permitted and can make informed choices," the statement said. In October 2025, the EPFO announced a slew of changes to its withdrawal norms by streamlining the withdrawal categories from 13 to three — essential needs (illness, education, marriage); housing needs; and special circumstances, along with an introduction of a minimum balance of 25%. Members can withdraw funds in case of illness of self and family members, up to 100% of the eligible member balance, after completion of 12 months of total membership.

The 100% eligible member balance means withdrawal of 75% of the total funds, as 25% is a mandatory minimum balance requirement. The full 100% amount can be withdrawn after remaining unemployed for one year. Members can also withdraw money for education of self and family members after 12 months of membership, subject to a maximum of 10 withdrawals during their membership. For marriage of self and family members, members can withdraw up to 100% of the eligible member balance, with a maximum of five withdrawals during their membership. For housing-related requirements, a member may be allowed partial withdrawal for the purchase of a flat or house; site for construction of a house; construction of a house; repayment of a home loan obtained for purchase, construction of a flat or house or for acquisition of a site; and additions, alterations, renovations or improvements to an existing house or flat. The condition is that such withdrawals will be limited to 75% of total funds after completion of 12 months of total membership and partial withdrawal not exceeding five times.

India eyes global trade expansion after EU pact

Washington: Fresh from concluding its landmark free trade agreement with the European Union, India is pursuing an ambitious strategy to expand its network of trade agreements across North America, Latin America, Africa and the Gulf, with negotiations already underway or planned with several major economies, the country's chief trade negotiator has said. Speaking at an event hosted by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Darpan Jain, India's Chief Negotiator for the EU-India Free Trade Agreement, said New Delhi's trade strategy now aims to deepen commercial ties across virtually every major region of the world.

"Broadly, our intent is to cover the entire world," Jain said. "Hands are full. The table is full. Mind space is full. So we are all working with all efforts to try and diversify our relations, expand our partnerships, and enhance trade."

Jain said India has already covered "almost 50 per cent of global trade and 50 per cent of global economy" through the countries with which it has negotiated trade agreements over the past five years. The focus is now shifting to regions where India has relatively limited trade agreements. In North America, India is negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada, while discussions have also been initiated with Mexico. In Latin America, New Delhi is negotiating with Chile and Peru and has begun discussions with the Mercosur bloc to expand its existing Preferential Trade Agreement.

"We intend to expand that," Jain said of Mercosur, adding that Latin America remains a key region where India wants to strengthen its trade presence. India is also intensifying its engagement with West Asia. Jain said the country already has trade agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Oman and is now holding discussions with Qatar, the Gulf Cooperation Council and other countries in the region.

Sarathkumar reveals 50-year fitness habit and current no-solids fasting routine



Tamil actor Sarathkumar, 71, recently spoke about working out for more than 50 years and how he has been fasting with liquids to lose 4-5 kilos in a few days. "Workout is a habit. For almost 50 years+, I have been working out. It becomes a habit. If I don't work out, it seems there is something wrong. I somehow hit the gym or work out at home. At least walk around and do something. I keep myself moving. If it is an overwhelming day, I become diet-conscious. I should not cheat. At least 15-20 minutes before the shot, I pump myself up and go. I increase my heartbeat and go," the veteran actor told actor and VJ Ramya Subramanian on her YouTube podcast. Mentioning that he used to do "crazy workouts," he continued, "That time, if I went to the gym at 6.30 pm, I would continue till 10.30 pm." Candidly admitting he thinks intermittent fasting works, he said he is not in favour of any other diets unless a role demands it. Quantifying his diet, he said, "I know that 250 grams of rice, 150 grams of vegetables, some protein of 150-200 grams, and drinking water works. If I base it on not overeating, I think that works for muscle building, unless you are in a competitive sport where you need more protein and muscle. I think on regular days you shouldn't follow all these diets. Right from the start, I never knew anything. Eat nicely, people would say. I would eat 5-6 full meals. Now, that is discarded." "fasting Can fasting lead to rapid weight loss?"

Admitting that he has tried "intermittent fasting for drastic weight loss," which "definitely works", he shared that he

has not been eating for "3 days now". "I am just drinking water. I have to drop 4-5 kilos. I have been told not to run on the treadmill because I ran to catch a flight inside the airport. I strained my leg. So, I was told to do only the rowing machine and no treadmill. So, when you don't run on the treadmill for one hour, you don't sweat that much. So, I thought I should lose weight. I have been having beetroot juice and water," the Por Thozhil actor expressed. From a clinical perspective, consultant dietitian and fitness expert Garima Goyal noted that exercising consistently for five decades is remarkable. "Long-term physical activity is associated with better muscle preservation, cardiovascular health, bone density, mobility, and cognitive function. Sarathkumar's fitness journey reinforces the idea that regular movement, rather than short bursts of intense exercise, is one of the strongest predictors of healthy ageing," said Goyal.

However, his statement about fasting for three days to lose 4-5 kilos needs important context. "A significant portion of the weight lost during a prolonged fast is usually due to depletion of glycogen stores and associated water loss, rather than pure body fat reduction. Since glycogen stores bind water, reducing food intake can lead to a rapid drop on the weighing scale," said Goyal. While short-term fasting may have certain metabolic benefits in selected individuals, a 3-5-day fast is not appropriate for everyone. "Prolonged fasting can cause fatigue, dizziness, electrolyte imbalances, headaches, reduced exercise performance, and loss of lean muscle mass if not supervised properly. Individuals with diabetes, medical conditions, pregnant women, and older adults should be particularly cautious," said Goyal. From a nutrition standpoint, rapid weight loss strategies are often used by actors and athletes for specific deadlines or aesthetic requirements, but they should not be mistaken for sustainable fat-loss approaches. "Long-term health and body composition are better supported by a balanced calorie deficit, adequate protein intake, resistance training, and consistency," said Goyal.

'Shorts were never meant for me': Actor Debinna Bonnerjee reveals reason behind stubborn thigh fat



Debinna Bonnerjee opened up about lipedema, admitting she always thought it was just her body type. "I thought this was just my body type. Have you ever felt like your body follows different rules than everyone else's? For years, I thought that was exactly what was happening to me. Before pregnancy, there was a phase. I was working out intensely. I'm talking about heavy weight training, CrossFit, HIIT, and a lot of cardio. My upper body would respond almost immediately. My arms would get really thin. My face would get sharper. My waist would also shrink. But my thighs, nothing. There was just no response," the actor said.

Noting that while the workouts helped her thighs "become stronger" and definitely much more "muscular," but "never really smaller," she continued: "And because of that, I genuinely believed that this was just my body type. Like bottom-heavy. I stopped questioning it. I thought maybe some women are simply built like this. I would look at my legs and wonder why they look like this. It was just different from the rest of my body. Shorts were just never meant for me. I was very uncomfortable wearing shorts. Why has that never changed, no matter how much weight I lost? Everyone around me called it cellulite." Dr Vashisht Dikshit, consultant — plastic and cosmetic surgery, Gleneagles Hospital Parel, said lipedema is a chronic condition in which there is an abnormal buildup of fat, most commonly in the

hips, thighs, buttocks, and legs. "It primarily affects women and is often mistaken for simple obesity or weight gain. Unlike regular body fat, lipedema fat is usually painful, bruises easily, and does not improve significantly with diet or exercise. As a result, many women struggle with both physical discomfort and emotional distress before receiving the correct diagnosis," said Dr Dikshit.

Experts urge that recent conversations around lipedema has helped bring much-needed attention to a condition that has long been overlooked. "Many women silently live with disproportionate enlargement of the lower body, difficulty finding comfortable clothing, reduced mobility, and a significant impact on their confidence and quality of life. Increasing awareness encourages people to seek medical evaluation instead of assuming that the condition is simply due to lifestyle or lack of exercise. When diagnosed early, lipedema can be managed effectively through a combination of lifestyle modifications, compression therapy, physiotherapy, and weight management to control symptoms," said Dr Dikshit.

How to differentiate between lipedema and obesity?

Unlike obesity, lipedema usually affects specific parts of the body while leaving the feet and hands relatively normal, said Dr Prashant Hansraj Salvi, chief bariatric and metabolic surgeon, Jupiter Hospital, Thane. "Many patients notice their lower body looks much larger than their upper body. The affected areas might feel tender, bruise easily, or become painful and heavy, especially after standing for a long time. Another important sign is that even when someone loses weight overall, these uneven fat deposits often stay," said Dr Salvi. Dr Dikshit also noted that in selected individuals with moderate to advanced disease, specialised liposuction can remove the abnormal fat deposits, reduce pain, improve mobility, and enhance body proportions. "Early recognition and timely treatment are essential to slow disease progression and help patients regain comfort, confidence, and a better quality of life," said Dr Dikshit.

This is what happens to the body if you do 100 jumps daily for 100 days



Can the "100 jumps every day for 100 days" challenge improve your fitness levels? Dr Priyank Patel, orthopaedic spine surgeon, Jupiter Hospital, Thane, said it can lead to clear improvements in fitness, as long as it is done correctly and gradually. "Jumping is a weight-bearing exercise that works the legs, core, and heart all at once. Over time, it can enhance stamina, coordination, balance, and strength in the lower body," said Dr Patel.

Can jumping every day strengthen bones and joints?

Moderate-impact exercises like jumping can promote bone health by encouraging bone remodelling and maintaining bone density. "It can also strengthen the muscles around the knees and ankles, which helps improve joint stability. However, these benefits occur when the exercise is done with the right form and enough recovery time," said Dr Patel.

Are there any risks of doing jumps every day?

Yes, said Dr Patel, continuing, "Repetitive jumping without proper technique or rest can put too much strain on the knees, ankles, and lower back. Some people may feel shin pain, tendon irritation, muscle strains, or worsening of existing joint problems. The risk increases for those who are overweight, have arthritis, past injuries, or poor muscle conditioning."

Who should be cautious before taking up this challenge?

Dr Patel noted that people with knee pain, ankle instability, osteoporosis, balance issues, or a history of fractures and joint injuries should consult a doctor before starting a daily jumping routine. "The exercise must always match an

individual's fitness level and health conditions," said Dr Patel.

What to note? The focus should be on consistency and proper technique instead of just finishing a set number of jumps. Begin slowly, wear supportive shoes, land softly, and let the body recover. If pain occurs, it is crucial to stop and get checked rather than pushing through discomfort. A 100-day jumping challenge can be a great way to improve fitness and build strength, but doing more doesn't always mean better. "Listening to your body and exercising safely is much more important than focusing on a specific number," said Dr Patel.

Anshula Kapoor ties nupital knot with Rohan Thakkar

New Delhi: "You are my safest place and easiest choice" said entrepreneur Anshula Kapoor as she tied the knot with screenwriter and director Rohan Thakkar. Anshula, daughter of producer Boney Kapoor and the late Mona Shourie Kapoor and sister of the Bollywood actor Arjun Kapoor, shared a series of pictures from the celebrations on her Instagram on Monday. It featured the couple holding hands and other pictures from the celebrations. Anshula wore a peach-coloured lehenga, which she complemented with a golden scarf and statement jewellery. Rohan wore an ivory-gold sherwani. "06.07.2026. Of all the people. Of all the places. Of all the timing. It was you. And somehow, through every twist, detour, and surprise, it is still you. My favourite conversation. My safest place. My easiest choice. Always you @rohanthakkar1511," she wrote in the caption. The couple dated for years and got engaged in October 2025. They announced the engagement with a social media post. "Somehow, even back then, it felt like the starting of something that mattered. 3 years later, in my favourite city, in front of the castle in Central Park, he proposed! At exactly 1.15 AM India time! "And somehow the world paused just long enough. Just the quiet kind of love that feels like home..."

What propelled Norway's ship into quarter-finals after 28-year World Cup absence



"Norway used to be an almost team," Morten Gamst Pedersen tells The Indian Express. "But almost is never enough." He would know. Pedersen played 83 times for Norway and lived through three separate World Cup qualifying campaigns, 2006, 2010, 2014, that each ended the same way: agonisingly short. This time there were no almosts. Norway held off a grandstand Brazil finish, Haaland's second goal only arriving in the 90th minute before Neymar pulled one back in stoppage time, to reach the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time ever, 28 years after they last made a World Cup at all, having scored 37 goals in an eight-from-eight qualifying campaign, eight more than any other team in the world. No one could have been prouder than the man who spent a career on the wrong side of Norwegian football's near-misses.

He credits it to what he calls the team's superpower: togetherness. "This is an unbelievable generation of footballers. Of course Erling is a superstar, who bangs in goals for fun and then laughs about it. But he's also a humble guy, like the rest of the team," Pedersen, who was the last Norwegian to score against Brazil, in a friendly, before Haaland's two in the last 16, points out that a squad stacked with talent, Haaland, Martin Odegaard, Alexander Sorloth, has somehow avoided anyone acting bigger than the team itself. "That's their superpower. Watching this team, it feels like this is a boys' holiday." That collectivism has found its way home too, in a form nobody could have scripted. The supporters' club Oljeberget turned the Viking Row into a global celebration from the stands in America, and back in Norway the same gesture has spread to retirement homes, airports, children's nurseries, even military bases. The clearest sign of how far it travelled came recently on Oslo's Karl Johans Gate, where an estimated 100,000 people sat down in front of the Royal Palace to row together as one. Partway through, Crown Prince Haakon walked out of the

palace and joined them, royalty and commoners shoulder to shoulder, doing the same silly, joyful thing at the same time. "There is a sense of euphoria back home," says Pedersen, who was in the US to support the team recently and will be travelling back again for the England quarter-final. Norway's Erling Haaland (9) leads the team as they participate in a viking boat row after the World Cup round of 16 match against Brazil. Norway's Erling Haaland (9) leads the team as they participate in a viking boat row after the World Cup round of 16 match against Brazil.

None of this happened by accident. Pedersen credits some of it to FIFA's expansion to 48 teams, but the deeper engine has been running for two decades inside the Football Association of Norway, known locally by its Norwegian name, Norges Fotballforbund, or NFF. Its grassroots pathway starts with six-year-olds: a published, age-by-age curriculum, broken into detailed chapters for coaches and clubs, spelling out not just the format but what to groom at each stage. Six- and seven-year-olds play three-a-side, built around giving kids plenty of time on the ball; eight- and nine-year-olds move to five-a-side, with passing becoming the emphasis; the plan keeps evolving, stage by stage, from there. Since 2011, UEFA figures show, more than 17,000 coaches have completed Norway's full grassroots coaching pathway, and almost 2,000 have gone on to complete the UEFA B diploma. At the top of that pyramid sits the Landslagsskolen, the national team school for players aged 12 to 16, fed by 1,800 clubs spread across 18 football districts, each nominating talent into a standardised development system. Many of this current squad came through it. Somewhere in that process, Pedersen says, the federation made a deliberate shift, away from defensively sturdy sides and toward technically gifted players who could cut through opponents "like longboats through fjords." "There is plenty of focus on the grassroots in Norway," he says. "This led to young players playing for the national team earlier in their careers than previous generations." Norway's brutal winters forced a parallel investment: 539 new artificial pitches built between 2016 and 2025, with 586 more renovated, so the weather stopped deciding who got to develop. On Sunday, Norway face England in the quarter-finals, a team with its own long history of almosts, the country that invented the game and has spent decades not quite winning it since. Pedersen doesn't sound worried. "England will have much more pressure. Football was born there. Norway? No pressure at all," he smiles. An almost-team knows better than anyone what pressure does to a side that hasn't learned to handle it. Norway, finally, has.

Why England, Argentina referees can't officiate each other's matches

As the 2026 FIFA World Cup is leaping towards the final stretch of the knockouts, refereeing decisions have been magnified, and the scrutiny intense. They hit a crescendo during a frenzied Round of 16 match between world champions Argentina and Egypt, officiated by Frenchman Francois Letexier on Tuesday night. While the neutrality of officials has been said to be overseen by the world football body on a match-to-match basis, Not all such combinations are welcome on the world stage, as Argentina officials may not be seen later in the tournament should England march on towards the final. The reverse is equally problematic, as seasoned English officials, Anthony Taylor and Michael Oliver, will not be able to take the pitch should Argentina proceed past Switzerland from the quarter-finals. Despite officiating in seven matches through the World Cup, Englishman Oliver could likely miss the final set to be held at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford on July 19, should Lionel Messi's men mark their presence. The unique situation stems from a 44-year-old war involving the two nations, aiming to wrest control over the Falkland Islands, an archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean. The Falkland War which began on April 2, 1982 with Argentina invading the English-occupied Falkland Islands, lasted 74 days. The war ended with an Argentine surrender in June 1982, after casualties totalling 649 Argentine military personnel, 255 British military personnel, and three Falkland Islanders. Refereeing neutrality and the selection of officials for matches in the remainder of the World Cup will continue the same policy of match-by-match templates, involving performance and other geo-political factors linked to the respective teams. They would also be barred from officiating matches involving countries that are in the same bracket as their country of berth. For instance, English or Norwegian referees will therefore not be considered to officiate the quarter-final involving Argentina and Switzerland as they are



deemed to meet in the semi-finals and vice-versa. Likewise, Argentine referee Facundo Tello was only considered for the quarter-finals in the upper-half of the bracket, involving France, Morocco, Spain and Belgium. Despite their comeback 3-2 win, Argentina fans themselves had taken offence to the neutral referee Letexier's background during the Round of 16 clash against Egypt. A referee from France, the country that thumped them out of the World Cup in 2018 and came close to shattering their dream in the final in 2022.

Even the Egyptian management, including coach Hossam Hassan, raised severe objections against the referee and FIFA after they lost the plot in just over 11 minutes after leading 2-0 until the 78th minute against the world champions. Hassan's grievances ran wider than the scoreline: earlier in the match, with Egypt already 2-0 up, a goal was disallowed on VAR review that would have made it 3-0; late on, he felt a foul in the box went unreviewed. He had also objected to the referee's identity before a ball was kicked, telling Francois Letexier that his background was the issue, and later that the Frenchman seemed to be "carrying a scar," that he had "something to hide." He was booked for it.

India assure nine medals in U-23 women's Asian boxing championships



Hyderabad: India's U-23 women boxers delivered a commanding performance at the Asian Under-19 & 23 Boxing Championships, with nine boxers advancing to the semi-finals to assure medals after a strong showing in the quarterfinals held across the afternoon and evening sessions on Wednesday in Jakarta. In the afternoon session, Tanu (51kg) registered a dominant 5:0 unanimous decision win over Thailand's Kewalin Norasing, while Nisha (54kg) secured an equally convincing 5:0 victory over Kazakhstan's Aliaksar Symbat. In the 48kg bout, Nidhi fought hard but went down narrowly to Kazakhstan's Gulnaz Buribayeva via a 3:2 split decision.

The evening session saw India continue its momentum, with Prachi (57kg) sealing a commanding win over Korea's Yejin Oh via RSC in the first round. Nikita Chand (60kg) followed it up with a clinical victory over Chinese Taipei's Chen-Xuan Ye via RSC in the third round, while Kajal (65kg) edged past Japan's Arinda Akimoto in a closely contested 4:1 split decision. With these results, India has now assured a total of nine medals in the U-23 women's competition, with all semifinalists guaranteed podium finishes. The boxers progressing to the semifinals are Tanu (51kg), Nisha (54kg), Prachi (57kg), Nikita Chand (60kg),

Kajal (65kg), Shivani (70kg), Muskan (75kg), Naina (80kg) and Priyanka (+80kg).

TG20 Winners Trophy Tour energises Sreenidhi University campus

Hyderabad: The campus of Sreenidhi University was agog with excitement on Wednesday as it hosted the TG 20 Winners Trophy Tour, serving as a dynamic prelude to the institution's highly anticipated Founder's Day 2026 celebrations scheduled for July 10. This exciting lead-up highlights the university's vibrant campus life, academic rigour and unwavering commitment to student excellence. As the official title sponsor of the TG20 Tournament, Sreenidhi University proudly welcomed the TG 20 Winners Trophy to the grounds today, sparking immense enthusiasm among the student body. The tour drew massive crowds across the campus, celebrating the spirit of high-level competition and camaraderie. The vibrant energy on campus today also celebrates Sreenidhi University's unique educational philosophy. Moving beyond traditional classroom theory, the university focuses on an industry-ready pedagogy. Through the School of Engineering and various dynamic faculties, the institution continues to blend rigorous technical training in fields like Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Computing, and Cybersecurity with a strong foundation in the liberal arts. The combination of today's competitive trophy tour energy and the formal recognition of student achievements planned for July 10th showcases what makes the campus environment so dynamic.

Morocco's tireless legs may be answer to stopping Olise, Mbappe



No team has scored more goals at the 2026 FIFA World Cup than France. No team has had more attempts on target either. There is no subjective statistic to corroborate this, but eye test suggests no team has a more intimidating attacking quartet than France's. Kylian Mbappe. Ousmane Dembele. Michael Olise. Desire Doue. How could Morocco relent the unrelenting in the impending quarter-final?

Turns out, Morocco's greatest weapon against France is...France. They will be relying on three footballers shaped by the French system, each of whom either wore France's colours, or harboured a desire to do so. At the heart of the defence is Issa Diop. At only 21, barely weeks after moving to England, he repelled every attack in a game against Manchester United. Jose Mourinho could barely believe what he saw. "Congratulations to whoever scouted him. The kid is a monster!" Diop was scouted by West Ham United after standout performances for France at the 2016 U-21 Euros — the very tournament that also offered the first glimpses of the brilliance of Kylian Mbappe. He had suitors — none more unrelenting than Senegal. A nation his father hailed from, and his grandfather had coached.

France's Kylian Mbappe (10) celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's third goal during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between France and Sweden in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York, Tuesday, June 30, 2026. France's Kylian Mbappe (10) celebrates with teammates after scoring his side's third goal during the World Cup round of 32 soccer match between France and Sweden in East Rutherford, N.J., near New York, Tuesday, June 30, 2026. Diop was asked whether the suitors interested him. The reply was firm: "I will only play for France and for no one else. I was born in France, I owe everything to France, so why play for another country? Even if I am never selected, I will never play for another country." Nine years later, another U-21 Euros. Gerald Baticle's squad, however, was missing the player he had earmarked for captaincy. Ayyoub Bouaddi. Lille refused to release their teenage prodigy. Asked about his allegiance, Bouaddi had said, "At the moment, I am in the French youth team. I feel good

playing for France."

Walid Regragui, the former Morocco coach, was on the brink of losing his patience ahead of the 2024 African Nations Championship. Neil El Aynaoui, son of former world No. 14 tennis player Younes El Aynaoui, repeatedly delayed Morocco's advances, reluctant to close any doors. "Neil has still asked for some time. But we will have to make a decision. If he doesn't make it, I will be the one to make it for him. We won't wait long," said Regragui, insinuating he will close the Moroccan door on El Aynaoui soon, should he not make up his mind. Toulouse. Senlis. Nancy. Three French cities. Three footballers, who now stand in the way of France's third consecutive FIFA World Cup semi-final appearance.

Loaded with runners Morocco advancing to the quarter-final is barely a surprise now. Their performance, however, has been at times. Canada — ranked 24 places behind — outshot Morocco, generated the better chances and, according to coach Jesse Marsch, deserved to win. The Atlas Lions were not convincing against the Netherlands either. In fact, without Diop's 91st-minute equaliser, they would have lost that game. But Diop's influence extends far beyond that goal. At 6'4", he consistently wins aerial duels, and is equally adept with ground tackles. Yet, defending is only a one-dimensional facet of a multi-dimensional player. Diop is the point of origin of Morocco's attacks. Against Brazil and Canada, he attempted more line breaks than anyone else in the squad. Against Canada, he attempted 42 forward passes. His nearest competitor did 21. Morocco have not out-dazzled teams in this competition, but outrun them, they have. Mohamed Ouahbi's men have covered 597.2 kilometres so far, in comparison to their opponents' 578.7. A delta of 3.7 km per game — enough to separate a winner from a loser at this level. At the heart of their lungs lie the pivot of Neil El Aynaoui and Ayyoub Bouaddi. Together, they have done 99.68 kilometres of running — one-sixth of the team's total. It was the same formula for their 2022 World Cup run, and now threatens to topple the French team's flawless run to the quarterfinals. Brazil were handed the hard lesson of Morocco's industry. El Aynaoui and Bouaddi finished first and second for distance covered in that game. Casemiro and Bruno Guimaraes were chasing shadows. Similar script against Scotland. First and second, again. While El Aynaoui's stamina puts the opposition under pressure, Bouaddi capitalises on it with his intelligence in positional awareness. Against Canada, he had eight forced turnovers, thwarting many of Marsch's attacks in the blooming stage. At the back, an enforcer who is as good with his feet as he is with his head. Ahead of him, a runner who never stops running. Alongside him, a teenage prodigy with a mind so unusually sharp for someone his age that he solves problems in midfield as effortlessly as differentiating a polynomial. This is the Moroccan spine.

World Cup 2026 controversy: Messi, Trump, and a conspiracy thriller

Lionel Messi might be the World Cup's overwhelming protagonist, shaping moments and defining games. But a background crew, Gianni Infantino, Donald Trump, enraged managers, referees, and the error-checking mechanism, are putting in heavy shifts as support cast. Add conspiracy theories, corruption and rigging allegations, and the World Cup has the intrigue of a spy movie. The background score intensified when Egypt manager Hossam Hassan remarked, after Argentina's controversial 3-2 turnaround, that officials had been pressured to keep Messi in the tournament. "Perhaps they wanted Messi to stay in the running," Hassan said after the match. "In football, there are sometimes external factors that go beyond the technical aspects. The world champions received support at every level."

He was referring to two incidents that decided the game: Mostafa Zico's goal scrapped for a foul on Argentina's Lisandro Martinez at the other end of the pitch, and Alexis Mac Allister pulling Mohammed Salah inside the box before Enzo Fernandez scored the winner. Egypt's Mohamed Salah (10) talks with Referee Francois Letexier, of France, during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Argentina and Egypt in Atlanta, Tuesday, Egypt's Mohamed Salah (10) talks with Referee Francois Letexier, of France, during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Argentina and Egypt in Atlanta. Going strictly by the book, the VAR's judgement cannot be argued: under International Football Association Board protocol, VAR checks the attacking phase before every goal, and a "clear and obvious" foul sends the referee to the pitch-side monitor to rule it out.

Whether Marwan Attia's foul, standing on Martinez's foot, was clear and obvious is as debatable as the foul on Salah, both soft offences lost in the grey shades of a referee's perception, not blatant ones. An emotional Hassan, Egypt's all-time highest goal scorer, said: "Life is unfair. The world is unfair. Okay, but why isn't there any fairness in sports? I'm not convinced by this outcome and by the way things unfolded in this match." He paused and said: "The referee is unfair, God is sufficient for me and the best disposer of affairs. He's wasting the effort of an entire nation. The cup is directed towards Argentina." Egypt head coach Hossam Hassan argues with referee Francois Letexier, of France, during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Argentina and Egypt in Atlanta, Tuesday, J Egypt head coach Hossam Hassan argues with referee Francois Letexier, of France, during the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Argentina and Egypt in Atlanta, Tuesday.

The decisions divided the football world. "Sometimes, even warriors lose because the devils decide the story should end differently," Real Madrid manager Jose Mourinho produced another ripping one-liner. Even chess legend Garry Kasparov chimed in, calling FIFA "a corrupt joke, playing favorites for stars" over the disallowed goal, and, separately, invoking Croatia's own complaints: "Croatia robbed, now Egypt. But you cannot shame the shameless." To bolster the theory of FIFA staging an Argentina triumph, social media dug up every prior decision that had favoured Argentina, foremost among them Messi catching Algeria captain Aissa Mandi's calf and Achilles tendon with his studs up in the opening game. Algeria complained, the decision stood. "It's pointless commenting on hypothetical situations, but everyone saw it, including me," Algeria head coach Vladimir Petkovic said.

World Cups have a long history of scandals: the dodgy refereeing that eased co-hosts South Korea into the 2002 semifinals at Europe's expense, two presidents shaking hands to spare Brazilian legend Garrincha a suspension, Argentina dictator General Jorge Videla's visit to Peru's dressing room to allegedly enable the four-goal win Argentina needed to reach the 1978 final, or the disgrace of Gijon. But seldom has an edition been layered with this many subplots, political, sporting, ethical. It started with Iran: based in Mexico, crossing the border only a day before each match



and leaving immediately after, officials and fans denied visas, manager Amir Ghalenoei calling his team the most "oppressed one" in the tournament. Their heartbreaking exit only deepened that sense of being victimised. Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran's president, did not mince his words either. "The U.S. government's conduct as World Cup host follows its familiar foreign policy: bending rules, bullying rivals, creating obstacles, and cheating. This is their MAGA playbook. Iran rejects such games. We stand firmly for our rights," he posted on X.

Players of the two teams await a VAR review after Iran's Shoja Khalilzadeh (4) scored a goal that was later overturned during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Egypt and Iran in Seattle, Friday, June 26, 2026. (AP Photo/Lindsey Wasson) Players of the two teams await a VAR review after Iran's Shoja Khalilzadeh (4) scored a goal that was later overturned during the World Cup Group G soccer match between Egypt and Iran in Seattle.

Drama stayed confined to the pitch through the round-of-32, before it exploded. Trump's successful intervention to rescind USMNT's Folarin Balogun's red card snowballed into a scandal, discussed as banter once Belgium hammered the co-hosts 4-1, and as political debate over a world leader's power to overturn decisions on a football field through his nexus with FIFA's suprema. "I didn't know that 5 July was equal to 1 April [April Fools' Day] at Fifa," manager Rudi Garcia said, half in jest before the game. His association was more vehement in its criticism, and drafted a strongly-worded letter to FIFA. As did UEFA. UEFA-FIFA ties grew more fractious still: dozens of European lawmakers are gathering support for a European Parliament investigation into Infantino's role in the decision. "Once again, we've seen Infantino and FIFA surrender to the demands of the Trump administration," the statement said.

‘Mysaa’ unit completes filming of exciting underwater sequence featuring Rashmika Mandanna



Chennai: The makers of director Rawindra Pulle's eagerly awaited action thriller 'Mysaa', featuring actress Rashmika Mandanna in the lead, have now disclosed that the unit has completed shooting a crucial underwater sequence featuring Rashmika. Taking to his Instagram stories section, producer Ajay Saipureddy wrote, "It's a wrap for the exciting underwater sequence with Rashmika Mandanna." The film was in the news just a few days back when director Rawindra Pulle posted a picture of him sporting a shirt bearing Rashmika's hand imprints on social media, saying, "The blood marks are on their way".

Unformula Films, the production house producing the film, for its part, had said, "Signed in mud. Remembered in blood. #MYSAA shoot in progress with #RashmikaMandanna, bringing raw emotion, grit and brilliance to the screen like never before. In cinemas this 2026." Rashmika, while responding to this post of her director, jokingly remarked, "We should have also mixed some blood and umber powder in this beautiful art of mine! Next time for sure! @rawindrapulle @unformulafilms." Only 10 days ago, the director had disclosed that the unit of the film had

just wrapped up the shooting of a song in the film. Taking to his Instagram stories section, Rawindra Pulle shared a picture of the sets of the song and wrote, "#Mysaa song pack up." The song, which features Rashmika, has been choreographed by well known dance choreographer Brinda. The film has generated excitement among fans ever since it was first announced.

In fact, in May this year, the film was in the news when actress Rashmika Mandanna disclosed that the unit had successfully wrapped up a long schedule in Kerala. Taking to her Instagram page to share pictures of the unit that worked in Kerala, Rashmika wrote, "Guys, a little update is that we successfully wrapped up a long schedule for #Mysaa in Kerala!!" She went on to say, "And these were some of the darlings who worked so so hard and made it all possible. Thank you guys and I'll see you soon again on set." Sources close to the unit had told IANS earlier that stunt master Kecha Khampakdi had choreographed some high voltage action sequences for this film which were shot in this schedule. Rashmika is believed to have performed some high intensity action sequences during this schedule along with key actors in the film. IANS had reported earlier that the actress had been training hard at an intensive stunt and combat bootcamp in Bangkok, Thailand to perform in the sequences that were to be filmed during this action schedule. Sources in the unit had disclosed that the actress had trained for over eight hours everyday For 'Mysaa' in Bangkok. For the unaware, Rashmika plays a tribal Gond girl- a character that demands emotional vulnerability as much as physical ferocity — in the film. The film, apart from Rashmika, also features Eshwari Rao, Guru Somasundaram, and Rao Ramesh in pivotal roles. On the technical front, cinematography for the film is by Shreyas P Krishna while music is by Jakes Bejoy. International stunt choreographer Andy Long is overseeing the action for this ambitious entertainer.

Anjali Anand defends fat-shaming jokes in Dhamaal 4: ‘Delusional to think I’ll be in Alpha’

It took almost a decade for actress Anjali Anand to bag the leading lady's role in Dhamaal 4 opposite Riteish Deshmukh. The actress, who started her journey with OTT and TV, faced stigma regarding her height and weight. Nothing much changed for Anjali even after playing the author-backed role of Ranveer Singh's sister in Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahaani. While she tries to be unaffected by stereotypes, the actress says she faced massive trolling for Dhamaal 4. Anjali also spoke about the fat-shaming jokes aimed at her in the film's trailer, and said she was okay being a part of a story like this. Talking about being part of a franchise like Dhamaal, Anjali Anand said, "I still cannot believe that I have shot for Dhamaal 4. I love this genre, and I was waiting for an opportunity like this, a song to dance on. I want to do so much more." She also shared how it was to work with Riteish Deshmukh. "Riteish has been around for 23 years. He is such a nice man, I love him and Genelia. They are a green forest. Riteish is such a nice man and so cool to work with; we had so much fun, such natural chemistry. Indju just makes everything better. I love Ajay Devgn also. Javed (Jaffrey) sir is amazing. Arshad (Warsi) is the funniest person ever. Ravi Kishanji and Sanjeeda (Shaikh) were a blast to work with. I am grateful to be a part of this. More makers have to see this film and believe that this girl can bring crowds to watch a film, and I hope Dhamaal does that," Anjali said. Anjali Anand on the fat-shaming jokes in Dhamaal

While this opportunity is a big one for Anjali, the film's trailer once again shows the actress being mocked for her weight. Sharing how she reacted to this role and how she was okay with it, Anjali explained, "People often say that to me, that how can you do a film like this, when you are so vocal and stand against people making fun of somebody. But this is the society, people are still making fun of me after I have proven myself. People are still trolling me online. They are commenting, 'kis bhains ko le liye', 'Riteish ke kya din aa gaye the ki isko iss heroine ke saath kaam karna pad raha hai', 'industry ke kya din aa gaye, heroine nahi bachi hai kya', these are the comments. Until society changes, scripts won't change."

"If there is a fat girl part, I will play it because if I don't do it, someone else will. I don't want that to happen because I know the way to play this and not victimize the character. I didn't victimize it in the film at all. She is a very strong girl. Her name is Paro. Once you see the film, you will know why she is there, what's happening. Mazak udna tab bandh hoga, jab real life main bhi mazak udna bandh hoga (People will stop cracking such jokes in film when it happens in real life). Things will change when people come to their senses and stop mocking fat girls. Until that perception changes, cinema won't change because cinema reflects reality. And I don't like that hypocrisy, where people say, 'oh, there are so many fat jokes', I am so sure these



people must have called someone fat moments before this," Anjali added. The actress, who was also seen in Dabba Cartel, added, "I will make sure that I am a part of the biggest films so that I become big enough for people to write different roles for me, and I break the barrier of stories making fat jokes. But there is a long way to go for that. It's a vicious circle: if I don't get a film, people will not know I exist. And these are the kind of films I am getting, because this is my reality. I will be delusional to think I should be cast in Alpha. I don't look like an Alpha, I will get films based on how I look, and this will continue until people's thinking changes, and directors think beyond. Why will they cast me in a film that people will not come to see?" "I have never been delusional about the fact that who I am or what I look like. I know if I am getting a part like this, which is making fun of me, it takes a lot of balls, and I have balls of steel. So bring it on, my work will speak for itself. Also, watch the film once, and if you tell me I did a bad job, I will accept it, but don't judge my decision. Who is anyone to tell me that my decision is wrong? I have to run my house, do things, so if there is a fat girl part, I will be the best fat girl India or the world has ever seen," Anjali said. Actress Anjali Anand is the daughter of actor Dinesh Anand, and her mother, Purnima Anand, has been a junior artist and professional dancer who played body double for Zeenat Aman in 70s and 80s. Anjali joined the industry in 2017. She made her debut with the web-show Untag, and the same here she starred in the Star Plus show Dhai Kilo Prem. Her second show in 2018, Kullfi Kumarr Bajewala, became a huge success. While Anjali's first film was Bell Bottom, it was her role in Rocy Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani in 2023 that became a breakthrough. In 2024, Anjali was also seen in the show Raat Jawana Hai, which received lots of praise. In 2025, Anjali Anand worked on Bun Tikki and Dabba Cartel. With Dhamaal 4 being her latest project, Anjali is still reading a few scripts.

Rashmika Mandanna wraps underwater sequence for ‘Mysaa’

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song pack up." The song, which features Rashmika, has been choreographed by well known dance choreographer Brinda. The film has generated excitement among fans ever since it was first announced. In fact, in May this year, the film was in the news when actress Rashmika Mandanna disclosed that the unit had successfully wrapped up a long schedule in Kerala. Taking to her Instagram page to share pictures of the unit that worked in Kerala, Rashmika wrote, "Guys, a little update is that we successfully wrapped up a long schedule for #Mysaa in Kerala!!" She went on to say, "And these were some of the darlings who worked so so hard and made it all possible.

Thank you guys and I'll see you soon again on set." Sources close to the unit had told IANS earlier that stunt master Kecha Khampakdi had choreographed some high voltage action sequences for this film which were shot in this schedule. Rashmika is believed to have performed some high intensity action sequences during this schedule along with key actors in the film. IANS had reported earlier that the actress had been training hard at an intensive stunt and combat bootcamp in Bangkok, Thailand to perform in the sequences that were to be filmed during this action schedule. Sources in the unit had disclosed that the actress had trained for over eight hours everyday For 'Mysaa' in Bangkok.

Guru Dutt slapped wife Geeta when she confronted him about his affair with Waheeda Rehman



It is said that when Guru Dutt saw Waheeda Rehman for the first time, he believed he had found his muse, and over the next few years as he worked with her, he designed his films around her. But, while Guru Dutt was rumoured to be having an affair with Waheeda, his relationship with his wife, singer Geeta Dutt, was going through a turbulent phase. Their love, which had once fought against the odds of society, was slowly waning. At one point, they even separated. Geeta even tried to catch Guru Dutt red-handed because she believed he was cheating on her, and he went as far as raising his hand on her. Geeta was a star, Guru Dutt was a struggling director

When Geeta and Guru Dutt first met, he was still directing his debut film Baazi, but she was a star. Geeta, who then went by Geeta Roy, was one of the most popular singers of this era and had been hired to sing the song 'Tadbeer Se Bigdi Hui' for his film. Sparks flew and before they knew it, they started seeing each other, but since they were at different stages of their careers, they could not afford the same things. Guru Dutt was still taking the bus, while Geeta would travel in luxury cars. He lived with his family in Matunga, Mumbai, and she would visit his mother often and would entertain her by singing her favourite songs. Before they knew it, Guru Dutt's family was in awe of her but Geeta's family was not comfortable with the relationship. She was the sole earning member of the household, and as it often happened in those days, the family was dependent on her earnings and did not want to let her go. They could only get married three years later. Guru Dutt's sister Lalita Lajmi told Nasreen Munni Kabir in Guru Dutt A Life in Cinema, "We all loved her. Lovely, wonderful Bengali lady. She used to come in a big car but she was very humble, very good at heart. Whenever she didn't have a song recording, she would come, help in the kitchen too." Guru Dutt's mother suspected that the marriage would never work

By the time they got married, Guru Dutt's career was starting to take off but he was yet to establish himself in the movies. Geeta, on the other hand, was an even bigger star. This led to rumours that he had, in fact, married her for her stardom and wealth. "People, as well as relatives, said that Guru Dutt married Geeta because of her money and because of the big name she had in the industry," shared Guru Dutt's mother Vasanthi Padukone in a chat with Imprint magazine. She believed this was all false, but despite that, she already had an intuition that the marriage would never work out. "Somehow, I had an intuition that Guru Dutt and Geeta's marriage would never be a happy one. Firstly, in those days, she earned in thousands whereas Guru Dutt's income was limited compared to hers. Secondly, both were stubborn and would never yield to one another. Thirdly, Guru Dutt had a burden of responsibilities on his shoulders," she shared with the magazine. guru dutt wife GURU Dutt with wife Geeta Dutt and their two sons. (Photo: Express Archives) Guru Dutt hated her drinking, tried to halt her career. Not just this, Guru Dutt did not approve of his wife's social circle. He did not like when she drank, even though he liked his drinks too. "Guru Dutt could not tolerate women drinking heavily. In certain ways he was old-fashioned. He disliked parties and the so-called women's lib. He was Indian at heart. In this way, Guru Dutt and Geeta were losing each other. It was so pathetic to observe. But no one had the boldness to bring them together," his mother shared with the same magazine. As time went on, he also expressed his disapproval over her career and believed that since she was not a star anymore, she should only sing for his films. By this time, Guru Dutt had become way more famous than her, and in many ways, the tables had turned. Author Bimal Mitra, who shared a complex friendship with Guru Dutt, wrote about their relationship in a memoir titled Binidra and recalled a conversation where he asked why Guru Dutt was stopping Geeta from singing in films. The filmmaker acknowledged that Geeta was not as successful as she once was, and believed that once someone hits their peak, they should pause. "But I let her do playback in all my films," Guru Dutt said as Bimal called him out on the superiority of his statement.

For Geeta, the interference in her career wasn't the only thing that bothered her. Like the rest of the town, she

too had heard stories about Waheeda Rehman, and Geeta found herself running from one person to another just so she could find out about her husband's affair. After all, they were parents to two sons by then. At one point, she landed at Abrar Alvi's home and asked him if he knew anything about their relationship; he denied it completely despite knowing that the relationship between the director and his actress wasn't purely professional. Abrar was a close confidante of Guru Dutt and towards his last years, Abrar practically lived with him. It speaks volumes about the relationship between Geeta and Guru Dutt that she had no faith in him. In Guru Dutt An Unfinished Story by Yasser Usman, Vasanthi Padukone has been quoted as saying that Geeta was a "jealous and temperamental" woman who was quite gullible. So those around her tried to take advantage of the same. At one point, Geeta fabricated a letter and signed it as Waheeda Rehman. In Ten Years with Guru Dutt Abrar Alvi's Journey, written by Sathya Saran, Abrar recalled that Guru Dutt handed him this letter, which read like a declaration of love. The letter said that he must come to see Waheeda at a discreet location. Guru Dutt was confident that Waheeda would never write this, and suspected his wife. When he and Abrar reached that location to find the truth, they saw Geeta's car pull up. "I think this was the first time. That night, after going home, he confronted Geeta with the episode and, as he confessed to me later, raised his hand on her," Abrar said.

'You want me to look worse than Waheeda Rehman?'

Geeta had also suffered a few setbacks in her finances, as her brother had produced a film, Sailaab, on her behalf and lost all of her money. After years of supporting her family, she now found herself bankrupt. At home, she was losing her husband and could not come to terms with the fact that he found Waheeda more of an inspiration than her. In an attempt to save his marriage, Guru Dutt decided to make a Bengali film, Gouri, with his wife. Geeta was not an actor but he decided to make a film where she would play the titular character, and he would play the leading hero. The crew started shooting in Calcutta but during one of the early days, they had a massive fight on set. Screenwriter Nabendu Ghosh, in his autobiography Eka Naukar Jatri, recalled that while the crew waited for Geeta on set, Guru Dutt grew impatient. When she ultimately arrived, he yelled at her as he was extremely unhappy with her makeup and believed that she had deliberately ignored his instructions. The screaming match continued in front of everyone and ended after Geeta yelled, "What do you want? That I should look worse than Waheeda Rehman?" Stunned silence followed, and the shoot was cancelled. The film was then shelved. Guru Dutt came back to Mumbai and started working on Kaagaz Ke Phool.

Geeta's alcoholism hampered her career. In the subsequent years, Guru Dutt's career faced a few setbacks but Geeta went from being a star to now singing a few songs, and while she desperately tried to sing as much as she could outside of her husband's banner, her drinking was starting to harm her reputation. "Slowly, stories about Geeta's alcoholism were heard. I never saw her drinking openly though. It first began with sleeping tablets. Then it went on to some kind of drugs," Lalitha Lajmi told Yasser Usman. Meanwhile, Guru Dutt had had enough emotional turbulence in his life and decided to leave Waheeda to give his marriage another shot. The husband and wife patched up and went on their second honeymoon to Srinagar. Soon after, they welcomed their daughter Nina. But this revival of the relationship was short-lived. guru dutt wife geeta dutt Geeta Dutt offering her prayers to late Guru Dutt. (Photo: Express Archives)

Guru Dutt wasn't meant for a normal married life. By 1963, Guru Dutt and wife Geeta, along with their two sons, moved out of their bungalow in Pali Hill as Geeta believed that the house was bad luck for their marriage. They temporarily moved into another apartment and soon after, Guru Dutt started living on his own. His brother, Atmaram, told Nasreen Munni Kabir that Guru Dutt was never meant for a "normal married life". "I don't think that he was meant for a normal married life. He should have lived like someone in France, where you live with someone and are not necessarily married to them. But Guru Dutt was also tied to tradition. It wasn't a question of unfaithfulness, it was more than that. He felt no responsibility towards his family, or towards society in any manner. He would not attend any parties or family functions. Geeta was a sociable sort, it was very difficult for her. When he was in his 20s and 30s, he worked round the clock. If he'd feel like going away, he would take his car and go straight from the studio to Lonavla without informing anyone. So there were a lot of misunderstandings. Geeta was a very good person, very talented; but intellectually they were not matched," he said, summarising their relationship. Despite the marital troubles they might have had, Geeta still loved Guru Dutt until the very end. Her son Arun recalled that she had a "nervous breakdown" after Guru Dutt died in 1964, and could not recognise anyone for the next few months. Less than ten years later, Geeta died in 1972 due to cirrhosis of the liver.

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