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English Daily

Profits remain elusive for India's e-commerce sector

India's e-commerce industry presents a paradox: On the one hand, it is one of the world's fastest-growing markets, while on the other, it remains unprofitable despite years of rapid expansion. While the sector is not short of growth, capital or ambition, what it has struggled to build, cycle after cycle, is a business model in which growth and profit move in the same direction at the same time. The tough and increasingly transactional global trade environment, coupled with a still-unresolved domestic cash-burn habit, is forcing the industry's hand. The platforms most likely to emerge as durable winners will probably not be the ones that deliver the fastest or offer the deepest discount, but the ones that quietly figure out how to make each order, each return, and each customer relationship pay for itself. The latest 'India E-Commerce Report 2026' by Delhi-based policy think tank, Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP), argues that policy around India's online retail sector has focused excessively on tackling market concentration—a few dominant players controlling too much of the market— while overlooking the structural reasons why most e-commerce firms remain unprofitable despite years of rapid expansion. India's merchandise e-commerce market expanded from about \$14 billion in 2014 to \$120-130 billion in 2024, and is expected to reach \$300-350 billion by 2030, growing at an annual rate of 20-25%. However, despite exponential growth in the sector, profitability remains elusive. The challenge is less about market concentration and more about cost economics. In many ways, the country's e-commerce industry is at an inflection point.

Residents of Bodrai Street Living in Darkness

as the streetlights have remained non-functional. The locals have expressed strong resentment over the negligence of the Panchayat authorities."According to the residents, they have repeatedly lodged complaints with the Panchayat officials, but no action has been taken to resolve the issue. "We are paying taxes regularly, but we are not even getting basic amenities like streetlights," they said."With the on-going monsoon season, the entire street is plunged into darkness after 6:00 PM every day, making it extremely dangerous for residents. They alleged that venomous snakes frequently move around the area, forcing them to live in constant fear."The residents also pointed out that vacant spaces and roadsides are covered with overgrown weeds, making the locality resemble a forest. As a result, mosquito breeding has increased significantly, leading to health concerns. They further alleged that despite three months of the rainy season, the Panchayat has neither carried out bleaching operations nor sprayed insecticides to control mosquitoes."Women, children, and elderly people are afraid to step out of their homes at night due to the unsafe conditions. The residents questioned whether the authorities would respond only after a tragic incident or loss of life occurs."The locals accused the Panchayat officials of neglecting public issues and demanded that the authorities immediately restore the streetlights, clear the overgrown vegetation, conduct sanitation and mosquito-control measures, and resolve all the problems in Bodrai Street without further delay.

Ramu Rathod's "Taj Mahal" Song Grandly Launched Under Sai Teja Music Production No.1

collaborating with him on a wonderful folk song in the future."Vijay Polaki Master shared, "Sai Teja has been my childhood friend, and I wish him many more achievements. I am delighted to see the tremendous response the audience has shown towards this song."Producer Sai Teja Master expressed his gratitude, saying, "I sincerely thank the audience for showering immense love on our song 'Taj Mahal.' My heartfelt thanks to all the guests who attended the event and blessed our team with their presence."Singer Ramu Rathod said, "While recording 'Taj Mahal,' I was confident that the overwhelming response and the promo have made us extremely one for their love and support."said, "We are truly grateful for the audience has shown towards the event has motivated us to do even more."Guru Master added, "On behalf of Sai Teja Music Production No.1, I tend my heartfelt thanks to the presence of the film's team fans in large numbers, all wish success."Technical Crew: "Pro Raju Reddy Garimilla, Abhila Kadari"Music: Kalyan Rathod"Cinematography Jagati"Choreography: Guru M

PEOPLE FELT ASHAMED AFTER WATCHING RAHUL GANDHI IN LOK SABHA “

HYDERABAD, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):The people of India hang their heads in shame after watching the conduct of main opposition Congress party's leader Rahul Gandhi in Lok Sabha while participating in a debate on anti-paper leak bill, said state BJP senior leader and ex-MLA of Uppal NVSS Prabhakar here today."Addressing a press conference at state party office, he said the behavior of Rahul Gandhi, who is also leader of opposition in Lok Sabha, was such that it made all the people of India hang their heads in shame."Prabhakar accused Rahul Gandhi of lacking even the most basic understanding what should talk in Lok Sabha and a local sabha ((meeting outside Lok sabha). There was no meaning in his speech and as he used some " words" and style of his body language and behavior was testament to lowering the dignity of the house which was a supreme body in democracy. This was not first time , earlier also people of the country have observed his puerile behavior inside the Lok Sabha, he said."Launching a scathing attack on Congress party, Prabhakar said Rahul Gandhi who is now talking about integrity and honesty is on bail along with his mother Sonia Gandhi in a ED case and termed Congress means scams, corruption, communalism, conspiracy and leakage party."Raising question on foreign tour of Rahul Gandhi, he asked why Rahul Gandhi is going foreign countries when country faced crisis bet it be war between Russia-Ukrain, US-Iran and Covid period. The people of the country wanted to know what is the secret behind his visit to 207 times to a particular country and roaming with a particular family in restaurants and enjoying boat journey, he demanded.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
REVENUE (LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT

FORM-VI
(Preliminary Notification)

Under Section 19(1) of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act 30/2013) and as per the state rule 11(1)
Collector's File No. G1/2333/2017 Date: 24-07-2026
Land Acquisition Officer, File No. B/11/2026 Date: 23-06-2026
Gazette No. 63/2026 Date: 24-07-2026

In accordance with the orders of the Government of Telangana and the District Collector, Siddipet, this notification is issued under Section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. It is declared that the land specified below situated in Lingareddy (Siddipet) village, Siddipet (Urban) Mandal, Siddipet District, and measuring 2.3550 guntas is required for a public purpose; specifically, the construction of the Ranganayaka Sagar Reservoir as part of the Kaleshwaram Project. Vide Government Order No. 35, dated 30.06.2017, the Irrigation and Command Area Development Department granted an exemption regarding the Social Impact Assessment (public consultation) and food security requirements, in accordance with Section 10-A.

Therefore, a preliminary notification has been issued regarding the land details specifically an area of 3.07 guntas in Lingareddy (Siddipet village), Siddipet (Urban) Mandal, Siddipet District to initiate land acquisition proceedings for the persons listed below.

SCHEDULE

Village: Siddipet	Mandal: Siddipet (Urban)	District: Siddipet								
Sl No.	Sy. No.	Soil Type (Dry/Tari Land Type/Lease/Govt Inam)	Area to be Acquired	Name of the Graduate	Experiencer's Name	Nor	Sou	East	West	Type of Trees/number/Wells/Buildings Others
1.	270	Khushki Patta	0.06	G.Satyannarayana Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G.Satyannarayana Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	370	370	370	370	2 RCC Houses
2.	270	Khushki Patta	0.06	G.Rameshwar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G.Rameshwar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	370	370	370	370	
3.	270	Khushki Patta	0.06	G.Dayakar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G.Dayakar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	346	346	346	346	
4.	346	Khushki Patta	0.25	G.Satyannarayana Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G.Satyannarayana Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	346	346	346	346	1 Well 1 Borewell 500 Pipes
5.	346	Khushki Patta	0.25	G.Rameshwar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G.Rameshwar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	346	346	346	346	
6.	346	Khushki Patta	0.26	G. Dayakar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G. Dayakar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	346	346	346	346	
7.	351	Khushki Patta	0.07	G.Satyannarayana Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G.Satyannarayana Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	351	351	351	351	200 Man go Trees 2 Neem Trees
8.	351	Khushki Patta	0.07	G. Rameshwar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G. Rameshwar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	351	351	351	351	
9.	351	Khushki Patta	0.0750	G. Dayakar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	G. Dayakar Reddy S/o Narasimha Reddy	351	351	351	351	
2.3550										
This notification is issued under Section 11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, to facilitate the payment of appropriate compensation to the concerned landowners.										
The land plan and details are available for inspection at the offices of the District Collector (Siddipet), the Special Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition, Unit-1, Kaleshwaram Project), and the Revenue Divisional Officer (Siddipet). Interested persons may inspect these records during office hours on any working day. The Government of Telangana/District Collector (Siddipet) has authorized the Revenue Divisional Officer (Siddipet) and their staff to enter the aforementioned lands, conduct surveys, measure land parcels, excavate or mark boundaries, and undertake other necessary actions in connection with this land acquisition, as per Section 12 of the Act.										
In accordance with Section 11(4), regarding the land proposed for acquisition, no person shall undertake any transactions such as purchase, sale, or mortgaging concerning the lands specified in the notification without the permission of the District Collector, Siddipet, effective from the date of the preliminary notification's issuance.										
Under Section (15) any person having an interest in the aforementioned lands may submit written objections to the Land Acquisition Officer within 60 days of the issuance of the preliminary notification.										
Sd/- Tahsilidar, Siddipet (Urban) Mandal Sd/- Special Deputy Collector (Land Acquisition), Unit-1, Kaleshwaram Project, Siddipet Sd/- Additional Collector, Siddipet Sd/- District Collector, Siddipet										
DIPR RO.NO:540/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2026-27										

Approval to 51 Agenda Items in Just 45 Minutes

Democracy Has Been Mocked: BJP Floor Leader Juluri Roja Rani" Narsampet, July 30 (Indian Chronicle): BJP Floor Leader Juluri Roja Rani alleged that approving 51 agenda items in just 45 minutes during the Narsampet Municipal Council's general meeting, without any discussion, was against the spirit of democracy."In a statement issued on Thursday, she said that the Municipal Council, which functions using taxpayers' money, denied councillors an opportunity to discuss public issues and approved all agenda items without debate. She criticized the proceedings, stating that it was not a council meeting but a mockery of democracy."Roja Rani questioned the proposal to recruit 20 outsourcing daily-wage workers for sanitation, garbage collection, drain cleaning, and emergency civic administration, despite the fact that some workers who were earlier recruited as PH workers had already been shifted to other duties. She alleged that the recruitment was not intended to improve public services but was aimed at benefiting Congress councillors."She also questioned the allocation of ₹30 lakh for toilets and water supply facilities at the Narsampet crematorium. She pointed out that a borewell, water tank, and other basic facilities already exist at the site and said that repairs would have been sufficient. Instead, she alleged that public funds were being misused in the name of new development works."Accusing the municipal administration of corruption involving crores of rupees, Roja Rani said the BJP would bring the issues of the alleged illegal recruitments and the conduct of the council meeting to the notice of the District Collector as well as the Commissioner and Director of Municipal Administration. She asserted that the BJP would continue its fight against the misuse of public funds and would not remain silent on the issue.

Development is the Goal of Praja Palana:

Minister Sidhar Babu Lays Foundation Stones for 76.46 Crore Development Works in Uppal"UPPAL, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Telangana Minister for Information Technology, Industries and Legislative Affairs, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, said that development and public welfare are the primary objectives of the Congress government's Praja Palana. He stated that while the previous government had burdened the state with debt, the present Congress government is simultaneously repaying those debts and carrying out large-scale development works across Telangana."On Thursday, the Minister laid the foundation stones for development works worth ₹76.46 crore in various divisions of the Uppal Assembly constituency. The programme was attended by Uppal Congress Constituency In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, District Congress Committee President Vajresh Yadav, public representatives, Congress leaders and party workers."Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the government is committed to the all-round development of the Uppal constituency. He noted that substantial funds have been allocated for essential public infrastructure, including storm water drains, CC roads, footpaths, sports facilities, gyms, culverts and the development of cremation grounds."Among the major projects launched are the construction of storm water drains at multiple locations in Uppal Bhagayath at a cost of ₹5.80 crore, development of footpaths costing ₹5.50 crore, construction of a Multi-Sports Arena with an investment of ₹4.95 crore, expansion of the Bajrang Vyayamshala and establishment of a modern gym at Ramanthapur, and construction of an additional driveway to facilitate the shifting of the Uppal X Roads bus stop to the Uppal Bus Stand near V.T. Kaman."The Minister also inaugurated CC road works in Balakrishna Nagar, Lakshmi Srikanth Nagar, Ravinder Nagar, Kurma Nagar, Annapurna Colony, Satyanagar and Sabera Colony in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division."Foundation stones were also laid for several development projects in Beerappagadda, Chilukanagar, Kushaiguda, Cherlapally, Vempuguda and Kapra divisions, including storm water drains, culverts, road repairs, pipeline works, development of cremation grounds and construction of retaining walls."Sridhar Babu reiterated that the government is determined to provide every colony in Uppal with the necessary civic infrastructure and is implementing permanent solutions to address public issues and improve the quality of life."The programme was attended by MMC Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy, Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta, Deputy Commissioners of Uppal and Kapra, officials from various departments, Congress division presidents, former corporators, senior Congress leaders, party workers and a large number of local residents.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
FORM-VII

OFFICE OF THE SUB-COLLECTOR, KALLURU
PRELIMINARY DECLARATION
(See sub-rule(1) of the Act -25 and section -19(1) of the Act-30/2013)

District Gazette No.A3/62/2026 Dated: 28.07.2026
Collector File No. G1/75552/2024 Date: 22.07.2026
Sub-Collector/LAO Kalluru File No.A/1153/2026 Date: 09.07.2026

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Collector that a total of Acs 09.35 1/2 Gts. Land is required in Yathalakunta Village of Sathupalli Mandal Khammam District for public purpose, namely, SRLP (Seetha Rama Lift Irrigation Project) requisition submitted by the Executive Engineer, Irrigation Division No.5 Sathupalli, Khammam District.

Therefore declaration is made and it is notified that for the above said project in the Yathalakunta Village of Sathupalli Mandal Khammam District land measuring more or less Acs 09.35% Gts. of standard measurement whose detail description is as following is proposed for acquisition:-

SCHEDULE

Village: Yathalakunta	Mandal: Sathupalli	District: Khammam								
Sl No.	Sy. No.	Type of Land	Type of Title	Area under acquisition in Ac.gts	Name and Address of the interested person and Employer/ Possessor	Boundaries	Trees & Structures			
						East	North	South		
1	61/1	Dry	Patna	0.13	Vellapu Sreenu S/o Krishniah (Late)	61/2	62/1	61/1	61/103	Veepa: 6 Pala: 1 Nagari: 20 Thali: 6 Thunni: 2 Mara: 1 Vega: 1 Aare: 3
2	61/1	Dry	Patna	0.15	Vellapu Lami W/o Narasimham (Late)	61/2	62/2	61/1	61/103	Veepa: 5 Ravi: 2 Jana: 1 Thali: 10
3	61/1	Dry	Patna	0.08	Bayyannuthula Chenna Keshavulu Shiviah (Patadar)	61/2	62/1	61/1	61/103	Nagari: 10 Thali: 1 Vega: 5 Eetha: 2
4	61/1	Dry	Patna	0.01	Vallapu Laxman Rao S/o Yadahi (Late)	61/2	62/1	61/1	61/103	Jamali: 22 Udathi Nakoni: 1
Total						0.39				
5	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.01	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	61/1		
6	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.06	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	62/1		Jamali: 321 Thali: 1 Vega: 1 Mam: 2
7	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.07	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	62/1		Jamali: 160 Ravi: 1 Vega: 2
8	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.05	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	62/1		Thali: 3 Vega: 2 Eetha: 1
9	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.05	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	62/1		Jamali: 103
10	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.04	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	62/1		Jamali: 26 Mam: 1 Jeed: 1 Mam: 1 Vega: 1
11	62/1	Dry	Patna	0.16	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	61/2	62/3	62/1		Mam: Chethi: 1 Mam: 7 Thali: 4 Mukla: 1 Nagari: 1 Mam: 1
Total						1.05				
12	63/1	Dry	Patna	0.14	Modiyam Seetharamulu S/o Hanumanth (Patadar)	61/2	65/3	63/1		Jamali: 160 Vega: 7 Thali: 20 Thangegudi: 4 Ravi: 1 Gumpeni: 1 Mam: 2 Pala: 3
13	63/1	Dry	Patna	0.02	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	62/2	65/3	63/1		Pala: 1 Thali: 1 Seetharamulu: 1 Thangegudi: 1
14	63/1	Dry	Patna	0.02	Modiyam Venkata Narsiah S/o Nagulu (Patadar)	62/2	65/3	63/1		Jamali: 47
15	63/1	Dry	Patna	0.05	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	62/2	65/3	63/1		Jamali: 510 Fencing Stones: 50
Total						0.23				
16	65/1	Dry	Patna	0.13	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	63/2	65/3	64/1		
17	65/1	Dry	Patna	0.02	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o Satyanarayana (Patadar)	63/2	65/3	64/1		Jamali: 46 Eetha: 1 Thali: 3 Sindhi: 1
Total						0.15				
18	71/1	Dry	Patna	0.17	Vechha Krishna Prasada Rao S/o	65/2	65/3	64/1		Jamali: 1020 Thali: 2

Sd/- Sub-Collector
Kalluru
Division

Sd/- Addl.
Collector,
Khammam

Sd/- District
Collector,
Khammam

DIPR RO.NO:556/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2026-27

BANNALA PRAVEEN MUDIRAJ Visits Ailing BRS Activist Parnandi Nursing Rao



“UPPAL, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): BRS State leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj visited senior party activist and Chikanagar leader Parnandi Nursing Rao, who is

undergoing treatment at Aditya Hospital in Dammaiguda after suffering a minor health issue. “On learning about his illness, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj called on Nursing Rao at the hospital on Thursday and enquired about his health condition. He also interacted with the hospital doctors and management, requesting them to provide the best possible medical care.” Praveen Mudiraj said that Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy had also spoken to the hospital management and instructed them to ensure that all necessary medical facilities are provided to Nursing Rao. Later, he met the family members of Nursing Rao and offered words of comfort and encouragement. Expressing confidence that the senior activist would recover soon and return to normal life in good health, he assured the family that there was no need to worry. He further stated that MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj would always be available to extend every possible support and assistance.

Prajavani NGO Urges IT Minister Sridhar Babu to Protect Ramanthapur Chinna Cheruvu

“RAMANTHAPUR, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Representatives of the Prajavani voluntary organization on Thursday submitted a memorandum to Telangana IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, urging the government to protect and develop the Ramanthapur Chinna Cheruvu (Small Lake) into a public recreation and sports facility. “The memorandum was submitted during the Minister’s visit to the Uppal constituency to inaugurate various development works.” Speaking on the occasion, Prajavani representatives Yerram Srinivas, T. Ravinder Rao, and Raju Goud stated that the Ramanthapur Chinna Cheruvu, located under the Uppal Circle of the Medchal-Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation, originally covered 19.8 acres but has now been reduced to nearly 10 acres due to encroachments. They alleged that previous governments and officials had failed to protect the lake and appealed to the Minister to ensure its complete restoration by removing encroachments and constructing a permanent boundary wall. The organization also requested the government to complete the long-pending walking track around the lake and develop the area into a sports and recreational zone for local residents as well as students from government and private schools. The representatives further urged the government to prevent sewage from entering the lake and establish a system that allows only rainwater to replenish it. They said such measures would help improve



groundwater levels and restore the lake’s ecological balance.” Prajavani appealed to the Minister to direct the concerned authorities to take immediate steps for the protection and comprehensive development of Ramanthapur Chinna Cheruvu.

FORMER CHILUKANAGAR DIVISION CONGRESS PRESIDENT MULAKALAPALLI RAJESH MUDIRAJ

Thanks Minister Sridhar Babu and Parameshwar Reddy for Sanctioning 1.13 Crore for Development Works”

“UPPAL, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Former United Chilukanagar Division Congress President Mulakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj expressed his gratitude to District In-charge and State IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, and District Congress Committee President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav for sanctioning ₹1.13 crore towards various development works in Chilukanagar Division. “During the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the development projects, Rajesh Mudiraj met the leaders, presented them with bouquets, and felicitated them with shawls in appreciation of their efforts.” Speaking on the occasion, Rajesh Mudiraj said that under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, the people’s government is giving special priority to the development of the Uppal constituency. He noted that Parameshwar Reddy has been paying special attention to Chilukanagar Division by securing substantial funds to provide essential civic infrastructure and public amenities. “He appreciated the government for fulfilling promises made to various community organizations by sanctioning funds for development works. He further stated that the foundation laying for several new projects, keeping public needs in mind, reflects the government’s commitment to the welfare of the people.” Rajesh Mudiraj expressed confidence that under the guidance of Parameshwar Reddy, Congress leaders and party workers would continue working to transform Chilukanagar Division into a model locality in the coming



days. “He once again thanked Minister Sridhar Babu, Parameshwar Reddy, and DCC President Vajresh Yadav for their support. He also conveyed his appreciation to Congress leaders, office-bearers of various party wings, party workers, supporters, and the residents of the division for making the programme a success.” Among those who attended the event were Aakiti Agam Reddy, President of the Beerappagadda Division Congress Committee, Vinay Krishna Reddy, Malkajgiri Municipal Commissioner, Radhika Gupta, Zonal Commissioner, Congress leaders and workers from the united Chilukanagar Division, and local residents.

Suspect Sheet Opened Against Businessman for Employing Child Labour



“MEDIPALLY, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Medipally Police have opened a Suspect Sheet against a businessman for allegedly engaging in illegal activities by repeatedly employing child labour. According to the police, Bakaram Arun Mahesh (38), a resident of Gandhinagar, Uppal, runs a cement brick manufacturing unit under the name “Sri Balaji Cement Bricks” at Peerzadiguda. He has been booked in three separate cases for employing child labour—one in 2024, another in 2025, and the latest in July 2026. All three cases are currently pending before the court. Police stated that despite repeated legal action, the accused allegedly continued to employ child labour without changing his conduct. In view of his repeated involvement in similar offences, Medipally Police have opened a Suspect Sheet against him to closely monitor his activities and movements and to prevent him from engaging in further unlawful acts. The Station House Officer (SHO) of Medipally Police Station confirmed the opening of the Suspect Sheet.

Dell Expands Premium Laptop Portfolio in India



Hyderabad, July 30 (Indian Chronicle) : Dell Technologies has announced the launch of its premium laptop lineup in India, introducing the XPS 13, Dell 14S, Dell 16S, and Alienware 15. The announcement was made by Chris Koger, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Global Consumer and E-Commerce, Dell Technologies, in a statement released on Thursday. Speaking alongside Raj Kumar Rishi, Vice President and General Manager, Asia Pacific and Japan Consumer Business, and Anurag Arora, Senior Director and General Manager, India Consumer Business, Koger said India remains a key market for Dell Technologies. He added that the company is committed to bringing world-class technology to Indian consumers. The newly launched laptops will be available across the country through DellStore.com, Dell Exclusive Stores, and the company’s retail network spanning more than 400 cities.

Memorandum Seeks Vigilance Probe into Alleged Irregularities at Kushaiguda Vegetable Market



--Allegations of Illegal Shop Transfers, Unauthorized Businesses, Illegal Collections from Farmers, and Revenue Loss Submitted to Deputy Commissioner KAPRA, JULY 30 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Representatives of the Kushaiguda Welfare Association submitted a memorandum to the GHMC Kapra Circle Deputy Commissioner seeking a comprehensive Vigilance inquiry into alleged irregularities at the Kushaiguda Vegetable Market. The association urged the authorities to take strict action over alleged illegal transfer of shops, unauthorized commercial activities, illegal collections from farmers, violations of rules, and the resulting loss of government revenue. “According to the memorandum, the Kushaiguda Vegetable Market consists of 219 shops, including 149 vegetable shops, 59 shops selling pooja materials, and 11 non-vegetarian shops. Of the 149 vegetable shops originally allotted by the government, only about 30 are reportedly still occupied by the original beneficiaries, while the remaining 119 shops are alleged to have been illegally transferred or sold to others.” The association alleged that each shop is currently being sold for ₹25 lakh to ₹30 lakh. It further claimed that some individuals

have purchased between three and ten shops and are earning substantial rental income by leasing them out. It also alleged that several shops originally meant for vegetable trading are now being used for real estate, finance, settlement offices, and other unauthorized commercial activities. “The memorandum further stated that farmers bringing leafy vegetables and other produce to the market are allegedly being forced to pay illegal charges of ₹10 to ₹20 per person every day. According to farmers, such collections amount to nearly ₹1,500 to ₹2,000 daily.” The association also expressed concern over reports that more than ₹8 crore in shop rent arrears and over ₹2 crore in pending electricity bills have accumulated since the market was established. If these figures are accurate, they said, the government has suffered a significant financial loss. The association requested the authorities to verify the details of the original allottees, identify illegally transferred shops, cancel allotments made in violation of rules, revoke multiple shop allotments held by a single individual, remove unauthorized businesses and offices, transparently allot vacant shops to local unemployed youth, stop illegal collections from farmers, and recover pending rents and electricity dues. It also urged the Vigilance Department to conduct a detailed investigation into shop allotments, illegal transfers, multiple ownership of shops by individuals, unauthorized business activities, illegal collections from farmers, and outstanding rent and electricity dues, assess the financial loss caused to the government, and initiate legal action against those responsible. Speaking on the occasion, representatives of the Kushaiguda Welfare Association assured the authorities of their full cooperation in the proposed investigation. “Among those present were Panagatla Chakrapani Goud, Challa Prabhakar, Kodakandla Yadaiah Venkateshwarlu, Pandala Ganesh Goud, Dayanand, Pittala Raju Mudiraj, and other members of the Kushaiguda Welfare Association.

3rd Eco Sustain Expo & 5th IPEC Expo Begin at HITEX, Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 30: The 3rd Eco Sustain Expo & Conference and the 5th IPEC Expo & Conference commenced on Thursday at HITEX Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad. The three-day event, organised by HITEX, will continue till August 1, 2026. “The expo was inaugurated by K. Madhukar Babu Garu, Joint Director (MSME), Commissioner of Industries, Government of Telangana, Swathi Chalamalasetty, Director, Ace Urban Group & AM Green, C. S. S. Rao, IEDS & Joint Director, HOO, MSME, Rashmi Pimpale, CEO, RICH, Telangana, B. Ravi, Principal Director & Head, CIPET, Hyderabad, Prasanth Kumar Reddy Arani, National Director, FSME – Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises, in the presence of government officials, industry leaders and exhibitors. “The event brings together over 140 exhibitors showcasing advanced solutions in waste management, recycling, wastewater treatment, bio-energy, air pollution control, circular economy and sustainable industrial technologies. More than 12,000 business visitors from over 30 cities are expected to attend. “The conference includes keynote sessions, panel discussions and technical presentations on Green Manufacturing, Industry 5.0, ESG, Climate Resilience, Resource Efficiency



and environmental sustainability. The co-located 5th IPEC Expo & Conference further promotes collaboration among professionals from process industries, environmental engineering and industrial infrastructure. “The organisers said the event aims to accelerate the adoption of clean technologies, strengthen industry-government collaboration and support India’s vision of sustainable industrial growth.

Collector Directs Timely Completion of Young India Integrated Residential Schools as Per Schedule

“Five Young India Integrated Residential Schools with World-Class Facilities Under Construction in Khammam District” “School of Excellence Boys Gurukul at Raghunathapalem to Be Completed Within One Month” “Modern Infrastructure to Promote Education, Sports, and Technical Skills” Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle): “District Collector Divakar T.S. has directed officials to complete the construction of the Young India Integrated Residential Schools within the stipulated schedule while maintaining the highest quality standards. The Telangana Government is establishing these institutions with international standards to provide quality education and a brighter future for students. “On Thursday, the Collector inspected the ongoing construction of the Young India Integrated Residential School at YSR Nagar, Raghunathapalem, being built at an estimated cost of ₹200 crore. He reviewed the progress of hostels, academic blocks, dormitories, kitchen, dining hall, principal’s residence, staff quarters, and other infrastructure by conducting a detailed on-foot inspection. He instructed officials to ensure that there is no compromise on construction quality and that every work is executed strictly according to technical standards. “Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the State Government is constructing five Young India Integrated Residential Schools, one in each Assembly constituency of Khammam district, as a prestigious initiative. He directed the construction agencies to accelerate the pace of work and complete the Khammam constituency school as per the agreement. “He stated that the Government aims to provide quality education to future generations through these institutions, which are being developed with modern infrastructure to enable students to excel not only in academics but also in sports, technical education, and personality development. “The Collector instructed officials to develop all essential infrastructure, including internal roads, link roads,



drainage systems, drinking water supply, electricity, and greenery, ensuring a comfortable and student-friendly campus environment. “He further emphasized that construction agencies, engineering officials, and all concerned departments should work in close coordination to complete the project within the prescribed timeframe. Daily monitoring of work progress and strict adherence to quality standards should be ensured, and regular progress reports must be submitted. “Later, the Collector also inspected the construction of the School of Excellence (Boys) Gurukul School/College, being built by the Tribal Welfare Department at Raghunathapalem. He directed officials to complete the remaining works within one month and make the institution ready for students. “The inspection was attended by Raghunathapalem Tahsildar Swetha, engineering officials, education department officials, and other concerned officers.

Special Focus on the Welfare of the Homeless: DLSA Secretary P. Devi Manasa Visits Mother Teresa Shelter Home

“Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle): “Smt. P. Devi Manasa, Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), visited the Mother Teresa Shelter Home in Khammam and interacted with the inmates to enquire about their well-being. “During the visit, she inspected the facilities being provided at the shelter home and held discussions with the management. She advised them to take necessary steps to further improve the services and ensure better care and support for the residents. “Later, she created awareness among the inmates and the management about the various welfare schemes being implemented by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the availability of free legal aid. She emphasized that eligible beneficiaries should receive the benefits of NALSA schemes and assured that the District Legal Services Authority would extend free legal assistance to all those in need. “The programme was attended by the staff of the Mother Teresa Shelter Home.



Joint Collector Reviews HIV/AIDS Prevention Activities; Calls for Achieving NACO's 95-95-95 Targets



“Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“A meeting of the District AIDS Prevention and Control Committee and the District Coordination Committee was held on Thursday at the Collectorate Conference Hall under the chairmanship of Dr. P. Srija, Joint Collector (Local Bodies), to review the progress of HIV/AIDS prevention and control activities in the district and discuss strategies for achieving the 95-95-95 targets set by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO).”“The meeting was attended by Ms. Diksha Raina, CEO, Zilla Parishad, along with officials and representatives of various departments and partner organisations. The performance of NGOs, including K.C. Pullaiah Foundation, Janavani, YRG Link Workers Scheme, Sampoorna Suraksha Kendra, and Asha Positive People's Association, was reviewed. The Joint Collector issued guidelines to strengthen awareness campaigns and improve coordination among stakeholders.”“It was noted that the district has achieved 93% of the first "95" target. To achieve the remaining target, more than 200 additional people living with HIV need to be identified, diagnosed, and linked to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). Officials were instructed to effectively utilise Mobile ICTC services and organise HIV screening camps in coordination with Primary Health Cen-



tres (PHCs), Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, and partner NGOs.”“The meeting also reviewed the performance of ICTC, PPTCT, DSRC, DTC, and ART Centres. Officials were directed to ensure timely HIV testing, counselling, treatment, and follow-up services. Special emphasis was laid on ensuring that every registered ART beneficiary regularly receives medication. Staff were also instructed to conduct periodic viral load testing for all eligible ART beneficiaries to ensure viral suppression, thereby improving treatment outcomes and preventing the spread of HIV.”“To achieve the remaining first "95" target under the National AIDS Control Programme, the Joint Collector instructed Dr. L. Praveen, Additional District Medical & Health Officer (A&L), to regularly review NGO activities, provide timely feedback, strengthen coordination among all stakeholders, and implement effective strategies.”“The meeting was attended by Dr. Surender, ART Nodal Officer; Dr. B. Kiran Kumar, Deputy Medical Superintendent; Dr. Mohan Rao, Senior Medical Officer; Dr. Nivedita, District Tuberculosis Officer; Mr. Shankar, representatives of partner NGOs; and officials and staff of ICTC, PPTCT, DSRC, DTC, ART, DAPCU, District Mass Media Unit, and Hospital Services Coordination Unit.”“Issued by:”District Medical & Health Officer”Khammam District

Cowardly Act to Demolish CPI Platform: City Secretary S.K. Janimiah

“Such Acts Are Against the Spirit of Democracy, Says CPI Leader”“Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“Khammam Urban: CPI Khammam City Secretary S.K. Janimiah strongly condemned the demolition of the Communist Party of India (CPI) platform at YSR Nagar Colony in the city's Eighth Division, describing it as a cowardly act and an attack on democratic values.”“According to CPI leaders, unidentified persons allegedly demolished the party platform during the midnight hours on Wednesday. Upon receiving information, S.K. Janimiah, AISF District Secretary Itikala Ramakrishna, AITUC Auto Stand Vice-President Sheikh Akram, Khanapuram Haveli Assistant Secretary Amudala Venkanna, and other party leaders visited the spot, inspected the site, and interacted with local residents to gather details about the incident.”“Speaking on the occasion, Janimiah said that the demolition of the CPI platform was highly condemnable and contrary to the spirit of democracy. He urged the Government and police authorities to identify those responsible for the incident and take stringent legal action against them.”“He also appealed



to the public not to indulge in activities that could create tension among people and called upon everyone to maintain peace and communal harmony. Janimiah further demanded that the Government take immediate steps to prevent such incidents from recurring and reconstruct the CPI platform at the same location where it was demolished.”

Village Federation Buildings Should Become Centres for Women's Empowerment

Sarpanch Kamadana Praveen”“Nelakondapalli, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“Tirumalapuram Gram Panchayat Sarpanch Kamadana Praveen said that Village Federation Buildings should serve as centres for the empowerment and socio-economic development of women.”“On Thursday, he laid the foundation stone for the new Village Federation Building to be constructed in Tirumalapuram village of Nelakondapalli mandal. Speaking on the occasion, he appealed to all sections of society to extend their cooperation for the development of the village, rising above political differences.”“He stated that the Gram Panchayat was taking up developmental works in a phased manner with the support of the elected body and village elders. He expressed hope that the Village Federation Buildings being constructed in every village would help strengthen women's self-help groups and enhance their economic opportunities.”“The Sarpanch also urged people to take preventive measures against seasonal diseases and advised them to maintain cleanliness in and around their homes to



ensure a healthy environment.”“The programme was attended by Panchayat Raj Assistant Engineer Prasad, Panchayat Secretary Suresh Antony, ward members Vijay Babu, Ramadevi, Keerthana, village elders, and others.

NCDC Consultant Dr. Sam John Appreciates Effective Implementation of National Health Programmes in Khammam

“Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“Dr. Sam John, Consultant with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and a member of the State Public Health Outbreak Team, visited Khammam district on Thursday and reviewed the implementation of various National Health Programmes.”“During a review meeting held at the District Medical & Health Office, he conducted a comprehensive assessment of the progress of 10 National Health Programmes being implemented across the district.”“Later, Dr. Sam John visited the Government General Hospital (GGH), Khammam, and the District Public Health Laboratory (IDSP Lab), where he inspected laboratory facilities, diagnostic procedures, and official records. He also visited the Mamillagudem Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) to verify the effective implementation of National Health Programmes at the grassroots level.”“Special Appreciation for the Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD) Programme”“Expressing satisfaction over the district's performance, Dr. Sam John commended the Medical and Health Department for the efficient implementation of all National Health Programmes. He particularly appreciated the successful execution of the Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD) Programme, recognizing the district's efforts in preventing vaccine-preventable diseases through effective immunization services.”“He also advised officials to continuously improve key programme indicators and offered valuable suggestions to further strengthen public health services and programme implementation.”“The review meeting and field visits were attended by Dr. I. Mothya, IDSP Programme Officer; Dr. Arunadevi, NCD Programme Of-



ficer; Dr. E. Sai Kumar, In-charge Epidemiologist; K. Krishnamohan, District Data Manager (DDM); A. Satish, MPHS (M); and other officials and staff of the Medical & Health Department.”“Issued by:”District Medical & Health Officer (DM&HO)”Khammam District

Public loots apples after truck overturns in Mahabubabad

Mahabubabad: Residents of Matedu village in the district and passersby had a field day as they looted a truck laden with apples after it lost control, overturned and fell into a roadside trench.

Awareness Is the Key to Preventing Human Trafficking: She Team & AHTU Inspector Shiva Nagula Srinivas

“Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“On the occasion of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons observed on July 30, an awareness programme was jointly organised by Action for Integrated Development (AID) and the Police Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) at the Government Junior College, Nayabazar, Khammam.”“Addressing the students, She Team and Anti-Human Trafficking Unit Inspector Shiva Nagula Srinivas said that awareness is the most effective weapon to prevent human trafficking. He expressed concern that 26% of all human trafficking victims are children, while 71% are women and adolescent girls. He pointed out that unemployed youth, economically weaker sections, and migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.”“He stressed the need for extensive awareness campaigns in villages, schools, and community meetings and educated students through short skits on how traffickers operate and how people can stay alert. He also advised the public to immediately contact Dial 100 or the National Cyber Crime Helpline (1930) in case of online fraud, harassment, or any suspicious activity.”“Railway Protection Force (RPF) Inspector Suresh Goud urged students to use their time productively instead of spending excessive time on social media. He encouraged them to understand their parents' aspirations, focus on education, and build successful careers.”“Child Welfare Committee Chairperson Bharathi Rani said that education is the foundation for becoming responsible citizens and achieving success in life. She explained the services provided by the Child Welfare Committee and advised children to contact the Child Helpline 1098 whenever they face any difficulty.”“Speaking on the



occasion, AID District Coordinator K. Srinivas said that the United Nations has observed July 30 as the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons since 2013. He warned that human trafficking is increasingly linked to online scams, fake job offers, fraudulent overseas employment opportunities, cybercrime, and cryptocurrency scams. He noted that human trafficking has become a global criminal industry worth nearly USD 236 billion annually, emphasizing the seriousness of the issue. He urged everyone to remain vigilant and immediately report any suspicious activities to the police.”“The programme was attended by AHTU officials Uday Bhaskar, She Team Constable Rukmini, AID members Ramdas, Ravichandra, Ravindra, Bhaskar, Para Legal Volunteer Madhavi Latha, the In-charge Principal of Government Junior College, Nayabazar, teaching staff, and students.

Major Accident Averted as Tipper Hits Car; Four Escape with Minor Injuries

“Khammam/Nelakondapalli, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“A major road accident was narrowly averted on Thursday after a tipper lorry collided with a car near Rayagudem village in Nelakondapalli mandal of Khammam district. Owing to the alertness and quick thinking of the car driver, four occupants escaped with only minor injuries.”“According to the victims, the car was carrying former Cheruvumadharam Society Chairman Eevuri Srinivasa Reddy, Congress Village Committee President Yadavalli Srinivas, T. Govinda Rao, and the driver, Megalali, who were travelling from Cheruvumadharam village to Chilakallu Police Station in Andhra Pradesh in connection with a panchayat.”“When the vehicle reached the outskirts of Rayagudem village, a tipper lorry from Vijayawada that was travelling from Buddharam towards Rayagudem reportedly took a wrong turn towards the Kattukacharam Road. Realising the mistake, the tipper driver suddenly reversed the vehicle without noticing the car approaching from behind.”“The car driver acted swiftly by steering the vehicle to the roadside, preventing a serious collision. However, the rear portion of the car was struck by the reversing tipper, causing damage to the vehicle. All four occupants were



shocked by the impact but escaped with minor injuries.”“Local residents immediately responded to the incident and handed over the tipper vehicle to the Nelakondapalli Police Station for further investigation.

BC Youth Urged to Avail Free UPSC Civil Services–2027 Long-Term Coaching: Collector Divakar T.S.

“Eligible BC Candidates Asked to Apply Within Deadline”“Collector Unveils Publicity Posters and Pamphlets for Free UPSC Coaching Programme”“Khammam, July 30 (Indian Chronicle):”“District Collector Divakar T.S. has called upon eligible Backward Classes (BC) youth to make the best use of the free long-term coaching programme for UPSC Civil Services Examination–2027 being offered by the State Government and strive to achieve their dream of joining the country's premier civil services.”“On Thursday, the Collector unveiled wall posters and pamphlets relating to the coaching programme at the Collector's Chamber. The programme is being organised by the TG BC Study Circle, Khammam.”“Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that talented youth should actively participate in public administration for the development of society. He stated that the State Government, through the BC Welfare Department, is providing completely free UPSC Civil Services coaching to support BC students.”“He said the programme would particularly benefit talented youth from rural and economically weaker backgrounds aspiring to join prestigious services such as IAS, IPS, and IFS. Selected candidates will receive free coaching from August 24, 2026, to May 2027, along with quality classroom instruction, study material, library facilities, current affairs material, expert faculty guidance, regular tests, mock examinations, personality development sessions, and interview guidance.”“The Collector said that 150 candidates will be selected for the programme. Of these, 100 candidates will be selected through an online screening test, while the remaining 50 candidates will be chosen from those who have already qualified in the UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Examination.”“He further announced that selected candidates would receive a monthly stipend and a one-time book grant, enabling them to focus entirely on their preparation for the Civil Services Examination.”“The Collector



instructed officials to conduct extensive awareness campaigns, especially in rural areas, so that all eligible students are informed about the opportunity. He reiterated that financial constraints should never become a barrier to talent and encouraged youth to work hard with determination to achieve their goals.”“He informed that applicants must belong to the BC category and possess a degree from a recognised university. The last date for online applications is August 7, 2026. The online screening test will be held on August 16, results will be announced on August 19, certificate verification will commence on August 21, and classes will begin on August 24, 2026. He advised candidates to visit the official TG BC Study Circle website for detailed eligibility criteria, selection procedure, and application guidelines and submit their applications before the deadline.”“The programme was attended by District BC Welfare Officer G. Jyothi, BC Study Circle Director Gona Srilatha, District Employment Officer Madhavi, SC Study Circle Director Venkat, officials of the BC Welfare Department, representatives of the TG BC Study Circle, faculty members, and staff.

Telangana should ensure uninterrupted supply of urea during Kharif season: MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra

Warangal, July 30 (Indian Chronicle): Stating that agriculture is the backbone of the state's economy, BRS Parliamentary Party leader and Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravichandra has urged the central government to ensure timely and uninterrupted supply of urea and other fertilizers to farmers in Telangana during the ongoing Kharif season.”“Speaking during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, he recalled that there was a severe shortage of urea in Telangana during the last Kharif season, due to which farmers had to stand in long queues for hours to get fertilizers. While many farmers returned empty-handed, others lost consciousness due to waiting for a long time, and some even lost their lives in stampede-like situations. He appealed to the center to take preventive measures to prevent such incidents from recurring.”“Ravichandra said that last year's experience has revealed serious shortcomings in planning, coordination and timely distribution of fertilizers. He said that despite repeated warnings from farmers' associations and public representatives, farmers have been facing serious difficulties due to lack of timely arrangements.”“He said that BRS President Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao had repeatedly requested the Central

Government to release additional urea to Telangana. He said that the situation has improved somewhat with the release of additional stocks by the Centre as per these requests. He welcomed the timely response of the Centre in that context.”“With the current Kharif season in full swing, the MP stressed that it is more important to take preventive measures than to react after a shortage occurs. He said that farmers should not waste their valuable time by leaving their fields and standing in queues for fertilizers. He said that availability of urea is very crucial during the sowing and growth stages of the crop. He warned that even a slight delay can have a negative impact on crop yields and farmers' income.”“Ravichandra urged the central government to closely monitor the demand and supply of urea in Telangana and ensure that appropriate allocations are made based on the actual needs at the field level. He also called for effective coordination with the state government to ensure that the fertilizers reach each district without delay.”“He suggested that the state government should strengthen its fertilizer distribution system, maintain adequate buffer stocks at the district and mandal levels, prevent black marketing and illegal stockpiling, and ensure that urea is available to farmers without any inconvenience.”“

Mumbai model Rhiya Ahir, who stopped police van with bare hands, alleges online ‘slut-shaming’, bullying



GNS News Agency,,July 30

Rhiya Ahir blocks police van during NEET protestRhiya Ahir has filed a police complaint, alleging defamation, 'slut-shaming' and online harassment post her viral video | Source: Instagram/Cockroach Janta PartyRhiya Ahir, the 27-year-old Mumbai model who stood in front of a police van escorting detained Shivaji Park protesters, has approached the Mumbai Police, alleging sustained harassment, bullying, 'slut-shaming' and defamation on social media after her images and videos went viral during the protests in the city.One of the defining faces of the Shivaji Park protest, Rhiya Ahir also alleged in her complaint that she has been 'slut-shamed' and fears it could affect her real life, her family's safety and reputation.

In her complaint, Rhiya Ahir has accused several so-

cial media content creators of falsely claiming that she produces and sells adult content through her social media accounts.Denying these allegations, Rhiya said her bank account is not linked to any such platform and claimed the allegations were being deliberately circulated to tarnish her reputation.She has urged the Mumbai Police to register an FIR and initiate legal action against those circulating such “defamatory” claims on social media.Deputy Commissioner of Police Datta Nalawade has confirmed receiving Rhiya Ahir’s complaint. It has been forwarded to the MIDC police station for verification. She is also expected to approach the Maharashtra Cyber Police regarding the circulation of defamatory content against her.“Her online complaint has been received and forwarded to the local police station for verification of the facts,” Nalawade said.Rhiya Ahir, aka Rhiya Yadav, became an overnight symbol of resistance after a video went viral showing her, in a rain-soaked hoodie, stopping a police van with her bare hands during the Shivaji Park protest in support of the Cockroach Janta Party-led (CJP) demonstrators in New Delhi’s Jantar Mantar. The van was carrying young protesters detained after demonstrations against leaks in most-competitive entrance exams, in Mumbai. Since the NEET paper leak in May, the CJP movement, started as a political satirical on social media, has grown beyond police complaints, drawing thousands of youngsters, professionals and families onto the streets.The protest was withdrawn on Saturday, July 25, after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned as Union education minister.

‘Our kids will spread the word’: Delhi transporters turn to Gen Z for E20 fuel protest

GNS News Agency,,July 30

To build momentum for their August 4 protest march to Parliament against ethanol-blended petrol, Delhi’s transporters are turning to an unlikely ally: Gen Z. They plan to enlist their children to create reels, amplify their message on social media, and rally support among young transporters and taxi drivers for the agitation.Sanjay Samrat, president of the Delhi Taxi Tourist Transporters and Tour Operators Association, said the idea emerged after the student-led protests at Jantar Mantar against the NEET paper leak.

“After the students’ protest (at Jantar Mantar), we saw the support they mobilised through the internet. Many of us transporters are old and not tech-savvy... I don’t know how to use Instagram and post videos online. So, we decided to ask our children to spread the word among young transporters and drivers active on social media,” Samrat said.He further said the Delhi Police has called them for a meeting on Monday to discuss the protest. “The aim is not to create a ruckus. Our protest is against the forcible implementation of ethanol-blended petrol without giving the public, especially those with older vehicle models not fit for such fuel, an option.”Samrat also stressed that they are not against the government. “We are raising an important issue which matters not only to us, but to the citizens of the entire country who drive and use a car. So, once we get permission from the police, we will start a campaign on social media and take help from the younger generation.”Bobby Jitendra, a member of the association, said the group was wary after seeing videos of people allegedly being assaulted during

the Jantar Mantar protest and wanted to secure permission before taking to the streets.“If we use social media, we can mobilise support within five or six days. But we want to follow the proper process first so that no one suffers any loss,” he said.A key demand of the association is an independent review of the E20 ethanol blending policy.Jitendra said, “Instead of converting entire fuel stations to ethanol, the government should install one or two ethanol dispensers. Those who want pure petrol or diesel should be able to buy it, while those who want ethanol-blended fuel can choose that...”Another member, Manish Thakur, who runs a luxury rental car service, claimed E20 petrol had reduced engine performance and mileage in some vehicles. “Why were we paying Rs 170 per litre for a blended petrol?” he asked.Referring to a recent court case involving a consumer and a car manufacturer, he said it raised questions about the readiness of vehicles for ethanol-blended fuel. “We are told new vehicles are compatible with ethanol-blended fuel. If that is so, why did the court direct the company to replace the vehicle? That suggests problems still exist.”The association claimed an internal survey found only four or five petrol pumps in Delhi selling pure petrol. It said its union represents more than 1.5 lakh transporters, including truck operators, taxi drivers and car owners.Samrat said the association would not seek political backing for the protest. “We will not seek support from any political party or approach the Cockroach Janta Party. We want to hold a peaceful protest and will soon give a call on social media to create campaigns, requesting people to join in large numbers against ethanol-blended petrol.”

Delhi cab driver robbed, killed for ‘easy money’; three arrested

GNS News Agency,,July 30

The victim, Vijay Kumar, a resident of West Vinod Nagar, was found with multiple stab injuries inside his Maruti WagonR near Road No. 57 in Krishna Nagar on July 23. He was rushed to Dr Hedgewar Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.The victim, Vijay Kumar, a resident of West Vinod Nagar, was found with multiple stab injuries inside his Maruti WagonR near Road No. 57 in Krishna Nagar on July 23. He was rushed to Dr Hedgewar Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

A 40-year-old cab driver was stabbed to death allegedly by four people, including a teenager, in East Delhi’s Krishna Nagar last week. Police said the accused were intoxicated and targeted the driver in a bid to make easy money.Police said two men have been arrested and the juvenile has been apprehended, while the fourth accused is on the run.The victim, Vijay Kumar, a resident of West Vinod Nagar, was found with multiple stab injuries inside his Maruti WagonR near Road No. 57 in Krishna Nagar on July 23. He was rushed to Dr Hedgewar Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.Police registered an FIR under murder charges at Krishna Nagar police station and launched an investigation.Within 24 hours, teams from Krishna Nagar police station and the Shahdara district’s Special Staff cracked the “blind murder” case using CCTV footage, call detail records (CDRs), technical evidence and

local intelligence.The arrested accused have been identified as Ayan (20), Sahil (19), and a 17-year-old juvenile. Police said raids are on to arrest the fourth accused, Aman.During questioning, police said the accused claimed they had planned to rob a cab driver for money after consuming liquor on July 23.According to police, Aman allegedly arranged a knife. The group then booked a Rapido cab to V3S Mall using Ayan’s mobile phone.olice said near the Chitra Vihar red light, the accused allegedly stabbed the driver multiple times before fleeing with the cab. Midway, they dumped the body.Police said they lost control of the WagonR and rammed into another vehicle, whose occupants gave chase. Scared that they might be caught, they abandoned the vehicle near East Azad Nagar Metro Station and fled.Police have recovered the alleged murder weapon, blood-stained clothes of the accused, the blood-stained WagonR, mobile phones and other incriminating material.Police said Ayan was previously found involved in four criminal cases, including robbery and snatching, while Sahil had earlier been booked in a snatching case.Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Rajendra Prasad Meena said the case was solved through a combination of technical analysis and field investigation.“We apprehended three accused, identified the fourth accused and recovered the alleged murder weapon along with other crucial evidence. Efforts are underway to arrest the remaining accused,” Meena said.

Crude oil futures tumble nearly 8 per cent on easing West Asia tensions

New Delhi: Crude oil futures tumbled nearly 8 per cent to Rs 7,939 per barrel on Monday amid hopes of easing geopolitical tensions in West Asia, triggering a selloff in global oil markets and dragging domestic prices lower.On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), crude futures for August delivery slumped Rs 665, or 7.73 per cent, to Rs 7,939 per barrel in a business turnover of 12,994 lots.

The September contract also tumbled Rs 537, or nearly 7 per cent, to Rs 7,710 per barrel in a business turnover of 1,865 lots.Traders said the sharp decline mirrored losses in global crude oil markets after Washington and Tehran signalled a pause in military escalation.“MCX crude oil futures have continued their downward momentum in the domestic market on Monday amid easing concerns over supply disruptions in West Asia,” said Aamir Makda, Commodity & Currency Analyst, Technical Research, Choice Broking.In the international markets, Brent crude futures for September delivery fell USD 7.66, or 8 per cent, to USD 89.12 per barrel on the Intercontinental Exchange.West

Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude for September delivery declined USD 6.93, or nearly 8 per cent, to USD 82.38 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.“Crude has fallen sharply, with Brent dropping as much as 7 per cent to below USD 90 and WTI nearing USD 85 per barrel, after the US quietly suspended its strike campaign late on Friday and Iran indicated over the weekend that it would also halt its attacks as long as Washington does the same,” said Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research, Kotak Securities.

However, he cautioned that the latest selloff reflects expectations of de-escalation rather than a lasting resolution.

Tanker movements through the Strait of Hormuz remain well below normal. Gulf crude loadings are yet to recover, and Houthi attacks on Saudi oil installations continue to threaten shipping through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, suggesting the risk at the second chokepoint remains high, Banerjee added.

Punjab developing backup for Centre’s Sarathi portal to avoid driving licence delays



GNS News Agency,,July 30Punjab is developing software to act as a backup for the Centre’s Sarathi Parivahan Portal after receiving repeated complaints from districts that driving tests had to be cancelled after the Sarathi server either slowed down or became unavailable.Punjab Transport Minister Harpal Singh Cheema told The Indian Express last week that the initiative was aimed at ensuring citizens were not made to suffer because of technical glitches beyond the state’s control.

“People have faced a great deal of inconvenience whenever the Sarathi server goes down. This initiative is aimed at resolving that problem. We are confident it will succeed and benefit not only Punjab but could eventually help other states as well,” Cheema added.The software, being developed by the Punjab government’s IT wing after obtaining approval from the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, is expected to be ready within the next fortnight. After real-time testing, it is likely to be rolled out at

automated driving test tracks across Punjab in August.Since Sarathi is the nationwide platform used by transport departments for issuing learner’s licences, driving licences and conducting automated driving tests, heavy traffic on the central server has at times affected services across states.There are so many people logging into the app at any given time. This makes it overloaded. We had to think of a way,” said a transport department official.He said Punjab took up the matter with the Centre after repeated disruptions. The state then proposed developing an auxiliary application that would work alongside Sarathi rather than replacing it.

The official explained that the software will receive data directly from sensors installed at automated driving test tracks and record a candidate’s progress even without a live connection to the central Sarathi server. The information will be securely stored in a digital capsule and synchronised with Sarathi once connectivity is restored.He said this would ensure that driving tests continue uninterrupted even if the central server goes down, eliminating the need to cancel appointments midway because of technical glitches.The application has also been designed to maintain the integrity of the automated testing process. Officials said the captured data cannot be modified at any stage, ensuring there is minimal human intervention.Currently, whenever the Sarathi server remains unavailable for an extended period, driving test appointments are automatically rescheduled, often by a week or more. In some cases, transport authorities have had to temporarily extend the validity of learner’s licences and driving licences to prevent inconvenience to applicants.

‘Save some Ladki Bahin money, don’t spend it on shopping’: Maharashtra Minister

GNS News Agency,,July 30

Months after the Maharashtra Government disqualified 92 lakh women from its flagship Ladki Bahin Yojana, Women and Child Welfare Minister Aditi Tatkare said Sunday beneficiaries should refrain from spending the monthly assistance given to them on shopping.The scheme provides Rs 1,500 every month to women aged 21 to 65 years from families with an annual income below Rs 2.5 lakh. Government employees, income tax payers and beneficiaries of certain other welfare schemes are excluded.“The beneficiaries should not spend all the Rs 1,500 they receive entirely on shopping, but rather save a portion of that money,” Tatkare said at an event in Washim district.“We are telling all the beneficiary women not to spend all Rs 1,500 on shopping. Save a few hundred rupees in self-help groups (SHGs), banks, or cooperative societies, and use them wisely. This will benefit you in the future.”Tatkare said traders constantly ask them when the money for the Ladki Bahin scheme will be disbursed.“Traders are actually more inquisitive about this than the women themselves. Once, I asked a trader if anyone in his family was a beneficiary. To that, the trader replied, ‘The day the Ladki Bahin money is credited, the market is jam-packed with activity the very next day,’” she said.A large-scale verification drive has led to the removal of more than 92 lakh beneficiaries from Maharashtra’s flagship Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, according to government records examined by The

Indian Express. The figure is significantly higher than the roughly 80 lakh exclusions the state government has publicly acknowledged, meaning that nearly four out of every 10 women enrolled in the scheme have now been dropped.The biggest share of deletions — close to 62 lakh cases — was attributed to beneficiaries not completing the mandatory electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC) process.

The verification exercise also identified thousands of ineligible recipients, including those whose household income exceeded the prescribed limit, government employees, women already receiving assistance under other welfare programmes, applicants above the eligible age, and nearly 29,000 male beneficiaries who had been enrolled despite the scheme being intended for women.The decision came under fire from Opposition parties, which alleged that the Maharashtra Government had taken women voters for a ride.Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) leader Rohini Khadse said the expenditure on the Ladki Bahin scheme has increased from Rs 26,197.78 crore to Rs 33,697 crore, an increase of about Rs 7,500 crore.“This might have forced the government to cut down the names. However, it is not right to deprive women of their benefits just to cut down expenses. This is like backtracking on its promises by making cuts to a scheme initiated for the financial empowerment of women,” Khadse, the chief of the NCP(SP)’s women’s wing, said.

Ahmedabad village turns into island as Bhogavo river overflows in rain

Just a day after massive operations to rescue people from floodwaters in Dholka, Bavla, and Viramgam ended, another taluka in Gujarat’s Ahmedabad district witnessed flooding. Vanitalav Bhal village in Dholera taluka has turned into a veritable island after the Bhogavo river overran its banks on the intervening night between Sunday and Monday.The overflowing of the Bhogavo river caused flooding in Dholera, while the overflowing of the Sabarmati river and sheet flows from North Gujarat caused flooding in the three other talukas.

On Monday morning, the Ahmedabad rural police reached this small, nondescript village on the southern bank of the west-to-east flowing Bhogavo river, which is near the Ahmedabad-Dholera Expressway and 100 km from Ahmedabad city.Superintendent of Police Om Prakash Jat said, “Due to heavy rain, the water flow in the Bhogavo river from upstream into Vanitalav Bhal village of Dholera taluka is continuously increasing, as a result of which the village has lost contact with the surrounding areas and the village has turned into an island-like situation.”The police, in coordination with the district administration and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), are carrying out rescue operations to move people trapped in the village to safety.“In addition, the police have closed the road due to the pres-

ence of Bhogavo river water on the approach road towards Anandpur and Buranpur villages. Continuous patrolling and surveillance is being maintained to ensure that no person passes through the water in a dangerous manner,” he said.The police appealed to people not to use closed roads, not to attempt to enter rivers or waterlogged areas, and to rely only on official information and follow the instructions of the police and district administration.Dholera is home to the Special Investment Region, India’s first planned greenfield smart city and a massive industrial node on the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC).Around 10,000 people in Ahmedabad district have reportedly been affected by flooding since July 23, when heavy rain inundated large parts of three northern and western talukas. More than 2,400 people received aid in the Gallops Industrial Park (in the Bavla-Changodar region), where officials reported that around 1,000 people were rescued and 1,400 others were relocated to safety on Saturday. More than 400 people were rescued in Dholka town and its surrounding villages.Two major highways closed since July 23—the stretch of Ahmedabad-Rajkot NH47 between Ahmedabad and Bagodara and the stretch of the Ahmedabad-Viramgam SH17 between Sanand and Viramgam—were opened late on Saturday night and Sunday morning as floodwater receded towards Nalsarovar and rain stopped.

‘Protesters insulting Lord Ram’: Right-wing outfit chief slaps student over Jantar Mantar protest

Even as the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar has wound up, a video has gone viral showing the president of a right-wing outfit allegedly harassing two young participants and slapping one of them.The Delhi Police said it had not received any complaint regarding the incident but were verifying the authenticity of the video.The man was identified as Satyam Pandit, a resident of Ghaziabad who claims to be the president of the Rashtira Hindu Veer Sena. The two students were from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. One of them, Ayush, told local media in Bareilly that he wanted action to be taken against the accused.Ayush said he had been staying at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in Delhi and had been participating in the protest since July 23. He said that while he and his friend were walking to the protest site, they were harassed and assaulted. “A car stopped near us. A person sitting inside the vehicle abused us and slapped my friend. Another occupant was recording the video,” he said.Speaking to The Indian Express, Pandit said, “The video is from July 24... near Hanuman Mandir, which is not very far from the Jantar Mantar protest site.”When asked why he assaulted the two students, Pandit claimed he heard that people attending the CJP protest were abusing the Prime Minister and Lord Shri Ram. “Chalo bhai kisi neta ko bhi gali sun lete, lekin koi agar hamare prabhu Shri Ram ko gali dega to hum nahi

sunenge. (We can ignore abuses directed at politicians, but we will not tolerate anyone insulting our Lord Shri Ram). I checked the protest site before stopping these two youths,” he said.The one-minute video shows Pandit, wearing an orange scarf, questioning the two youths. He asked them, “Why are you supporting CJP? What is your name? Are you Hindu?... People here are raising anti-national slogans. Why are you doing this?”He also asked where they lived. The students replied they were from Bareilly and had come to participate in the CJP protest.The video shows Pandit grabbing one of them by the collar and slapping him twice. Both students could be seen pleading with him to let them go.The video was shared by several users on social media, including Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav who criticised the incident.Pandit said that if the police initiated action against him, he was prepared to face the legal consequences.A final-year law student, he is facing around six cases in Ghaziabad between 2022 and 2026 including assaulting shopkeepers, vendors, and a meat shop owner, and making hateful remarks against Bangladeshis, said police.In a recent video he recorded, he can be seen asking the UP Police to avoid deploying Muslim officers on duty for the Kawnar Yatra.He frequently posts videos of his actions on social media. After allegedly assaulting the two students, he posted the video on his social media account.

Iran’s FM says Ukraine’s attack on Iranian ship ‘cannot go unanswered’



GNS News Agency,,July 30

Tehran: Iran’s Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on said Ukraine’s attack on an Iranian commercial ship in the Caspian Sea “cannot go unanswered.”In a post on the social media platform X, Araghchi accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of ordering “a blatant UN Charter violation done at Israel’s behest to drag Europe into its war.” He said he had “made clear that what the freeloader in Kyiv did CANNOT GO UNANSWERED” in phone calls with European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday and Sunday respectively, Xinhua news agency reported.He made the remarks on Saturday in a phone call with EU foreign policy

chief Kaja Kallas, in which the two sides discussed the latest regional developments, according to a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry. Araghchi condemned the Ukrainian attack, urging the EU, UN Security Council, and international community to hold its “perpetrators” and supporters to account, according to the statement.The two sides also addressed developments in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing the need for diplomatic initiatives to manage regional tensions, it added.

In a separate statement, the ministry said it summoned Ukraine’s charge d’affaires in Tehran on Saturday over the attack, formally delivering a note of protest condemning the “hostile and criminal” act.According to the Iranian foreign ministry, the attack took place at 3:00 a.m. local time on Saturday (2330 GMT on Friday) and led to the vessel’s explosion as well as a sailor’s death. The semi-official Mehr news agency on Sunday reported that three sailors were also injured in the attack.Citing the Governor of Iran’s northern Gilan province Hadi Haghsheenas, it said that the steel-laden vessel was en route from Russia’s Astrakhan Port to Iran’s Anzali Port in Gilan when it came under attack. The ship’s bridge was destroyed, leaving it unable to continue its voyage, Haghsheenas said, adding that the incident would be pursued through domestic and international legal channels.Zelensky said on Saturday that his country’s forces had hit a Russian warship and vessels used for transporting Iran-linked military cargo in the Caspian Sea.

Iran says it will halt strikes as long as US bombing pause holds

DUBAI/WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency,,July 30Iran will halt its own ?attacks as long as the United States does the same, a senior Iranian official told Reuters on Sunday. The development comes as the United States pressed ?pause on its bombing campaign after President Donald Trump’s advisers told him they were running out of targets and expressed worries about depleting the U.S. arsenal.

After 13 nights of intensifying U.S. airstrikes on Iran, the Pentagon suspended the campaign late on Friday, with no U.S. attacks reported on either Saturday or Sunday. Iran, which had been following each night of U.S. attacks with its own strikes ?on neighbouring countries that host U.S. bases, has also so far held fire for two days.Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.The Iranian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that Tehran’s position “remains ‘attack ?for attack’: if the attacks stop, Iran will also halt its operations. That message has already been conveyed to the United States.”



about the halt in attacks. The prevailing view is that the pause is tactical rather than genuine. Iran has accumulated enough ?bitter experience with what it sees as ?U.S. deception,” the source said.

For ?the past two weeks, U.S. forces had been striking Iran nightly in what Washington said was retaliation for Iranian attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian forces have responded to the U.S. attacks by launching strikes at water desalination plants in nearby Gulf ?Arab states.Iran says it aims to retain control of the strait, through which a fifth of global oil flows passed before?the war.The renewed U.S. ?military campaign effectively torpedoed last month’s interim agreement aimed at ending the war.Trump’s decision to pause the strikes followed what several media outlets described as a meeting on Friday where Caine and other senior military and political advisers raised concerns.CNN said Vice President JD Vance had expressed reservations. Axios reported that the overall commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, Admiral Brad Cooper, ?had advised ?halting the U.S. bombing campaign because it had reached the limits of its effectiveness.Residents of Iran remain apprehensive. Nader, ?49, an import-export business owner in Tehran, said he doubted any pause in strikes would last.“Everyone in the country is stuck in limbo,” he told Reuters by telephone. “Trump is playing games with Iran. He neither ends ?the war and leaves the region nor strikes decisively. It’s exhausting.”Writing by Raphael Satter and Peter Graft; Editing by Alexander Smith, Ros Russell and Sergio Non and Deepa BabingtonPhil Stewart has reported from more than 60 countries, including Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China and South Sudan. An award-winning Washington-based national security reporter, Phil has appeared on NPR, PBS NewsHour, Fox News and other programs and moderated national security events, including at the Reagan National Defense Forum and the German Marshall Fund. He is a recipient of the Edwin M. Hood Award for Diplomatic Correspondence and the Joe Galloway Award.

Red Sea shipping slows after Houthi attack on Saudi Arabia, data shows



Red Sea traffic has ?been disrupted off the coast of Yemen since last week by the Tehran-aligned Houthis, who want to blockade ?Saudi exports, expanding the U.S.-Iran conflict that has already choked oil supply through the Strait ?of Hormuz.

SINGAPORE, GNS News Agency,,July 30 Ship traffic through Bab el-Mandeb fell on Sunday after Yemeni Houthis attacked Saudi oil ?installations along the Red Sea coast, while transit through the Strait of Hormuz stayed low over the weekend, shipping data from Kpler showed. Eleven commodity vessels passed through the Bab el-Mandeb strait on Sunday, the lowest level in months, the data showed.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.Red Sea traffic has ?been disrupted off the coast of Yemen since last week by the Tehran-aligned Houthis, who want to blockade ?Saudi exports, expanding the U.S.-Iran conflict that has already choked oil supply through the Strait ?of Hormuz.The shipping disruption

Oil prices dip over 6% after US, Iran pause fighting over weekend



GNS News Agency,,July 30

SINGAPORE, July 27 (Reuters) - Oil prices tumbled more than 6% on Monday after the ?U.S. and Iran paused strikes over the weekend after two weeks of attacks, raising hopes of a diplomatic solution that would de-escalate the conflict and allow shipping to resume in the Strait of Hormuz.Brent crude futures fell \$6.20, or 6.4%, to \$90.58 by 0620 GMT ?after briefly slipping under the key support level of \$90 earlier in the session.The Reuters Power Up newsletter provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.U.S. West Texas Intermediate ?crude was at \$83.51 a barrel, down \$5.80, or 6.5%.Both contracts are trading at their lowest ?levels in nearly a week after rising for the past three weeks.

Brent had reached \$100 per barrel as ?the conflict, which reduced oil shipments via the Strait of Hormuz, spilled

over to the Red Sea, hindering exports ?from the world’s top exporter, Saudi Arabia, via the Bab el-Mandeb strait to Asia.The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, told “Fox News Sunday” and other U.S. media that President Donald Trump had decided to pause U.S. attacks to allow more time for ?diplomacy.“Oil prices fell sharply in early trading as the U.S. and Iran refrained from further military action, ?offering the first tangible signs of a potential de-escalation in tensions,” said ING analysts in a client note.“The price action in ?oil ?this morning clearly reflects the market’s desperation for positive news.”Despite the pause in attacks, fewer than 10 commodity vessels passed through the Strait of Hormuz daily during the weekend, shipping data from Kpler showed.“Any rebound in flows through the Strait of Hormuz is likely to prove slow and partial, as many shippers remain wary and ?will want greater confidence in ?their safety before they ?bring more empty ships into the Strait,” MST Marquee analyst Saul Kavonic said.

In addition, ship traffic through the Bab el-Mandeb strait fell on Sunday after Yemeni Houthis ?attacked Saudi oil installations along the Red Sea coast, although a third Chinese supertanker ?exited via the ?Bab el-Mandeb strait.However, some analysts are still expecting markets to be supported if crude supplies stay affected by ongoing shipping risks in the Middle East and the Russia-Ukraine war.“As the Middle East conflict widened to the Red Sea ?and ?Ukrainian drones struck Russian ships and refineries ... Sustained (supply) disruption would likely ?keep oil prices elevated and continue to pose upside risks to global inflation,” said UOB analysts in a note.Ukraine said it hit several ?Russian oil sites over the weekend.

Germany's sick-note crackdown may be treating the symptoms, not the disease

FRANKFURT, - Germany’s plans to tighten sick-note rules may be mistaking the symptoms of rising absenteeism for the underlying illness, researchers say, pointing to mental health strains and deteriorating working conditions in sectors such ?as healthcare and education.Workers in Germany took an average of about 22 days of sick leave in 2024, among the highest levels internationally. That figure, from the association of ?company health insurers BKK, jumped sharply in 2022 after the introduction of electronic sick-note reporting, which improved the recording of short-term absences.The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here.

Under plans agreed by Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s coalition, telephone sick notes would be scrapped and employers could require medical certificates from the first day of absence, part of a broader push to raise productivity in an economy grappling with an ageing population and years of weak growth.But researchers studying sickness, mental health and labour markets increasingly point to deeper problems in professions where absenteeism ?is high, such as nursing, care work and teaching.They cite chronic understaffing, low pay, weak career prospects and high emotional demands as risk factors for poor mental health in those professions.



In 2024, ?the latest year for which sectoral data is available, women in healthcare and social work took on average 27 sick days and teachers took 24, compared ?with 18 in finance and 16 in communication, BKK data shows.“It doesn’t need to be a full-blown depression,” said Johannes Siegrist, an emeritus professor at the University of Duesseldorf. “It can also be a state of ?exhaustion or burn-out as a result of problematic working conditions.”Mental disorders account for only 4.8% of sickness cases, but when they occur they lead to 28 days of absence on average, according to data from AOK, ?Germany’s largest health insurance provider.The number of sickness leave days taken by AOK members due to mental health issues has risen by 47% since 2014, making it the second-biggest cause of absence after respiratory diseases.HIGH RESPONSIBILITY, LOW REWARDHealthcare, education and social services tend to have the highest proportion of mental health-related diagnoses.

“They have jobs with high responsibility, they need to combine task performance and social interaction and they have to deal with emotional problems, but also with physical stressors, including violence,” ?Siegrist said. “And often these are low-paid people with a rather low socioeconomic status.”The combination of low pay, social status or security with high demands is what scholars describe as an effort-reward imbalance.A large body of ?international occupational health research has linked this imbalance to mental health issues and long-term absence. It also increases the risk of coronary heart disease.Recent evidence from Germany’s schools illustrates the problem. The 2024 German School Barometer found that nearly ?half of teachers reported psychological or physical violence among pupils at their school, while more than one-third felt emotionally exhausted several times a week.Nursing tells a similar story. Despite acute staff shortages, recent German stud-

ies have found surprisingly limited wage increases, particularly in hospitals and public institutions.The health ministry declined to comment when asked about absenteeism rates being highest in sectors with the biggest mental health and emotional pressures.

NO SIGN OF WIDESPREAD ABUSENone of this means Germany’s absenteeism problem can be explained solely by mental health.Sickness absence is influenced by a range of factors, including demographics, workplace conditions, social norms and institutional differences, making international comparisons difficult.Germany’s sick-pay arrangements, which replace ?100% of wages from the first day of illness ?for up to six weeks, are some ?of the most generous in the world.Yet seven OECD countries — Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Finland, France, Portugal and Belgium — report a higher incidence of sick leave among full-time employees.

“What we can say is that sick leave rules are one factor among many, and we would caution against reading too much into direct country comparisons of sick leave rates,” said OECD researcher Sofia Malinai Domagk.Many of the institutions studying Germany’s absenteeism surge have struggled to find evidence of widespread abuse.A study by ?health insurer DAK and the ?IGES institute found that the sharp increase in recorded absences in 2022 was driven largely by better electronic reporting and unusually strong waves of respiratory illness and COVID infections. The number of sick days has since stabilised.The study found no evidence that telephone sick notes introduced in 2020 during the pandemic were responsible for the surge and concluded that neither telephone certification nor routine malingering explained record sickness levels.“The available scientific studies suggest that sick ?leave by phone ?has not led to an increase in sick leave reports,” said Enzo Weber, from the Institute of Employment Research.BEYOND POLICING ABSENCEThe ?government’s proposal has also been criticised by the services union Verdi, which said it exemplified a “culture of mistrust” towards workers.Doctors associations said it would be “absolutely disastrous” for already overburdened medical practices.In response, the government said companies will have the freedom to decide whether they ?want to follow the new rule or to retain the requirement to provide a medical certificate from the fourth day of illness.

Iran blames Israel as sailor killed in Ukraine’s ship attack



Tehran: Iran’s Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that the attack on an Iranian commercial vessel by Ukraine, which killed a sailor, was done at the ‘behest’ of Israel to drag Europe into its war.“(Ukrainian President Volodymyr) Zelensky has attacked an Iranian commercial vessel, killing a sailor. A blatant UN Charter violation done at Israel’s behest to drag Europe into its war. In calls with EU High Representative Kaja Kallas and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, made clear that what the freeloader in Kyiv CANNOT GO UNANSWERED,” Araghchi said on social media platform X.

On Saturday, the Iranian Foreign Minister called on

the European Union to take “decisive” action against Ukraine’s targeting of an Iranian commercial ship in the Caspian Sea.He made the remarks in a phone call with EU Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas, in which the two sides discussed the latest regional developments, according to a statement by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Araghchi condemned the Ukrainian attack, urging the EU, UN Security Council, and international community to hold its “perpetrators” and supporters to account, according to the statement.The two sides also addressed developments in the Strait of Hormuz, stressing the need for diplomatic initiatives to manage regional tensions, it added.In a separate statement, the Ministry said it summoned Ukraine’s Charge d’Affaires in Tehran on Saturday over the attack, formally delivering a note of protest condemning the “hostile and criminal” act.Earlier on Sunday, the Ministry said the Ukrainian attack had caused the vessel to explode, killing a sailor and wounding another,

Xinhua news agency reported.The Ministry said Iran has never intervened in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, adding the strike could further “spread the flames of the war and insecurity in a dangerous manner”.Also on Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country’s forces had hit a Russian warship and vessels used for transporting Iran-linked military cargo in the Caspian Sea.

Incidents on loop, but it’s escape for regulator, airlines



The recent incident, on December 5, 2024, involving an Air India Airbus A320 aircraft at Goa’s Mopa airport is another wake-up call for Indian aviation. The crew of the Hyderabad-bound aircraft had to reject takeoff after entering a parallel taxiway instead of the main runway. This is not the first time an event such as this has happened to airlines in India. This falls under the category of runway confusion. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the regulatory body that primarily deals with safety issues, as we have seen during the past 20 years, will blame the pilots and sweep the report under the carpet. The blame, squarely, points to the regulator and the airlines. It has failed to learn from earlier events. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)’s Annex 13 makes it mandatory for a member-state to investigate accidents, serious incidents and also incidents and identify the cause and take corrective steps to prevent a recurrence. Series of incidents

The history of runway confusion errors by Indian carriers is long. In 1993, a Jet Airways Boeing 737 inaugural flight to Coimbatore landed at the Suler air base of the Indian Air Force instead of Peelamedu civil airport. In September 2002, a Jet Airways Boeing 737 landed on the taxi track in Dabolim airport in Goa. In June 2007, a Spicejet Boeing 737 landed on the wrong runway at Delhi. In December 2008, a Spicejet Boeing 737 landed on a wrong runway at Kolkata. In March 2009, a Jetlite CRJ landed on a wrong runway at Kolkata. In September 2018, an Air India Airbus A320 on the Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram-Male sector landed on a wrong (under construction) runway in the Maldives. Just a month earlier, a Jet Airways Boeing 737 had to abort takeoff while on a taxiway at Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. In January 2014, an Air India Boeing 787 almost landed at Melbourne’s Essendon airport before air traffic control directed the crew to Melbourne Tullamarine airport. And in December 2020, a Spicejet Boeing 737 had a hard touchdown short of the runway threshold in Guwahati, Assam.

Had the DGCA and the airlines concerned taken proactive and corrective steps, India would not have to cut a sorry figure in international aviation. India is lucky that none of these events resulted in fatalities. The blame is apportioned to pilot error while the airlines and the regulator walk away without accountability. In June 2010, in the first meeting of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC), formed after the Mangaluru crash of an Air India Express flight (May 2010), this writer had highlighted some of the events, between 2002 and 2009, in a presentation before the Union Minister of Civil Aviation. If such serious incidents are still taking place in 2024, the blame falls squarely on the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the DGCA and the airlines for their failure to prevent a recurrence. Singapore took corrective

measures

Contrast this with an incident involving a Singapore Airlines flight in Taiwan on October 31, 2000. The crew were trying to expedite their departure before the airport closed due to a typhoon. They took off from a wrong runway which had been partially closed. The aircraft crashed into construction equipment, exploded in a fire and several passengers died. It was night, in heavy rain and with strong winds. Singapore took corrective measures and there has not been a serious incident till date. Can India not learn from them?

Airlines in India have had a repeated number of accidents involving high and fast approaches, resulting in runway overruns since 2005. In October 2005, an Air Sahara Boeing 737 went off the runway at Mumbai and there was serious damage to the aircraft. In March 2015 a Spicejet DH8-D sustained damage during a runway excursion on landing in Hubli. In July 2019, a Spicejet Boeing 737 overran the runway in Mumbai on landing and was damaged. In December 2016, a Jet Airways Boeing 737 went off the runway at Goa after a rejected take off. A majority of those aircraft have resulted in hull losses and some such as the Mangaluru and Kozhikode (2020) crashes have resulted in the loss of 179 lives. In all those overrun accidents, pilots have been blamed but never the poor training and safety standards of airlines, the non-compliance with ICAO standards on aerodrome infrastructure and the failure of the DGCA’s and Airports Authority of India’s safety audits that have covered up serious deficiencies. The Flight Standards Directorate of the DGCA — which is supposed to oversee standards — has failed miserably, as it is the same type of accidents that have occurred and aircraft have been written off. Pressure on crew

India has one of the worst set of regulations on flight and duty time limitations for flight crew. Pilots and cabin attendants are pressured to operate in violation of flight time limits, flight duty limits and rest periods. The new addition to pressure on flight deck crew is the hydra-headed monster called “on time performance”, or OTP. Many of these errors can be attributed to the OTP pressure and failure of crew resource management in the cockpit. In the Kozhikode crash, the captain was in a hurry to land because he was required to operate the next day’s flight. The accident is a classic case of “press-on-it-is” where, once the pilot gets fixed on to the landing strip, no inputs are received from the other pilot. The same happened in the Mangaluru accident. Repeated calls by the co-pilot to go around were ignored. The incident, in Mopa, Goa, shows a lack of knowledge of runway markings by the pilots. Runways and not the taxi track have specific markings. Pilots landing short is also an indication of a lack of knowledge of runway markings and non-compliance of stabilised approach criteria. Airline training and safety departments should wake up and address these serious training deficiencies. India has to move from the old adage, “If a pilot is alive, blame him. If he is dead, bury him”. The recent deferment of flight and duty time limits at the behest of airline managements is a serious safety issue. To add fuel to the fire is a High Court decision asking the DGCA to negotiate with the two sides to find a suitable solution. Safety and fatigue are not negotiable. This is another instance of the judiciary having no clue about aviation safety. Captain A. (Mohan) Ranganathan is a former airline instructor pilot and aviation safety adviser. He is also a former member of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC), India

Stability hangs in balance in Bangladesh as mob violence rises under the interim govt.

Abdul Hai Kanu, a 78-year-old veteran freedom fighter from Bangladesh’s Comilla district, could never have imagined that December — a month synonymous with liberation and pride — would become a chapter of horror in his life.

On the afternoon of December 22, in his hometown in Chaudhagram under Comilla, Abdul Hai Kanu was on his way to the market to buy medicine when a group of young men, affiliated with the politics of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, surrounded him. They forced a garland of shoes — a symbol of ultimate humiliation — around his neck and captured his torment. They then shared the video on social media that has since gone viral where Mr. Kanu can be seen standing visibly crushed. His trembling hands clasped together as he begged for mercy, his voice breaking with desperation. “Let me go,” he pleaded, but his cries met only cold disdain. They also asked him to leave the district. Mr. Kanu was involved with the Awami League, the party of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, but claimed he never harmed anyone despite his political affiliations. He said that he had to leave his village for eight years due to conflicts with the local MP from Sheikh Hasina’s party. After this incident, Mr. Kanu was admitted to hospital and left his village for another district. However, the chief adviser press wing condemned the deformation and asked authorities to launch an investigation into the incident.

Not only Mr. Kanu, but hundreds have recently fallen victim to mob justice, killings, fabricated cases, brutal attacks, and public humiliations across Bangladesh. Mr. Kanu is relatively fortunate to have survived, unlike two young men who were beaten to death by a mob on suspicion of cattle theft in the presence of police on December 14 in Kishoreganj. In recent months, an alarming number of people have lost their lives to mob justice across the country. Sharp rise in mob violence After the fall of Sheikh Hasina’s 15-year regime on August 5, a tenure marked by allegations of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, the country has experienced a sharp rise in mob violence, fabricated cases, robbery, mugging and extortions. The instability persists, with the nation still struggling to restore law and order, even after four months under the interim government led by Nobel Laureate Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yunus. The surge in many forms of violence has disproportionately targeted both Awami League members and those unaffiliated with the party, often stemming from political disputes, power struggles, internal party conflicts and monetary gains. Although police operations have resumed across the country, and traffic police are actively managing road traffic, a sense of fear still lingers within the force. The visible police presence has done little to reassure the public, as officers remain hesitant to intervene. “Since August 5, the police chain of command has been severely disrupted. Senior officers can no longer enforce duties on juniors as they once did. Now, officers think multiple times before intervening in any incident, fearing reprisals if their actions go wrong. There’s still a prevailing trend of prioritizing personal safety over intervention,” a police officer stationed at Police Headquarters told The Hindu on condition of anonymity. The Bangladesh Army remains deployed on the streets to assist civil authorities in improving law and order after the interim government extended their judicial powers for an additional 60 days. Despite their continued presence, street

patrols, and operations against crime, incidents of theft, robbery, and extortion — many involving politically connected leaders — persist in the country, showing no signs of abatement while the government claims that law and order are gradually returning to normal. Over 100 high-profile leaders arrested from Awami League

According to the monthly statistics of human rights violations published by leading Bangladeshi human rights organization Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), at least 82 people were killed in incidents of mob justice over four months — August, September, October, and November — under the interim government. This includes 14 deaths in November 19 in October 28 in September, and 21 in August. In contrast, only 15 people were beaten to death by mobs in the four months prior — April, May, June, and July — before the fall of Sheikh Hasina’s government, indicating a sharp spike in such incidents. Another report published by rights organization Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation reveals that mob violence claimed the lives of at least 44 people in August and September. The report noted a significant surge in such attacks, with 53 incidents recorded over the two months, including 33 in September alone. The country has also witnessed a spike in fabricated cases where murder cases are being filed indiscriminately, often including innocent people as the accused. In many instances, money is being demanded from the accused to have their names removed from these cases. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Sheikh Md Sajjat Ali said, “Many of these cases were intentionally exaggerated, with 150 to 200 or more individuals listed as accused, including Awami League leaders. Police were forced to file these cases.” Police Headquarters sources said, by December 15, 2,350 cases were filed in connection with attacks on students and the public during the July-August uprising. These cases involve several hundred thousand accused. So far, over 10,000 accused have been arrested, including 100 high-profile leaders from the then ruling party. Several incidents of mugging, robbery reported Mugging and robbery have surged significantly, with four people stabbed to death by muggers in Dhaka and Narayanganj in the past week alone. Meanwhile, three suspected muggers were beaten to death by enraged mobs. On December 23, seven people were killed aboard the MV Al Bakhera, a fertilizer-carrying vessel anchored in the Meghna River in Haimchar, Chandpur. Police reported that the victims were murdered while trying to resist a robbery on the ship. According to crime statistics from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), over hundred incidents of mugging were reported in the capital between August and December. During this period, at least 10 people were killed in Dhaka alone after being stabbed by muggers. The country also witnessed a spike in recovering unidentified bodies in three months — August, September and October compared to the same months in 2023. According to Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF), at least 112 unidentified bodies were recovered in the three months. Among them, 35 unidentified bodies were found in July, 29 bodies were recovered in August, and September saw the recovery of 48 unidentified bodies. Advocate Saidur Rahman, Chief Executive of MSF, expressed deep concern to The Hindu over the rise in mob justice incidents adding that, “We are deeply concerned about mob justice. Police are not intervening, leading people to believe they can act without police interference.

U.S.-India ties will be strengthened, but expect tariff trouble, FTA push: Former Ambassador Juster

India should expect raised tariffs, and a renewed push to get a Free Trade Agreement finalised from the United States as Donald Trump gets set to begin a second term in office, said former Ambassador to India Kenneth Juster. In an exclusive interview to The Hindu via videoconferencing from New York, Mr. Juster, a former U.S. department of Commerce official who was appointed by Mr. Trump to India in the first term (2017-2021) said that the first tenure and Mr. Trump’s campaign pronouncements were indicators that the second term would see a further strengthening of India-U.S. ties, but certain irritants in ties, such as over high tariffs, market access in areas like “agricultural exports from United States to India and the IT (information technology) equipment sector and medical devices”, and differences over Iran policy could also return. In Mr. Trump’s first term, the U.S. had withdrawn India’s GSP status for exporters, and forced India to cancel all oil imports from Iran.

Mr. Juster pointed out that Mr. Trump’s cabinet nominees thus far had very strongly pro-India positions, and that they also saw China as the U.S.’s “major strategic challenge”, pointing in particular to USA-designate Michael waltz, currently co-chair of the India Caucus in the House of Representatives, whom External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met in Washington last week. Mr. Juster said that it was unlikely the Department of Justice indictments in the Pannun case and against the Adani group would have “any substantial effect on the broader US-India relationship”. When asked about a possible invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Trump inauguration on January 20, Mr. Juster pointed out that foreign leaders have not traditionally attended the inauguration, but that the two leaders share a close personal relationship from Mr. Trump’s previous term. With the inauguration of Donald Trump as the President of the United States for the second time just weeks away, New Delhi stepped up its outreach to the incoming administration with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri both spending the year-end week in Washington. In an exclusive interview to The Hindu over a video conference from New York, Mr. Trump’s last envoy to India (2017-2021) Kenneth Juster spoke about what to expect from his next tenure in office.

Broadly, how do you think President Trump will approach India, given your experience of the ties during his previous tenure?

I think there’s going to be a very strong U.S.-Indian relationship during the second term of the Trump presidency, and I base that on what happened during the first term. U.S.-India relations were among the highlights of the Trump administration’s foreign policy. President Trump was the first U.S. President to label China as a strategic challenge to the United States and to popularize the concept of the Indo Pacific, which strategically links the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean regions. It was a concept that was pioneered by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, but the United States really enhanced it by its own activities, and soon the entire region and world was speaking of the Indo Pacific. Under the Trump administration, we also revived the Quad, the grouping among the United States, India, Japan and Australia, which has continued to thrive under the Biden administration. We enhanced our defence cooperation significantly, signing three major foundational agreements, increasing the number of military exercises and having the first ever tri-services exercise. We increased energy exports to India of all types, clean coal, natural gas, oil and renewables, and worked closely with India on those issues. There was also a very strong people-to-people relationship. There was a Howdy Modi event in Houston with over 50,000 people that President Trump was at. And then there was a Namaste Trump event in February of 2020, that had over 100,000 people in Gujarat. So, there’s a very strong relationship between the President and the Prime Minister, and the United States really provided very critical and important assistance to India when China came across the Line of Actual Control into disputed territory in 2020.

What should one make of Trump nominees thus far, including Rubio, Hegseth, Gabbard, Ramaswamy and Hegseth, all of whom have been positively disposed towards India?

Let me also mention Representative Michael waltz, who’s going to be the incoming National Security Advisor, who is currently co-chair of the India Caucus in the House of Representatives. And yes, I think the appointees by and large will be furthering the strength of the US-India relationship that we saw in the first term of the Trump administration. Senator Rubio, who’s the nominee to be Secretary of State, had introduced legislation that would treat India as equivalent to an ally for purposes of technology transfers and provide a variety of other positive elements to the US-India relationship. But in addition, these advisors see China as the major strategic challenge that the United States faces. And in that sense, I think there’s a certain strategic clarity between the United States and India as to what some of the challenges will be in the Indo-Pacific region.

What about the unusual and special relationship with Elon Musk, who has been trying to bring in companies like Tesla and Starlink to India, but asking for more concessions, tax waivers. Do you think India should be prepared to give more when it comes to business?

Well, that’s going to be a business decision for India. India made concessions to bring Apple into India, and that’s been a great success in terms of its manufacturing operations there. And the government of India will have to decide whether the concessions being sought by Mr. Musk relative to Tesla and Starlink, and I don’t know all the specifics of that, make sense from its perspective or not. But given Mr. Trump’s threats of the past on India being a “tariff abuser” and how India lost its GSP status for exporters, should India expect more of such shock therapy?

Look, the President has been clear that he believes India should lower tariffs and is too protectionist, and he bases this on both the levels of tariffs, which the real tariff level in India is high, and the trade deficit that exists between the United States and India. And he had this opinion during the first term. I don’t think it’s correct to say that the GSP issue was shock therapy. There’s a statute that provides the generalized system of preferences benefits to countries, which gives tariff free entry to hundreds and even thousands of products into the United States. But the statute also requires that the beneficiary country increase its own market access to US products. There were complaints filed by the medical devices industry and the dairy industry that they were not getting access to India. So, the US Trade Representative’s Office undertook a full investigation. They felt that there were other industries, including the IT services industry, that also were not getting sufficient access. But instead of withdrawing GSP right away, the US government undertook an extensive negotiation with the Government of India to try to reach some resolution of this issue. The negotiations lasted for over one year. The US government felt that they were coming close to an agreement, but it could never get concluded. And finally, under the statutory requirement, they were compelled to have to terminate GSP, and yet still continued negotiations after that to try to

reinstate GSP, to get some market opening measures. Regrettably, that was still not possible. I think by the time President Trump came to India in February of 2020, it looked like the Indian side was willing to close the deal, but at that point the President was seeking a bigger deal. We have to remember that part of the effort in putting tariffs on a country is to try to get a negotiation to increase market access for the United States. So, the President-elect has indicated that he will slap tariffs of 10 to 20% on most countries around the world, and I think that would probably include India. But I also think that could be the beginning of a negotiation to open markets a bit and, from India’s perspective, to try to lock down the benefits of its largest trade partner, the United States, in both goods and services. And one should think expansively in terms of what other issues of concern, whether it be in technology, in energy, or elsewhere, where the two sides could do some horse trading and reach a broader trade and economic agreement.

Will reopening FTA talks be a priority for the Trump administration, as when the Biden administration came in it made it clear it wasn’t a priority?

Well, to be fair, the Biden administration chose not to move forward in the free trade agreement area and, instead, launched a different initiative, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity. President Trump, despite being known as someone who loves tariffs, also negotiated several trade deals during his first term, including with Mexico and Canada and with Japan as well. And I think he would want to do so in the second term with India. Some of the areas that were sticky were in some agricultural exports from United States to India and the IT (information technology) equipment sector and medical devices. And I would hope that we could get beyond those issues, reduce tariffs there, and then look at other broader measures that could be addressed to enhance our economic relationship. One strategic reason for doing this is that China really dominates the Indo Pacific region with its economic strength, and if the United States and India were to strike a larger trade and economic agreement, that would begin to counter some of China’s enormous presence in the region. Also, we should work out an understanding on the digital economy, because so much data flows back and forth between our two countries. Both of our technology sectors are critical to our economies and are leading technology sectors of the world.

Do you think the ease of doing business in India is now better in these last four years?

Yes, I think the ease of doing business in India has certainly improved, although I think there could still be further improvements. We’ve seen enormous investments by the government in infrastructure, whether it be airports, seaports, roads or highways. We’ve seen efforts to attract investors through a variety of different incentives, and certainly India is on the radar screen of most major US and other international companies that are looking for a major market to invest in. I still hear, though, from US companies that they find the regulatory framework can be a bit slow and burdensome, and that at times there’s regulatory uncertainty. My concern at times about some of the high barriers to trade -- not to investment, but to trade -- is that this may dissuade some companies that want to move goods in and out of India from making it the supply chain hub that India would like to be.

Like with the GSP removal, the feeling in India is that the Trump administration strong-armed India- the US insisted that India must zero out Iran oil import. It’s interesting that despite many requests from the Biden administration, India did not actually reduce its oil intake from Russia. What would the expectations be from India in the next four years?

I don’t think we strong armed India on trade, because we never changed the situation. So, it was a negotiation that was unable to be concluded. Yes, you are correct on Iran, the Trump administration had a maximum pressure campaign, which I think may well get reinstituted in this next term. India was treated like every other country, which meant you needed to zero out oil imports from Iran. And India complied with that. I think on Russia, there is an understanding of the long historical relationship India has had. And in the previous term of the Trump administration, there were not ultimatums put on India with regard to Russia. As you know, there was an S-400 sale. There was talk of potential sanctions under CAATSA, but that never was implemented. I think Russia is a fluid issue, and it may well depend on how negotiations go between Russia and Ukraine. But I think Iran is one area where the administration has shown a very consistent and tough position in terms of seeking to economically isolate the Iranians.

Delhi has also been shocked by US Department of Justice investigations and indictments- first in the Pannun assassination plot case, and then against the Adani group. Do you think a Trump administration will approach these DOJ investigations and indictments differently, and now that the Pannun case trial is actually underway, will it affect India US bilateral ties?

Well, when cases get into our Justice Department and into the legal process, I would not want to comment on them, and they should probably not be affected by any concerns other than the legal considerations that are being followed by the prosecutors. I would not expect that the Trump administration would seek to inject itself in these cases. I can’t foresee what the legal people at the Department of Justice will do and how they will read the evidence overall. But beyond that, I don’t see these cases having any substantial effect on the broader US-India relationship.

The BJP has said on its official handle in response to these cases that the US State Department is targeting the Modi government, and that it is, in fact trying to in some way weaken India. Were you surprised that the investigations have had such a negative effect in India? Well unfortunately, at times, folks in India can be very sensitive about legal matters, but I can tell you from my experience, this would not have been something that the State Department would have chosen to push or not push. If anything, the diplomatic community would wish that these types of cases did not exist, but they get into our legal process, and we are very strict about not interfering with what the prosecutors do. The Attorney General and the people in the Justice Department make those decisions, but it’s really inappropriate for someone at the State Department or an ambassador or diplomat to try to inject him or herself into those matters. The Biden administration has sought to leave its legacy on Indian ties with the iCET. What do you think will be the major areas of growth for the India, US relationship in the next four years of Trump? The US-India relationship has continued to grow in a positive direction over the last 25 years, and each administration has built on the successes of the previous one, despite changes of parties [in power], and I expect that to continue. Technology has always been an important aspect of the US-India relationship. When I was Under Secretary of Commerce (2001-2005), we launched the High Technology Cooperation Group. We then had an initiative called the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) that worked on civil defence, civil nuclear and high technology issues.

Why agri-tech might need a different approach to boost innovations



Primarily an agrarian economy, India holds large potential for research and technological innovation in agriculture. Nevertheless, innovations in this space which is estimated to be around \$24 billion, have barely scratched the surface given the myriad challenges such as low market adoption, high customer acquisition costs, lukewarm investor interest, high infrastructure costs, and more. Compared to tech in other sectors, Indian AgriTech might need a different approach to turbocharge innovations in this space, say experts. IIIT-B, for example, takes an interdisciplinary approach and often looks at developing solutions as digital public goods.

The institution has been developing a host of AgriTech projects with the idea of introducing higher efficiency in agricultural processes. These include AutoGrow - an Autonomous greenhouse System for Precision Agriculture, Smart Greenhouse with secure long-range connectivity, a Remote Compost Monitoring system for Sustainable agriculture and AgriSense (an IoT system for with a soil monitoring device) among others. An India-specific problem? Autogrow, which is the autonomous greenhouse system for precision agriculture, is an autonomous system for growing food. We are trying to solve a very India-specific problem," says Ramesh Kestur, faculty at IIIT-B.

The system seamlessly integrates biological food production with an IoT/AI-based system and includes automated greenhouse control of climatic conditions, irrigation, and nutrient supply to plants. This can provide substantial gains in increasing the efficiency of crop production while using optimal resources and thereby reducing costs. "If you see in the West, they lack resources such as lighting and therefore cannot grow throughout the year. So, we should not imitate their solution. We have enough light, and we can grow 365 days a year. We just need to control whatever is critical for our condition," Kestur explains. Given the abundance of sunlight and temperature in the country, his team avoided including components like LED lights in the system which helped to reduce cost and complexity. After eliminating the unnecessary, the team then looked what needed to be controlled.

One was the inputs which were essentially water and nutrients. "We thought we will try to build a system and control those things. With this motivation, we built systems for three configurations; One is the hydroponic system. The other one is what we call the vertical system where we can vertically stack growbags. And the last is the open field." "It's a non-linear control system where the inputs are continuously monitored, and the required amount of nutrition is administered. It is a control system realized with sensors and

AI-ML algorithms," notes Kestur, adding that no sensors are placed in the soil as it can lead to quick draining of battery. Instead, the temperature and moisture sensors are placed in the input tank where levels of nutrition such as nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium are monitored. The project is done in collaboration with the Department of Biotechnology, IIHR, Bengaluru. The wick irrigation technology developed at IIHR has been incorporated into the system. AgriSense and Smart Greenhouse Monitoring System are led by professor Jyotsna Bapat at IIIT-B. Both are sponsored by the Government of Karnataka. The Smart Greenhouse Monitoring System aims to transform greenhouse farming by leveraging IoT to improve crop health, automate environmental controls, and facilitate remote monitoring. The idea is to enable farmers to monitor environmental conditions like temperature, humidity, soil moisture, and pH remotely, providing real-time data for precise control over crop conditions. The system looks at features such as real-time data monitoring utilising a network of sensors, automated control based on sensor data, remote accessibility for farmers via app and data analysis and alerts with the help of machine learning. Optimising inputs in agriculture finding the optimum watering level to ensure maximum output has always been a problem. Yet another challenge is the deteriorating health of soil due to over application of fertilisers. AgriSense, an IoT system developed by the institute to address these challenges, uses Agri-cone a mushroom shaped soil-monitoring device. "We were initially looking at the bigger farms where we could help the farmers to ensure irrigation is done in the correct way. By measuring the soil moisture content and looking at the predicted forecast, we could advise them on the irrigation that should be done," explains Bapat.

"Another aspect is the soil content and we measure carbon dioxide and ammonia in it. If the soil is of good quality, then the amount of carbon dioxide will be relatively higher. If there is too much of urea or any of the other fertilizers, the amount of ammonia released would be higher. So, we can advise them based on these too." Inside Agri-cone, a coin battery powers various sensors for monitoring soil moisture and temperature. The sensors detect gases such as including CO2 and ammonia. Humidity sensors track air moisture levels around plants, helping to prevent diseases and promote healthy growth. "Right now, we have put a small battery. But the goal is to put solar surface on top of the mushroom so that it becomes completely sustainable," Bapat notes. "Right now, we just use Wi-Fi. But the other solution is something called LoRa. It is used for IoT a lot in Europe and in Netherlands, their entire IoT network is on LoRa. It is more power efficient, and the range is higher which makes it suitable for a vast field," says Bapat. The team led by Bapat has also been working on a Remote Compost Monitoring system. The idea was to build a prototype for an intelligent IoT system that remotely monitors and manages compost which can then be used as fertilizer. Bapat explains that the system developed by them can help compost Bengaluru's garbage piles, with a lot of food waste in it, correctly while avoiding odour. The solution developed by the team comes with a sensor hub associated with each bin to monitor pH values, temperature, humidity, and CO2 levels of the compost inside them. It also allows remote monitoring

From Noida lab, a next gen cancer therapy that keeps it from coming back

With cancer incidence on the rise — and the cost of newer therapies keeping them out of reach of most — there has been a race to develop CAR-T cell therapies for Indian patients. Among researchers dedicated to lengthening the life span of survivors are those sitting in an unassuming building in the heart of Noida, who have been working tirelessly through the pandemic to develop therapies that are not just cost-effective but also innovative. CAR T cell therapies — or chimeric antigen receptor T cell therapies — collect a patient's own immune T cells, re-engineer them in the laboratory, multiply them and then infuse them back into the patient. These engineered T cells can then identify the cancer cells, attach themselves to them, ultimately destroying them. The latest innovation is about making them more persistent against a relapse. Cellogen Therapeutics is set to begin human trials soon for its novel CAR-T therapy at Christian Medical College-Vellore. It can not only fight a patient's current cancer but also create a memory in the body's immune system so that it can keep fighting it off whenever it emerges. The model has an Indian patent and a provisional US patent. This will work much like vaccines, to prevent relapse in cancer patients. Simultaneously, the researchers are also working on developing off-the-shelf CAR-T therapies — therapies that are not specifically designed for each patient. At present, there are two indigenously developed CAR-T therapies approved for the treatment of blood cancers in India — Immuneel's Qartemi that costs around Rs 40 lakh and ImmunoAct's NexCAR19 that costs around Rs 20 lakh. The first round of a battle When he came back from the UK, co-founder of Cellogen Dr Gaurav Kharya understood that India needed to develop its own cell therapies to ensure that these treatments became accessible. Cancer treatment was not his first interest, however. As a specialist of blood disorders, he wanted a way to cure sickle cell disease — a condition where the body starts producing red blood cells becoming rigid, sickle-shaped, and less capable of carrying oxygen. The shape of the blood cells can also lead to blockages in blood flow, leading to acute episodes of pain, chronic pain, organ damage, anaemia, infections, and strokes. He had been treating the children who suffer this pain with bone-marrow transplants. When his team did start working with lentivirus — the virus that carries modified cells back to the body — his interest grew using the same to treat cancers as well. "Researchers across the world were already working on this type of therapy," he said. He reached out to everyone working in the field to gain knowledge. "T cells are the immune system's foot soldiers. Most people do not get cancers because every day these foot soldiers identify thousands of cells that have acquired cancer-causing mutations and kill them. In some cases, however, some monster cells learn to dodge this identification mechanism and start proliferating," explains Dr Kharya. While T cells are generalists, antibodies are specialised and can attach to specific receptors to defend the body against infections and cancers. In cancer, receptors are proteins on or inside cells that act like docking stations. When specific molecules in the body bind to them, they send signals that tell the cancer cell to grow and multiply. Knowing which receptors a tumour has is crucial for choosing the right treatment. The chimeric T cells are a combination of both — they are specialised foot-soldiers. They can be trained to attach to specific receptors found on the cancer cells but in large numbers. Dr Kharya explains why his approach is novel. "The first-generation therapies could target the cancer cell only one-on-one.

meaning each modified T cell injected into the body could kill only one cancer cell. This is very disproportionate — a patient usually has billions of cancer cells while only two or three million modified T cells are administered. So, the cancer always had the upper hand and would relapse after a few months or years even in patients in whom it worked successfully. There was also no way to ensure that the body could start generating these cells on its own if and when the cancer relapsed," he says.

What can be a solution? Second generation therapies are trying to ensure that the modified T cells could start replicating within the body as per the need, increasing their persistence and thereby the time for which a patient remains cancer-free. First is adding more than one target. "Some of the second-generation therapies are bi-specific, meaning they target two receptors. There are only a minuscule number of cancer cells that can escape both the targets, reducing the chances of the therapy failing after some time," says Dr Kharya. Second, ensuring that the immune system learns how to produce the modified T cells on its own. "This is where our innovation lies. We create a memory in the immune system. We added another co-stimulatory domain to our engineered T cells, which ensures that every time these cells replicate, a number of them go to the central memory. So, even after the cancer has completely been killed, the memory persists. And, if there is a relapse, say after a couple of years, the immune system immediately recognises the cancer cells and starts producing the modified T cell," he explains. In layman terms, it would work like a vaccine, which trains the immune system to recognise various pathogens and produce specific antibodies against them. The phase I clinical trials of the Cellogen CAR-T therapy will start soon, probably within a month, at Christian Medical College-Vellore. The trial will be conducted on nine patients with acute leukaemia and nine with lymphoma. The phase II trial will be on 27 patients and in more than one trial site. These "living therapies" do not require phase III studies, so it should become available soon after these studies. The therapy is likely to cost around Rs 20 lakh. Cellogen is, however, working on another innovation that is likely to bring down the cost of the novel therapy further. What makes CAR-T therapy so costly is the fact that it cannot be mass-produced and needs to be created for each and every patient separately. Researchers are working to create CAR-T therapies that can multiply within the body, eliminating the need for extracting a patient's T cells and modifying them in specialised labs. This novel method can bring down the cost of treatment to around Rs 8 lakh. For in-vivo CAR-T therapies, instead of delivering the modified T cells using a virus vector, we deliver the genetic instruction for making them. This information reaches the DNA of the cells and then teaches it to make the modified T cells," says Dr Kharya. What this means is the same product can be used by anyone without concern for any reaction. Dr Kharya adds that there is no risk of the virus, which is used to deliver the genetic instruction, becoming infective. The real challenge is not knowing whether the genetic information delivered will be used accurately. "With these types of therapies, the biggest fear is that once you insert it, you don't know what will happen — how many on-target and how many off-target activities will take place. Now, we know that they are not that big of a concern and as an abundant precaution, monkey studies are being conducted instead of mice studies."

‘Health, social bonds, happiness’: Participants list benefits of ‘disputed’ Kerala exercise programme



Around 5.45 am, men and women wearing white T-shirts start trickling into the spacious compound of the Narikkuni English Medium School at Chembakkunnu village, located 18 km from Kozhikode in Kerala. Fifteen minutes later, as some in the group, between the ages of 40 and 60, start with their morning walk, a trainer instructs, "Line up." Soon, men and women take their positions in separate formations, marking the beginning of another day of the multi-exercise combination (MEC-7) programme, which has become the subject of a political row lately, after the ruling CPI(M) alleged that the Jamaat-e-Islami and Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), the political wing of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI), were using the platform to further their political agendas.

Raising alarm over the fitness programme, CPI(M) Kozhikode district secretary P Mohahan recently said, "Lifestyle diseases should be fought and remaining physically fit is important for everyone. However, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the SDPI are using MEC-7 for their narrow politics. The Jamaat is using it as a shield for its campaign for Islamic nation. Secular society should be vigilant against such attempts." Mohanan was forced to soften his stance — which was seen by some as continuation of the CPI(M)'s attacks on "radical" Muslim outfits — after it emerged that CPI(M) leaders in Kozhikode district supported the programme. CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan also stepped in, saying the party did not consider MEC-7 a tool for communal activities. While a section of Muslim clerics also came out against MEC-7, their stand did not get any support from the larger community. Even as the controversy was in the limelight, Congress Palakkad MP V K Sreekandan inaugurated a new session of the fitness programme in Pattambi, saying he wanted MEC-7 to be expanded across India, and underlined that there were "no religion elements" in it.

Kerala exercise programme After the final exercise, the participants break out of their formation to stand in a circle, and end the day's session by shaking each others' hands. At the Chembakkunnu school compound, the trainer guides those gathered through the paces. The MEC-7 programme comprises 21 exercises in all, each for the duration of a minute, performed over 21 minutes. The brief instructions to the 130-odd participants are about the only sounds around as they navigate from one exercise to another — jumping jacks, ankle rotations, knee rotations, hip rotations, head rotations and so on. The sound of synchronised inhaling and exhaling fills the ground as the second set of exercises, focusing on breathing, begins. A minute later, with their fingers interlocked, the participants stretch both arms over their heads while holding their breath. Next, the participants begin clapping overhead, and then stretching their arms behind their backs and bending forward, as they exhale.

In Telangana, birds of a feather ‘hunt’ rogue drones together

Seconds after the bird of prey soars under the blue Telangana skies, the "hunt" is over and it is on the ground with its "prey" — a rogue drone ensconced in a net that the eagle has been trained to deploy as part of its training for the Garuda Squad, the state police's unique bird squad. Among the latest additions to the Telangana Police security apparatus, the five-bird squad has been undergoing training to intercept nano (weighing up to 250 grams) and micro (between 250 g and 2 kg) rogue drones, especially in no-fly zones during VIP movement. The squad's primary role is to secure no-fly zones, say trainers.

Deployed recently, the Garuda Squad has proved to be cost-effective and efficient in counter-attacking small drones (costing around Rs 1 lakh), which have become a headache for security forces due to their size and maneuvering abilities. By teaching the birds to deploy nets, the Telangana Police has taken care of a critical concern — the safety of its squad from the spinning propellers of rogue drones as they are intercepted. telangana A collage showing an eagle from the Garuda Squad deploying "hunting down" a drone during a training exercise. (Photo: Special Arrangement)

"The training process involved a lot of trial and error, but no birds were harmed in the process. Instead of the bird seizing the drone directly, they have been trained to deploy a net, ensnare the drone and drag it to a secure, predetermined location, away from public areas," says Tafseer Iqbal, Deputy Inspector General, Intelligence Security Wing. Stating that Telangana is now ready to assist or share its knowledge and capabilities with other police departments and security forces across the country, Iqbal says, "The Garuda Squad, the first-of-its-kind, was conceptualised in 2021, following a state government order. Three years on, it has achieved operational readiness and is currently being utilised on a pilot basis." Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken about the need to establish a "comprehensive" anti-drone unit to protect the country from threats posed by drones. Shah was referring to a laser-equipped anti-drone gun mount system that has been developed, especially for border areas.

However, training the squad, which comprises kites and eagles, was easier said than done. "There were challenges, because these are birds and not machines. But the Garuda Squad is operationally ready for deployment now. We have been utilising their services for a while," says Iqbal, director, Integrated Intelligence Training Academy (IITA), Telangana's premier institution that provides expert training in canine handling, bomb detection and disposal techniques, and specialised instruction for both personal security officers (PSOs) and private security agencies. At the sight of an aerial intruder, a bird is released from its location to snatch from the skies the rogue drone — just as it would its prey.

"As an advanced training measure, the team has been acclimatising the birds to different scenarios, including crowd and noise levels that they would encounter in real-life situations," says an officer. telangana An eagle from the Garuda Squad deploys a net to snag a drone during a training exer-

The next steps of the routine are sit-ups and acupressure, in which participants squeeze the sides and centre of their stomachs. After a moment's rest, they begin with abdomen vibrations, meant to strengthen muscles and improve blood circulation, and then toe jumps for the next minute. After a pause, standing with their eyes closed, they begin meditating. Once that is over, they massage their faces with both hands. After the final exercise, the participants break out of their formation to stand in a circle, and end the day's session by shaking each others' hands. The participants say that the MEC-7 programme in Chembakkunnu began nearly four months ago, and has been part of their morning routine, for both men and women, since. It was more than a decade ago that ex-CISF assistant sub-inspector Salahudheen P conceptualised the programme, and now an estimated 1,000-plus groups which follow it, concentrated in Malappuram and Kozhikode.

A public sector bank employee, K M Venugopalan, 54, says he has been attending MEC-7 sessions since they began in 2012. "I used to go for morning walks, but got interested when I heard about the programme and joined it in the initial days itself. I lost 3 kg after I started regularly doing this exercise. People from all parties and religions take part. Every morning, we meet for nearly half an hour. This gives a pleasant start to the day, apart from helping us build social bonds," he says. Shafeeqe K M, the instructor at Chembakkunnu, says more and more people are drawn to the programme due to such benefits. "Social life and personal relations have improved. We have two brothers who had been estranged, hadn't spoken to each other for several years. But after they started attending MEC-7, change came, as every participant has to shake the hands of all the others before leaving the day's session," he says. Many participants at Chembakkunnu tell The Indian Express the exercise session has helped them manage weight, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, plus regulate their mornings, which otherwise they may have idled away. Aneesha, who works as a public relations officer at a nearby hospital, says that for women in particular, MEC-7 has been a game-changer. "This has grown into a collective of women. Homemakers get an opportunity to meet people of their locality and improve their bonds. We all live in the same village, but are not familiar with one another. This session gives us a positive energy for the day," she says. Graphic designer Shiny, who is in Chembakkunnu these days on a work-from-home assignment, agrees. "Homemakers are now celebrating their social life. All us women participants at MEC-7 recently went on a tour and are planning another next month. We discuss our issues and look at how we can help a member in need," she says, adding that the sessions have taught them a way to be happy. Usha, a homemaker, says her family was accommodative when she wanted to make MEC-7 part of her daily routine. "We rescheduled the domestic chores... I take a half-an-hour break from the kitchen. Earlier, by noon, I used to get exhausted both mentally and physically. Now, I feel the change." MEC-7 Kozhikode district coordinator Asharaf Pulparambil says the controversy has not impacted the fitness programme's conduct or popularity. "We are getting inquiries to start more such clubs... No religious element is involved in the exercise module," says Pulparambil. He also dismisses the claim of Muslim clerics that the exercise is against religion, putting it down to their fears regarding the intermingling of genders. "Women have separate sessions at MEC-7 and they too realise that health is important," the coordinator says, adding that they expect more units in Kozhikode after the present issues settle down.



"As an advanced training measure, the team has been acclimatising the birds to different scenarios, including crowd and noise levels that they would encounter in real-life situations," says an officer.

cise. As K Aravind Rao, Deputy Superintendent of Police, IITA, reiterates that the bird squad offers "an efficient and cost-effective alternative", Alladi Nagesh, who heads the team of trainers — Mohammad Fareed and Abir Bandari — says the species chosen for the squad are "aerial hunters with a killer instinct". Different birds have been designated for different purposes depending on their nature, size, flying pattern, hunting style and ability. For instance, kites are used for aerial surveillance due to their ability to fly at great heights with stability. "Cameras have been attached to the kite for such surveillance. Besides providing extremely stable visuals, they go unnoticed in the skies," say officials, adding that eagles have been deployed for an attack over a short distance. Yet another bird on the squad — officials declined to reveal the species — is best suited for long-range sniper-like attacks. Nagesh, who heads the team of bird trainers, says the squad's "sniper" can hit a speed of 390 miles per hour (approximately 620 km per hour), something a drone cannot achieve even while trying to evade a hit. Nagesh adds, "The birds are identified while still young and trained just like a canine — by using feeding as incentive. GPS trackers are attached to the birds so we don't lose them. They are given training in different real-life scenarios involving public address systems and loud music, to prepare them for various operational environments." Talking about a "key limitation", officials say the birds are unable to distinguish between authorised drones and the rogue ones. Calling the inclusion of birds in safeguarding the country's internal security a "welcome" move, Rajeev Khandelwal, general secretary, Hyderabad Birding Pals, an NGO dedicated to promoting birdwatching across Telangana, says, "As long as the birds are trained ethically, internationally set norms are followed, and they are not hurt or tortured and allowed to fly freely, it's a fantastic move."

Small cars return to fast lane as first-time buyers power auto surge



India's automobile market has delivered an unexpected upshift against a gloomy backdrop of elevated fuel prices, uncertainty over the monsoon and concerns among motorists about the ethanol-blending mandate. Overall vehicle retail sales rose almost 22% to a record 2.6 million units in June 2026, while passenger vehicle sales jumped 29% year-on-year to about 410,000 units, the highest recorded for the month.

Within that surge is another surprise: the return of the first-time car buyer, and with it, a revival in small cars that many in the industry believed had been permanently beaten back by the rise of sport utility vehicles. The clearest indication comes from Maruti Suzuki, the country's largest carmaker and the manufacturer with the widest entry-level portfolio. First-time buyers accounted for 51% of its sales in the fourth quarter of FY26, up from 42% in the first half and 48% in the third quarter. Replacement purchases formed 18% of sales, while households buying an additional car accounted for 31% of total sales. The numbers are specific to Maruti rather than the entire passenger vehicle industry, but they offer an important window into the market because of the company's dominance in small cars. They also suggest that the post-pandemic pattern — where existing car-owning households upgraded to larger vehicles while potential new buyers remained priced out — might be beginning to change.

Entry-level hatchbacks return as passenger vehicle market widens This shift is visible in company sales. Maruti's domestic passenger vehicle dispatches rose nearly 24% in June to 1,47,187 units. Sales of its mini segment, comprising the Alto and S-Presso, increased 78%, while its compact and mid-sized car portfolio grew nearly 16%. Its utility vehicle sales also rose nearly 29%, showing that entry-level cars are returning alongside SUVs rather than replacing them. Mahindra, which is overwhelmingly focused on SUVs, sold 60,393 utility vehicles domestically in June, up 28%. The passenger vehicle market, therefore, appears to be widening at both ends — aspirational buyers continue to purchase larger vehicles, while price-sensitive households are starting to enter the car market again.

CBDT issues guidance note on crypto reporting in line with OECD framework

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has come out with a 198-page guidance note on crypto-asset reporting obligations in a move that will help in global sharing of information on crypto transactions from next year. The guidance note has been released in line with the crypto asset reporting framework (CARF) outlined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) putting greater onus on crypto exchanges for providing transactional information about crypto assets.

The CBDT said that guidance note intends to provide guidance to Reporting Crypto-Asset Service Providers (RCASPs) for compliance with the reporting obligations under section 509 of the Income-tax Act, 2025, and under Rules 241 to 244 and Form 167 of the Income-tax Rules, 2026. However, it pointed out that nothing in the guidance note and FAQs should be construed as affecting the permissibility, or the legitimacy of the transactions in crypto-assets as well as regulation for transactions in crypto-assets. In the note's foreword, CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal said the rapid growth of crypto-assets has brought with it a fresh challenge even as India's commitment to combating tax evasion and protecting its revenue base has remained steadfast. The note will help RCASPs in understanding and discharging their obligations under the Income-tax Act and Income-tax Rules in a clear and practical manner, he added.

The CARF defines "Crypto-Assets" as "a digital representation of value that relies on a cryptographically secured distributed ledger or a similar technology to validate and secure transactions", which includes cryptocurrencies, as well as cryptography-based tokens. The framework is expected to bring tax transparency to the crypto-asset sector as it will impose obligations on a new subset of service providers, RCASPs, which are the service providers collecting and reporting information on transactions of crypto-assets. The CARF requires RCASPs to identify their users and to report on specified transactions, with a view to ensuring the annualised reporting of tax-relevant information concerning certain activities in relation to crypto-assets, the note said.

Once received by tax authorities, the information will be automatically exchanged with the tax authorities of the jurisdiction(s) of residence of the crypto-asset users, pursuant to an international agreement that provides a legal basis for the automatic exchange of such information for tax purposes, the note added. The G20 had mandated the OECD to develop a dedicated framework for the automatic exchange of information on crypto-assets. "India has actively contributed to the development of these standards through its participation in the Global Forum's CARF Group and the OECD's Working Party. The obligation to report transactions in crypto-assets is now provided for under section 509 of the Income-tax Act, 2025, with the due diligence and reporting requirements prescribed under the Income-tax Rules, 2026. This guidance note has been prepared to assist RCASPs in understanding and discharging their obligations under the Income-tax Act and Income-tax Rules in a clear and practical manner," Agrawal said. Such assets were capable of escaping the reporting obligations that apply to financial institutions under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and, under the Common Reporting Standard (CRS), thereby leaving a gap in the framework of global tax transparency, Prasenjit Singh, Member (Legislation), CBDT said. The Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF), developed by the OECD at the request of the G20, was conceived to address this gap by providing for the standardised and automatic exchange of tax-relevant information on transactions in crypto-assets between jurisdictions, he said.

Experts said though there is no additional filing requirement for taxpayers under this guidance note, the importance of accurate reporting and documentation has in-

Part of this growth momentum is because of the GST 2.0 tailwinds, which seem to be continuing, given that June brings up nearly nine months of high growth. The hatchback category is doing well again, largely due to lower GST aiding the base entry-level cars. Alongside SUVs, sedans are also reclaiming their spot higher up in the sales charts. The cut lowered upfront prices in a segment where even a relatively small increase in monthly loan instalments can push a household out of the market. Many of these consumers are two-wheeler owners upgrading to their first car. For such households, the buying calculation is shaped less by additional features and road presence than by purchase price, mileage, maintenance costs and access to service centres. Small hatchbacks, which had steadily lost ground as prices rose and manufacturers prioritised more profitable SUVs, remain the most accessible bridge between two-wheeler and car ownership. That bridge had weakened considerably over the past few years. Rising input costs, stricter safety and emissions requirements, and the withdrawal of several entry-level models had pushed up the minimum price of car ownership. At the same time, buyers who could afford a car increasingly stretched their budgets for compact SUVs, attracted by their higher seating position, styling and features. Rural markets race ahead, momentum seen beyond cars

Rural India has been central to the recovery. Passenger vehicle registrations in rural markets grew by more than 35% year-on-year in June, outpacing the 24.7% increase in urban centres, according to data compiled by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA). Better rural demand, access to financing and wider dealership networks have combined with the GST benefit to bring customers back to showrooms. Urban markets, which had remained weak earlier, also recovered after the tax reduction. The June numbers also point to a rapid change in what powers the vehicles Indians buy. Electric, hybrid and compressed natural gas vehicles together accounted for 40% of passenger vehicle retail sales, up from around 38% in May. CNG alone comprised 24.3%, hybrids 8.3% and electric vehicles 7.8%, as elevated petrol and diesel prices strengthened the case for lower running costs.

The momentum was visible beyond cars. Two-wheeler sales returned to double-digit growth, three-wheeler registrations rose 16.2%, and tractors recorded their second-best June, despite the prognosis of a weak monsoon, underscoring the breadth of the demand recovery. Soumyarendra Barik is a Special Correspondent with The Indian Express, specializing in the complex and evolving intersection of technology, policy, and society. With over five years of newsroom experience, he is a key voice in documenting how digital transformations impact the daily lives of Indian citizens. Expertise & Focus Areas Barik's reporting delves into the regulatory and human



creased considerably because the tax authorities will have greater access to transaction-level information. "Taxpayers should continue reporting crypto income in accordance with the existing provisions of the Income-tax Act; maintain proper records of purchases, sales, transfers and wallet movements; preserve exchange statements and supporting documentation; and ensure that the information disclosed in their income-tax return is consistent with the records available with crypto exchanges," Amit Agarwal, Senior Partner, Nangia & Co LLP said. With adoption of CARF, India is aligning its reporting standards with internationally accepted OECD norms, thereby strengthening cross-border exchange of crypto transaction information, Agarwal said. Since the CARF seeks to enable automatic exchange of crypto-related tax information among participating jurisdictions, it would imply greater transparency in tax reporting, he said. "Crypto transactions will increasingly come within the ambit of structured reporting and information exchange, similar to the existing FATCA and CRS framework. There will be better visibility for tax authorities as the objective is to bridge the information gap that existed because crypto-assets could be transferred or held outside the traditional financial system," he added.

Indian equity markets opened higher on easing crude oil prices

Mumbai: Domestic equity benchmark indices opened higher on Monday, supported by a sharp decline in crude oil prices. Sensex started the session 549.21 points or 0.72 per cent higher at 76,608.98, while Nifty gained 160.95 points or 0.68 per cent to 23,928.40. All sectoral indices traded in positive territory during the opening session. Nifty Mid-Small Financial Services index emerged as the top gainer, rising 1.29 per cent, followed by Nifty IT, which advanced 1.25 per cent. Nifty Media gained 1.06 per cent, while Nifty FMCG rose 1 per cent.

Among other sectors, Nifty Auto climbed 0.83 per cent, Nifty Chemicals added 0.80 per cent, Nifty Private Bank gained 0.80 per cent, Nifty Realty advanced 0.75 per cent, Nifty Metal rose 0.73 per cent and Nifty PSU Bank traded 0.72 per cent higher. According to market experts, the sharp decline in Brent crude prices from \$102 four days ago to around \$93 on Monday morning has emerged as a key positive for market sentiment. "The sharp dip in Brent crude price from \$102 four days ago to around \$93 this morning is a sentiment positive for the market. If the de-escalation of the West Asia conflict holds and crude price drifts lower, that can sustain a mild rally in the market," they said.

They added that the correction in global chip stocks and concerns surrounding the artificial intelligence (AI) trade could revive foreign portfolio investor (FPI) interest in Indian equities. International oil benchmark Brent crude fell more than 7 per cent or about \$7 to trade around \$91 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude declined over 7 per cent, shedding around \$6.4 to slip below \$85 a barrel.

He had no symptoms of Hepatitis B, yet it was too late: Why Indians need early therapy



A new Asian consensus recommends expanding antiviral therapy for hepatitis B before patients develop cirrhosis or liver cancer, aiming to reduce preventable deaths in India. A new Asian consensus recommends expanding antiviral therapy for hepatitis B before patients develop cirrhosis or liver cancer, aiming to reduce preventable deaths in India.

Thirty-seven-year-old Anand, an engineer from Begusarai, was admitted to hospital with deep jaundice, liver failure and a small tumour caused by hepatitis B infection. He needed an urgent liver transplantation. Sadly, he was unable to get a donor as his only brother was also found to have the infection. We lost Anand. He received his diagnosis nearly 12 years ago but was never put on treatment as he had no symptoms and his liver function tests (LFT) were normal. His death was a stinging pain for me. A life was lost because of inept policies.

Hepatitis B is a DNA virus that causes chronic but silent viral infection of the liver. In 10 per cent of the infected, hepatitis B can remain silent — show no symptoms — yet cause cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver failure and liver cancer. Globally, 1.1 million lives were lost due to the infection in 2024 — 17 per cent more than the numbers in 2015. And, in India, around 29 million people live with the infection. Global estimates show that around 15 to 25 per cent of the infected are likely to die due to delayed diagnosis as well as treatment restrictions as seen in the case of Anand. Only three to five per cent of the infected persons get the antiviral drug.

Why most patients are left untreated For decades, hepatitis B treatment has been offered only to those who have a high viral load, raised liver enzymes, or scarring or stiffening of the liver. Unfortunately, seven in 10 infected patients do not get the treatment based on these guidelines. These restrictions may be valid when the treatment is unaffordable or drug resistance is common. When it comes to India, as the pharmacy of the world, the country supplies generic antivirals globally. Potent low cost (less than Rs 1,000/month), once-daily generics, such as tenofovir and entecavir, which are part of the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP), can safely and effectively suppress the virus life-long.

A new treat-all approach The theme of this year's World Hepatitis Day (July 28) is 'Let us break it down'. This is good news for the people living with Hepatitis B. The new

Top endocrinologists call for diet to become standard care with GLP-1 weight loss drugs for Indians

A new consensus by leading Indian endocrinologists recommends structured nutritional counselling for every patient taking GLP-1 weight loss drugs such as semaglutide and tirzepatide to preserve muscle and sustain weight loss. (Representative image) A new consensus by leading Indian endocrinologists recommends structured nutritional counselling for every patient taking GLP-1 weight loss drugs such as semaglutide and tirzepatide to preserve muscle and sustain weight loss. Weight loss drugs like semaglutide and tirzepatide have transformed the management of obesity and Type 2 diabetes and in the process lowered risk of metabolic diseases. But research has shown that the medication works best only when paired with the right diet. Because these drugs suppress appetite and reduce food intake, patients who do not follow a structured nutrition plan may inadvertently lose muscle along with fat, develop vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and struggle to maintain their weight loss over the long term.

However, a new consensus from leading Indian endocrinologists, published in Obesity Pillars, highlights an often-overlooked aspect of GLP-1 therapy: effective treatment requires equally effective nutritional support. "All of us doctors have worked on a consensus protocol and will prescribe a dietary plan to be followed alongside the prescribed dosage of weight loss medicines. Patients may inadvertently reduce the intake of essential nutrients, increasing the risk of muscle loss, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, dehydration, and weight regain after treatment is discontinued. Proper nutrition that suits the Indian body type is a must," says Dr V Mohan, Chairman, Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre, Chennai and a co-author of the consensus.

Why nutrition is an equally important pillar for Indians during GLP-1 therapy GLP-1 medicines work by reducing appetite, increasing feelings of fullness, delaying stomach emptying and suppressing food cravings. These mechanisms make them highly effective for weight management but they also significantly reduce overall food intake. As a result, patients may consume insufficient amounts of protein, vitamins, minerals, and fluids. The expert panel emphasises that without careful nutritional planning, the weight lost may include valuable muscle and bone mass rather than fat alone, potentially compromising long-term health outcomes. "Indians need more attention to nutrition because we eat too many carbs, have less protein, eat unhealthy fats (saturated) and very little of healthy (monounsaturated fats). We are highly deficient in vitamin D, vitamin B12 and iron. We have excess of visceral fat and lower muscle mass," explains Dr Mohan. The consensus identifies five key nutritional and metabolic challenges associated with GLP-1 therapy. Gastrointestinal side effects such as nausea, vomiting, constipation, diarrhoea and abdominal discomfort are among the most common and often discourage patients from maintaining adequate food intake during the early phases of treatment.

Reduced food intake also increases the likelihood of nutritional deficiencies. Vitamins D and B12, iron, calcium, magnesium, and zinc are among the nutrients most commonly affected. Studies reviewed by the panel found that nutritional deficiencies almost doubled between six and 12 months after starting GLP-1 therapy, reinforcing the importance of regular nutritional assessment throughout treatment. Another important concern is the loss of lean muscle mass. Research suggests that approximately one-quarter of the total weight lost during GLP-1 therapy may come from muscle rather than fat, particularly in individuals with inadequate protein intake or insufficient physical activity. This issue is especially relevant for older adults and Asian Indians, who naturally have lower baseline muscle

Asian guidelines released in June 2026 have made very important recommendations. These recommend treatment at any level of detectable hepatitis B DNA and above normal liver enzyme levels, irrespective of scarring. This, in a way, supports 'Treat All' rather than 'Treat Select' policy. This is already true for the country's AIDS control programme, which initiates antiretroviral therapy for any detectable level of viral load. The AIDS programme demonstrates that it is possible. It would be a matter of pride for India if the NVHCP moves towards early viral suppression and cancer prevention. We should not wait for hepatitis B to produce advanced fibrosis, cirrhosis or liver cancer before offering protection. Some fear that patients without symptoms may not take the drugs regularly. This is ill-founded as more than 75 per cent patients adhere to treatment and reach virus undetectable state. Like HIV, the treatment should not be stopped.

Another key issue is the social stigma as hepatitis B is often clubbed with HIV. Marriages break if the wife tests positive for hepatitis B during pregnancy. Job offers are withdrawn; promotions are denied. Students are excluded. Surgery or dental care are refused. Families isolate individuals who pose no risk through ordinary social contact. This injustice is due to sheer ignorance. In India, a majority of hepatitis B infections are transmitted from mother to baby. The infected child can't choose their mother; they have no choice but to receive and silently carry the virus. Decades later, once detected, the person is deemed as one with moral failing and shamed publicly. This is the reason most relatives of a patient never get tested and treated. Overcoming the stigma is as important as providing treatment.

The law is changing but mindsets must too The Kerala High Court in 2025 held that denial of public employment solely because a candidate had hepatitis B violated Article 14 of the Constitution and is "illegal, unfair and unjustifiable" if the person is otherwise medically fit. India already has an instructive model in the HIV and AIDS Act, 2017. But, does India need a change of mindset or want millions approaching the court for their justified status and rights in the society?

We, at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, launched a campaign, EMPATHY (Empowering People Against Hepatitis), in 2018 to address stigma through advocacy, behaviour-change communication and patient empowerment. This should become part of national policy. There is also a need to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Every pregnant woman should be screened and those with high hepatitis B DNA should receive antiviral prophylaxis. Every newborn should receive hepatitis B vaccination, preferably within 24 hours. As for the millions already living with chronic infection, antiviral treatment is prevention of fibrosis, decompensation, liver cancer and premature death. For them the new Asian guidelines open a way to get antiviral medications. Now, general physicians are empowered to diagnose and prescribe antiviral therapy and not refer all patients. India can surely build and showcase the most effective model for elimination of hepatitis B.

mass and a greater risk of sarcopenia or muscle loss. Bone health also deserves attention. Rapid weight loss may contribute to reductions in bone mineral density, although current evidence remains mixed. The consensus recommends monitoring bone health in high-risk patients and ensuring adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D throughout treatment. Finally, maintaining weight loss after discontinuing GLP-1 therapy presents another major challenge. Several studies reviewed in the paper found that many patients regained a substantial portion of the weight they had lost within a year of stopping treatment. This rebound was often accompanied by worsening blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure readings, underscoring the importance of continuing nutritional guidance even after medication is withdrawn.

The nutritional strategy recommended by experts The consensus recommends beginning nutritional assessment before initiating GLP-1 therapy and continuing it throughout treatment. Maintaining adequate protein intake is considered one of the highest priorities. During active weight loss, patients should aim for approximately 1.2 to 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight each day to help preserve muscle mass, while maintenance requires at least 0.8 grams per kilogram daily. Carbohydrate quality is equally important. The panel encourages replacing refined carbohydrates with whole grains, millets, legumes and pulses, while emphasizing healthier fat sources such as olive oil, groundnut oil, sesame oil, rice bran oil, nuts, and seeds. These dietary changes support better metabolic health while maintaining nutritional adequacy.

Regular monitoring of micronutrient status is also recommended, particularly for vitamin D, B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin E, calcium, magnesium, zinc, chromium, and selenium. Rather than prescribing supplements universally, the authors advocate individualised assessment and supplementation based on documented deficiencies or inadequate dietary intake. Adequate hydration is another essential component of care, with most patients encouraged to consume at least two litres of water or other unsweetened beverages daily to minimize constipation and reduce the risk of dehydration-related kidney complications. Exercise is essential for preserving muscle

The consensus stresses that medication alone cannot protect muscle mass during weight loss. Structured resistance training performed two to three times each week, combined with approximately 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise, helps preserve lean muscle, maintain bone health, and improve long-term metabolic outcomes. Exercise should be tailored to each patient's age, fitness level, and medical condition, making it an integral component of successful GLP-1 therapy rather than an optional addition.

A practical clinical approach The expert panel recommends that clinicians evaluate each patient's medical history, nutritional status, muscle strength, dietary habits, and gastrointestinal symptoms before prescribing GLP-1 therapy. Regular follow-up should include monitoring body composition, muscle function, nutritional adequacy, and treatment tolerance. Patients experiencing poor food intake or persistent gastrointestinal symptoms may benefit from structured nutritional interventions, including diabetes-specific nutrition formula where appropriate, alongside resistance exercise and ongoing dietary counselling. Continued nutritional support after treatment discontinuation is also considered essential for preventing weight regain and preserving metabolic benefits. When combined with comprehensive nutritional and lifestyle support, GLP-1 therapies can deliver healthier, more sustainable outcomes over the long term.

Mirabai Chanu wins CWG gold: How lifter's relationship with the Games evolved



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When Mirabai Chanu walked into Glasgow's SEC Arena as a 20-year-old in 2014, the Commonwealth Games felt enormous. They were her first major multisport Games, and perhaps her first chance to announce that India had another weightlifting star ready to emerge. Every lift carried consequence. Every kilogram mattered.

Twelve years later, she leaves the same city and same venue with her fourth consecutive Commonwealth Games medal — and a golden hat-trick. With nobody to challenge her, Mirabai spiced things up by failing to lift in her first attempts in the snatch as well as clean and jerk sections. But once she got her bearings, she continued to rule the 48kg category in the Commonwealth like a monarch. Her yet another dominant run on Sunday, lifting a total of 190 kg (85kg in snatch and 105kg in clean and jerk) to win the gold medal, completed a remarkable streak unmatched in Indian weightlifting. It also underscored how Mirabai's relationship with the event had fundamentally changed over her four appearances. The competition that once represented the biggest stage of her career has gradually become a carefully managed stop on a much longer journey. Channu India's Mirabai Chanu celebrates after a successful lift in the women's 48 kilogram weightlifting during the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, Sunday, July 26, 2026. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup) In Glasgow in 2014, Mirabai was still introducing herself to the sporting world. Indian weightlifting was searching for its next face after the generation of Karnam Malleswari and Kunjarani Devi, and the soft-spoken Manipuri knew she belonged among the elite. She lifted fearlessly, pushing eventual champion Sanjita Chanu all the way before settling for silver with a total of 170kg. That medal became the foundation of a Commonwealth Games career that would stretch over more than a decade, surviving changing weight categories, injuries, Olympic cycles and the relentless demands of staying at the top. If Glasgow was about ambition, Gold Coast in 2018 became about redemption. Few athletes have arrived at a Commonwealth Games carrying the emotional baggage Mirabai did. Less than two years earlier, she had walked off the Rio Olympic platform without registering a single successful clean and jerk, one of the most painful afternoons

of her career. The failure lingered long after the Games ended. Rebuilding her confidence became as important as rebuilding her technique.

By the time she reached Australia, she was the reigning world champion. This time, there was no uncertainty. Mirabai produced one of the most dominant performances in Commonwealth Games history, totalling 196kg for a gold. The improvement from Glasgow was staggering — 26 kilograms added to her total in four years. At one level, even that commanding victory reflected an athlete still trying to prove something, as every successful lift was a statement that Rio had been an aberration. Between Gold Coast and Birmingham, Mirabai had become an Olympic silver medalist, one of India's biggest sporting icons and arguably the finest weightlifter in the Commonwealth. She no longer needed the Games to establish her credentials. Her victory was comfortable, almost inevitable. She defended her title with another Games record, lifting a total of 201kg. Long before arriving in Glasgow, Mirabai had made her priorities clear. The Commonwealth Games, she admitted, would not receive her absolute focus because the Asian Games remained the real objective. She spoke openly about avoiding unnecessary risks, about resisting the temptation to chase symbolic milestones such as a 90kg snatch, and about preserving her body for Aichi-Nagoya, where the level of competition rises dramatically with the presence of China, North Korea and other Asian powerhouses. Channu India's Mirabai Chanu celebrates after a successful lift in the women's 48 kilogram weightlifting during the Commonwealth Games, in Glasgow, Scotland, Sunday, July 26, 2026. (AP Photo/Manish Swarup) A fourth successive Commonwealth medal, therefore, says less about her dominance over this field than about her longevity. Across 12 years, the sport has evolved around her. Rivals have emerged and disappeared. Weight categories have been restructured. Injuries have interrupted momentum. Younger challengers have arrived with bigger ambitions and fresher bodies. Yet Mirabai has remained the constant, adapting not only her lifting but also her understanding of where each competition fits within the larger picture. The Asian Games have long remained the missing piece in an otherwise extraordinary collection. Mirabai owns an Olympic silver medal, a world championship title and now three Commonwealth Games gold medals. Yet, an Asian Games podium finish has eluded her, partly because of injury and partly because the continental field is considerably stronger than anything the Commonwealth can assemble. In many ways, the Asian Games has become the challenge that the Olympics once represented — a medal that would complete the story rather than merely embellish it. These Games were a carefully calibrated checkpoint. Every training session, every attempt selection and every kilogram lifted in Glasgow has been planned with Japan in mind. Unlike the eager youngster of 2014, who chased every possible lift because every lift could change her career, today's Mirabai understands that sometimes greatness lies in knowing exactly what not to chase.

Rishikanta Singh used to wash dishes for Rs 150. Now, he has a CWG silver medal

GNS News Agency,,July 30

On Sunday night, when Rishikanta Singh Chanambam walked into the dining hall at the Indian contingent's accommodation in Glasgow with a Commonwealth Games medal, he was not basking in the glory of the silver medal he won, courtesy of his 264kg lift in men's 60kg weightlifting. Instead, looking at the kitchen staff of the Glasgow games, his mind recollected fragments of an 11-year-old kid. A child who used to earn Rs 150 a day while working at a roadside dhaba near the Ngaihaktang Makha Maning Leikai village in Imphal, Manipur. Rishikanta grew up washing utensils, carrying buckets of water and spending his evenings at construction sites — just so that his family could have food on their plates. Hours after his achievement, the Indian Navy Petty Officer found himself reliving the months that shaped him.

"Before I got into sports as a teenager, I worked as a helper at a local dhaba, washing utensils and carrying water apart from working at construction sites to earn extra money for the family. My father, Irabot Singh Chanambam, worked as a taxi driver, and things were so bad that we could afford only one meal a day. I remember eating rice or wheat flour balls without any vegetables, which my mother, Chandrajini Devi Chanambam, used to make. For over three months, I worked for Rs 150 per day to support my family. And today, as I was having dinner with the silver medal still in my pocket and seeing the kitchen staff work, I was reminded of all those days. This medal is for people like me, who have had no support and had to share the burden of their family," shared an emotional Rishikanta while speaking to The Indian Express from Glasgow. At a village fair, a sports teacher noticed the wiry youngster. Then 12, Rishikanta, who mostly played football, appeared for trials at the SAI academy at Khuman Lampak Stadium. He was shortlisted for both boxing and weightlifting before then coach S Brojendra Singh — current secretary of the Manipur Weightlifting Association — made the final call. "When Rishikanta came to the trials, he was very thin, but his muscles were very strong. I could see the willpower in his eyes, and he took up weightlifting with natural ease," remembers coach Singh.

The stadium, which had nurtured champions such as Mirabai Chanu, also gave Rishikanta something he had never taken for granted — regular meals. "Training at the sports complex meant that I did not have to worry about meal time during the time of training. I would visit the local sports shops to get the local shoes and belts modified with



stuff from discarded belts or shoes," shared Rishikanta. After turning 18, Rishikanta stepped away from the sport for nearly a year. With the family still battling financial hardship and no job or financial security in sight, he stayed home, convinced his weightlifting journey had ended. "I was demotivated. My family would talk about all the hardships and how those who could afford it could not win medals, and we did not have any idea about a job through sports. It was when the then Manipur Weightlifting Association secretary, Sunil Elangbam, called me and asked me about my training. I told him that I had left weightlifting due to my family's financial condition and that I was not eligible for the SAI Academy. Sunil sir told me about the newly opened Weightlifting Centre of Excellence in Takyel in Imphal, and I gave the trials and was selected for that. It was like a new life for me," remembers the weightlifter. Rishikanta became national champion in the men's 55kg category in 2019 before winning gold at the Commonwealth Championships in Samoa later that year. The same season also brought him financial security through a job with the Indian Navy. On Sunday, Rishikanta became the first male weightlifter from Manipur to win a medal in the Commonwealth Games. He knows how he is going to celebrate the medal. "I will hand this medal to my parents and my brothers and sisters who always believed in me. When I started earning, I also made a point to help youngsters in whatever way I could so that anybody can become like me. And I plan to do it this time too." There is, however, one phone call he wants to make before anything else. "When I worked at the dhaba, I had a friend who has now shifted to Guwahati. I will call him and tell him about this medal. I also hope that the dhaba owner will tell his customers that a Commonwealth Games medalist once washed dishes in his kitchen."

Raja Muthupandi wins silver in 65kg weightlifting, India's fourth medal at CWG 2026

Raja Muthupandi won India's fourth medal of the 2026 Commonwealth Games, and third in weightlifting, by winning silver in men's 65kg late on the fourth day in Glasgow. Muthupandi had a best lift of 126kg in snatch and 160kg in clean and jerk. His total lift was 286kg. Malaysia's Aznil Bidin won gold with a Games record lift of 299kg while Papua New Guinea's Morea Baru won bronze with 282kg at the SEC Armadillo.

It is India's third medal in weightlifting and fourth overall at Glasgow 2026. Rishikanta Singh had won silver earlier in the day in men's 60kg while Mirabai Chanu later won an incredible third consecutive CWG gold in women's 48kg. The medal marks a remarkable turnaround for Muthupandi, who has dealt with a host of injury and health setbacks in recent years. He secured a flight to Glasgow by winning the national title and setting a new national record. Muthupandi was unsuccessful in his first attempt at

Shreyas Iyer hails India's 'flawless' T20I series sweep over Zimbabwe



GNS News Agency,,July 30 Harare: Captain Shreyas Iyer described India's performance during their 3-0 T20I series win over Zimbabwe as 'flawless,' barring a few dropped catches, while praising the squad and coaching staff for coming together in executing team plans to perfection. After suffering series defeats in Ireland (2-0) and England (4-0), Iyer got his maiden series victory as India's T20I captain when the visitors sealed a clinical 35-run win in the third and final T20I over Zimbabwe at the Harare. "I think we were flawless, honestly speaking, throughout the series, barring the catches that we dropped. But phenomenal effort by each and every individual, including the support staff and whatever we mentioned in the team meeting, executing it to the best of the abilities was something that we always looked up to.

"The approach was a notch above the others. So congratulations to each and every individual who have been part of this victory and thank you to VVS sir as well for motivating us and inspiring each and every day when we stepped onto the field. I think everything that you mentioned

was apt and we could relate to it. So thank you so much and thank you to each and every individual," said Iyer in a video posted on BCCI's social media accounts on Monday. VVS Laxman, who stepped in as India's head coach for the series, lauded Iyer's leadership and pointed out how the skipper bounced back after a tough start to his captaincy tenure to unite a largely fresh squad. "Firstly, a big round of applause to everybody. We set out to win the series and that was what we aspired to do. I would like to congratulate Shreyas because he had a rough start to his captaincy career, but the way he came back and right from the first day when he joined us, one day before the first game, he was very optimistic. "He was in fact looking forward to play with all of you. It's a new group of players. We know that only four or five were there in England, joined us on this tour. But he was so confident and I think a lot of credit for this victory should be given to the captain. The way he encouraged each one of us. It was again a very collective effort."

Laxman further spoke on how the squad embraced a winning mentality from day one of assembling in Zimbabwe. "We had one thing which we wanted to achieve. We wanted to exhibit the winner's mindset. If you remember the first meeting we had before the first match, we said that as a team we can display the winner's mindset and I think through the three matches, each one of you have displayed that. "So congratulations on that. I would like to thank all the coaches, all the support staff and Amit and the manager for your efforts through the series. Sometimes we don't realise how important a role you all play. So thank you very much for your commitment towards making sure that our players were ready for this series and through the series. All of you have made sure that they are best prepared for each and every match. So thank you to each one of you."

'Abhishek is a player with lot of hype': India batter questions Samson's T20I snub



Abhishek Sharma's prolonged run of poor scores has led to criticism of the team management for their 'unfair' preference for the left-handed opener over wicket-keeper Sanju Samson, who was dropped from the T20I squad ahead of the Zimbabwe series that concluded on Sunday. Out-of-favour India batter Hanuma Vihari questioned why Abhishek has received firm backing from the management while Samson was sidelined despite leading India to T20 World Cup glory with three back-to-back match-winning knocks. "Before the World Cup, Sanju Samson did not

perform in five games and lost his spot in the starting 11. He then made a comeback and became Player of the Tournament. In that same tournament, how many runs did Abhishek Sharma make?" In the UK series, apart from one fifty, there were no scores at all. Not even 20s and 30s, no significant score. One fifty in the last eight matches. If you include the World Cup, three half-centuries in the last 18 matches," Vihari said on his YouTube channel. In his last 10 innings since India's tour to Ireland last month, Abhishek has registered only 191 runs with a solitary half-century. Notably, the southpaw has been dismissed on single-digit scores in his last four innings. Vihari questioned why Samson has not received the same treatment during patches of poor form. "How many matches Samson played in the World Cup? Three. And fifties in all three. Abhishek's highest score in the five matches is 16.

Why is no one talking about it? When it comes to Samson, they say he is inconsistent. Fair enough. But he can win high-pressure matches on his day. "Abhishek is a player with a lot of hype, but Samson is also equal. He has also performed in the IPL. Why different rules for different players?" The 31-year-old Samson, who was the World Cup's Player of the Tournament, has featured in four innings in Ireland and England, scoring 33 runs.

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From 'curse' to crown: How Delhi teen Anahat Singh scripted Indian squash history



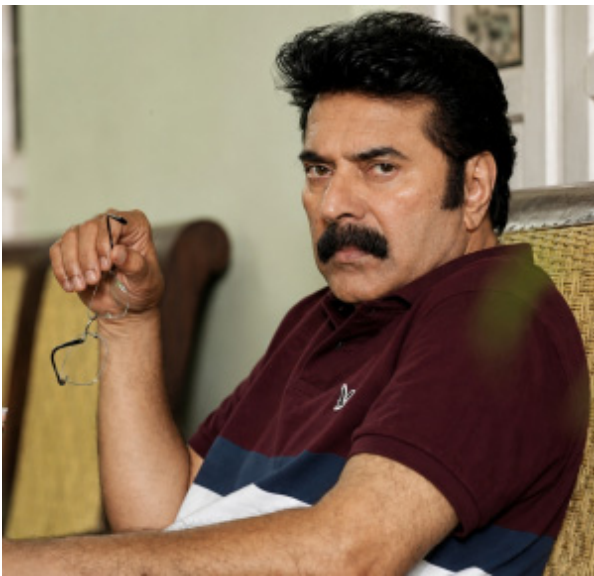
It was Anahat Singh's fifth and, importantly, final chance to get it right at the World Juniors Championships in Canada. She had four quarterfinals, one bronze, plenty of deja vu, and even a French coach to match. Gregory Gaultier had been in her tactical corner as coach, the squash legend most famous for losing four Senior World Championship finals before winning the fifth, to teach her precisely how to handle this last week. The 18-year-old from Delhi, whose father is a lawyer and mother an interior designer, had called the World Juniors a "curse" because she kept missing the title. When she broke the curse, she became India's first-ever world title holder among women. On Saturday in Ontario, finally, the teen prodigy made up for all misses and ended Egypt's run of 13 straight titles, after beating three from the squash powerhouse in the quarters, semis and finals. The attacking player with Indian flair and Gregorian gumption defeated Ruqaiyya Salem 11-3, 11-7, 11-9 to en-

sure a non-Egyptian won the World Juniors for the first time since 2011. India's last finalist was Joshana Chinappa in 2005.

At least 4 people, including a child, wounded by gunfire at Seattle festival, hospital says

Seattle: At least four people, including a child, were wounded in a shooting Sunday night at an events complex close to the Space Needle in Seattle, a hospital spokesperson said. Authorities did not immediately release more information. Police were investigating the shooting and urged people to avoid the area. Harborview Medical Center spokeswoman Susan Gregg said the hospital admitted four victims including a toddler, a 23-year-old man and two adult women. One patient was in critical condition, she said. The Seattle Centre was hosting the Bite of Seattle food festival over the weekend. Estan Wakonabo said he and his girlfriend were at the festival waiting in line for a photo booth when he was shoved from behind and he turned to see a rush of people fleeing. "People were hiding, were pushing, people were falling on the ground, baby strollers were falling," Wakonabo said, adding that was when he heard gunshots.

‘Cried like a child’: Cochin Haneefa kept his fatal illness a secret from friend Mammooty



called Mammooty “sobbing like a little child,” heartbroken that he couldn’t save Haneefa. “When talking about Haneefa, there’s no way one can skip mentioning Mammooty’s name. I can only wonder why they weren’t born as brothers. Mammooty had that much love for Haneefa, and the latter had double the love for him. While Haneefa was expressive, Mammooty wasn’t as much. Yet, his love for Haneefa was always evident,” Mukesh shared. Mukesh recalls Mammooty’s grief over Cochin Haneefa’s demise. He continued, “That’s why when Haneefa left us, Mammooty burst out crying like a little child. His crying was mostly because... until the very end, until his condition got very bad, Haneefa didn’t tell anyone about his disease or that his condition was serious. He kept it a secret, and only in the final days did people realise it. By then, his condition had reached such a stage that he could no longer be saved. That’s why Mammooty cried.” “Those were heart-melting scenes. Mammooty wasn’t just crying; he was scolding Haneefa, saying, ‘Couldn’t he have told me at least? I would have taken him anywhere in the world for treatment.’ Those were the moments that made us realise how innocent he is as a person,” Mukesh added. Following Haneefa’s death, Mammooty wrote on social media, “I lost my best friend. My heartfelt tribute to Cochin Haneefa... pray for him.” From villain roles to master director: Cochin Haneefa’s cinematic journey Cochin Haneefa made his acting debut in 1972 with Azhimukham. However, most of his early roles were villainous. By the 1980s, Haneefa had become a notable actor. In 1985, he made his directorial debut with Oru Sandesham Koodi, starring Mammooty. In 1986, he wrote and directed the legal drama Moonnu Masangalku Mumbu, also starring the megastar. He also helmed movies such as Oru Sindoor Pottinte Ormaykku (1987), Aankiliyude Tharattu (1987), Paasa Paravaigal (1988), Paadatha Thenikkal (1988), Veena Meettiya Vilangukal (1990), Pagalil Pournami (1990), Vatsalyam (1993), and Bheesmacharya (1994), before shifting his focus entirely to acting. Cochin Haneefa is best known for his performances in movies such as Kireedam, Chenkol, Punjabi House, Mannar Mathai Speaking, Devaasuram, Praja, Arayannangalude Veedu, Sathyam Sivam Sundaram, Swapnakoodu, Mazhathullikkilukkam, Meesa Madhavan, Kuljikoonaan, CID Moosa, Kilichundan Mampazham, Pulivaal Kalyanam, and Thilakkam, among others. Meanwhile, a big dream that Haneefa left behind 16 years ago finally became a reality recently as the family of the beloved actor moved into their own home. The new house, built on Ambedkar Road in Vennala, Kochi, has been named ‘Cochin Haneefa’s AB Manzil,’ just as he had deeply wished.

Cochin Haneefa was renowned not just as a phenomenal actor but also as an exceptional writer-director. In a career spanning close to 40 years, he appeared in over 300 films across Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi, and Telugu languages, winning the hearts of audiences wherever he set foot. Haneefa was also a beloved figure among industry insiders, and almost everyone still has only the nicest things to say about him. The unbreakable bond between Mammooty, Cochin Haneefa While he shared a warm bond with almost everyone around him, Malayalam megastar Mammooty held a special place in Cochin Haneefa’s heart. In fact, the only time Malayalees saw Mammooty, widely considered as the regional film industry’s Valyettan (big brother), cry in public was when the actor-director died. The image of a highly emotional Mammooty struggling to pacify a sobbing Maniyanpilla Raju during one of the moments following Haneefa’s death still remains etched in Malayalees’ minds. Cinema Anatomy | Jana Nayagan: Vijay’s propaganda film makes even Sura and Villu look like masterpieces For the unfamiliar, Cochin Haneefa died at the age of 59 in February 2010. He had been unwell for some time due to liver-related problems. However, not even his closest friends in the industry knew about his illness till the last minute, as he did not wish to burden others with his woes. By the time the megastar and others learned of his condition, it was too late. During a 2023 episode of his podcast, Mukesh Speaking, actor-politician Mukesh recalled the Malayalam megastar’s reaction to Haneefa’s illness and eventual death. He re-

Who is Samreen Kaur? Meet actor-model who is dating cricketer Arshdeep Singh

Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh Indian cricketer Arshdeep Singh has confirmed his relationship with actor and model Samreen Kaur. Weeks after fuelling dating rumours, Indian fast bowler Arshdeep Singh has officially introduced Samreen Kaur as ‘my person’ on Instagram. The cricketer put an end to weeks of dating speculation by making his relationship with actor-model Samreen Kaur Instagram official. The cricketer shared two loved-up pictures confirming what fans had long suspected, and the post went viral in no time. The post now has more than 2.2 million likes, along with congratulatory messages pouring in from fans and fellow cricketers. Born on September 7, 1999, Samreen Kaur hails from Jammu and Kashmir. She first stepped into the spotlight as a finalist representing the state at the Femina Miss India 2018 pageant before pursuing a career in modelling and acting. She later completed her B.Com (Honours) from Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce, Pune. Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh Samreen Kaur hails from Jammu and Kashmir. Samreen made her acting debut with Kabir Khan’s 83 and later appeared in the ZEE5 web series Nail Polish and featured in the film Sardaar Ji 2. She has also featured in Punjabi projects and gained immense popularity through music videos with artists including Badshah, Guru Randhawa, Jubin Nautiyal, Jass Manak and Maninder Buttar, making her a familiar face among young audiences. Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh Samreen Kaur is an actor and model. Apart from films, Samreen has built a massive social media presence, where she regularly shares fashion, travel and lifestyle content. Her popularity has continued to grow over the years, making her one of the emerging faces in the entertainment industry. Before her relationship with Arshdeep Singh became official,



Samreen Kaur was also rumoured to be dating popular YouTuber Ashish Chanchalani. However, both had dismissed the speculation, clarifying that they were close friends and not romantically involved. In a later interaction, Samreen revealed that their bond had changed over time due to personal reasons, while emphasising that they continued to have mutual respect. Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh Samreen Kaur was earlier rumoured to be dating popular YouTuber Ashish Chanchalani. Samreen Kaur and Arshdeep Singh’s dating rumours Rumours about Samreen and Arshdeep’s relationship first surfaced during the IPL 2026 season, when she was spotted cheering for the Punjab Kings pacer and the duo was seen together on multiple occasions. While both remained silent initially, Arshdeep’s latest Instagram post has now officially confirmed their relationship.

Ragula Prasad, S/o Premanadam Condemns the Statement Made by Arepalli Padma

Ragula Prasad, S/o Premanadam Condemns the Statement Made by Arepalli Padma Published in the Press on 07.06.2026 in Indian Chronicle “Ragula Prasad strongly condemns the statement made by Smt. Arepalli Padma in the press on 07.06.2026, wherein she alleged that certain influential persons are attempting to encroach upon land legally allotted to her by the Government. “These allegations are completely false, misleading, and intended to divert public attention from the actual facts. On the contrary, it is Smt. Arepalli Padma, her sons Arepalli Srinivas, Arepalli Krishna, and Arepalli Uday, along with her son-in-law Batheni Sunil & Shri Laxman Naik, and Shri Maisa Shobhan, who have been making repeated attempts to illegally encroach upon my land by relying on false and fabricated claims. “A brief account of the facts is as follows: “In the year 1990, I purchased 10 guntas of land in Survey No. 702/12 from Sri Arepalli Ramaswamy, the paternal uncle of Smt. Arepalli Padma. The land is situated backside of the church, Warangal Road and adjacent to the land of Sri Raji Reddy. Since the date of purchase, my family has been in continuous, peaceful possession of the property. We cultivated the land, and my parents also constructed a shed and resided there for several years. “In 2010, the sons of Smt. Arepalli Padma, namely Arepalli Srinivas, Arepalli Krishna, and Arepalli Uday, filed O.S. No. 44 of 2010 before the Court at Narsampet, falsely claiming that the land belonged to their grandfather and asserting that they were the lawful owners of the said 10 guntas in Survey No. 702/12. Based on these false claims, they obtained a temporary injunction order. “During the pendency of the case, members of the Arepalli family allegedly pressured and threatened my family, demanding ₹3,00,000 to withdraw the suit. Under compulsion, my parents paid ₹1,00,000 to the Arepalli family on 23.06.2010, and a stamp paper acknowledging the transaction was executed. Despite receiving the amount,

they failed to withdraw the case, and the litigation continued. “After detailed examination of the evidence and several hearings, the Hon’ble Court dismissed the temporary injunction and ultimately passed a decree in our favour in 2021, thereby affirming our lawful rights over the property. “Following the demise of my father in 2023, Smt. Arepalli Padma, her sons, Batheni Sunil, Laxman Naik, and Maisa Shobhan have continued their attempts to unlawfully occupy and encroach upon our land. “In view of these repeated acts, I lodged a written complaint with the Station House Officer on 26.06.2026, and the matter is presently under police enquiry. “As my family resides outside Narsampet due to employment obligations, the Arepalli family appears to be taking advantage of our absence by attempting to encroach upon our property. Having failed before the competent court, they are now making baseless allegations in the media that others are trying to encroach upon their land. These allegations are entirely false, malicious, and intended to mislead the public while concealing their own unlawful activities. “I firmly deny all allegations made by Smt. Arepalli Padma and urge the public and the media not to be misled by such false and defamatory statements. The matter has already been adjudicated by the competent court, and the facts clearly establish our lawful ownership and possession of the property.



Pankaj Tripathi’s Ohh My Dog postponed, director says ‘won’t repeat’ OMG 2 clash mistake



Pankaj Tripathi’s upcoming film Ohh My Dog has been postponed by a week amid Spider-Man Brand New Day release. Pankaj Tripathi’s upcoming film Ohh My Dog has been postponed by a week amid Spider-Man Brand New Day release. Pankaj Tripathi’s upcoming family entertainer Ohh My Dog was set to hit the theatres in July 31. However, the release date of the film has been postponed by a week. It is now scheduled to debut on the big screens on August 7. While talking to SCREEN exclusively, the film’s director Amit Rai revealed that the reason behind the postponement is lesser screens and a clash with other big releases. He also admitted making a mistake by releasing his Akshay Kumar, Pankaj Tripathi starrer OMG 2 with Sunny Deol’s Gadar 2, in 2023. When asked about pushing the release date of his film Ohh My Dog, he shared, “We made a practical decision because the screens will get occupied with Spider Man. Already Odyssey has taken over the theatres, and Dhamaal 4 is also screening in two shows. So, our base is a family audience and it will be scattered in all these films, a big chunk will go to Spider-Man Brand New Day. There won’t even be a chance of increasing the number of screens.”

The director also opened up about the positive response the upcoming movie received from his close friends

and family. “I can’t say no to close friends, so we have been doing special group screenings. I wanted reactions, so we have done it in Jaipur, Lucknow, and Calcutta. The reactions are very positive, and that made me take the decision overnight. The reaction of the audience, especially children, was tremendous, more than expected,” he said. Rai also recalled making a big mistake of releasing his film OMG 2 on the same date Gadar 2 was premiering, and the latter turning out to become the winner. “I didn’t want that positive response to stay limited to close friends. It has to go to people and become big. My last film had the same fate, the crew and my friends loved it. They wanted it to be showcased in schools, but it got an ‘A’ certificate. Despite that, I kept saying that the release date should be changed,” he elaborated. He continued, “But, it was announced by then and the film was released with Gadar 2. Even with the competition, my film earned Rs 188 crore, but Gadar 2 collected Rs 500-600 crore. If OMG 2 had a solo release, it would have comfortably earned Rs 300-350 crore. It shouldn’t have been released with Gadar 2, so I don’t want to repeat history. I will not make the same mistake again.”

In a statement to the media, filmmaker Amit Rai spoke about the decision and said that Spider-Man is expected to “create history” with an opening of “around Rs 50 crore,” leaving little room for other films. “Even after making such a good film, the reason won’t be anything else... the reason will be that we simply won’t have the space to occupy screens,” he mentioned. Explaining the postponement of Ohh My Dog, Rai said the team decided to “step aside briefly,” delay the release by a week, and return when audiences had already watched the bigger releases. “By then, there will be a little space, and we might be able to grow there.” Besides Tripathi, Ohh My Dog also stars Pavan Malhotra and Maahi Rai. The family drama tells the story of a young child’s pure bond with a stray dog and handling the major problem of dog trafficking. It also features canine stars Oscar and Bruno, along with more than 250 real dogs. Major clash with Odyssey and Spider Man For the unversed, Christopher Nolan’s The Odyssey hit the theatres last week and has been performing well at the box office. It has already crossed \$600 million globally. On the other hand, Marvel’s much-awaited Spider-Man: Brand New Day is also releasing next week, on July 31. Having said that, Spider Man is missing an IMAX release because Nolan’s The Odyssey secured a worldwide four-week IMAX exclusivity window from July 17, 2026. This block leaves no IMAX screens available for the Marvel release.

Aishwarya Lekshmi calls Kangana Ranaut a ‘mad genius,’ praises her Parliament speeches

Actor Aishwarya Lekshmi has offered a glowing endorsement of Kangana Ranaut, calling the actor-turned-politician a “mad genius” and praising her growth as a public speaker and her work in Parliament. “I love Kangana Ranaut. I feel like she is a mad genius,” Aishwarya said in a conversation with Galatta Plus. “I like how she taught herself to talk well and be a good orator. I love the speeches she gives in Parliament.”

Kangana Ranaut arrived in Mumbai as a teenager from Manali in Himachal Pradesh with no backing, no formal training in acting, and limited command over English or Hindi. She has spoken openly about how she was mocked in the early years of her career for her accent and her lack of polish. Over the next decade, she taught herself to speak fluently in both languages, worked on her diction, and went on to win four National Film Awards for Best Actress, a record matched by very few in Hindi cinema. Her performances in Queen, Tanu Weds Manu Returns, Fashion and Manikarnika established her as one of the most acclaimed actors of her generation.

In 2024, she entered politics, winning the Mandi Lok Sabha seat as a BJP candidate, and has since made several interventions in Parliament, including speeches during the Women’s Reservation Bill debate. Her political positions and confrontational public style have made her a deeply polarising figure, but even her critics have acknowledged her oratory skills on the floor of the House. Aishwarya Lekshmi’s trajectory has its own version of that story. Born in Thiruvananthapuram, she completed her MBBS from Sree Narayana Institute of Medical Sciences in Ernakulam before entering modelling in 2014 and making her acting debut in 2017 with the Malayalam film Njandukalude Nattil Oridavela. Her breakthrough came the same year with Mayaanadhi opposite Tovino Thomas. She went on to work across three languages, appearing in Varathan and Kumari in Malayalam, Gargi and Ponniyin Selvan in Tamil,



and Ammu in Telugu. Like Kangana, Aishwarya has no family connections in the film industry. She has spoken in the past about the pressure women face in the industry to conform, including in interviews where she has been vocal about society’s obsession with marriage and the limited space given to female-led stories. The comments have drawn a mixed response online, with some appreciating Aishwarya’s willingness to express admiration for a controversial figure, and others questioning the praise given Kangana’s political positions. Neither actor has responded to the online reaction so far.

Karan Johar to host The Traitors Season 2, premieres on August 13

Mumbai: Filmmaker Karan Johar is all set to return as a host for the second season of the reality show “The Traitors”, which will start streaming from August 13.

Collaborating with independent distributor All3Media International for the local adaptation of IDTV’s BAFTA and Emmy Award-winning global format, season two is produced by Dharmatic Entertainment. 21 celebrity players will battle for the grand prize and the coveted title.

Nikhil Madhok, Director and Head of Originals, Prime Video, India said: “The Traitors has become one of Prime Video India’s most defining reality franchises, transforming the genre with its unique blend of intelligent gameplay, psychological strategy, and riveting entertainment.” “Audiences across the country were hooked by its emotionally charged mind games and raw, unfiltered drama. With season two, the stakes are higher, the gameplay is sharper, the drama is more intense, and the new line-up of players will keep audiences on the edge of their seats at every turn.” “We’re thrilled to have Karan Johar return as the host and master orchestrator, and we can’t wait for audiences to experience another extraordinary season.”

“The Indian adaptation of The Traitors struck a powerful chord with viewers in its very first season, and we couldn’t be more delighted to see it return for another thrilling chapter. The passion, engagement, and sheer obsession from fans have been extraordinary, and we’re excited to build on that momentum with season two,” said Sabrina Duguet, EVP, APAC, All3Media International.