

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy hails launch of Vikram 1, says a milestone achieved

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy mentioned that the Vikram 1 rocket launched is a major success for the Hyderabad-based company, Skyroot Aerospace.Chief Minister of Telangana Revanth Reddy has hailed the successful launch of India's first private space vehicle, 'Vikram-1'. Taking to social media platform X, he lauded the launch event with the slogan, "Hyderabad Rising... Telangana Rising."According to Reddy, this rocket launch marks the huge success of the Hyderabad based firm, Skyroot Aerospace. According to him, Indian space industry has achieved yet another milestone."Telangana has become the center for the space dreams of the country," CM said adding that Hyderabad has gained international recognition. He congratulated the Skyroot team for this achievement. He congratulated 'Vikram-1' as it showcased the capabilities of the Indian private space sector.

Skyroot's Vikram-1 Reaches Orbit in Pathbreaking Launch

SRIHARIKOTA: Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace scripted a historic chapter in India's space journey on Saturday, becoming the country's first private rocket builder and launcher after its Vikram-1 debut orbital launch vehicle performed like a veteran and met all mission parameters on its first launch.

In doing so, Skyroot opened up the space sector to private commercial participation by demonstrating that an Indian private company could build a rocket and launch it from Indian soil. With Mission Aagaman (Arrival), India became the third country, after the US and China, to have a private rocket company successfully launch an orbital vehicle.

"Hello space, we have arrived!" Skyroot Aerospace said after the launch. "Vikram-1's Test Flight-1 has completed its mission. The first ever Indian private sector launch has been successfully completed."

The company plans to launch Vikram-2, capable of carrying up to 1,000 kg to low-Earth orbit, in 2027, while also developing a fully reusable launch vehicle. Once the technology is proven, Skyroot intends to offer "on-demand" fast, affordable launches for small satellites, positioning itself as a "space cab" for the growing global small-satellite market.

The seven-storey, all-carbon-composite, four-stage launch vehicle, built at Skyroot's Infinity campus in Hyderabad, was powered by 3D-printed engines and high-thrust solid motors.

Vikram-1 lifted off at 12.05.30 pm, after a brief technical halt, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota. In a record-setting flight of about 15 minutes, the rocket flawlessly cleared the launch pad, followed its designated trajectory and placed multiple technology-demonstration payloads into an orbit about 450 km above the Earth.

High-resolution onboard cameras transmitted breathtaking live images of Earth from space, drawing applause from scientists at the Launch Control Centre and enthusiastic cheers from students watching the mission.

The achievement was seen as a major outcome of the space sector reforms launched by the Centre in 2020, which opened the space ecosystem to private participation. Backed by the Indian Space Policy and supported by the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre), the mission underscored the rapid rise of Indian space start-ups, now numbering about 400 in just six years.

The launch was delayed by about 35 minutes due to a navigation-related issue, but once the countdown resumed, the mission unfolded flawlessly. The crucial third-stage separation occurred as planned. The first three stages were powered by solid motors, followed by the successful performance of the fourth (S4) stage, powered by Skyroot's 3D-printed Raman-I liquid engine.

After a precise engine cut-off, Vikram-1 successfully injected Skyroot's SCOPE mission to measure flight data, Cosmoserve Space's Embrace robotic arm, Grahaa Space's SOLARAS nanosatellite to study spacecraft subsystems, and German company DCubed's payload to verify in-orbit micro-deployment and release mechanisms.

Adding an emotional touch to the mission, Vikram-1



carried hundreds of commemorative cards signed by scientists, astronauts, investors, policymakers, Skyroot employees and well-wishers. Among them was a special handwritten postcard from Prime Minister Narendra Modi bearing the words "Vande Mataram."

Following the successful orbital insertion, Skyroot and Isro officially declared Mission Aagaman a "Grand Success."

Built with a lightweight all-carbon-composite structure, Vikram-1 is a four-stage launch vehicle standing 24 metres tall and comprising three solid-fuel stages and one liquid-fuel upper stage. Capable of carrying payloads of up to 350 kg to low-Earth orbit (LEO), it is designed to offer fast, affordable launches for small satellites, positioning it as a "space cab" for the growing global small-satellite market.

The mission also represents a significant technological leap for Skyroot, which successfully launched the Vikram-S sub-orbital demonstrator from Sriharikota in November 2022.

Calling it a defining moment, Skyroot Aerospace CEO and founder Pawan Kumar Chandana said it was the first time an Indian private company had independently built an orbital rocket, brought it to the launch pad and successfully sent it into orbit. He noted that the achievement was made possible by a team with an average age of just 28 years and highlighted that the rocket was built almost entirely using advanced carbon-composite technology.

Congratulating the Skyroot team, Isro and IN-SPACe, Chandana said the successful Vikram-1 mission had opened the door for more private space ventures, strengthened India's position in the global commercial launch market and marked the beginning of a new chapter in the country's space ambitions.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) played a crucial role by providing extensive technical and infrastructure support. The space agency enabled access to its solid motor casting and static testing facilities at Sriharikota, where the first-stage motor was cast and tested and the second-stage motor was validated.

The Raman-I upper-stage engine was tested at Isro's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC). Isro also assisted with vehicle preparation, stage transportation, trajectory analysis, launch-pad integration and round-the-clock safety oversight, while IN-SPACe facilitated access to Isro facilities, technical consultancy, mission-readiness reviews and launch clearances.

Govt preparing for deficient monsoon amid super El Niño threat: Uttam

Hyderabad: Expressing concern over the possibility of a climate phenomenon called by experts as a 'Super El Niño' threatening to impact current monsoon, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Ns Uttam Kumar Reddy said the State government was actively preparing to tackle the challenges posed by deficient rainfall and increasing uncertainty in respect of utilisation of water resources. Delivering the keynote address at a meet on climate change organised by "Symposium", a non-profit platform bringing together leading voices from academia, civil society, government and industry, the Minister said that he had been closely following scientific assessments indicating that the global climate phenomenon could influence rainfall patterns across India.



Clean, Prosperous AP My Goal, Says Naidu; Launches Rs15,274-Crore Urban Projects

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday laid foundation stones for public health and municipal engineering works worth ₹15,274 crore across 120 urban local bodies (ULBs), asserting that Swachhhandhra–Swarnandhra Mission would help achieve his goal of transforming Andhra Pradesh into a clean, healthy, and prosperous state.

Addressing the 18th Swachhhandhra–Swarnandhra programme at Gudivada in Krishna district, Naidu reviewed the Online Works Monitoring System, visited MEPMA women's self-help group stalls, inaugurated Integrated Solid Waste Management plants at eight locations, presented Operation Clean Sweep awards to nine urban local bodies, and released a coffee-table book on the Swachhhandhra–Swarnandhra campaign.

Recalling that Gudivada had been the constituency from which Telugu Desam Party founder N.T. Rama Rao entered electoral politics, the Chief Minister said TD promotes clean politics, self-respect, and honest public representation. His government, Chandrababu Naidu said, is committed to transparent governance, welfare schemes for all eligible beneficiaries, employment generation, and wealth creation.

The Chief Minister said cleanliness is not limited to just sweeping roads. It is essential to protect the environment and improve public health. He asked people to adopt a net-zero lifestyle by reducing household waste, segregating garbage at source, practising carbon-neutral living, and conserving rainwater.

"The government has already introduced 126 electric autos for door-to-door garbage collection. We would add another 1,104 autos shortly. Waste management plants worth ₹528 crore and eight waste-to-energy plants are being established," Naidu pointed out.

Underlining that 140 million metric tonnes of legacy waste left by the previous government had been cleared, the AP CM said Andhra Pradesh would become a garbage-free state by October 2 through implementation of Swachh Patham and Operation Clean Sweep.

Highlighting irrigation, Naidu said Pattiseema Lift

Irrigation Scheme has diverted 450 TMC of Godavari water to Krishna delta despite a 48 per cent rainfall deficit, generating a wealth of ₹50,000 crore. He reiterated that the Polavaram project and linking of rivers from Vamsadhara to Penna would permanently address drought in Andhra Pradesh.

Assuring full support to agriculture and aquaculture, the Chief Minister disclosed that the state government has taken up issues, such as falling shrimp prices and rising feed costs, with the centre, while continuing to supply power to the aqua sector at ₹1.50 per unit. He urged farmers to adopt natural farming and improve traceability and certification to meet global quality standards.

Naidu disclosed that ₹10,122 crore would be credited into mothers' accounts under the Talliki Vandanam scheme between July 22 and July 24, benefiting 67.47 lakh students. He assured that welfare measures, including Talliki Vandanam and assistance to Anganwadi workers and sanitation staff, would be continued despite financial constraints.

Attacking the previous YSRC government, the CM said voters had "cleaned up political garbage" in the 2024 elections. In this regard, he emphasised that obscene social media posts cannot be justified in the name of freedom of expression.

Referring to recent incidents in Srikakulam and Guntur, he asserted that law will be applicable to all, irrespective of political affiliations. No offender would be spared.

On the occasion, philanthropists Anne Narasimha Rao and Pushpa Leelavathi donated ₹3 crore for the development of Gudivada Bus Stand and Amaravati. Home-maker Sai Swetha donated her gold bangles for Amaravati. The homemaker's son Ganesh contributed his savings.

Those who participated in the programme included ministers P. Narayana, Kollu Ravindra, and Vasamsetti Subhash, MP Balashowry, and Gudivada MLA Venigandla Ramu.

Pawan Kalyan's wife Anna Konidala shares emotional Tirumala climb after his surgery

Hyderabad: Anna Konidala, the wife of Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and well known Telugu star Pawan Kalyan, who recently offered prayers at Tirupati has now disclosed how she completed the challenging climb to Tirumala.

Taking to her Instagram page to share pictures of her climb to Tirumala, Anna, whose trip to the holy place comes in the wake of the successful surgery that her husband Pawan Kalyan recently underwent, wrote, "I knew the climb to Tirumala would be difficult. I just didn't expect

prayers for our family."

"Every time I felt I couldn't go any further, I'd sit down for a few minutes, catch my breath, watch everyone else slowly making their way up... and then get up and keep walking with them. By the end, I was completely exhausted," she said and added, "But somewhere in the way I realised that nobody was climbing because it was easy. Everyone had their own prayer, hope or gratitude. Maybe that's why this journey stays with so many people. You arrive tired... but your heart feels lighter than when you started."



it to be this difficult. Not only physically, but mentally too. There were so many moments when I wanted to stop and give up. So I started counting my blessings instead of the steps."India news updates

She then went on to list all her blessings, saying, "My family. My health. The people I love. Everything life has given me. Support from millions of people and their

It may be recalled that Anna had penned a note of gratitude to the doctors who had treated Pawan Kalyan on the day he was discharged from the hospital after having successfully undergoing a surgery.

In that post, Anna had said ," Today, we were finally discharged from the hospital, and our hearts are full of gratitude. A heartfelt thank you to this incredible team for taking such exceptional care of my husband and performing his surgery with the highest level of skill and professionalism. We knew he was in the very best hands, and that gave our family something priceless — peace of mind."

She went on to add, "Our sincere gratitude to: Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwala – Arthroscopy Surgeon, Dr. Shyam Sunder Gaonkar – Senior Anaesthetist, Dr. Hitesh Yadav – Assistant Doctor, Dr. Arpit Mutha – Assistant Doctor. Thank you not only for your expertise, but also for your kindness, dedication and compassion throughout this journey. We will always be grateful."

Nirmohi Akhara moves SC, seeks reconstitution of Ram Janmabhoomi Trust

Ahead of the Monday hearing on Ram Temple donation theft, the Nirmohi Akhara has moved the Supreme Court seeking reconstitution of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust that manages the Ayodhya Temple, alleging the present set up lacked accountability and was inconsistent with the 2019 Ayodhya verdict.

The Nirmohi Akhara — a prominent Hindu religious denomination which was one of the petitioners in the Ayodhya dispute — has sought a forensic audit of all financial and property transactions done by its board of trustees and restoration of the 1950 and 1982 idols at the site in place of the newly consecrated idol.

It also sought appointment of an independent panel to examine if the Supreme Court's directions in its November 9, 2019 Ayodhya verdict had been faithfully implemented by the Trust. The Akhara has filed a miscellaneous application in the disposed of Ayodhya title dispute seeking implementation of the directions issued by the Constitution Bench in its November 9, 2019 judgment.

While the judgment envisaged an "appropriate role" for it in the management of the temple, the scheme framed by the Central Government has effectively excluded it from both the governance of the Trust and the conduct of



religious affairs, it contended.

Despite passage of almost seven years, the 2019 judgment has not been implemented in its true letter and spirit, it said, alleging that a private trust was established with some named members and some occupyin posts ex-officio.Referring to the recent allegations of large-scale embezzlement of cash and valuables offered by devotees, the Akhara alleged that some of the Trust members may have indulged in corrupt acts in relation to the property of the Deity

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

James Webb scripting new era in astronomy

For millennia, the star-lit sky has fascinated humans and triggered profound questions about the cosmos, the mysteries of its origin, and our place in it. This pursuit may have reached its watershed moment now, thanks to a series of discoveries made by the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), the most sophisticated 'window to the universe' ever built by mankind. On July 12, 2022, the world was treated to the first set of full-colour images beamed back by the JWST, marking the beginning of a new era in astronomy. The images coming from the \$10-billion telescope over the last four years have revolutionised our understanding of the early universe, galaxy formation, stellar evolution, black holes, and the atmospheres of distant exoplanets. Its discoveries have challenged long-held theories and opened new frontiers in the search for extraterrestrial life. Jointly developed by NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) over three decades, the JWST is humanity's most ambitious eye in the sky. Peering into the distant past, the telescope has been revealing incredible new details of the early universe. JWST is located 1.5 million kilometres from Earth, well beyond the Moon's orbit. Here, its giant gold-plated mirror can observe the cosmos unhindered, protected by a tennis court-sized sunshield that blocks our star's light and heat. All this gives JWST unprecedented sensitivity to some of the faintest wisps of light reaching us from the first few hundred million years when the first stars were kindled, and galaxies coalesced. The most significant revelation made by the telescope so far is that the early universe grew faster than anyone expected.

Ponguleti Reaches Out to Farm Workers During Kusumanchi Tour



"Khammam, Kusumanchi, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): "In a heartwarming gesture during his tour of Kusumanchi Mandal, Telangana Minister for Revenue, Housing and Information Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy stopped his convoy to interact with women agricultural labourers working in paddy fields. "While travelling from Mallayigudem to Kokya Thanda via Lingaram Thanda and the outskirts of Juijurala Peta village, the Minister noticed women engaged in paddy transplantation. He immediately halted his convoy, stepped out of his vehicle, and walked into the fields to meet the workers. "Setting aside official formalities, the Minister spoke with the women labourers, enquired about their hardships, daily lives and needs, and assured them that the government would continue to stand by the poor. "He stated that eligible poor families would be provided Indiramma houses without any political discrimination and reaffirmed the government's commitment to welfare initiatives, including free electricity and other social welfare schemes. "The Minister's interaction and assurances brought smiles to the faces of the villagers, instilling renewed confidence and hope among the rural community.

Telangana activists' meeting in Hyderabad: Bhuvanagiri



TUJAC Bonagiri Mandal President Kondapuram Srinivas reaches Amar Jyoti office (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 18):- The Telangana activists' meeting in Hyderabad was held at the Amar Jyoti office under the chairmanship of TU JAC Bonagiri Mandal President Kondapuram Srinivas from Nandanam village of Bhuvanagiri Mandal in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District. As part of the suggestions given by the Telangana activists at the Amar Jyoti office, the Telangana government should provide legality in the year 2026 without delay in implementing the promise given to the activists. "First, the activists should be given identity cards. "The activists should be given 250 plots of land and 10 lakh rupees for the construction of houses, free bus passes, health insurance and facilities. "The committee members were informed in the meeting that a monthly pension of 25000 should be given. Matta Anjaneyulu Goud, Matta Saidulu Goud, Allampalli Shankaraiah, Ratnam Yadagiri, Potta Kiran Kumar, Yata Ashok, Ballem Ashok, Allampalli Lakshmaiah, Nagelli Danaiah and others participated in this program.



Kagaznagar Police Conduct Massive CASO: Seize 60 Vehicles

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, July 18:"The Kagaznagar Town Police on Saturday conducted a large-scale Cordon and Search Operation (CASO) in Subhash Chandra Bose Colony, Kagaznagar. "The operation was led by Kagaznagar DSP Waheeduddin and supervised by Town Circle Inspector Prem Kumar. Sub-Inspectors Sandeep, Yadagiri, and Laxman, along with other police officers and personnel, participated in the operation. "During the drive, police thoroughly searched houses, verified the identities of suspicious persons, and inspected vehicles in the locality. According to Town CI Prem Kumar, around 60 two-wheelers without valid documents or found under suspicious circumstances were seized. "Police urged the public to carry all valid vehicle documents at all times and to immediately report any suspicious persons or activities to the authorities. Officials stated that such Cordon and Search Operations (CASO) will continue on a regular basis to curb unlawful activities and maintain law and order.

Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy Tours Kusumanchi Mandal

"Lays Foundation Stones for Development Works Worth ₹4.61 Crore, Distributes Welfare Cheques""Khammam, Kusumanchi, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): "Telangana Minister for Revenue, Housing and Information, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, toured Kusumanchi Mandal in the Palair Assembly constituency on Saturday, where he laid foundation stones for development works worth ₹4.61 crore and distributed welfare assistance cheques to beneficiaries. "Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that meteorologists have warned of below-normal rainfall this year due to the El Niño effect. In view of the changing climatic conditions, he advised farmers to move away from conventional farming practices and focus on alternative dryland crops that require less water, instead of cultivating water-intensive crops. "He stated that the State Government has always stood by farmers and has already extended support through the Rythu Bharosa scheme. He urged farmers to adopt scientific recommendations and modify their cultivation practices to suit changing weather conditions. "Development Works Worth ₹4.61 Crore""During the tour, the Minister laid the foundation stone for a BT road from the NSP Canal at Perikasingaram to Mallayigudem via Bhagavan Thanda at a cost of ₹2.52 crore, along with a Gram Panchayat office building costing ₹20 lakh at Mallayigudem. "He also laid the foundation stone for a BT road from Lingaram Thanda to the NSP Canal at Lokya Thanda via Kokya Thanda at a cost of ₹1.69 crore, besides a Gram Panchayat building costing ₹20 lakh at Agraharam. "Welfare Assistance Distributed""At the Kusumanchi Camp Office, the Minister distributed Kalyana



Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques to 66 beneficiaries. "He also handed over Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques worth ₹35.16 lakh to 111 beneficiaries who were facing financial hardship due to serious health conditions. "Local public representatives, government officials, Congress leaders and residents participated in the programme.

Collector Divakar TS Reviews Arrangements for Chief Minister's Visit to Godrej Oil Palm Factory

"Khammam, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): "Khammam District Collector Divakar TS has directed officials to ensure meticulous arrangements for the upcoming visit of the Chief Minister to inaugurate the newly constructed Godrej Oil Palm Factory at Anjanapuram village in Konijerla Mandal of Wyras Assembly constituency. "On Saturday, the Collector inspected the venue, helipad, parking areas and other facilities, and issued detailed instructions to officials of various departments and representatives of Godrej Agrovet to ensure that all preparations are completed in accordance with protocol. "During the inspection, the Collector instructed officials to make proper seating arrangements as per protocol and install clear identification boards for each gallery. A separate gallery should be provided for media personnel, while VIP passes should be issued only as required. He also directed that the main stage be constructed to safely accommodate around 100 people, with seating arranged strictly according to protocol. "The Collector emphasized that a minute-to-minute programme schedule should be prepared well in advance and followed by every department without deviation. He instructed the Police Department to provide comprehensive security at the helipad, meeting venue, approach roads and parking areas. "Separate entry routes should be arranged for media personnel, officials, VIPs and VVIPs, while adequate barricading must be completed at the venue. Separate parking facilities should also be provided for government vehicles, VIP vehicles and the general public to ensure smooth traffic movement. "He directed officials to finalise in advance the details of the Godrej representative who will address the gathering and communicate them to the concerned departments. The Collector also instructed that there should be no shortcomings in the audio and video arrangements. He suggested screening a video on the Godrej Oil Palm Factory along with government development programmes, with the final decision to be taken by the Revenue Divisional Officer. Adequate LED screens should be installed to ensure visibility for all attendees. "The District Panchayat Officer was asked to continuously monitor sanitation at the venue. The Food Safety Officer was instructed to personally inspect and certify the quality of food to be served to the Chief Minister and



Ministers. The Executive Engineer of the Rural Water Supply Department was directed to ensure an adequate supply of safe drinking water. "The Collector also instructed the District Medical and Health Officer to deploy doctors, paramedical staff, emergency medical teams, ambulances and all necessary medical equipment as per protocol. Electricity Department officials were directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply and keep standby generators with sufficient fuel ready throughout the programme. "He further instructed all departments to maintain close coordination with Godrej Agrovet representatives and personally supervise the responsibilities assigned to them. "The inspection was attended by Revenue Divisional Officer Srinivas, police officials, R&B officials, District Minority Welfare Officer Mohammed Mujahid, DYSO Sunil Reddy, Food Safety Officer, DPO Rambabu, Horticulture Officer Anita, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. Rama Rao, officials from various departments and representatives of Godrej Agrovet.

Divyang Welfare Representatives Urge Distribution of Sanctioned Scooters

"Khammam/Nelakondapalli, July 16 (Indian Chronicle): "Representatives of the Divyang community have urged the District Officer for Welfare of Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities to distribute the scooters already sanctioned to eligible beneficiaries without further delay. "TDAJAC Chairman P. V. Chalamayya, along with association representatives, met District Welfare Officer Prameela on Saturday to congratulate her on assuming charge and submitted a representation highlighting the issues faced by persons with disabilities. "Speaking on the occasion, Chalamayya said that 23 scooters sanctioned for persons with disabilities in the Palair Assembly constituency have remained undistributed for the past six months, causing hardship to the beneficiaries. He requested the authorities to complete the distribution process at the earliest. "He also demanded the immediate filling of vacant posts in the District Welfare Department for Persons with Disabilities. He pointed out that the absence of a Director for the District Divyang Welfare Committee has deprived persons with disabilities of an effective platform to present



their grievances. "He warned that the organisation would launch field-level agitations if the pending issues affecting persons with disabilities were not resolved. "The representatives thanked District Welfare Officer Prameela for her positive response to their concerns. "Among those present were Nazeer, K. Suresh, Jilapalli Venkateswarlu, Islavath Rama Rao, Mallela Ramadevi, Bindu Ramadevi and other association representatives.

Chhatron Ki Goonj Protest Held for Students' Future: Rayala Nageswara Rao



"Khammam, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): "State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao participated in a hunger strike organised at the Khammam District Congress Committee (DCC) office as part of the "Chhatron Ki Goonj" campaign, launched following a call by Rahul Gandhi. "The protest was held under the leadership of DCC President Noothi Satyanarayana Goud to express concern over alleged irregularities in national-level competitive examinations and to demand reforms in the education system. "Addressing the gathering, Rayala Nageswara Rao said that the Central Government should take responsibility for the NEET and UGC-NET paper leak incidents and apologise to students and their parents. He also demanded the immediate resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, holding him morally accountable for the controversy. "He stated that the movement aims not only to seek reforms in the country's education system but also to ensure strict action against those responsible for irregularities in national-level competitive examinations. Those found responsible, he said, should be removed from their positions and punished. "Referring to the nationwide campaign initiated by Rahul Gandhi, he said students and youth across the country were participating in the "Chhatron Ki Goonj" movement to protest paper leaks, unemployment and what he described as the Central Government's negligent approach. "Rayala Nageswara Rao asserted that the Congress would continue to question the Central Government over issues affecting students' futures and demanded the implementation of a transparent and credible examination system across the country.

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Flags Off SIR Awareness Campaign Vehicle



"UPPAL, JULY 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy flagged off a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) awareness campaign vehicle in Cherlapally Division. The campaign was organized under the leadership of senior BRS leader Nemuri Mahesh Goud to create widespread public awareness about the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls. "Speaking on the occasion, the MLA urged every eligible voter to verify that their name is correctly included in the electoral roll. He appealed to the public to complete all voter-related services, including new registrations, corrections, change of address, and deletion of ineligible entries, within the stipulated deadline. He said the primary objective of the awareness campaign is to educate people about the electoral roll revision process and ensure that they protect their voting rights by following the guidelines issued by the Election Commission, without falling prey to misinformation or misconceptions. The campaign vehicle will travel across the division, reaching every household to provide information on the electoral roll revision process and encourage citizens to actively participate in the SIR exercise. Several BRS leaders and party workers from Cherlapally Division participated in the programme.



(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 18):- Sudagani Raju Goudlu, husband of the 28th ward councilor, has submitted a petition to the Bhuvanagiri Sub-Registrar to cancel the illegal registrations made in the land with survey number 963 in ward 28 of Bhuvanagiri town. The Sub-Registrar has inquired about the details required to cancel the illegal registrations.

Telangana schools face action for failing to display class-wise fee structure

Hyderabad: The School Education Department has decided to withdraw recognition or permission from private unaided schools that fail to display a class-wise fee structure on their notice boards and websites for the academic year 2026-27.

In addition, private schools will face action if they fail to submit annual administration reports, along with the audited statements of accounts that are certified by a Chartered Accountant (CA).

Congress Help Centres Should Ensure Smooth SIR Process: MANDUMULA PARAMESWAR REDDY



“UPPAL, JULY 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal Assembly Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameswar Reddy called upon Congress workers to actively support the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) pro-

cess and ensure it is carried out smoothly and efficiently.” On Thursday, he inspected the SIR Help Centre set up at Vijaya School, Bharat Nagar, Uppal, under the leadership of Congress Division President Eega Anjaneyulu Mudiraj. “Speaking on the occasion, Parameswar Reddy said that genuine voters should not face any inconvenience or lose their voting rights during the SIR process. He advised Congress workers to coordinate closely with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and provide all necessary assistance to voters in completing the process without difficulty. Among those present were SC Cell President Lingampally Ramakrishna, Tummala Devi Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Prashanth Reddy, Afzal, Butkuri Madan Goud, Naveen, Ram Reddy, Ravinder Reddy, Komat Reddy Krishna Reddy, Irshad, Nayeem, Afroz, Asif, Waheed, Bunt, Eshwar, Vijay, Mohsin, Srinivas, Mohan Naik, and other Congress leaders from Uppal.

BRS Leaders Leave in Large Numbers for Telangana Yuva Sangrama Sabha

We Helped Revanth Reddy Win, We Will Defeat Him Too”: Telangana Unemployed Youth” “UPPAL, JULY 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Acting on the directions of the Telangana BRS party and under the guidance of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, a large number of BRS leaders, unemployed youth, and students left for the Telangana Yuva Sangrama Sabha at Saroornagar on Saturday. “The delegation was led by former corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj and BRSV State leader Prashanth Goud, with around 250 unemployed youth and students from the Uppal constituency participating in the rally. “Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj and Prashanth Goud alleged that the Revanth Reddy government had “completely betrayed” Telangana’s youth in the name of the Youth Declaration. They claimed that the government failed to fulfill its promises, misled students and unemployed youth through false assurances, and did not deliver on commitments related to the job calendar and employment opportunities. “They said the Telangana Yuva Sangrama Sabha, organized by BRS Working President K.T. Rama



Rao (KTR) at Saroornagar Stadium, was intended to expose what they described as the government’s failure to fulfill its promises to the youth. They added that a large number of unemployed youth and students from the Uppal constituency participated in the meeting, contributing to its success.

Parents–Teachers Meeting Held at ZPHS Arenda

“Manthani Peddapalli District, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): A Parents–Teachers Meeting (PTM) was held at Zilla Parishad High School (ZPHS), Arenda, on July 18, 2026, where various issues related to students’ education and overall development were discussed. “Addressing the gathering, Headmaster Edulapalli Narasimha Rao emphasized that parents and teachers should work together to ensure better academic progress for students during the current academic year. On the occasion, parents pledged to follow several commitments, including sending their children to school regularly, informing teachers whenever a child is absent, encouraging daily study at home, attending every Parents–Teachers Meeting, visiting the school every month to discuss their child’s progress with teachers, and interacting with their children daily about the activities and lessons taught at school. “As part of the programme, students presented subject-wise demonstrations and academic activities. A Science experiment on Neutralization drew appreciation from the parents. Mathematics students showcased an activity on Integers, while students delivered an English



speech on No Water, No Life. Sixth-class students also impressed the audience by giving self-introductions in Hindi. “The programme was attended by village Sarpanch J. Ramaswamy, teachers B. Sriatha, M.D. Giyazuddin, V. Sahender, P. Padmaja, A. Mamatha, K. Srivani, Cluster Resource Person Mallaiah, parents, and students.

Gaddam Sammayya Goud Appointed as State Secretary of Goud Jana Hakkula Porata Samithi



“Mahabubabad, July 18 (Indian Chronicle) : Gaddam Sammayya Goud, a resident of Mudupugal village in Mahabubabad district, has been appointed as the State Secretary of the Goud Jana Hakkula Porata Samithi ‘Moku Debba’ by National President Amaraveni Narsa Goud and General Secretary Ragula Siddiramulu Goud. “Speaking on

the occasion, Gaddam Sammayya Goud expressed his heartfelt gratitude to National President Amaraveni Narsa Goud, General Secretary Siddiramulu Goud, State Working President Ananthula Ramesh Goud, National General Secretary Kondapuram Balaraju Goud, and State General Secretary & Joint Warangal District In-charge Muthyam Narasimhulu Goud for reposing their faith in him and entrusting him with the responsibility of State Secretary. “He also thanked Mahabubabad District President Munjala Rajender Goud, District General Secretary Budige Bhadrasesa Goud, Secretary Merugu Mallesham Goud, Official Spokesperson Lingala Veerabhadram Goud, Kuravi Mandal President Thanda Nagender Goud, State Media Convener Kandula Srinivas Goud, and all the leaders of the organization for their encouragement and support. “Sammayya Goud stated that, as State Secretary, he would continuously strive to resolve the issues faced by the Goud community, strengthen unity among Gouds, ensure that every toddy tapper without an identity card receives one, and actively contribute to strengthening the organizational committee.

Former Uppal Constituency State Secretary Nerdam Bhaskar Goud Leaves with Supporters for Youth Declaration Meeting

“UPPAL, JULY 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former Uppal Constituency State Secretary Nerdam Bhaskar Goud led a large group of supporters to the Youth Sangram Sabha held in Hyderabad under the leadership of BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR). Speaking on the occasion, Bhaskar Goud alleged that the Congress government had completely failed to implement the promises made in its Youth Declaration before the Assembly elections. He said the BRS organized the meeting to protest the Congress government’s failure to fulfill its election commitments. He recalled that the Congress had promised to fill two lakh government jobs and provide unemployment allowance to jobless youth if voted to power. However, after assuming office, the government had allegedly ignored these assurances, leaving unemployed youth disappointed and frustrated. Bhaskar Goud further alleged that the Congress government had also failed to implement several other election promises, including Rythu Bharosa, Rythu Bima, one tola of gold under the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme, and enhanced pensions for senior citizens, widows, and persons with disabilities. He criticized Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy’s government for failing to honor its commitments and accused it of betraying the people of Telangana. Bhaskar Goud asserted that the BRS would continue its fight for the rights of youth, students, unemployed persons, farmers, women, and all sections of society, and demanded that the



Congress government immediately implement all its election promises. “A large number of BRS leaders, party workers, and youth from the Uppal constituency participated in the Youth Sangram Sabha.

Perini Dance is a Symbol of Telangana's Self-Respect : MLA Nayini



“Hanamkonda, July 18 (Indian Chronicle) : The “Perini Natya Guru–Shishya Parampara” celebration, organized by the Telangana Department of Telugu Language and Culture in association with the Nataraja Kala Krishna Nritya Jyothi Academy, Warangal, was held grandly on Saturday at Kaloji Kalakshetram in Hanamkonda. Warangal West MLA Nayani Rajender Reddy attended the event as the chief guest. “Before the formal inauguration, the MLA watched Perini dance performances presented by several artists. He later inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. “Speaking on the occasion, Nayani Rajender Reddy said that Perini dance is a symbol of Telangana’s self-respect and emphasized that preserving and passing on such rich traditional art forms to future generations is the responsibility of everyone. He appreciated the dedication of those working to keep this artistic tradition alive, saying that the commitment to preserving the art is more important than the number of participants. “He noted that Perini is not merely a dance form but a unique cultural heritage



that inspired courage, enthusiasm, and valor among warriors before they entered the battlefield. “The MLA stated that Kaloji Kalakshetram is being developed into a permanent platform for arts in the state. He said that after Chief Minister Revanth Reddy assumed office, the long-pending construction of the Kalakshetram was completed with the sanction of necessary funds, making it operational within a few months. As a result, the venue is now regularly hosting cultural programmes, helping bring Telangana’s culture and traditions closer to the younger generation. “Nayani Rajender Reddy also congratulated the gurus, artists, and organizers who are preserving the Guru–Shishya tradition of Perini dance and keeping the art form alive. He expressed hope that such programmes would continue to showcase the rich cultural heritage of Telangana to the world. “Among those present at the event were Nataraja Kala Krishna, Padma Shri awardee Uma Maheshwari, Dharavath Raj Kumar, Vijaya Rachana, Perini dance gurus, dance artists, and several other dignitaries.

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Thanks All for Making Youth Sangram Sabha a Success“

“UPPAL, JULY 18 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the unemployed youth, students, party leaders, workers, and supporters from the Uppal constituency who participated in large numbers and contributed to the success of the BRS Youth Sangram Sabha held at Saroor Nagar, Hyderabad. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that despite several obstacles, the youth stood united in safeguarding democratic values and raising their voice for their rights, making the meeting a grand success. He stated that the overwhelming participation reflected the determination and spirit of Telangana’s youth. “Bandari Lakshma Reddy said the meeting once again proved that no force can suppress the aspirations and voice of the youth. He asserted that the BRS Party would continue to intensify its fight until justice is delivered to Telangana’s unemployed youth, employment opportunities are created, and the promises made during the elections are fulfilled. The MLA once again extended his sincere thanks to every young man and woman, party leaders, workers, and supporters from the Uppal constituency who actively participated in and contributed to the success of the movement.



The services of the great leader Swargiya Kommidi Narasimha Reddy, who was dedicated to public service, are memorable:



-Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy “We want to see the state Chief Minister Revanth Reddy name the Bollepalli canal after Swargiya Kommidi Narasimha Reddy... Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy “We will work to install a statue of Swargiya Kommidi Narasimha Reddy in Bhuvanagiri town... MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy “(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 18):- Bhuvanagiri constituency legislators Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy participated in the ten-day ritual program of former MLA Swargiya Kommidi Narasimha Reddy organized in Brahmanapalli village of Bibinagar mandal and paid tribute to him. Later, they participated in the condolence meeting and remembered their services. On this occasion, the MLA unveiled the commemorative edition of Kommidi Narasimha Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, they praised the late Kommidi Narasimha Reddy as a great leader who worked for the



welfare of the people throughout his life. He said that although he was a great person who donated about 300 acres of land for public benefit, the fact that he did not even have his own house is a testament to his sacrifice. He recalled that Kommidi Narasimha Reddy was a visionary leader who spent his own money for the survey work of the Pillaipalli-Bunadi canal in 2001 and paved the way for development. The MLA said that they are requesting the state Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to name the Bollepalli canal after the late Kommidi Narasimha Reddy in recognition of their services. It was also announced that steps would be taken to install a statue of the late Kommidi Narasimha Reddy in the Bhuvanagiri town center. The MLA said that his commitment, sacrifice, and dedication to development in public service will serve as an example for future generations. Bhuvanagiri constituency representatives, party leaders, activists, villagers, and fans participated in this program.

MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy Launches BT Road Works Worth Rs 3 Crore in Bibinagar Mandal

(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – July 18): Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy laid the foundation stone for the construction of a new BT (Black Top) road connecting Brahmanapalli village to Yapagani Thanda in Bibinagar Mandal, a project costing Rs 3 crore. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA stated that the Congress government is according special priority to the comprehensive development of both villages and Thandas (tribal hamlets). He noted that the government is sanctioning substantial funds for the construction of quality roads with the aim of providing better transportation facilities to the residents of these Thandas. Criticizing the previous administration for neglecting basic infrastructure and employment opportunities, the MLA asserted that the current Congress government is moving forward by balancing public welfare with development. He remarked that the people would give a fitting reply to politics that seek to mislead them regarding employment issues. He further highlighted that the state government, under the leadership of Chief Minis-



ter Revanth Reddy, is rapidly implementing initiatives such as ‘Indiramma’ houses, new ration cards, women’s welfare schemes, and rural infrastructure development. The MLA stated clearly that the development of every village and thanda in the Bhuvanagiri constituency is the goal of their government. Bibinagar PACS Chairman Pottolla Shyam Goud, Mandal Party President Surakanti Satti Reddy,

Applications Invited for Guest Faculty Posts at Railway Degree College:



Principal Dr. Sushil Tukaram Ambedkar“Hyderabad, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): Railway Degree College, Secunderabad, has invited applications for the engagement of Guest Faculty on a purely temporary, honorarium basis for the academic session 2026–27, Principal Dr. Sushil Tukaram Ambedkar announced.“The vacancies are:Chemistry – 1 Post,“Hindi – 1 Post,Computer Science

– 2 Posts.“Candidates must possess a Master’s Degree in the relevant subject with at least 55% marks. Preference will be given to candidates who have completed their education through the regular mode. Applicants must also have qualified NET/SET/SLET. However, candidates who have obtained a Ph.D. in accordance with the UGC 2009 or 2016 Regulations are exempted from the NET/SET/SLET requirement.“For the Management discipline, candidates should possess a First Class MBA from a reputed institution. The maximum age limit is 65 years. Preference will be given to candidates with teaching, research, or industry experience.“The engagement is purely temporary and will remain valid only for the 2026–27 academic session, up to April 30, 2027.“Important Dates:Registration of Applications: July 20 & 21, 2026Classroom Demonstration and Viva-Voce: July 22 & 23, 2026For further details, candidates are advised to visit the official website of Railway Degree College: <https://sccrrdc.com/index.php??>, Principal Dr. Sushil Tukaram Ambedkar said.“

Every eligible person must register their name in the voter list: Ganta Ravikumar

“Warangal, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): Describing the right to vote as a powerful weapon in a democracy, BJP Warangal District President Ganta Ravikumar urged every eligible citizen to register their name in the voter list.““A special voter list revision program was organized at the Prataparudra Community Hall and Mahatma Gandhi Community Hall in the 33rd Division (Perukavada) of the Warangal East Assembly constituency, under the leadership of BJP District Secretary Manda Srinivas and District Leader Mengani Naresh. Ganta Ravikumar attended the event and reviewed the progress of the voter registration drive.““Speaking on the occasion, he appealed to the public to make full use of the special summary revision and new voter registration program being conducted by the Election Commission of India. He appreciated the initiative taken in the 33rd Division to create awareness among newly eligible young voters and local residents who needed to amend or update their voter details.““Emphasizing that every vote



plays a crucial role in strengthening democracy, Ravikumar insisted that the name of every eligible individual must be included in the voter list.“

“During the program, BJP leaders distributed enumeration forms to the Booth Level Officers (BLOs). BJP Mandal leader Muddasani Krishna, BLA-2, BLOs, and local voters attended this program.

Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy visited Shirdi Sai Baba



““(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 18):- Bhuvanagiri Member of Parliament (MP) Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy visited the famous pilgrimage site of Shirdi Sai Baba. Upon reaching the temple, he was given a grand welcome by the members of the Sai Baba Sansthan Trust Board. The MP, who participated in



Baba's special pujas, was given Vedic blessings by the temple's Vedic scholars with mantra chanting. Later, the representatives of the trust honored him with a shawl and presented Baba's Tirtha Prasad and a memento. On this occasion, MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said that Baba had prayed to all the people of the constituency to be healthy and happy.

Students Should Excel in All Fields: Municipal Chairperson Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand“



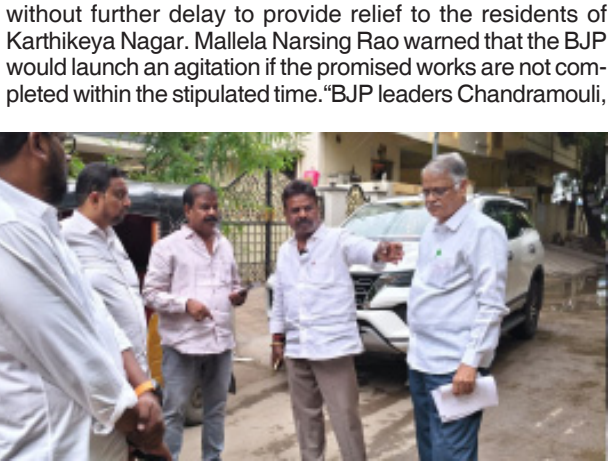
“Narsampet, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): Narsampet Municipal Chairperson Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand said that students should strive for excellence in all fields, alongside academics, and become role models in society.““She attended as the chief guest at the “Try Blaze” programme held on Saturday at St. Mary’s School, Maheshwaram, which was organized with the objective of encouraging students to shine in every sphere of life.““The chief guest was accorded a warm welcome by the students, who presented bouquets. She also congratulated the students elected as student leaders by presenting them with badges.““On the



occasion, School Principal Sister Spandana, Correspondent Rashmita, Sister Maria, and Sister Prameela felicitated Chairperson Pendem Srilakshmi Ramanand.““Addressing the gathering, she advised students to attentively listen to their teachers from an early stage and continuously develop their skills in various fields. She encouraged them to participate actively in academics, sports, and cultural activities to build a well-rounded personality.““She further urged students to stay away from harmful habits, focus on sports and physical exercise, and maintain discipline, stating that these qualities would help them achieve great success in life.

BJP Leaders Inspect Incomplete Road and Drainage Works in Nacharam

“Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, July 18:““Residents of Karthikeya Nagar in Nacharam Division have been facing severe inconvenience due to incomplete road and drainage works that have remained unfinished for the past two months.““On Friday, BJP Medchal Urban District Vice President Mallela Narsing Rao visited the area to inspect the ongoing works and assess the situation. He interacted with local residents and listened to their grievances regarding the delay.““He immediately contacted GHMC Nacharam Deputy Commissioner Nityanand over the phone and sought an explanation for the prolonged delay in completing the works. Subsequently, the Deputy Commissioner visited the site, inspected the ongoing works, and, in the presence of local residents, assured that the road and drainage works would be completed within seven days.““BJP leaders stated that leaving the works incomplete has caused significant hardship to the public and demanded that the authorities complete the project



Abhishek, Dayanand, along with local residents, participated in the programme.

Everyone should donate blood and save those in danger



Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Additional Collector Bhaskar Rao““(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 18):- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Additional Collector Bhaskar Rao said that donating blood can save the lives of those in danger. On Saturday, a blood donation camp was organized by the District Panchayat Raj Department under the auspices of the Indian Red Cross Society Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Branch at the Collectorate Office. Additional Collector of Local Bodies Bhaskar Rao and Additional Collector of Revenue Venka Reddy inaugurated the camp. Speaking on this occasion, Additional Collector Bhaskar Rao called on everyone to come forward to donate blood. He said that donating blood once every three months has the potential to save the lives of those in danger as well as staying healthy. He said that it is commendable that the Panchayat Raj department staff in the district have come forward to donate blood. Red Cross State Secretary and CEO Professor Sriramulu said that not even half of it has been collected from donors. He said that there are 8 blood banks in the state and the foundation stone for the construction of a building as the 9th blood bank will be laid soon in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district headquarters. He explained that for this, the State Red Cross has provided equipment worth Rs. 2 crores and it is commendable that



donor Sridhar Reddy has come forward to distribute Rs. 5 crores for the construction of the building. Sriramulu explained that so far 42 thousand memberships have been completed in the state as per the instructions of the State Governor and Red Cross State Chairman Dana Kishore. He called on government employees, volunteers and the public to come forward to join the Red Cross and do voluntary work. District Additional Collector Venka Reddy said that the youth should be at the forefront in donating blood.““On this occasion, 86 Panchayat Raj department staff donated blood under the auspices of Hyderabad Vidya Nagar Red Cross Blood Bank. In this program, Bhuvanagiri RDO Krishna Reddy, CEO Shobharani, Chairman Mandadi Upender Reddy, DRDO Nagi Reddy, Additional PD Suresh, DHMO Manohar, Deputy CEO Srinivas, Panchayat Raj Ministerial Employees Association District President Srikanth, District General Secretary Hari Siva Prasad, Red Cross District Chairman Dr. G. Lakshminarasimha Reddy, State MC Member R Mahender Reddy, Division Chairman Saddi Venkat Reddy, District Directors Sheikh Hameed Pasha, P Srinivas Reddy, S.N. Chari, Town President Y Purushottam Reddy, Division representatives Ram Reddy, Chandrasekhar, Lavanya, Kavitha, Bhagyalakshmi, Varalakshmi, and others participated.

R.S. Brothers Expands Its Fashion Footprint with the Grand Launch of Its 19th Showroom in Boduppall on 18th July

R.S. Brothers, one of the most loved family shopping brands, has reached a new milestone by opening its 19th showroom on 18th July. Located at Peerzadiguda, Pillar No: 93 & 94, Boduppall , this new store is set to become the go-to shopping spot for families living in and around the Boduppall area. The opening was a major success, especially with celebrity couple Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala coming to inaugurate the store. A large crowd of excited fans and shoppers gathered at the venue to catch a glimpse of the stars and check out the brand-new showroom.“Speaking at the event, Naga Chaitanya said: “R.S. Brothers has always stood for trust, tradition, and good fashion. With this new store in Boduppall, they have made shopping even better for local families by bringing the best styles right to their neighbourhood.” Sobhita Dhulipala added: “The moment you enter this store, it feels like a celebration. R.S. Brothers really knows what families want. Whether you are shopping for upcoming weddings or looking for the latest seasonal trends, they have something beautiful for everyone.““R.S. Brothers was started by Sri P. Venkateswarlu, Sri S. Rajamouli, Sri T. Prasada Rao, and late Sri P. Satyanarayana . Over the years, the brand has continued its journey of bringing together traditional designs and modern fashion, giving customers a great shopping experience with plenty of variety, reasonable prices and trust.“The directors of the Company shared their thoughts on this new launch:“Sri P. Venkateswarulu (Founder & Chairperson): “We are very happy to open our 19th store here in Boduppall. This expansion is possible only because of the love and trust our customers have shown us for years. Our goal is to make this store a one-stop fashion spot where families can find the best traditional and modern styles at affordable prices.““Sri S. Rajamouli (Founder & Managing Director): “With this new Boduppall showroom, we are bringing even more variety and value to our shoppers. We have timed this launch so we can bring our fresh Ashadam and



Shravanam collections directly to our customers, giving them the latest designs first.““Sri T. Prasada Rao (Founder & Whole-Time Director): “ We are excited to come to Boduppall and get closer to our customers in this area. We welcome all families to visit us and enjoy shopping for the upcoming wedding and festive seasons.““A Great Collection for Every Occasion“The new Boduppall store has launched with the fresh Ashadam and Shravanam collections. Shoppers can choose from beautiful premium Kanchi Pattu sarees, fancy sarees sourced from weavers across India, and gorgeous bridal wear. It is the perfect place to shop for the upcoming wedding and festive seasons. Along with sarees, the store has a massive collection of menswear, traditional ethnic outfits, modern styles, and cute, colorful clothes for kids. The team at R.S. Brothers warmly invites everyone to visit the new showroom at Peerzadiguda, Pillar No: 93 & 94, Boduppall. With great prices, high-quality collections, and special opening offers, it is the perfect place to shop for your next family occasion.

Women's Empowerment is the Goal of the Congress Government



Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya““Warangal, July 18 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal Member of Parliament Dr. Kadiyam Kavya said that the Telangana Government is giving special priority to women's empowerment and economic self-reliance. She attended as the chief guest at the “Rise Her–2026” Women's Empowerment Summit, organized by the Telangana SC/ST Industrial Chamber of Commerce (TSICC) at Red Hills, Hyderabad.““Addressing the gathering, Dr. Kadiyam Kavya said that the state government is implementing several initiatives for the welfare, empowerment, and economic independence of women. She urged women to always move forward with a positive attitude and encouraged everyone to adopt Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's principle of “Pay Back to Society.“““She stated that it is the responsibility of every citizen to uphold the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and strengthen national pride. She also stressed the need to provide 50 percent reservation for women and ensure equal opportunities in all sectors.““Dr. Kavya said that the Telangana Government is strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs) while promoting savings, self-employment, and entrepreneurship among women. She encouraged everyone to remain lifelong learners and urged

SC women, in particular, to excel in education, employment, business, and leadership, thereby playing a significant role in the development of society.““She added that when women confidently showcase their talents and make the best use of the opportunities available to them, it contributes to the progress of their families, society, and the state.““The programme was attended by Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIIC) Chairperson Nirmala Jaggareddy, Industries and Commerce Department Additional Director Srinivas Naik, PMEGP representative Ravi, SBI Lead District Manager Murthy, V-Hub Director Javed Akhtar Shaikh, TSICC President Nalla Babu, and other dignitaries.

Erstwhile BRS regime paved the way for Skyroot’s success

Hyderabad: From a startup incubated at T-Hub, Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace on Saturday scripted history after it successfully launched Vikram-1, India’s first privately developed orbital-class rocket. The success of the mission has also proved the validity of the startup policy drafted by the erstwhile BRS government and the efficacy of organisations like T-Hub and T-Works, started with passion by the former minister and current BRS working president K T Rama Rao.The milestone achieved by Skyroot Aerospace showed the success of T-Hub, the brainchild of K T Rama Rao, as within a short span of time, Skyroot Aerospace proved what the intelligentsia of the country can achieve if provided with the right encouragement and the right ecosystem.It was indeed a proud moment for Rama Rao, who rejoiced at the success of the mission. Congratulating Skyroot Aerospace on its achievement, the BRS working president said in a post on X: “

‘Narrative has to be built... we were lacking’: General Naravane on Op Sindoor

GNS News Agency, July 18

There is nothing inherently wrong with the Agnipath scheme. Many people don’t know that in the late 70s, there was nothing like pensionable service. The jawan used to serve for seven years and go home without any pension or any major corpus or anything like that. At that time there was no social media, so we do not know the objections which were raised, then. But we have on record senior generals of the army then saying — What are you doing? We will become an old army, how will we fight with old people? The exact opposite is being said now. How will we fight with young people? So HR policies change with time. Then it was seven years, no pension and it became 15 years, plus pension. Now it will come down to four with the policy of retaining some and releasing some. So it’s a mixture and there is nothing wrong. Nothing will be perfect — you cannot think of all the angles to something and therefore changes will be required. Three days ago, The Indian Express had a headline that the army and air force want 50% retention of Agniveers with the Navy looking at 75% retention. I’m sure that amendments will be brought in to keep finding new solutions.

You oversaw significant progress on Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence. Which indigenous platforms or systems developed or inducted during your tenure you think will have the most impact on future operations?

Drone and counter drone industry are the main industries where a lot of work had stepped up. The first drones which came in were from ideaForge, which is an indigenous company. But having said that, we have to accept that we are still at the assembly stage. Parts are still coming majorly from abroad, and we are assembling here. Self-reliance doesn’t happen overnight. So we are taking those baby steps. And as we go ahead, from assembly, we will get to manufacture — that transition period is on, it will take time.You talked about drones and anti-drone systems as key elements of modern warfare. The other domains are Cyber, Information and Space. Where do you think armed forces are heading on these fronts?

On the Cyber, Space and Information fronts, all three services are putting joint efforts. The future is not just about the platforms. It will be platforms, fused with the sensors fused with AI. So earlier we used to talk about platform centric, then we moved to network centric paradigm with sensor-shooter network. Now, going beyond that, we are incorporating AI into it. At the same time, Cyber warfare will be an overlay on everything. Whether it is a small weapon system or a rocket or a drone which has to be controlled or brought down, everything will have a Cyber warfare part interwoven. So at the time of design development itself, the Cyber-hardening of these systems will have to be done, not as an afterthought. This is how we will have to think ahead.Taking you back to Op Sindoor, are there any lessons for the Indian Armed forces? What are your observations as far as we could change or do differently?

I think our response was militarily excellent. If at all we have lost out somewhere, it was in the information warfare, the narrative. I think we were slightly lacking in that. Information warfare does not start once the crisis has started. Narrative has to be built and its seeds have to be sown. It is a continuous process. Even as we speak, it should be happening. Our ambassadors abroad, our DAs, trade delegations should know what picture is to be painted. And when the crisis arises, this narrative, which we have been building, should be made use of. That is where we need to focus. Pakistan tried to set the narrative that they are the victims of terrorism rather than what they actually are — the hub of terrorism. But we also have to understand information warfare has to be a nationwide effort, not just of individual services. It has to be a top down approach. The narrative to be known and passed down. Everyone is an ambassador in that sense, everywhere we go, especially in the era of social media. In the age of social media, velocity beats veracity. So you have to be first one. But when I say, velocity beats veracity, what we say should have truth.

After Op Sindoor, the tri-services continued their exercises along the Western front. New formations too came up including Rudra Brigade, Bhairav Battalion among others. How do you look at that?

Bhairav and Rudra were not directly correlated to Op Sindoor. These thought processes were in the pipeline. Structures keep changing. The Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) were started in my time as an initial idea and they are getting operationalised now. Basic motto is one foot on the ground. So with one foot steady on the ground, you bring in the change. The idea is to never lose balance.

What was the most difficult call you had to make during the Ladakh standoff? And would you have done anything differently in hindsight?

The very difficult call was when we lost 20 men. At that moment there was the thought that should we delay or stagger the announcement. I said, no, we cannot keep fami-

lies and others in a state of suspense. Yes we suffered casualties, it should not happen but it’s a part and parcel of our job. It was critical that we announced that straightaway. That was my decision and even in hindsight I feel it was a correct decision. I always told my commanders too that when things go wrong you must tell me immediately – after that it becomes my problem, it’s not yours anymore.

How much operation latitude does a serving army chief have versus political direction during the time of crisis, especially war crisis?

A lot of it. No two crises are the same. No two situations are same. In a similar situation with say Pakistan and with China there will be different methods to tackle it. And the person, the commander on the ground is given full latitude to handle it. When they feel it’s beyond their capability, then they look up for direction and more resources to use. And we also know our extent and areas of capabilities and responsibilities right? So these obviously, automatically, becomes a boundary too. But otherwise full levy is always given to the man on the ground.

On the international front, the conflicts in West Asia and between Russia and Ukraine continue to evolve. What key lessons do these conflicts hold for the Indian Armed Forces, and how should India view them from a strategic perspective?

First and foremost, I want to say that wars are easy to start and difficult to end. In that respect, India as a nation has been very mature in choosing what to do, what level to do and how to exit and stop. The Ukraine-Russia conflict has lasted longer than World War I. On the other hand, we have been very finite. So when we embark on an action, we must know what the aim is. The politico-military aim has to be clear and once that is achieved, one must stop. Lessons will keep emerging. Importance of drone warfare is another lesson. Vulnerability of large groups of people or platforms, whether it is ships or other such targets. There is also a lesson, you cannot do without the man on the ground. Earlier, if we needed 100 for something, we can now do the job with 50. But we still need that 50. Technology will never replace man.Post Op Sindoor, you were one of the first to talk about trauma of war. In a speech in Pune, you talked about how war impacts people. Because conflicts don’t just have strategic implications but also have social impacts.

When the cost of war is generally discussed, it is done in terms of cost in rupees, its budget. But there is also a social cost. Wars displace people. Just like the soldiers bear the cost, so do the people. Women and children are the worst affected in a conflict. Then there are human losses. Children lose parents, people lose spouses. It takes generations to get over such traumas. My wife has written a series of books on the subject, it’s called the Memory Tree and it’s available with Bare Bones Publishing. It’s a set of three age-appropriate books. It deals with the subject of how to help children overcome loss.

There have been three unfortunate deaths of cadets at the NDA since October last year. Do you think a change is needed in the way training is conducted at military academies?

We will have to be more stringent in our selection process. Unfortunate deaths have occurred in the past. When I was at the academy, a cadet had lost his life in the swimming pool. But the incidents seem to be happening more frequently over the last few years. Because of the basic standards, we might have to change our training regimen. Maybe, a three to four months of transitional period can be introduced. Maybe, a more rigorous medical check-up can be put in place including better ways of detecting underlying causes.What advice would you give to the young officers and jawans of today when it comes to balancing professional and personal life in the forces.I always talk of work-life balances. You will never say at the end — I wish I had spent more time at the office. You will always say – I wish I had spent more time with my family. So everyone in the forces need to have this balance. I tell the officers if you are going for a fitness run, take your daughter or your wife along. Find ways to spend time with them. Also never start a drill or anything new on a Monday because that will mean everyone will have to work on Sunday to prepare, I always said — start things on Tuesdays.

We know you said you are bored of this question but still do you see your book Four Stars of Destiny releasing anytime soon?

The publisher is in contact with the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The MoD has also invested their time and efforts in it so I am sure it’s in their interest to have it out too. My job was to write it. It’s their job to release it. I have written two books after that and the sequel of the Cantonment Conspiracy is with the publisher. In fact I even have the plots of the third and fourth books in the series all sorted out in my mind.

11.09.2025, Praveen Kumar Yadav again called Mohammed Kamran over WhatsApp and demanded an additional Rs 4 crore to close the investigation,” it stated.A preliminary inquiry by DGGI revealed that Yadav, the then senior intelligence officer of the unit, “was in unauthorised contact with Shri Kamran, met his acquaintances near Beer Garden/Parklane Hotel, Mysuru, and concealed these facts from his supervisory officers.”“The complaint prima facie discloses commission of offences under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018) warranting registration of a Regular Case and investigation into the same,” states the CBI FIR for the ongoing bribery probe.On July 7, the Karnataka High Court upheld the September 16, 2025 arrest of Kamran on charges of GST fraud to the extent of over Rs 21 crore through false claims of input tax credits. The court had overruled the businessman’s claims that parallel proceedings of GST violations had been taken up against him by the Karnataka GST unit and the central GST unit.“The contention that parallel proceedings are commenced and therefore, they should be stalled is a submission that would not merit acceptance, in the light of the judgment of the Apex Court in the case of ARMOUR SECURITY supra,” a single judge bench of the HC ruled.Kamran involved in receiving fake invoicesThe central GST authorities had found the businessman who ran a firm called M K Traders and his associate firms “were involved in receiving fake invoices without actual receipt of goods or services from fictitious and non-existent suppliers.”Kamran was arrested on September 16, 2025—the same day that he raised a complaint of corruption against a DGGI official – and a prosecution complaint was filed on November 13, 2025, for violations of the GST Act.

Mira Road crane was operational on 11th floor when it collapsed, killing one

GNS News Agency, July 18man killed after crane collapses, crane collapse kills man, man killed after crane collapses inside housing complex, crane collapse kills man inside housing complex, Mumbai news, Maharashtra news, Indian express, current affairsMira Road crane collapse: The exact cause of the crane collapse is yet to be ascertainedAt least one person died and two others were injured after a construction crane crashed from the 11th floor of an under-construction building at JP North Society in Mumbai’s Mira Road on Thursday, July 16. According to the preliminary investigation, the crane was operational on the 11th floor at around 8:30 pm, when it lost balance and crashed.

The police are now investigating to ascertain the exact cause of the Mira Road crane collapse, following which an FIR will be registered in the matter.Senior inspector of Kashi Gaon police station, Rahul Patil said, “The crane was operational and it appears the operator lost balance due to which the crane fell off the 11th floor. The operator appears

‘Grieving’ elephant that chased vehicles for 3 years after herd killed captured

An elephant that lost all other members of its herd in a highway accident in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh three years ago, and subsequently went on a rampage raiding crops, attacking livestock and leaving villagers terrorised in the Palamaner forest division, was finally captured and taken to an elephant camp for veterinary and behavioural assessments.Officials described the elephant as “grieving”, making its behaviour unpredictable and potentially dangerous to people as well as to itself.

The sub-adult tusker was part of a herd of four, including two sub-adult males, one female, and a calf. On the night of June 14, 2023, a speeding truck rammed into the herd while the elephants were crossing the Bengaluru-Chennai National Highway (NH-4) near Palamaner. Three elephants died, but this one escaped without any injuries.“This elephant lost its herd and became a grieving, solitary animal. Since the tragedy, it has frequently returned to the area where the accident occurred, crossing the NH-4 at unpredictable times. It became a threat not only to people on the highway, but also to itself as the possibility of another accident was high,” Conservator of Forests, Anantapur Circle, R Yashoda Bai, told The Indian Express.“It was not eating properly, chewing up garbage and trash, and its health was deteriorating. Villagers were also complaining about it. It had to be rescued,” Yashoda Bai added.The forest department was continuously monitoring the elephant’s movements and behaviour, and had spent considerable resources to keep it and the people who live in the area safe, officials explained.‘I thought I was going to die’During one of its many run-ins with people, the elephant fell on top of Palamaner Forest Division Forest Section Officer S Sukumar.

“I thought I was going to die. Imagine an elephant falling on you,” he said, recalling the incident.The incident happened on September 13, 2025, when the elephant was aggressively pursuing vehicles and people on NH-4. Sukumar and forest department tracker B Hari were trying to drive the elephant away when, even though it initially ran towards the forest, it suddenly turned around and charged at the duo.In the subsequent chase, the elephant slipped and fell on Sukumar. After a few minutes, the confused elephant found its footing, stood up and ran away. A seriously injured Sukumar was admitted to a hospital and spent weeks recovering. Months later, this week, he took part in the operation to capture the elephant.hyderabad elephant Using drones and thermal sensor cameras, continuous monitoring of the elephant was undertaken to confirm its identity, study its behaviour, map its movement pattern, and iden-

Sonam Wangchuk hunger strike: AISF to send over 500 protesters from Maharashtra to Delhi

GNS News Agency, July 18

Wangchuk has been on hunger strike at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar for the past 19 days as part of a protest by the CJP seeking the resignation of Education Minister Pradhan over NEET-UG paper leak. (Express Photo by Tashi Tobgyal)Sonam Wangchuk has been on hunger strike since June 28 in support of the Cockroach Janta Party’s demand for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The All India Students’ Federation (AISF) Thursday announced that more than 500 people from Maharashtra will set out for Delhi to join a mass demonstration planned in support of activist Sonam Wangchuk at Jantar Mantar on Sunday.Wangchuk has been on hunger strike since June 28 in support of the Cockroach Janta Party’s demand for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged paper leaks in competitive exams like the NEET (UG).“Over 160 tickets have been booked from Pune, 100 from Nagpur, and more than 150 from Mumbai. AISF, along with NSYF (New Students and Youth Federa-

tion) and Chatrabharti, is coordinating travel from the three cities,” said Shravani Buwa, Pune convenor, AISF.

“The whole thing started when Shravani Buwa posted a video on Instagram, which got a boom and support from all over Pune. People started approaching them, and now AISF is organizing free of cost travel for some students and helping them reach from Pune to Delhi for the protest at Jantar Mantar,” remarked Ketan Salve, committee member, AISF.NSYF State President Niharika Bhosale said they want to show solidarity with Wangchuk and students across the country. “This is a systematic issue, not just an academic one. That is why we, as a student organisation, are joining this protest,” Bhosale added.A young chartered accountant, too, said the issue was much more than just about examinations. “This is our support towards our people and asking for the government’s accountability,” the chartered accountant added.“Pune has always responded when education is under attack,” said FC College student Anuradha, adding that “after Jantar Mantar, it was the energy here in Pune that helped the CJP protest gain traction. We are carrying that same spirit to Delhi now.”

tify suitable capture sites. G Subburaj, District Forest Officer, Chittoor, said that it took months of monitoring and planning to capture the elephant safely.“This young elephant would have been happy and safe with its herd. Instead, it was lonely and disoriented with frequent mood swings,” he said.While the elephant showed aggression towards humans, it fled when forest guards or trackers approached it on “kumki” elephants — trained captive elephants used to capture or rescue wild elephants.We realised that it ran away because these [kumki] elephants were older and bigger. When we used young elephants of the same age as this elephant, it approached and tried to be friendly. It appeared that the young kumki elephants were trying to console him. This helped a lot in planning and managing the operation to capture it,” said Yashoda Bai.Since the 2023 accident, the elephant had continued to chase people, particularly two-wheeler riders, besides repeatedly damaging crops. It had also become a risk to itself on the NH-4.

The Forest Department submitted proposals seeking permission to capture the elephant. After detailed examination of the field situation, permission was accorded by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the Chief Wildlife Warden under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.Following approval, the Forest Department constituted an Advisory Committee, Field Capture Team, veterinary teams, tracking teams, logistics teams and communication teams. Using drones and thermal sensor cameras, continuous monitoring of the elephant was undertaken to confirm its identity, study its behaviour, map its movement pattern, and identify suitable capture sites.Risk assessments were carried out to identify safe darting locations, emergency evacuation routes and transportation logistics. Simultaneously, coordination meetings were held with the police, Revenue, Health, Animal Husbandry, Fire Services and other line departments to ensure seamless support during the operation.It was also decided to deploy five trained Kumki elephants from the Musalimadugu Elephant Camp, where elephants are trained.Finally, on July 15, the elephant was captured near Palamaner, not far from where it lost its herd.The whole operation cost around Rs 5 lakh.The elephant was transported to Musalimadugu Elephant Camp, where it will remain under veterinary observation and a behavioural assessment will be carried out.Deputy Chief Minister and the Minister for Forests and Environment, K Pawan Kalyan, praised the operation and commended the Forest department for balancing public safety with wildlife conservation.

CBI books GST intelligence officer for taking Rs 1 crore bribe from Mysuru businessman

GNS News Agency, July 18

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) last week registered a corruption case against a senior intelligence officer of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) for allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 1 crore from a GST offender in Mysuru in 2025.Praveen Kumar Yadav, who is currently under suspension from the central GST unit in Bengaluru, allegedly took the bribe from scrap materials businessman Mohammed Kamran, 24, on September 11, 2025, in Mysuru to drop a Rs 21-crore GST (input tax credit) fraud investigation against him.

The CBI took action against Yadav on July 8 — a day after the Karnataka High Court ruled that the DGGI’s September 16, 2025 arrest of Kamran was not illegal as claimed by the businessman.The Bengaluru unit of the DGGI had conducted a preliminary inquiry and sent a complaint to the CBI on October 6, 2025, and an authorisation under the Prevention of Corruption Act to investigate the officer on October 29, 2025.The case was registered only after the Karnataka government granted consent for the probe on March 6, 2026, and the Central Government accorded consent on June 8.According to the FIR, Kamran’s written complaint on September 16, 2025, stated that “during a search operation of his house on 10.09.2025, he was approached by certain officers of CGST including Shri Praveen Kumar Yadav” who “demanded a bribe of Rs 1 crore” to help the businessman escape the search operation.The FIR stated that around 9.30 pm on the same day, Yadav shared a location on WhatsApp and directed Kamran to bring Rs 1 crore in cash. It is further alleged that Kamran, along with his friend, went to Parklane Hotel, Mysuru, and handed a box of Rs 1 crore in cash to Yadav.“The next day, i.e.,



Punjab police resort to lathi-charge, teargas, and water cannons to disperse protesting MGNREGA workers



GNS News Agency, July 18

A protest by MGNREGA employees demanding regularisation of their services and release of eight months' pending salaries turned violent in Khanna on Wednesday when police used lathi-charge, tear gas and water cannons to stop demonstrators marching towards the residence of Punjab Rural Development and Panchayat Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond. According to protesters, 10 of them suffered injuries in the police action and were admitted to the Khanna Civil Hospital and private hospitals. Police officers, including Khanna DSP Vinod Kumar, also sustained injuries during the clash.

The employees, who had gathered at Prem Bhandari Park in the morning, marched towards the minister's residence on Amloh Road to submit a memorandum seeking the regularisation of over 2,000 contractual MGNREGA staff by merging them into the Department of Rural Development and Panchayats and the release of salaries pending for the last eight months. Police had erected barricades near the minister's residence. As protesters attempted to move past them, police resorted to lathi-charge, fired tear gas shells and used water cannons to disperse the crowd. Police said force was used after protesters tried to breach the barricades and advance towards the minister's residence. Ad-

ditional personnel were deployed and the situation was later brought under control. The Pendu Mazdoor Union, which extended support to the protest, condemned the police action. State president Tarsem Peter alleged that protesters were peacefully proceeding to submit their memorandum when they were stopped and assaulted. He claimed several women protesters were injured and alleged that police manhandled them during the clash. The union said Fatehgarh Sahib resident Sudagar Singh suffered fractures in both legs and was referred to a hospital in Mohali due to the seriousness of his injuries. Tarsem Peter demanded that the Punjab government provide free medical treatment and compensation to all injured workers.

In a separate incident after the protest, a canter carrying MGNREGA workers back to their villages overturned following a head-on collision with another vehicle near Bija village. One worker, identified as Sukhdev Singh, was killed, while several others were injured and admitted to nearby hospitals. Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring condemned the use of force against the protesting workers, alleging that the Bhagwant Mann government had "turned Punjab into a police state". He said the MGNREGA workers were holding a peaceful 'dharna' and chanting 'Satnam Wahe Guru' (Sikh religious chant), yet the police resorted to "brutality". He questioned the use of water cannons, teargas shells, and lathi-charge against protesting MGNREGA workers. "Is this how a common man's government deals with its people?" Warring demanded suspension of police and administrative officers who resorted to "unprovoked" lathi-charge on MGNREGA workers. Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal also criticised the crackdown, alleging that contractual employees seeking their legitimate dues were met with "lathis, water cannons and tear gas". "These contractual employees and labourers were only demanding their rightful pending wages... This is not governance, this is pure dictatorship and 'Danda Tantra'! You cannot silence the voice of the people with brute force," he said.

20 yrs before Satluj, a House divided: A debate on militancy that only reopened old wounds

GNS News Agency, July 18

The debate triggered by Satluj, the biopic on human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalsa, is not the first time Punjab has found itself sharply divided over how to remember the years of militancy. Two decades ago, the then Capt Amarinder Singh-led Congress government attempted to revisit that turbulent period on the floor of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. Instead of producing a common narrative, the debate bought to fore how the state was still divided over its past. On October 18, 2005, the Vidhan Sabha held a day-long discussion on the "Roots and Causes of Terrorism which caused huge loss to life and property in the State of Punjab". The debate, which stretched until 9 pm, became one of the few occasions when Punjab's political class collectively looked back at the violence that engulfed the border state during the 1980s and early 1990s. "As legislators rose one after another, the House relived some of Punjab's darkest memories — bus massacres, targeted assassinations, Operation Blue Star, the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, the killings of political leaders, police personnel, journalists, women, children and migrant workers. Yet, after nearly an entire day of discussion, there was little agreement on what had triggered the violence, who bore the greatest responsibility or even how many people had died.

Then Deputy Speaker Bir Devinder Singh set the tone by invoking Guru Gobind Singh's code of warfare, reminding the House that Sikhs were forbidden from attacking women, children, travellers, sleeping persons or unarmed enemies. By that moral standard, he said, the violence Punjab witnessed stood unequivocally condemned. He tabled figures to illustrate the scale of the bloodshed, saying nearly 12,000 people had been killed, including women, children, journalists, newspaper hawkers, political leaders, members of weaker sections, social workers, informers, government officials, travellers and security personnel. The list of police casualties alone reflected the intensity of the conflict: two Deputy Inspectors General, seven Superintendents of Police, 12 Deputy Superintendents of Police, 32 Inspectors, 61 Sub-Inspectors, 111 Assistant Sub-Inspectors, 267 Head Constables and 818 Constables, besides Home Guards and Special Police Officers. He also recalled passengers being pulled out of buses and executed, innocent civilians caught in targeted killings and the enormous price Punjab had paid.

Shiromani Akali dal's Parkash Singh Badal, who was then the Leader of Opposition, while cautioning against reopening old wounds, argued that Punjab's tragedy could not be understood without examining the political grievances that preceded militancy. He cited the unresolved issues of Chandigarh, Punjabi-speaking areas, river waters, Centre-State relations and what he described as the repeated misrepresentation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

Badal reminded that the Shiromani Akali Dal had itself been a victim of terrorism. He recalled the assassinations of party president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, former



Finance Minister Balwant Singh, Shaminder Singh, Hardyal Singh Rajla, Balbir Singh Ranike, Sukhpal Singh and several members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. He also referred to attacks on senior Akali leaders, including Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Jagdev Singh Talwandi. He described Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh violence that followed Indira Gandhi's assassination as defining events that deepened Sikh alienation, and reiterated the Akali Dal's long-standing allegation that radical elements had initially been encouraged by the Congress before the situation spiralled beyond control. CM Amarinder Singh rejected that interpretation. Instead, he read out a grim chronology of terror attacks that had scarred Punjab: attacks on Ram Navami processions, the massacre of Hindu villagers at Bhikhowal in Hoshiarpur, the killing of 27 Swaraj Mazda employees at Ropar, the Abohar massacre, attacks in Khudda and a series of targeted assassinations. Amarinder argued that while politicians debated the origins of militancy, ordinary Punjabis had paid the price. He accused sections of the Akali leadership of engaging with militants rather than confronting them, citing episodes from the late 1980s and early 1990s to question their political conduct.

His deputy, Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, shifted the focus from politics to the human cost. Punjab, she said, had lived through more than a decade of relentless mourning, where funeral pyres had become a daily reality and countless families had been devastated. Recalling passengers and migrant labourers being dragged out of buses and killed because of their identity, Bhattal warned against viewing such atrocities through a partisan lens. Terrorism, she said, was an assault on humanity itself, and no political party should seek electoral mileage from that tragedy. If there was one point of consensus by the end of the debate, it was that Punjab had suffered immeasurably. Beyond that, the divisions remained stark. Even casualty figures varied depending on whether those killed in Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots were included. Political accountability remained equally disputed: the Congress blamed the Akali leadership for its ambiguity during the insurgency, while the Akalis held successive Congress governments responsible for creating the conditions that fuelled militancy.

More trouble for Siya Goyal's family, food safety watchdog halts business

Trouble has mounted for the family of 20-year-old Siya Goyal, who is accused of murdering her 25-year-old fiancé, Ketan Agarwal. Following an inspection, the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has asked Siya's family-owned grocery business to halt operations for allegedly violating norms of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. The family-owned business deals in spices and dry fruits.

The inspection on the company's premises at Pune's Gultekdi was carried out following a tip-off. "During the inspection, authorities seized 84 food samples, including turmeric powder, oil, and soybean chunks, weighing a total of 4,172 kg and valued at Rs 8.13 lakh," said DV Bhogawade, Joint Commissioner of FDA, adding that the action was carried out as part of Safe Food, Safe Drug, Safe Maharashtra campaign.

"The stock was confiscated due to failure to comply with mandatory provisions under the Food Safety and Standards regulations. In addition, since the required corrective measures were not implemented after previous instructions, the business has been issued a closure notice, requiring it

to remain closed until further orders," Bhogawade said. Bhogawade told The Indian Express that they receive over 25-30 complaints daily, many of them anonymous. "However, we ensure each complaint is acted upon," he said. The samples will be sent to the laboratory and based on the report, further actions will be taken, he said.

Siya Goyal made national headlines after the investigation into the death of Ketan Agarwal, her fiancé and a 25-year-old Pune realtor, revealed that Siya and her boyfriend, Chetan Chaudhary (22), allegedly pushed Ketan off the Lohagar Fort near Pune. According to the police, the families of Siya and Ketan planned their wedding in February this year. They were engaged on February 19, and the wedding was scheduled for later this year. Siya, police have found, was in a relationship with Chetan since October and did not want to marry Ketan. So she allegedly plotted his murder with her boyfriend, Chetan



Karnataka draft apartment Bill: What could change for flat owners, builders, housing societies



GNS News Agency, July 18

Lakhs of apartment owners in Karnataka could soon see sweeping changes to how housing societies are governed, maintenance charges are calculated, and old buildings are redeveloped, with the state government unveiling a draft Bill to replace two 53-year-old Acts. Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar Wednesday set a deadline of August 6 for citizens, resident welfare associations, and other stakeholders to submit feedback and recommendations on the Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2025, which is likely to be passed during the next Monsoon Session of the Assembly. Karnataka Government data shows there are more than 25,000 apartment buildings in Bengaluru alone, with nearly 25-30 lakh flats. In the last year alone, about 60,000-75,000 flats were registered with the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (KREERA) in Bengaluru and its adjoining areas. The Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act (KAOA) and the Karnataka Ownership Flats Act (KOFA), which came into effect in 1972, have not been updated despite several shortcomings. The draft notes several shortcomings in the existing legal framework that the new Bill seeks to address. These include the failure to transfer the land on which common amenities are built from developers or landowners to apartment owners' associations, the absence of a clearly designated competent authority to approve and enforce association bye-laws, and the lack of clarity over accountability for safety and security within apartment complexes. The current laws also do not provide an effective mechanism to act against owners who default on maintenance charges, while overlapping jurisdiction between the Urban Development Department and the Co-operation Department has often led to administrative confusion. Additionally, the existing legislation lacks adequate provisions governing the redevelopment of ageing apartment complexes. With Bengaluru's rapid expansion and the rise of apartment complexes, gaps in the decades-old laws have increasingly led to disputes between owners, builders, and other stakeholders. The existing Acts, for instance, do not provide any framework for redevelopment, which is a growing concern for residents of ageing apartment complexes and the future of their properties. The new Bill also seeks to align Karnataka's apartment ownership framework with the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA), 2016, which was enacted decades after the existing state laws and whose provisions were not reflected in them. The Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF), a body representing more than 1,500 apartment associations, has been demanding a new law to address these problems. A major concern has been that some builders, even after selling apartment units, have allegedly mortgaged the property's title documents to secure bank loans, ex-

posing homebuyers to legal and financial risks due to the absence of clear regulatory safeguards. Any apartment project with more than eight units will fall under the Karnataka Apartment (Ownership and Management) Bill, 2025.

The draft Bill seeks to strengthen the role of apartment owners and their associations by giving them greater decision-making powers. It also proposes to bring the registration, regulation, monitoring, and compliance of apartment associations under a single authority, the Urban Development Department. At present, associations are governed by multiple laws, including the Karnataka Societies Registration Act and the Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (KREERA), which often lead to overlapping jurisdictions. The Bill also introduces clearer legal definitions for key terms. For instance, it defines "super built-up area" to include the carpet area, external walls, balconies, and a proportionate share of common areas. It further lays down provisions governing the ownership, transfer, and maintenance of common areas, an issue that has often led to disputes as builders frequently fail to transfer these spaces to apartment owners.

A key provision mandates that the land beneath common areas and facilities be transferred as an undivided share to all apartment owners, in proportion to the size of their units, thereby removing ambiguity over ownership and property tax liability. It also requires developers to execute title deeds for common areas in favour of apartment owners within 12 months if the transfer has not already been completed. The draft Bill also seeks to settle a long-standing dispute over the calculation of maintenance charges. While a recent civil court ruling held that all flat owners should pay an equal maintenance fee irrespective of the size of their apartments, the existing Karnataka Apartment Ownership Act links such charges to each owner's undivided share in the property. The proposed law adopts the RERA-aligned approach, mandating that maintenance charges be levied in proportion to an apartment's super built-up area, describing it as the "largely accepted norm." Separately, complexes with amenities such as a swimming pool, clubhouse, or retail shops can levy additional "community and commercial facilities user charges" for them, in addition to regular maintenance. For the first time, the proposed law lays down a statutory framework for apartment redevelopment. Any alteration, modification or redevelopment of a building will require the consent of at least 75 per cent of flat owners. It also empowers apartment associations to collect a dedicated "common capital" fund from residents to finance future renovation and redevelopment works.

Under the Bill, a Group B or above officer from a local body or planning authority will serve as the competent authority to oversee apartment governance. The authority will be empowered to register apartment associations, approve their bye-laws, inquire into complaints and resolve disputes. It can also take over the functions of an association if at least two-thirds of the apartment owners submit a written request. The Bill also establishes a multi-tier grievance redressal mechanism. It provides for a first appellate authority that must dispose of appeals within 90 days and a second appellate authority with a 30-day timeline. In addition, it proposes a State Consultation and Advisory Committee comprising representatives of apartment owners' associations and federations, government officials, and a chairperson appointed by the state government.

Karnataka doctor murdered, son stabbed inside Dharwad home. Wife is suspect

GNS News Agency, July 18

Dr Kiran Honannavar and Dr Priyanka Katanahalli Dr Kiran Honannavar was found dead with multiple injuries, while his wife, Dr Priyanka Katanahalli has been taken into custody. A 45-year-old anesthetist was allegedly murdered inside his apartment in Dharwad, Karnataka, while his eight-year-old autistic son was critically injured in a suspected knife attack. The incident came to light on Wednesday at Ranka Apartment, opposite Pawan High School, where Dr Kiran Honannavar was found dead with multiple injuries. His son was discovered with multiple stab wounds in another room and was rushed to a private hospital, where he remains in critical condition. Police have taken Dr Kiran's wife, Dr Priyanka Katanahalli, an ophthalmologist, into custody on suspicion, as the three family members were the only occupants of the sixth-floor apartment and there were no signs of forced entry. Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner N Shashikumar said the suspect was giving inconsistent statements and appeared to be in an abnormal men-



tal state. Police have registered a murder case and are examining CCTV footage, forensic evidence and witness statements to establish the motive and reconstruct the sequence of events. The post-mortem examination is expected to determine the exact cause and time of death.

'A passing motorist alerted us': Inside the first minutes of Mumbai's Coastal Road tunnel fire

Mumbai Coastal Road tunnel fire, India first undersea tunnel car fire, Mumbai Coastal Road Project accident, MCRP tunnel fire today, Shaunak Modi twitter coastal road, Saccardo ventilation system Mumbai, Breach Candy to Nariman Point traffic, Mumbai Fire Brigade rescue coastal road, undersea road tunnel safety features, Dharamveer Swarajya Rakshak Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Mumbai Coastal RoadA burned car was removed from the tunnel on the Mumbai Coastal Road today after a blaze caused thick smoke and disrupted traffic. (Express Photo by Akash Patil) "We were heading towards South Mumbai when a person in a passing vehicle alerted us that something had fallen from our car. I immediately asked my driver to stop. As soon as I got out, I noticed smoke coming from the vehicle. Immediately, my mother and other family members came out. Thankfully, all of us escaped safely," recalled 60-year-old Sudhir Nair, who was travelling in a Maruti Ignis with three family members, including his elderly mother, on Wednesday afternoon. Within minutes, flames engulfed the vehicle inside India's first undersea road tunnel on Mumbai's Coastal Road, forcing traffic to a halt and triggering an emergency response involving police, firefighters and the tunnel's automated safety systems.

The cause of the fire is yet to be established. By the time the blaze was extinguished, the Maruti Ignis had been gutted. No injuries were reported. Mumbai Coastal Road tunnel fire, India first undersea tunnel car fire, Mumbai Coastal Road Project accident, MCRP tunnel fire today, Shaunak Modi twitter coastal road, Saccardo ventilation system Mumbai, Breach Candy to Nariman Point traffic, Mumbai Fire Brigade rescue coastal road, undersea road tunnel safety features, Dharamveer Swarajya Rakshak Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Mumbai Coastal RoadA burned car was removed from the tunnel on the Mumbai

Coastal Road today after a blaze caused thick smoke and disrupted traffic. (Express Photo by Akash Patil) The first few minutes According to police, the family was travelling from Thane to Churchgate when they noticed flames emerging from the engine compartment near the bonnet. "They got scared, immediately stopped the car and alerted the police control room," an officer said. As panic spread, several motorists stopped their vehicles inside the tunnel. Nair said strangers were among the first to respond. "We are safe because of the helping nature of Mumbai's citizens. Almost everyone stopped their vehicles and rushed to help us. I do not know who informed the police, but they reached the spot within a few minutes and safely escorted us out of the tunnel." I have never experienced anything like it. Entered the Coastal Road tunnel from Worli and in a couple of minutes saw 100s of people running towards us. Asked one person and he said "aage aag lagi hai". Police said a patrol vehicle from Gaondevi police station reached the spot within about 10 minutes. "The officers shifted all four family members to the police vehicle and safely evacuated them from the tunnel," a D.B. Marg police officer said. The family, he added, remained in shock after the incident. Mumbai Coastal Road tunnel fire, India first undersea tunnel car fire, Mumbai Coastal Road Project accident, MCRP tunnel fire today, Shaunak Modi twitter coastal road, Saccardo ventilation system Mumbai, Breach Candy to Nariman Point traffic, Mumbai Fire Brigade rescue coastal road, undersea road tunnel safety features, Dharamveer Swarajya Rakshak Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj Mumbai Coastal Road The southbound lane was temporarily closed while firefighters extinguished the vehicle fire and ventilated the tunnel. (Express Photo by Akash Patil) According to senior Mumbai Fire Brigade officials, an emergency call reached the Coastal Road control room near Amarsons Junction.

US strikes on Iran strengthen Trump's options for new escalation, officials say



WASHINGTON, -GNS News Agency, July 18 Recent waves of U.S. strikes on Iran aimed at forcing open the Strait of Hormuz are also targeting Iranian military capabilities the U.S. would want to destroy before executing more complex operations against Iran, three U.S. officials said. The officials, who were granted anonymity to discuss military matters, said the strikes effectively strengthen additional military options for President Donald Trump, who has kept the world guessing about his next steps after notifying Congress last weekend of a formal resumption of conflict with Iran.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Now in its fifth month, the Iran war continues to rage after the unraveling of a memorandum of understanding that was meant to stop the fighting and pave the way for a peace agreement. Despite heavy blows to Iran's military since the start of the U.S. and Israeli campaign on February 28, Tehran retains significant drone and missile capability and has attacked passing tankers as well as its Gulf neighbors. The U.S. military has said its latest bombings have targeted Iranian air defense systems, coastal radar, missile and drone sites as well as small boats and other maritime assets. One of the U.S. officials said the strikes could be seen as "shaping operations" that are degrading Iranian defenses in case the U.S. military was ordered to carry out more intensive operations in the future. "This is helping set the stage, if needed," the official said. Reuters in March reported on U.S. military planning to create options to deploy U.S. troops to Iran's shoreline to better secure the Strait. At the time, officials said the Trump administration had also discussed sending ground forces to Iran's Kharg Island, the hub for 90% of Iran's oil exports. Such an operation would be risky, since Iran could shower the island with missiles and drones from the

mainland. Trump said on Tuesday he had ordered his military to avoid striking Iran's oil facilities during previous strikes against Kharg island. But he has left open the option of taking the island. "If we degrade them far enough and deep enough back, I would do that," he told Fox News. Trump has also threatened to attack a site linked to Iran's nuclear program known as Pickaxe Mountain, a fortified facility buried deep underground near one of Tehran's main nuclear sites. Mark Cancian, a retired U.S. Marine officer at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said Trump's willingness to publicly discuss military options like seizing Kharg island was a double-edged sword. It could aid diplomacy by putting the Iranians on edge. But it's "bad for the military, because we're saying where we might be going," he said.

TACTICAL WINS, STRATEGIC STALEMATE Critics of Trump's war with Iran, including within the U.S. Congress, say that while it achieved tactical victories that destroyed big swathes of Iran's conventional military and defense industrial base, it failed strategically to win concessions from Tehran. It also prompted Iran to exert unprecedented leverage over the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for a fifth of the world's crude output. Even if its conventional navy was largely destroyed, it could still attack commercial vessels using capabilities like drones and rockets. That has led to a debate within the Trump administration about the best way forward, U.S. officials say. A fourth official said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has been an advocate of escalating the military operation against Iran. Imran Bayoumi, a former Pentagon official now with the Atlantic Council, said Trump's sweeping comments in recent days on Iran appeared to be aimed at pressuring Iran in negotiations and keeping Tehran unsure about his military's next steps. "I would separate the noise from the actions," Bayoumi said. "I would expect the discussions between him and his national security team are looking a bit different than what he's posting online." Phil Stewart has reported from more than 60 countries, including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China and South Sudan. An award-winning Washington-based national security reporter, Phil has appeared on NPR, PBS NewsHour, Fox News and other programs and moderated national security events, including at the Reagan National Defense Forum and the German Marshall Fund. He is a recipient of the Edwin M. Hood Award for Diplomatic Correspondence and the Joe Galloway Award. National security correspondent focusing on the Pentagon in Washington D.C. Reports on U.S. military activity and operations throughout the world and the impact that they have. Has reported from over two dozen countries to include Iraq, Afghanistan, and much of the Middle East, Asia and Europe. From Karachi, Pakistan.

‘Could be a woman, absolutely. No reason why not’: US on next UN Secretary General

GNS News Agency, July 18

New York: The US has voiced its support for a woman to lead the United Nations, saying "there is no reason" why a female cannot be elected as the next Secretary General of the world organisation. "Could be a woman, absolutely. There is no reason why not," US Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and Alternate Representative of the United States to the Sessions of the General Assembly Ambassador Dan Negrea said Wednesday. Negrea responded to a question by PTI on a woman leading the United Nations as its next Secretary General. Negrea was addressing a press briefing organised by the New York Foreign Press Centre here on 'Outcomes of the High-Level Forum on the US Trade Over Aid Initiative'. The briefing was held a day after the US Mission to the UN hosted a Trade Over Aid Forum on the margins of the United Nations High-Level Political Forum. Negrea, in response to a question on the selection process for the world's next top diplomat, said: "The United States is very much involved in evaluating the candidates, and we are considering this an extremely important matter." He said the US has met with candidates vying for the top job at the 193-member world organisation.

"...it's a crucial, crucial matter on the efficiency of a very important international organisation. And we are spending a lot of time at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. on this and at the State Department in Washington. Yeah, very much so," he said. He added that while Secretary of State Marco Rubio has not met with the UNSG candidates, US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz, as well as other officials, have met with them. "I met with some of them, not all of them, but we are taking this very, very, very seriously. It's extremely important," he said. The process to select the next Secretary General of the United Nations has commenced at the world body, and so far, seven candidates are in the fray for the post of the world's top diplomat, of which five are women.

The following persons have thrown their hats in the UNSG election ring: former Chilean President and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and former Vice President of Costa Rica Rebeca Grynspan, Former President of the UN General Assembly and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Natural Heritage of Ecuador, Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces, Former Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Prevention of Genocide and Hate Speech and former UN Under Secretary General and



Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations, Ambassador Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Grossi and former President of Senegal, Macky Sall. UN chief Antonio Guterres, the former Prime Minister of Portugal and former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, will complete his second five-year term as head of the global organisation in December 2026. He had assumed office in 2017 as the ninth Secretary General of the UN, an organisation that had never seen a female leader at its helm in 80 years of its existence.

The Secretary-General is appointed by the 193-member General Assembly "upon the recommendation of the Security Council", the powerful but divided 15-nation body where China, France, Russia, the UK and the US sit as permanent members and have veto powers. A UN General Assembly resolution adopted in September last year had noted "with regret" that no woman has ever held the position of Secretary-General and had encouraged Member States to "strongly consider nominating women as candidates" for the top post. While the selection of the Secretary General does not follow any regional rotation, it is being pointed out that the next UN chief should come from Latin America. Negrea further said that while the United States has been "very critical" of many aspects of the UN, many places where it sees duplication of effort and wasted effort, at the same time, there are parts of the UN that are very, very useful, and "we want to work with them and harness their capabilities to this cause. He noted that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF are doing important work.

Over 500 feared dead as officials investigate reports of boats capsizing in recent weeks

GNS News Agency, July 18

Sydney: More than 500 people are feared dead after reports that two boats carrying members of Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya minority have capsized in the Bay of Bengal, officials said Thursday. According to preliminary information, the two boats left Myanmar's western state of Rakhine in late June carrying mostly Rohingya passengers, including some who had travelled from refugee camps across the border in Bangladesh, according to a statement from the International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

One boat, believed to have been carrying around 250 people, lost contact shortly after departure. A second boat, reportedly carrying 280 people, is believed to have sunk off Myanmar's Ayeyarwady coast on July 8. "While the incidents and casualty figures have yet to be officially confirmed, UNHCR and IOM are gravely concerned by the potentially devastating loss of life," the agencies said.



More than 500 Rohingya migrants are feared dead after two boats reportedly capsized in the Bay of Bengal during separate journeys from Myanmar. The vessels carried refugees fleeing persecution, while UNHCR and IOM await official confirmation and expressed grave concern over the tragedy

US hosts global meet on far-left political terrorism



Washington: The US is hosting an international ministerial conference on Thursday to discuss the resurgence of "far-left political terrorism" and joint action to counter the "renewed threat" to society. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will chair the meeting on Thursday and highlight the importance of deepening cooperation with international partners to better map violent activity, disrupt terrorist financing, protect critical infrastructure, and promote collective action "against a threat that respects no borders". "Far-left political terrorism is resurgent, manifesting in violent terrorist acts across the Western Hemisphere, Europe, Asia and beyond," the US Department of State said in a statement here on Wednesday. "These are not isolated incidents. They reflect a deliberate, ideologically motivated strategy to destabilise free societies by violently targeting our political and economic systems, including attacks against private

citizens, government officials, police and law enforcement, businesses, and critical infrastructure around the globe," it said.

The State Department said that for too long, this threat has remained a blind spot in the international community's counterterrorism focus, underestimated and under-resourced, despite the danger it poses. The State Department said that the US is taking a leading role in countering far-left terrorism. "Since November 2025, the United States has designated four violent far-left groups — Antifa Ost, the Informal Anarchist Federation/International Revolutionary Front (FAI/IRF), Armed Proletarian Justice, and Revolutionary Class Self-Defence — as Foreign Terrorist Organisations and Specially Designated Global Terrorists," it said. The State Department said it has also offered a reward of up to USD 10 million for information leading to the disruption of the financial mechanisms of these same four organisations. "In recent months, the United States engaged also law enforcement, counterterrorism professionals, and prosecutors around the globe through direct engagements, as well as the inaugural Counterterrorism Law Enforcement Workshop in May 2026, which convened 14 countries for a two-day, practitioner-focused workshop to exchange best practices for countering the threat of transnational far-left terrorism," it said. This Ministerial builds on that foundation, bringing together partners from across the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and Asia to expand coordination, enhance information sharing, and strengthen international law enforcement mechanisms to counter the threat.

US military says it completed latest strikes on Iran, targets included Bandar Abbas

GNS News Agency, July 18

WASHINGTON, - The U.S. military said late on Wednesday it completed its latest wave of strikes on Iran that it carried out at President Donald Trump's direction, with targets including Bandar Abbas, Iran's principal port city on 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. "U.S. forces struck Iranian command centers, air defense sites, missile and drone capabilities, and coastal surveillance facilities," the U.S. Central Command said on X. The statement said the U.S. military hit targets in multiple locations, including Bandar Abbas, home to Iran's largest port and key navy and Revolutionary Guards facilities on the Strait of Hormuz. "Earlier this morning, American forces struck coastal defense and cruise missile sites on Greater Tunb Island during a 90-minute wave," it added. Trump this week reiterated threats to hit Iranian energy targets while also threatening to target bridges next week. The 1949 Geneva Conventions on humanitarian conduct in war prohibit attacks on sites considered essential for civilians. After Trump's past threats to strike such targets earlier this year, international law experts in the U.S. had said such attacks may amount to war crimes. Trump also received condemnation in April when he threatened to destroy Iran's entire civilization before reaching a ceasefire with Tehran. The Iran war



began when the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on February 28 and Iran responded with its own strikes on Israel and Gulf states that host U.S. bases. U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran and Israeli attacks on Lebanon during the war have killed thousands and displaced millions. The war has also sent oil prices higher and shaken markets around the world (This story has been refilled to add the dropped word 'higher' in the last bullet point) Reporting by Kanishka Singh and Jasper Ward in Washington; Editing by Michael Perry Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tab Kanishka Singh is a breaking news reporter for Reuters in Washington DC, who primarily covers US politics and national

Ukraine's Zelenskiy endorses energy boss as PM, will change his defence minister, lawmakers say

KYIV, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy endorsed the head of the state energy company as Ukraine's new prime minister on Wednesday and lawmakers said he planned to replace his defence minister at a pivotal juncture in the war with Russia. Some lawmakers and commentators expressed dismay at the departure of Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, saying it would hurt Ukraine's war effort just as it was hitting Russia's oil industry and slowing the frontline advances of Moscow's forces. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. Zelenskiy pushed out Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko this week after just a year on the job. Parliament accepted her resignation on Tuesday and is expected to vote on her successor on Thursday. Zelenskiy has given little explanation for the move so far, apart from saying the aim is to refresh the leadership.

Speaking to reporters in Kyiv, Zelenskiy said the CEO of the state-owned energy company Naftogaz, Sergii Koretskyy, was the best candidate for prime minister, because Ukraine's priority was preparing for the upcoming winter. "The priorities are clear – preparing for winter," Zelenskiy said. "Therefore, following all the consultations, Sergii Koretskyy is surely the most prepared candidate for the post of prime minister of Ukraine." Outgoing Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko's removal, after just a year in office, triggered the resignation of the whole government. Parliament names the prime minister and is likely to accept Zelenskiy's preferred candidate as prime minister as his Servant of the People party controls a majority. **FOCUS ON THE DEFENCE MINISTRY IN WARTIME** But much of the focus on the government line-up was fixed on whether Zelenskiy would keep Fedorov, a 35-year-old tech expert, as defence minister nearly 4-1/2 years into the war with Russia. Members of parliament, posting on social media after a meeting with the president, said he would appoint Ihor Klymenko, interior minister since 2023, to take on the defence portfolio. Olha Vasylevska-Smahliuk, from Zelenskiy's ruling Servant of the People party, said that Klymenko would be put forward. It was not immediately clear whether another government job would be offered to Fedorov, who during his six-month tenure as defence minister has led an ambitious campaign to transform Ukraine's outmanned army into a more efficient fighting force. Some lawmakers said Zelenskiy's decision to replace Fedorov as defence minister would not help Ukraine's war effort. Oleksandr Merezhko, the chair of parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and member of Zelenskiy's party, expressed disappointment. "Fedorov... is highly respected amongst our international partners," he said on social media. "His name was associated with hopes for genuine reforms within the Ministry of Defence." Maria Berlinska, a prominent volunteer and drone warfare advocate, said Fedorov's replacement was "one of President Zelenskiy's biggest mistakes." "This decision by the president will not only cost us, it will cost us hugely. The price will be the lives and health of hundreds of thousands of people ... if not more." Fedorov, writing on Telegram, said it had been a "great honour" to serve Ukraine and compiled two sets of objectives - those already achieved, including investments in drones and a revamp of procurements. Others to be completed included "organising the transformation of the



Defence Ministry to the standards of NATO and common sense". The episode threatens to further dent public and parliamentary trust in Zelenskiy's wartime leadership, just when Ukraine's fortunes appear to be reversing. Ukraine also still faces critical challenges like a shortage of air defences and manpower. Russia says it is on course to achieve its goals in the war, now in its fifth year. Fedorov's attempts to clean up defence procurement have angered parts of the establishment, his supporters say. He has also been criticized by some lawmakers for failing to deliver quickly enough on his pledge to reform recruitment. Previously, as Ukraine's first minister for digital transformation, Fedorov streamlined key state services into a now-ubiquitous app. As defence minister, he has been credited with boosting drone procurement and pursuing a data-driven strategy of exhausting Russian forces. Despite its success, Ukraine lacks U.S.-designed interceptors to shoot down the ballistic missiles that have rained down on major cities like Kyiv in greater numbers. Officials are bracing for another winter of Russian strikes on the power grid. Fedorov's reforms to alleviate the army's manpower shortage remain in progress, while abuse and mismanagement still plague the draft and some military units. On the battlefield, Russia is grinding toward Ukraine's "fortress belt" of cities in the eastern Donetsk region that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to occupy fully. Additional reporting by Anna Pruchnicka, Olena Harmash and Yuliia Dysa; Editing by Mike Collett-White, Sharon Singleton, Ron Popeski, Nick Zieminski and Stephen Coates

US Mint to strike \$1 coin featuring Donald Trump for America's 250th anniversary

Washington: The US Mint will begin striking a new \$1 coin featuring President Donald Trump to commemorate 250 years of American independence, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Wednesday. The coin carries a portrait of Trump on one side. The word "Liberty" appears above the portrait, while the dates 1776-2026 are engraved below it. The words "In God We Trust" appear beside Trump's portrait. Two stars flank the image.

Tiny farmers: Ants began farming fungi 66 million years ago, says new study



Long before humans planted crops like wheat or rice, ants were already farming. These tiny animals have been cultivating fungi for millions of years, developing a system that rivals our own agriculture in complexity. New research led by entomologist Ted Schultz from the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History traces this practice back 66 million years, right after the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs.

In a study, published earlier this month in *Science*, Schultz and his team used genetic data to uncover the early stages of this farming relationship. After the asteroid impact ended the Cretaceous period, plants across the globe began dying. But fungi thrived, feeding on decaying plant material. For ants, this provided the ideal conditions to start cultivating fungi as a reliable food source. Schultz explained that the aftermath of the asteroid impact created ideal conditions for fungi to flourish. While it was a disaster for plants and dinosaurs, it created new opportunities for the organisms studied by the researchers.

The study revealed that 66 million years ago, ants began collecting organic debris to fuel fungal growth. This was the beginning of ant farming. Over time, their agriculture became more specialised. Around 27 million years ago, as the planet's climate cooled, ants domesticated certain fungi. These species became fully dependent on the ants for survival, while the ants relied on them for food. Similar to humans domesticating crops, ants took their fungi from tropical forests into drier environments. These isolated fungi became reliant on the ants' care in the new, more arid habitats. Leafcutter ants, for example, now grow a specific fungus that produces nutritious food bodies called gongyliidia,

which are used to feed their young. Ants also practice many behaviours that mirror human farming. They weed their fungal gardens, use bacteria on their bodies to apply antibiotics, and even pass down their crops to future generations. When a new queen establishes a colony, she carries a piece of her mother's fungal garden to start the next farm. Currently, there are 247 species of fungus-farming ants found across the Americas. These species are all descended from the first ants that began farming after the asteroid impact. Leafcutter ants were first observed farming fungi 150 years ago by naturalists, and Schultz's study adds new depth to this discovery, using advanced genetic tools to map out their evolutionary history. Why did ants start farming? Schultz believes the asteroid played a major role. When the dust and debris from the impact blocked out the sun, many plants and the animals that fed on them died off. Fungi, however, thrived in the dead vegetation. Ants, already familiar with fungi, began farming them, setting off a relationship that has lasted for millions of years.

The research also highlights a key moment 27 million years ago, when ants began practicing "higher" agriculture, fully domesticating fungi that could no longer live independently. This advanced farming allowed ants to thrive in new environments where their crops depended on carefully controlled conditions. Despite facing challenges that human farmers also face, such as managing disease in their monocultures, ants have maintained a stable farming system. Schultz points out that while human monocultures are vulnerable to crop failure, ants have somehow managed to avoid this, possibly through their use of antibiotics. Researchers are still investigating how ants maintain this balance. Ant agriculture offers a glimpse into a system that has survived mass extinctions, climate change, and infectious diseases. Schultz believes there is still a lot to uncover about these tiny farmers.

He highlights the vast diversity among fungus-farming ants, many of which are still waiting to be discovered. "Ants have been practicing agriculture and fungus farming for much longer than humans have existed," says Schultz, adding that "we could probably learn something from the agricultural success of these ants over the past 66 million years." Anirban Mahapatra is a scientist and author, most recently of the popular science book 'When The Drugs Don't Work: The Hidden Pandemic That Could End Medicine'. The views expressed are personal.

Why is the rupee weakening against the dollar? | Explained



The story so far: In the last week of December, 2024, the rupee breached the 85 mark against the U.S. dollar, touching an all-time low of 85.81. The currency depreciated about 3% in 2024, continuing its long-term trend of gradually but consistently losing value against the dollar.

What causes a currency to depreciate?

The price of any currency in the foreign exchange market is determined by the demand for the currency vis-a-vis its supply. This is similar to how the price of any other product is determined in the marketplace. When the demand for a product rises while its supply remains constant, this causes the price of the product to rise in order to ration the available supply. On the other hand, when the demand for a product drops while its supply remains constant, this causes sellers to drop the price of the product in order to attract sufficient buyers. The only difference between the goods market and the forex market is that currencies are exchanged for other currencies rather than for goods in the foreign exchange market. A currency depreciates against a foreign currency when the demand for it (in terms of the foreign currency) drops compared to its available supply in the market. When the currency's value depreciates, the value of the foreign currency automatically appreciates on the other side. This is similar to how the purchasing power of your money depreciates or appreciates when the price of goods in the marketplace rise or fall, respectively. There are various factors that determine the demand for and the supply of any currency in the foreign exchange market.

One of the most important determinants of the supply of a currency in the market is the monetary policy of a country's central bank. A central bank adopting looser monetary policy compared with other central banks will cause the supply of its currency in the market (for both goods trade

and investment purposes) to rise relative to other currencies, causing the currency's value to drop. Central banks adopting relatively tighter monetary policy, on the other hand, are likely to see their currencies appreciate in value. A crucial factor that determines the demand for any currency, on the other hand, is the demand among foreigners for the goods and assets of the country. Since foreigners will first have to purchase the local currency before they can purchase a country's goods and assets, high demand for a country's goods and assets translates to high demand for its currency and which in turn leads to a rise in the value of the currency. A fall in demand for a country's goods or assets, on the other hand, will cause the value of its currency to fall.

What is behind the rupee's fall?

The current bout of rupee depreciation is seen as driven primarily by the exit of foreign investors from India, which has put pressure on the rupee. Global investors have been shuffling their investments across countries as central banks recalibrate their monetary policies to varying degrees. High inflation in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic led to monetary tightening by central banks which is now being reversed as inflation comes more under control. This has pushed investors to withdraw money from markets like India and invest in more advanced markets. Meanwhile, the longer term trend of the rupee's depreciation against the dollar is attributed to higher inflation in India than in the U.S. due to the Reserve Bank of India's looser monetary policy compared to the U.S. Federal Reserve. India's traditional demand for high-value imports such as crude oil and gold (which boosts demand for the dollar and weakens the rupee) to keep its economy going and its inability to boost exports (which can help boost demand for the rupee) have also contributed to the lackluster performance of the rupee. The RBI has been using its dollar reserves to prop up the value of the rupee by artificially increasing the supply of dollars in the foreign exchange market, and thus the dollar demand for rupees. As a result, the value of India's foreign exchange reserves dropped to an eight-month low of \$640 billion as of the last week of December from over \$700 billion in September. Analysts believe the rupee's depreciation would have been far worse if not for the RBI's intervention to support the rupee against the dollar. The RBI's traditional stance has been to manage the rupee's exchange value in such a way as to allow for a gradual depreciation in its value without too much volatility that could disrupt the economy.

India needs to prioritise preventive care

India is facing a healthcare crisis that is growing both in scope and cost. We face an alarming dichotomy today: while life expectancy of Indians is expected to increase further, many are facing disease burden earlier. As the country sees an alarming rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer, the financial burden on individuals and the healthcare system continues to escalate. NCDs accounted for about 65% of all deaths in 2022, up from about 50% in 2010-13, as per the National Family Health Survey-5. The prevalence of risk factors for NCDs is worryingly high. One in four adult men are hypertensive. One in eight are diabetic. Further, breast, lung, and cervical cancer are on the rise, with the median age of diagnosis occurring earlier than global averages.

Millions of people who are facing these conditions could have been managed better, at often lower costs, had they been diagnosed earlier. In this context, shifting the focus from reactive treatment to proactive prevention is crucial, not only to improve health outcomes but also to control the ever-increasing healthcare expenses. A growing economic burden

The Union Budget for 2024 allocated ₹87,657 crore to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, marking a 13% increase from the previous year. While this is a step forward, experts agree that this allocation remains insufficient given the scale of India's health challenges. The National Health Accounts show the total current health expenditure estimate in 2021-22 as ₹7.9 lakh crore, growing at a rate more than overall inflation. The share of household health expenditure, including insurance contributions, while decreasing over time, still drives nearly 50%+ of the spend. This remains one of the highest globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that the economic burden of NCDs in India will surpass ₹280 lakh crore by 2030 — a cost equivalent to ₹2 lakh per household. This escalating cost, driven by rising healthcare expenses and productivity losses, poses a severe threat to financial stability, particularly for middle and lower-income families. Regular screenings, especially for high-risk individuals, could significantly reduce the incidence of serious, life-threatening and debilitating conditions and its resultant cascading economic and social effects. In a large hospital network, for every 1,000 people screened, at least three people are identified for pre-emptive cardiac or cancer interventions. Targeted but periodic screening investigations for individuals such as mammograms for breast cancer, pap smears for cervical cancer, X-ray or low-dose computed tomography for lung cancer, ultrasound for liver disease, echo cardiography and treadmill stress test for heart disease beyond the physical vitals and blood tests enable early intervention. Unfortunately, comprehensive health checks (which can cost anywhere between ₹8,000 and ₹15,000 in metro cities today) are perceived as expensive. If the government were to enable a step change in preventive health services adoption, it could significantly reduce the overall financial burden on individuals and the healthcare system. Tax incentives, subsidised screenings, and public awareness are key policy tools that can enable this. As part of the Finance Act, 2013, the Union government made efforts to encourage preventive healthcare by offering a ₹5,000 tax deduction under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act for health checks. However, this amount has remained stagnant for the last decade, despite the 12-14% estimated healthcare inflation rate and the rising cost of healthcare services. Thus, it would be prudent for our policymakers to consider revising the tax deduction limit to at least ₹15,000 in the Union Budget for 2025-26. This would incentivise more individuals to undergo preventive health checks, potentially saving the nation several thousand of crores in future healthcare costs. The incremental tax foregone to the exchequer from such a measure is estimated to be less than ₹5,000 crore, a worthy investment towards improving the health of the nation.

The path forward We need to prioritise preventive care to mitigate the increasing economic and financial burden of chronic diseases. A three-pronged approach can potentially drive a change in the adoption of preventive health services. First, we need to strengthen early intervention capabilities through the Ayushman Health and Wellness Centres, including capturing trends effectively and enabling risk-driven targeted screening using AI-enabled imaging



modalities to offer lower cost screenings at-scale. Second, we need to improve the adoption of screening at private centres by encouraging insurers and private health providers to offer a subsidised minimum screening programme for every individual between 40-60 years. For example, for women after the age of 40, a mammogram is necessary annually or once in two years, based on her risk factors. Exploring part funding through allocations from proceeds from the healthcare cess or the proposed 35% GST slab on tobacco and sugar products can help reduce funding needs. Finally, the increase in tax deduction limit can further incentivise people to complete comprehensive health checks. By prioritising preventive care over reactive treatments, India can pave the way for a healthier and more economically resilient future.

Reel consumers get note from Karan Johar

Mumbai: Filmmaker Karan Johar has shared a message for 'avid reel consumers' and talked about how they have bid adieu to the 'silently suffering attention span.' Karan took to his Instagram stories, where he shared the profound note, which also talked about killing books courtesy the consumption of clips. "Dear avid REEL consumer, You have officially bid goodbye to the silently suffering Attention Span... and as far as I am concerned you killed me a decade ago. Regretfully yours, BOOK," he wrote as the caption. An avid user of social media himself, Karan often posts thought-provoking yet hilarious quotes on his social media.

Earlier this week, KJo reflected on his fond memories and reopened his "yaadon ka dabba". He penned a nostalgic post about the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer 'Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani', which released in 2013. It read, "It's time to re-live this yaadon ka mithai ka dabba! #YehJawaaniHaiDeewani in select cinemas near you — book your tickets now!" KJo's latest Insta post also included a collage of some special moments from the film, capturing its essence of "Pyaar, Sapna, Deewanapan, Dosti". Made under the direction of Ayan Mukerji, "Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani" starred Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Kalki Koechlin in pivotal roles. Bankrolled by Hiroo Yash Johar and Karan Johar under the banner of Dharma Productions, Pritam has provided the tunes for the movie. "Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani" shares the tale of four classmates, who end up going on a trekking trip together, changing the dynamics of their friendship forever.

The drama is also credited with some memorable songs such as 'Badtameez Dil', 'Balam Pichkari', 'Subhanallah', 'Kabira', 'Ilaahi', and 'Dilliwali Girlfriend'. Karan on January 2 had revealed what he considers to be his biggest passion. He wrote, "Filme.. What we live and die for..." It should not come as any surprise, given that Karan Johar has dedicated all his life to making movies, and continues to do so even today. As far as Karan Johar's next project is concerned, the director recently joined forces with Kartik Aryan for a romantic comedy titled 'Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri'. Sameer Vidwans will be helming the movie scheduled to be out in the theatres in 2026.

What ails pre-clinical PG courses in Karnataka?

There were zero admissions for the post graduate (PG) medical pre-clinical courses in Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre (VIMS), Bengaluru, including in anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, forensic medicine, microbiology and pharmacology, till the second round of PG-NEET counselling. The institute then informed the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), the counselling authority in the State, that it would waive the tuition fees for candidates opting for these courses, after which, all the pharmacology seats were filled during the subsequent round of counselling, said Kalpaja D.A., Chairperson of the Institute. This is the situation of PG medical pre-clinical courses in Karnataka, as candidates are hesitant to take them up due to a lack of job opportunities. Even in government medical colleges, only 15% to 20% of the seats in these courses are filled. The situation is far worse in private medical colleges, which have resorted to fee reduction, free hostel facility, stipend as per government guidelines, and job guarantee with good salary as promises to attract students towards pre-clinical and para-clinical courses.

Like VIMS, Oxford Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre has also waived the tuition fees, while BGS Institute of Medical Sciences has promised jobs to candidates immediately after completing the courses. "For PG medical courses, students like to join clinical courses due to job prospects. As a result, despite measures such as fee reduction, free hostel facility and stipend, the enrollment has been poor. It is very difficult to find candidates for courses like anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, forensic medicine, and microbiology. Therefore, many seats in PG medical courses have remained vacant this year as well. The KEA has announced it will conduct a special stray vacancy round for the second time. We hope all the vacant seats will be filled," Kalpaja explained. "This time, several private medical colleges have announced many facilities, including fee reduction and free hostel facility and others to attract students towards pre-clinical and para-clinical courses. There is no other way to attract students," said M.K. Ramesh, former Vice Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS). A large number of postgraduate medical seats remained vacant in the State this year due to the lack of students opting for pre-clinical courses. A total of 3,864 postgraduate medical seats were available in the State for 2024-25. Out of these, 3,379 seats have been filled, and 485 seats remain vacant. Out of these, 471 are PG medical courses, while the remaining 14 are Diplomate of National Board (DNB) courses for in-service doctors.

Among these, most of the seats filled are in clinical courses, while most of the vacant seats are in pre-clinical courses. Out of the total 104 seats available in the MD Anatomy course this year, only six seats have been filled, leaving 98 seats vacant; of the 97 seats in the Physiology, 10 have been filled, leaving 87 seats vacant. Out of the 99 Biochemistry slots, 12 seats have been filled, and 87 remain vacant. Out of the 114 seats in Pharmacology, only 46 seats have been filled, leaving 68 seats vacant. Further, out of the 116 seats in Microbiology, 48 have been filled, and 68 are vacant, and of 58 seats in Forensic Medicine, only 10 have been filled and 48 remain vacant. On the other hand, almost all the seats in other clinical courses, including MD General Medicine, Radiotherapy, Dermatology, Psychiatry, General Surgeon have been filled. The statistics of the KEA show students have been showing apathy towards clinical courses even in the past. In 2023-24, only two students were enrolled in the MD Anatomy course across the State. There were 12 students enrolled in Physiology, 7 in Biochemistry, 29 in Pharmacology, 15 in Microbiology, and 22 in Forensic Medicine. In 2022-23, only one student was enrolled in MD Anatomy, and no student enrolled in Physiology, leaving all the seats vacant. Only two students were enrolled in Biochemistry, 20 in Pharmacology, 8 in Microbiology, and two in Forensic Medicine. KEA is the counselling authority to fill the PG medical seats of the state on the basis of PGNEET ranking. This year, a large number of PG medical seats, including clinical, pre-clinical and para-clinical, remained vacant in Karnataka and the country after the mop-up round. Therefore, the NMC reduced the PGNEET cut-off percentage to 15% and allotted seats in the stray vacancy



round. However, in this round too, more than 600 PG medical seats remained vacant in Karnataka. In this context, the NMC has again reduced the NEET cut-off percentage to 5% and has ordered to conduct the 'Special Stay Vacancy Round' counselling for the fifth time to allocate the remaining PG medical seats.

This year, the pre-clinical seats are the largest number of unfilled seats among PG medical courses, and the NMC has reduced the PGNEET cut-off percentage and has asked us to conduct another round of counselling to allocate the seats. It has been four months since the PGNEET counselling started, and now the NMC has reduced the cut-off percentage to 5%. Earlier, the NMC had reduced the cut-off percentage to zero. If the PGNEET cut-off percentage had been reduced to 5% earlier, it would have been more beneficial for the candidates, and more people would have opted for the courses. As soon as the NMC admission schedule is released, we will start option entry and allocate all these seats," said Prasanna.H. Executive Director of KEA. But will this be enough? "I have decided to study clinical courses in PG. I did not get any clinical course seat in the last four rounds of counselling due to my PGNEET ranking. Recently, the cut-off percentage for the special stray vacancy round has been reduced to 5%. So, there is a possibility of getting a seat. If I do not get a PG clinical course seat this time, I will write the PGNEET exam next year as well," said Abhijit, a PG medical seat aspirant from Bengaluru. Experts believe that candidates who have completed MBBS are hesitant to pursue pre-clinical courses in their postgraduate degrees due to a lack of future opportu-

Hyderabad police seek negative marks for students caught driving underage

Hyderabad: Underage driving continues to be a cause for concern on the city roads, with Hyderabad police registering 2,539 cases involving minors driving vehicles in just five months between January and May. The issue has now prompted the city police to suggest that schools award negative marks to such errant students. The punishment is in addition to existing measures, including cancellation of registration certificates and hefty penalties. At a meeting with various stakeholders on 'School Student Road Safety' on Friday, Hyderabad Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Joel Davis said as many as 719 registration certificates had already been suspended for a period of 12 months after juveniles were caught driving this year. Furthermore, violating minors will be legally barred from obtaining a driving licence until they reach 25 years of age. Parents or guardians who hand over vehicles to minors will face stringent legal prosecution, including a jail term of up to three years and a penalty of up to Rs 25,000, he warned. In a major shift towards enforcing a 'zero tolerance' policy, Hyderabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar said the police would directly report minor driving violations to the respective schools, urging the managements to award "negative marks" to such errant students to instil regulatory discipline.

Rituparna Sengupta on Sharmila Tagore: ‘She helped me understand the mother-daughter dynamic better’

When Sharmila Tagore became a bona fide star, she had journeyed from Satyajit Ray’s masterpieces to Bengali and Hindi films, balancing arthouse and commercial cinema. But she would return to her Bengali roots whenever she could, her last being 14 years ago. As she approached her 80th birthday, she decided to end her self-imposed exile and expressed a desire to work in Bengali cinema again to actor-producer Rituparna Sengupta. “Why don’t you find a good script? We can do it together,” she suggested. Sengupta, a Bengali superstar for over two decades, took this as a cue to find a fitting story. “I wanted to re-establish her connect with the Bengali audience who admire her Ray films,” she says. Coincidentally, her friend and director Suman Ghosh had engaged Tagore in a discussion about Ray’s films in the US. “This led us to explore an untapped mother-daughter dynamic rooted in differing perceptions of time and space,” says Sengupta, who, unlike Tagore, did not have a Ray-backed debut and built her career through mainstream films with a brief Bollywood stint. However, she embraced offbeat roles in films by Aparna Sen and Rituparno Ghosh. Winning the National Award for Ghosh’s Dahan (1998) motivated her to produce woman-centric films like Alo, Potadar Kirtee (2016), a gangster-superstar romance, Ahaa Re (2019), a cross-border love story, and now Puratawn. The long pauses are because Sengupta is selective. “I am not a big producer but a passionate one. I love stories which inspire me or an issue which triggers me. I am not in the rat race of making money though it is important for survival. But I have seen that passion-driven scripts work. That’s why I am producing short films too,” she says. But she is a realist enough to stay away from direction. “That requires a different eye. I look at a script from an actor’s lens and need a director to interpret and execute that vision,” she says.

Puratwan has already been feted in the film festival circuit. Though Tagore dominates the screen, Sengupta insists the film shouldn’t be seen from a woman’s lens. “I am not an ultra-feminist. But I do believe in the power of the woman to make a difference in the script where other characters have equity too. I am not looking at messaging. I want the viewer to take back an emotion that can help them fill up spaces in human relationships,” she says. Sharmila Tagore 1 Sharmila Tagore with Rituparna Sengupta. In the film, Sengupta plays a corporate professional struggling to balance work and relationships, while Tagore portrays her dementia-afflicted mother clinging to her past in her crumbling ancestral home. Despite her condition, she remains as concerned for her daughter as she was when packing her school tiffin. The daughter, seeking her mother’s grounding presence, fails to realize that her mother tries to maintain relevance by repeating old rituals. She is also unaware of a long-held family secret that reveals the extent of a mother’s protectiveness. “The daughter craves for her mother’s reassurance although she too had not bothered to understand why her mother had clung to a lost world. We



tend to invisibilise the elderly, expecting them to see the world through our prism, and take them for granted,” says Sengupta. The film draws on reminiscence therapy, where dementia patients recall episodic memories from their past to maintain their sense of continuity and feel happy. “So, the mother is happy with her daughter, even though she sees her as a little child. Rather than alienating her, why not embrace her world,” asks Sengupta. The film’s layering required constant collaboration between Tagore and Sengupta. “Shooting on location wasn’t easy but she cooperated. When we had trouble securing a mansion permit, she asked if we could switch locations. I insisted we couldn’t, and she agreed to wait it out. Despite being an icon, Sharmiladi remained open to feedback, ensuring her performance was nuanced and authentic. She was emotionally invested,” says Sengupta. “She reads a lot and is updated about the world around her but has old world grace. After every shot, she would take everybody’s feedback. She was mentally agile but still had an actor’s vulnerability. Without it, no performance can look real,” adds Sengupta. The two women bonded on the sets. “She helped me understand the mother-daughter dynamic better. I lost my mother to kidney disease just after the film was screened at the MAMI fest in Mumbai. Sharmiladi comforted me when it mattered,” says Sengupta. “She also shared behind-the-scenes moments of her films and that was a learning experience too,” she adds. With two superstars from different eras sharing the screen space, did Sengupta ever feel intimidated? “No way. I am not an insecure actor. Stardom matters but a story works when actors shed their image and immerse themselves in the narrative,” says the actor who is now working on a thriller, then a satire and a film on child psychology.

Why India’s education system fails marginalised communities — and how to change it

The story I share is not mine alone. It belongs to millions of students from marginalised communities across India who face systemic barriers in their pursuit of education.

Born to illiterate farming parents in Buldhana district of Maharashtra’s Vidarbha region, the idea of quality education seemed like a distant dream from my earliest memories. Our village school had broken benches, overworked teachers, and no electricity for days. Yet, it was the only gateway to a future beyond the fields. For students like me, cities like Pune and Mumbai represented the only hope for proper education, but they might as well have been foreign countries: unfamiliar, expensive, and often hostile to our presence. The journey from rural India to urban educational institutions is fraught with invisible barriers. The financial burden alone crushes countless dreams before they can take flight. Even for those who manage to secure admission, the cultural transition is brutal.

Our accents are mocked, our clothes scrutinised, and our food habits ridiculed. We are made to feel like outsiders in our own country. This constant othering creates a psychological burden that privileged students never have to carry. Many talented students from marginalised communities drop out, not because they lack ability, but because the system is designed to make them feel they don’t belong.

A dubious conceptThe concept of merit in Indian education purports to be objective while ignoring the vast inequalities in preparation and opportunity. A student from an elite Delhi school who has access to the best coaching, books, and networks is judged by the same standards as a student from a village school with no library and intermittent electricity. The so-called merit that is sought to be evaluated by competitive exams is often just a measure of accumulated privilege. The numbers don’t lie: in India’s top educational institutions, the representation of SC, ST, and OBC students remains shockingly low, especially at higher levels of study and faculty positions. Competitive exams like JEE and NEET exemplify this systemic bias. Coaching centers in Kota and Delhi churn out toppers, but these expensive programmes are out of reach for most rural and poor students. The language of exams itself becomes a barrier. English-medium students have a clear advantage over those educated in regional languages. Even when reserved category students clear these exams, they face additional challenges. Many report being treated as “quota students” rather than equals, and their achievements are constantly questioned. India proudly proclaims its demographic dividend, and the potential of its young population to drive economic growth. But this promise seems hollow for marginalised communities. Oxfam’s latest reports reveal that India’s economic growth has been accompanied by widening inequality. The benefits of development are captured by a small elite, while Dalits, Adivasis, and OBCs, who together constitute the majority of India’s population, are left behind.

At the five highest-ranked IITs, SC students constitute only about 10% of PhD enrollments, while ST students make up a mere 2%. In faculty representation, it’s even lower. Data shows that over 90% of professors in these institutions come from upper-caste backgrounds. Some premier institutes have no SC/ST faculty members.

This lack of representation creates a vicious cycle for marginalised students who face additional barriers to success. The system effectively reproduces itself, generation after generation. The barriers begin early. Government schools in rural areas and urban slums lack basic infra-



From rural India to urban institutions, the struggle for quality education for marginalised students in India is fraught with invisible barriers

structure, qualified teachers, and proper learning materials. The mid-day meal might be the only reason some children attend school at all. Meanwhile, privileged children attend well-resourced private schools with trained teachers and abundant extracurricular activities. By the time both groups reach college, the gap in preparation is enormous. The discrimination continues in campus life. Marginalised students often face social exclusion, microaggressions, and sometimes outright casteism. Hostel rooms are segregated along caste lines in some institutions. Students from certain communities are barred from sharing tables in dining hall. The mental toll of constantly navigating these hostile environments leads many talented students to drop out. Those who persevere often find the job market equally biased, with caste networks determining access to the best opportunities. Breaking the vicious cycleBreaking this cycle requires systemic change. First, we must redefine merit to account for the unequal playing field. A student who scores 80% in a village school with no proper facilities has demonstrated more potential than a student who scores 90% with every possible advantage. Second, we need to strengthen and expand reservation policies to ensure proper representation at all levels, including faculty positions. Third, elite institutions must implement robust support systems: mentorship programs, remedial classes, and mental health services — to help first-generation students succeed. The current system maintains caste and class hierarchies by presenting them as natural outcomes of merit. Real reform requires acknowledging this fundamental injustice. Education should be the great equaliser, but in India, it accentuates exclusion. In a knowledge-driven global economy, denying quality education to large sections of population isn’t just unjust, it’s national self-sabotage. India can’t achieve its potential while leaving the majority of its youth behind. Either we transform education into a true tool of liberation, or we perpetuate a system that maintains caste privilege under the guise of merit. For students like me who made it against the odds, the fight continues. Education remains our only path to liberation, but first, we must liberate education itself from the grip of caste and privilege. Only then can we build a system that truly rewards potential, regardless of the accident of birth.

The next tech challenge is to prove you are a human: Srikanth Nadhamuni, Founder CTO, Aadhaar

Srikanth Nadhamuni is the founder CTO of Aadhaar. He set up the technology centre for the development, design, and operations of the Aadhaar system. He is also the Managing Trustee of the eGovernments Foundation, which he co-founded with Nandan Nilekani in 2003, working on improving governance and public service delivery in Indian cities.

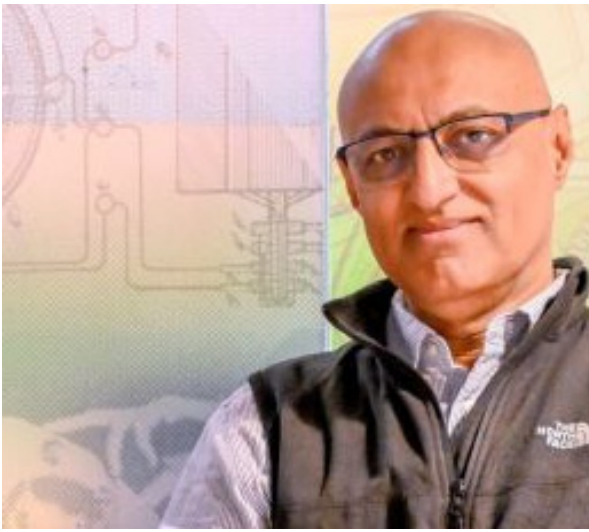
He is also the chairman of 10BedICU, a health tech initiative trying to change the face of critical care in remote and unreachable regions of the country, and co-founder and chairman of Trustt, a fintech initiative working to digitise banking operations and enhancing the same with conversational AI. Srikanth is an engineering graduate from the University of Mysore and has a masters in electrical and computer engineering from Louisiana State University. He spoke to indianexpress.com on challenges in building Aadhaar, his passion for changing the face of critical care and, ultimately, the health sector in India, his initiatives to take digital public infrastructure (DPI) to various developing countries, and his work on ‘personhood credentials’ as a way to fight misinformation. Edited excerpts: Srikanth Nadhamuni: There is one such anecdote that comes to mind. I was driving from Delhi to Dehradun, and we had done a lot of spade work on the biometric system design for Aadhaar. I had asked one of our volunteers, Raj Mashruwala, to meet with Professor Jim Wayman of San Jose State University — who was a leading expert in biometric systems — to validate our assumptions about our biometric-based ID system. Mashruwala called up to say that deduplication at an India level with 1.3 billion people was impossible. He said that we would need six football fields of servers to do the deduplication, and even then, the errors would be high. And this was when the project had not even started yet. We spoke to Nandan Nilekani, and we decided if the software does not solve the problem, we would need to build a chip for the same. I’m a chip designer myself. Later on, we somehow figured out how to solve the problem without building huge data centres. Aadhaar founder CTO interview “We revamped and digitised the Bengaluru city property tax system and ensured that people could pay taxes in any place near their office or their home,” says Nadhamuni about the impact of the eGovernments Foundation. (Express photo/ Jithendra M) It was a new territory for us as techies, and the risks were high. There were questions like: Will Iris scans work at an India scale? Will the diversity of India make it very hard to enrol people? Will the error rate start mounting as we start adding more and more people? Some of these were not fully understood yet, though we had modelled it and had figured it out mathematically. We also ran a huge pilot. Things could have gone terribly wrong. Later, discussing our Aadhaar project in an article, a professor from the London School of Economics said India will drown in a sea of false positives because of the huge population. He said that as we add more and more people, the chances of people’s fingerprints looking alike will increase. However, all of it got solved with a brilliant team of technologists and computer scientists.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us about your role in eGovernments Foundation and its impact. Where is it headed?

Srikanth Nadhamuni: Nandan Nilekani and I set up the eGovernments Foundation in 2003. Initially, our work was to create municipal ERP systems for improving urban governance and enhancing service delivery for citizens in urban local bodies. We revamped and digitised the Bengaluru city property tax system and ensured that people could pay taxes in any place near their office or their home. Earlier, it was all in leather-bound books and was error-prone. Property tax management is just one of the modules, and now our DIGIT platform encompasses aspects like public grievance redressal, ward works, building plan approval, and birth and death registration and certification. We are also working on the accounting side of things with fiscal discipline as the focus. Now, our eGovernment platforms and tools help city governments in a lot of ways from sewage disposal to water management to tracking healthcare systems like distribution of mosquito nets in Africa. We are working in about 14 countries across the world. As for international outreach, India has now become a global leader in digital public infrastructure (DPI). A lot of countries, especially in the Global South, like our model of open source, population scale, and equitable access. India’s playbook for DPI is improving governance across the world. Many developing countries are looking for the kind of solutions that India has perfected to improve their economy, get payments going, improve tax collections, and provide frictionless services to citizens. It is replacing the expensive Western models with large companies charging them hundreds of millions of dollars. I think India is playing a wise and generous role in helping countries through its expertise and technology. There is Aadhaar, UPI, eSign, Digilocker, ONDC, and so on.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: What is the 10BedICU? What does it do, and what has been its impact?

Srikanth Nadhamuni: 10BedICU is an initiative to change the face of critical care in remote and rural areas of the country using tech. We have 220 of these 10BedICU units across the country. The focus is on critical care. It is a fully digitised ICU with a digitised nursing station. It is a tele ICU with the centre being linked to a nearby medical college or hospital, which serves as a knowledge hub, and the patients can be monitored and serviced from the hub. The doctors and nurses serving in these 10BedICUs are rigorously trained in various critical care protocols and also in telemedicine to access specialists at the hubs and work on their advice during emergencies. Using conversational AI, nurses and doctors can talk to each other seamlessly in different languages. We are also using AI to generate discharge summaries. Nurses can ask questions in their own language, tell the status of the patient, and receive an answer in the language of their choice on the next steps to be followed. The government provides land, staff, electricity, Internet and supplies. We, from eGovernments Foundation, provide all the equipment, technology and training free of cost, with funds raised through donations and philanthropic contributions. We have built very exhaustive training protocols for critical care and basic life support for emergencies. The entire electronic medical records, video, and conversations are managed from the ICU hub. When we say 10BedICU, it means that there is one ICU and 10 beds for patients. It is run in collaboration with the government. MOUs have been signed with 10 states. In every state we have an agreement with, we will have at least one hospital in every district of the state. In Karnataka, we have 43 10BedICUs. I also mentor a group called the Open Healthcare Network (OHC), which has created a healthcare platform called CARE. It has been recognised as a Digital Public Good. CARE powers all our 10BedICU hospitals. It is also India’s most active open source project with 900 contributors. We are also looking to expand it from critical care to areas like oncology and other specialisations. We are working with Tata Memorial hospitals to train our doctors and nurses in oncology protocols, and using our tele-ICU facilities their patients could interact with their doctors sitting in Tata Memorial cancer centres.



Venkatesh Kannaiah: Can you explain what Trustt does and the kind of impact it is having?

Srikanth Nadhamuni: At Trustt, we are building a digital layer for banks, to help them in their lending and distribution of financial products across India. The product portfolio includes digital lending, digital distribution, digital identity, and multilingual conversations. Imagine that a bank was available on your phone in the village, and you can talk to it in Kannada, Tamil or Hindi and do all the banking. Open an account, do your KYC, apply for a loan, and figure out all the products that are available. I want to buy a buffalo. Will you give me a loan? How long will it take? What do you need from me? This is the problem we are trying to solve in a local language with the mere use of the phone. It is relevant not just for the rural customers. It will even help the urban customers of banks to do their transactions faster. It is replacing an older manual method of lending, which was slow, error-prone and not digitised. It is not modelled on any US system. Actually, the banks in the US have pretty old banking systems. They have much more paperwork than we do. There are a few banks in Europe which have done it better — going fully digital. Venkatesh Kannaiah: Can you tell us about the apex committee to create AI Centres of Excellence and the way forward for the same? Srikanth Nadhamuni: I am a member of the apex committee to create AI Centres of Excellence, an initiative of the Government of India. They want to create AI Centres of Excellence in healthcare, agriculture, sustainable cities, and education. The budget is around Rs 300 crore per sector and there would be one nodal AI Centre of Excellence for each of the focus areas. My interest in this is that we can build a Digital Public Infrastructure in each of the focus areas out of this initiative so that the impact from these research projects and initiatives is more widespread. For example, AIIMS and IIT Delhi are building good AI models to detect breast cancer. IISc is building models to detect oral cancer from smartphone photographs. Some of them are working on tuberculosis. Can you imagine something like this helping diagnosis at every government hospital? In agriculture, our researchers are looking at interesting themes. For example, pollination happens because of bees. Now, how do you make sure that the beehives are there in your fields? There is a sound with a certain frequency that the queen bee makes when it is around. We can track it and IIT Ropar is building devices using AI to ensure that the queen bee stays in the hive, and if it is not there, to let the farmer know that the queen bee has left. As for sustainable cities, we are looking at traffic congestion and traffic patterns and using AI to help reduce pollution in cities, rerouting traffic and alerting policemen whenever there is traffic congestion. Sriharish Nadhamuni: “As the world marches towards AGI, it is hard to distinguish AI from humans,” says Nadhamuni. (Express photo/ Jithendra M) The multiplier effect of such projects and initiatives will happen when this knowledge is digitised, put in a cloud, distributed and used across the country. That is the DPI approach. You have to run it on the cloud. It has to be a good product. So, I am trying to see if we can push all this into a DPI approach. Venkatesh Kannaiah: How would AI be impacting identity platforms like Aadhaar or payment platforms like UPI? Srikanth Nadhamuni: I have written a paper co-authored with a bunch of researchers from OpenAI, Harvard, MIT, and UC Berkeley. This paper explores ‘Personhood-Credentials,’ a method of proving your humanness in this fast-changing digital landscape. As the world marches towards AGI, it is hard to distinguish AI from humans. It’s going to be difficult to figure out whether the video call you just had was with a real human or an AI bot. Let me tell you, you will not be able to find the difference. This is a great challenge that we are facing with AI-led bots. Imagine the impersonation, fraud and ransom attacks that would happen or are happening right now, and the impact they would have on trust and transactions online. I think we have to first register everybody in person through multiple ways. Aadhaar biometrics is a good method. There is some process of verification, but when I get onto a Zoom call or a video call, can I be authenticated on the platform that I am on? That is the challenge — To prove that you are a human and not a bot. If trust erodes on the Internet, imagine the impact it would have on knowledge, communication, and transactions. So this is where the personhood credentials concept comes in. When do I see it becoming a product? Aadhaar can be used to build a personhood credentials product quite easily. It is already compatible because we have done this enrollment of the whole population face-to-face. Of course, there’s a whole other system of credentialing that has to be built out with Zoom or YouTube or places where you meet or consume content. That would be the challenge.

Hyderabad police seek negative marks for students caught driving underage

Hyderabad: Underage driving continues to be a cause for concern on the city roads, with Hyderabad police registering 2,539 cases involving minors driving vehicles in just five months between January and May.

The issue has now prompted the city police to suggest that schools award negative marks to such errant students. The punishment is in addition to existing measures, including cancellation of registration certificates and hefty penalties. At a meeting with various stakeholders on ‘School Student Road Safety’ on Friday, Hyderabad Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Joel Davis said as many as 719 registration certificates had already been suspended for a period of 12 months after juveniles were caught driving this year. Furthermore, violating minors will be legally barred from obtaining a driving licence until they reach 25 years of age.

Tough measures on table as Railways seeks to curb linen theft in AC coaches



A day after The Indian Express reported that about 1.27 crore linen items were stolen from AC coaches of the Indian Railways over four years, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw directed officials to come up with a reform to curb such theft. Turning to top Railway officials at a press conference Tuesday on Railways’ “52 reforms in 52 weeks” initiative, Vaishnaw referred to report and sought a timeline for the issue to be resolved. The officials responded by seeking two months to formalise a way to fix the issue. On Monday, The Indian Express reported that between January 2022, when bedroll services had fully resumed after the pandemic, and May 2026, at least 1.27 crore bedroll pieces were stolen from the AC coaches. A linen bedroll consists of two bedsheets, a blanket, a pillow, a pillow cover, and a face towel. Some tough measures on Rlys table as Vaishnaw seeks to curb linen theft applications filed with all 69 divisions of the Railways. Replies were obtained from

54 divisions across 16 of the 18 Railway zones. The data showed a 56% rise in such thefts from 2022 to 2025. The investigation also showed that the theft cost bedroll contractors an estimated Rs 104.51 crore over the past four years — money that coach attendants employed by the contractors say is mostly deducted from their salaries. The Railways is now exploring multiple options to tackle the problem, senior officials told this newspaper Tuesday. Linen stolen from AC coaches in Indian Railways: In 4 years, 1.27 crore bedsheets, towels, blankets, pillows Under the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, theft of railway towels, bedsheets or blankets is a non-bailable offence. In September 2015, the Railway Board had prescribed that linen distribution staff advise passengers to hand over used linen at least 30 minutes before disembarking. It also directed that a watch be kept on regular defaulters with suitable counselling, training and penalties. Currently, the primary response to curb linen theft across divisions has been to counsel the bedroll attendants to remain vigilant, monitor linen closely, ensure prompt collection, and stay alert during duty hours.

“This issue is complex and will require wider consultation. It is difficult to track these passengers. We have to do something to disincentivise it. One way is to grant the RPF the power to arrest such offenders. Along with this, RPF can be asked to search a suspicious passenger’s luggage if the linen is not returned,” the official said. Linen stolen from AC coaches in Indian Railways: In 4 years, 1.27 crore bedsheets, towels, blankets, pillows Under the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, theft of railway towels, bedsheets or blankets is a non-bailable offence. In September 2015, the Railway Board had prescribed that linen distribution staff advise passengers to hand over used linen at least 30 minutes before disembarking. It also directed that a watch be kept on regular defaulters with suitable counselling, training and penalties. Currently, the primary response to curb linen theft across divisions has been to counsel the bedroll attendants to remain vigilant, monitor linen closely, ensure prompt collection, and stay alert during duty hours.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman: Not just host GCCs; maximise innovation, accelerate discovery

Moving beyond minimising cost to maximising innovation, accelerating discovery and strengthening long-term competitiveness should define the ambition for the enterprises for the next decade, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Thursday. The ambition for the next decade should not simply be to host Global Capability Centres (GCCs), but “to ensure that an increasing share of the world’s ideas, patents, products, algorithms, platforms and enterprise capabilities are conceived, engineered and led from India”, she said. “Global enterprises no longer choose countries merely based on costs or incentives. It is eco-systems, not incentives alone, that determine long-term competitiveness,” Sitharaman said at the inaugural GCC summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). In her message to the industry leaders, Sitharaman urged them to continue moving decisively up the value chain by creating intellectual property, leading frontier research, and developing AI applications, own product architecture to drive global innovation.

She asked industry to deepen its engagement with knowledge institutions through stronger partnerships with universities, start-ups, and centres of excellence to ensure that innovation moves seamlessly from laboratories to markets. As Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are rapidly developing the talent, infrastructure and innovation capacity required for globally competitive enterprises, Sitharaman said the industry should look at expanding into the emerging cities. “I encourage industry to engage proactively with state governments, city administrations, educational institutions and local communities to build that awareness and help prepare these cities for the next wave of GCC investment,” she said, adding that industry should build partnerships with governments by sharing practical feedback on policy, processes, talent and infrastructure. Urging enterprises that have invested successfully in India to become ambassadors for India’s capabilities, she said their success stories are the “strongest endorsement of India’s GCC ecosystem”.

The finance minister said the next phase of GCC



growth cannot remain confined to a handful of metropolitan centres. “If the first 2,000 GCCs were concentrated in metropolitan centres, the next wave of India’s GCC growth will be geographically far more diverse. The geography of global value creation itself is changing. Tomorrow’s breakthrough in artificial intelligence, engineering design or product development could emerge as readily from Varanasi, Chandigarh, Visakhapatnam, Tiruchirappalli or Mysuru as from Bengaluru, Hyderabad or Gurugram.” “These cities are offering competitive operating costs, and they are also rapidly developing a mature innovation base, emerging as powerful centres of innovation,” she said. The establishment of a GCC in one of these cities has a multiplier impact, Sitharaman said. “It creates demand for advanced skills and specialised training. It supports start-ups, professional services, housing, urban infrastructure and research collaborations. It also encourages stronger partnerships between universities, industry and local institutions, helping cities evolve into vibrant innovation ecosystems. In doing so, GCCs become catalysts for balanced regional development,” she said. The minister said states can develop specialised ecosystems aligned to their own abilities and needs as different states possess different competitive advantages, which will help make India’s overall innovation ecosystem more resilient, diversified and globally competitive.

Mistry defends HDFC’s governance standards after part-time chair Atanu Chakraborty’s exit



HDFC Bank’s part-time Chairman Keki Mistry has mounted a full-scale defence of its corporate governance after the dramatic exit of former Chairman Atanu Chakraborty triggered speculation on the bank’s governance standards. Mistry assured shareholders that the bank remains committed to the “highest standards of transparency, accountability and oversight”, saying any matter warrant-

ing review or attention “will continue to receive careful consideration through established processes” and in the long-term interests of shareholders and other stakeholders.

“In my capacity as the interim Part-time Chairman of HDFC Bank, I, together with the board of the bank, would like to assure you that the bank remains strongly rooted in strong corporate governance principles and values,” Mistry said in the bank’s annual Report. He said resignation of Chakraborty as the Part-time Chairman of the bank on March 18, 2026 “led to speculation on the bank’s governance standards”. After Chakraborty’s exit, the bank acted swiftly to announce the appointment of an interim Part-time Chairman on March 18 with the approval of the Reserve Bank of India, he said. On June 26, HDFC Bank said external law firms, which conducted a “thorough and objective review” of its former Chairman Chakraborty’s statement about “certain practices and happenings” in the bank, reported that Chakraborty’s statement and its implications were “not substantiated”.

bonus issue, which allots additional shares to existing shareholders in proportion to their holdings, is typically announced by companies as a sign of confidence in their financial strength and long-term growth prospects. The bonus issue is also expected to improve the stock’s accessibility for retail investors. Paytm shares have largely traded above Rs 1,000, reaching a 52-week high in July 2026, showcasing a strong recovery from its February 2024 low. The proposed bonus issue could make the stock more affordable for small and first-time investors, potentially broadening the shareholder base and improving trading liquidity. Unlike dividends or share buybacks, a bonus issue does not involve a cash outflow, allowing the company to preserve its Rs 13,315 crore cash balance for future growth. The proposed bonus issue comes after Paytm has completed a year of rebuilding its business.

‘I drank milk all my life. Then my body suddenly said no’



I grew up on milk tea. Strong, sweet, made just right. It was the kind of thing you didn’t think twice about because it was a part of your morning and evening rituals for as long as you could remember. Coffee was no different. My mother would force me to drink an entire glass of hot milk before I hopped on my school bus. Then, somewhere in my late twenties, my body decided it had had enough.

It didn’t happen all at once. First, it was a heaviness after my usual cup, a dull ache I brushed off as ‘something I ate’. Then the ache turned into cramps. Then I doubled over, clutching my stomach, lying very still because moving made it worse. I remember staring at a half-finished cup of tea, waiting for the pain to pass, wondering what I had done to deserve this. Maybe the milk was stale? But I’d checked the expiry date. It got to the point where even a splash of milk in my cup of chai or coffee would set my gut off. It wasn’t just the physical discomfort. It was the longing. I missed my coffee. I missed my tea. I tried oat and almond milk. I didn’t like either because they tasted like compromises, not comfort. For a long time, I thought I was the only one dealing with this. Turns out, I am far from alone.

‘It was unfathomable that milk could be the problem’ Subhranil Sengupta, 31, an assistant account manager, remembers the exact moment his relationship with milk changed. It was the summer of 2014, after a football match, when his usual cold coffee left him with a severe stomach ache two hours later. “I did not pay heed to it,” he recalls. But it kept happening—nausea, bloating, heartburn, every time he had anything made of milk. His doctor suggested a simple experiment: have black coffee after a match, then a chocolate shake with milk the next day. The black coffee was fine. The milkshake wasn’t. “So it was evident that it was the milk that was triggering the pain and discomfort,” he says.

It took him nearly two months to seek medical help because, as he puts it, the idea that milk, something he’d had since childhood, could suddenly be the culprit was “unfathomable”. Shreya Das, 29, from Kolkata, traces her symptoms to a few months after the third wave of COVID-19. Milk tea and dairy began causing bloating, cramps, acidity and occasional diarrhoea. She switched to ginger-honey tea and oat milk and became, in her words, “more mindful while eating out”. She has since heard that many people developed new intolerances in the post-COVID period and believes it’s “an area worth paying attention to”. For Aishwarya Ganesh, 30, from Chennai, the reaction was far more frightening. At a family dinner, prawn dumplings, a dish she had eaten all her life, made her throat tighten and her face swell. “There was no family history. I had no frame of reference,” she recalls. It took antihistamines and a pharmacy run to get through that night, and a second, worse reaction at a wedding requiring IV medication before she accepted that shellfish was now dangerous for her. “The doctors told me there’s no clear ‘why’ behind adult-onset allergies,” she says.

Others describe subtler but equally disruptive shifts. Vrushali Wani, 27, began waking up with rashes so painful they interrupted her sleep, eventually diagnosed via skin prick test as a gluten allergy alongside sensitivities to dozens of other foods. Immunotherapy over two years helped, but managing a gluten-heavy Indian diet, she says, “isn’t easy,” and gluten-free alternatives remain “significantly more expensive”. Arshia Bhandari, 44, developed painful mouth ulcers every time she ate nuts, especially walnuts, and found relief only through homeopathic treatment—though she admits she was never able to pin down the exact cause. Aflah ul Haque, 33, spent mornings with unexplained stomach aches before realising, through elimination, that milk was to blame. “Food intolerances are often dismissed,” he says. “People tend to assume you’re simply being picky.” The common thread across all these stories isn’t just the food; it’s the disbelief. Nobody expected their own body to turn on something so familiar. The reasons allergies emerge later in life are varied (The medical reality: Why the body changes its mind

Doctors say this disbelief is understandable but increasingly outdated. “This I hear frequently from patients in the clinic,” says Dr Shivakumar Varakanahalli, Consultant-Medical Gastroenterology, at Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru. “I have eaten this food all my life. What has made it problematic?” Food sensitivities do not just affect

children,” he says, noting a rise in adult diagnoses over the past decade, though he’s careful to distinguish allergy from intolerance. The latter, especially lactose intolerance, is far more common, driven by a natural decline in lactase production over time. The reasons allergies emerge later in life, he explains, are varied: “Shifting things in the immune system, changes in the makeup of the gut microbiota, past infections, certain medications, and also broader environmental influences.” Since the gut steers immune regulation, disrupting that balance can cause the body to start reacting to once-harmless foods.

Dr Varakanahalli is also wary of the current cultural moment around food sensitivity. “What worries me the most is the sheer number of folks who decide they have something based on social media posts, or on those commercial ‘food sensitivity’ tests that have very little solid science behind them,” he says. By the time patients reach him, they’ve often already eliminated dairy, wheat and more—without knowing if any of it was ever the actual cause. Dr Shilpa Singi, Lead Consultant in Internal Medicine at Aster Whitefield Hospital, Bengaluru, frames it as a question with no single answer. “Our immune system is a living organism that constantly changes throughout our lifetime, along with our reactions to food,” she says. Gut infections, chronic inflammation, microbiome shifts, certain viruses, acid-suppressing medications, hormonal changes during pregnancy or menopause, and simple ageing can all tip the balance. “We still have some questions,” she says, “but we do know that there are medical causes of adult-onset food allergy, and you should not dismiss the idea out of hand.”

Dr Rakesh Aga, Director of Gastroenterology at PB Health, adds important nuance in terminology—a distinction almost every person interviewed for this piece stumbled through before getting a diagnosis. A food allergy is immune-mediated, often IgE-driven, and can escalate to anaphylaxis within minutes. A food intolerance, by contrast, is a digestive issue with no immune involvement—uncomfortable, but not life-threatening. And “food sensitivity” has no fixed medical definition at all, which is precisely why commercial IgG-based sensitivity tests are, in his words, “not scientifically validated” and not endorsed by major allergy bodies. Among adults, shellfish allergy stands out as one of the most common new-onset allergies, while lactose intolerance remains the most common intolerance worldwide, generally worsening with age. Wheat-related complaints deserve particular caution, Dr Aga notes, since coeliac disease, wheat allergy, and non-coeliac gluten sensitivity are three entirely different conditions requiring different tests and treatments—and coeliac testing must be done while still eating gluten, or results can be falsely reassuring. Every doctor converged on the same warning: don’t self-diagnose, and don’t eliminate multiple foods at once based on the internet.

“The first thing I would advise patients to do is not to panic and not to eliminate several foodstuffs at one go,” says Dr Varakanahalli. Instead, track the pattern of which food causes problems, how quickly symptoms appear, and whether they’re purely digestive or involve skin, swelling, or breathing difficulty. That distinction alone often separates an intolerance from an allergy. Dr Singi echoes the same caution against eliminating foods without proper testing, calling it a common error alongside the opposite mistake, continuing to eat a trigger food repeatedly, hoping symptoms will fade. “Instead, get yourself tested by a specialist,” she advises. As for prevention, the doctors are honest about its limits. Lactose intolerance, driven by declining enzyme levels, is largely genetic and unavoidable. Food allergies have no proven prevention strategy either. What helps, they agree, is simply maintaining overall gut and immune health—a balanced, fibre-rich diet, avoiding unnecessary antibiotics, managing chronic conditions, and getting proper rest.

But can adult-onset food intolerances be avoided? Dr Singi says that whether prevention is possible “depends on whether you are referring to food intolerance or allergy since these conditions are entirely different”. Lactose intolerance, she explains, is “mainly genetic and something that one cannot evade” as it develops naturally as lactase production declines with age. There’s also no proven benefit to pre-emptively avoiding common foods, she adds; doing so unnecessarily “may cause nutritional deficiencies”. Her advice is to focus on a balanced diet, avoid unnecessary antibiotics, keep chronic conditions in check, and get enough rest and exercise to keep the immune system functioning well. Dr Aga offers more actionable steps. “Not all food intolerances can be prevented because many are related to genetics, ageing or underlying medical conditions,” he says. That said, he points to steps that may help prevent secondary intolerances: maintaining good gastrointestinal health, promptly treating conditions like coeliac disease or inflammatory bowel disease, managing gastrointestinal infections early, and avoiding medications that unnecessarily disrupt the gut microbiome. For people with Irritable Bowel Syndrome in particular, he recommends identifying personal dietary triggers with a gastroenterologist or registered dietitian with a targeted approach that, he notes, improves symptoms “without unnecessarily restricting the diet”.

Actor Suchitra Krishnamoorthi opens up about ulcers, severe acidity; expert explains sleep link

Actor and model Suchitra Krishnamoorthi took to X to share how she can’t sleep because of severe acidity and also has ulcers. “It’s 1.45 am and I can’t sleep because of severe acidity. I have ulcers. And the last time my ulcers threatened to burst, I had to be hospitalized,” she noted, highlighting her complaint about insurance not covering it. Taking a cue from her revelation, we decided to ask experts about the link between severe acidity and ulcers, which affect one’s sleep. Dr Saiprasad Lad, consultant gastroenterology, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mumbai Central, said there is a “strong two-way relationship”. “Severe acidity, especially due to acid reflux, often becomes worse at night. When a person lies down, stomach acid is more likely to flow back into the food pipe, leading to symptoms such as a burning sensation in the chest, sour burps, throat irritation, or coughing. These symptoms can interrupt sleep repeatedly, making it hard to fall asleep or stay asleep.” On the other hand, poor sleep and ongoing stress can worsen digestive issues, said Dr Lad.

Dr Shankar Zanwar, senior consultant gastroenterologist at Gleneagles Hospital, Mumbai, described stomach ulcers as sores that develop in the lining of the stomach or the upper part of the small intestine. “They are commonly caused by Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection or prolonged use of painkillers such as NSAIDs (Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs). While stress alone does not cause ulcers, it can make symptoms worse. People with ulcers or severe acidity may experience burning pain in the upper abdomen, nausea, bloating, frequent burping, acid reflux, loss of appetite, or disturbed sleep. Night-time symptoms are particularly common because lying flat allows stomach



acid to move back into the foodpipe more easily,” said Dr Zanwar. Acidity or acid reflux occurs when stomach acid repeatedly goes into the oesophagus. “Although both conditions can cause upper abdominal discomfort, they need different evaluation and treatment,” said Dr Lad. gut health Here’s what you should consider (Photo: AI Generated) Its 1.45 am and I cant sleep bec of severe acidity. I have ulcers. And the last time my ulcers threatened to burst i had to be hospitalized & guess what @icilombard refused to cover my hospitalization cost – bec i hadnt declared my ulcers at the time of taking the policy. But iDr Zanwar advised that if acidity is persistent, sleep is regularly disturbed, or symptoms include vomiting blood, black stools, unexplained weight loss, or severe abdominal pain, seek immediate medical attention. “Early diagnosis and proper treatment can heal ulcers, relieve acidity, and restore healthy sleep,” said Dr Zanwar.

How Argentina and Messi unlocked chaos in comeback win for the ages



GNS News Agency, July 18

Near the centre circle, Lionel Messi knelt, prayed, and stared poignantly into the skies through the translucent roofs of the arena. Tears of joy streaming down, his head drooped and he repeatedly punched the air like a judoka’s underarm knock. In twenty years of scaling greatness, he has felt the sport’s elusive nirvana, achieved saintliness and experienced every conceivable emotion, suffered heartbreaks and felt disillusioned, and won every trophy football could offer him. But beating England 2-1 with collective courage, via late goals when everything seemed nearly lost, was special. Even for Messi. With a faint but contented smile, he trudged towards the fans, where his teammates were already celebrating, with the drums blaring incoherent beats in the background. Some of them unfolded a huge white flag with a message— “Las Malvinas son Argentinas” (“The Malvinas are Argentine”) – a reference to the Falkland Islands, a self-governing territory of Britain over which the countries went to war half a century ago. His teammates tossed Messi in the air, and carried him on their shoulders, which is now a ritual.

No matter how the managers shook off the echoes of history, the match could hear it. They danced and jumped, shirtless, until the media engagements of Argentina were over and their buses were about to leave. The crowd lingered, just to soak in the joyful vibes of a grand feat. Atlanta would feel like the Azteca. Maybe, it’s for experiences and emotions such as these, which life alone cannot give, that Messi continues to play the game.

On his way back to the tunnel, he wrapped his arms around England captain Harry Kane, stopped for a chat with John Stones, and consoled Thomas Tuchel. He could relate with England’s pain, he has felt similar torment. It was a poignant frame that captured the undulating emotions of a game that barely roused in the first half. On one side of the ground, Argentinians and their supporters were bringing the roof down; not far from them, England’s players lay coiled on the ground, cursing the cruel fate, wondering where it all went awry for them, fearing how history would judge them, or the social media would rip them. England couldn’t beat Maradona; they wouldn’t his heir Messi either. Kane said he was gutted, but the trauma could live forever. Another game into the alley of heartbreaks.

Yet, it could have been different. Just five minutes remained between a painful end to Messi’s career, before he and his indefatigable men pulled off another miraculous escape, scoring two goals in only six minutes to nail their spot in the final. This one would be sweeter than the Egypt heist; the layers of history that underpins the two nations, the angst and acrimony that spilled onto the field, the nerves and the tensions that clanged, the hollowness of becoming the former champions. But when adversity stares into their

eyes, Argentina inevitably finds a thread of hope. Perhaps, it’s their ignition; they need a slap on their face to wake them up from the slumber. Argentina’s Lionel Messi (10) and England’s Harry Kane embrace after the World Cup semi-final soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta, Wednesday, Argentina’s Lionel Messi (10) and England’s Harry Kane embrace after the World Cup semi-final soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta, Wednesday,

A more short-tempered referee would have flicked the cards in his chest-pocket more often. Players pushed and pulled, tackles flew as frequently. A header from John Stones off a Declan Rice was the first convincing shot attempt. That came 33 minutes into the game. Before half-time nudged in, Enzo Fernandez unzipped a curler that he couldn’t keep down and soared over Jordan Pickford. The more apt portrait of the game was the 7-12 in Argentina’s favour, the number of fouls both teams committed. The second Argentina conceded, through a startling defensive lapse that winger Anthony Gordon pounced, they transformed into a different team; they gathered a sense of authority. When everything is pushed to the corner, when the comeback paths are blocked, when all is nearly lost, when they throw the carefully-conceived tactical sheets into the wind, eschew structures and formations, and just unlock chaos. A rhythmic, systematic chaos, like the chorus of their anthem Muchachos. Messi, refined in La Masia, was never a man of chaos. Now, he is an agent of chaos. He defined football in his image, now he is redefining it.

England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford (1) fails to stop a shot by Argentina’s Enzo Fernandez (24) as he scores his side’s first goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta, Wednesday, July 15, 2026. (AP Photo/Stephanie Scarbrough) England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford (1) fails to stop a shot by Argentina’s Enzo Fernandez (24) as he scores his side’s first goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta, Wednesday, Before Enzo Fernandez’s strike, a curling pearler that swung away from Jordan Pickford, Alexis Mac Allister had hit the upright (he would slam the post again), Nico Gonzalez induced a low diving save off Pickford. Each unfruitful attempt didn’t wither them. Messi implored the crowd to raise the volume and keep believing. From a fleeting passage of shock, they picked up their voice. Argentina found their precision and purpose. When Argentina got a corner, England packed the box, anticipating a wickedly swirling corner. It didn’t. Messi took the corner shot, received it and recycled it to Fernandez, in vast space. He took a touch and wrapped his foot around it. The ball whooshed past Pickford, who had put in a heroic shift. Discernible was a shift in mood. You could hear the sound of England’s belief creaking, thanks to their own self-destructiveness and defensive tactics. Argentina would now be unstoppable. They tigerishly reclaimed possession; they ravenously attacked England’s box, dismantling their cohesion and destroying their belief. The dagger through the heart arrived. From the foot of Messi, again. He swirled a devastatingly arcing cross over Nico O’ Reilly. Lautaro Martinez was waiting. He strained every sinew of his neck to meet the ball and guide it past Pickford. This was the game; Argentina knew; England knew it too. England could not beat Maradona; they couldn’t beat Messi either. And Messi has one more game to experience the whole spectrum of emotions that he lives for. Perhaps the greatest game of his career; or the cruellest.

Messi on facing Spain in final: ‘I know their players and philosophy very well’

GNS News Agency, July 18

For the first time in history, the reigning Copa America winners will take on the defending European champions in a World Cup final. The possibility of a Spain versus Argentina final had partially disappeared when England opened the scoring in the semi-final against the reigning world champions, until Lionel Messi & Co. hit a frenetic gear late on Wednesday night in Atlanta. Messi’s sparkling movement powered Argentina back from the brink yet again as Enzo Fernandez and Lautaro Martinez converted the assists from their captain to etch a dramatic 2-1 victory over the Three Lions. Entering a record-equalling third final, Messi will face Spain for the first time in his World Cup career, a country that forged his genius for the better part of the last two decades.

Speaking after the win over England, Messi hailed Spain’s unique style of football. The FC Barcelona legend also revealed that he continues to follow the Spanish intently, having revelled in the system for a majority of his club career. “Spain is a great team with outstanding players and a very distinctive style of play. They’re a team I know very well, with a football philosophy they’ve been following for many years. I know their players too,” Messi said. Having conceded just the solitary goal throughout the campaign, Spain neutralised the high-flying France in the first semi-final, beating them 2-0 to reach their first final in 16 years. “I’ve faced many of them, and I still follow them. Several of them play for Barcelona, a club I love and continue to follow. So it will be a special match because it’s a World Cup final, and naturally I expect it to be a very even game,” Messi told



reporters after the win. Messi also reflected on Argentina’s stupendous run to a second successive World Cup final and fifth in all competitions since losing to Brazil in the Copa America in 2019. “It’s crazy what this group has been doing: five finals. We’re coming off winning the World Cup, we’ve been the best team over the last four years, and today we’re among the two best teams in the world, another final. No matter how much it hurts or what people say, this group keeps proving that nobody gives you anything on the pitch,” he added. With eight goals and four assists, Messi leads the Golden Ball race into Sunday’s final at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford. The 39-year-old revealed that he had set his sights on the World Cup since last year. “I’ve been preparing for this World Cup for almost a year. I spent December in Argentina, training morning and afternoon, because I knew I was going to give everything to arrive in the best possible shape,” he added.

among the final four and, thank God, we made it into the top two.” Messi, who had featured in 205 appearances, was facing off arch-rivals England for the first time in his career. “If we had lost to England, people would’ve come out and said some nonsense about us, but we didn’t give them the chance. We were lucky enough to win, to get through this, with everything this match means.” “We knew that football-wise we were better than them, but a lot is at stake when you play a match of this magnitude, when historical factors come into play. Still, it doesn’t stop being special because of everything it means, and we had to win it,” he added. The eight-time Ballon d’Or winner also dedicated the win to the legendary Diego Maradona, who had famously headlined the clash between Argentina and the Three Lions in the World Cup quarter-final 40 years ago. Maradona produced two of his most eye-popping moments in the Argentina shirt in the matter of four minutes in a 2-1 win then, producing the ‘Hand of God’ and the ‘Goal of the Century.” Without a doubt, Diego is enjoying this immensely from up there because today was a very special day for him; to be able to give him this joy and for him to experience it however he wants from up there.

PV Sindhu outclasses Han Yue, storms into Japan Open QFs



Tokyo: Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu produced one of her best performances of the season to out-class world No. 5 Han Yue of China in straight games and storm into the quarterfinals of the Japan Open Super 750 badminton tournament here on Thursday. The world No. 10

Indian needed just 35 minutes to register a commanding 21-16, 21-14 win over the higher-ranked Chinese shuttler in their second-round contest. After a sluggish start, the unseeded Sindhu found her rhythm midway through the opening game, striking the shuttle cleanly and dictating the rallies to take the lead.

The former world champion then completely dominated the second game, racing to an 8-0 advantage before comfortably sealing the contest. With the victory, Sindhu improved her head-to-head record against Han to 8-1. The 31-year-old will next face familiar rival Nozomi Okuhara of Japan, who received a walkover after top seed An Se-young of South Korea withdrew from their second-round match. Sindhu is now India’s lone survivor in the tournament after the mixed doubles pair of Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila bowed out in the pre-quarterfinals. The Indian duo fought hard before losing 20-22, 17-21 to top seeds Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping of China in their round-of-16 clash in 47 minutes.

‘England fell in trap of fear’: Oliver Kahn, Robbie Fowler slam Tuchel’s tactics

The knives were out for England coach Thomas Tuchel after his side allowed a 1-0 lead to slip and become a 2-1 defeat to Argentina in the FIFA World Cup semi-finals on Wednesday night. The German coach’s tactics came under withering scrutiny from former footballers like Oliver Khan and Robbie Fowler England had taken the lead in the 55th minute, thanks to Anthony Gordon’s goal. Then they resorted to defensive tactics which allowed the defending champions to attack in wave after wave. Finally, England conceded in the 85th minute with Enzo Fernandez shooting from distance before Lautaro Martinez headed the ball in in the second minute of injury time to complete a come-from-behind win. “England fell in the trap of fear,” was former Germany keeper Oliver Kahn’s assessment on Zee5 after the game ended. “From the point England scored and took the lead, they were only defending. Against Argentina this is not possible. They were almost playing with 10 defenders by the end of the game.” “We should ask Tuchel what he was thinking. These kind of tactics cannot work till end of the game against Argentina.” Former England footballer Robbie Fowler, who earned 26 caps for the national team and scored seven goals, agreed with Kahn. “This defeat is on the manager and his tactics. Tomorrow he is going to be annihilated in the English press. He came to England with the reputation as a super coach. But as a super coach you have to do something more. With his tactics, he attracted too much attention on the backline,” Fowler said. When asked



how England’s World Cup should be viewed, considering they faltered in the semi-final, he said: “Don’t think it’s a success. Minimum we should have got to the final. Otherwise what had changed (from the previous manager)? The defeat was completely England’s fault.”

“Argentina won every header. They kept crossing and crossing. So we went to a back five to close the gaps inside and be stronger in the air,” Tuchel said. “Straight after our goal, with no substitutions, we just conceded way too many crosses and way too many chances. So we tried to help. But of course the responsibility is on the coach. And ... if it doesn’t go well, it’s easy to say that it was wrong,” Tuchel said.

‘We got too passive after the goal’: Tuchel remarks after loss to Argentina

England coach Thomas Tuchel’s tactics against Argentina came under a lot of flak after the Three Lions went into a defensive shell following Anthony Gordon’s opener in the 55th minute. From then on, England sat back in defence, looking for counters as Argentina pressed ahead ahead relentlessly which ultimately bore fruit as Enzo Fernandez and Lautaro Martinez scored in the 85th as well as the 90+5 minutes, both goals assisted by Lionel Messi, to relegate England to a 1-2 defeat.

“We’re disappointed. We were so close but we got too passive after the goal. We conceded so, so many crosses and chances and shots. We were close but we couldn’t keep the level up after we scored. We decided to go a back five because the gaps were too big and be strong in the air. Straight after the goal, with no substitutions, we conceded far too many crosses. We tried to help the players, but the responsibility is on the coach,” Tuchel said after the match as per Guardian, explaining his tactics. “Of course we wanted to go for the second goal, but it doesn’t help if you don’t have the ball. We became too passive, we couldn’t keep the ball. I don’t think it was a structural problem. The match changed completely and I understand that these discussions are out there, that there are a million coaches out there who know better. I have to make a decision. No re-



grets, not at the moment. We were very close, we deserved to be 1-0 up – we played one of our better matches [up to that point], maybe our best match,” he added. England could just keep 12% of the possession from the 55th minute—when Gordon scored—to the 92nd minute, as per Opta which paints a dire picture of the Three Lions with Tuchel absolutely getting savaged by critics due to his defensive approach. Tuchel and England will now play against France in the 3rd place play-off on Saturday while Messi and Argentina have a date with destiny against Lamine Yamal’s Spain in the World Cup final on Sunday.

Messi on reaching World Cup final: ‘No one gives us anything for free’

GNS News Agency, July 18

Lionel Messi slammed his and Argentina’s critics after multiple allegations and claims of FIFA’s favouritism had hit their path towards reaching a second successive World Cup final on Wednesday, beating England 2-1 in Atlanta. Messi, 39, spearheaded a stunning second-half comeback, producing two assists in the space of six minutes to freeze England, who had previously taken the lead through an Anthony Gordon strike in the 55th minute. Argentina’s title defence has been shrouded in controversy from the first match itself, with a series of contentious decisions from the officials appearing to have gone in the favour of the world champions. But with the Albiceleste booking their shot at a second successive title, Messi minced no words as he brushed aside the allegations of bias during the tournament. Scaloni repositioned Messi, from a central, free-roaming role to the right side, his hunting zone in “It hurts whoever it hurts, and let them say whatever they want — we proved once again on the pitch that nobody gives us anything,” Messi told TyC Sports. “We came in under fire, with a lot of doubts around us, but I knew this group always competes. I was sure we were going to be

How Argentina and Messi unlocked chaos in comeback win for the ages

Near the centre circle, Lionel Messi knelt, prayed, and stared poignantly into the skies through the translucent roofs of the arena. Tears of joy streaming down, his head drooped and he repeatedly punched the air like a judoka’s underarm knock. In twenty years of scaling greatness, he has felt the sport’s elusive nirvana, achieved saintliness and experienced every conceivable emotion, suffered heartbreaks and felt disillusioned, and won every trophy football could offer him. But beating England 2-1 with collective courage, via late goals when everything seemed nearly lost, was special. Even for Messi.

With a faint but contented smile, he trudged towards the fans, where his teammates were already celebrating, with the drums blaring incoherent beats in the background. Some of them unfolded a huge white flag with a message— “Las Malvinas son Argentinas” (“The Malvinas are Argentine”) – a reference to the Falkland Islands, a self-governing territory of Britain over which the countries went to war half a century ago. His teammates tossed Messi in the air, and carried him on their shoulders, which is now a ritual. No matter how the managers shook off the echoes of history, the match could hear it. They danced and jumped, shirtless, until the media engagements of Argentina were over and their buses were about to leave. The crowd lingered, just to soak in the joyful vibes of a grand feat. Atlanta would feel like the Azteca. Maybe, it’s for experiences and emotions such as these, which life alone cannot give, that Messi continues to play the game. On his way back to the tunnel, he wrapped his arms around England captain Harry Kane, stopped for a chat with John Stones, and consoled Thomas Tuchel. He could relate with England’s pain, he has felt similar torment. It was a poignant frame that captured the undulating emotions of a game that barely roused in the first half. On one side of the ground, Argentinians and their supporters were bringing the roof down; not far from them, England’s players lay coiled on the ground, cursing the cruel fate, wondering where it all went awry for them, fearing how history would judge them, or the social media would rip them. England couldn’t beat Maradona; they wouldn’t his heir Messi either. Kane said he was gutted, but the trauma could live forever. Another game into the alley of heartbreaks. Indefatigable men Yet, it could have been dif-

ferent. Just five minutes remained between a painful end to Messi’s career, before he and his indefatigable men pulled off another miraculous escape, scoring two goals in only six minutes to nail their spot in the final. This one would be sweeter than the Egypt heist; the layers of history that underpins the two nations, the angst and acrimony that spilled onto the field, the nerves and the tensions that clanged, the hollowness of becoming the former champions.

But when adversity stares into their eyes, Argentina inevitably finds a thread of hope. Perhaps, it’s their ignition; they need a slap on their face to wake them up from the slumber. Argentina’s Lionel Messi (10) and England’s Harry Kane embrace after the World Cup semifinal soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta, Wednesday, July 15, 2026. (AP Photo/Erik S. Lesser) Argentina’s Lionel Messi (10) and England’s Harry Kane embrace after the World Cup semifinal soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta, Wednesday, July 15, 2026. (AP Photo/Erik S. Lesser) A more short-tempered referee would have flicked the cards in his chest-pocket more often. Players pushed and pulled, tackles flew as frequently. A header from John Stones off a Declan Rice was the first convincing shot attempt. That came 33 minutes into the game. Before half-time nudged in, Enzo Fernandez unzipped a curler that he couldn’t keep down and soared over Jordan Pickford. The more apt portrait of the game was the 7-12 in Argentina’s favour, the number of fouls both teams committed. The second Argentina conceded, through a startling defensive lapse that winger Anthony Gordon pounced, they transformed into a different team; they gathered a sense of authority. When everything is pushed to the corner, when the comeback paths are blocked, when all is nearly lost, when they throw the carefully-conceived tactical sheets into the wind, eschew structures and formations, and just unlock chaos. A rhythmic, systematic chaos, like the chorus of their anthem Muchachos. Messi, refined in La Masia, was never a man of chaos. Now, he is an agent of chaos. He defined football in his image, now he is redefining it. England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford (1) fails to stop a shot by Argentina’s Enzo Fernandez (24) as he scores his side’s first goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between England and Argentina in Atlanta

‘Akshay Kumar must’ve been emotionally disturbed’: Paresh Rawal on Rs 25 cr Hera Pheri notice



GNS News Agency, July 18

Around this time, a major controversy erupted last year after Paresh Rawal announced that he would no longer be a part of Hera Pheri 3. In response, Akshay Kumar, who is also producing the film, sent a legal notice to Paresh seeking Rs 25 crore in damages, alleging breach of contract and sabotage of the project. The dispute, which stretched on for months with several twists and turns, was eventually resolved after Paresh reversed his decision and agreed to return to the film. However, Hera Pheri 3 continues to remain mired in uncertainty, with legal disputes over the ownership of the franchise rights. Now, the veteran actor has opened up about what really transpired behind the scenes and explained why he had initially decided to walk away from the project. ‘Legal notice was an emotional reaction’ Speaking to Vickey Lalwani, Paresh clarified that his decision had nothing to do with Akshay Kumar personally. “No, it wasn’t about, ‘I’m uncomfortable working with Akshay Kumar.’ It was a contractual obligation. If I were to do the film, I needed the approval of Firoz (Nadiadwala, producer) because he is the sole owner of the Hera Pheri franchise. And also of other films like Awara Paagal Deewana, Welcome, and all of that. Until I had his approval, I simply couldn’t commit.” Recalling his reaction after receiving the legal notice, Paresh said he was frustrated by being pulled into a legal dispute.

“When the legal notice came, I thought, ‘Why am I

getting dragged into legal issues? Am I here to enjoy making a film or to get caught up in this?’ I told myself I didn’t want to be a part of it anymore.” He also said he believes Akshay’s decision to sue him stemmed more from emotion than legal intent. “I genuinely believe the legal notice was an emotional reaction. It was probably a case of, ‘How could he say no to me?’ He must have been emotionally disturbed.”

When asked why Firoz A Nadiadwala’s approval never came through, Paresh maintained that it was an issue between the producer and Akshay Kumar, and one he never wanted to get involved in. “As for why Firoz’s approval never came, that was something between Akshay and Firoz. I never dug deeper into it.” He added, “There has never been any reason for Akshay and me to have a fallout. None at all.” “I’m married to that film! Despite the prolonged uncertainty surrounding the film, Paresh said he remains committed to returning whenever the project finally goes on floors, irrespective of who directs or produces it. “Whenever Hera Pheri actually happens, I’ll do it. I’m married to that film. Whenever they make it, I’ll be there.” Asked whether he and Akshay eventually sat down to discuss the legal dispute and whether the superstar apologised for sending him the notice, Paresh suggested that the matter resolved itself without the need for a formal conversation. “We never really sat down and discussed it, but we worked together afterwards. Sometimes you don’t even need to say the words. That’s the gentlemanly way of resolving things.” Meanwhile, Hera Pheri 3 has suffered another setback. Director Priyadarshan recently confirmed that he is no longer associated with the proposed third instalment. Earlier this year, the filmmaker had expressed hope that the film would eventually materialise, even if not in 2026. However, he has now revealed that he has stepped away from the project altogether. Producer Firoz A Nadiadwala was the first to announce Priyadarshan’s exit, following which the filmmaker confirmed the development himself. “What Firoz has said is true. I am not associated with Hera Pheri 3 at present. To the best of my knowledge, Hera Pheri 3 will never hit the screens due to lots of legal issues and personal conflicts. Whether I am involved or not is unimportant,” he told Hindustan Times.

The Odyssey eyes Rs 22 crore opening day, Rs 75 crore opening weekend in India



GNS News Agency, July 18

Christopher Nolan’s long-awaited IMAX epic The Odyssey is finally set to arrive in theatres this Friday. Headlined by Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Robert Pattinson, Tom Holland and Zendaya, among several others, the film has generated extraordinary anticipation worldwide. In India, where Nolan has consistently enjoyed a strong fan following, the excitement around the film is particularly high. The buzz has also translated into strong advance bookings. According to trade estimates, The Odyssey has already sold tickets worth nearly Rs 18 crore for its first three days in India.

Trade analyst Ramesh Bala told NDTV, “The Odyssey has sold nearly Rs 18 crore worth of tickets for its opening weekend in India. Based on the current trend, the film has the potential to collect around Rs 18 crore to Rs 22 crore net on its opening day, with the three-day opening weekend likely to finish in the Rs 65 crore to Rs 75 crore net range.” The film has also made history as the first feature in the world to be shot entirely using IMAX cameras, driving unprecedented demand for its IMAX screenings. In Delhi-NCR, IMAX shows begin as early as 6.30 am, with ticket prices going up to Rs 2,500. In Mumbai, tickets have touched Rs 3,100 while Bengaluru’s premium IMAX tickets are priced at Rs 1,850. Chennai remains comparatively affordable at Rs 508.

Nolan arrived in Mumbai last Friday ahead of The Odyssey’s India premiere, making the country one of the key stops on the film’s global promotional tour. He was joined by his wife and longtime producing partner Emma Thomas, along with actors Tom Holland and Matt Damon. The team attended a special screening of the film at the IMAX theatre in Lower Parel, Mumbai, on Friday evening. The event marked The Odyssey’s first public screening anywhere in the world. Addressing the audience after the screening, Nolan reflected on premiering one of his films in India for the first time. “This is not the first time I’ve been to Mumbai, but it is the first time I’ve had the chance to launch a film here. So, you are amongst the first audiences in the world to see this film.” Based on Homer’s ancient Greek epic poem, The Odyssey follows the legendary Greek king Odysseus and his arduous ten-year journey home to Ithaca after the Trojan War.

Shilpa Shinde claims fake MMS was circulated after her Bhabiji exit: ‘My blood ran cold’

Actress Shilpa Shinde is currently seen on Lock Upp Sach Ya Sazaa. While the actress has been stirring up drama on the show, she is having her vulnerable moments, too. On Wednesday, during a conversation with Varun Yadav, Shilpa spoke about the harassment she claims she faced following her exit from Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain. Just a few months back, Shilpa received backlash for confessing that she falsely accused Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain maker Sanjay Kohli of sexual harassment. And on Lock Upp’s latest episode, Shilpa finally shared the other side of the story.

The actress revealed, “During my journey back in 2015-16, the show was going on, I was ousted from it, and all that drama happened. After that, so many people were relentlessly targeting me, I had absolutely no way out, no options left. Next thing I know is, a reporter sent me a video clip, I asked: ‘What is this?’ She said, ‘It’s your video.’ I was like, ‘My video?’, she replied, ‘Open it and see.’” Shilpa further added, “While the video was downloading, I kept thinking if it was from my changing room or something like that. My blood ran cold for a moment. I was sitting in my car when I finally played the video. It was a blurry video of a girl lying on top of a guy. I asked, ‘What on earth is this?’ She said, ‘It’s your video.’ I just told her, ‘Are you mad? Look at the bedsheet, it’s so dirty.’ She further questioned, ‘Is it not you then?’ I said, ‘Hell no, are you crazy?’ I know when my last relationship was and with whom. This is impossible.”

“She then asked if she should release it, and I replied, asking what she meant. Imagine they stooped to this level. I sat at the cyber cell unit for 6-7 hours. I finally tracked it down, and it was just a Hindi adult site clip; they took freeze frames of the girl in the video from specific angles where she looked like me, blurred it, and blasted it everywhere, saying Bhabiji’s MMS is out,” Shilpa shared. Criminal case before Bigg Boss 11 Adding further, Shilpa Shinde said, “Does anyone say that it was my video? Everyone only denies it. My mother asked me, and society’s watchman asked her if her daughter’s MMS had leaked. How do you even respond to that? I have endured so much. Even when I was going on Bigg Boss, they filed a criminal case against me, I took bail and went on the show. Imagine the insane



degree of harassment I went through.” Shilpa Shinde quit Bhabiji Ghar Par Hain in 2016 after the makers and channel demanded that she sign an exclusive contract. After Shilpa refused, the discussions took an ugly turn, with Shilpa’s payment being withheld. Following her exit, Shilpa accused producer Sanjay Kohli of sexual harassment and also became involved in contractual and payment disputes with the makers. The matter was eventually settled out of court. Earlier this year, Shilpa said on Bharti Singh’s podcast that the sexual harassment allegation she had made was false. After the confession controversy blew up, Shilpa Shinde shared that both producers, Benaifer and Sanjay Kohli, called her up and thanked her for telling the truth. When she entered Lock Upp: Sach Ya Sazaa, Shilpa also spoke about how the makers had begged her to join the show once again. Disclaimer: This article contains sensitive personal accounts of harassment and legal disputes that may be emotionally distressing for some readers. The narratives are based on public disclosures and are intended purely for informational and entertainment purposes, rather than professional or legal advice. Nawaz Javed Kochra is a seasoned entertainment journalist at

Why Aamir Khan changed his mind about getting married at 60, reveals friend



When Aamir Khan introduced Gauri Spratt as his partner in March 2025, he had laughed off the idea of getting married again. Asked if wedding bells were on the cards, the actor had said, “See, we are fully committed. And I have been married twice. Now getting married at 60 probably wouldn’t suit me. But let’s see.” More than a year later, however, Aamir and Gauri tied the knot in an intimate ceremony at his Mumbai home. Now, the actor’s close friend and Lagaan co-star Amin Hajee has shared why he believes Aamir eventually changed his mind. Speaking to Rediff.com, Amin said Aamir’s earlier remarks may simply have reflected where the relationship stood at the time.

“This is my personal opinion, but I think sometimes you wish for something without saying it out loud.” He added that Aamir would never have spoken publicly about marriage before discussing it with Gauri. “At that point, how could Aamir have answered that question? Maybe he hadn’t even proposed to Gauri yet. Aamir is extremely sensitive to other people’s feelings and would never make such an announcement without first speaking to the person involved.” According to Amin, Aamir has always been mindful of other people’s emotions.

To explain what he meant, Amin recalled an incident from his own directorial debut, Koi Jaane Na, in which Aamir made a special appearance. “When he agreed to act in my

film Koi Jaane Na, he called me and asked, ‘Amin, do you mind if I do a role in your film?’” Amin said he was stunned by the question. “I told him, ‘If I had been driving when you asked me that, I would have had an accident! How can you even ask me? It would change the course of my life.’” He simply said, ‘I didn’t want to overstep.’” Amin added that Aamir even invited him and his wife, Charlotte, home to discuss the role before signing on. Amin also described Gauri as “an angel” and said one conversation with her helped him understand why the couple may have waited before deciding to marry. “She is a very mature and thoughtful person.” He recalled Gauri telling him: “I have a son who needs my attention and love. I have to make sure I find the right balance in this new phase of my life.” According to Amin, those words answered why Aamir had not committed to marriage publicly earlier. “That was such a responsible thing to say. She was thinking not only about herself, but also about her son and how this new relationship would affect him.” He added, “That also answers the earlier question. How could Aamir have spoken about marriage publicly before having those conversations with a mother, whose first priority is her young son?”

Aamir knew Gauri was ‘the one’ Amin also revealed that Aamir had introduced Gauri to his closest friends nearly a year before the wedding. According to him, the actor became emotional while sharing the news. “About a year ago, Aamir invited a few of us to his home and said, ‘I want to talk to you about something.’ Gauri wasn’t there that day. He told us there was someone special in his life. Aamir is a very emotional person, and I remember he had tears of joy in his eyes.” Aamir introduced Gauri as his partner ahead of his 60th birthday in March 2025, revealing they had been in a relationship for around 18 months after reconnecting years after first meeting. He had also said Gauri brought him “peace” and that they felt secure enough in their relationship to make it public. Before marrying Gauri, Aamir was married to Reena Dutta, with whom he has two children, Junaid and Ira. He later married filmmaker Kiran Rao in 2005, and the former couple welcomed son Azad through surrogacy in 2011 before announcing their separation in 2021. Gauri has a son, Quinn, from her previous marriage.

Paresh Rawal regrets angry tweets, targeting critic’s Dhurandhar review: ‘My BP shot up’



Paresh Rawal has, in recent years, often made headlines as much for his outspoken social media posts as for his performances. The veteran actor, widely regarded as one of the finest performers in Indian cinema, has frequently found himself at the centre of online controversies because of his blunt opinions and sharp remarks. In a recent conversation with Vickey Lalwani, he reflected on his temper, admitted that he regrets being excessively vocal on Twitter, and revealed that his activity on the platform even took a toll on his health.

Hitting a member of the audience Speaking about his personality, Paresh said, “Look, I have nothing to gain from anyone. I don’t want to bring anyone down. I’m not driven by greed. Whatever I have, I already feel God has given me more than enough. So I have no greed. Why would I do something like that to someone? That’s why I’m straightforward and honest with everyone.” The actor also looked back at an incident where he admitted to hitting a member of the audience during a performance, calling his own actions “idiotic.” “As for that incident where I talked about hitting someone... what happened was that they were passing remarks. There were comment after comment, even from other actors. It turned into banter, and then I got carried away. It was idiotic. I jumped into it. I was completely wrong. It happened, but I’ll never repeat it. I regret it. I really

do. An artist should have control over themselves and over the circumstances.”

“Too much negativity and toxicity” Paresh also addressed his controversial presence on Twitter, including the much-debated post he had made about author Arundhati Roy. Looking back at it, the actor admitted he should never have posted it. “Yes, I wrote it. I shouldn’t have. I shouldn’t have said that.” He further explained why he has almost stopped using the platform altogether. “I’ve almost stopped using Twitter now because it was harming my health very badly. In fact, my blood pressure shot up. My doctor clearly told me: don’t watch news channels before going to bed, and don’t read newspapers until noon after waking up. If there’s any important news you need to know, it’ll find its way to you. You don’t have to sit there and make yourself hyper over everything.” Reflecting on the nature of social media, Paresh acknowledged that he, too, contributed to its toxicity. “Many people treat social media like their personal dumping grounds, and I’m equally responsible for that. People write whatever comes to their mind because they have a platform. Nobody listens, so you just type it out. I never abuse people. My sarcasm is sharp enough. I won’t stoop to using foul language. But even that sarcasm, I shouldn’t have indulged in it. There’s too much negativity and toxicity there.”

Paresh was also asked about the controversy surrounding his tweet directed at film critic Anupama Chopra last year after her review of Dhurandhar. The post, in which he referred to her as “Miss Irrelevant”, sparked widespread criticism online. Looking back at it, the actor admitted he regretted posting it. “Yeah, that was unwanted. I should not have done it.” However, he stood by the sentiment behind his criticism, saying he believed the film deserved a constructive discussion. “I felt that Dhurandhar was a well-made film. Some people will like it, others won’t, that’s perfectly fine. But then write about it. Offer constructive criticism. That’s how it should be. Not the other way around. That’s what I felt was wrong.” Explaining why he had referred to Chopra as “Miss Irrelevant”, Paresh said: “Yes, but the truth is, nobody really listens to what you’re saying. You can write whatever you want, and it hardly changes anything. Instead, it turns into a bandwagon. Fine, they’re doing their job, that’s okay.” When asked about the abusive comments and threats that Chopra reportedly received after his tweet went viral, Paresh condemned such behaviour. “That’s wrong. You can’t treat someone like that. She’s a lady, you know. She’s an educated, cultured woman. She’s Vikram Chandra’s sister, for God’s sake.” He also spoke about Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Anupama’s grace after the incident, and how they called and spoke to his son Aditya Rawal’s work.

Prabhas-starrer ‘Fauzi’ to hit screens on December 3

Hyderabad: The makers of director Hanu Raghavapudi’s eagerly awaited action entertainer ‘Fauzi’, featuring Pan Indian star Prabhas in the lead, on Thursday announced that the film would hit screens worldwide on December 3 this year, much to the delight of fans and film buffs. Taking to his social media timelines, the film’s director Hanu Raghavapudi wrote, “On 3rd DECEMBER 2026, the #Fauzi march begins. Come witness a story that won’t just unfold on the big screen, it will live on in the hearts of everyone who believes in courage, honor, and freedom. #FauziOnDec3.” The film has triggered huge interest in fans and film buffs ever since the makers first announced the project last year. Fauzi hit the limelight earlier this year in April, when director Hanu Raghavapudi made an emotional appeal to people, asking them not to circulate leaked images of the film on social media. Taking to his social media timelines, he had then said, “We’ve poured our hearts into #Fauzi to give you something truly special. Humbly requesting everyone, please don’t spoil the magic with leaks. Let’s experience it the way it’s meant to be... together in theatres.” At that point, the makers of the film, using the official handle of the film on the social media platform X, is-

sued a stern warning to those accounts that were circulating the leaked images of the film. The makers had then said, “It has come to our attention that certain accounts are circulating leaked images from the sets of #Fauzi. Please treat this as a strict warning – any such content will be reported, and necessary action will be taken against those involved.” The makers had further said, “These leaks compromise the experience we are carefully building. What’s coming on the big screen will be far bigger and worth the wait. We urge everyone to refrain from sharing or engaging with leaked content.” For the unaware, director Hanu Raghavapudi’s upcoming historical action film, featuring actor Prabhas in the lead, was titled ‘Fauzi’. While announcing the title of the film, the makers had used Sanskrit Shlokas. Opening up on why they had used the Shlokas, director Hanu Raghavapudi had said, “We intentionally used Sanskrit Shlokas because they add gravity and meaning to our warrior tale. However, this is not a mythological film. We’ve only drawn philosophical inspiration from the Bhagavad Gita. ‘Fauzi’ is a powerful patriotic drama that explores human emotions and socio-political tensions during the British era, many of which still resonate globally today.”