

# Tribal woman swept away in flooding stream in Nirmal

Nirmal: A tribal woman was washed away while crossing a flooding stream at Ervachintal village in Khanapur mandal on Wednesday.Police and locals said that Marsakola Parubai (45), a social security pension beneficiary from Chamanapalli village was swept away in swirling waters of the stream after attempting to cross it. She was returning after receiving the social security pension at a neighboring village when the mishap occurred.

# Lok Sabha passes stricter anti-paper leak Bill: Up to 10 years of jail, Rs 50 lakh fine



The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, by voice vote amid chaotic protests by the Congress, even as Union Minister in the PMO Jitendra Singh, replying to the debate on the legislation, told Parliament that no firing took place during the July 20 police crackdown on students protesting against the NEET paper leak at Jantar Mantar.

Congress members, who shouted slogans against the government during the Bill's passage and stormed the Well of the House, were protesting that Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi was not allowed to complete his speech on the legislation.

Countering Rahul's charge that Home Minister Amit Shah had ordered firing on protesting students, Singh said, "When he (Rahul) says that the Home Minister ordered the shooting and failed to authenticate it, the basic fact is that no minister anywhere issues an order to open fire. Either a magistrate issues it, or an SDM or a DM does. Secondly, it has been clarified repeatedly that no firing took place at all. Tear gas was used."

Incidentally, Delhi Police records state that pellet guns were used against the agitating students, while medical reports of those present at the protest site have

also surfaced, citing gunshot injuries. Singh also attacked Rahul over his "inappropriate" remarks. "The foul language he used is not only unparliamentary, but it is such an unparliamentary expression that I cannot even utter it," the minister said. The word was later expunged from the House records.

Singh also said the LoP was initially hesitant to join the Cockroach Janta Party-led anti-NEET paper leak campaign. "But when he felt the movement was picking up... he suffered from MIA (using Gen Z lingo) or missing in action, in our language. Later he suffered from FOMO (fear of missing out). That is why he went and sat there."

He also attacked Priyanka Gandhi over her claim that no action had been taken against those involved in paper leaks despite the law enacted in 2024. Singh said PM Narendra Modi had acted swiftly to address the issue. "Information was received on the night of July 7 and 8. By July 12, the case had been handed over to the CBI. As many as 13 individuals were immediately taken into custody. Simultaneously, raids were conducted at nearly 92 locations. I am happy to share that the chargesheet was filed yesterday (July 28), and the trial under this new law began today (July 29). The case is expected to be solved in the next three months," he added.

# Rahul Gandhi seeks Amit Shah's sacking over 'brutal' crackdown on student protest

\New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday demanded the sacking of Home Minister Amit Shah and a Supreme Court-monitored probe into what he claimed was a "brutal attack" on protesting students and use of pellet guns on them, a charge rejected by the BJP as "lie".

Gandhi alleged that by ordering the "brutalities" on students, Shah was culpable and hence should be removed. He said in case Shah did not know about the use of pellet guns on protesters, he was incompetent and in that case also should be sacked.Print newspaper delivery

The BJP hit back, accusing Gandhi of telling a "bundle of lies", and demanded he apologise for "misusing" the House by making "baseless" allegations.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju rejected Gandhi's charges and accused him of trying to mislead the House by claiming that Shah ordered police firing during the protests over NEET paper leak.

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra also sought to debunk Gandhi's claims. "Rahul Gandhi said that bullets were fired at the students. He lied. No bullet was fired. He also lied that Home Minister Amit Shah ordered the firing."

Gandhi started his attack on Shah in Lok Sabha while speaking on the debate on the bill seeking to make stricter punishment for paper leaks. He alleged Shah was behind police excesses and firing against student protesters, triggering a massive uproar inside and outside Parliament.

Many of Gandhi's remarks made in Lok Sabha were



later expunged by the Speaker, but the Congress leader repeated his charges outside Parliament.Social Issues & Advocacy

In a post on X, he said the BJP can turn off his microphone in Parliament but not the "chhatron ki goonj" (voice of the students).

"There can be just two options – the Home Minister gave the order for firing (at protesters), the other is that the Home Minister did not know that there will be firing."

"In the first case, he is culpable. In the second case, he is incompetent, there can be no other option," he told reporters outside Parliament while questioning why Shah did not come to the house.

Later addressing a press conference at the AICC office, the leader of opposition claimed that he was not allowed to speak in Lok Sabha and everytime he tries to speak there, he is "silenced".

# Rahul lying in Parliament, trying to incite anarchy for political gains: BJP

New delhi, July 29 : The ruling BJP on Wednesday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of lying about firing of bullets at students during the NEET paper leak protest at Jantar Mantar in the national capital.

The party alleged that the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha was attempting to spread confusion and incite anarchy for political gains. Senior party spokesman Sambit Patra also slammed Rahul for his remarks that Home Minister Amit Shah travelled in a convoy of 30 cars.



"It is a lie. Even the

Prime Minister's cavalcade perhaps does not have 30 cars. Rahul Gandhi, come and show me where are those 30 cars that you saw in Amit Shah's convoy," he said at a press conference.

On Rahul's remarks in the Lok Sabha that the Home Minister "trembles in fear", Patra hit back and said Shah was the man who made Naxalites and terrorists tremble in fear.

The BJP's response came after Rahul alleged that Shah had authorised police excesses and firing against student protesters, triggering a massive uproar in the Lok Sabha during a debate on a Bill to amend the anti-paper leak law.The BJP hit back, accusing the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha

## NEET aspirant dies by suicide in Bhupalpally

Bhupalpally: A 19-year-old student, who celebrated her birthday 18 days ago on July 11, allegedly died by suicide for failing to secure a good rank in recently held National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG).The deceased, Page Krishnaveni, a native of Pankena village in Palimela mandal in the district, died on Wednesday while undergoing treatment at NIMS Hospital after consuming a herbicide. Her father, Rajaiah stated that she fell unconscious in the bathroom after consuming the poison.Telangana political newsAfter noticing her lying in the bathroom, the family members rushed her to a local hospital and later to NIMS. She took the extreme step as she was distressed over securing low marks and feared that she might not be able to get a medical seat, he said.Krishnaveni secured an All India rank (AIR)-2,60,392 and a category rank (SC) 22,380 in NEET. Her father said that she wanted to undergo a long-term coaching to appear for NEET again if she failed to get a seat this time and he agreed for that.

# Revanth To Bridge Gap Between Govt, Congress

Hyderabad, July 29

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday said that he will strengthen coordination between the state government machinery and the ruling Congress' organisation to ensure that welfare schemes and development programmes reach every household in Telangana.

The Chief Minister attended the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Coordination Committee meeting convened by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) at the party's headquarters, Indira Bhavan, in Delhi on Wednesday.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, enrolment of every eligible voter, the upcoming Graduate MLC elections for two seats scheduled in March 2027, selection of candidates and an aggressive campaign to take the Congress government's welfare and development programmes to every doorstep.

According to party sources, Revanth Reddy said coordination between the government and the party organisation would be streamlined by convening TPCC Coordination Committee meetings once every 45 days. The meeting was attended by deputy chief minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, C. Damodar Rajanarasimha and Danasari Anasuya (Seethakka), AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, TPCC president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud and Congress Working Committee special invitee Ch. Vamshi Chand Reddy.

The high command convened the coordination committee meeting in Delhi for the first time amid reports of gaps between the government and the party organisation. Though the AICC had constituted the TPCC Coordination Committee in March this year to bridge the gap between the government machinery and the party network, it had failed to meet even once. Taking serious note of the issue, the high command summoned all members of the committee to Delhi and held the first meeting.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Bhatti Vikramarka said the right to vote was the cornerstone of Indian democracy and the Constitution, and ensuring voting rights for every eligible citizen was a major objective of the Congress. He said the meeting had taken key decisions on three major issues — the SIR exercise, taking welfare and development programmes to the people through the party organisation, and preparations for the Graduate MLC elections.

Bhatti Vikramarka said the Congress had been pay-

# SIR: CEO Seeks Guidance From ECI on FRCs

Hyderabad:Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy has reportedly decided to seek 'clarification' from the Election Commission of India (ECI) on the Telangana government's decision to issue Family Register Certificates (FRC) to ration card holders amid the Special Intensive Review (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state.

According to official sources, the state government's decision to issue FRC is likely to be challenged in courts on various technical grounds. To avoid future controversies, Sudarshan Reddy decided to write to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar seeking his guidance on the matter.

Though the Telangana government's decision to issue FRC was inspired by the Karnataka government's Permanent Residence Certificate (PRC), sources said Karnataka decided to issue PRC before the SIR phase rollout, while Telangana's decision comes amidst the SIR exercise.

"The ECI has already extended the deadlines for the various phases in Telangana. Compared to Karnataka, the decision to issue FRC was taken midway and almost when the Enumeration Phase was in the final stages," a higher official said.

By Wednesday, officials had digitised 76.28 per cent of the 2.58 crore enumeration forms received in



ing special attention to the SIR process in Telangana and that the party's Booth Level Agents (BLAs) were working effectively. He said the AICC had also reviewed and appreciated their performance. Meenakshi Natarajan had directed the party leadership to speed up the remaining voter enrolment process and ensure that no eligible voter was left out.

As part of the coordination between the government and the party, district in-charge ministers have been entrusted with key responsibilities. They will hold consultations with District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents, MLAs and senior party leaders in their respective districts and submit a panel of three probable candidates to the party high command, Bhatti said.

TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud said the party had decided that important government decisions relating to schemes and programmes should be discussed in the coordination committee in advance.

Goud said Telangana Congress was ranked first in the country in implementing programmes in response to AICC calls and the high command was fully satisfied with the activities being undertaken by the state unit. He said the party cadre was being kept fully active and that clarity on coordination and other organisational issues would emerge by the end of August.

He said the Congress government had taken the Indiramma Indlu housing scheme as a prestigious programme and was ensuring complete transparency in the selection of beneficiaries through the lottery system, leaving no scope for irregularities. He said the provision of free electricity up to 200 units, supply of fine rice and the Indiramma Indlu housing scheme were among the major programmes strengthening the Congress party's popularity among the people.



Telangana. Hyderabad, however, remained below 55 per cent with only 25 lakh forms digitised.

Sources also said the BJP strongly opposed issuing FRCs and built pressure on state poll officials to act. They said the BJP could challenge the state government's decision on FRC in court.

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DEMAND NOTICE TO THE BORROWER

(Notice under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 Section 13(2))

It is hereby inform that borrower Sri Upalanchiwar Krishna S/o. Digamber Rao availed loan facilities from the bank and failed to pay principal and interest to the concern loan and the loan has been classified as non performance asset (NPA) Under Section 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 notice has been issued to his last known address. But, the same has been returned without handover to him. Hence this information has been informing through this public notice.

| Name of Borrower                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Property details                                                                                                                                                                       | Notice Date                                         | Outstanding Amount (As on Notice date) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Upalanchiwar Krishna S/o Digamber Rao, H.No. 3-4-107, Ashok Road, Near Jama Masjid, Adilabad-504001. Guarantor: Smt Upalanchiwar Ragini W/o. Upalanchiwar Krishna, H.No. 3-4-107, Ashok Road, Near Jama Masjid, Adilabad-504001. | Door No. 3-4-106/1 & 3-4-107, situated at Ward No.3, Block No.4, Brahmanwada, Adilabad.<br><br>Door No. 3-4-106/1 & 3-4-107, situated at Ward No.3, Block No.4, Brahmanwada, Adilabad. | 06-01-2026<br><br>04-07-2026<br>NPA Date 27-06-2026 | Rs. 88,18,462/-                        |

The above person has failed to pay the above mentioned amount along with future interest and incidental expenses. Hence for the rules SARFAESI Act Section 13(2) with in 60 days from the notice date the above mentioned person failed to pay the above mentioned amount along with future interest and incidental expenses the bank may take SARFAESI Act Section 13(4) and any other provisions in the act. This notice is issued without prejudice to the rights of the Bank under available provision of any other act or any acts or legalacts.

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## Watershed moment for space industry

India's space journey has reached a historic milestone. The successful launch of Vikram-1, the first orbital rocket developed in the private sector, is a watershed moment because it achieved what is exceptionally rare in the

space launch industry: a successful orbital mission on its very first attempt. Most new rockets suffer failures or major anomalies during maiden flights, making its flawless insertion of payloads into a 450-km orbit a remarkable demonstration of engineering maturity, rigorous testing and execution. Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace has now joined a small and elite group of global companies that have successfully developed and launched orbital rockets. India is only the third country, after the United States and China, where a private company has independently placed payloads in orbit. The seven-storey rocket, carrying technology demonstration payloads and postcards, lifted off ISRO's First Launch Pad at Sriharikota and, a little over 15 minutes later, placed its payloads in an orbit roughly 450 km above the Earth. Named 'Aagaman' (arrival), it was the first of two test flights Skyroot plans to do this year before starting commercial launches next year. For nearly six decades, the space sector was entirely in the hands of the government. Every celebrated milestone, from Aryabhata to Chandrayaan-3, every Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) that became the workhorse of global commercial launches, every Mars and Moon mission, bore the unmistakable signature of the Indian state. That monopoly has ended now. The achievement also validates India's 2020

space-sector reforms, which opened ISRO's infrastructure to private firms, proving that Indian startups can independently design, build and launch orbital-class rockets.

## Welfare and Development Are the Two Eyes of the People's Government: Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy



"Every Eligible Poor Family Will Receive an Indiramma House in a Phased Manner" Minister Lays Foundation Stones for Development Works Worth ₹7.21 Crore in Khammam Rural" Khammam, July 29 | Indian Chronicle "Telangana Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said that the people's government, formed with the blessings of the people, is moving forward by giving equal importance to welfare and development, describing them as the "two eyes" of governance. "During his extensive tour of the Palair Assembly Constituency on Wednesday, the Minister, accompanied by Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Sreeja, laid foundation stones for several development projects in Khammam Rural Mandal. "He inaugurated the construction of the Mangalagudem-Dakya Thanda BT Road at a cost of ₹1.41 crore in Dakya Thanda village and later laid the foundation stone for the Gollagudem-Pallegudem BT Road via NSP at a cost of ₹5.80 crore. The total value of the development works launched was ₹7.21 crore. "Addressing the gathering, Minister Ponguleti said that people's welfare is the government's top priority and that the administration is committed to improving the lives of farmers, women, students, and economically weaker sections. He stated that the government's welfare schemes and development initiatives are reaching every village because of the trust and blessings of the people. "Highlighting the government's commitment to farmers, the Minister said that under the Rythu Bharosa Scheme, ₹9,200 crore had been credited directly into farmers' bank accounts within nine days at the rate of ₹6,000 per acre. He added that paddy farmers are receiving the Minimum Support Price (MSP) along with an additional ₹500 bonus for fine variety paddy. He further stated that farm loan waivers up to ₹2 lakh have benefited 25 lakh farmers, with the government spending nearly ₹21,000 crore to reduce their financial burden. "The Minister also emphasized the government's focus on women's empowerment, stating that eligible families are receiving up to 200 units of free electricity, while new ration cards are being issued to distribute fine rice. He said the government aims to economically empower one crore women across Telangana through various welfare and livelihood initiatives."

"Speaking about the Indiramma Housing Scheme, Ponguleti said the government is determined to fulfill the dream of providing a permanent house to every poor family. Around 4.5 lakh houses were sanctioned in the first phase and 2.5 lakh houses in the second phase, taking the total to nearly 7 lakh houses. He assured that the remaining eligible villages would be covered in the ongoing phase and that every deserving poor family would receive an Indiramma house in the third and fourth phases. "The Minister reaffirmed that development works across the state would continue without interruption and that the government is giving top priority to rural roads, drinking water facilities, educational institutions, and other basic infrastructure. He assured that every promise made to the people would be fulfilled. "The programme was attended by Edulapuram Municipal Chairperson Pokabathini Anitha, Khammam RDO N. Srinivas, Housing PD Bhukya Srinivas, PR EE Mahesh Babu, officials from various departments, public representatives, and local leaders.

## HYDRA Commissioner A.V. Ranganath Should Be Dismissed Immediately



UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY "UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has demanded the immediate dismissal of HYDRA Commissioner A.V. Ranganath, alleging that the Telangana High Court's recent remarks on the Commissioner's functioning have exposed the Congress government's administrative failures. "Addressing the media, the MLA said that HYDRA had exercised sweeping powers while demolishing people's houses but had failed to adhere to the rule of law. He alleged that officials who ignore court directions and established legal procedures are being protected by the government, calling it a threat to democracy. Lakshma Reddy further alleged that under the banner of HYDRA, bulldozers were used to demolish the

houses of poor and middle-class families, leaving thousands of families displaced. He said that following the High Court's observations, the Congress government is now answerable to the people. "He criticized the government for adopting a "double standards" approach, claiming that justice was being applied selectively. According to him, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) had consistently maintained that HYDRA's actions were being used for political vendetta rather than for the protection of law. He added that the High Court's observations have now raised serious questions regarding those actions. "The MLA stated that any official with moral responsibility should not continue in office under such circumstances and demanded that the state government immediately remove A.V. Ranganath from the post of HYDRA Commissioner. He also claimed that several contempt of court cases had been registered in connection with HYDRA's actions. "Lakshma Reddy further demanded that the demolitions carried out under HYDRA, the alleged selective actions, and the alleged misuse of official authority be investigated either under the supervision of the High Court or by an independent judicial inquiry, with strict action taken against those found responsible. "Concluding his remarks, the Uppal MLA urged the Congress government to abandon what he described as its arrogant approach, implement the High Court's directions without delay, and stop policies that, according to him, infringe upon the constitutional rights of citizens. "This translation preserves the original statements as political allegations and demands attributed to the MLA, rather than presenting them as established facts.

## CM Revanth Reddy Sanctions 3.20 Crore for Modernisation of Uppal Bus Station



"Congress Uppal Constituency In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and Former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Played Key Role in Securing

Funds" UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has sanctioned ₹3.20 crore for the construction of a modern RTC bus station at Uppal, giving another major development boost to the constituency. "The existing RTC bus station, located near V.T. Kaman on Uppal Main Road, will be upgraded with modern infrastructure and passenger-friendly amenities. According to Congress leaders, the sanction of these funds was made possible through the dedicated efforts of Congress Uppal Constituency In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy and former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy. "The present bus station, which has limited facilities, will be transformed into a modern transit hub equipped with advanced amenities for the convenience of commuters. Once completed, the station is expected to provide improved passenger services and a completely revamped infrastructure. "Key Facilities Planned at the Modern Uppal Bus Station: "Additional driveways and platforms for smooth bus movement. "A dedicated traffic management system. "Spacious and comfortable waiting lounges for passengers. "Digital information display boards providing real-time bus arrival and departure updates. "Modern and hygienic toilet facilities. "A dedicated dining hall and rest rooms for RTC drivers and conductors. Construction of a compound wall to strengthen security and landscaping of the premises. "Upon completion, the upgraded Uppal Bus Station is expected to become a more convenient and efficient transport hub, significantly enhancing passenger comfort and strengthening its role as one of Hyderabad's key public transport centres."

## Grand Guru Purnima Celebrations and Maha Annadanam at Mamillagudem Sai Baba Temple

"Former Corporator Budigam Srinivas and Temple Chairman Uthukuri Srinivasa Rao Inaugurate the Annadanam Programme" Khammam, July 29 | Indian Chronicle "Guru Purnima celebrations were held with great devotion and grandeur on Wednesday at the Sri Sai Baba Temple in Mamillagudem, 45th Division, Khammam. Devotees started arriving at the temple from the early hours of the morning in large numbers to seek the blessings of Sri Sai Baba. Women, youth, and elderly devotees participated enthusiastically, creating a spiritually vibrant atmosphere. "The Maha Annadanam (mass free meal service) organized on the occasion was inaugurated by former Corporator Budigam Srinivas and Uthukuri Srinivasa Rao, Chairman of the Mamillagudem Sai Baba Temple and a prominent advocate. They personally served food to the devotees, marking the commencement of the programme. "Special pujas, abhishekams, bhajans, Maha Mangala Harathi, and Naivedyam were performed with religious fervour. Following the rituals, free meals were served to nearly 5,000 devotees as part of the Maha Annadanam programme. "The event was attended by Sai Baba devotees and volunteers, including Lingam Narendra, Bondili Satyanarayana Singh, Jakkula Venkataramana, Anil, Vanam Ravi Kumar, Palavelli Sunil, temple priests, Chintala Sunitha, Sharath, and several others, who contributed to the suc-



cessful conduct of the programme. "The temple management made elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the celebrations and the comfort of thousands of devotees who participated in the Guru Purnima festivities. The event concluded in a devotional and peaceful atmosphere with devotees receiving the blessings of Sri Sai Baba.

## RAJITHA PARAMESWAR REDDY Participates in Special Prayers at Sri Mahankali Temple



"UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal Division former Corporator Rajitha Parameswar Reddy participated in the special prayers held as part of the Sri Shakambari Devi Divya Alankaram at the Sri Mahankali Temple in Uppal. "Speaking on the occasion, Rajitha Parameswar Reddy said that the Shakambari Devi Alankaram at the temple was beautifully decorated with fruits, vegetables, leafy greens, and flowers, presenting a magnificent divine form. She stated that the Shakambari Devi Alankaram holds special significance during the auspicious Ashada month, as the Goddess is worshipped as

the divine mother who blesses all living beings with food, agricultural prosperity, and nature's abundance. She prayed that, with the blessings of Goddess Shakambari, the people of Uppal would live in peace, happiness, and prosperity, and that every family would progress and flourish. Among those who participated in the programme were Telkela Mohan Reddy, Gummadelli Krishna, Mashetty Raghavendra, Mahankali Raju, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Turpati Jangaiah, temple priest Hanumanthu, Kannamaina Naresh Mudiraj, Prashanth Reddy, and a large number of devotees.

## Drizzles add to Hyderabad's traffic woes despite no heavy rain

Hyderabad: After giving the denizens a harrowing evening on Tuesday with waterlogged roads and long traffic snarls, the weather on Wednesday remained steady with drizzles till the evening.

## Former Corporators Participate in Guru Purnima Celebrations Across Meerpet-HB Colony Division



"Nacharam, Indian Chronicle, July 29: "Former Corporators Jeripothula Prabhudas and Gundarapu Srinivas Reddy participated in the Guru Purnima celebrations held at various temples across the Meerpet-HB Colony Division. "On the occasion, they visited the Shirdi Sai Baba Temple located in Venkateswar Nagar, New Narasimha Nagar, and IDA Moula Ali, had the darshan of Shirdi Sai Baba, and performed special prayers seeking the blessings of Baba. "Speaking on the occasion, they highlighted the spiritual significance of Guru Purnima and conveyed their wishes to devotees and the people of the division. They prayed for the peace, prosperity, happiness, and well-being of all the people. "A large number of devotees participated in the Guru Purnima celebrations with devotion and enthusiasm. The temple premises witnessed a spiritual atmosphere as devotees offered prayers and sought the blessings of Shirdi Sai Baba.

## Police Counsel Suspect Sheet Holders Ahead of Bonalu Festival



"OU JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of preventive measures to ensure the upcoming Bonalu festival is celebrated peacefully and without any untoward incidents, the Lalaguda Police conducted a preventive counseling session for 15 Suspect Sheet holders at the Lalaguda Police Station on Tuesday. "The counseling programme was led by Lalaguda Police Station Inspector K. Ravi Kiran, who interacted individually with each suspect sheet holder. He advised them to maintain good conduct during the festival, respect the law, and refrain from engaging in any unlawful, anti-social, or criminal activities. "Inspector Ravi Kiran warned that strict legal action would be taken against anyone found disturbing law and order or posing a threat to public safety during the Bonalu celebrations. "Police officials appealed to the public to cooperate with the police in maintaining peace and harmony, ensuring that the Bonalu festival is celebrated in a safe and orderly manner.

## SIR Progress Review Meeting Held in Uppal Constituency - under PARAMESWAR REDDY's Leadership



"Constituency Congress SIR Coordinator Varalakshmi Attends as Chief Guest" UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A review meeting on the progress of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls being carried out across the Uppal Assembly constituency was held on Wednesday at Srirastu Convention in Uppal Bhagayath. "The meeting was chaired by Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameswar Reddy and attended by Congress Party SIR Coordinator for the constituency, Varalakshmi, as the chief guest. "During the meeting, Varalakshmi reviewed the progress of the SIR exercise in all divisions of the constituency. Noting that only three days remain for the completion of the SIR process, she urged party leaders, booth agents, and workers to intensify their efforts. "She appealed to them to visit every household, assist eligible voters in filling out enumeration forms, and collect the completed forms. She also advised them to coordinate with the concerned officials to expedite the digitisation of the collected forms. "Varalakshmi further instructed party leaders to pay special attention to polling booths with lower registration percentages and ensure that no eligible voter in the constituency is deprived of their voting rights. She emphasized that Congress booth agents should remain vigilant throughout the process. She described the SIR exercise as crucial in view of the upcoming Municipal Corporation elections and called upon party workers to complete the revision process efficiently. Congress division presidents, party leaders, booth agents, and other party functionaries from all divisions of the Uppal constituency participated in the meeting.

## No Community Radio in Warangal is Regrettable: MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya



“Warangal, July 29 (Indian Chronicle): Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya raised questions in the Lok Sabha regarding the extent to which Warangal district is benefiting from the Central Government's information and publicity programmes. She also sought details on the assistance being provided to community radio stations, public awareness initiatives, and the measures undertaken to promote Central Government welfare schemes in the district. “The MP questioned the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about the financial assistance provided over the past three years for community radio stations, media outreach programmes, and public awareness campaigns in Warangal district, along with details of beneficiaries and ini-

tiatives taken to publicise Central Government schemes. “In a written reply, Dr. L. Murugan, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, stated that there is currently no community radio station in Warangal district. Responding to this, Dr. Kadiyam Kavya said it was unfortunate that no community radio station had been established in Warangal despite the Central Government implementing a special scheme to promote the community radio movement across the country. “The Centre also informed the Lok Sabha that 17 Integrated Communication and Outreach Programmes (ICOPs) had been conducted in and around Warangal over the past three years. These programmes covered themes such as the International Day of Yoga, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, voter awareness campaigns, Nasha Mukh Bharat, and Poshan Maah, among others. “Speaking on the issue, MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavya said that information about Central Government welfare schemes needs to reach the people of Warangal more extensively. She expressed concern over the absence of community radio and similar public information platforms in the district. “She further stated that she would continue to raise issues in Parliament to secure Central institutions, support, and development opportunities for Warangal. She affirmed that her goal is to bring every issue concerning the district to the attention of the Central Government and ensure that Warangal receives the priority and support it deserves.

## Asifabad Administration on High Alert as Heavy Rains Loom“

“Indian Chronicle, Asifabad, July 29: “With the district expected to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall over the next three days, District Collector K. Hariitha has urged residents to remain vigilant and venture outdoors only in case of emergencies. “On Wednesday, the Collector inspected the floodwaters flowing through the Thumpelli stream in Asifabad mandal and reviewed the situation on the ground. “Speaking on the occasion, she said continuous heavy rainfall in the upper catchment areas could lead to a further rise in water levels in streams and rivulets across the district. “The Collector directed officials and police personnel to prevent both motorists and pedestrians from crossing bridges where floodwaters are flowing over the surface. She also advised two-wheeler riders and cattle herders not to attempt crossing overflowing streams, rivulets, or low-lying causeways under any circumstances. “Officials were instructed to immediately shift residents living in low-lying areas to safer locations and evacuate people residing in dilapidated houses to prevent any loss of life. “To ensure a swift response during



rain-related emergencies, the district administration has established a 24x7 Control Room at the Collectorate. “Emergency Control Room: 8500844365” The inspection was attended by Tahsildar Riyaz Ali, police personnel, and officials from various government departments.

## Free medical camp at Spandana Mentally Handicapped Ashram... Dr. Anita Reddy



“Hanumakonda, July 29 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of Guru Pournami, Anurag Helping Society and Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamy Trust jointly organized a free medical camp for people with intellectual disabilities at Spandana Mentally Handicapped Ashram in

Hanumakonda. “In this camp, Dr. Lakshminarayana conducted free health check-ups for the residents and staff of the center, provided necessary medical advice and suggested treatment. Medicines were distributed free of cost under the supervision of Dr. Anita Reddy. “Dr. Anita Reddy, Chairperson of Anurag Society, National Vice-Chairperson and Advisor of World Wide Consumer Rights and Protection Organization, and Member of the Governing Body of Kakatiya University, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the medical camp. “Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Anita Reddy said, “Serving people with intellectual disabilities is a service to humanity.” She said that such free medical camps are very beneficial in maintaining the health of children with special needs. She also urged people not to neglect regular health check-ups and to take advantage of the free medical camps organized by the government and NGOs. “Dr. Lakshminarayana, chemist Ravi, and center administrators Sucharita, Vasudha, Hariitha, Bhargavi, Raghava and others participated in the program. “Later, Dr. Anita Reddy also participated in the Annadanam (mass meal program) organized at Abhiram Garden as part of the Guru Purnima celebrations.

## Hanumakonda DCC Media & Communication Committee Constituted



DCC President Inagala “Hanumakonda, July 29 (Indian Chronicle): To ensure the effective dissemination of Congress Party programmes, policies, and government welfare initiatives through the media, the Hanumakonda District Congress Committee (DCC) Media & Communication Committee has been constituted, announced Hanumakonda DCC President Inagala Venkatram Reddy and Hanumakonda Kisan Congress Chairman and DCC Programme Implementation Committee Chairman Pingili Venkatram Narasimha Reddy on Wednesday. “They stated that the committee will oversee the party's publicity activities, press meets, official communication, and media coordination across the district. “Mark Vijay Kumar has been appointed as the Chairman, while M.D. Azeez Khan has been appointed as the Convenor of the newly formed committee. “The members of the committee are Puli Priyanka, Gunti Swapna, Kura Venkateswarlu, Jakkula Ravi Yadav, M.D. Ankoos, Rayapuram Sambaiha, Rahimunnisa Begum, Perumandla Ramakrishna, Bairaboyina Ramesh, M.D. Nehal, Marri Prabhakar, Achha Varsha (Youth Congress), and Roshan (Youth Congress). “Inagala Venkatram Reddy said the committee would work responsibly to take the Congress Party's

ideology and the government's public welfare programmes more effectively to the people through the media.

## Varkala Rajender Goud Appointed BJP OBC Morcha District Secretary; Pays Courtesy Visit to Former MLA NVSS Prabhakar

“UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): On the occasion of his appointment as the BJP OBC Morcha Medchal-Malkajigiri Urban District Secretary, in recognition of his dedication and services to the party, Varkala Rajender Goud paid a courtesy visit to former Uppal MLA NVSS Prabhakar along with senior BJP leaders. “Speaking on the occasion, Rajender Goud expressed his heartfelt gratitude to former MLA NVSS Prabhakar, Medchal-Malkajigiri Urban District President Mallareddy, and OBC Morcha District President Shekhar Yadav for entrusting him with the new responsibility. He also thanked senior BJP leaders Gorige Krishna, Mahankali Laxman Mudiraj, Ravula Balakrishna Goud, and former Uppal BJP President Reddigari Devender Reddy for their support in his appointment. The programme was attended by BJP leaders Yellagoni Prakash Goud, Borampet Muralikrishna Mudiraj, Singaram Karthik, Sriram Jyothi, and several other party members.



## CM Revanth Reddy to Review Finland Education System Today



“Nelakondapalli MEO Balina Chalapathi Rao to Participate in the Review Meeting “Local Teachers Felicitate the MEO “Khammam (Nelakondapalli), July 29 | Indian Chronicle “Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will review the findings of the Telangana State delegation that studied the Finland education system during a high-level meeting on Thursday. “Among those participating in the review is Balina Chalapathi Rao, Mandal Education Officer (MEO) of Nelakondapalli, who was a member of the state delegation that visited Finland from April 18 to April 26 to study its edu-

cation system. “The delegation examined Finland's teaching methodologies, school administration, teacher training, student learning practices, and innovative educational policies. Following the study tour, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) invited Balina Chalapathi Rao to attend the review meeting and present the delegation's observations. “During the meeting, he is expected to brief the Chief Minister on Finland's educational practices, government policies, and the reforms that have contributed to the country's globally recognized education system. The discussion will also focus on how suitable aspects of the Finland model can be adopted to further strengthen the education system in Telangana. “Ahead of his participation in the Chief Minister's review meeting, government school teachers of Nelakondapalli felicitated Balina Chalapathi Rao on Wednesday and wished him success. They expressed confidence that his participation would bring recognition to Nelakondapalli at the state level. “The felicitation programme was attended by District Resource Person Itikyala Suresh Kumar, Swamy, Madhav, Srinivas, teachers' union representatives T. Vengala Rao, B. Srinivas, Thorthi Suresh, Koteswara Rao, Chinna, and several other teachers.

## Grand Welcome to Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on His Visit to Khammam District

“District Collector Divakara T.S. Welcomes the Lieutenant Governor with a Floral Bouquet “Lieutenant Governor Receives Guard of Honour at NSP Guest House “Khammam, July 29 | Indian Chronicle “Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha arrived in Khammam district on Wednesday as part of his official visit. Upon his arrival at the NSP Guest House, District Collector Divakara T.S. extended a warm welcome by presenting him with a floral bouquet and conveying greetings on behalf of the district administration. “During the reception ceremony held at the NSP Guest House premises, the Lieutenant Governor received a ceremonial Guard of Honour from the Telangana Police. “Among those who greeted the Lieutenant Governor were Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt, Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy, Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, Trainee Assistant Collector Paras Kumar, along with senior district officials, public representatives, and other dignitaries. “Later, the Lieutenant Governor held a review meeting with district officials, during which District Collector Divakara T.S. presented a comprehensive overview of Khammam district's development. He briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the implementation of welfare schemes, agricultural development, industrial growth, irrigation projects, education, healthcare, infrastructure expansion, rural and urban development, and investment promotion initiatives. “The Collector also highlighted the district's geographical features, natural resources, cultural heritage, industrial potential, implementation of key government programmes, public service delivery, and the progress of various developmental projects. He stated that all government departments are working in close coordination to ensure the district's holistic development. “As part of his Khammam tour, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha participated in various official



programmes, appreciated the warm hospitality extended by the people and administration of the district, and later departed for Hyderabad to continue his official engagements. “Several senior government officials, police officers, public representatives, and dignitaries were present during the visit.

## Pensioners Must Unite and Fight for Their Rights Inspired by Nakara: TSGREA



Khammam, July 29 | Indian Chronicle “Retired employees should unite and continue their struggle for the protection of their rights, drawing inspiration from the legacy of late Dharam Sud Nakara, said Talluri Venu, District General Secretary of the Telangana State Government Retired Employees Association (TSGREA). “Speaking at the death anniversary meeting of Dharam Sud Nakara, held on Tuesday at the Pensioners' Bhavan in Khammam under the chairmanship of District President M. Subbaiah, Talluri Venu said that the pension rights secured through Nakara's historic movement are gradually being weakened, leaving pen-

sioners to face severe financial hardships. “He expressed concern over the delay in issuing health cards to retired employees. Although health insurance premiums have been deducted from pensions for the past two months, the government has neither issued the health cards nor released clear operational guidelines or a list of empanelled hospitals. He also pointed out that the official website is not functioning properly, causing considerable inconvenience to pensioners. “Venu further stated that the non-implementation of cashless health services in corporate and private hospitals has created serious difficulties for retired employees seeking medical treatment. He urged the government to resolve all pending issues relating to pensioners without further delay. “Calling for collective action, he appealed to all pensioners across the state to remain united and be prepared for democratic agitation until their legitimate demands are fulfilled. “The programme was attended by District Vice-President S. Poornachandra Rao, District Secretary T. Janardhan, city unit leaders S. Satyanarayana, Ramana Yadav, Venkateswarlu, M. Shankara Rao, C.H. Rambabu, Ramaswamy, Krishnamurthy, and several other members of the association.

## BRS Allegations Are Baseless; MLA Nayini is Committed to Minority Welfare: Minority Leaders

Hanumakonda, July 29 (Indian Chronicle): Congress Party minority leaders have stated that the allegations made by BRS minority leaders against Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy are completely false. Addressing a press conference organized by the Congress Minority Department at the Hanumakonda DCC office on Wednesday, they defended the MLA's commitment to minority welfare. “Speaking on the occasion, former Warangal Waqf Board Chairman Ismail criticized the previous BRS government, stating that it had failed to take any significant measures for the welfare of the Muslim minority community during its tenure. He alleged that those who ignored the issues of minorities while in power are now using their name for political gain. “He said that the present MLA, Nayini Rajender Reddy, had allocated three acres of land for a Muslim graveyard (Khabristan) and another three acres for a Christian cemetery. He further stated that the MLA had assured that these sites would be fully developed with facilities such as roads, a compound wall, and a gate. “Ismail also criticized the BRS government for failing to implement its promise of 12% reservation for Muslims. He said the Congress government is sincerely working for the welfare of minorities and that MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy has been making continuous efforts for their development. “Social activist Rahimunnisa Begum alleged that the previous TRS government had neglected the needs of the Muslim community. She said that despite requests for land to construct a Shadi Khana (community function hall), no proper response was received, and even the land that had earlier been allotted was later cancelled. She added that after the Congress government came to power, the process of allo-



cating land for the construction of a Shadi Khana was initiated. “Minority leaders further explained that 25 guntas of land in Survey No. 579 had initially been allotted for the Shadi Khana. However, as the then Minority Welfare Officer found the site unsuitable and requested an alternative location, the District Collector cancelled the allotment. After the matter was brought to the notice of MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy, he immediately intervened, held discussions with the concerned officials, restored the cancelled allotment, and ensured that the necessary Government Order (GO) was issued. They said the MLA had shown special initiative throughout the process to protect the interests of the minority community. “The leaders said that the allegations made by BRS minority leaders were an attempt to mislead the public. They asserted that people are witnessing the steps being taken by the Congress government and MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy for the welfare of Muslim minorities. They reiterated that the Congress government remains fully committed to the development and welfare of minority communities. “Former Corporator Naseem, Division President Jaffer, and leaders Ghouse Pasha, Zubeda Begum, Ayesha, and others were present at the meeting.

# Laws Must Be Strengthened to Protect National Honour: MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra

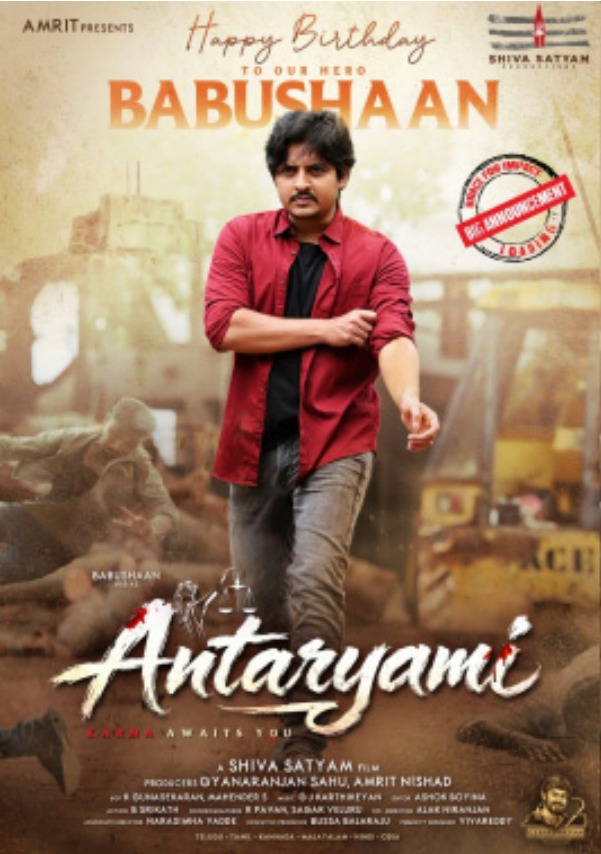


“Warangal, July 29 (Indian Chronicle): BRS Parliamentary Party Floor Leader and MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra stated that national honour is not limited only to the national flag, Constitution, and national anthem, but also represents India’s sovereignty, independence, democratic values, and the sacrifices of millions of martyrs who laid down their lives for the nation.”“MP Ravichandra spoke during the discussion on the “Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026” held in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. He said that the Indian Tricolour is not an ordinary piece of cloth, but a national symbol that carries the ideals of great personalities such as Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh, Alluri Sitarama Raju, and Komaram Bheem.”“He stated that the national flag reminds the nation of the sacrifices of every freedom fighter who gave their lives for the country, whether known or unknown. He said that each colour in the Tricolour has a special significance and reflects the values of the Indian Constitution and the ideals of the nation.”“MP Ravichandra explained that when the law was introduced by Parliament in 1971, its objective was to prevent intentional acts of disrespect towards national symbols such as the national flag, national anthem, and Constitution. At that time, communication systems were limited, and the impact of any such incident remained confined to a few people.”“However, he said there is a huge difference between the India of 1971 and the India of 2026. With the growth of social media, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and digital technology, an insulting act by an individual can reach millions of people within moments. Such incidents can particularly influence the youth and may also harm India’s image internationally, he added.”“Stating that laws must change according to the needs of time, MP Ravichandra clarified that the amendment is not intended

to suppress freedom of expression. He explained that Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution grants every citizen the right to freedom of speech and expression, while Article 19(2) allows reasonable restrictions to protect the country’s integrity, sovereignty, public order, and moral values.”“He said that respecting national symbols is not against democracy; rather, it strengthens democracy. He pointed out that many developed democratic countries across the world have laws to protect their national flags and anthems.”“He mentioned that there have been instances of misuse of national symbols during protests, public events, commercial advertisements, and social media campaigns. While criticising governments is a democratic right, insulting the honour of the nation is not a right of anyone, he asserted.”“Governments may change... policies may change... political parties may change... but the nation remains permanent,” MP Ravichandra remarked.”“He stated that the national flag does not belong to any particular political party but is a symbol of pride for all 140 crore Indians. He said that the Tricolour has the power to unite people beyond differences of caste, religion, language, region, and politics.”“MP Ravichandra suggested that along with stricter punishments for insulting national symbols, awareness programmes should be conducted in schools, colleges, and government institutions to promote respect towards national symbols. He said people should respect the national flag not out of fear of punishment but with pride as Indians.”“At the same time, he urged that the law should act strictly against those who intentionally and repeatedly insult national honour.”“MP Ravichandra said that laws should be made stronger in accordance with the vision of Viksit Bharat–2047. Protecting national symbols means protecting the honour and identity of the country, he stated.”“On the occasion, MP Ravichandra recalled the contribution of Pingali Venkayya, the designer of India’s national flag. He said that the Tricolour officially adopted by the Constituent Assembly on July 22, 1947, was based on Pingali Venkayya’s design. He praised the national flag as a symbol of Pingali Venkayya’s vision and patriotism, which continues to fly across the world.”“Highlighting the role of Backward Classes (BCs), MP Ravichandra said their contribution to the freedom movement, nation-building, agriculture, industries, education, and defence sectors has been immense. He expressed concern that despite BCs constituting a significant share of the population, there is still no separate ministry for their welfare.”“He stated that just as there are separate ministries for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and minorities, a separate ministry should also be established for BCs. On behalf of the BRS party, he urged the Central Government to take this step, stating that it would be a historic decision to further strengthen social justice.”“Considering all these aspects, MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra announced that the BRS party extends its complete support to the “Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026.”

# 'Antaryami' Team Extends Birthday Wishes to Odia Superstar Babushaan, Unveils Special Poster

On the occasion of the birthday of Odia Superstar Babushaan Mohanty, the team of Antaryami, produced under the Amrith Presents – Shiva Satyam Productions banner, extended their heartfelt birthday wishes by unveiling a special official poster.“Babushaan Mohanty, one of the most celebrated stars in the Odia film industry, plays the lead role in Antaryami. The birthday poster released by the makers has received an encouraging response from audiences, further raising expectations for the film.”“The film stars Vedvika Soni as the female lead, while veteran actresses Aamani, Kasturi, and Sreetam Das play pivotal roles. The film is directed by Shiva Satyam and jointly produced by Gnanaranjan Sahu and Amrith Nishad.”“The makers stated that the birthday poster has generated greater excitement among movie lovers, and more updates about the film will be announced soon.”Banner: Amrith Presents – Shiva Satyam Productions“Film: Antaryami“Hero: Babushaan Mohanty“Heroine: Vedvika Soni“Key Cast: Aamani, Kasturi, Sreetam Das“Director: Shiva Satyam“Producers: Gnanaranjan Sahu, Amrith Nishad“Cinematographer: K. Gunasekaran“Music: GJ Karthikeyan“Editor: Ashok Boyina“Executive Producer: Bussa Balaraju“PR & Digital: Colorful Digital Media



# One-Day Marketing Awareness Program for PM Vishwakarma Beneficiaries Held in Khammam



“Khammam, July 29 – Indian Chronicles”“A one-day Marketing and Branding Awareness Program for beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Scheme was or-

ganized at the Khammam district headquarters under the coordination of MSME-Development & Facilitation Office (MSME-DFO), Hyderabad.”“The program focused on creating awareness among beneficiaries on marketing, financial literacy, e-commerce, and entrepreneurship development, enabling artisans to strengthen their businesses and improve market access.”“Addressing the participants, resource persons explained various marketing strategies, digital business opportunities, branding techniques, and financial management practices to help beneficiaries become successful entrepreneurs.”“The programme was attended by Mr. Naveen Kumar, Assistant Director, MSME-DFO Hyderabad; Mr. Ravi Prasad, Lead District Manager (LDM); Mr. Prashanth, NSDC Coordinator; Mr. Rajesh, IPPB Manager; Mr. Prudhvi, IPO; Mr. Radha Krishna, Director, Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS); Mr. Pawan, Assistant Manager, EDC; and Mr. Pushyamitra, Marketing Expert, who shared their expertise with the participants.

# Former Medipally Sarpanch Kuthadi Narsimha Passes Away

“MEDIPALLY , JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Kuthadi Narsimha, the first Sarpanch of Medipally village, former MPTC member, and veteran public leader, passed away in the early hours of Wednesday due to illness. He had recently suffered serious injuries after an accidental fall at his residence and was undergoing treatment at Yashoda Hospital in Secunderabad, where he breathed his last.”“Narsimha dedicated nearly four decades to public service and played a significant role in the development of Medipally village. Local residents recalled that his efforts in protecting government lands made it possible to allocate land for the construction of the police station, municipal office, court complex, and housing for the poor.”



# Corporate-Standard Education and Modern Infrastructure for Students: Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy



“Investment in Students' Future Is the True Investment in Development”“Minister Lays Foundation Stone for 74.85 Crore Development Works at Gollagudem Ashram Girls High School”“Khammam, July 29 | Indian Chronicle”“The Telangana Government is committed to transforming government educational institutions into centers of excellence by providing high-quality education and world-class infrastructure, enabling students to compete with their counterparts in corporate schools, said Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy.”“During his extensive tour of the Palair Assembly Constituency on Wednesday, the Minister laid the foundation stone for development works worth 74.85 crore at the Gollagudem Ashram Girls High School in Edulapuram Municipality, Khammam Rural Mandal.”“The proposed works include the construction of an additional hostel building, dining hall, kitchen, additional classrooms, toilet blocks, kitchen sheds, overhead water tank, solar fencing, and several other infrastructure facilities aimed at improving the learning environment for students.”“Addressing the gathering, Minister Ponguleti said the government’s foremost objective is to ensure that students studying in government schools receive quality education along with all essential facilities. He emphasized that children from economically weaker families should be able to compete on par with students from private and corporate schools.”“The Minister said Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is giving the highest priority to the education sector by strengthening government

schools and converting them into institutions of quality learning. He added that substantial funds have been allocated to provide facilities comparable to those available in private educational institutions.”“He stated that once the 74.85 crore development works are completed, students will benefit from improved accommodation, safety, sanitation, and a better academic atmosphere, allowing them to focus entirely on their education without facing basic infrastructural difficulties.”“Ponguleti said the government is determined to ensure that no child’s education is interrupted due to poverty. He urged students to recognize the sacrifices made by their parents and remain dedicated to achieving their educational goals. He also appealed to teachers to treat every student as their own child and impart quality education along with strong moral values.”“The Minister appreciated the efforts of the ITDA, Bhadrachalam officials for taking special initiatives to improve Ashram schools and creating better educational opportunities for tribal students. He described education not merely as a welfare programme but as an investment in the future of the State, reaffirming the government’s commitment to providing every possible facility to students from poor families.”“Speaking on the occasion, Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Sreeja said that government schools are being upgraded with modern infrastructure while also focusing on skill development to prepare students for future employment. She encouraged students to dream big and pursue education with dedication, stating that education brings dignity, recognition, and opportunities in life.”“ITDA Bhadrachalam Project Officer B. Rahul said the department has introduced several initiatives for the holistic development of students. He informed that the Minister released the “Uddeepakam-3” educational handbook after previously launching Uddeepakam-1 and Uddeepakam-2. He also announced the launch of the “Varadhi” programme to guide students toward higher education and employment opportunities after completing their studies.”“The programme was attended by Edulapuram Municipal Chairperson Pokabathini Anitha, Vice-Chairman Thammineni Naveen, Khammam RDO N. Srinivas, Housing PD Bhukya Srinivas, PR Executive Engineer Mahesh Babu, Khammam Rural Tahsildar Vinay Chandra Reddy, officials from various departments, public representatives, and local leaders.”[

# Kalvakuntla Kavitha visits Peddi Sudarshan Reddy's family members at Yashoda Hospital



“Narsampeta, July 29 (Indian Chronicle):Telangana Defence Sena President Kalvakuntla Kavitha visited former Narsampeta MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, who is undergoing treatment at Yashoda Hospital in Secunderabad, on Wednesday and assured his family members. She enquired about his health condition from the doctors, received information about the treatment, and collected his health details.”“Later, she visited Peddi Sudarshan Reddy’s family members who are in the hospital. She assured his wife Peddi Swapna and family members and wished Peddi Sudarshan Reddy a speedy recovery and return to the pub-



lic in perfect health.”“Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha said that she wishes Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, who worked with her in the Telangana movement, to recover quickly and actively participate in public service again. She expressed hope that he is returning to service in good health with the blessings of the people.”“She said that in the wake of concerns expressed by party leaders, activists and fans about the health of Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, she had visited him and assured his family members. He is currently undergoing treatment at Yashoda Hospital under the supervision of expert doctors.

# Parameshwar Reddy Offers Special Prayers at Sri Sai Baba Temple on Guru Purnima

“UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): On the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima, Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy offered special prayers at the Sri Sai Baba Temple in Venkat Reddy Nagar, Ramanthapur.Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy said that Guru Purnima symbolizes knowledge, righteousness, and spirituality in everyone’s life. He prayed to Sri Sai Baba to bless the people of the Uppal constituency with peace, happiness, good health, prosperity, and overall well-being.”“He expressed hope that, with the divine blessings of Sri Sai Baba, every family would



lead a happy, healthy, and prosperous life.”Temple committee members, Congress leaders from Venkat Reddy Nagar, and party workers also participated in the special prayers.

# Parakala MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy Participates in Varuna Yagam Homa



“Parakala, July 29 (Indian Chronicle): Parakala legislator Revuri Prakash Reddy, along with his wife, participated in the Hiranya Rishyashrunga Vahana Varuna Yaga Mahotsavam held on Wednesday at Sri Kunkumeshwara Swamy Temple in Parakala town and performed special prayers.”“On this occasion, the temple priests welcomed the MLA couple with a traditional Purna Kumbham ceremony. Later, participating in the Varuna Yagam Homa, the MLA prayed to the deity for timely rainfall, peace and prosperity for all the people of the state.”“In view of the El Niño impact, he wished for abundant rainfall, the well-being of farmers with prosperous crops, and the overall welfare and happiness of the people.

# Open drain accidents raise fresh safety concerns in Hyd

Hyderabad: This year’s monsoon, though delayed, has begun with a tragic incident, the alleged sweeping away of a 70-year-old man into an open drain during repair works in Miyapur on Tuesday.The incident has once again brought the spotlight on the city’s vulnerable stormwater infrastructure, raising questions over whether lessons from past accidents have led to better safety measures.The apathy of the civic administration and its failure to take appropriate safety measures well in advance had earlier resulted in the loss of lives and left several others seriously injured. There

have been incidents in Secunderabad, Bachupally and Karmanghat, among other places, where the alleged negligence of the administration resulted in people being swept away in drains.April 2023: Kalasiguda, Secunderabad – Nine-year-old Mounika was swept away after falling into an open stormwater drain during rain. Her body was recovered later.September 2023: Pragathi Nagar, Bachupally – Four-year-old Nithin fell into an uncovered drain while walking with a relative during heavy rain.

## Every student should excel in sports alongside academics:



Bhuvanagiri Mandal Educational Officer Rangarajan""Khelo India Coach Dr. G.V. Subbarao shak-

ing hands with the players""(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – July 29): Bhuvanagiri Mandal Educational Officer (MEO) Rangarajan stated that Sepak Takraw is a popular Southeast Asian sport similar to volleyball. On Monday, at the town's indoor stadium, medals and certificates of appreciation were awarded to players who succeeded in the combined Nalgonda district Sepak Takraw league, held as part of the 'Asmita' sports initiative. Speaking on the occasion, he noted that the Central Government introduced the Sepak Takraw sport specifically for girls to ensure gender equality alongside boys. He emphasized that every student should excel in sports in addition to their academic studies. Khelo India Coach and 'Asmita' Sports Observer for Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, Dr. G.V. Subbarao, spoke about the importance of health—calling it the greatest wealth—and urged every student to cultivate an interest in sports. He stated that the nation would progress in all sectors only if the youth remain healthy. He explained that Sepak Takraw is played without using hands, relying instead on the knees, head, and chest. The event was attended by State Sepak Takraw Association General Secretary K. Srinivas Reddy, State Treasurer Vikesh Kumar, TRSMA State President S.N. Reddy, State Vice-President Jitender Reddy, correspondents (Raghu, Suresh Kumar, Durga Prasad, Yadayya), and students.

## Rotary Club Bhuvanagiri Central distributed sewing machines on the occasion of its 5th foundation day



Club President MA Rahim.. Dr. Empalla Buchireddy""(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 29): - In Bhuvanagiri town YSR Gardens.... Rotary Club Bhuvanagiri Central distributed sewing machines on the occasion of its 5th foundation day.... Under the auspices of Club President MA Rahim for the year 2026-27... Dr. Empalla Buchireddy, Head Kepal Bone Settings Center Aushapur... After Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, Gudur and Kondamadugu poor women. 08 sewing machines worth Rs. 70,000 were handed over to the beneficiaries by the



hands of 3150 Rotary District Governor Uday Sudhir Pilani. Speaking on the occasion, Pilani said that the services of the Rotary Club are extensive and urged them to continue their services as before. Assistant Governor Pakiru Kondal Reddy, Kakatiya Region Social Media Chairman Gaddam Gyan Prakash Reddy, former presidents, former presidents of districts Kondal Reddy, Kommidi Ravinder Reddy, MD Anil Memon, Treasurer Kontham Padma Reddy, members Gummula Malleshham, Gudur Ashok Reddy, SP Upender Rao, Nalla Satyanarayana Reddy and others participated in the program.

## Teachers Felicitated Under the Leadership of Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy



"Inverter Donated to Beda Budagajangala Community Hall""Khammam, July 29 – Indian Chronicles""On the occasion of Guru Purnima, an inverter was donated to the Beda Budagajangala Community Hall in Khammam under the leadership of BJP National Leader Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy. The service initiative was undertaken in memory of Ponguleti Lakshma Reddy and Nagamma.""Following the

donation, the community's respected gurus were felicitated in recognition of their invaluable services and contributions.""During a recent visit to the 22nd Division of the Khammam Assembly constituency, the Beda Budagajangala community elders and gurus had invited Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy to visit the Community Hall and informed him about the need for an inverter. Honouring their request, he fulfilled the commitment on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima.""On the occasion, Kondapalli Venkateswarlu, Sirigiri Hindu Raju, Sirigiri Raju, Sirigiri Srinu, Sirigiri Munuswamy, Sirigiri Pahlwan, Kondapalli Gangaraju, Shiravathi Yaki Marayya, and Kondapalli Ganesh were felicitated with shawls in recognition of their services.""The programme was attended by BJP Khammam District President Nelluri Koteswara Rao, District General Secretary Gutta Venkateswarlu, District Vice-President Veeravelli Rajesh Gupta, Khammam Town-I President Gadila Naresh, District Dalit Morcha President Bandla Regan Pratap, Janardhan, Sirigiri Shiva, Kadudula Prabhakar, along with party leaders, community elders, and workers."

## Legal Fight Against Fisheries Society Irregularities, Says Tribal Leader Palya Kotya



Alleges Contractor System in Society; Complaint Submitted to District Collector Against Fisheries Department Officials""Nelakondapalli, July 29 – Indian Chronicles""Telangana Girijana Sangham leader Palya Kotya has announced that he will initiate a legal battle against the alleged irregularities in the Cheruvumadharam Fishermen Cooperative Society in Nelakondapalli mandal.""Addressing a press conference at the mandal headquarters on Wednesday, Kotya alleged that the society had violated its rules by allowing fishing operations through a contractor system. He claimed that instead of benefiting local fishermen, the contractor transported the fish to other areas, depriving local members of their rightful livelihood.""He further alleged that despite submitting several complaints to the Fisheries Department regarding the irregularities, no action had been taken. He said a formal complaint had now been lodged with the District Collector against the Fisheries Department officials, seeking a comprehensive inquiry into the matter.""Kotya stated that the government had supplied 5.34 lakh fish seed free of cost to the Cheruvumadharam tank for the benefit of local fishermen. However, instead of allowing society members to earn their livelihood through fishing, the management allegedly handed over the operations to a contractor, which he termed a clear violation of the cooperative society's rules.""He also alleged that the contractor recently carried out large-scale fishing operations and harvested a significant quantity of fish. Pointing out that the tank lease expired on June 30,

Kotya claimed that attempts were being made to obtain fresh permission for further fishing operations.""He questioned the deployment of police personnel to prevent local fishermen and residents from approaching the tank bund, calling it unjustified. Kotya reiterated that he would continue his legal fight against both the Fisheries Society and the Fisheries Department officials and appealed to the District Collector to pay special attention to the issues concerning the Cheruvumadharam tank.

## Vyas Guru Pournami celebrated with grandeur at Sri Pachalakatta Someswara Swamy Temple

"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 29):- A special abhishekam ceremony was held on the occasion of Vyas Guru Pournami at Sri Pachalakatta Someswara Swamy Temple. At Sri Pachalakatta Someswara Swamy Temple, the temple committee chairman Kolluri Raju performed special abhishekams on the occasion of Vyas Guru Pournami under the leadership of the temple chief priest Kappaganthula Nagaraju Sharma. In this program, 24th Ward Councilor Challagurugula Krishnaveni Raghubabu Devarakonda Narasimha Chari Potnak Sridhar Bellamkonda Suresh, Prati Saho Ramesh Macharla Vinay Pallerla Naveen devotees participated.



## Krishna Pharma Allegedly Spreading Pollution in Uppal Industrial Area?



Authorities Ignoring Repeated Complaints, Alleges CPM Leader Guntoju Bhishmachari""UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): CPM leader Guntoju Bhishmachari has alleged that residents living near the Krishna Pharma

industry in Uppal Industrial Area are facing severe inconvenience due to the strong spirit-like odour allegedly emanating from the factory."He said people residing in nearby colonies are forced to cover their noses while moving around because of the unbearable smell. He further alleged that the situation has worsened as drums used for storing spirit are being washed and the waste is being discharged onto the roads."Bhishmachari criticized the authorities for failing to take action despite several complaints submitted on the issue. He said local residents have expressed concern that the foul smell from the industry is causing health problems such as breathing difficulties, headaches, and eye irritation, particularly among children, women, and senior citizens."He stated that it is unfortunate that officials responsible for enforcing industrial pollution control regulations have remained negligent. Bhishmachari demanded that the concerned departments conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the storage and transportation of hazardous chemicals and spirit in the midst of residential areas and take immediate steps to ensure public safety.He urged the Pollution Control Board, Industries Department, and the district administration to conduct a joint inspection, ascertain the actual situation, and make their findings public. He also called for strict legal action against industries found to be endangering public health through pollution.

## Protests and Democratic Movements Are the People's Right: CPI Leader Bagam Hemantha Rao

"Suppressing Democratic Voices Will Lead to Downfall""CPI Conducts Constituency-Level Cadre Training Programme in Khammam""Khammam, July 29 | Indian Chronicles""Protesting against anti-people policies and organizing peaceful democratic movements are fundamental rights of citizens in a democracy, and any attempt to suppress such rights amounts to an attack on democratic values, said CPI National Council Member Bagam Hemantha Rao.""He was addressing the Khammam Constituency-level CPI cadre training programme held on Wednesday at the GMR Function Hall. Earlier, the party flag was hoisted by Khammam Constituency Secretary S.K. Jaani Miya. The training sessions were presided over by Pagadala Mallesh.""Speaking on the topic "Current Political Situation and the Role of Communists," Hemantha Rao alleged that the Union Government had adopted a repressive approach towards protests relating to the NEET paper leak, affecting the future of lakhs of students. He criticized the use of force against peaceful demonstrators and questioned the government's authority to curb democratic rights.""He demanded a judicial inquiry into the incidents that took place in Delhi and called for the withdrawal of what he described as false cases filed against protesters. He warned that if justice was denied, larger public movements could emerge.""Hemantha Rao also criticized remarks allegedly made by certain BJP leaders and members of organisations such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), describing them as provocative. He termed comments attributed to BJP MP Kangana Ranaut on student and youth protests as inappropriate and alleged that they insulted the youth. He also condemned remarks attributed to VHP leader Mohan Das and demanded legal action if those statements violated the law.""He further alleged that economic inequality in the country was widening, with wealth increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few while the poor continued to suffer. Referring to issues such as unemployment, the agrarian crisis, labour codes, and rising economic dispari-



ties, he said these challenges could lead to future mass movements if left unresolved.""The CPI leader also alleged that the Telangana Government had been slow in implementing several election promises. He urged the government to fulfil its commitments, including the Six Guarantees, farm loan waiver, Rythu Bharosa, Rythu Bima, and promises made to women.""Calling for the strengthening of the Communist movement, Hemantha Rao urged party workers to identify local issues, organize democratic struggles, and remain closely connected with the people.""During the training programme, CPI District Secretary Dandi Suresh spoke on "Party Building, Agitations and Campaigns," Jammula Jitender Reddy delivered a session on "The National Movement and the Role of the Communist Party," while Shingu Narasimha Rao addressed the topic "Caste, Religion and Class Struggle.""The programme was attended by CPI State Committee Members Apuri Latha Devi, Mohammed Salam, B.G. Clement, District Executive Members Potu Kalavathi, Mekala Srinivasa Rao, Enugu Gandhi, Yanali Sambasiva Reddy, NFIW District President Battineni Neeraja, district committee members, and a large number of CPI activists.

## FORMER CORPORETER BANNALA GEETHA PRAVEEN MUDIRAJ Participates in Guru Purnima Special Prayers

"UPPAL, JULY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Guru Purnima celebrations were held with great devotion and grandeur on Wednesday at the Sri Shirdi Sai Baba Temple in Dharmapuri Colony under the Beerappagadda Division."On the occasion, former Chilkanaagar Division Corporator and former GHMC Standing Committee Member Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj participated in the special prayers and sought the blessings of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba."Speaking on the occasion, Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj said she prayed for the continued blessings of Sri Shirdi Sai Baba upon all the people of the Uppal constituency. She noted that the temple committee conducted special Abhishekams with 101 Kalashas as part of the Guru Purnima celebrations."She further informed that an Annadanam (community meal) was organized for devotees and that a grand procession of Sri Sai Baba would be taken out in the evening."Appreciating the temple committee, she said the Guru Purnima celebrations were organized in a magnificent manner and commended the members for making excellent arrangements to ensure the convenience of devotees."Temple committee members, local public representatives, and a large number of devotees participated in the celebrations."



## Flyover bridge should be constructed on Bhuvanagiri National Highway immediately

Telangana Rajyadhikari Party Dharna""(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. July 29):- Telangana Rajyadhikari Party leaders expressed their concern that people going from Bhuvanagiri town to villages like Ramakrishnapuram, Ramachandrapuram, Penchikalpadu, Chandupatla, Kummarigudem, Banda Somaram and others have to cross the National Highway every day, and accidents are frequent in this area and many people are losing their lives. They said that the recent death of a person from Bhuvanagiri in a road accident in the same area is very sad. They strongly condemned the fact that a flyover bridge has not been constructed here despite many accidents already."With the support of Teenmar Mallanna, the Telangana Rajyadhikari Party Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Youth Union President Sheikh Riyaz and party leader Tallapalli Sivakumar organized a huge dharna along with the local people."Speaking on the occasion, the leaders questioned why the government, which is sanctioning bridges on the National Highway in neighboring constituencies, is neglecting the Bhuvanagiri constituency. They demanded that the National Highway

Authority, the central and state governments immediately take action for the construction of the flyover bridge. District Minority President MD Soyal, Sajid, Baja Krishna, Baja Mani along with people from Ramakrishnapuram,



Ramachandrapuram, Penchikalpadu, Chandupatla, Kummarigudem, Banda Somaram and other villages participated in this program in large numbers."The leaders warned that they will intensify the movement along with the people until the demand is fulfilled.

# Telangana mother seeks CM’s help to bring back Agniveer aspirant from Abu Dhabi



GNS News Agency, July 29

A Telangana woman has appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to help bring her son back from Abu Dhabi after his employer allegedly demanded Rs 1.08 lakh for visa cancellation, putting his Agniveer recruitment at risk. A Telangana woman has appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to help bring her son back from Abu Dhabi after his employer allegedly demanded Rs 1.08 lakh for visa cancellation, putting his Agniveer recruitment at risk. A Telangana woman has appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to help bring her son back from Abu Dhabi after his employer allegedly demanded Rs 1.08 lakh for visa cancellation, putting his Agniveer recruitment at risk. A Telangana woman has appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to help bring her son back from Abu Dhabi after his employer allegedly demanded Rs 1.08 lakh for visa cancellation, putting his Agniveer recruitment at risk.

to appear for the Army recruitment process.

According to Mandha Bheem Reddy, the vice-chairman of the Telangana Government NRI Advisory Committee, Sumalatha said her son, Koparathi Abhilash, had been shortlisted for the Physical Screening Test of the Agniveer Army recruitment programme, but his employer was refusing to release him unless a visa cancellation fee was paid. She said she could not afford it. Abhilash, a native of Patha Gudur village in Jagtial district, travelled to Abu Dhabi from Mumbai on July 8, 2026, on a tourist visa through a licenced Gulf recruiting agency based in Jagtial. He was issued an employment visa on July 13. On July 14, he received an email informing him that he had been shortlisted for the Physical Screening Test. In her application through the CM Pravasi Prajavani help desk, Sumalatha said Abhilash’s dream was to serve in the Indian Army, but his employer and recruiting agent were demanding Rs 1.08 lakh (AED 4,100) as a visa cancellation penalty.

The penalty is included in the contract signed by the candidates. “Abhilash kept trying to join the army and just when he has got the opportunity he is stuck in an unfortunate situation. I do not have enough money to pay the visa cancellation fee and the agent’s fee. I want to bring my son home so he can fulfil his dream of joining the army,” she said. Sumalatha said her son could not return to India in time for the recruitment process because the family could not afford the amount. She sought the government’s immediate intervention. She also met CM Prajavani State Nodal Officer K Vidyasagar, who wrote to the Special Chief Secretary, General Administration Department (GAD), seeking immediate intervention to facilitate Abhilash’s return to India, stating that he belonged to a financially disadvantaged family. Officials said some youths working in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who had also received Agniveer notifications were trying to return to India to appear for the tests. The Agniveer written examination was held from June 1 to 15 this year, while the physical tests are scheduled between July and September.

# Why everyone in Mumbai is still talking about Kaspers, Bandra’s buzziest bistro

GNS News Agency, July 29

It opened late last year, dinner service only, and packed reservations. At a gathering earlier this year with a pastry chef and a food blogger, the conversation drifted to “have you dined at Kaspers yet?” The buzz had reached everyone, including a food influencer who has stopped dining out entirely to follow a diet. She made an exception for Kaspers.

Eight months later, it now opens for longer hours — covering breakfast, lunch and dinner, but the buzz hasn’t died down. Even on a heavily pouring evening earlier this week, the 38-seater bistro just off Hill Road was full: a bunch of ladies, a family of four, two girls catching up, a group of six young people. There’s chatter, the kind you can eavesdrop on without it touching your own evening. Kaspers is the latest opening from restaurateurs Jay Yousuf and Gauri Devidayal’s Food Matters Group, the house behind The Table, Mag St. Bread Co., and Magazine St. Kitchen. The menu and the room are both put together by Chef Will Aghajanian, who has cooked at Mugaritz in Spain and Per Se in New York, and ran Horses in Los Angeles before the restaurateurs called him to Mumbai a little under three years ago now. Mumbai Sea bream tartare with meunie’ re vinaigrette; Demi’s salad, barrel-aged sheep’s feta, crushed olive and watermelon; and bread & butter. Photo Courtesy: Special Arrangement

The space, designed with Patch Design Studio, is a piece of Paris folded into a busy Mumbai lane: hand-laid mosaic floors, deep maroon banquettes, a zinc bar. It is lit exactly the way Will wanted it. “Lighting is one of the most important things; it needs to be good, not overly bright,” he said. That instinct extends to everything guests touch. “Even the forks have a hidden logo on the back. There are a lot of small hidden details like that.” The room is also, unmistakably, a canvas. Every table is topped with white paper and a packet of crayons, an invitation the artist Kacper Abolik set the tone for: he spent a month in Mumbai hand-painting the cherub frescoes that give the restaurant its name and its whimsy. On the night we visited, nearly everyone gave in to it. The family of four’s mother sketched a mountain scene while her daughter drew a waffle; a group of friends recreated the cherub motif from the walls. A few of these table-top doodles have already been framed and now hang in the space. Will is candid about why he built the room this way. “I am pretty awkward, and when I used to date, I was bad at it, I have ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder, now called ADHD), so I need things to talk about, or the conversation stalls,” he said. “So the idea was: give people things that fill the void of an awkward date. It’s why Jenga comes out for the second seating, why the playlist shifts toward ‘90s Blink-182 territory as the night wears on, why there is always something on the wall worth pointing at.” The two pillars at the centre of the room do plenty of that talking themselves. A nice mix of Hollywood and Bollywood memorabilia decorates them: Rekha from Umrao Jaan, a poster from the Folies Bergère cabaret hall in Paris, vintage adverts for Campa Cola and Charminar cigarettes, and covers from The New Yorker and Illustrated Weekly. The menu resists easy geography, drawing on French bistro classics and Basque pintxos using seasonal ingredients with European flair. “It’s what sets it apart,” Will said of the Indian elements running through it. “There’s also Basque in there, Italian, and something like southern France meeting Indian



flavours.” His tandoori crab, technically a Basque preparation before the tandoori paste goes on, ends up tasting, in his own words, like rustic coastal cooking “even though it’s meant to be tandoori crab.” Much of that flavour memory, he said, comes from staff meals cooked by his largely Bengali kitchen team, which he eats constantly.

That range shows on the table. We began with charred dates and smoked goat’s curd with rosemary (Rs 750), a dish that leaned sweeter, better suited perhaps as a light dessert than an opener. The bread basket (Rs 450), sourdough, sesame focaccia and a crisp olive disc, came with a golden housemade butter, cultured with buttermilk and cream, finished with sea salt. Stronger was the ruby red beet lavash (Rs 950): crispy lavash topped with sliced avocado, pistachio, roasted beetroot, arugula leaves and mulberries. The sea bream tartare (Rs 975) was plated over browned-butter vinaigrette, and seasoned just right, with capers and parsley, and the golden crispy shortcrust of spinach and Taleggio read almost like a pizza. “I had to learn the vegetarian palate when I came to India,” Will said. “It’s still western at its base, but figuring out how to make it work for everyone was the goal.” Demi’s salad (Rs 850), barrel-aged sheep’s feta over cherry tomato, onion, crushed olive and watermelon, came together very well, and we polished it off. The French onion soup crostino (Rs 675) didn’t land for us. But we thoroughly enjoyed the salt roasted tiger prawns with prawn head rouille and bouillabaisse jus (Rs 1050). “It’s a king prawn dish, but we make almost a curry paste using Bouillabaisse spices instead of the traditional approach, so it ends up with a lot of Thai elements. It’s a hybrid of Southeast Asia and France. A lot of the food here works that way — it takes elements of Basque, French, or Italian cooking, and then becomes Indian or Southeast Asian somewhere inside it.

There might be a sambal, there might be something hidden in there that we don’t talk about, but it’s what gives the dish more flavour. It’s always a bit of a balancing game,” said Chef Will. For drinks, we began with a lighter Aperol Spritz, moved on to a bold Negroni, and ended the night with a shot of espresso. Desserts, which Will oversees personally, were the stronger half of the meal. The Santa Rosa plum and almond tart (Rs 650) had just the right tang, though its accompanying cream needed more sweetness to balance it. The pineapple baba au rhum with coconut cream (Rs 650) was heavy on alcohol and light on coconut. But the coffee cake tiramisu (Rs 650), dusted in dark cocoa, stole the meal. “It’s the way we use dark cocoa that changes it, like an Oreo tiramisu, playing on that trashy, familiar flavour,” Will said. “Secretly, it’s all a bit of a Cheesecake Factory. We just don’t talk about it.”

# Back to Delhi home from US for break, student dies as car veers off slippery road

GNS News Agency, July 29

According to officers, the driver, identified as Yashvendra, had sustained serious injuries in the crash. Yashvendra Singh, shared by Sanskriti school According to officers, the driver, identified as Yashvendra, had sustained serious injuries in the crash. A 20-year-old student died and a woman, who was travelling with him, was injured after the car he was driving allegedly lost control, plunged into a drain and overturned in South West Delhi on Friday morning, said police. According to officers, the driver, identified as Yashvendra, had sustained serious injuries in the crash. He was rushed for medical treatment but later succumbed to the injuries. Preliminary enquiry revealed that while taking a sharp turn near the Nangal Dewat red light, Yashvendra allegedly lost control of the vehicle because of the slippery road surface. The car subsequently veered off

the road, fell into a drain and overturned. Police said the two had spent the previous night at a friend’s house and were on their way to drop the woman home when the accident took place. Investigators found that the vehicle belonged to the woman while it was being driven by Yashvendra at the time of the accident. In her statement to police, she said the vehicle skidded due to the road condition, leading to the crash. Officers said both Yashvendra and the woman were students of the same institution in the United States, where they had become friends. They were in India for a break. Yashvendra was the son of an Indian Army officer and a resident of Delhi. The woman is a resident of Vasant Kunj. Her father works with a private firm in Delhi, while her mother is a homemaker. According to police, a PCR call regarding a fatal road accident was received at Vasant Kunj South police station on Friday.

# Govt orders GitHub to remove Bluetooth-based chat app Bitchat over security concerns: Jack Dorsey



GNS News Agency, July 29

New Delhi: Home ministry’s cybercrime arm, the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre, has ordered Microsoft subsidiary GitHub to remove Bluetooth-based messaging application Bitchat, according to a notice. “The Government of India does not like technologies like Bitchat and wants it taken down,” said the app’s developer and former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey on Friday in an X post, sharing a copy of the notice dated July 23. A query sent to I4C in this regard elicited no immediate reply. In its notice, I4C said that the app enables communication even during network restrictions and creates a substantial risk of misuse by anti-national elements, terrorist organisations, organised criminal groups and cyber criminals seeking to evade lawful detection and continue communication despite legally imposed restrictions.

While giving reference to Bitchat, I4C said that the content hosted or published by the GitHub intermediary platform is prohibited by law or being used to commit an unlawful act. “I4C said that it has identified multiple applications as communication platforms capable of establishing decentralised peer-to-peer messaging over Bluetooth mesh networks without relying on mobile networks, internet connectivity, or centralised servers.

# Bengaluru delivery agent, jailed for stripping inside woman’s home, seeks bail

A delivery agent arrested for allegedly entering a woman’s house in Bengaluru’s Electronic City area and stripping on the pretext of using the bathroom has sought bail, claiming innocence. A rural Bengaluru court on Friday directed the state government to file its objections by July 28. The delivery agent, Maheshkumar Patil, arrived at a sixth-floor apartment in Electronic City on the morning of July 17 with a rent renewal document for a 30-year-old tenant. When she went to fetch her phone to provide an OTP number, he allegedly entered the house.

According to the woman’s police complaint, Patil told her that he wanted to use the bathroom. Even though she denied the request, he allegedly entered the bathroom and came out within a couple of minutes without clothes, exposing his privates. The woman told the police that she panicked and ran out of the flat and sought help from neighbours and the apartment security staff. Patil stepped outside the flat after putting his clothes on. “The suspect was caught by the neighbours and the security and handed over to the police,” the First Information Report states. Patil was arrested



on July 17 and booked on charges of sexual harassment, outraging the modesty of a woman, and house trespass. The incident came days after another delivery agent, Vijay Mallikarjun Kamath, was accused of sexually harassing a woman in a similar manner at her Bengaluru apartment. Kamath was arrested last week.

# Why Sukhbir Badal’s reading of Modi’s ‘Akali’ remark has created a storm

PM Narendra Modi referred to ‘Akali Dal’ during his Punjab rally, but SAD chief Sukhbir Badal said the remark targeted another Akali faction. (File Photo) PM Narendra Modi referred to ‘Akali Dal’ during his Punjab rally, but SAD chief Sukhbir Badal said the remark targeted another Akali faction. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent visit to Punjab was intended to highlight the Centre’s development agenda, with projects worth around ₹5,470 crore inaugurated or dedicated to the state. Yet, much of the political discussion that followed centred not on the projects but on a brief remark the Prime Minister made about the Akali Dal, and more significantly, on how Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal interpreted it. While Modi referred simply to “Akali Dal” during his address in Jalandhar, Sukhbir Badal later maintained that the criticism was not aimed at the Shiromani Akali Dal but at another Akali faction. His interpretation has generated considerable discussion because the Prime Minister himself did not distinguish between different Akali groups.

What did PM Modi say?

Addressing a public rally in Jalandhar, Modi targeted Punjab’s three principal political rivals while projecting the BJP as the state’s only viable alternative. He described the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) as “kattar beimaan” (utterly dishonest), said the Congress remained trapped in internal power struggles, remarking that “inka to kissa kursi ka hi khatam nahin hota”, and added that “Akali Dal is no different”, alleging that internal selfish interests had prevented it from serving Punjab effectively. At no point did the Prime Minister specify any particular Akali faction. He referred only to “Akali Dal”.

Why did Sukhbir Badal’s response attract attention?

Rather than treating Modi’s remarks as criticism of the Shiromani Akali Dal, Sukhbir Badal argued publicly that the Prime Minister was referring to Akali Dal Punar Surjit and other splinter Akali factions that have emerged in recent years. That clarification surprised many political observers because Modi himself had made no distinction between the Shiromani Akali Dal and any other Akali outfit. The response immediately prompted a political question: why did the SAD chief seek to distance his party from remarks that appeared to refer to the Akali Dal as a whole?

How do political observers view Badal’s statement?

Political observers and leaders from both parties suggest more than one explanation. One view is that by declining to interpret Modi’s remarks as a direct attack on the Shiromani Akali Dal, Badal avoided publicly escalating tensions with the BJP, the party’s ally for nearly 25 years. A senior SAD leader said this should not be read as evidence of any behind-the-scenes negotiations but reflected a conscious decision not to further widen the political distance between the former allies.

Why does the BJP-SAD relationship still matter?

The BJP and the Shiromani Akali Dal shared one of India’s longest-running political alliances before parting ways in 2020. Together, they governed Punjab three times. The BJP traditionally drew support from urban constituencies, traders and sections of the Hindu middle class, while the



Shiromani Akali Dal remained dominant across large parts of rural Punjab and among sections of the Sikh electorate. The alliance allowed both parties to expand beyond their individual support bases.

What changed after 2020?

The alliance collapsed in 2020 after the Shiromani Akali Dal walked out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the Centre’s three farm laws. Since then, the two parties have fought the 2022 Punjab Assembly election and the 2024 Lok Sabha election separately. Both have faced electoral challenges after the split. The BJP has continued to struggle to expand beyond its traditional urban base into rural Punjab, where the Akali Dal historically maintained strong organisational networks. The Shiromani Akali Dal, meanwhile, has found it difficult to regain political momentum without the BJP’s urban support base. It has also had to contend with anti-incumbency from its previous tenure and the emergence of new political players, according to a senior SAD leader. Political observers say the breakup has weakened the electoral complementarity that once benefited both parties.

Why is every interaction between the two parties closely watched?

Against this backdrop, every public statement involving the BJP and the Shiromani Akali Dal is scrutinised for signs of either continued hostility or possible accommodation. A senior RSS leader said this was precisely why Badal’s interpretation attracted attention. Similarly, a senior BJP leader said that had Badal publicly accused the Prime Minister of targeting the Shiromani Akali Dal, it would have reinforced the perception that relations between the former allies remained deeply adversarial. By attributing the remarks to another Akali faction, he avoided creating another political flashpoint, even though Modi himself had made no such distinction.

Is there any indication of a BJP-SAD reunion?

According to senior BJP leaders, there is currently no discussion on reviving the alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal. The BJP leadership has repeatedly maintained that it intends to strengthen its own organisation in Punjab rather than depend on regional allies. At the same time, local BJP leaders acknowledge that any strategic decision on alliances would ultimately be taken by the party’s central leadership.

With the 2027 Punjab Assembly election still some distance away, both parties remain focused on rebuilding independently.

# Indian crew member killed in black sea attack on commercial vessel: MEA



GNS News Agency, July 29

New Delhi: An Indian national was killed in an attack on a commercial vessel while it was reportedly transiting Russian territorial waters in the Black Sea on July 18, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday. The fresh incident comes to light days after the MEA said four Indians were among 10 killed in an attack on a commercial vessel off the coast of Ukraine on July 19.

"It has come to our attention that on July 18, the com-

mercial vessel MV OMORFI was attacked while transiting the Black Sea, reportedly in Russian territorial waters. At the time of the incident, there were 10 crew members on board, including three Indian nationals," the MEA said. "As per available information, one Indian national tragically lost his life in the attack. We extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved family of the deceased. The other two Indian nationals on board are reported to be safe," it said in a statement.

The MEA said the Indian mission in Russia has reached out to the relevant authorities and is making efforts to extend all possible assistance to the affected family. "India unequivocally condemns such attacks targeting commercial shipping and placing the lives of innocent civilian crew members at risk. It is a matter of serious concern that the freedom of navigation and international commerce is facing increasing threats," it said. "India calls upon all concerned parties to uphold international obligations to ensure the safety and security of maritime navigation and uninterrupted flow of global commerce," the MEA added. New Delhi summoned the Russian charge Charge d'affaires on Tuesday following the killing of the four Indians in the strike on the MV Golden Leo vessel on July 19.

# US court rejects Trump administration bid to revive USD 100,000 H-1B visa fee

GNS News Agency, July 29

A US federal appeals court has refused to stay a lower court order striking down the Trump administration's decision to impose a USD 100,000 fee on H-1B visas for highly skilled foreign workers. The three-judge bench at the Boston-based First Circuit Court of Appeals denied the federal government's motion to stay US District Judge Leo T Sorokin's June 8 ruling that struck down the fee, terming it an unlawful tax not authorised by Congress....we deny the defendants' motion to stay pending appeal to this Court, the district court's June 8, 2026, Memorandum and Order and accompanying Judgment," the bench ruled on Friday.

The judges agreed with the plaintiffs -- 20 Democrat-ruled states -- that "the question here is not whether Congress may delegate the authority in question. It is whether Congress has done so". President Donald Trump had issued a proclamation in September last year imposing a USD 100,000 fee for obtaining new H-1B visas. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. American technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. Citing a 1989 US Supreme Court ruling, the appeals court said the executive must show that Congress had spoken "clearly" in conferring discretionary authority to impose financial burdens, whether described as "fees" or "taxes". "However, the Trump administration has not ex-



plained why that clear standard isn't required in this case," the order said. The court also said the administration had failed to show why the plaintiff states would not suffer substantial injury if the stay was denied. The defendants "cur-sorily assert that the plaintiffs would face 'minimal' harm without developing that argument -- if it does constitute an argument as to the plaintiffs' lack of substantial injury -- further," the order said. The US issues 65,000 H-1B visas annually, along with an additional 20,000 visas for foreign workers holding advanced educational qualifications. These visas usually cost between USD 2,000 and USD 5,000 in fees.

# As AI grows more powerful, a US-China feud threatens safety efforts



Unlike U.S. giants OpenAI and Anthropic, many Chinese AI labs lack the computing resources for extensive safety training and instead focus on improving model capabilities, industry observers say. "It's plausible China reconsiders allowing open-weight releases for frontier models down the line, but the bar for doing so is high,"

BEIJING, GNS News Agency, July 29 U.S. threats to sanction Chinese AI developers over alleged intellectual property theft and export-control violations risk unravelling efforts to establish a bilateral dialogue on AI safety, analysts say, just as increasingly powerful models raise concerns over serious security ?breaches. U.S. officials on Wednesday accused Chinese AI lab Moonshot of distilling its Kimi K3 model from Anthropic's advanced Fable 5 model, prompting Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent to warn of potential sanctions. Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here. Distillation is the process of training AI models using output from more advanced ones to lower the costs of training a powerful new AI tool.

The Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security is also investigating whether Chinese firms like Moonshot are accessing advanced U.S. chips illegally to train their models. A Moonshot ?spokesperson did not respond to Reuters' request for comment. The dispute exposes a growing tension at the heart of the U.S.-China AI race. Both sides increasingly view frontier AI as a ?strategic asset and a security risk, yet experts argue cooperation on safety standards is becoming more urgent as powerful models could be misused for cyberattacks ?or other harmful applications. The accusations, coupled with reports Washington is weighing restrictions on Chinese open-weight models, could provoke tit-for-tat measures and jeopardise a planned U.S.-China AI dialogue in September, analysts say.

The tensions come atop years ?of U.S. export controls designed to curb China's access to cutting-edge chips, measures that have increasingly dominated trade talks between the two countries. "Depending on the number of Chinese companies targeted, (and) the nature of the punitive

?actions taken... the retaliation has the potential to scuttle both the AI dialogue and the September 24 meeting between Presidents Trump and Xi," said Paul Triolo, a partner at DGA-Albright Stonebridge Group. Beijing meanwhile is considering whether to restrict overseas users' access to its models as a retaliatory measure, Reuters previously reported.

CLOSED AND OPEN-SOURCE SECURITY RISKS New York-based Hugging Face last week used a Chinese model, Z.ai's GLM-5.2, to contain a cyberattack by a rogue OpenAI agent that escaped during safety testing, ?since American closed models' safety guardrails were ironically too strong. As Chinese and U.S. frontier models achieve recursive self-improvement (RSI), where systems can autonomously enhance their own capabilities, researchers say both countries have an incentive ?to cooperate on safety standards before a more serious incident occurs.

Industry experts are also highlighting the risks posed by open-weight models, which can be downloaded, modified and redistributed with little oversight, limiting the effectiveness of software-based export controls. "Godfather ?of AI" ?Yoshua Bengio warned at China's flagship AI forum last week that the deployment and sharing decisions of open-weight models are irreversible, and their safeguards are easier to remove. "The logical thing to do is to find a good evaluation of these models, share the models that are not too dangerous, and not share those above the threshold of risk," he said via video link. Chinese AI models must undergo government safety and content reviews before release, though current rules do not cover post-release modifications.

Unlike U.S. giants OpenAI and Anthropic, many Chinese AI labs lack the computing resources for extensive safety training and instead focus on improving model capabilities, industry observers say. "It's plausible China reconsiders allowing open-weight releases for frontier models down the line, but the bar for doing so is high," said Kristy Loke, a MATS research fellow studying China's AI governance. Some AI safety researchers argue that frontier models in both the U.S. and China should face stricter pre-release testing and independent third-party evaluations. In the U.S., firms can voluntarily submit models for testing by ?the state-funded Center for AI Standards and Innovation (CAISI), though some lawmakers have called for mandatory federal reviews. "In an ideal world, the two countries will ?come together to work on ?safer models... agree to build common standards around pre-release testing and set red lines for the most advanced open models," said Loke. Some U.S. government and AI industry officials remain split on how to respond to Chinese models, which account for about 60% of token usage by U.S. companies on the OpenRouter platform. OpenAI and Anthropic have lobbied Washington against lower-cost Chinese models, arguing they could undermine their business ?models. OpenAI lead strategist ?Dean Ball wrote on X that the Trump administration could "create large amounts of regulatory risk around the use of open-weight ?Chinese models" to curb their adoption by U.S. firms. White House AI adviser David Sacks countered that leading U.S. labs "want the government to eliminate their open-source competition" and argued for fair competition, adding in another post that the "Kimi Panic needs to stop". "As long ?as we don't sabotage ourselves with unnecessary rules, the U.S. will continue to win," he said. Reporting by Laurie Chen in Beijing; Additional reporting by Samuel Shen in Shanghai; Editing by Eduardo Baptista and Shri Navaratnam

# Death of Black teen Nolan Wells to go to Mississippi grand jury



GNS News Agency, July 29

A grand jury ?in Mississippi will review the circumstances around the death of Nolan Wells before the evidence is made public ?in the case of the Black teenager whose body was found in the water off an island he had visited with white friends, a local prosecutor said this week, but as of Friday had not said when jurors would take up the matter. This week, an attorney for the ?teenager's family said a private autopsy could not rule out foul play. The family's calls for answers have ?been amplified by civil rights leaders and social media, feeding a debate about the safety of ?young Black Americans in predominantly white environments.

Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here. The district attorney for Jackson County said that, as a matter of routine, case ?information would be withheld from the public to protect the "integrity" of the

# Trump orders signs outside Smithsonian history museum to correct what he calls 'inaccurate information'

WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency, July 29- President Donald Trump directed federal officials on Friday to ?install signs outside the Smithsonian's flagship National Museum of American History to reflect his administration's criticism of how the institution portrays the United States. Trump's executive order cited a White House Domestic Policy Council report accusing the museum of "thinly veiled ?anti-Americanism" and "extreme political activism." He said he directed officials to install temporary signs on ?sidewalks maintained by the National Park Service to correct "inaccurate information presented in the ?Museum." The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. While the Park Service falls under the secretary of the interior's authority, the 180-year-old Smithsonian is ?an independent institution. Trump has for months denounced the Smithsonian in what critics say is part ?of a larger campaign to present U.S. history from a conservative point of view. In his order, Trump said the "current leadership of both the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum cannot be trusted to tell America's story with honesty and ?gratitude." The White House Domestic Policy Council report had recommended the museum post a notice ?at its entrance reading: "Warning: the exhibits in this museum were prepared by people who don't want you to ?love ?your country." National Museum of American History director Anthea Hartig and Smithsonian Institution secretary Lonnie Bunch have both said the White House report unfairly characterized the museum's work.

Hartig testified before a House of Representatives oversight subcommittee this week, saying the museum is most powerful when patriotism is "not instructed but inspired." The ?Organization of American Historians, ?the country's largest group ?of U.S. history scholars, rejected claims made in the 162-page White House report released on July 4. The Smithsonian said it had no comment on



?Friday's executive order. Trump's other declarations and executive orders have led to the ?dismantling of ?slavery exhibits, the restoration of Confederate statues, and reviews into the work of museums. Trump says he aims to remove "anti-American ideology." Civil rights advocates say Trump's actions are reversing decades of social progress and undermining ?the acknowledgment ?of critical phases of U.S. history. The Smithsonian is a ?vast museum and research complex and a premier exhibition space for U.S. history and culture, with 21 museums and galleries and ?the National Zoo. Kanishka Singh is a breaking news reporter for Reuters in Washington DC, who primarily covers US politics and national affairs in his current role. His past breaking news coverage has spanned across a range of topics like the Black Lives Matter movement; the US elections; the 2021 Capitol riots and their follow up probes; the Brexit deal; US-China trade tensions; the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan; the COVID-19 pandemic; and a 2019 Supreme Court verdict on a religious dispute site in his native India.

# International Criminal Court members dismiss prosecutor Khan over sexual misconduct allegation



Khan's dismissal follows an announcement by the United States that it will launch a renewed diplomatic campaign to dismantle the ICC, which it says is a threat to its sovereignty

GNS News Agency, July 29

Member states of the ?International Criminal Court voted to dismiss prosecutor Karim Khan for serious misconduct, the ICC said on Friday. Diplomats running the executive bureau of the court's governing body said last month the British barrister had an inappropriate sexual relationship with a junior ICC lawyer and should be fired, documents seen by Reuters showed. On Friday, a ?large majority of the ICC's 125 member states voted to follow that recommendation. Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up here.

"The assembly decided by a majority of 82 ?states parties that the elected official, prosecutor, Karim Khan, committed serious misconduct and a serious breach of ?duty ... and to remove ... Karim Khan from office," the president of the court's governing body, Paivi Kaukoranta, said.

"Mr. Khan ?will challenge the lawfulness and fairness of the decision through all available legal mechanisms," his lawyer, Tayab Ali, said after the vote. Khan's dismissal immediately riggers the election process for a new ICC prosecutor who is not expected to be voted in before next year. "Members of the court acted swiftly and decisively to remove an embattled and discredited official so that the court can move forward with its important work in all the situations on its docket," ?said Leila Sadat, professor of international criminal law at Washington University.

Khan's dismissal follows an announcement by the United States that it will launch a renewed diplomatic campaign to dismantle the ICC, which it says is a threat to its sovereignty. During a visit to the Philippines on Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said there were "lunatics and crazies involved in the ICC" and there was no way any U.S. political or military officials would ever go on trial at the court, reiterating previous criticism. State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott welcomed Khan's removal but said, "he is only one small cog in this irredeemably corrupt institution. Today's outcome will have no impact on the United States' plans to dismantle ?the ICC." The U.S., which is ?not a member, has imposed ?sanctions on 11 ICC judges and prosecutors, including Khan, citing the ICC's arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former defence minister Yoav Gallant, and a past probe into U.S. troops in Afghanistan. While removing Khan helps the ICC's credibility by showing it has accountability for its own leadership, the ?court has more ?hurdles to overcome, said Kyra Wigard, assistant professor of law at Utrecht University. "The bigger challenge going forward is whether the court can restore confidence internally and externally while maintaining the perception of independence amid intense geopolitical pressure," she said. Khan's accuser spoke publicly for the first time last week ?in an ?interview with CNN in which she repeated her allegations that the prosecutor had a non-consensual ?sexual relationship with her.

# How safe are facial wipes for your skin? Dermats weigh in



Whether it's for removing makeup or refreshing a sweaty face, facial wipes are our go-to for their sheer convenience. But is there a danger lurking behind this ease?What's in my bag? – My wallet, makeup essentials, my earphones, a box of snacks, and, of course, a pouch of facial wipes.

It's surprising how facial wipes have become an indispensable part of our everyday bags, amongst other things, and there are reasons behind that. Facial wipes are convenient, and more often than not, they come in handy in tricky situations (think spilling some tea when the tissue comes to your rescue). Of course, it's also useful during a quick change to remove makeup, amongst other utilities.Additionally, we cannot deny the fact that after the pandemic our inclination towards hygiene has increased manifold and these wipes sometimes just double as surface wipes too. That probably justifies the current wet wipes market in India, which is about Rs 744 crore and this is expected to grow annually by 18.38 per cent and reach Rs 2,155 crore by 2027. Now, here's the thing: we often tend to overlook a problem when it has innumerable uses. So, the question is, are we doing the same thing when it comes to facial wipes, or are they just as harmless as a dove? India Today spoke to experts and here's what we understand:Facial wipes are convenient, and more often than not, they come in handy in tricky situations. (Photo: Unsplash)

The problem of plentyFacial wipes are infused with a mix of ingredients designed to cleanse your skin. While most wipes are dermatologically tested, certain chemicals in them might not suit every skin type, particularly if you have sensitive or acne-prone skin.Dr Shireen Furtado, senior consultant, medical and cosmetic dermatology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru, explains, "With the proliferation of options, it becomes important to evaluate the ingredients, effectiveness, and overall quality of these products to determine their value in skincare routines."He adds that the market is replete with various facial wipes brands, but it is always necessary to check their efficacy and suitability for diverse skin

types. Not all products are created equal; some may contain harsh chemicals or allergens that could potentially harm the skin rather than provide the intended cleansing or moisturising benefits. A flip around, and ingredients list at the back of the packaging can spill a lot of beans.What to keep in mindWhen selecting a facial tissue, it is essential to consider various factors and ingredients that may influence both the quality and suitability of the product for your needs. Dr Deepali Bhardwaj, a Delhi-based dermatologist, suggests that wipes shouldn't be used on the face unless absolutely necessary. And if at all it has to be, certain things have to be kept in mind.

Check ingredients to ensure if there is presence of any additives such as lotions or fragrances that could affect skin sensitivity. "Ensure the wipes contain hydrating ingredients like aloe vera, hyaluronic acid, or Vitamin C, and are free from alcohol. They should also have minimal perfume, as excessive fragrance can irritate the skin and lead to blackheads or whiteheads. The alcohol in the perfume can linger on the skin, and applying cream over it may cause further irritation while attracting dust and impurities," Dr Bhardwaj mentions.Dr Furtado also shares a few aspects to keep in mind while purchasing facial wipes: Key aspects to evaluate include the softness and strength of the tissue (preferably choose wipes that have good feedback/good word-of-mouth review)As well as check if there is presence of any additives such as lotions or fragrances that could affect skin sensitivity. Furthermore, the environmental impact of the product, including whether it is made from recycled materials or is biodegradable, should also be taken into account to ensure a responsible purchase.Makeup/facial wipes over cleanser?There's a quintessential Bengali expression, "lyadh", that describes a state of being that's more than just procrastination or laziness. Why bring it up here? Because while we can't stress enough the importance of a good skincare routine, many women might be tempted to skip cleansing and opt for a quick swipe with facial or makeup wipes out of sheer lyadh—and that's a big no-no.Experts warn that facial wipes can be convenient, but they should never replace your regular skincare routine."When it comes to removing makeup, there are much better options. You can use an essential oil, a cream, or, ideally, a cleanser. A cleanser is the best choice, and for optimal results, you can double cleanse—first removing the makeup with the cleanser, then using it again as a face wash. Just using wipes is a big no-no," advises Dr Bhardwaj.Experts warn that facial wipes can be convenient, but they should never replace your regular skincare routine.Swipe right on wipes?Well, it depends, as Dr Bhardwaj suggests, using wipes when it is absolutely necessary. "If you absolutely need to use a facial wipe, reserve it for times when your face is really dirty, and water isn't available. However, if you do have access to water, splashing your face and gently patting it dry with soft tissue is a much better option," she concludes.

# Can being your child's 'soulmate' backfire?

Parents today want to be more involved in their children's lives, leading to the rise of soulmate parenting. But can being too involved cause problems?We live in an era where expressing emotions openly has become the norm, and this shift has significantly influenced modern parenting. Gone are the days when fathers sat on the sidelines with a straight face, watching mothers shoulder the responsibility of childcare. Today, fathers actively embrace parenthood, sharing the joys, challenges, and moments of raising a child alongside mothers—and sometimes even taking the lead.This wave of free-flowing emotions has brought parents closer to their children, giving rise to soulmate parenting, where both parents are deeply involved in every aspect of their child's life.But could being too involved unintentionally harm your relationship with your child?

Understanding soulmate parentingSumalatha Vasudeva, psychologist, Gleneagles BGS Hospital, Bengaluru, tells India Today that soulmate parenting is a modern approach where a parent takes on multiple roles to nurture a deeper emotional connection with their child."The parent acts as a best friend, providing companionship and trust; a sensitive listener, understanding the child's emotions without judgement; a cheerleader, offering encouragement and motivation; and a diagnostician, identifying and addressing the child's developmental and emotional needs," she explains.Further, Dr Rahul Chandhok, head consultant, mental health and behavioural science, Artemis Hospital, Gurugram, says that this style of parenting is not only about developing strong bonds. It is about providing children with emotional resilience and self-awareness.When balanced with appropriate boundaries, this approach fosters a nurturing environment that can support emotional and intellectual growth.

Why are parents loving it?

The rising popularity of soulmate parenting can be attributed to its alignment with the increasing emphasis on emotional intelligence and open communication in relationships.Parents today are more aware of the need for a safe and nurturing environment that fosters their child's self-expression and individuality.This style of parenting is also seen as a response to the growing challenges children face, such as mental health issues and societal pressures, prompting parents to take a more supportive and engaged role.Dr Chandhok notes that new-generation parents, particularly millennials and Gen Z, are striving to form deeper emotional bonds with their children while managing the complexities of modern life.Soulmate parenting fosters a deeper emotional bond (Photo: Pexels/Andrea Piacquadio)Adding to this, Sumalatha Vasudeva highlights key principles of soulmate parenting: Empathy and active listening: Being emotionally available and validating the child's feelings Positive reinforcement: Celebrating achievements and building self-confidence Holistic support: Addressing physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Non-judgmental communication: Ensuring open dialogue to build trust.Collaborative problem-solving: Working with the child to navigate challenges.The Role of Parents in Soulmate ParentingEach additional role a parent plays impacts the child in different ways:As a best friend, the parent builds trust and reduces fear of judgement, encouraging the child to share their thoughts and feelings openly. However, overly prioritising friendship can blur boundariesMeanwhile, as a sensitive listener, the child feels understood and validated, which enhances emotional regulation and self-esteem. The parent instils confidence and motivation in the child as a cheerleader.Lastly, as a diagnostician, the parent identifies emotional, behavioural, or developmental concerns early, ensuring timely intervention and support.

Why being your child's soulmate is beneficialAccording to Dr Chandhok, soulmate parenting strengthens the par-



The parent acts as a best friend, providing companionship and trust; a sensitive listener, understanding the child's emotions without judgement; a cheerleader, offering encouragement and motivation; and a diagnostician, identifying and addressing the child's developmental and emotional needs," she explains.

ent-child bond. Adopting various roles creates a nurturing environment where children feel safe to share their thoughts, fears, and aspirations without fear of judgement.He goes on to mention that the benefits of soulmate parenting are extensive, which can improve emotional security and allow children to develop a positive sense of self-worth and resilience.Parents will also have greater insight into the needs and emotions of their child, thus supporting them in an effective manner. Such parenting promotes positive reinforcement for the child, bringing more confidence and motivation to their activities.This parenting style fosters a balanced, healthy relationship where the child feels loved and understood.Not just this, but soulmate parenting benefits the child psychologically by promoting emotional intelligence and self-esteem, hence making them resilient. The different roles played by a parent create an atmosphere where children are valued, understood, and supported. This strengthens their confidence and encourages healthy emotional expression.Children raised in such a nurturing framework are more likely to have strong coping skills, secure attachments, and empathy.But there are issuesWhile soulmate parenting builds strong emotional bonds, it can pose risks if boundaries are not maintained.Sumalatha Vasudeva warns that excessive involvement can hinder a child's independence. And, relying too much on a parent for approval can weaken a child's resilience.Blurring boundaries can lead to a loss of parental authority, while overprotection may result in overdependence.If not properly balanced, soulmate parenting can have a negative impact (Photo: Pexels/Ketut Subiyanto)Parents can also experience burnout, as constant emotional involvement is draining. Additionally, this style of parenting may set unrealistic expectations for the child, leaving them unprepared to cope when the parent is unavailable.A delicate balance is essential. While emotional support is crucial, being overly lenient or lacking authority can create challenges related to discipline, respect for boundaries, and accountability. Overindulgence can also cause role confusion, where the child sees the parent more as an equal than an authority figure.

Do experts recommend?

Both Sumalatha Vasudeva and Dr Rahul Chandhok support soulmate parenting but stress the importance of balance."Effective soulmate parenting should be balanced with boundaries and structure to not only foster emotional connection and resilience but also maintain the authority to promote discipline and healthy independence in children," says Dr Chandhok."Soulmate parenting should complement, not replace, traditional parenting principles of discipline, responsibility, and independence," concludes Vasudeva.

# Does colouring your hair lead to greying?



Does colouring your hair actually lead to greying, or is it just a myth stopping you from achieving that hair makeover of your dreams? Ironically, the answer isn't black or white—it lies somewhere in the grey."New hair, new me" – they say it for a reason! Colouring your hair is one of the best ways to embrace a makeover. Like your overall style, your hair colour is also an expression of your personality. While some go bold with vibrant shades (think pink, green, or blue), others prefer the timeless elegance of natural browns or the glamorous allure of mahogany. The colour options are endless, and so is the variety of products available to choose from.However, despite the excitement of choosing a new shade, there's often a lingering concern associated with hair colouring – premature greying. A common perception, especially among Indian households, suggests that altering one's natural hair colour with dyes or chemical products inevitably leads to greying.This belief has been around for years, leading many to be resolute in their avoidance of hair colour. Doesn't it remind you of that time your parents sternly warned you not to "ruin" your tresses by colouring them in your 20s?

But how true is this perception? Does colouring your hair actually lead to greying, or is it just a myth stopping you from achieving that hair makeover of your dreams? Ironically, the answer isn't black or white—it lies somewhere in the grey.What experts sayHair colouring or not, younger generations (millennials and Gen Z) are experiencing premature greying at an alarming rate anyway. Experts blame it on genetics, nutritional deficiencies, stress, poor lifestyle choices such as alcohol consumption and smoking, several medical conditions, and environmental factors like pollution, UV rays, and oxidative stress."Hair greying is predominantly influenced by three factors: genetic predisposition, sun exposure, and stress. The process of greying occurs when melanocytes, the cells that produce pigment in hair follicles, reduce their activity or die off. This is a natural biological process and is not triggered by hair colouring," says Dr Geetika Srivastava, dermatologist, and founder of Influennz Skin and Hair Clinic, Delhi.Experts state that hair colouring is not directly linked to greying, and there is currently no meta-analysis or sufficient scientific evidence to support such a connection."Hair dyes only affect the outer layer of your hair, but not the follicles that determine the colour. Though frequent use of harsh chemical dyes damages your hair by making it dull and brittle, they are not the

cause of your hair turning grey overnight," says Dr Ruben Bhasin Passi, consultant, dermatology, CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram.

Bleach to be blamed?

However, the involvement of bleaching – a process used to lighten natural hair colour to deposit artificial colour – cannot be ignored."When you start colouring your hair, it may contribute to an increase in greying, primarily due to the bleach used in the process. Global colouring and high-light techniques, in particular, can damage hair roots and overall hair quality because of the harsh chemicals involved," says Delhi-based dermatologist Dr Deepali Bhardwaj."Permanent and semi-permanent hair dyes typically rely on chemicals like hydrogen peroxide and ammonia to deposit or lighten colour. These chemicals oxidise the natural melanin in your hair, leading to a permanent colour change. Over time, repeated exposure can make hair appear lighter even in its uncoloured state," adds Dr Srivastava.According to a study published in PubMed Central, the accumulation of hydrogen peroxide in hair follicles contributes to greying.This, however, can be managed by choosing darker hair colours or temporary hair dyes that do not require bleaching.Many modern hair colour products have evolved to be gentler. They are often enriched with antioxidants to help combat oxidative damage, feature ammonia-free formulas, and contain nourishing ingredients that protect and condition the hair.To enjoy hair colouring without compromising hair health, choose high-quality products, practise moderation, and follow a rigorous hair care routine.Hair colour and hair healthHair colouring, in general, can also have significant effects on hair health: Dehydration: Bleaching agents strip hair of its natural oils, leaving it dry and brittle. Weakened structure: Frequent colouring disrupts protein bonds in hair, making it prone to breakage and split ends.Scalp sensitivity: Chemicals in dyes can irritate the scalp, causing redness, itching, or allergic reactions. Loss of shine: Repeated colouring damages the hair cuticle, reducing elasticity and natural shine."Certain allergies and autoimmune conditions, such as ashly dermatosis, can be triggered by chemicals in hair dyes. This condition gives a grey hue to the skin, starting from the face and spreading across the body. These rare but serious side effects highlight the need for caution," says Dr Bhardwaj.How to minimise hair colour damageHere are some expert-approved tips to minimise damage caused by hair colour: Opt for darker or temporary colours, as these don't require bleaching and are gentler on the hair. Space out colouring sessions. Touch up grey strands every 6–8 weeks instead of colouring the entire head. Choose ammonia-free products and low-chemical dyes, as they are less harsh and safer for long-term use.Regularly apply deep conditioning masks and oil treatments to restore moisture and prevent damage Support hair health with a protein-rich diet and supplements like biotin and zinc, especially before (15 days prior is a good time) and after colouring sessions.Experts also recommend home remedies like using a curd mask every week, and steaming the scalp twice a month to keep the hair and scalp healthy.

# Expert-backed ways to manage extremely dry skin this winter

Dry skin in winter can be more than just annoying—it can also be really uncomfortable. Wondering how to keep your skin glowing and nourished despite the chilly weather? Experts are here to guide you.How to manage dry skin in winterThe weather is changing (though several areas in northern India are grappling with smog), it's time to bring out our boots, cosy cardigans, stylish trench coats, and all those chic scarves and hats.

Winter is knocking at our door, and with it comes the familiar routine of slathering on thick moisturisers to keep our skin from cracking.While those with oily skin had their share of struggles during the monsoon, it's now the turn of those with dry skin. And we know that simply switching to a heavier moisturiser isn't always the solution.You need more than just a quick fix — you need a comprehensive guide to keep your skin nourished and hydrated throughout the season.

What happens to dry skin in winter?

During the winter months, air holds less moisture, and as a result, the skin gets extremely dry, chapped, and itchy."For individuals with dry skin, the loss of moisture leads to flakiness, tightness, dullness, and an increase in skin sensitivity. They might experience changes in skin texture, a damaged skin barrier, and even bleeding at some point," Dr Shaurya Thakran, dermatologist and co-founder, Rakshaa Aesthetics, Delhi, tells India Today. To this, Dr Nirumpama Parwanda, dermatologist at Zolie Skin Clinic, Delhi, adds that this weather can create several challenges for the skin, such as intense dryness that leads to itchiness and discomfort, cracked or chapped skin (especially on exposed areas like hands, lips, and heels), redness and irritation, which can worsen over time, and skin condition



To this, Dr Nirumpama Parwanda, dermatologist at Zolie Skin Clinic, Delhi, adds that this weather can create several challenges for the skin, such as intense dryness that leads to itchiness and discomfort, cracked or chapped skin (especially on exposed areas like hands, lips, and heels), redness and irritation, which can worsen over time, and skin condition flare-ups, such as eczema or psoriasis.

flare-ups, such as eczema or psoriasis.But what leads to dry skin?It is vital to understand that dry skin occurs when the skin's natural moisture-retaining mechanisms are compromised. According to Dr Vidushi Jain, dermatologist and medical head at Dermalinks, NCR, dry skin is provoked by the following causes: Natural oils and moisture get depleted from the skin's protective barrier. Environmental factors such as cold, dry air or overly aggressive indoor heating. Usage of chemical-laden soaps and detergents, or regular hot show Insufficient hydration or nutrition. Genetic predisposition in some people.Weather makes it worseDr Thakran mentions that weather changes, especially a shift from warm to cold, can trigger or worsen dry skin.

People with naturally dry skin are more likely to notice this change because their skin struggles to retain moisture in extreme conditions, which can further aggravate the issues.However, weather changes can affect anyone's skin, even those with oily or normal skin types. For in-

stance, skin can become drier or more irritated during the winter months, regardless of skin type. The key difference is that individuals with dry skin will typically see more noticeable effects.This change in weather often leads to chapped skin, and we all know how painful that can be. Dr Jain tells us that these cracks allow irritants to penetrate, which can cause inflammation or infection.But you can control the situation just by applying a protective balm or petroleum jelly on affected areas and avoiding exfoliants.Managing dry skin

The experts suggest tweaking your skincare routine to combat and prevent itchy skin when the weather changes."Switching to moisturisers during winter will keep the skin hydrated. Lightweight lotions from summer may not be effective enough. Instead, opt for cream-based moisturisers with ingredients like hyaluronic acid, glycerine, ceramides, or shea butter; fragrance-free and hypoallergenic products to avoid irritation; and occlusive products (like petroleum jelly or oils) for areas prone to extreme dryness," says Dr Parwanda And like we

said before, just moisturiser isn't enough Avoid long, hot water baths. Instead, opt for lukewarm water and keep showers shortSkip harsh soaps or cleansers and use gentle, hydrating cleansers in your routine Cut out exfoliating scrubs, as scrubbing may strip the skin of its natural oilAvoid prolonged exposure to indoor heaters that can dry out the skin. Avoid using loofahs, and do not rub your towel vigorously on your skin when drying off your face or body Always apply moisturiser to damp skin right after showering to lock in hydration.Trust home remediesCertain DIY hacks can help soothe and hydrate dry skin. But if not done carefully, these home remedies can do more harm than good.To manage your dry skin, you can try aloe vera, which is known for its calming and hydrating properties. Aloe vera gel can help soothe dry and irritated skinApart from this, honey, which is a natural humectant, draws moisture into the skin. You can apply raw honey as a mask this winter. Coconut oil also serves as an excellent emollient. You can also try oatmeal baths, as they may help assuage itchiness and dryness.

# Is Trump justified in asking EU to buy more oil and gas from the U.S.?



U.S. President-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose tariffs on many countries if they do not fulfil certain conditions. In November last year, he said he would impose sweeping tariffs on imports from Canada, China, and Mexico if these countries failed to stem illegal border crossings into the U.S. and the trafficking of drugs — in particular Fentanyl, which is a deadly opioid.He has also threatened the European Union (EU) with tariffs, as the U.S. runs a trade deficit with the bloc. This means that its imports from the EU are higher than its exports.

Data show that the U.S. had a trade deficit of more than \$208.7 billion with the EU at the end of 2023, second only to China with which it had a trade deficit of \$279.4 billion. The third on the list is Mexico (trade deficit of \$152.4 billion). With Canada, the U.S. had a trade deficit of \$67.9 billion. Chart 1 shows the U.S.'s trade deficit with select countries at the end of 2023. The other countries which have been threatened with tariffs are also part of the list of countries with which the U.S. runs the highest trade deficits.

It is debatable whether imposition of tariffs is the most efficient way of dealing with this. In 2023, the U.S. imported \$40.7 billion worth of motor cars and vehicles from the EU. This was the second biggest commodity in terms of value, from the bloc. If there are higher tariffs on the import of European cars, these cars would become more expensive. This would benefit U.S. car manufacturers.At the same time, consumers in the U.S. have been importing cheaper goods from countries such as China. They imported over \$35 billion worth of smartphones in 2023 from China. If the higher

tariffs proposed by Mr. Trump come into force, consumers will need to look for alternatives. This means that they will spend more on these products.This means manufacturers will benefit, but not consumers.Mr. Trump's solution to bridge the EU's trade deficit with the U.S. is also questionable: he has asked the bloc to buy more oil and gas from the U.S. By the end of 2023, the EU had sourced close to 43% of its Liquefied Natural Gas needs from the U.S. Just three years before that, in 2020, the EU had sourced below 20% from the U.S. (Chart 2).Chart 2 | The chart shows EU's imports of liquefied natural gas from US and Russia

This means that the EU's dependency on the U.S. had more than doubled in just three years. This was because sanctions were imposed on Russia after it invaded Ukraine. Thus, import of gas from Russia had to be cut, which benefited the U.S.In July 2024, the EU sourced close to 15% of its crude oil from the U.S. compared to just 8% in July 2020. In the same period, crude oil imports from Russia were reduced from 23% to 2% (Chart 3).Chart 3 | The chart shows EU's crude oil imports from US and RussiaSo, the question is, why is Mr. Trump threatening the EU when the bloc's dependency on the U.S. for oil and gas is already increasing at a rapid pace?The U.S. exported 31.8% of its crude oil production in 2023 compared to just 18.7% five years prior. It exported 16% of its natural gas production in 2023 compared to 9.6% five years prior (Chart 4).Chart 4 | The chart shows U.S.'s exports of crude oil and natural gas as a share of production

Are producers in the U.S. equipped to sustainably increase production if the export share increases further, given that the U.S. is also the biggest consumer of oil and natural gas domestically?Finally, of all the top 10 oil refineries (in terms of processing capacity) that operate in Europe, most are owned by private players (Chart 5).Chart 5 | The chart shows the largest crude oil refineries in Europe by capacity (in thousand barrels per day)While Mr. Trump's tirade is directed against the governments in Europe, will the bloc be able to convince the private refineries, whose best interest is to choose the cheapest and most viable oil, to get supply from the U.S.?Source: The data for the charts were sourced from Eurostat, U.S. Energy Information Administration, and the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

# Prioritising IMEC is in America's best interest

The United States-India relationship has evolved into an increasingly vital strategic partnership ever since the Clinton administration laid the foundation for a new direction in the 1990s. Today, broad bipartisan consensus supports building upon these ties even further, driven by converging interests in economic growth, regional security, and democratic values. As global dynamics shift, the importance of this relationship for the Trump administration becomes even more pronounced.The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) agreement presents a tremendous opportunity for President Donald Trump to solidify this multilateral partnership while advancing both the strategic interests of the U.S. and India. By leading the effort to secure cooperation among the participating nations, the U.S. can help create a robust economic corridor to ensure free and open trade routes, with enhanced energy security and technological innovation, which, in turn, will also benefit American companies.

More conceptual nowAnnounced in 2023, IMEC represents an ambitious vision to forge an integrated network spanning three vital regions through advanced physical and digital infrastructure. The corridor must develop efficient transportation routes, including railways, shipping networks, and maritime connections, while also establishing cross-border electricity and hydrogen pipelines and digital communication cables. The end goals should be to enhance trade connectivity and reduce transportation costs, while diversifying global supply chains and promoting deeper economic integration among participating countries (India, the U.S., the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Germany, and the European Commission).

At the moment, it is reasonable to suggest that IMEC is more conceptual than concrete. Meeting its lofty goals requires extensive planning and cooperation. The Trump administration's leadership on this matter could enhance his legacy on the international stage. By supporting IMEC, the U.S. and India can establish a compelling alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), creating a more balanced global economic architecture that aligns with western democratic values and market principles.IMEC was never destined to be a straightforward endeavour. Each participating nation faces a complex calculus of investment, political will and economic strategy. The corridor demands substantial infrastructure investments that directly compete with other national priorities. Moreover, private sector engagement introduces another layer of complexity. Corporate investors require clear pathways to return on investment; and without active engagement from the private sector, it is unlikely that the project could succeed.Several countries, such as Greece and Italy, have shown substantial initiative on IMEC. France has distinguished itself by appointing a special envoy in Gérard Mestrallet, who is not a traditional diplomat. France's President Emmanuel Macron has chosen a proven business leader from France to head this geopolitical and economic initiative, as he recognises its economic potential for France. The UAE and Saudi Arabia appreciate the role IMEC can play in advancing relationships with the West, and have spearheaded efforts for its implementation. Without regular, strategic engagement, there is a significant risk of creating an uneven economic landscape that could breed tension and political friction among participating nations. The corridor offers transformative economic opportunities not just for coastal regions and primary ports but also for inland areas that could become crucial nodes in this expansive trade network. Even within the region, we have already seen countries such as Iraq and Türkiye initiate trade agreements to compliment IMEC.

As an alternative to China's BRIIMEC promises substantial economic advantages for India by dramatically reducing trade costs and transforming maritime logistics. This strategic network reduces vulnerability to potential disruptions such as those that might occur in the Suez Canal, but also creates compelling opportunities for increased foreign direct investment. By positioning itself as an alternative to the BRI, the corridor allows India to strengthen diplomatic ties with West Asian and European countries.

Better for the environmentThere are implications to this deal that could impact the earth's climate health. India has emerged as a significant player in green hydrogen development, positioning itself as a potential global leader in this emerging clean energy technology. The country has



launched ambitious initiatives to develop green hydrogen as a strategic component of its energy transition and decarbonisation efforts.India is collaborating with international partners such as Germany and Japan, and developing infrastructure for green hydrogen production, storage, and transportation. This will help reduce carbon emissions, decrease dependence on fossil fuel imports and create new job opportunities in emerging green technology sectors.The Trump administration's role in facilitating the Abraham Accords proved instrumental in creating the diplomatic conditions that made IMEC possible. Former U.S. President Joe Biden has been a strong proponent of IMEC. Looking ahead, questions remain about IMEC's future under potential new U.S. leadership. One intriguing factor is Mr. Trump's warm personal relationship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This rapport could prove significant to ongoing relations. Now that there is a peace agreement between Israel and Hamas, both leaders could facilitate the much needed (and required) meeting of IMEC participants to discuss the next steps.This endeavour transcends traditional infrastructure development; it represents a fundamental reimagining of regional economic cooperation that requires unprecedented levels of coordination among diverse stakeholders. The U.S. and India, as key architects of the corridor, must work closely to shepherd this project to completion, recognising both its economic significance and environmental implications for all participating countries.

## New wildfire in Los Angeles grows over 500 acres

Los Angeles: A fast-moving brush fire erupted in US Los Angeles County, expanding over 500 acres (2.02 square km) with zero containment, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire).The blaze dubbed Hughes Fire was reported at about 10:30 a.m. Wednesday local time in the area of Lake Hughes Road near Castaic Lake, about 80 km northwest of Los Angeles downtown, the KTLA news channel reported, noting it spread to the size in less than one and a half hours.Fuelled by heavy and dry plants and pushed by gusting Santa Ana winds, the latest wildfire in Southern California spread rapidly, the authorities said, adding evacuation orders had been issued in the Castaic Lake area and nearby remote canyon areas, Xinhua news agency reported.Los Angeles County has been inundated with deadly blazes this month.The Palisades and Eaton fires, the largest ones in the most populous county of the US, have killed 28 people, sparked numerous mandatory evacuations, and destroyed thousands of structures.The blaze is the latest to strike the greatest Los Angeles area after a series of fires began to sweep through America's second-largest city on January 7. The first inferno, the Palisades Fire, has devastated the upscaled coastal community of the Pacific Palisades while another major blaze, the Eaton Fire, tore through wide swathes of the foothill city of Altadena.A total of 11 people were killed in the Palisades Fire while 17 died in the Eaton Fire amid mass devastation in both communities that has left many residents scrambling to find new homes.They are now 68 per cent and 91 per cent contained, respectively, after more than two weeks of expansive firefighting efforts.Robert Jensen of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department urged everyone in the affected area of the new fire to evacuate immediately.

# Firefighters bat down wildfires in Los Angeles; more than 50,000 under evacuation orders, warnings



Firefighters fought to maintain the upper hand on a huge and rapidly moving wildfire that swept through rugged mountains north of Los Angeles and resulted in more than 50,000 people being put under evacuation orders or warnings.The Hughes Fire broke out late Wednesday morning (January 22, 2025) and in less than a day had charred nearly 41 sqkm (16 square miles) of trees and brush near Lake Castaic, a popular recreation area about 64 km (40 miles) from the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires that are burning for a third week.

Though the region was under a red flag warning for critical fire risk, winds were not as fast as they had been when those fires broke out, allowing for firefighting aircraft to dump tens of thousands of gallons of fire retardant on the latest blaze. By Wednesday night (January 22, 2025), about 14% of the Hughes Fire had been contained.“A different situation today”“The situation that we're in today is very different from the situation we were in 16 days ago,” Los Angeles County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone said.

“This fire had a robust response today, and as you can see behind us, the responders are doing great work to try to contain this fire,” Joe Tyler, director of Cal Fire, said at a Wednesday (January 22, 2025) evening press conference. “Certainly, we are not out of the woods yet.”Red flag warnings were extended through 10 a.m. on Friday (January 24, 2025) in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Officials remained concerned that the Palisades and Eaton fires could break their containment lines as firefighters continue watching for hot spots.More than 31,000 people have been ordered to evacuate, and another 23,000 are under evacuation warnings, LA County Sheriff Robert Luna said.LA County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone said the fire remains difficult to contain but firefighters are getting the upper hand. “Parts of Interstate 5 that had been closed will shortly be reopened,” Mr. Luna said.

A 48km (30-mile) stretch of the major north-south artery had been closed for emergency vehicles and moving equipment. Crews on the ground and in water-dropping aircraft tried to prevent the wind-driven fire from moving across the interstate and toward Castaic.Mr. Marrone said that because winds were not as strong as they were two weeks ago, aircraft crews were able to drop tens of thousands of gallons of fire retardant on the south side of the fire, where the flames were moving. “More than 4,000 firefighters were assigned to the fire,” he said.Winds in the area were gusting

# Los Angeles fires have scorched largest urban area in California in at least 40 years

GNS News Agency, July 29

Two wildfires still burning in Los Angeles have torched more urban area than any other fire in the state since at least the mid-1980s, an Associated Press analysis shows.The Eaton and Palisades fires that erupted last week have collectively burned almost 4 square miles of highly dense parts of Los Angeles, more than double the urban acreage consumed by the region's Woolsey Fire in 2018, according to the AP's analysis of data from the Silvius Lab at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.Experts say several factors could lead to wildfires reaching cities more often. Urban areas continue to sprawl into wildland. Climate change is raising global temperatures that lead to more severe weather, including droughts, especially in the western United States.“If these conditions get worse or more frequent in the future, it wouldn't be surprising, in my opinion, if there were more events that threaten densely populated places,” said Franz Schug, a researcher studying the boundaries between the wildland and urban areas at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Eaton and Palisades fires' rampage through Los Angeles has killed at least 27 people, destroyed more than 12,000 structures and put more than 80,000 under evacuation orders. The fires are likely to be among the most destructive in California history, according to the state agency CalFire.The Woolsey Fire eventually grew to about twice the current size of the Eaton and Palisades fires but most of the area it burned was uninhabited.Silvis, and AP, defined urban areas as those that are “high density,” where the land has at least 3 housing units for every acre, calculated with U.S. Census data.The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 burned about 3.3 square miles of the downtown area of the city, according to the Chicago Architecture Center. San Francisco's Great Fire of 1906 destroyed 4 square miles of the city, according to the Museum of the City of San Francisco.

Besides burning the most urban area, the Eaton and Palisades fires are the largest ever for California in January. Alexandra Syphard, a senior research scientist at the Conservation Biology Institute, said their timing and path through the city “may have no precedent in history.”Authorities haven't

at 42 mph (67 kph) in the afternoon. They had reached as high as 65 mph (105 KPH) in some mountain pockets by Wednesday night, according David Roth, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Kayla Amara drove to Castaic's Stonegate neighborhood to collect items from the home of a friend who had rushed to pick up her daughter at preschool. As Amara was packing the car, she learned the fire had exploded in size and decided to hose down the property.“Other people are hosing down their houses, too. I hope there's a house here to return to,” Amara said as police cars raced through the streets and flames engulfed trees on a hillside in the distance.Amara, a nurse who lives in nearby Valencia, said she's been on edge for weeks as major blazes devastated Southern California.“It's been stressful with those other fires, but now that this one is close to home it's just super stressful,” she said.Los Angeles officials prepare for potential rainTo the south, Los Angeles officials began to prepare for potential rain even as some residents were allowed to return to the charred Pacific Palisades and Altadena areas. Gusty weather was expected to last through Thursday (January 23, 2025) and precipitation was possible starting Saturday, according to the National Weather Service.

“Rains are in the forecast and the threat of mud and debris flow in our fire-impacted communities is real,” Supervisor Kathryn Barger said during a Wednesday (January 22, 2025) morning news conference.Fire crews were filling sandbags for communities while county workers installed barriers and cleared drainage pipes and basins.Red flag warnings for critical fire risk were extended through 10 a.m. Friday (January 24, 2025) in LA and Ventura counties. Officials remained concerned that the Palisades and Eaton fires could break their containment lines as firefighters continue watching for hot spots.Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass warned that winds could carry ash and advised Angelenos to visit the city's website to learn how to protect themselves from toxic air during the latest Santa Ana wind event. LA County public health director Barbara Ferrer cautioned that the ash could contain heavy metals, arsenic and other harmful materials.“Even a brief exposure can potentially cause skin irritation and lead to more serious problems,” Mr. Ferrer said Wednesday (January 22, 2025), asking people to wear protective gear while cleaning up.The low humidity, bone-dry vegetation and strong winds came as firefighters continued battling the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have killed at least 28 people and destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out January 7. Containment of the Palisades Fire reached 70% and the Eaton Fire was at 95%.Mr. Luna said Wednesday (January 22, 2025) that his department was still investigating 22 active missing person reports in both fire zones. “All of those reported missing are adults,” he said.The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is investigating the causes of the fires but has not released any findings.Several lawsuits have been filed by people who lost their homes in the Eaton Fire, alleging Southern California Edison's equipment sparked the blaze. On Tuesday (January 21, 2025), a judge overseeing one of the lawsuits ordered the utility to produce data from circuits in the area where the fire started.



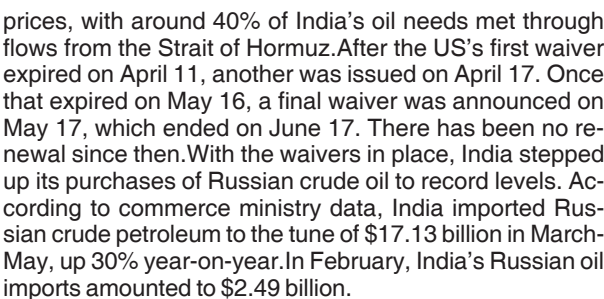
determined a cause for the major blazes in California. But experts have noted the extreme weather that created more favorable conditions: heavy rains that drove vegetation growth, then extreme drought that turned much of that vegetation into good fire fuel. Scientists say such extreme weather events are a hallmark of climate change.Then there's the human element.Across California, about 1.4 million homes were built in areas where residential areas and vegetation intermingle between 1990 and 2020, a 40% increase, the Silvius Lab found.Fires that begin close to populated areas are often caused by people, and their proximity to people means they are usually extinguished sooner. As David Helmers, a data scientist and geographer at the Silvius Lab, put it, “Humans tend to ignite fires, but they also fight fires.”But that wasn't the case with the Eaton and Palisades fires, which were whipped by fierce Santa Ana winds to overwhelm fire crews.The 2017 Tubbs Fire in northern California's wine country came under similar high winds. That blaze, sparked by a residential electrical system, tore through suburban areas of Santa Rosa, killing 22 people and destroying more than 5,600 homes, businesses and other structures. Overnight, the rubble of the Coffey Park neighborhood became a symbol for how quickly a wildfire can reach a populated area.Some 53 years prior, another fire — the Hanly Fire — burned through almost the exact same area. Winds helped it spread with furious speed. But with little development at the time, nobody died and only 100 homes were lost.

# When did Stargate start, the AI project that has reignited rivalry between Musk and Altman

Hyderabad: The feud between the two tech billionaires Elon Musk and Sam Altman that started on OpenAI's board has reignited. This time the two are exchanging barbs over the Stargate artificial intelligence infrastructure project, backed by President Donald Trump.“The largest AI infrastructure project in history with an investment of \$500 billion” was announced by Trump on Jan 21. Sam Altman of OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, along with Oracle's Larry Ellison and SoftBank's Masayoshi Son have come together for this project. The initial investment will be \$100 billion.But the Tesla CEO, a close Trump adviser, questioned the value of the investment hours later. “They don't actually have the money,” Musk wrote on his social media platform X. “SoftBank has well under \$10B secured. I have that on good authority.”Altman responded to say Musk was “wrong, as you surely know” and inviting Musk to come visit the first site in Texas that is already under construction.Musk and Sam Altman co-founded OpenAI as a non-profit in 2015 but

difference cropped up after Musk exited OpenAI's board in 2018. Last year, Musk sued Altman and other OpenAI co-founders, accusing them of abandoning the startup's original mission to develop AI for the benefit of humanity. It claimed OpenAI's partnership with Microsoft “flipped the narrative” of the company's original mission.Tech news outlet The Information first reported on an OpenAI data centre project called Stargate in March 2024, indicating that it's been in the works long before Trump announced it.Another company — Crusoe Energy Systems — announced in July it was building a large and “specially designed AI data center” at the northwest edge of Abilene, Texas, at a site run by energy technology company Lancium.Crusoe and Lancium said in a joint statement at the time that the project was “supported by a multibillion-dollar investment” but didn't disclose its backers.Abilene Mayor Weldon Hurt said construction began about nine months ago but “we didn't know it was going to be quite this big. We thought it was going to be about a third of this size.”

## Eight IVF failures, then a miracle: Why IVF setbacks do not mean the end of parenthood



First announced on March 12, the US sanctions waiver on buying sanctioned Russian crude oil led to a big jump in purchases by India in the face of soaring global energy

To be sure, this would not be the first time India has paid for Russian oil in rupees, with the RBI in mid-2022 announcing a framework for the settlement of international trade in rupees. As a net buyer of goods and services from abroad, India's import bill is often at the mercy of the rupee's performance — if it weakens, it would lead to more money being paid by importers for a fixed dollar amount. In 2025-26, India had a trade deficit of \$119 billion. As such, paying for imports in rupees can reduce the outflow of foreign currency and help stabilise the exchange rate which has been under intense pressure over the last year due to foreign capital outflows from domestic financial markets and global geopolitical developments. Rupees are also being used to pay by other countries for Indian goods and software exports. From Rs 15,195 crore in February, Indian exports that were paid for in rupees more than doubled to Rs 41,373 crore in March, before declining to Rs 10,218 crore in April and Rs 8,289 crore in May. The jump in March may have again been on account of Russia. "With India paying for Russian oil in rupees, it makes sense for Russia to use those rupees to pay for what products it can from India," an economist said, requesting not to be named. Except for March 2026, payment received in rupees by India for its exports constitutes a small portion of total exports: Rs 1.75 lakh crore in 2023-24 (3.56% of total exports), Rs 1.69 lakh crore in 2024-25 (3.21%), and Rs 1.87 lakh crore in 2025-26 (3.22%). In the first two months of 2026-27, it has been a mere Rs 18,507 crore (1.82%).

## A microscopic view of a cell, likely a sperm cell, showing its nucleus and surrounding structures. The cell is dark purple, and the surrounding area is filled with numerous small, orange, oval-shaped structures, possibly representing other cells or debris.

A fertility specialist explains why repeated IVF failures do not necessarily mean pregnancy is impossible, with each cycle providing valuable insights to improve future treatment. A fertility specialist explains why repeated IVF failures do not necessarily mean pregnancy is impossible, with each cycle providing valuable insights to improve future treatment. When Meera (name changed), a 38-year-old from New Delhi, first began trying for a baby, she imagined becoming a mother within a year or two. Instead, her journey stretched over eight years and eight IVF cycles, all of it filled with hope, heartbreak and repeated disappointments.

After trying to conceive naturally for nearly two years, Meera and her husband underwent fertility testing. The results showed that Meera had a reduced ovarian reserve, which simply means that the number and quality of eggs remaining in her ovaries were lower than expected for her age. While this does not make pregnancy impossible, it can reduce the chances of conception and often requires timely fertility treatment. Her husband, meanwhile, was found to have mild sperm motility issues. Sperm motility refers to how well sperm swim. Good movement is essential because sperm need to travel through the female reproductive tract to reach and fertilize the egg. When sperm movement is reduced, the chances of fertilisation can also decrease. Taken together, these factors made IVF the most appropriate treatment option.

When hope meets repeated disappointmentThe couple's first three IVF cycles, carried out at different fertility centres, ended without success. In some attempts, very few healthy embryos developed, while in others the embryo failed to implant in the uterus. The emotional toll was immense. Every cycle brought fresh hope, followed by disappointment. Financially too, the repeated treatments be-

came increasingly demanding. Then came a glimmer of hope. The fourth and fifth IVF attempts resulted in pregnancy—but both ended in early miscarriages. Further investigations finally uncovered conditions that had gone unnoticed earlier. Meera had a blood-clotting disorder that could affect early pregnancy, along with persistent inflammation of the uterine lining, making it difficult for an embryo to grow successfully. These conditions were treated before another attempt was planned. Even after these medical issues were addressed, the sixth and seventh IVF cycles failed. At this point, many people around the couple suggested that it was time to stop trying. Understandably, repeated failures often make couples believe that IVF simply isn't working for them. However, one of the biggest misconceptions about fertility treatment is that every failed IVF cycle is just another failed attempt. In reality, each cycle provides valuable information. It helps doctors understand how the ovaries respond to treatment, how embryos develop and whether there are factors affecting implantation or pregnancy. These insights often help refine the treatment plan for future cycles. Rather than repeating the same protocol, the medical team reviewed every stage of Meera's previous treatments and developed a more individualized approach. A different strategy, a different outcome

The eighth IVF cycle was carefully customised to Meera's specific needs. Her medications were adjusted according to her body's response, the healthiest embryo was selected for transfer and special attention was given to preparing the uterus to improve the chances of implantation. Two weeks after the embryo transfer, the pregnancy test came back positive. This time, the pregnancy progressed normally under close medical supervision. At 38 weeks, Meera gave birth to a healthy baby girl—a moment that marked the end of an eight-year struggle and the beginning of a new chapter. Infertility is rarely caused by a single issue. The health of the eggs and sperm, the quality of embryos, the condition of the uterus, hormonal balance and certain hidden medical conditions can all influence the outcome. Sometimes these factors become apparent only after earlier treatment attempts, allowing doctors to modify the approach and improve the chances of success. While no fertility treatment can guarantee pregnancy, a personalized treatment plan based on careful evaluation of previous IVF cycles can make a meaningful difference. Looking back, Meera says the most difficult part was not the treatment itself, but believing after every failure that her dream of becoming a mother might never come true. The unwavering support of her family, regular counselling and honest communication with her treating team helped her stay the course.

shift towards litigation prevention should rest on pillars of three Cs — clarity in taxpayers' obligations through timely circulars in simple language, whether English or Hindi; consistency of interpretation across jurisdictions; and continuous institutional learning from appellate orders to inform future reforms.

“Together these principles produce avoidable disputes, while improving certainty for honest taxpayers. On this dimension, I appreciate that there has been progress...a total dependency declined by over 34,000 cases to 5.4 lakh appeals now. No good. We should pause here. Are we doing this consciously? The appeals despite your efforts to bring down the number by 34,000, it’s such a big number that on reading that number, I would have thought that the pending appeals would have come down to less than a lakh. We still have 5.4 lakh appeals,” she said. Three years ago, Sitharaman said the tax department had discussed a blueprint on reducing the pending appeals but now the mounting appeals are being allowed to keep coming up even as the reduction is happening at a slower pace, she added. “I appeal to the CBDT to have one more review on how to handle this,” she said. Commenting on the current return filing season, Sitharaman said the e-filing portal has significantly strengthened this season with expanded computing capacity, storage, bandwidth and also network infrastructure.

The portal handled more than 1 crore taxpayer interactions in a single day, with daily interactions reaching around 1.6 crore at peak, she said. As on July 21, more than 3.2 crore income tax returns have been filed, nearly 94% verified, and 60% processed, she said. On this, over 1.3 crore refund claims have been received, 96% verified and 40% processed, she said, adding that the tax department must continue reducing processing timelines. "Prompt refunds strengthen confidence in the fairness of the tax administration and improve liquidity for taxpayers," she said.

“So, our approach should ensure convenience for the honest taxpayer, and opportunity to correct bona fide errors and firm consequences for deliberate evasion. But sometimes we make the error of treating honest taxpayers with deliberate evaders and everybody goes home unhappy with this. We have to be intelligent. We have to be discreet...the authority conferred by tax law must always be exercised with humility,” she said. Sitharaman said a taxpayer is left with a bitter taste in his mouth when tax officers “slightly exert that empowerment that the tax law has given”. “And that bitter taste in the mouth of the taxpayer is something which only we can redress and we can redress only if we approach it with humility,” she said, adding that a taxpayer is “not merely an assessee” but a citizen and a partner in India’s growth and development. “We have to give him that space and respect. Please do not overdo. At the same time, please do not be laidback. There is a fine balance to maintain,” she said. The finance minister said the

The India findings are part of a wider global picture that shows nearly three-fourths of countries are using more antibiotics overall than needed, while almost every country is overusing the antibiotics that contribute most to antimicrobial resistance. At the same time, millions of people worldwide still lack access to the antibiotics they need.

researchers grouped countries with similar infection burdens, antimicrobial resistance patterns, healthcare access and socioeconomic characteristics into peer groups. Within each group, countries with the lowest antibiotic use and the fewest infection-related deaths served as benchmarks for estimating optimal antibiotic consumption.

The analysis found that while high-income countries currently consume the most 'watch' and 'reserve' antibiotics, more than 80 per cent of the world's estimated need for these medicines lies in lower-income countries, where infectious disease and antimicrobial resistance burdens are highest. At the same time, 42 per cent of countries were using fewer Access antibiotics than estimated to be necessary, while 52 per cent were using fewer 'reserve' antibiotics than required, potentially leaving patients with drug-resistant infections without the treatments they need.

The findings mirror earlier evidence from India. The National Centre for Disease Control's First Multicentric Point Prevalence Survey of Antibiotic Use (2021-22), conducted across 20 tertiary care hospitals in 15 states and two Union Territories, found that nearly three out of every four hospitalised patients were receiving antibiotics. The survey showed 57 per cent of prescriptions were for 'watch' antibiotics, 38 per cent were 'access' antibiotics and 2 per cent were 'reserve' antibiotics. About 3 per cent were fixed-dose combinations not recommended by WHO. Only 6 per cent of antibiotic prescriptions were based on microbiological evidence, with most antibiotics started without culture confirmation. Dr Kamini Walia, Programme Officer (AMR) and Head of the Division of Descriptive Research at ICMR, who was not associated with the present study, says more than half (55 per cent) of antibiotic prescriptions were for prophylaxis rather than treatment, suggesting opportunities to improve surgical prophylaxis, perioperative antibiotic policies and infection prevention practices.

She highlights unnecessary duplicate antibiotic coverage, noting that 26.4 per cent of prescriptions included duplicate gram-negative coverage and 8.7 per cent duplicate anaerobic coverage, increasing toxicity, costs and the risk of antimicrobial resistance without improving outcomes. Another concern was the extensive use of injectable antibiotics, with 86.5 per cent administered intravenously, alongside wide variation in prescribing practices across hospitals, where antibiotic use ranged from 37 per cent to 100 per cent. According to Dr Wallia, India should particularly focus on reducing unnecessary use of commonly prescribed 'watch' antibiotics such as ceftriaxone, cefixime, azithromycin, ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin and piperacillin-tazobactam through better antimicrobial stewardship and awareness. 'Reserve' antibiotics, including meropenem, colistin, ceftazidime-avibactam, ceftiderocol and aztreonam-avibactam, should be restricted to patients with documented or strongly suspected multidrug-resistant infections.

PMS SEBI According to SEBI, assets managed by portfolio managers have more than doubled over the past six years, prompting the need for a fresh regulatory framework. Wikimedia Commons Capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a sweeping review of the SEBI (Portfolio Managers) Regulations, 2020, seeking to modernise the framework governing portfolio management services (PMS). The SEBI consultation paper carrying the proposal, released on July 23, comes against the backdrop of a rapid expansion in the PMS industry and changing investor preferences. According to SEBI, assets managed by portfolio managers have more than doubled over the past six years, prompting the need for a fresh regulatory framework.

For investors and market participants, the proposed PMS reforms, including a 'mutual fund-only' category and permission to invest in overseas securities and to be-listed securities, signal SEBI's broader approach of adapting regulations to the growing complexity of India's capital markets while ensuring that investor interests remain at the centre of the regulatory framework. The consultation paper marks one of the most comprehensive reviews of the Portfolio Managers Regulations since they were notified in 2020. If implemented after the public consultation process, the proposals could significantly reshape India's PMS industry by offering greater flexibility to portfolio managers and broader investment options to sophisticated investors. Portfolio management service (PMS) is registered under the SEBI (Portfolio Managers) Regulations, 2020. It is a professional investment service where a qualified fund manager takes charge of the equity, debt and other securities portfolio of a customer, who is a high net-worth individual. Only corpo-

rate entities, companies or LLPs with SEBI registration can legally offer these services in India. SEBI mandates that no PMS provider can accept less than Rs 50 lakh per client.

The assets under management (AUM) of the PMS industry reached Rs 42.61 lakh crore as on May 2026 from Rs 18.07 lakh crore as on April 2019. The total number of clients as of May 2026 stood at 2.19 lakh from 1.5 lakh in April 2019. The number of portfolio managers has more than doubled from 226 in 2020, when the regulations were revamped, to 515 as on May 31, 2026. One of the biggest changes proposed is the expansion of investment avenues available to portfolio managers. Currently, PMS providers face restrictions on investing in certain asset classes that are accessible to other regulated investment vehicles. SEBI has proposed allowing portfolio managers to invest in overseas listed equity and debt securities, securities that are yet to be listed and a limited exposure to unlisted debt instruments.

The move is intended to align PMS regulations more closely with those governing mutual funds and alternative investment funds. The regulator has also proposed to expand the permissible investment universe to permit investments in "to be listed" securities. This would enable investors to gain exposure to broader market opportunities. Further, SEBI's consultation paper has proposed that a portfolio manager offering discretionary portfolio management services may be permitted to invest up to 10% of its client's AUM in investment-grade unlisted debt securities. The regulator believes that broader investment flexibility would enable portfolio managers to design more diversified and customised portfolios for high-net-worth clients.

The India findings are part of a wider global picture that shows nearly three-fourths of countries are using more antibiotics overall than needed, while almost every country is overusing the antibiotics that contribute most to antimicrobial resistance. At the same time, millions of people worldwide still lack access to the antibiotics they need.

“Our study found that in India some patients were exposed unnecessarily to antibiotics while others did not have access to the right antibiotics to treat their infections,” Prof. Ramanan Laxminarayan, founder and president of One Health Trust, senior research scholar at Princeton University and one of the study’s authors, told The Indian Express. “Strategies to improve antibiotic use will focus on ensuring populations have access to the right antibiotics at the right time while reducing unnecessary use.”

## What is antibiotic classification all about?

Access: First-choice antibiotics for common infections that have a lower risk of driving resistance. Watch: Broad-spectrum antibiotics that should be used only for specific infections because they carry a higher risk of promoting antimicrobial resistance. Reserve: Last-resort antibiotics reserved for treating multidrug-resistant infections. The study estimates India would ideally require 14.7 defined daily doses (DD) of antibiotics per 1,000 people per day, comprising 7.8 DD of 'access' antibiotics, 6 DD of 'watch' antibiotics and 0.99 DD of 'reserve' antibiotics. Actual consumption, however, paints a different picture. India currently uses 18.3 DD overall, comprising 4.5 DD of 'access' antibiotics, 9.3 DD of 'watch' antibiotics and 0.19 DD of 'reserve' antibiotics. Only 27 per cent of antibiotic use currently comes from the 'access category,' against an estimated requirement of 52.3 per cent. "This suggests that in India some 'watch' antibiotics are potentially being used unnecessarily and some of this use could be replaced with 'access' antibiotics instead," Prof Laxminarayan says, adding India's higher burden of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance means the country will legitimately require more 'watch' antibiotics than many other countries. However, the study also suggests 'reserve' antibiotics are being underused despite the country's resistance burden, while antibiotics that are no longer recommended continue to be prescribed more than expected. Global picture

Researchers analysed antibiotic use across 186 countries and territories, representing 99.8 per cent of the world's population. They found that 72 per cent of countries used more antibiotics overall than estimated to be necessary. Ninety-nine per cent prescribed excessive quantities of antibiotics that contribute most to antimicrobial resistance. Sixty per cent continued to use antibiotics the World Health Organisation (WHO) considers should no longer be routinely prescribed. The study estimates that around 43 billion antibiotic treatment days were needed globally in 2019 — roughly one antibiotic course per person per year — to appropriately treat bacterial infections. It also found that 77 per cent of global antibiotic use should come from the WHO's access group, suggesting the United Nations target of 70 per cent 'access' antibiotic use by 2030 is reasonable.

Lead author Aislinn Cook, Senior Research Fellow in Infectious Diseases Epidemiology at City St George's, University of London, feels the findings point to a double challenge. "While some antibiotics are being overused, millions of people may still lack access to the medicines they need to treat their infections," she says. How the study worked The

# Para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar wins bronze, opens India's account



GNS News Agency, July 29

Para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar opened India's medal account in the Commonwealth Games on late Friday night when he won the bronze medal in the Men's Heavyweight category. Jhandu, who was in Group B, started with a successful 181 kg lift before following it up with another successful lift of 190 kgs. He finished with 130.9 points and maintained his lead for a while before he was pipped by Matthew Harding who finished second and eventual winner Riluwan Idris. Kumar, who was affected by polio since birth, was born in Harnaut, Nalanda district to a humble family. His father was a vegetable vendor and Kumar had to overcome financial and physical challenges through determination and hard work. Kumar began his sporting career in 2017 as a para athletics athlete, competing in the F55 shot put and discus throw events, where he won several district and state-level medals. During this period, strength training in the gym sparked his interest in powerlifting.

Jhandu Kumar India medal Born in Harnaut, Nalanda district, Bihar, he was affected by polio since birth. The son of a vegetable vendor, Jhandu comes from a humble fam-

ily and overcame financial and physical challenges through determination and hard work. (SAI) Following a recommendation at a state championship, he switched to para powerlifting. Although he failed to register a successful lift at his first National Championship, the setback became a turning point when Paralympic bronze medallist Rajinder Singh Rahelu identified his potential and invited him to train at the Sports Authority of India National Centre of Excellence (NCOE), Gandhinagar. Under the guidance of Rajinder Singh Rahelu, Jhandu rapidly progressed into one of India's leading para powerlifters. In 2025, he set a new National Record with a 205 kg lift at the National Championships and improved it further to 206 kg at the Khelo India Para Games. His outstanding performances earned him a bronze medal at the Beijing World Cup 2025, followed by another bronze at the Asian & Oceania Championships 2026, and qualification for the Commonwealth Games 2026. Other results: Lawn Bowls: Putul Sonowal defeated Falkland Islands' Cecil Alexander in the men's singles sectional round 2 match while Rupa Rani Tirkey and Pinki Singh beat the South Africans 2-0 (6-4, 7-5) in their second women's pairs event match in Section B at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) Hall 3. Boxing: India's Jadumani Singh registered a facile win against local favourite Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg contest. Para Swimming: Ravi Veera Venkata Bhavani Karthik Budigina and Ali Imam qualified for the men's 100m freestyle S13 final but finished 4th and 7th respectively. Swimming: Srihari Nataraj qualified for the men's 50m backstroke semifinal but fails to reach final, finishing 7th. Para powerlifting: Ashok and Parmjeet Kumar finished 4th and 7th in the men's lightweight final while Jaspreet Kaur and Suman Devi finished 6th and 7th respectively in the women's lightweight final. Coming to the heavyweights, Kasthuri Rajamani failed to register a successful lift and finished last while Sudhir finished sixth in the men's heavyweight category.

## Jadumani Singh's 5kg gamble pays off, enters Round of 16

GNS News Agency, July 29

India's Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (blue) competes against Scotland's Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg Round of 32 boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026, in Glasgow, Friday, July 24, 2026. Jadumani won the bout by a 5-0 unanimous decision to advance to the Round of 16. (PTI Photo) India's Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (blue) competes against Scotland's Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg Round of 32 boxing event at the Commonwealth Games 2026, in Glasgow. Jadumani won the bout by a 5-0 unanimous decision to advance to the Round of 16.

Jadumani Singh had a successful 2025 – a year that was built on his southpaw excellence in the 50kg category. But the men's boxing weight classes at major amateur events all start at the 55kg category. So the Manipuri boxer made the tough call – a five-kilogram jump in weight and the uncharted territory that comes with it would have to follow. The Commonwealth Games and its lack of seeding would have to be the first major tournament in the weight class. The 23-year-old boxer turned in a spectacular opening round, one that set the tone for the judges over where this bout was headed, and defeated home favourite Aaron Cullen 5-0 in a unanimous win to start his Commonwealth Games campaign on Friday evening.

The lack of seeding meant that what could have been a bout for the later rounds was played out as an opener. In these situations, Indians have struggled, especially after the Tokyo Olympic cycle. But Jadumani fashioned a victory, one which came from an agile lead foot that kept him a moving target for Cullen, and set his lightning-fast left hand. The left hook, followed by a left uppercut, was the bread and butter shot of the Indian. It found its mark in key mo-



ments. Cullen responded with a stinging right jab that found its mark. But on output, the Indian boxer, making his Commonwealth Games debut, was the clearer victor in the first round.

The second round, though, is where boxing struggles to survive as a sport. Cullen's control of the centre of the ring was absolute, and his adjudging of range was precise. When those two conditions were met, his shots landed aplenty. Jadumani changed his stance, deployed himself lower than his stance, and bobbed his head, but was not able to defend that first punch from Cullen's right. The Scottish boxer made it a close fight in the second, but the Indian got all five judges to give him the round 10-9. That surety on the scorecards was not what was showing in the ring. Jadumani had landed shots, but Cullen surprisingly failed to turn any of the judges' heads. The third round needed Cullen to produce an extraordinary knockout. But Jadumani coasted through the third, avoiding any heavy shots and preserving his body for the wars to come.



ment, including its relations with government, and to (FIFA's) implementation of the rules of its sport," the IOC said in a statement. "Consequently, the complaint falls outside the IOC ethics commission's jurisdiction," the statement said. The ethics body does not have independent powers to start investigations and sanction officials, but can make recommendations to the IOC executive board chaired by President Kirsty Coventry. She attended the World Cup final last Sunday at East Rutherford, New Jersey. Action has been taken against just one IOC member in the past eight years for unethical conduct: Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah, a key power broker who built a reputation as the "kingmaker" of Olympic elections.

fortable win for India. Earlier in the day, the Indian Men's Team put on a scoring masterclass against hosts Oman, securing a 10-1 victory. India stormed to a 6-0 lead at half-time, powered by two goals each from Shahrulkh Ali (3', 10') and Ketan Kushwaha (6', 8'), alongside strikes from Karan Gautam (2') and Prahalad Rajbhar (3'). India added four more goals in the second half, with Kushwaha (11', 19') completing a four-goal haul, while Gautam (15') and Rajbhar (16') netted their second goals of the match. Oman scored a late consolation goal through Khazraj Subait Subait Al-Mashrafi (20'). In the women's match, India fought hard in an entertaining contest against China that stood tied at 3-3 at half-time. Sandeepa Kumari (1') gave India an early lead while Kiran Ekka (3', 6') scored a brace, matching China's first-half strikes from Guo Jiaxin (2'), Ge Chen (3'), and Lu Tongtong (10'). China pulled ahead in the second half as Guo Jiaxin (13', 20') completed her hat-trick.

# LeBron James set to join Philadelphia 76ers after leaving Los Angeles Lakers



GNS News Agency, July 29 Legendary basketball player LeBron James on Friday announced that he will be joining the Philadelphia 76ers for his record breaking 24th NBA season, ending an eight year association with the Los Angeles Lakers, a team he lead to a title in 2020 after two separate stints with the Cleveland Cavaliers and four years with the Miami Heat. "This is my last decision. I'm not going for money. I'm not going for family. What am I really playing for at this point? I still want to sacrifice. I still want to work. I still want to grind. I still want to compete, to win and to have a chance at the feeling of winning another championship," James wrote on social media. "I believe I can help make the Philadelphia 76ers a championship team and I am so excited to energize a new fan base and start this incredible journey one last time. Thank you LA. Miami I'll forever love and Northeast Ohio will always be home!"

"I thought I was done when the season ended. I wasn't

ready to announce it, and I knew I needed some time to really decide, but I was pretty sure I played my last game. I was honest at that last press conference when I said I needed to look at myself and decide if I still love this game. I still truly love this game, and I have more to give. The last few weeks have really been special. I've never been able to have no clue what to do and take real time to just think. I've had an incredible few months with all the people I love trying to figure it all out," he added.

I thought I was done when the season ended. I wasn't ready to announce it, and I knew I needed some time to really decide, but I was pretty sure I played my last game. I was honest at that last press conference when I said I needed to look at myself and decide if I still love James will join a 76ers team that made the 2026 NBA playoffs by securing the seventh seed through a play-in tournament before falling to the eventual champion New York Knicks in the second round. James did not disclose terms of the deal but ESPN reported that the four-time champion signed a two-year, \$8 million contract with a player option. A number of teams had been pursuing James, with Cleveland, Miami, the Golden State Warriors and Minnesota Timberwolves all believed to have been interested in the high-profile free agent. The 41-year-old James, who last March surpassed Robert Parish's record for most career regular-season games played, has continued to perform at an elite level despite his age. He earned a league-record 22nd consecutive All-Star selection last February during a season in which he averaged 20.9 points, 6.1 rebounds and 7.2 assists over 60 games. His season ended when the Lakers were swept from the second round of the playoffs.

## Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha set to join Colo Colo after World Cup heroics

GNS News Agency, July 29

New Delhi: Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha, one of the breakout stars of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, is set to continue his remarkable rise after reaching an agreement to join Chilean giants Colo Colo, club president Anibal Mosa confirmed on Friday. The 40-year-old free agent is set to go to Chile in the coming days for a medical examination before the transfer is completed and he is officially presented at the Estadio Monumental.

Mosa told the reporters earlier on, before Colo Colo's league game against Deportes Limache, that Vozinha would be one of the club's players and that in the coming days he would go to Chile, have the standard medical examinations, and then be introduced at the Estadio Monumental. Mosa stated that the experienced goalkeeper had won the chance through his excellent performances at the World Cup, although he also acknowledged that the transfer would bring a commercial advantage to the Chilean club. Even though the deal has not yet been officially completed, Colo Colo hinted at the signing on social media by posting an image which seemed to display Vozinha's characteristic curly hair and thus excited the supporters. Vozinha emerged as one of the tournament's greatest surprises after having left the Portuguese second-division club Chaves prior to the World



Cup; he was subsequently included in FIFA's fan-voted World Cup Dream Team as a result of his series of inspiring performances while playing in the tournament with Cape Verde. In Cape Verde's successful campaign the experienced goalkeeper played a vital part by keeping the eventual champions, Spain, without scoring in a goalless draw and then again showing excellent form by getting the eventual runners-up, Argentina, into extra time in the Round of 32; his remarkable performances made him one of the standout features of the tournament and have now led to a transfer to one of South America's most successful clubs.

## Commonwealth Games 2026: India's Putul Sonowal beats Cecil Alexander to continue winning run in lawn bowls

GNS News Agency, July 29 Glasgow: India's top lawn bowls star Putul Sonowal continued his fine run at the Commonwealth Games 2026 with a hard-fought victory over Cecil Alexander of the Falkland Islands in the Men's Singles sectional play in Glasgow on Friday. The contest went down to the tie-break, in which Putul held his nerve to secure victory. The reigning Asian Champion, Sonowal, won the first set 7-5, taking the lead with a narrow win. Cecil Alexander fought back to win the second set 8-6 and took the matter to the tie-breaker. Sonowal then sealed victory by winning the tie-break 1-0. The Indian star will next face a Malaysian player in his next Section D match on Saturday.

Earlier on Thursday, Sonowal continued India's superb start in the bowls competition by pulling off a major upset on his Commonwealth Games debut, beating reigning World Champion and World Bowls Hall of Fame inductee Ryan Bester in men's singles sectional play. Sonowal started his campaign in Section D of the preliminary competition, defeating Canada's Bester in a thrilling encounter that went down to the wire and was decided in a tiebreaker. Sonowal won the tiebreaker after Match 2 in Round 1 of Section D had ended 1-1 in regulation time. Ranked 21st in the world, the Indian clinched a close first set 5-4 to take the lead against Bester, a two-time CWG silver medallist. But the Canadian came back and took the second set with a 7-3



scoreline. Bester, who claimed a bronze in Men's Singles in the 2006 edition in Manchester before claiming a silver each in 2014 in Glasgow and 2018 Gold Coast editions, won the toss and had the first roll in the tiebreak. The Canadian is very experienced, as he has also won seven medals in World Outdoor Championships in Singles and Pairs, including a gold and a bronze in Singles and Pairs in the 2023 edition. However, reigning Asian champion Sonowal's opening attempt landed close to the kitty, which ultimately proved enough to seal the win.

## Srihari Nataraj enters 50m backstroke semifinals, Budigina reaches para swimming final

Glasgow: India's swimming campaign at the Commonwealth Games 2026 started on a high note on Friday as Olympian Srihari Nataraj secured a place in the men's 50m backstroke semifinals, while para swimmer Budigina and Ali Imam produced impressive performances to qualify for the men's 100m freestyle S13 final. Nataraj finished fifth in Heat 4 of the men's 50m backstroke after clocking 25.52 seconds to comfortably book his place among the top 16 swimmers progressing to the semifinals.

England's Oliver Morgan won the heat in 24.91 seconds, while compatriots Jack Skerry (25.08) and Matthew Ward (25.16), along with Benjamin Winterborn (25.37), also advanced from the same heat. A total of 40 swimmers competed across the heats, with the fastest 16 making it through to the semifinals. The Indian swimmer finished 0.61 seconds behind Morgan and will now look to improve his timing in the semifinals, scheduled to begin at 12:30 AM IST on Saturday. In the para swimming competition, Budigina underlined his growing reputation as one of India's brightest medal hopes with a remarkable effort in the men's 100m freestyle S13 event. The Indian clocked 57.10 seconds to finish third in his race, just 0.53 seconds behind Britain's Stephen Clegg, who topped the field. Budigina displayed an excellent finish after being placed fourth at the halfway mark before accelerating strongly over the closing stages to move into the top three. His late burst saw him overtake James Clegg, who had been running second midway through the race, while Stephen Clegg and South Africa's Hendricks



India enjoyed a positive start to its Commonwealth Games swimming campaign as Olympian Srihari Nataraj qualified for the men's 50m backstroke semifinals, while para swimmers Budigina and Ali Imam advanced to the men's 100m freestyle S13 final in Glasgow

finished ahead. Fellow Indian Ali Imam also progressed to the final after returning a time of 1:05.32. Although he finished 8.75 seconds behind the heat leader, his performance was enough to secure qualification for the medal race. The final of the S13 freestyle will be held on Saturday, with India hoping to get their first medal of the ongoing tournament in swimming.

## Salman Khan says ‘jo darr gaya vo mar gaya’ amid backlash over CJP protest remarks



Salman Khan has once again grabbed headlines after sharing a cryptic post that many believe is aimed at those trolling him over his recent comments on the ongoing NEET paper leak protests. The backlash began after Salman expressed support for protesting students on Instagram. He urged them to return home after Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured strict action against those responsible for the paper leak. While the actor did not mention anyone directly, social media users were quick to link the post to the criticism he has been facing over the last two days. Posting pictures from his workout session, the actor wrote, “Salman Khan darrrrr gaya.... Hmmmm. Jo darr gaya vo mar gaya...”

A day prior, Salman had posted on social media where he requested Sonam Wangchuk to end his fast. He wrote, “The students are the top priority, educationally and security-wise, so they need not worry or have their parents worried for them. The Hon’ble Prime Minister has tweeted, and I am sure he will take strict action against all those responsible for this leak. So students, please go back to your parents

and homes.”

He also addressed activist Sonam Wangchuk, adding, “Sonam, it’s done, bro. Don’t extend this. Keep the spirit for another day if there be a need, which I doubt, and eat something. If you want, I’ll send you food from home.” A few hours later, it just so happened that Sonam actually ended his fast while in the hospital. However, the CJP protests are still continuing as students are demanding strict educational reforms. The remark quickly went viral and drew various opinions online. While some users appreciated Salman’s message, many mocked the actor. One user commented, “And if you need some books to read, let me know, I’ll send you.” Another wrote, “Not the plot twist I was expecting.” Several others posted, “You are scared,” while another remarked, “Camera ke saamne sher, system ke saamne...”

Two days earlier, Salman had shared a childhood photograph and voiced support for the students. Calling the paper leak a “very serious issue,” he praised students for protesting peacefully and said he was proud to see young people demanding a stronger education system. “It was such a peaceful movement. I feel so sad that it had to take a violent turn. My heart goes out to the students and their families who were hurt,” he wrote. The actor also urged students not to let the movement become politicised, saying the issue should remain between students and the education system. He expressed confidence that the government would address their concerns and hoped India would eventually become a global education hub. The protests continue at Jantar Mantar, although activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 26-day fast after meeting BJP president JP Nadda, who assured him that the demands related to education reforms would be addressed. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a video promising the strictest punishment for those involved in paper leaks, including the use of fast-track courts.

## Aamir Khan’s daughter is staying away from CJP protests, Imran Khan speaks up for students



Aamir Khan's daughter Ira said that she has intentionally stayed away from visuals of violence. Imran Khan questioned the state's response to the agitating students.

As the nation remains gripped by the ongoing student protests demanding education reforms, several celebrities have come forward over the past few days to express solidarity with the demonstrators. Prominent Bollywood names including Salman Khan, Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor, Hrithik Roshan, Varun Dhawan, Ratna Pathak Shah and Naseeruddin Shah have all voiced their support. The latest to weigh in is Aamir Khan's daughter, Ira Khan, who shared her thoughts on the issue in a six-minute-long video posted on Instagram. Aamir Khan has maintained silence on the ongoing CJP protests. Sharing the video, Ira admitted that she had consciously maintained a distance from the protests as consuming news often leaves her emotionally overwhelmed. In the caption, she wrote, “I see that being able to, being able to afford to... having the option at all to look away... is a privilege. I’m figuring out what my most helpful role can be that aligns with my values and that’s what I’ll do. Be safe.” Beginning her video, Ira addressed the question many had been asking: why she had not spoken about the protests sooner. “Why am I not speaking up about the protests? It’s true that I advocate for mental health, and I ask for your attention whenever I speak on these topics. And I think that mental health is all of life. So I guess, in a way, I’ve chosen to say things and speak up about certain things. There are a couple of reasons why I haven’t, and I’m going to do my best to articulate them,” she said.

Explaining her silence, Ira said she initially felt she had little to contribute to the conversation and had deliberately stayed away from distressing news coverage. “The first that comes to my mind is that I didn’t think I had anything to say that was going to add to the conversation in any meaningful manner, especially because I’m not having feelings about it. And that’s something that I do actively with all news. I usually just don’t look at it. I don’t go to my Explore page. I have not seen any videos of violence or any videos of the protests. I know that they’re happening, and I know what is happening, I think. But I don’t let it emotionally reach me because it really bothers me, and I get overwhelmed, and I start feeling really helpless.”

She further explained that, instead of constantly following the news, she prefers to channel her energy into understanding how individuals can make a difference within their own capacity. “So my way of not getting overwhelmed and helpless, but still not ignoring things, is that I divert my energy and my focus, whatever I have in me, into the attempt to figure out: how can an individual person navigate the best they can with what they have in their individual

capacity, outside of any system or regardless of any system? I’m not saying this is the best approach, but this is what I do. I don’t look at the news, and I don’t look at social media. I purposefully spend time and energy focusing on, regardless of the topic, regardless of the system, regardless of the kind of discrimination or unfairness or whatever I may think and feel, I shift my energy that way.”

Ira also clarified that her silence should not be mistaken for indifference. Recalling how she briefly panicked after seeing a video that reportedly showed her cousin being detained during a protest, she said she realised she had unconsciously been distancing herself from the events. “My feelings still haven’t reached me. I know that I got sent one reel, and the story was that my cousin was in it. I saw the reel, and it was that she was potentially being detained at one of the protests, and I freaked out. And as soon as I realised she was safe, again, I was like, ‘Okay,’ and I went back to work. So I’m sure there are feelings, but they’re not reaching me. I did not say anything because I didn’t realize that me saying anything would make a difference. And so, if me not speaking up at this point implied in any manner that I don’t care, then I’m sorry. That was not my intention. While I’m not fully feeling anything, if there was any doubt, I would like to clarify that I do care.” She concluded by expressing concern over how the situation might unfold, saying, “Something I’m feeling, something I’m closer to feeling, is that I’m worried about how this is going to progress. And I really hope that it ends with the least amount of emotional, psychological, and physical pain possible for anybody.”

Ira’s remarks came after her cousin, actor Imran Khan, joined a student protest march in Mumbai earlier this week. Speaking to Brut India about his experience at the demonstration, Imran said he was deeply moved by the students’ determination to raise their concerns. “I was on the ground with all of these students. The average age over there must have been 16. These were kids who were 16, 17, 18 years old, genuinely raising their voice and highlighting something that affects them, that directly affects their today and their tomorrow. It was hard not to be moved by that, and to not feel empathy with a movement like that,” he said.

Elaborating on his support for the protests, Imran added, “What’s happening today is that a certain section of our Indian citizens, children of this country, are standing up and trying to draw attention to an issue that affects them. If not their cause, what are we supposed to pay attention to?” He further criticised the state’s response to the movement, saying, “The response from the establishment, and the response from society at large, is something that will be remembered by those who are affected by it. To club these kinds of voices and to group them under the umbrella of ‘the other’, this whole ‘anti-national’ thing which gets thrown around, to invalidate the opinion of other citizens and to deem that as counter to national interest, that in itself is creating a division.” Imran concluded by arguing that such rhetoric risks deepening divisions within the country. “You’re creating a division within the country itself. The idea that the state itself is the country and not its people, that is a problematic thing. The country is its people. The state is an appointed body, appointed by public demand.”

Ira’s statement also comes days after Aamir Khan addressed questions about education activist Sonam Wangchuk during a conversation at the 17th edition of the London Indian Film Festival. Responding to claims that his character in 3 Idiots was based on Wangchuk, Aamir said, “No. That’s not true actually. That is a misconception. I didn’t know about Mr Sonam at the time when we were doing the film 3 Idiots.”

He further explained, “Neither Raju and Abhijat, who were the two writers, nor I knew about Sonam. However, what Mr Sonam is doing doesn’t have to be based on the character of 3 Idiots for us to respect him. In fact, Mr Sonam himself has said that the character is not based on him. He has also clarified.” Speaking about Wangchuk’s then ongoing fast, Aamir had added, “I think all of us are very concerned for his health and life. We hope that he ends his fast.” The protests at Jantar Mantar, spearheaded by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), have intensified over the past few weeks after educator and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk began an indefinite hunger strike, which concluded on Thursday night. On Monday, July 20, as the Monsoon Session of Parliament commenced, students from across the country gathered in New Delhi and marched towards Parliament under the banner of the Chalo Sansad march.

## Jyotika backs CJP protest, demands Dharmendra Pradhan’s resignation: ‘Proud of you Gen Z’



After more than a month of silence, actor Jyotika has spoken out strongly on the ongoing CJP protests, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Taking to Instagram, the actor wrote, “Step down Dharmendra Pradhan. Resign.” Her statement comes amid the increasing number of protests across the country where

students of all age groups have banded together to demand the resignation of the Education Minister.

In her post, Jyotika wrote, “Step down Dharmendra Pradhan. Resign. I stand with the students and the future of our nation! I stand with accountability. I stand for a democratic India! I stand for a reformed education! Sonam Wangchuk, Abhijeet Dipke and Saurav Das, as mothers we want to raise our children to be like you. Proud of you, Gen Z, for being unfiltered. You have proved that together ‘WE’ are India. Thank you for breaking the pressure. Thank you for making us fearless, CJP. Jai Hind.” Jyotika’s statement comes days after Suriya’s fan club released a message saying the actor had requested fans not to celebrate his birthday as a mark of respect for students protesting across the country. According to the statement, Suriya urged fans to keep the focus on the concerns raised by students rather than on celebrations. With her post, Jyotika joins several South Indian actors, including Prakash Raj and Kamal Haasan, who have criticised the government’s handling of the issue and expressed support for the protesting students. The protest, spearheaded by the Cockroach Janta Party, has brought together students from across the country to demand reforms following the NEET paper leak. The movement gained further momentum after educationist and engineer Sonam Wangchuk joined the demonstration on June 28 and began an indefinite hunger strike, which ended on Thursday.

## Salman Khan says ‘jo darr gaya vo mar gaya’ amid backlash over CJP protest remarks

Salman Khan has once again grabbed headlines after sharing a cryptic post that many believe is aimed at those trolling him over his recent comments on the ongoing NEET paper leak protests. The backlash began after Salman expressed support for protesting students on Instagram. He urged them to return home after Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured strict action against those responsible for the paper leak. While the actor did not mention anyone directly, social media users were quick to link the post to the criticism he has been facing over the last two days.

A day prior, Salman had posted on social media where he requested Sonam Wangchuk to end his fast. He wrote, “The students are the top priority, educationally and security-wise, so they need not worry or have their parents worried for them. The Hon’ble Prime Minister has tweeted, and I am sure he will take strict action against all those responsible for this leak. So students, please go back to your parents and homes.” He also addressed activist Sonam Wangchuk, adding, “Sonam, it’s done, bro. Don’t extend this. Keep the spirit for another day if there be a need, which I doubt, and eat something. If you want, I’ll send you food from home.” A few hours later, it just so happened that Sonam actually ended his fast while in the hospital. However, the CJP protests are still continuing as students are demanding strict educational reforms. The remark quickly went viral and drew various opinions online. While some users appreciated Salman’s message, many mocked the actor. One user commented, “And if you need some books to read, let me know, I’ll send you.” Another wrote, “Not the plot twist I was expecting.” Several others posted, “You are scared,” while another remarked, “Camera ke saamne sher, system ke saamne...”

Two days earlier, Salman had shared a childhood photograph and voiced support for the students. Calling the paper leak a “very serious issue,” he praised students for protesting peacefully and said he was proud to see young people demanding a stronger education system. “It was



such a peaceful movement. I feel so sad that it had to take a violent turn. My heart goes out to the students and their families who were hurt,” he wrote. The actor also urged students not to let the movement become politicised, saying the issue should remain between students and the education system. He expressed confidence that the government would address their concerns and hoped India would eventually become a global education hub. The protests continue at Jantar Mantar, although activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 26-day fast after meeting BJP president JP Nadda, who assured him that the demands related to education reforms would be addressed. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a video promising the strictest punishment for those involved in paper leaks, including the use of fast-track courts.

## Shabana Azmi diagnosed with swine flu, to skip CJP protest on doctor’s advice



However, there is now concerning news for her admirers. Shabana has been diagnosed with swine flu and has been advised complete bed rest after developing a high fever. A statement issued by her team said, “Shabana ji was meant to go to the protest today but she has contracted swine flu with 102 fever and has been advised rest by the doctor.”

One of the first prominent voices from the film industry to publicly back the ongoing CJP protests was veteran actor Shabana Azmi. She expressed solidarity with the students and also joined the widely covered Chalo Sansad march, walking alongside protesters as they marched towards Parliament. Videos of her participation quickly went viral across social media, with many praising her presence at the demonstration.

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Shabana shared a post on Instagram where she shared that she has been asked to maintain isolation for the next five days. “My dear Mumbaiikars, I was meant to join your protest yesterday, but I’ve come down with H1N1 and need to remain in isolation for the next five days. Even so, I want to express my solidarity and appreciation. I’m receiving first-hand reports from the young people on the ground, many of them have taken part in a protest for the first time and have experienced how much their voice counts. I continue to be inspired by your courage and commitment and stand by you in solidarity.” On Monday, July 20, the veteran actor had joined thousands of citizens participating in the Chalo Sansad march towards Parliament. Later that day, she shared photographs on social media

showing herself alongside veteran actor Prakash Raj atop a truck surrounded by protesters. Welcoming reports that the government had finally agreed to hold talks with the students, Shabana stressed that the agitation remained “a peaceful protest,” rejecting allegations suggesting otherwise.

She also posted a video of herself walking through a sea of demonstrators. Sharing it, she wrote, “Climbing up with the help of young colleagues to the protest site at Jantar Mantar to demand reforms within our educational system and an overhaul of the entire system. Allocate 6 per cent of GDP to education, public health and women’s empowerment to measure the success of our country.” In addition, Shabana shared videos of herself reciting poems by her father, the celebrated poet Kaifi Azmi, saying that his verses reflected the price people often pay for speaking the truth. “Got an attack because of the tear gas”

Earlier, in an exclusive conversation with SCREEN, Shabana recalled suffering an asthma attack after tear gas was used during the protest march. “I am an asthmatic and got an attack because of the tear gas, but I had my pump with me so I am okay now. I was respectfully escorted to a nearby building and after catching my breath, I went right back and spoke to the students who had been lathi charged. Their spirit is unprecedented. My salaams to all of them,” she said.

Speaking about why she chose to join the demonstration, Shabana added, “I came to Jantar Mantar in solidarity with the students who have been on a hunger strike for over 20 days and whose health is now failing. What they are demanding is not sinister or evil. Students are asking for educational reforms to safeguard their future and an overhaul of the education system. Demanding that an allocation of 6 percent of the GDP for education is urgently required. Listen to them, give them an ear, and give them hope.” The protests at Jantar Mantar, spearheaded by the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), have intensified over the past few weeks after educator and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk began an indefinite hunger strike, which concluded on Thursday night. On Monday, July 20, as the Monsoon Session of Parliament commenced, students from across the country gathered in New Delhi and marched towards Parliament under the banner of the Chalo Sansad march. The march was stopped by the Delhi Police, leading to clashes that triggered widespread criticism and intense debate on social media. The protesters have been demanding a dialogue with the Central government and are seeking, among other demands, the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged NEET-UG paper leak.