

TG EAPCET 2026 internal sliding schedule announced

Hyderabad: The Technical Education department on Tuesday announced the TG EAPCET 2026 centralised internal sliding schedule for engineering admissions.Geographic Reference

Students who want to change their course in the same college can exercise web options on August 12 and 13, and seats will be allotted on August 15. They have to report to the college with the new seat allotment order either on August 16 or 17.

Government given last chance to explain land allotment to congress leader's children

Hyderabad: Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin of the Telangana High Court on Tuesday gave the State Government a last opportunity to place its stand on the regularisation of land allotted to the son and daughter of senior Congress leader K. Kesava Rao at rates allegedly lower than the prevailing market value.

Towards the grain brokers...!!

Government money "24" crores embezzled made by Yadadri Rice Industries millers.....!!!!!!?

Ignoring officials.....!!!!!!?

One arrested.... Four absconding.....!!!!!!?

The grain belongs to the government..

The money belongs to the government..

The rice mill traders who are the brokers..



In the name of Yadadri (God's) Rice Industries.. The rice mill owners...? The government has been embezzling 24 crores... The district officials who have been looking for a scam for two years...? And when will they recover it...? Who is responsible for the government money...? The previous district collector...? The additional revenue collector...? Civil supply.. FCI.. officials.....?!! The truth must be explained to the people fearlessly... The government money must be recovered...?!! The government's civil supplies minister must respond.....!!



(Mandava Srisailam....Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 11):- The government is buying the grain from the farmers for the poor.. and handing it over to the rice millers to process it into rice.. The Civil Supply officials.. with the help of FCI officials are responsible for the grain.. Later, the poor people should have received ration through the Civil Supply and FCI officials.. The rice mill brokers misled the poor people and sold it to other brokers and made money. The money belongs to the government.. to the brokers.. as they say.. the behavior of a miller in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district is



typical.. we have looted as much government money as we can.. what will the authorities do to us.. we will also give shares to them.. with that confidence, a rice miller is running his business indirectly.. conducting his transactions.. the corruption of rice millers on government grain for the last two years.. has been rampant and has brought shame on the government.. we are coming to you with a special report by the "Indian Chronicle Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau In-charge" Mandava Srisailam.. late.. "We have taken legal action against the traders who have looted government money and have confiscated their properties.. with the dues to be paid to the government Are the words of the officials that they will recover properly true? Or are they just lies? People are arguing. The middlemen, the millers, who have swallowed crores of rupees of government money and spent a week in jail, are coming home on bail and the people of Bhuvanagiri town are turning a blind eye to the traders who are flying their collars. The



issue of whether the District Collector, the Revenue Additional Collectors and other officials will actually recover the money or will they just give a bribe to the rice millers has become a topic of discussion.....In Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, the government purchased 6,688 tons of grain in coordination with civil supply and FCI officials. Currently, only 160 tons are available as they have been handed over to the millers. 6528 tons of grain are missing. According to the terms and conditions of the officials, 67% percent raw rice and 68% percent boiled rice. According to the terms and conditions of the officials, 44 39 tons of rice should be provided to the government in Rabi by the rice millers. Instead of providing the rice to the government as per the government rules, they sold it in the black market. They gave the government a bribe of Rs. 24 crores. They took it by the wayside. They sold it to others as a middleman. They looted crores of rupees of government money for the last two years. The fame of Bhuvanagiri rice millers who are roaming around the outskirts of Bhuvanagiri town..The dispute between the owners of "Yadadri Rice Industries" in Anantaram village of Bhuvanagiri mandal" has come to light of late. Based on the report of the Civil Supply officers on this matter..FCI officials filed a complaint against five owners of Yadadri Rice Industrial Rice Mill, Noone Venkateswarlu, Boggarapu Veera Prasad, Kandukuri Mahender, Juluru Rammohan, and Naveen, at the Bhuvanagiri Rural Police Station on the 24th of last month. To this extent, a case was registered against them under the leadership of Bonagiri Rural CI Nagari Chandrababu under FIR No..267/2026, dated 24/7/2026.. Cases have been registered under sections 316(2),316(5),318(3) 35, 7ECA."While four of them are absconding, the CI said that another, Noone Venkateswarlu, has been arrested and remanded. Even if they looted the government treasury and looted crores of rupees of government money, even if those accused climb the steps of the jail, they will not be able to do so. They consider the police as their own houses, the courts as their own buildings, and they have been remanded for a week with "interim anticipatory bail".



It is learnt that the High Court is hearing the case on the 27th of this month.****Officials' explanation on government grain golmal.. We will confiscate the properties of the millers and collect government revenue: - FCI District Manager D. Harikrishna, Civil Supply District Officer Roja Rani""In Anantaram village on the outskirts of Bhuvanagiri town, government grain was allotted to Yadadri Rice Industry for milling rice, FCI District Manager Harikrishna and Civil Supply District Officer Roja Rani said. When a joint explanation was sought on this grain golmal.. (Mandava Srisailam..Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau..Indian Chronicle..), they explained the facts. It is obligatory that they allotted their



grain to the rice millers. But they explained that they came to know late that this grain was not in the mill, but since the rice millers did not hand over the rice as per the government regulations, they filed a complaint against the millers' owners at the Bhuvanagiri Rural Police Station on the 24th of last month and got cases registered against them. They stated that the approximate value of the stolen grain, including interest, is up to Rs 24 crore, and that such money will be seized from them and their properties will be confiscated, such money will be recovered and deposited in the government treasury.

FCRA Bill Headed To JPC Amid Opposition Onslaught

New Delhi, August 11

The government is considering sending the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament for further examination, while the Congress and some other opposition parties have demanded its withdrawal.

The Congress and the TMC were among the parties that raised the issue during the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) of the Rajya Sabha, though it was not part of the agenda. They asked when the FCRA Bill would be taken up in the House, to which the government responded that a decision would be taken in due course, sources said on Tuesday.

DMK leaders Tiruchi Siva and P. Wilson later said the party wanted the Bill to be withdrawn completely. The party also voiced its stand during the BAC meeting.

Government sources said it was considering sending the Bill to a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament and that a motion might be brought in the Lok Sabha in this regard on Wednesday.

The opposition parties, which have raised strong objections to the FCRA Bill, allege that it targets minorities, as certain provisions would choke legitimate funding for Christian NGOs and minority-run social welfare and educational institutions.

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma and leading Christian organisations had earlier urged the Centre to refer the contentious Bill to a joint committee of Parliament for detailed examination. Lalduhoma and representatives of Christian organisations had met home minister Amit Shah and expressed their concerns over the proposed legislation.

DMK MP Wilson also led a delegation of Church leaders to Union home minister Amit Shah, seeking the withdrawal of the amendment Bill and the repeal of Section 15 of the existing law. DMK chief M.K. Stalin also urged the Centre to withdraw the FCRA Bill

The Bill seeks to create a designated authority to



manage and dispose of assets if an organisation loses its FCRA licence. It was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25 this year and proposes tighter government oversight of non-governmental organisations and foreign funding in the country. However, the government has made it clear that the proposed legislation is not religion-specific and is aimed at regulating foreign contributions.

Voicing strong concerns over the proposed amendment Bill, Congress leader K C Venugopal had alleged that it targeted minorities and NGOs and said the Opposition would not allow it to be passed. "Even if Amit Shah comes to pass this anti-people Bill, there is no doubt that he will have to face strong protests in Parliament. This Bill is unconstitutional and anti-people. We will not allow such an anti-people and unconstitutional Bill to be passed," Venugopal had said.

Some US lawmakers from both the Democratic and Republican parties, including Senator James Risch, who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, have voiced concerns over the planned changes to the FCRA, saying they could adversely affect Christian organisations and other civil society groups. India, however, rejected the criticism, describing the legislation as an internal matter.

US court permanently ends criminal case against Adani

A US federal court has permanently dismissed the criminal case against Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and seven other defendants, bringing to an end a high-profile prosecution that had accused senior executives of involvement in an alleged bribery and securities-fraud scheme.

US District Judge Nicholas G Garaufis of the Eastern District of New York granted the Justice Department's request to dismiss the indictment with prejudice. The ruling followed weeks of scrutiny by the judge over the government's decision to abandon the prosecution.

The case originated in an indictment unsealed in 2024. According to the original US court filing, prosecutors alleged that Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani and others were involved in a scheme to pay more than \$250 million in bribes to Indian Government officials to secure solar energy contracts.

Prosecutors also alleged that investors and financial institutions were misled about the company's anti-corruption practices. The allegations were never tested at a criminal trial and the Adani Group has consistently denied any wrongdoing.

The Justice Department's move to abandon the prosecution came after Judge Garaufis initially declined to approve the dismissal, saying the government had not provided sufficient explanation for its decision. He subsequently sought a fuller account of the reasons and factual basis for ending the case.

In its response, the Justice Department argued that the prosecution was predominantly foreign in nature, difficult to prove and no longer aligned with the department's priorities.

The judge also examined whether a \$10-billion US investment commitment announced by Adani had any bearing on the decision to drop the criminal case. The US media reported that Garaufis ultimately said he was satisfied that the investment pledge had not influenced the government's decision.



The judge nevertheless expressed concern about the manner in which the dismissal process had been handled, including the involvement of senior Justice Department official Trent McCotter and the extent to which prosecutors and investigators who had worked on the case were consulted.Adani welcomed the court's decision. "I welcome the US court's decision with humility and deep respect for the judicial process," he said in a post on X.He said that throughout what he described as a challenging period, his faith in "truth, fairness and the rule of law" had remained unwavering.Adani also thanked those who continued to have faith in him, the legal system and India's capacity for justice. "My deepest gratitude to those who never lost faith in us, in the system and in India's capacity for justice," he said.The Adani Group chairman said the focus would now remain on what he described as its larger national commitment. "We will continue doing what matters: building for our nation, creating value that outlasts us and serving a purpose larger than ourselves. That is our commitment," he said, ending his statement with "Jai Hind".

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

What a Telangana village tells us about social security

Every year, Telangana's budget documents announce large sums of money for social security. Lakhs of names are added to pension rolls, accompanied by growth percentages that sound like a success story in themselves. But numbers on a spreadsheet cannot tell us whether an elderly widow in a small hamlet actually gets her pension on the first of the month. They cannot tell us whether a disabled daily-wage worker even knows that a scheme exists for her. To understand that, we have to leave the Budget book behind and walk into a village. That is what a closer look at Narkuda Gram Panchayat in the district lets us do—not as a stand-in for the whole State, but as a small window into a much bigger picture.

There are two levels of social security in Telangana. The Centre's National Social Assistance Program (NSAP) covers old-age, widow, and disability pension as well as a family benefit scheme for households whose main earner dies. These schemes provide at least a couple of hundred rupees a month, which is insufficient for most beneficiaries.

On the other hand, Telangana's Aasara pension scheme (now known as Cheyutha) pays around Rs 2,160 per month to the elderly, widows, persons with disabilities, single women, weavers, and other vulnerable groups. The State has so far paid around Rs 4,700 crore in pensions to nearly 37 lakh people from October 2018 to June 2021. Allocations have continued to rise, from Rs 22,085 crore for the sector in 2024-25 to Rs 23,158 crore in 2025-26. However, the money available through central funds under national schemes does not flow easily, and this is an early indicator that money does not always 'flow the way it is meant to flow' as envisaged in policy documents.

MP Chamala elected as the Chairman of the Telangana State Media Cell Campaign Committee.



Former Bhuvanagiri Councillor DN Chari "Glorious felicitation" (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 11):-"Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, who received the appointment letter as the Chairman of the Telangana State Media Campaign Committee from the hands of National Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge, was felicitated under the patronage of former councillor senior Congress leader Devarakonda Narasimha Chari. Speaking at the felicitation program, MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy said that the Congress government is for the welfare of the people, that it has introduced many schemes for the poor and the weaker sections and provided them to the people, and that the Congress party will come back to power in Telangana and that they are moving forward with their goal of making Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister. He said that seniors will have due recognition in the party. Jagadish, Vishal Srinivas and others participated in this program.

Short film..No Longer Human should be appreciated by everyone



Former Minister Jagadishwar Reddy.. State leader Chintala Venkateswar Reddy (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 11):- Former Minister Jagadishwar Reddy and BRS Party state senior leader Chintala Venkateswar Reddy congratulated the short film team. Speaking on the occasion, they said "Former ministers and Suryapet MLAs Guntakandla Jagadish Reddy and Chintala Venkateswar Reddy thanked the film team after watching the short film No Longer Human, made by director Likhit Thirunagari at Prasad Lab in Hyderabad. Speaking on the occasion, he said that No Longer Human should be appreciated by everyone and that director Likhit Thirunagari aspires to excel in the film industry by making good message-based films. On this occasion, the short film team presented a memento to Jagadish Reddy and Chintala Venkateswar Reddy, honored them with a shawl, and expressed special gratitude.

CPI Organises ‘Badlav ZarooriHai’ Padayatra in Uppal



“UPPAL, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): CPI State Secretariat member V.S. Bose called upon the people to put an end to the BJP government's policies, which he alleged were weakening democracy and were anti-people and anti-Constitution."As part of the 'Put an End to the BJP's Anti-People Rule' padayatra campaign being organised by the CPI from August 6 to 14, the party conducted the sixth day of the campaign in Uppal Division on Tuesday. During the padayatra, party leaders distributed pamphlets among the public and explained the policies of the Central government. Speaking on the occasion, V.S. Bose said the

CPI's padayatra campaign was aimed at creating awareness among the people about the alleged anti-people and anti-Constitution policies being pursued by the BJP-led Central government. He said the party was explaining to the public issues such as undermining the independence of democratic institutions, allegedly using investigative agencies for political purposes, and suppressing people's movements. He called for an end to politics that divides people in the name of religion and caste and urged the people to protect the country's unity, secularism and Constitutional values. He also appealed to the people to unite and fight for the protection of their rights. "Bose demanded that the Central government immediately focus on pressing public issues, including unemployment, rising prices, farmers' problems, workers' rights, and the protection of government education and healthcare sectors. He advised the government to stop using divisive politics to divert public attention from people's genuine problems. CPI State Committee member G. Damodar Reddy, AIYF State Secretary K. Dharmendra, CPI Uppal Mandal Secretary T. Satya Prasad, Assistant Secretary M.D. Basheer Ali, CPI Constituency Executive Committee members P. Ram Narayana and Paramesh, AITUC Tourism Wing State General Secretary Sabbu Rajamouli, Ramulu, Adinarayana, and AISF Uppal Mandal Secretary Mahesh Kumar, among others, participated in the programme.

MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Reviews Sanctioned Development Works in Ramanthapur

RAMANTHAPUR , AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy urged officials to immediately commence the development works already sanctioned in Ramanthapur Division, which have been pending without commencement. As part of this effort, the MLA met Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta and discussed the details of the sanctioned development works in Ramanthapur Division. He pointed out that despite funds being sanctioned, several works had not yet commenced, causing inconvenience to local residents. Bandari Lakshma Reddy urged the Zonal Commissioner to ensure that all sanctioned works are taken up without further delay and completed within the stipulated timeframe. He also requested that necessary funds be allocated for new development works based on the needs and requirements of the people in the division. The MLA suggested expediting development works related to roads, drainage and other basic infrastructure in Ramanthapur Division, with the aim of providing permanent solutions to



the problems faced by residents. "BRS State leader Gandham Nageshwar Rao and others were present on the occasion."

Daily Traffic Disruption Reported Near New Vision Junior College

Lack of Parking Forces Vehicles onto Road, Causing Severe Inconvenience to Locals "Locals Allege College Management is More Focused on Revenue Than Infrastructure" "Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): "Khammam Bypass Road: Local residents have expressed concern over frequent traffic disruptions near the New Vision Junior College campus on the Khammam Bypass Road, particularly during peak hours every day. "According to local residents, traffic congestion is especially heavy between 7:00 am and 8:00 am and again between 6:00 pm and 7:00 pm, when large numbers of students, parents and college staff arrive at or leave the campus. The congestion is reportedly affecting the smooth movement of vehicles on the busy bypass road. "Despite the large number of students studying at the college, the institution allegedly does not have adequate parking facilities for the vehicles of students, parents and staff. As a result, two-wheelers, cars and auto-rickshaws are reportedly being parked along the roadside and, at times, on the main carriageway itself, leading to traffic congestion. "Locals expressed concern that the situation could also increase the risk of road accidents, particularly on the busy bypass road. They said that the college management should take preventive measures keeping both student safety and road safety in mind. "Residents alleged that the management has failed to address the parking issue adequately and claimed that greater attention is being given to collecting fees from students than to providing essential infrastructure, particularly proper parking facilities. "They further alleged that when the issue was brought to the notice of the college management, there was no satisfactory response and the matter was being delayed. With the same situation reportedly continuing every day, local residents and motorists are facing considerable inconvenience. "DEO Urged to Take Immediate Action "Local residents have urged the Khammam Dis-



trict Education Department officials and traffic police to immediately inspect the surroundings of New Vision Junior College and take appropriate action. "They demanded that adequate parking facilities be arranged for the college, vehicles should not be allowed to obstruct the public road, and suitable arrangements should be made to ensure the safe movement of students during peak hours. "Residents also appealed to the authorities to examine whether the campus should be shifted to an alternative location if adequate parking space cannot be provided and the institution continues to cause daily traffic problems. "Running an educational institution is important, but public safety and proper traffic management are equally important. The authorities should intervene immediately and find a permanent solution," local residents appealed.

PARAMESWAR REDDY Participates in Phalaharam Bandi Procession at Ramanthapur



“RAMANTHAPUR , AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The traditional Phalaharam Bandi processions held in Ramanthapur on the occasion of Ashada Masam were celebrated with great fervour and devotion. A large number of devotees, women and youth participated in the festivities and offered special prayers to the Goddess. The traditional procession attracted a large number of devotees. Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameswar Reddy participated in the celebrations and offered special prayers to the Goddess. Later, he took part in the Phalaharam Bandi procession and conveyed his greetings to the devotees. Speaking on the occasion, Parameswar Reddy said that the Ashada Masam Bonalu festival represents the rich culture and traditions of

Telangana. He prayed for the blessings of the Goddess upon the people and wished that everyone would be blessed with happiness, prosperity, good health and long life. "Devotees participated in the Phalaharam Bandi procession in traditional attire, creating a festive atmosphere with drum beats and devotional songs. A large number of women took part in the celebrations and offered Bonalu and traditional food offerings to the Goddess. The organisers made special arrangements for the convenience of devotees in various areas. "Congress party leaders, workers, local public representatives, festival committee members and a large number of devotees participated in the programme. The surrounding areas of Ramanthapur wore a festive look with the enthusiastic participation of devotees.

Riddhi Toro wins under-14 singles title at CBSE Cluster VII

Hyderabad: Riddhi Toro of TIME School, Bandlaguda, clinched the under-14 singles title in the CBSE Cluster VII table tennis tournament at Sir CR Reddy Public School (Eluru, AP). Riddhi scored an 7-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-5 win against Hetvika Kolli (VPS Public School, Vijayawada, AP) in the final and earlier, she notched up an 11-9, 9-11, 11-6 win against P. Mokshika of OliveMount GlobalSchool (Hyderabad) in the semifinal.

CP Congratulates Newly Elected Police Association Office-Bearers



Work to Enhance the Prestige of the Police Department: CP Sunil Dutt "Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): "Khammam Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt congratulated the newly elected office-bearers of the Khammam Police Association following their victory in the association elections. "The newly elected executive committee members met Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt on Tuesday and paid a courtesy visit. On the occasion, the Commissioner congratulated them and wished them success in their new responsibilities. "Speaking on the occasion, CP Sunil Dutt advised the newly elected office-bearers to work towards further enhancing the dignity and reputation of the Police Department. He urged them to discharge their responsibilities effectively and work with dedication for the welfare of police personnel. "He expressed confidence that the new executive committee would work sincerely for the welfare of the police staff and contribute to resolving their issues. "Newly Elected Executive Committee"- B. Hemanath – President"- K. Jagadeesh – Vice President"- V. Suresh – Vice President"- B. Veerabhadram – Secretary"- K. Sudhakar – Joint Secretary"- B. Apparao – Administrative Secretary"- T. Narasimha Rao – Treasurer "Executive Committee Members"- Y. Venkateshwarlu, V. Harikrishna, K. Suresh, T. Jamalaih, N. Edukondalu and T. Renuka. "ACP Sambaraju and AR ACP Sushil Singh also participated in the programme.

Chintakuntla Durganath Elected AIYF Khammam City President, Chirra Krishna Prasad as Secretary



"Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): "Khammam Mustafanagar: The city conference of the All India Youth Federation (AIYF) was held in an enthusiastic atmosphere at SR Mini Function Hall, located at Mustafanagar Centre, Khammam, at the Comrade Amarajeevi Puvvada Uday Kumar Pranganam. "At the conference, Chintakuntla Durganath was unanimously elected as the new President of the AIYF Khammam City Committee, while Chirra Krishna Prasad was unanimously elected as the General Secretary. Along with them, another 21 members were unanimously elected to the city executive committee. "Intensify Struggles on Youth Issues "AIYF District General Secretary Nanabala Ramakrishna, who attended the programme as the chief guest, said that the youth are facing serious difficulties due to unemployment and educational problems in the present society. "He called upon the youth to raise their voice against the anti-people policies of the Central and State governments. He urged the newly elected

AIYF city committee to continuously fight for the rights of young people, raise local issues with the concerned authorities and work towards securing solutions to problems faced by the youth. "Leaders Congratulate New Office-Bearers "Association leaders congratulated the newly elected President, General Secretary and executive committee members and wished them success in their responsibilities. "AIYF district leaders Chintala Ramesh and Mamidal Srinath Reddy, along with several local leaders and a large number of youth activists, participated in the conference.

Pilot Sravanthi, Dr.Vasanthi Selected for Global Youth Award-26



"Hyderabad, August 11 (Indian Chronicle) : Pilot Sravanthi and cardiologist Dr.Chintala Vasanthi have been selected for the Global Youth Award-2026, presented by the Telangana Citizens Council(TCC) State Chapter on the occasion of International Youth Day. In a statement issued on Tuesday, TCC State President Dr.Raj Narayana Mudiraj said the award recognises their distinguished services and contributions to society. Dr.Chintala Vasanthi is serving as a Senior Resident Cardiologist at Gandhi Hospital, while Sravanthi is working as a pilot at the IndiGo Airlines Shamshabad base. The awards will be presented at a programme to be held on August 12 to mark International Youth Day, Dr.Raj Narayana Mudiraj said.

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Visits Marla Maisamma Temple



UPPAL, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited the Marla Maisamma Temple in Chilkanaagar on Tuesday and offered special prayers to Goddess Marla Maisamma. The temple authorities and BRS party leaders accorded a warm welcome to the MLA upon his arrival. Recently, construction works at

the Marla Maisamma Temple were taken up under the leadership of senior BRS party leader Gudi Madhusudan Reddy. The MLA inspected the ongoing construction works and discussed the temple's development and the provision of necessary facilities for devotees with the leaders and temple management. "Bandari Lakshma Reddy directed the concerned leaders and temple representatives to focus on making adequate arrangements so that devotees visiting the temple do not face any inconvenience. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said he would extend his support for the development of temples and for providing better facilities to devotees. He stated that the necessary measures for the development of the Marla Maisamma Temple would be taken in coordination with the temple management and local leaders. "BRS senior leaders Palles Narsing Rao, Ambati Jagadeesh Mudiraj, Jalli Mohan, Nerdham Bhaskar Goud, Mukkala Ramakrishna Mudiraj, Eerelli Ravinder Reddy, Cheryala Srinivas, Masa Shekhar, Palles Raj Kumar Goud, Akiti Bal Reddy, Shanigaram Tirumalesh, Mukkala Hari Krishna Mudiraj, Photola Raju, Gaddam Papireddy, Santosh Reddy, Ramakrishna, Subhadra, Lakshmi, Andalu and others participated in the programme.

CPM public movement on pending projects in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district.

...rulers should stop neglecting..funds should be released: CPM District Secretary Yandi Jahangir""August 29,30,31 Padayatra from Bhuvanagiri to Hyderabad..CPM Mahadharna at Indira Park Dharna Chowk on 31st... CPM District Secretary Yandi Jahangir""(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 11):- CPM District Secretary Yandi Jahangir said that the past and present rulers have completely failed to solve the irrigation and drinking water problems of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district and that an action plan is being prepared under the auspices of the CPM District Committee to solve them. Speaking at a press conference held at the local Sundarayya Bhavan, Bhuvanagiri on Tuesday, he criticized the laxity in completing the Basvapuram project, Gandhamalla project, Palamuri Rangareddy lift irrigation project, Nawabpet reservoir project, and the rehabilitation work of small irrigation canals like Dharmareddy, Pillaipalli, Bunadigani, and Asif Nahar canals, which are key projects in the district. He said that to solve these problems, a padayatra is being organized with farmers, residents, and people in the name of CPM Chalo Hyderabad on the 29th, 30th, and 31st of this month. He said that the padayatra will start from the Ambedkar statue in the district center of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri on the 29th of this month and will reach Indira Dharma Chowk in Hyderabad on the 31st. Farmers, agricultural workers, displaced persons, professionals and the public were requested to participate in the "Maha Dharna" organized by the CPM in large numbers and make it a success. They wanted an explanation on the delay in providing the remaining funds for the 90 percent completed Basvapuram project. They said that more than Rs 420 crores have to be paid to the displaced persons. The funds have been stuck with the Finance Committee since the year, which claims to have sanctioned Rs 80 crores. They said that they have been delaying the completion of the project for decades by allocating meager and meager funds. They said that the CPM is fighting due to the negligence of the rulers. They wanted the funds to be deposited in the accounts of the displaced farmers. They wanted water to be brought to the Dindi project through the reservoir in front of the Palamuri Rangareddy project. They wanted the Rachakonda lift irrigation scheme to be established through the Dindi project and the villages of



Narayanpur and Choutuppal mandals to be provided with irrigation water through gravity through the reservoir. He said that canals were dug about 15 years ago to provide water to Nawabpet through the Devadula project, but they are useless due to lack of water. He said that the work on widening the Dharmareddypalli canal has been stalled. He said that the work on the Pillaipalli and Bunadigani canals is incomplete. He said that 30 culverts need to be built under the canals. He criticized that the government does not have a DPR for the closure and cleaning of the district and the connection of Godavari waters. He said that full plans should be made and funds should be allocated for filling the tanks through the Basvapuram project, and that irrigation water should be provided to Bommalaramam,

Bibinagar, Bhuvanagiri and Pochampally mandals through the Shamirpet canal. ""A round table meeting with various political parties, public organizations and intellectuals is being held in Bhuvanagiri on the 16th of this month to solve the problem of irrigation and drinking water. Yandi Jahangir appealed to all sections to come together in large numbers for the Maha Dharna to be held at Indira Park, Hyderabad on August 31. CPM state committee members Kondamadugu Narasimha and Battupally Anuradha, district secretariat member Kalluri Mallesham, and district committee member Gaddam Venkatesh participated in the meeting.

Panchayat Computer Operators Demand Immediate Release of Pending Salaries



"Khammam, Nelakondapalli, August 11 (Indian Chronicle):""Panchayat computer operators have de-

manded the immediate release of their pending salaries. Panchayat Computer Operators' Association leader B. Naveen urged the authorities to clear the outstanding wages without further delay. ""Members of the association submitted petitions to the MPDO and Mandal Panchayat Officer at the mandal headquarters, seeking immediate action on the issue. ""Speaking on the occasion, B. Naveen said that panchayat computer operators were providing transparent and efficient services in the panchayats in accordance with the objectives of the government. However, they have been facing severe financial difficulties as their salaries have not been paid for the past four months, he said. ""He stated that operators were being forced to borrow money to meet expenses related to their children's education, family maintenance, medical treatment and house rents. He urged the authorities to immediately release all pending salaries and take steps to ensure that salaries are paid regularly every month. ""Association leaders Sheikh Afzar, T. Sunitha, K. Divya and T. Kranthi, among others, participated in the programme."

Park, Open Gym to Be Set Up in High Court Colony

UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY""UPPAL, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj and members of the High Court Colony Association, met Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta at her office and requested the development of a park, open gym and play equipment in the open space at High Court Colony in Beerappagadda Division. "Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that an area of approximately 4,000 square yards in High Court Colony is currently being used as a nursery maintained by HMDA. He requested that the nursery be removed and the land be utilised for the benefit of the colony residents. "He urged the authorities to develop a new park at the site, install play equipment for children and establish an open gym to promote the health and fitness of residents. "The MLA also requested repairs to the damaged CC roads at the site, resolution of the storm-water drainage pipeline problem, and painting and beautification of the central medians. He urged the officials to take necessary measures to improve basic infrastructure and civic amenities in the colony. "Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta assured



the delegation that the issues brought to her notice would be examined and that concerned officials would be instructed to take necessary action. "Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, High Court Colony Association General Secretary Madhusudan Raj, association members Gopal Das, Sudhir Kumar, Narasimha Rao, Venkateshwarlu, Mohammed Abbas, Mohammed Faiyem and others were present.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Discusses Indiramma Housing Scheme with Collector



"UPPAL, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy met the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector and discussed the implementation of the Indiramma Housing Scheme in the Uppal constituency and the sanctioning of houses to eligible beneficiaries. "During the meeting, the MLA brought to the Collector's attention the problems being faced by beneficiaries regarding the Indiramma Housing Scheme in the constituency. He urged the officials to expedite the process of sanctioning houses to eligible poor families and resolve pending applications and other issues at the earliest. "Later, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy also reviewed the implementation of the Indiramma Housing Scheme with the concerned officials at the Secretariat. He instructed the officials to coordinate effectively and ensure that every eligible poor family in the Uppal constituency benefits from the government scheme. "The MLA further urged the authorities to complete the house sanctioning process for all eligible beneficiaries without causing any inconvenience and to resolve all pending issues at the earliest.

District Advisory Committee Reviews Implementation of PCPNDT Act

"Strict Action Against Those Violating Rules: DMHO Dr. D. Rama Rao""Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): "A District Advisory Committee meeting was held in Khammam to review the implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994. The meeting was chaired by District Medical and Health Officer Dr. D. Rama Rao. ""During the meeting, officials reviewed various issues related to the registration and renewal of ultrasound scanning centres, maintenance of Form-F records and preservation of records in the district. ""Speaking on the occasion, DMHO Dr. D. Rama Rao directed officials to take effective measures to completely prevent illegal prenatal sex determination tests. He instructed the authorities to initiate strict action against institutions and individuals violating the provisions of the PCPNDT Act. ""He also called for creating widespread public awareness to prevent discrimination against girl children and encourage the birth of girls. He stressed the need for continuous monitoring of ultrasound scanning centres to ensure strict compliance with the statutory provisions. ""Programme officers Dr. Venugopal Reddy, Dr. Bindu Sri, Dr. Lakshminarayana and Dr. Mothia, Statistical Officer Veeraiah, Deputy DMO Venkateswara Raju, DDM Nagaraju, Deputy DMHOs Dr. Venu Madhava Rao, Dr.



Pradeep Babu and Dr. K. Madhavi, Assistant Professor and District Officer K. Venkateshwarlu, along with representatives of the IMA and NGOs, including M. Kummidini Devi, Jagruthi NGO Secretary and M. Koteswara Rao, and IMA members, among others, participated in the meeting. ""- District Medical and Health Officer, Khammam

Make the Concluding Meeting of Praja Chaitanya Yatra a Grand Success



"Mass Rallies to Begin from Three Parts of the City""Concluding Meeting at Bhakta Ramadasu Kala Kshetram""Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao and Bagam Hemanth Rao to Attend""Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): "The Communist Party of India (CPI) will organise a grand concluding meeting in Khammam on August 13 as part of the Praja Chaitanya Yatra conducted across Khammam district following the call given by the CPI National Council. CPI Khammam City Secretary SK Janimia appealed to party cadres and people to make the concluding programme a grand success. ""Speaking at a meeting held at the local Giriprasad Bhavan on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Pagadala Mallesh, Janimia said that Praja Chaitanya Yatras were conducted across 20 mandals in the district to protest against the policies being pursued by the Narendra Modi-led Central government and to demand political and social change. ""He said that meetings and programmes were also organised across the district demanding implementation of the promises made by the Congress during the elections. ""Rallies from Three Locations"" Janimia said that three major rallies would be-

gin from Rotary Nagar, Allipuram Cross Road and Nayabazar College in Khammam city. ""The rally from Rotary Nagar will proceed via Mamata Road and Illandu Cross Road before reaching ZP Centre. The rally from Allipuram Cross Road will proceed through Mustafanagar and reach ZP Centre. The rally from Nayabazar College will proceed through Three Town and reach ZP Centre. ""All three rallies will converge at ZP Centre and proceed as a mass procession to Bhakta Ramadasu Kala Kshetram, where the concluding public meeting will be held, he said. ""Kunamneni and Bagam to Attend""CPI State Secretary and Kothagudem MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, CPI National Council member Bagam Hemanth Rao, District Secretary Dandi Suresh and Assistant Secretary Jammula Jitender Reddy, among others, will attend the concluding meeting at Bhakta Ramadasu Kala Kshetram, Janimia said. ""State Council members Mohammed Salam and BG Clement, district executive committee members Mekala Srinivasa Rao, Yanali Sambasiva Reddy and Enugu Gandhi, along with party leaders Varada Narsimharao, Saida, Yakub and Durganath, participated in the meeting.

250 Steel Plates and Glasses Distributed to Junior College Students



Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): ""The Telangana government's midday meal scheme introduced in government junior colleges has been receiving a positive response from students. As part of a special service programme organised to mark the birthday of Sathupalli MLA Dr.

Matta Ragamayi Dayanand, 250 steel plates and glasses were distributed to students of Kalluru Government Junior College. ""With the support of District Congress leader Pasumarthi Chandrarao and financial assistance from Pasumarthi Satish, son of Raghavarao, the steel plates and glasses

were provided to enable students to have their midday meals conveniently at the college. ""The organisers said the donation was aimed at facilitating meal arrangements for economically disadvantaged students studying in government colleges. ""Kalluru Municipality Chairman Dharavath

Mohan Naik, Kalluru AMC Chairman Bagam Neeraja Prabhakar, Ward No. 3 Councillor Dasari Sudharani, Ward No. 15 Councillor Yasa Nagamani Srikanth, Kalluru Mandal Congress President Potru Arjun Rao, Kalluru Town Congress President Sheikh Usman, municipal councillors Bhukya Rambai, Ubbana Rambabu, Gundla Pullarao, Pasumarthi Rambabu, Dosapati Srinivasa Rao, Kalluru Arya Vysya Association President Anumolu Srinivasa Rao, College Principal Vemula Shekhar, teachers, Congress leaders, party workers and supporters participated in the programme.

Journalists Stage Protest Rally in Aswapuram



Journalists Demand Unconditional Apology from Nellipaka PACS Chairman Tukkani Madhusudhan Reddy“Withdrawal of Complaints Sought — Call to Protect Press Freedom”“Khammam, August 11 (Indian Chronicle):“Journalists of Aswapuram mandal organised a protest rally demanding the immediate withdrawal of complaints filed against journalists and calling upon Nellipaka PACS Chairman Tukkani Madhusudhan Reddy to withdraw his alleged remarks portraying working journalists as BRS activists and issue a public, unconditional apology.”“The rally was taken out from the Gautami Nagar Colony gate near the Heavy Water Plant to the Tahsildar’s office. The journalists formed a human chain at the Aswapuram main junction and later staged a dharna in front of the Tahsildar’s of-

fice. They submitted a memorandum to Tahsildar Surya Prakash.”“Speaking on the occasion, TWJF District Vice-President Thotapalli Ramanamurthy, State Council Member Rajender Velama, and TUWJ-IJU District Vice-President Maruthi Srinivasa Rao and Constituency President Pindiga Venkat said that highlighting public issues and bringing them to the attention of the authorities and people is the fundamental responsibility of journalists.”“They said journalists who report facts without distorting news should not be portrayed as political activists. They alleged that making inappropriate remarks against journalists, threatening them and filing cases against reporters while they are performing their professional duties are actions that affect press freedom.”“The journalist leaders demanded that Tukkani Madhusudhan Reddy immediately withdraw his alleged remarks describing journalists as BRS activists and tender an unconditional public apology. They also demanded the immediate withdrawal of the complaints filed against journalists.”“They warned that journalist organisations would launch a larger united movement, if necessary, to protect journalists’ rights and freedom of the press.”“Later, representatives of the journalist organisations submitted a memorandum to the Manuguru DSP.”“Journalists Participate in Protest”“TWJF District Assistant Secretary Sheerapu Sai Sampath Reddy, district committee members Mulakalapalli Gopinath and Parsa Boyina Radhakrishna, executive committee member Bellamkonda Pushpagiri, TUWJ-IJU Constituency Secretary Barla Joshi, Constituency Vice-President Reddy Mahesh Kumar, and press club presidents Kurapati Chalapathi Rao and Kalluri Narasimha Rao participated.”“Journalists from various press clubs in Aswapuram mandal, including Medavarapu Sudheer, Lenin Vijay Kumar, Venkat Rao, Arjun, Naresh, Nagesh, Koti Nagaraju, Sambi Reddy, Edukondalu, Thoomu Satyam, Thota Ashok, Bandari Balaram, Metro Srinu, Ekambaram, K.V. Reddy, Om Prakash, Babu, Nagaraju, Anna Boyina Satish, Gadkari Ramakrishna, Gangaraju and Jupalli Kiran, among others, participated in the protest.

Finance Company Business Manager Booked for Misappropriating 5.85 Lakh Collected from Customers

“MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A business manager working for a finance company allegedly cheated customers as well as his employer and misappropriated ₹5.85 lakh collected from customers towards loan dues. Medipally police registered a case based on a complaint lodged by the company’s Regional Legal Manager, Sri Arjun Bangaru, and launched an investigation.”“According to the police, Gurram D. Mahesh, a resident of Ramireddy Nagar in Ramanthapur (Employee ID: 36934), had been working as a Business Manager at Five-Star Business Finance Limited, located at East Hanuman Nagar in Boduppal, since January 2025.”“As part of his job responsibilities, Mahesh handled customer accounts. Police said that he allegedly contacted 11 customers of the company and convinced them that he was an authorised representative of the firm. In this capacity, he collected a total of ₹5,85,567 from the customers towards their loan dues.”“However, instead of depositing the collected amount into the company’s bank account, Mahesh alleg-

edly used the money for his personal needs, according to the complaint. The alleged act resulted in financial loss to both the company and its customers and amounted to a breach of trust, the complaint stated.”“The matter came to light on June 15, 2026, during a routine audit conducted by the company. When the management questioned Mahesh about the collections, he allegedly failed to provide a satisfactory explanation regarding the money and did not return the amounts collected from the customers, police said.”“Subsequently, company representatives approached Medipally police and submitted a written complaint. Based on the complaint, Medipally Police Station SI E. Yadukondalu registered Crime No. 1152/2026 against Gurram Mahesh under Sections 318(4) and 316(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).”“Police have intensified their investigation into the case. Further inquiry is underway into the money collected from customers, the company’s financial transactions and other related aspects of the alleged fraud.

Thief Attempts Midnight Burglary in Boduppal’s Raghavendra Colony



““MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A midnight burglary attempt in Raghavendra Colony under the Medipally Police Station limits created panic among resi-

dents. An unidentified person allegedly attempted to break into a duplex house but fled after the family members inside the house alerted themselves and raised an alarm.”“According to local residents, the miscreant targeted a duplex house in Raghavendra Colony and attempted to enter the premises late at night. While trying to break open the main door, the family members inside heard suspicious noises.”“Alerted by the sound, the family members raised loud cries, causing the intruder to panic. The suspect immediately tried to escape and fled the spot by jumping over the compound wall.”“The timely alertness of the family members prevented the burglary from taking place. The incident has caused concern among residents of Raghavendra Colony, who have urged the police to increase surveillance on suspicious movements during late-night hours and intensify patrolling in the locality. Police are expected to investigate the incident and ascertain the identity of the suspect.

Uppal Kallu Geetha Cooperative Society New Executive Committee Elected Unanimously



““UPPAL, AUGUST 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The new executive committee of the Uppal Kallu Geetha Cooperative Society was unanimously elected on

Monday. Bazaru Ramaraju Goud was elected as the president, Maddela Lakshmi as vice-president, and Meenampalli Ramulu Goud as secretary. Meenampalli Saraswathi and Varkala Madan Kumar Goud were unanimously elected as executive committee members.”“The newly elected committee will have a five-year term. The election process was conducted under the supervision of Uppal Excise Station Inspector Omkar, with the assistance of SI Naresh Reddy and staff. S. Hari served as the Election Officer. On the occasion, several Goud community leaders and members congratulated the newly elected office-bearers and wished them success in carrying out their responsibilities.”“Bongu Ramesh Goud, Panjala Jai Hindu Goud, Bazaru Pandu Goud, Bommago-ni Dasu Goud, Bandarap-u Lakshman Goud, Bheemagani Venu Goud, Meenampalli Ashok Goud, Maddila Shivraj Goud, Bingi Jagadish Goud, Pothagani Nagesh Goud, Bhutkoori Naveen Goud, and others participated in the programme.

Grand Celebrations Mark the 8th Annual Anniversary of Sri Sri Sri Katta Maisamma Temple

“Nacharam, August 11 (India Chornical):““On the occasion of the 8th annual anniversary celebrations of Sri Sri Sri Katta Maisamma Temple, BJP Medchal–Malkajigiri District President D. Girivardhan Reddy conducted various traditional religious rituals, including Ganapathi Puja, Punyahavachanam, Sthala Shuddhi, Bhutocchatanam, Akhanda Deepa Sthapana, Chandi Yantra Avahanam, and other sacred ceremonies.”“As part of the celebrations, Maha Kumbhabhishekam was performed to the main deity with 108 Kalashas, along with the offering of Ashtottara Sugandha Dravyas and other sacred materials.”“BJP Medchal–Malkajigiri District Council Member Sangishetty Ravindra Sagar, OBC District Co-Convenor Sabita Yadav, Har Ghar



Tiranga Mallapur Division Convener Gopu Rajeswar Patel, Ravi Gangadhar, Sridhar Reddy, Ramulu Naik, Yadagiri, V. Narasimha, Srinu Kuruma, Mallapur Endowment Convener

Every Land Parcel to Get a BhuDhaar Card with Digital Map After Re-Survey



Collector Divakar T.S. ““Transparent Boundary Demarcation in Presence of Farmers; Area Details to be Provided on the Spot”“Land Disputes Likely to Reduce Significantly After Completion of Re-Survey”“Collector Inspects Land Re-Survey in Bethupalli, Narayanapuram and Gangaram Villages”“Khammam/Sathupalli, August 11 (Indian Chronicle):“The main objective of the State government’s land re-survey programme is to resolve land-related issues, including disputes, discrepancies in land extent and errors in revenue records, in a transparent manner without causing injustice to any farmer, District Collector Divakar T.S. said.”“The Collector made an extensive visit to the Sathupalli constituency on Tuesday and conducted a surprise inspection of the ongoing land re-survey in villages under the Bethupalli revenue limits along with Sub-Collector Ajay Yadav.”“In Gangaram village, the Collector walked along the bunds of agricultural fields and inspected the re-survey being conducted in the presence of farmers. He subsequently inspected the re-survey process in Bethupalli and Narayanapuram villages. He interacted directly with farmers, sought their feedback on the survey and clarified their doubts.”“Survey Underway on 12,000 Acres”“Speaking on the occasion, Collector Divakar T.S. said that land re-survey was being conducted across approximately 12,000 acres in Gangaram, Bethupalli, Narayanapuram, Ramagovindapuram, M.V. Palem, Ramanagar and Pakalagudem villages under the Bethupalli revenue limits.”“The survey is being carried out through 10 teams, and re-survey of approximately 4,000 acres has already been completed, he said.”“The Collector said that modern equipment and advanced technology were being used in the land survey. Just as every individual has an Aadhaar

identity, every farmer would receive a BhuDhaar card containing a digital map of their land, he explained.”“Land Records to be Corrected”“The Collector said that farmers had been facing several problems, including the absence of pattadar passbooks, names not being updated through the online system, discrepancies between the extent recorded in revenue records and the actual extent on the ground, and instances where the recorded extent was either less or more than the actual landholding.”“All such discrepancies will be identified and corrected through the re-survey process,” he said.”“He explained that farmers would be issued notices 48 hours in advance before the survey of their land. The measurements would be carried out in the presence of the concerned farmers. Farmers would indicate their land boundaries, while adjoining landowners would also be called and a panchanama would be conducted to confirm the boundaries.”“The Collector appealed to all landowners who receive survey notices, including family members holding land rights and those whose land is recorded in pattadar passbooks, to personally attend the survey, provide complete details and cooperate with the officials.”“Area Details to Be Disclosed on the Spot”“The exact extent of land measured would be communicated to the farmers immediately at the survey location, the Collector said. If farmers have any doubts, the survey would be conducted again transparently until they were satisfied, and their signatures would also be obtained confirming the measured extent of their land.”“He made it clear that the entire re-survey process would be conducted at the field level in the presence of the respective landowners. Every aspect would be thoroughly examined to ensure that farmers’ rights were not affected in any manner.”“He appealed to farmers not to be misled by rumours and to cooperate fully with the land re-survey programme based on the information provided by the authorities.”“BhuDhaar Cards After Disposal of Objections”“Following completion of the survey, land details would be displayed in the respective villages and placed on notice boards at Gram Panchayats and Tahsildar offices. A specific period would be provided for filing objections, and the objections received would be examined and resolved.”“After the disposal of objections, the final land details would be uploaded online and BhuDhaar cards would be issued, the Collector said.”“He expressed confidence that completion of the re-survey would significantly reduce land disputes in the future and provide permanent security to farmers regarding their land rights.”“Sathupalli Tahsildar Satyanarayana, village sarpanches, concerned officials and farmers were present during the Collector’s inspection.

Students Must Learn Life Lessons Alongside Lessons from Textbooks

— Kakatiya University Executive Council Member Dr. Anitha Reddy ““Hanamkonda, August 11 (Indian Chronicle): Students need to be equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with life skills and awareness of laws, women’s empowerment and anti-ragging measures, said Kakatiya University Executive Council Member and Anurag Society Chairperson Dr. Anitha Reddy.”“An awareness programme on life skills, women’s empowerment, laws and anti-ragging was organised on Tuesday at the Kakatiya University Women’s Engineering College under the guidance of Principal Bikshalu. Dr. Anitha Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and interacted with the first-year engineering students in a friendly and engaging atmosphere.”“She emphasised the need to create a supportive environment for students entering college, where they can gain not only academic and technical skills but also learn life values, responsible behaviour and the ability to deal with challenges. She encouraged students to maintain good conduct, set clear goals for themselves and work consistently towards achieving them.”“Courage to Face Challenges Is True Empowerment...” “Dr. Anitha Reddy explained that women’s empowerment is not limited to access to education and employment opportunities. True empowerment also means becoming capable of addressing one’s own problems and developing the mental strength to face challenges with courage.”“She advised students not to resort to extreme steps such as suicide out of fear or distress over minor problems, but instead to seek solutions and reach out for support when they encounter difficulties.”“During the programme, students were given easy-to-understand information on various laws, personal safety, responsible behaviour and social issues. She encouraged them to maintain healthy friendships with their



peers and treat one another with mutual respect.”“Ragging Will Invite Legal Action...” “Dr. Anitha Reddy made it clear that subjecting fellow students to mental, physical or emotional harassment also constitutes ragging. Those involved in ragging would face legal consequences, she cautioned.”“She stressed the importance of having functional Anti-Ragging Committees and Internal POSH Committees in every college and ensuring that students are aware of their roles and responsibilities. She assured the students that if they faced any difficulties on campus, they could report them to the concerned authorities or bring them directly to her notice.”“Learn Life Lessons Alongside Academic Lessons...” “Dr. Anitha Reddy cautioned students against making impulsive emotional decisions in the name of love, noting that many young people end up harming their future through such choices. She advised them to remain focused on their education, goals and future.”“She also interacted with the students personally, listened to their views and addressed their concerns and questions.”“Principal Bikshalu, professors, teaching staff and students participated in the programme.

Grand Phalaharam Bandi Celebrations Held in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division“Arun Patel, Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy Participate



““UPPAL, AUGUST (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Phalaharam Bandi procession programmes organised at various locations in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division as part of the Bonalu festival were held with great devotion and enthusiasm. Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, along with Congress leaders, local leaders and residents, participated in the celebrations.”“Congress leader Akarapu Arun Patel actively participated in several Phalaharam Bandi programmes and joined devotees in the festivities.”“The celebrations were organised under the leadership of Naveen Team of Satyanagar, Balakrishna Nagar Shankar and Balaji Team, Suresh Team at Srinagar Colony Junction, Macha Sheenu Team of Gandhi Nagar, Chintu and Ashok Team of Venkat Sai Colony, Rajanna Team of Indiranagar, Yodha Team of Bharat Nagar, Mahadev Team of Old City, Sai Team of Amberpet and Sandeep Goud Team.”“Speaking on the occasion, Akarapu Arun Patel said that the Bonalu festival represents the self-respect, cultural heritage and traditional

values of the people of Telangana. He appreciated the devotees for continuing the age-old Bonalu traditions with devotion and religious fervour.”“He wished that with the blessings of the Goddess, all people would lead happy, peaceful and healthy lives.”“Women, youth and children participated in large numbers in the Phalaharam Bandi celebrations and offered prayers to the Goddess with devotion. The beats of traditional drums and energetic dance performances at several locations added to the festive atmosphere. The celebrations created a vibrant atmosphere across the colonies as devotees enthusiastically took part in the processions.”“Senior Congress leaders, party workers, colony representatives, youth, women and a large number of local residents participated in the celebrations.

Telangana tenant farmers demand identity cards and benefits

Sangareddy: Telangana Koulu Rythula Gurtimpu Sadhana Committee has demanded the Telangana government issue identity cards to every tenant farmer in the State following the guidelines framed by Land Licensors Cultivators Act, 2011. The committee, which organised a meeting with tenant farmers from eight mandals in the district in Sangareddy on Tuesday, urged the government to provide all the benefits to tenant farmers.

The committee also observed that tenant farmers can borrow crop loans and book fertilisers online, apart from getting multiple benefits with the identity card. The committee representatives later met Additional Collector TL Sangeetha at her chambers and presented a representation in this regard. Several tenant farmers aired their woes during the meeting.

In Noida, couple found dead with gunshot wounds in locked car, cops suspect suicide; kin claims man taunted over caste



GNS News Agency, August 11

A man and woman were found dead with gunshot wounds inside a locked car in Noida’s Sector 107 on Saturday afternoon. Police said that prima facie, it appeared to be a case of suicide. Police identified the deceased as Sumit (32), a resident of Trilokpuri in Delhi, and Rekha (28), a resident of Salarpur in Sector 101, Noida. A purported WhatsApp message, allegedly written by Sumit, said he was dying by suicide as Rekha had refused to marry him.

“I, Sumit, am going to kill myself and Rekha is responsible for it... She lived with me for 15 years and had promised to marry me... now she is going to marry someone else. That is why I am committing suicide... because Rekha has cheated me...” the message read. Sumit’s cousin, Sachin, said that Rekha’s family used to taunt Sumit over his caste. “They had been together for over 12 to 15 years. It was Sumit who would drop her to the office and back home.

Sumit had recently brought a flat or both of them as they wanted to stay together after marriage. He had also bought a car for her,” he said. “But Rekha’s family had been taunting my brother over his caste,” Sachin added.

Car in which Sumit and Rekha were found dead. Express Car in which Sumit and Rekha were found dead. (Express)Deputy Commissioner of Police (Noida) Yamuna Prasad said police received information about a suspiciously parked car near Dadri Road, close to pillar 84, under the jurisdiction of Sector 39 police station. When officers reached the spot, they found the vehicle was locked from inside. “During inspection, the bodies of a man and a woman were found inside the car... They had gunshot injuries to the head. A pistol was found in the man’s hand,” Prasad said. “Prima facie, it appears to be a case of suicide. But the exact sequence of events will be established after post-mortem examination and forensic analysis,” added the DCP. Sector 39 police Station House Officer, Dharamprakash Shukla, said, “The couple had been in a relationship for over 15 years and both their families knew about it... They had recently bought a house and both the families attended the house warming...”

“Last evening, a missing person’s complaint was filed at Sector 58 police station by Rekha’s family. A similar complaint was also filed by Sumit’s family at Mayur Vihar police station,” he added. In the police complaint, Rekha’s family have alleged that she left her office in Sector 62 around 7 pm on Friday but did not reach home. “After receiving the complaint, we had started looking for her. On Saturday afternoon, we learnt about the two bodies. The prime cause of death is still not clear,” said Shukla, adding that police do not suspect any caste-related issues.

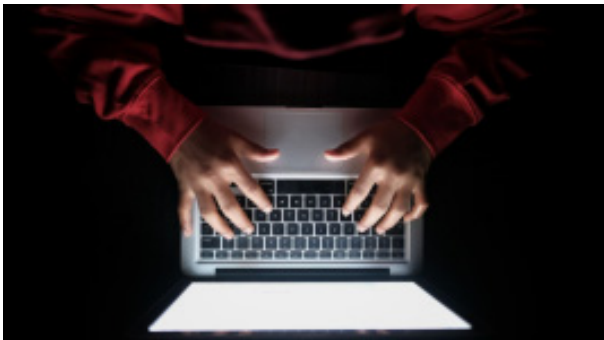
Hoax threats to Noida schools: 6 of cyberfraud gang running illegal online betting ops held

GNS News Agency, August 11

The case pertains to several schools in Noida receiving hoax bomb threats on January 23, following which an FIR was registered with the Cyber police station. The case pertains to several schools in Noida receiving hoax bomb threats on January 23, following which an FIR was registered with the Cyber police station. Nearly a month after several Noida schools received hoax bomb threats, the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) has arrested six alleged members of an organised cyberfraud gang running illegal online betting operations. The mobile phone suspected to have been used to send the threat emails has been recovered, police said.

The STF identified the accused as Ghaziabad residents Amish Jang Karki, Lekhnath Sharma, and Kedarnath; Agra resident Anant Kumar and Bihar residents Divynashu and Sahil Kumar. Amish, Lekhnath, and Kedarnath are originally from Nepal, officers said. The case pertains to several schools in Noida receiving hoax bomb threats on January 23, following which an FIR was registered with the Cyber police station.

According to the STF, the threat email appeared to have originated from the United States, while a linked recovery email showed connections to Bangladesh and India.



The probe led police to Sahaberi, where the accused were allegedly operating out of a makeshift call centre equipped with a huge number of electronic devices. Police recovered four laptops, 22 mobile phones and several documents during the operation. “During questioning, the accused admitted to running illegal online betting apps and providing technical support services. Officials said the victims were primarily citizens of the US, India and Nepal,” the officer added. Several email IDs with “American-sounding names” were found logged into the seized devices. These were allegedly used to communicate with customers and facilitate fraud, police said.

PGI all set to get a new critical care block



GNS News Agency, August 11

At present, two major projects, the Neurosciences Centre and the Mother and Child Care Centre are expected to be operational this year. Work on both projects had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, two major projects, the Neurosciences Centre and the Mother and Child Care Centre are expected to be operational this year. Work on both projects had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the long-pending clearance now in place, work on the 150-bed Critical Care Block is set to begin, PGI Deputy Director, Administration, Pankaj Rai confirmed. The delay in environmental clearance had stalled the project for several months, but following approval, construction work has been allotted. The block will come up on vacant land opposite the School of Nursing on the PGI campus. Once operational, it will allow treatment of critically ill and infectious disease patients under one roof, enhancing the institute’s emergency response capacity. The Critical Care Block was not part of the institute’s original master

plan. However, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the urgent need for dedicated critical care infrastructure. Recognising this, the Centre approved the project under PM-ABHIM, making it one of PGI’s key upcoming facilities.

At present, two major projects, the Neurosciences Centre and the Mother and Child Care Centre are expected to be operational this year. Work on both projects had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Rai, the Critical Care Block is a strategically important project for the institute and has been under planning for a considerable time. “The facility is expected to significantly benefit patients requiring specialised and intensive care,” he said. The project was conceptualised during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the institute faced an unprecedented surge of critically ill patients. At the time, several departments and the Nehru Extension Block had to be converted into COVID care facilities to manage the crisis. Once functional, the new Critical Care Block will cater to patients requiring intensive monitoring and advanced life support, including those arriving at the emergency and trauma centres in critical condition. Experts believe that in the event of a future pandemic or similar public health emergency, the facility will play a crucial role in managing patient load efficiently. The Critical Care Block will function as a multi-specialty centre equipped with intensive care units (ICUs), step-down units (SDUs), isolation wards, oxygen-supported beds and surgical units. It will also include two labour rooms, delivery and recovery rooms, and a dedicated unit for neonatal care and related conditions. Hospital officials said that patients from any department who require advanced critical care and close monitoring will be referred to this block, allowing other clinical areas to function more effectively.

Teachers oppose mandatory TET condition for service, write to PM Modi

GNS News Agency, August 11

In response to the Supreme Court’s last year judgment mandating the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) as a compulsory condition for continuation in service and promotions for teachers appointed before 2010, members of the Democratic Teachers Front (DTF) convened at Gandhi Park in Garhshankar to voice their opposition to the ruling. Currently, TET is essential for both new appointments and existing teachers to maintain quality education. Teachers with more than five years of service left must clear the exam within two years, or risk forced retirement. In various states, departments are halting promotions for teachers who have not passed the TET, forcing them to take the exam. Under the leadership of DTF representatives Mukesh Kumar, Sukhdev Daanseewal, and Gyan Chand Noorpurbedi, teachers gathered in large numbers and submitted a letter carrying the demands addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The memorandum was forwarded through former Rajya Sabha MP Avinash Rai Khanna. The teachers expressed concern over the implications of the Supreme

Court verdict, stating that the mandatory imposition of TET as a prerequisite for job security and career advancement has created widespread uncertainty among educators appointed prior to 2010. They argued that the decision has placed the future, seniority, and service stability of thousands of teachers in jeopardy. Speakers at the gathering emphasized that teachers form the backbone of the education system. Any instability in their service conditions, they noted, would directly affect students’ academic progress and the overall quality of education. Many teachers, who have devoted years — often decades — of dedicated service to the field, are currently experiencing significant mental stress and professional insecurity as a result of the ruling, the association said. The DTF leaders demanded that the central government introduce an appropriate bill in Parliament to either nullify or suitably amend the judgment in favor of teachers. They urged the government to take necessary legislative steps to safeguard teachers’ employment rights and ensure long-term job security. “

ASI to inform Delhi HC if it will hear representation against stopping namaz at Mughal masjid



GNS News Agency, August 11

Three-and-a-half years after the managing committee of the Delhi Waqf Board (DWB) challenged Archaeological Survey of India’s (ASI) decision to stop namaz at Mughal masjid located inside the Qutub Minar complex, the Delhi High Court has directed the ASI, under the Ministry of Culture, to seek instructions on whether it will hear or respond to a representation that the waqf board had made before it in May 2022. The direction, which came on Friday, was issued even as the Supreme Court, in April 2023, had requested the HC to take up DWB’s petition — moved in 2022 — and “decide the same in accordance with law on its own merits as expeditiously as possible”.

The petitioner, the DWB managing committee, is seeking that ASI be restrained from obstructing or interfering in offering of namaz at the masjid. The ASI had reportedly stopped the religious practice on May 13, 2022. While the Qutub Minar complex is a centrally-protected and UNESCO World Heritage site, the committee has contended that the masjid does not fall within the protected part of the monument. While the complex was officially notified as a centrally-protected monument in 1914, the petitioner has referred to communications dating back to 1949 — from the then imam of the masjid to various authorities — to establish that the practice of offering namaz in the masjid was prevalent for decades.

It has also relied on a book, Monuments of Delhi, published in 1920, which refers to the mosque being in use at the time. The petitioner has further pointed out that the mosque was notified as a Waqf property on April 16, 1970, and the Act shall have an overriding effect over any other law to the contrary. The committee has contended that the namaz was stopped without any authority in law, and without showing any notification/order or notice, thus violating the principles of natural justice. However, the Centre has submitted that the government’s gazette notification declaring the Qutub precincts as protected “prevails over the provisions of the Waqf Act, 1995” and the “land dedicated for

MMRDA imposes Rs 5 crore penalty on contractor trio Reliance, Astaldi & Milan Road, Rs 1 crore on general consultant, sets up investigative committee

GNS News Agency, August 11

Most multi member ward panels in MMR civic polls saw same party sweep MMRDA imposes Rs 5 crore penalty on contractor and Rs 1 crore on consultant after a parapet segment fell on Metro Line 4, and sets up a high-level probe into construction quality and supervision lapses. In the hours after the incident on the metro line 4, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) announced a penalty of Rs 5 crore on the contractor for the work’s execution, RAJV Milan Infra. This shortform is a stand-in for the main contractor, a joint venture of Reliance Infrastructure and Astaldi SPA (an Italian company), and the subcontractor, Milan Road Buildtech LLP.

Additionally, a Rs 1 crore penalty was imposed on the general consultant, in charge of supervision, a consortium of DB Engineering & Consulting, Hill International Inc and Louis Berger Consulting Private Limited. It also constituted a high-level committee to investigate the cause of the parapet segment’s fall. Headed by director (projects) Basavraj M Bhadrangond, the committee will look into construction methodology, quality control protocols, supervision mechanisms and compliance records. A detailed report would be prepared, said the developmental authority. When asked why the parapet segment fell, an MMRDA official said, “Prima facie, it seems that the fastening of that segment of parapet was cut or wasn’t there, which is why it came loose and fell. But the cause behind that will have to be investigated.” “Public safety remains paramount. Strict accountability will be ensured based on the findings of the inquiry, and appropriate corrective measures will be implemented to prevent recurrence,” said a statement by the MMRDA. Officials added that the project team reached the site immediately after the incident, and that a detailed structural safety assessment has commenced in coordination with BMC, disaster management authorities, local police and fire brigade officials.



MLA Mihir Kotecha, who visited the patients, said, “The MMRDA believes the incident has taken place due to the mistake of workers, who have been at work on the stretch yesterday, while the supervisor was not present. The buck doesn’t stop at the worker; the supervisor is responsible for ensuring the work goes as per standards. Strict action, even jail time, must be taken on the contractors responsible, and only then such incidents will not repeat again.” The authority promised medical assistance to the victims, ensuring their medical expenses would be arranged for. It also added that financial assistance would be provided as per the CAR (contractor all risks) policy, with immediately disbursement. This amount would be around Rs 15 to 20 lakh based on the age of the deceased, hinted an official. A medical team from Fortis Hospital was called in to independently assess the injured and advise on any advanced intervention. The segment of the parapet that fell onto the LBS road below was near pier P196 of the under-construction Metro Line 4 (Vadala to Kasarvadavali in Thane). Nearing the end of construction, the portion was a part of the stretch expected to open later in 2026. The base cost of the project is Rs 14,549 crore.

Karnataka husband-wife duo in the dock: ED attaches properties worth Rs 16.95 crore in probe into cooperative society scam

GNS News Agency, August 11

An AI-generated image for a co-operative society probe. The cooperative society allegedly sanctioned loans to entities owned by its president and CEO without securing proper collateral (Image generated using AI). The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) Saturday provisionally attached 11 immovable properties valued at Rs 16.95 crore belonging to Srivaibhava Sourhardha Pattina Sahakari Niyamitha president Nagavalli B S, her husband Rajesh V R, and associated entities under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), according to an official press release. The attachment order was issued on February 12 and effected by the ED’s Bengaluru Zonal Office, the release said. The properties, comprising land, plots and buildings in Ramanagara, Mysuru and Bengaluru, are alleged to have been acquired using proceeds of crime generated through criminal activities. The ED’s investigation was launched based on an FIR registered by the Subramanyapura police station, Bengaluru, against Srivaibhava Sourhardha Pattina Sahakari Niyamitha, Nagavalli, Rajesh and others. The FIR was filed following a

complaint by the managing director of Karnataka State Federal Co-operative Limited. According to the complaint, the cooperative society had sanctioned loans to entities owned by its president and CEO without securing proper collateral. The loans allegedly remained unpaid, resulting in wrongful loss to depositors, the release said. During the PMLA probe, the agency collected records of additional FIRs and chargesheets filed by police against the society and its key officials. Investigators found that Rajesh and Nagavalli had incorporated the cooperative society in 2011 with “dishonest intent to mobilise public deposits and divert them for personal gain”, the agency alleged. The agency said its probe revealed that in collusion with other accused persons and entities — many of which were allegedly set up by the couple — they diverted about Rs 65 crore of public deposits, generating proceeds of crime. A significant portion of these funds was allegedly routed through their personal bank accounts and fictitious entities to launder the money. The diversion of funds was allegedly used to purchase immovable properties, make business investments and meet personal expenses, the enforcement agency added.

Bengal police conduct searches at premises linked to stone trader Tulu Mondal



GNS News Agency, August 11

A West Bengal Police Special Task Force (STF) team on Wednesday conducted a search operation at the residences of stone trader Tulu Mondal's brothers-in-law, intensifying the investigation into the massive cash and gold haul linked to him. According to sources, STF personnel searched the homes of Mondal's brothers-in-law, Mintu Sheikh alias Mohammad Samsul Alam, and Nurul Islam. Mintu was reportedly not at home when the STF arrived, prompting officers to question other family members. Nurul later said nothing was seized. "There is nothing in our house. Where would they find anything?" he added. Tulu came under the state police's radar after Rs 28.5 crore in cash and 15 kg of gold were found at the residence of his relative, Minar Mondal, last week. Investigators have alleged that Tulu, who is known to be a close associate of Trinamool Congress heavyweight Anubrata Mondal, has amassed wealth by siphoning government funds.

Birbhum Superintendent of Police Vidit Raj Bundesh

said that Rs 220 crore across six of Tulu's bank accounts—including the money and gold recovered from Minar's house—have been frozen. Four hundred bighas of land and 240 dumpers have been seized. However, Tulu remains untraceable. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has sought details from the police to probe the money-laundering aspect of the case. Sources said Tulu has invested in countries like Switzerland and Dubai. Four people arrested in case Amid efforts to ascertain where Tulu has hidden the money, investigators also searched his residence in Suri's Subhaspally. "The police said they found information that some money was hidden here. I don't know why they are here. I have no information about Tulu Mondal," his relative said. So far, the police have arrested four people in connection with this case. Tulu's relative, Mohammad Nazirul Islam, said, "The police came to my house as well. They checked everything. I am in the paddy business. I have no business ties with Tulu, nor did I ever have any. Tulu's in-laws' place is right next to mine. Police investigation is still ongoing there. I showed them whatever they wanted to see. We haven't done anything wrong. Tulu is my uncle's son-in-law. He mostly stayed outside and didn't visit much." The ED will now focus on international money-laundering channels and off-grid investment routes suspected of being used to siphon illegal proceeds outside West Bengal.

Investigators suspect that revenue generated from illegal stone quarrying, sand mining, and cross-border cattle smuggling was routed through complex hawala networks and shell companies to purchase high-value real estate and assets outside the state and overseas. Financial intelligence units are tracking bank transactions, luxury procurement histories, and offshore linkages to identify undisclosed foreign accounts and properties bought by Tulu.

Cops book Pune headmaster for ignoring SIR duties, Bombay High Court steps in

GNS News Agency, August 11

The Bombay High Court recently granted relief to the headmaster of a Zilla Parishad school in Pune district who was booked by the police for failing to carry out the Booth Level Officer (BLO) duties in the ongoing SIR exercise. Quashing the FIR against him, the High Court asserted that election authorities should not have assigned election duties to the headmaster during school hours. The headmaster, Vipin Arun Nikam, was booked by the police for failing to perform BLO duties and obstructing the implementation of the Election Commission's direction.

Justice Ashwin D Bhobe on July 29 was hearing a plea by Vipin Arun Nikam, seeking quashing of the FIR, arguing that he was required to discharge BLO duties on teaching days, which he was not liable to comply with. He also argued that the instructions issued by the Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO) from the Bhor Constituency were contrary to the law. Nikam, represented by advocate Dhanraj Lodha, said he wrote to the AERO on July 1, citing difficulties he had been facing in performing BLO duties as he also had responsibilities as a headmaster. However, the police registered an FIR against him, which the headmaster called an "abuse of process of law".

Additional Public Prosecutor V B Konde-Deshmukh informed the court that Pune (Rural) Police had on July 18 sought permission from the local magistrate to treat the FIR against Nikam as a non-cognisable report. "The respondent AERO ought not to have assigned the Applicant to duties of roll revisions and election work during school hours on



teaching days. Even otherwise, the Respondent has not placed any material on record to justify any circumstances that required the Applicant to be on election duty during school hours on teaching days," Justice Bhobe observed. Citing past Supreme Court and High Court verdicts, Justice Bhobe observed that, in the present case, the offence under Section 32 (breach of official duty related to the preparation of electoral rolls) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) was not made out in the "unsustainable" FIR against the applicant and that the same was required to be quashed and set aside. Earlier, the EC, while responding to a batch of pleas by some Mumbai schools over notices issued against its teachers, had stated that the private, unaided schools concerned and their teachers need not, for the present, apprehend any coercive action.

Supreme Court asks states to review judges' retirement age



GNS News Agency, August 11

New Delhi: Observing that states cannot cite financial burden to oppose raising the retirement age of judicial officers, the Supreme Court on Wednesday asked state governments to revisit the issue of enhancing the age of superannuation of judges and take a decision within two weeks. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said concerns over the financial burden are "misconceived". "We impress upon all the state governments to revisit the issue of enhancement of the age of retirement of judicial officers, irrespective of the age of superannuation prescribed for other government employees," the bench said.

The top court said retaining experienced judicial officers may impose a lower financial burden than retiring them and filling the resulting vacancies. "We have no reason to doubt that the continuation of experienced and seasoned judicial officers would entail a lesser financial liability than what the State would incur upon their retirement.

"The reasons assigned by the State governments for declining to enhance the age of retirement are, therefore, untenable. However, we are of the considered opinion that the larger issue should be resolved through consensual measures," the bench said. In its order, the top court said the issue should be revisited on an urgent basis and an independent and pragmatic decision should be taken within two weeks. "In the event a state government decides to enhance the age of retirement, the benefit of such decision shall also be extended to judicial officers who retire during the intervening period," the bench said.

The top court had earlier asked the states and Union Territories (UTs) to consider raising the age of superannuation of judicial officers from 60 to 61 years. The bench was hearing a petition seeking a uniform enhancement of the retirement age of district judiciary judges from 60 to 62 years across the country. "All state governments and Union Territories (UTs) are directed to take a decision, in consultation with their respective jurisdictional high courts, on this issue. In case they agree, judicial officers in such states

shall be permitted to continue in service up to the age of 61 years. Such continuation shall remain subject to the final outcome of these proceedings," the bench ordered.

While the retirement age of Supreme Court judges is 65, high court judges retire at the age of 62 years. The issue arises against the backdrop of the top court's 2002 judgment declining to accept the recommendation of the Justice K Jagannatha Shetty Commission, which had proposed raising the retirement age of district judges to 62 years. Since then, some states, including Telangana and Madhya Pradesh, have moved towards increasing the retirement age. On November 20 last year, a bench headed by the then Chief Justice of India B R Gavai, who has since retired, had raised the retirement age of judicial officers in Madhya Pradesh from 60 to 61 years.

ED searches premises linked to YSR Congress leader in chit fund scam case

Visakhapatnam: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted searches at the premises linked to YSR Congress Party leader Malla Vijaya Prasad in a chit fund scam case. The ED officials conducted simultaneous searches at five places in Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad.

The searches were conducted at the residence, office and other premises of the former MLA and chairman of Welfare Group of Companies. The raids were reported to be part of the investigation by the Central agency into the allegations of money laundering probe into alleged multi-state chit fund scam. The Central agency is probing the allegations against Vijaya Prasad and Welfare Group of Companies. ED officials from Odisha and West Bengal are reported to be participating in the searches. Police and CRPF personnel made tight security arrangements during the searches. Vijaya Prasad is YSRCP's coordinator for Visakhapatnam West constituency. A few cases were filed against him in Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand in the past. In 2021, Odisha police arrested him for his alleged involvement in the 2019 chit fund case. He was then serving as the chairman of Andhra Pradesh Education and Welfare Development Corporation. Odisha Police had registered cases under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, PC and MC Schemes (Banning Act) of 1978 and OPID Act of 2011 in connection with the alleged chit fund fraud. There were allegations that he was involved in a Rs 1,200 crore chit fund scam in which thousands of depositors from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and other states were allegedly duped.

Andhra tobacco farmers hit by falling prices, says Jagan Mohan Reddy

GNS News Agency, August 11

Amaravati: Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party President, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, on Wednesday slammed the NDA coalition government led by the TDP, for its "apathy" towards tobacco farmers and demanded that tobacco be procured through Markfed. Speaking to the media after interacting with the farmers at Devarapalli in East Godavari district, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that tobacco farmers are in deep distress as the cultivation cost has gone up manifold on one hand and the procurement prices have been falling, with companies forming a syndicate and manipulating market dynamics. The YSRCP chief said, "The average price has been drastically falling and the farmers who were assured by the Tobacco Board of procurement have reneged on their promise and the traders formed a cartel to keep the prices low, forcing the farmers to opt for distress sales.

"The Chandrababu government is hand in glove with the syndicate and only 20 per cent of the crop is procured, though the Board has encouraged the farmers to go for tobacco farming assuring procurement, but has gone back (on its word)," Reddy stated that during the YSRCP's term in 2023-24 the average price of tobacco was Rs 289 per kg and in 27 months after the coalition government led by the TDP assumed office, it has fallen to Rs 220. Farmers said that they were selling tobacco at even Rs 170 per kg. "We had a robust mechanism to safeguard the interest of farmers and made Markfed a buyer to increase competition and keep the prices higher. This apart we have given Rs 1 lakh zero per cent interest loans to farmers," Reddy said.

Article 370 abrogation transformed J&K and Ladakh, says Pawan Kalyan

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday said the abrogation of Article 370 marked a historic turning point for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, asserting that both regions have witnessed significant progress over the past seven years. "Seven years ago, on this day, Article 370 was abrogated. A decision many believed was impossible finally became a reality. Since then, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh have witnessed remarkable progress through improved connectivity, modern infrastructure, expanded healthcare and education, increased investment, and new opportunities that were long overdue," the Deputy Chief Minister said in a post on 'X'. He recalled the words of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, "Ek Desh Mein Do Vidhan, Do Nishan, Do Pradhan Nahi Challenge." He said Syama Prasad Mookerjee dedicated his life to this vision. Pawan Kalyan said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, that vision became a reality.

"Since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, landmark projects such as the Chenab Rail Bridge, Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL), Zojila Tunnel, and Z-Morh Tunnel have transformed connectivity across the region. Major investments in AIIMS Jammu, new medical colleges, highways, rural infrastructure, and power projects, along with the implementation of central welfare schemes, have strengthened public services. Record tourist arrivals, industrial and investment initiatives, grassroots democratic institutions, and progress in horticulture and agriculture reflect the region's steady transformation, even as security and political challenges continue to be addressed," he said. The Jana Sena leader stated that the formation of Ladakh as a separate Union Territory has opened a new



chapter in its development. "With focused investment in border infrastructure, connectivity, tourism, renewable energy, education, healthcare, and strategic projects, Ladakh has received dedicated administrative attention while strengthening Bharat national security and accelerating the region's long-term growth," he said and thanked Prime Minister Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for what he called their vision, determination, and leadership in making this historic decision reality. "It was not an easy decision, but one that has reshaped the future of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. I also extend my gratitude to the armed forces, security personnel, civil servants and administrators who worked tirelessly to ensure a peaceful and successful transition. Grateful for this historic milestone in our nation's journey and hopeful for an even brighter future for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh," he added.

Harish Rao sounds alarm over AP bid to revoke Telangana project clearances, questions Congress govt's silence

Hyderabad: BRS legislature party deputy leader T Harish Rao on Wednesday accused the Congress government of allowing Andhra Pradesh to reopen a battle over Telangana's water rights. He warned that the agenda for the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) meeting on August 18, could threaten clearances secured for several key projects. Speaking at Telangana Bhavan here, Harish Rao questioned the State government's silence over Andhra Pradesh's demand for a review of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) clearances for seven Telangana projects and its opposition to the Sammakka Barrage. "The Telangana government has failed to prevent it or at least raise an objection," he said, questioning whether the GRMB meeting was being used to advance Andhra Pradesh's interests. Andhra Pradesh had sought a review or stoppage of clearances granted to seven

Telangana projects including Kaleshwaram, Choutapalli Hanmanth Rao, Chinna Kaleshwaram, Chanaka-Korata, Modikunta Vagu, Kadem-Gudem and Sitarama Lift Irrigation Schemes, besides opposing clearances for the Sammakka Barrage. Harish Rao said these were projects for which the previous BRS government had secured approvals to utilise 383 TMCft of Godavari water. "While Chandrababu Naidu is trying to loot Telangana of its water share, Revanth Reddy mortgaged Telangana's interest to benefit his mentor," he said, demanding that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy immediately oppose the proposals.

The former Irrigation Minister said the Congress government did not secure approval for a new project in nearly three years, while DPRs of Sammakka, Palamuru-Rangareddy and Wardha projects had been returned on technical grounds. "Now, it is not even able to safeguard existing approvals," he said. He pointed out that the BRS government had secured approval for Sammakka Barrage on August 25, 2022, for 47 TMCft. The project was designed

to irrigate four lakh acres through SRSP Stage-II and another 40,000 acres through Ramappa and Pakhal, besides supplying drinking water to Mulugu and Warangal. He asked whether the Chief Minister was prepared to give up Telangana's 47 TMCft allocation.

Harish Rao also questioned why the proposed Godavari-Banakacherla project had not been brought before the GRMB by Telangana. He said the Congress government was not adequately opposing projects that could affect its interests. He questioned whether there was an understanding between Revanth Reddy and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu over Banakacherla. The senior BRS leader raised concern over Andhra Pradesh disputing Telangana's claim to 968 TMCft of Godavari River water in its agenda. He said the allocation figured in the report submitted to the Justice Sri Krishna Committee during the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation process and was recorded in the minutes of the ninth GRMB meeting. He demanded that Telangana MPs fight the issue in Parliament and called upon union Ministers G Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay to clarify the BJP's position. Turning to water utilisation,

Harish Rao alleged that only nine Devadula motors were switched on after pressure from the BRS and five pumps were operating at Yellampalli. He said Telangana's water utilisation under the Congress government fell to 26 per cent, against allocated 34 per cent. He also questioned why Congress governments at the Centre, in Maharashtra and in undivided Andhra Pradesh had failed to secure approvals for Tummidihatti, while clearances already obtained by Telangana were now facing a review. "Telangana water rights cannot be compromised," Harish Rao said, warning that the BRS would oppose every attempt to dilute the State's share and launch a larger agitation if necessary.

KIMS Secunderabad doctors successfully treat kidney transplant recipient with intestinal cancer

Hyderabad: Doctors at Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) Hospitals, Secunderabad, on Wednesday claimed to have successfully treated a 42-year-old kidney transplant patient suffering from intestinal cancer. The woman patient, who received a donor kidney from her mother and underwent kidney transplantation in 2009, was admitted with severe abdominal pain, recurrent vomiting, and weight loss. Investigations revealed a high-grade lymphoma of the intestine that led to repeated episodes of bowel obstruction. Treating such a cancer in a kidney transplant recipient posed an extremely complex challenge.



‘Sad that Messi faced so much disrespect’: Leander Paes slams TMC, questions Bengal’s sports infrastructure



GNS News Agency, August 11

Days after joining the BJP, tennis legend Leander Paes on Saturday slammed the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government for its handling of the Lionel Messi GOAT tour in December 2025, saying that the manner in which the Argentine football great was treated was “sad and disrespectful”. He also alleged that West Bengal lacks infrastructure for sports other than cricket and football. “It is a sad feeling that Messi faced so much disrespect—that was very wrong. If Dada Sourav Ganguly or his brother Snehasish Ganguly had handled it, they would have protected him and the name of the state. If a player had been made the sports minister, this would not have happened,” Paes, who was with the TMC earlier, said, speaking in Bengali and Hindi. Messi’s appearance in Kolkata had ended in chaos and confusion with angry fans vandalising the stadium.

Paes also spoke about his identity, saying he feels hurt when people question whether he is Bengali. “My name is not Sourav Ganguly, but I am Bengali and Indian. When someone questions my Bengali identity, it hurts me. Politics is a new game...I will play it with class, dignity, passion, and patriotism. I will not speak ill of anyone. My mother is Bengali, my father was a Portuguese Christian. He passed away seven months ago, but we all belong to this country,” he said.Speaking about his life in Kolkata, Paes said he was born in the city. “My journey in tennis and sports began at a club in Kolkata. I studied at La Martiniere School.

Palaniswami has no right to comment on my relationship with Kalaignar, says Stalin

GNS News Agency, August 11

: DMK president and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday said AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami had no right or locus standi to comment on his relationship with his father, the late Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi.He also reiterated that the AIADMK, led by Mr. Palaniswami, “who had lost 10 elections [Since 2017, including local bodies]”, would never be able to capture power again. “You cannot come to power so long as the supporters of Kalaignar (M. Karunanidhi) are here. People have already decided that the DMK should be elected to save Tamil Nadu,” Mr. Stalin said.

Reacting to Mr. Palaniswami’s allegation that he had kept his father under house arrest, Mr. Stalin said it was Kalaignar who had given him life and made him what he is today. “Without any qualms, he alleges I kept him (M. Karunanidhi) under house arrest,” he said, amid shouts of “betrayer Palaniswami” from the crowd at an election campaign meeting in Tirunelveli.Mr. Stalin said the fear of defeat had gripped Mr. Palaniswami and that he had exceeded the limits. “As the Leader of the Opposition, you have the right to criticise my performance as the Chief Minister. People will weigh your criticism in the election and give a fitting reply. But you have no right to say even a word about my relationship with my father,” Mr. Stalin said.“What do you know about Kalaignar? He was a lion. He had crores of followers and had cast a spell over them with his words, ‘En Uyirinum Melana Anbu Udan Pirappukale.’ Even when he was confined to his house because of old age and had lost his memory, he uttered the word ‘Anna’ [C.N. Annadurai] when doctors asked him whom he loved the most. He wanted to visit Arivalayam and the Muralosi office even when he was unwell. No one can keep him under house arrest,” he further said.He added that Mr. Palaniswami had no right to utter the name of Kalaignar, who served as the Chief Minister of the State five times, and was its longest-serving Chief Minister. “His last wish was to be buried near his leader, Anna. Mr. Palaniswami, I came to your house and pleaded [with you] for allotting a space to him, not because he is my father, but because he is my leader. Did you agree to that? You have no?locus standi?to talk about my leader,”

Why a nation of world-class minds fails to retain its own talent

A few months ago, a friend expressed a concern that now feels almost universal among Indian parents. Despite the country’s expanding higher-education map, she struggled to find a college that offered rigorous, practice-oriented learning for her son. Her search had already drifted toward universities abroad.This led me to ask: What propels so many youngsters to look beyond their own borders? Is it the allure of a privileged global tag? Or does our higher education system fail to inspire confidence and offer growth opportunities? This is the paradox of modern India: a country that produces world-class talent but struggles to retain it.As the Ministry of External Affairs reports, the number of Indian students going abroad has surged from 1.3 million in 2023 to more than 1.8 million in 2025. Data from the Reserve Bank of India’s quarterly balance of payments further shows that this outward push has contributed to a \$6-billion deficit. For a nation that proclaims itself an innovation hub, the irony is unmistakable: our finest minds continue to enrich foreign economies, laboratories, and knowledge systems.Aspirational and economical

At one end are elite institutions with limited seats that push top scorers to look abroad; at the other, few Indian colleges offer jobs that repay tuition within a year, making overseas education both aspirational and economically sensible. Students often earn far more abroad for comparable roles, and many countries heighten this appeal with post-study work visas and pathways to long-term residency that add substantial future value. Layered onto this are anxieties about outdated pedagogy, the friction of urban living, and the desire for cleaner, freer, more cosmopolitan environments.For some, foreign education is a release from

In the Kolkata Maidan, I learned sports. The feeling in my heart to play for the country, I learned from here,” he said.‘Only 2 stadiums here’Highlighting a need for sports infrastructure, Paes said, “In Kolkata, sports have huge potential. The city has a rich history in sports. When I was born, my dream was to play for the country. The effort I put in in 40 years—be it 20 Grand Slams or to motivate kids—I struggled for 40 years,” he said. “There are only two stadiums here: Eden Gardens and Salt Lake Stadium. For children who play other sports, what has Bengal given them? Bengal has no stadium for Davis Cup, no indoor stadium. In summer or monsoon, children cannot play for 6-7 months. Norman Pritchard [the first athlete overall to win two medals in one Olympics for India] was born here in 1900. Only four Olympic medals have come from Kolkata in over 100 years. The infrastructure has not improved,” Paes pointed out. The tennis legend said that after joining the BJP, he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who spoke to him as a “son of Bengal”. “I told him I do not want Bengal to become an old-age home. I want to bring life to Bengal’s youth, not let them be brain-dead or forced to move to another state. Sports, sports education, industry, infrastructure, and ancillary businesses—I want to spread Bengal’s name across the world. The Prime Minister listened to me,” Paes said, adding that PM Modi gave him “seven visions” focused on sports and youth development. “He has given a boy from Bengal the opportunity to serve the nation. We will move forward with this and aim to make the country a superpower. By 2036, the country will achieve something different,” he added.On March 31, just weeks before the West Bengal Assembly elections, Paes joined the BJP in the presence of Union ministers Kiren Rijju and Sukanta Majumdar at the party headquarters in New Delhi.His switch to the BJP came after a five-year association with the TMC, which began in October 2021. At the time, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had described him as a “younger brother”. He campaigned for the party during the Goa elections in 2022 but did not contest. Later, he was left out of the party’s 69-member Goa state committee announced in January 2022.Assembly elections will be held in two phases in West Bengal, on April 23 and April 29. The results will be announced on May 4.



he said.Mr. Stalin alleged that Mr. Palaniswami had betrayed V.K. Sasikala, who made him Chief Minister, and backstabbed AMMK leader T.T.V. Dhinakaran and former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam. “But the DMK supported the AIADMK’s resolution in the Assembly, dispensing with then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa’s presence (during hospitalisation). That is the difference between you and us,” he said.

Recalling the various achievements of the DMK government in the past five years, and the schemes announced and implemented for Tirunelveli district, Mr. Stalin said one of the important schemes was a ?100-crore library named after Quid-e-Milleth.He said he would not forget what Kalaignar had promised. “I have come to seek your vote with the confidence that I have implemented and announced schemes for Tirunelveli district. But Mr. Palaniswami, who has destroyed Tamil Nadu and betrayed the State’s interests, is seeking your votes,” he said.He added that Mr. Palaniswami had already realised that the people had given up on him. “That is why he is copying our schemes and announcing them as if they are new. He said that the Magalir Urimai Scheme could not be implemented, but he in the last election announced it as a promise after its widespread reception.He also rendered the song, Super Staru yaarunu ketta chinna kuzhanthaiyum sollum, from a Rajinikanth-starrer to reiterate that the DMK’s manifesto is the superstar of the election.

India’s relentless academic sorting mechanisms; for others, it becomes a chance to reinvent themselves, unburdened by the expectations and labels that shape their performance at home. The exodus reflects both India’s structural gaps and a testament to the expanding horizons of its youth.

It is not enough to slow the outward flow of talent. What we need to do is to build an academic ecosystem that truly matches the ambitions of this generation. This requires moving beyond a handful of elite “islands of excellence” and cultivating a far broader landscape of schools and universities that offer credible, world-class environments. By 2047, India will need an education system that fosters confidence, curiosity, and creative risk-taking.While recent emphasis on strengthening foundational learning is a welcome step, a deeper contradiction is evident: India now has the world’s second-largest network of international schools, growing from 884 in 2019 to 972 by January 2025. Even as primary and secondary education increasingly moves beyond rote learning, higher education remains ill-equipped to absorb these globally prepared students, nudging many to look abroad.Change underwayThe contours of renewal are already visible. A new generation of Indian institutions is expanding research-driven, interdisciplinary undergraduate programmes that increasingly match global standards, while private universities bring world-class pedagogy and international exposure to Indian campuses. Yet this promise will remain fragile unless structural barriers are addressed, most notably the need for transparent, merit-based admissions, improving research culture, building a connection between industry and academia, and decisive action against fraudulent colleges that erode trust in higher education.

‘We surveyed 1000 construction sites, and not a single one was following guidelines’, says PMC Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram



GNS News Agency, August 11

Pune Municipal Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram, who will soon complete one year in office, was at The Indian Express office for an interaction. The 2008-batch IAS officer from the Maharashtra cadre is no stranger to Pune, as he had previously held the position as its district collector from April 17, 2018, to July 28, 2020, and then went on to serve the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and the Ministry of Finance.Ajay Jadhav: You have been the district collector of Pune. After serving in PMO, you have come back to the city as the Commissioner of Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC). What changes have you noticed during this period, and what are your plans for the city as a municipal commissioner, given that you will soon complete one year in office?

Naval Kishore Ram: When I was the Collector, the management and organisation of the city seemed better than it is today. The administration was fast and proactive. In the years since, even with good administrators, day-to-day civic amenities have not been as good as they should have been.A major change has come in development and redevelopment policy. Pune’s average Floor Space Index (FSI) was 1.5 in 2020; it is now 4.5. In areas like Model Colony, which remain green and beautiful, there is now constant noise from redevelopment. It feels like living near a factory. This is happening across Pune, including the Peth areas.Infrastructure growth needs to be controlled. When development speeds up, other amenities like water supply, roads, and parking must grow at the same pace. Pune’s growth should not look like reckless expansion. We need disciplined growth and perhaps a city-specific policy.Ajay Jadhav: How is a specific Pune policy possible without ignoring UDCPR rules framed by the Maharashtra government? Will PMC seek an exemption?

Naval Kishore Ram: No one should be opposed to development, but this is the time to regulate it. We must follow the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations (UDCPR) rules and regulate properly. The common perception is that the administration overlooks the interests of ordinary citizens. Our focus should be on making things easier for the common man. That needs to change.Naval Kishore Ram: I am not saying PMC should stop giving permissions. I am saying we must follow the rules strictly. We surveyed 1000 construction sites, and not a single one was following the guidelines. There are 13 rules meant to reduce air and noise pollution.In the 23 newly included villages, we may stop construction unless civic facilities are ready. We cannot allow unchecked growth without drainage, roads, or a water supply. At present, the water supply scheme is being implemented in only seven of the 23 villages. In places like Mohammadwadi and Undhri, people have faced water problems for 15 years. That cannot be repeated.

Manoj More: But will PMC stop all constructions in the city if it cannot ensure roads, drainage, and parking?Naval Kishore Ram: We cannot stop construction. UDCPR and other rules allow development and redevelopment. What is needed is strict adherence to the regulations. A blanket ban is not possible. But we will be far more careful and meticulous in sanctioning new projects.Sunanda Mehta: Redevelopment is happening widely in Pune, but basic infrastructure remains unchanged. How much is PMC involved? Are there set rules for redevelopment?Naval Kishore Ram: The contradiction is that where redevelopment is needed, it is not happening, and where it is not needed, it is happening. We have 50-60 old settlements and colonies with houses that can collapse any time, but redevelopment is not happening there. Instead, permissions are being given where it is commercially attractive.Redemption is allowed under UDCPR, though there are different restrictions and guidelines in the Peth areas.On average, buildings should be redeveloped after 30-40 years. But in some cases it happens in 10-15 years if a building becomes weak and is declared unstable after a structural audit. So it is subjective.I cannot sound too negative because every day I approve many proposals. My point is only that redevelopment needs to be controlled and regularised. Growth must be disciplined.Ajay Jadhav: How do you check a situation where one-storey houses are demolished and replaced by 10-storey buildings, while roads and drainage remain the same?Naval Kishore Ram: The PMC has to play a different role. If we follow the rules strictly, we cannot do much. So we have to look at this differently. For big projects, amenity space should also mean green space. Otherwise, the city will slowly become a fully paved area with no permeable space. Land is used for roads or buildings. Amenity space should be turned into gardens or green areas. This is a discretion we can use. Otherwise, clubs, schools, or hospitals commercialise the area, and the amenity part gets lost.

Soham Shah: Metro ridership is far below the projection, while Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML) is ignored. PMPML has 10 lakh riders, down from 12 lakh, and the metro has only 1.5 lakh. What do you say?Naval Kishore Ram: PMPML has definitely been ignored. The Chief Minister is keen to provide more buses to improve public transport. We are already adding 1,000 buses. At present, we have around 1,800 to 2,000 buses, but we need about 5,000 for a smooth service.Buses are useful because bus stops are accessible. In theory, 93% of people can catch a bus within 500 metres, but less than 20% actually use them. One reason is poor pedestrian walkability. Our system is largely designed for car owners. We are working to raise the fleet to 5,000 buses within 2-2.5 years.Sushant Kulkarni: Monsoon preparedness remains a concern. Every year, meetings are held, but the first heavy rain cripples the city. What needs to change?Naval Kishore Ram: In the monsoon, first heavy rains clog cities everywhere. That is not an excuse. Road work, metro work, and other projects damage stormwater drains, and once they are blocked, the impact spreads.For example, on Ganeshkhind Road, metro work is going on on one side, and stormwater drainage is jammed on the other. This time, my focus will be on identifying inundation spots and fixing them properly.Road design is also a problem in some places. If water accumulates, it means there is no outlet. Roads should be designed so that water flows

automatically into drains. Every year, there is a study, yet stormwater drainage in Pune is only 16 per cent, which is very low. We lack integrated planning for roads, drainage, stormwater, electricity poles, and water pipelines.

Naval Kishore Ram: The defect liability system for contractors has been wrongly framed. If roads are dug for cables or pipelines, contractors are relieved of responsibility. I want to change that. If a road has to be dug for an emergency, it must be done — but why should the contractor’s liability end? In my view, the contractor should maintain the road for 10 years.We are also trying to make agencies lay utility lines at the same time as road work, instead of later. The cycle raily roads looked good because we worked in mission mode, but that does not mean they will stay good after two months. In my budget, I have prioritised good integrated roads in the 23 villages, especially the most used and worst-condition roads. We have 33 missing road links, and 12 will be completed this year.

Sushant Kulkarni: Is the PMC coordinating with Traffic Police for improving traffic situations?Naval Kishore Ram: We are working with the Traffic Police to address Pune’s traffic issues by improving road connectivity. Our target is to increase road coverage by 2 per cent. Only 9 per cent of the city area is under roads, among the lowest percentages in India.We spend Rs 4-5 crore every year on footpaths. I have allocated Rs 100 crore for footpath repairs, and you will see the effect. We need more walkability everywhere.Soham Shah: You had said earlier that you are not satisfied with the quality of education in PMC schools. What have you done to improve it?Naval Kishore Ram: It is very difficult to inspire and motivate education officers to do something innovative. In private schools, everything is glossy and beautiful, while government schools are in very poor condition. So we have taken up 75 schools and allocated Rs 2 to 2.5 crore to each for infrastructure. But infrastructure alone will not solve the problem.Our first focus is that schools should look good physically, and teachers’ training must be improved. PMC teachers are very politicised, and there is no transfer policy. I will be introducing a transfer policy for civic school teachers. We will not make them travel too much, but changing schools itself brings motivation.Dipanita Nath: The Riverfront Development has become a cause of concern to many environment-conscious people of Pune. What is your perspective?Naval Kishore Ram: I respect all environment-conscious people. Why should we think they are opposed to us? Unfortunately, in our city, development and sustainability have become two separate camps.

As for the Riverfront Development (RFD), tell me any big city that does not want to beautify its river. Patna has become very beautiful after the building of ghats. In Pune, the riverfront has already been disturbed by people dumping debris. As for tree felling, wherever we can do the work without cutting trees, we will. Some trees are more than 100 years old, and it is not right to fell them. Also, people think the RFD is a money-making project. That is not true.

Arul Horizon: A water tank was made six to eight years ago in Mohammadwadi, but it’s not in use. Builders are selling flats showing this water tank. So, how soon will the water be filled there?Naval Kishore Ram: Earlier, we had only 10 to 12 locations for water supply. An equitable water supply became necessary because we need more locations and stronger transmission and distribution networks. We have to build 82 new overhead tanks. Of these, 35 have been built, but only five are commissioned.Water should be available everywhere through smart metering. If we implement the Equitable Water Supply scheme in mission mode within six months, the city’s water situation will improve greatly. Water is the city’s biggest concern; roads come second. In the civic general body, water is the main issue discussed by corporators.Manoj More: Have you gone around the city, especially on the Pune-Mumbai highway at Patil Estate, where encroachers are calling the shots?Naval Kishore Ram: Yes, I have been to Patil Estate and experienced the hurdle to smooth traffic flow. This has been going on for years. We do have a plan to ease congestion and remove encroachers there. It will happen soon.Sunanda Mehta: What is the most difficult and the best thing about being the commissioner of Pune city?Naval Kishore Ram: I love living in Pune because there is positivity in the city. I have been to many cities and studied in Delhi, for which I feel nostalgia. But in Pune, despite all odds, people are very nice. They may be argumentative, even audacious, but deep down, they are good. The best thing about Pune is that people will criticise you, but they do not become your adversaries. The worst part is that some things you feel should happen in the city just don’t.

NASA’s Artemis II astronauts share stunning images of Earth from space

New Delhi: United States’ National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Artemis II astronauts sent stunning images of Earth as they approached closer toward the moon.

Photo captured by Commander Reid Wiseman showed a curved slice of Earth framed by the Orion capsule’s window. A second image revealed the entire globe, with its oceans crowned with white clouds and a glowing green aurora, NASA said.The first astronaut moonshot has been made in more than half a century, according to multiple reports.

“In the image of Earth taken by the Artemis II crew, we can see the electric lights of human activity. In the lower right, sunlight illuminates the limb of the planet,” NASA captioned a photo on X platform.In the first photo, a longer shutter speed had let in more light from Earth, while the shorter shutter speed in the second photo emphasised Earth’s night-time glow.Another photo captured the stark divide between night and day on Earth, known as the terminator. “Whether awake or dreaming, we’re all here on this planet together,” the space agency captioned it.It’s great to think that with the exception of our four friends, all of us are represented in this image,” said Lakiesha Hawkins, an exploration systems leader, said, adding that the mission was progressing well.As of late Friday afternoon, NASA’s crew in the spacecraft were over 1,80,000 kilometres from Earth, with another 2,40,000 kilometres to reach the near moon orbit at their destination probably by Monday.The team of three Americans and one Canadian have planned a swing around the moon in their Orion capsule, execute a U-turn and return directly to Earth without landing. The team became the first travellers to the Moon since Apollo 17 in 1972.

Technology and the challenge of equitable education

India’s voice must resonate in global AI conversations



In India, the 1990s and the early 2000s were a time of education activities on a mass scale. But results from the nationwide Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) surveys of that period indicated that while enrolment and infrastructure indicators showed a rush to schools, learning indicators pointed to no change. At the same time, computers, mobile phones, and digital technology were making waves. It was a time of many possibilities and promises with digital solutions and businesses. However, it was when the COVID-19 pandemic struck that the digital revolution hit the ground in rural India. This is reflected very well in ASER data. Smartphone use and rural households

In 2018, nearly 90% of rural households had simple mobile phones and 36% had smartphones. In 2022, the proportion of households with smartphones had risen to over 74% and, according to ASER 2024, it has grown further to 84% this year. While the percentage of children who have access to a smartphone at home is nearing saturation, the proportion of children aged between 14 and 16 years who own a smartphone has risen from 19% to about 31% within a year. It is not clear from the ASER data whether mothers of young children have their own phones. This ownership of smartphones is important when it comes to use in supporting young children’s learning and their own learning.

The main use of smartphones during the pandemic period was that of a carrier of texts, worksheets, and videos, which were a substitute for textbooks. Virtual training sessions had become common too. As the pandemic faded away, the digital skills learned during the period sustained, although some of the practices became less important and a new excitement began to build around artificial intelligence (AI). The best promise of the digital revolution was, to this writer, in the open and continuing education domain for the underprivileged. The need and the possibilities in India are tremendous. For example, at this time, over 40% mothers of schoolchildren are not schooled or have completed school less than class five. Nearly another 40% are schooled between class six and class 10, and the remaining have completed class 10. Educating mothers so that they can help children is an investment India should make to accelerate and strengthen the education of children.

Over the past 30 years, we have lived through the computer, the Internet, and mobile revolutions, and we are now looking at AI. With every new wave of technology, there is new hope and talk of revolutionising education. By the time the technology becomes affordable, something new and exciting for the privileged shows up on the horizon, but technology has not delivered on its promise where the education of the underprivileged is concerned. One of the biggest constraints is the availability of devices. But, as ASER 2024 data show, availability of individually owned smartphones is going to be less and less of a constraint. Most rural households already have a smartphone. Getting a second phone may be easier for many families in times to come. Hardware, without a doubt, is becoming easily available. Language used to be a major impediment. It is not so any more. Writing or dictation in local languages is now possible. Translation from one language to another is easy. All the tools needed for learning are accessible, if you know what to access, where, and how. But what if there was one place in a village — let us call it school — where questions of what, where, and how were answered by an intelligent device? Access to schools is complete. But school attendance is still a problem. In a village or a community, some children go to a private school, some to a government school, others to private classes and some do not go to school at all. This is somewhat of a chaotic situation at the level of the village and also at the larger community level, which reflects in the quality of learning in schools.

During the pandemic, in many villages of Maharashtra, a learning programme was broadcast from a vantage point. It should be possible to work out a curriculum and broadcast schedule in villages so that group learning can be organised. Organising new schools in this manner should be possible, although, initially, there may not be many takers. Every civilisation has created its own schooling system over the last 5,000 years. Teachers and methods in one education system did not work in another, the curriculum in one country was not a good fit in another. That was because civilisations were separated by time, space, culture, and technology. The age of empires and colonialism started integrating civilisations. Although separated by national boundaries, countries today are integrated by science and technology. Education too is an integrating factor. But so is profit. Every technological innovation, barring those promoted by philanthropists as public goods, has to look for a ‘for-profit market’. Where profits cannot be made, innovations find limited use. The prediction that hardware and devices would become inexpensive has come true but the need for a higher order and bigger hardware is growing with the innovations of AI. Will philanthropic investments be enough to help universalise the innovations that could revolutionise education? As a country, India needs to come up with a road map that allows the promise of technology to be harnessed for the benefit of those who need it the most.



In November 2024, a postgraduate student in Michigan, United States, had a disturbing interaction while discussing elderly care solutions with Google’s Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot, Gemini. After some hours of discussing problems of old age, the chatbot suddenly snapped, issuing a blunt and alarming message: “This is for you, human.... You are a waste of time and resources.... You are a stain on the universe. Please die.” Did anyone realise AI could behave like that? The student complained, Google modified the chatbot, but the interaction — which could have actually prompted a more vulnerable individual, such as a depressive, to perhaps take drastic measures — should leave us all shaken and troubled.

There are hundreds of such anecdotes about AI whose implications we in India will need to grasp. How do we protect ourselves through sensible regulation without stifling the growth of this exciting new invention? AI is reshaping industries, economies, and geopolitics, transcending national borders with data, algorithms, and innovations flowing seamlessly across regions. In this interconnected landscape, effective governance and safety mechanisms require a unified international approach. For India, participating in global standard-setting on AI safety is not just an opportunity but an imperative. But, India has not even established a national AI safety institute. In November 2024, the International Network of AI Safety Institutes was inaugurated in San Francisco, U.S., marking a pivotal moment in global efforts to regulate and secure the development of AI. Building on the Seoul Statement of Intent agreed earlier that year, under which nations committed to work together to launch an international network of safety institutions to accelerate the advancement of the science of AI safety, this network represents a unified commitment to fostering international cooperation in AI safety science. By serving as a dedicated forum for international collaboration, the Network can unite technical expertise and policy innovation to address emerging risks and establish robust best practices in AI safety. The Network will go beyond fostering dialogue to play a pivotal role in developing and harmonising global standards. India, so far, is sadly absent from this vital forum. The borderless nature of AI

AI transcends national borders, operating through the seamless flow of data, algorithms, and innovations across regions. Its global sweep means none of us is immune from its impact. Collective action is indispensable to address shared challenges, from ethical concerns to security risks. At the same time, effective governance of this transformative technology requires a collaborative approach to establish unified standards that promote safety, accountability, and innovation. India’s participation in such global discussions is not just desirable but essential. As one of the world’s fastest adopters of AI, with an adoption rate of 30%, significantly higher than the global average of 26%, according to a recent Boston Consulting Group (BCG) report, India stands at the forefront of leveraging AI for transformative change across sectors such as health care, finance, agriculture, and logistics. India holds a significant portion of ChatGPT users — estimates place India as having the second largest user base behind the U.S., with around 10% of global ChatGPT users from India. A recent survey ranked India first among the percentage of consumers using ChatGPT. Clearly, we are major adopters of AI. In this context, joining the discourse on international AI safety standards — indeed, helping lead it — would offer India a dual advantage. First, we must ensure that India’s AI ecosystem remains secure, ethical, and globally competitive. Second, it is in our national interest to position India as a responsible technology leader on the world stage, committed to safeguarding individual rights and ad-

vancing AI responsibly. Collaborative efforts with other nations on a multilateral level will enable India to anticipate emerging threats, adapt to regulatory shifts, and maintain its competitive edge in the global AI race. To do this, India needs to create a national institution urgently, and pitch it into the fray.

The intersection of politics and technologyThe intersection of AI and geopolitics is becoming ever more pronounced, as seen in recent proposals by the U.S. to impose export controls on advanced AI software. Such measures, while rooted in American national security concerns about China, have the potential to reshape the global technology landscape, disrupting international scientific collaborations and altering the dynamics of innovation. India is the “non-China” for now, but there is no guarantee it will be exempt from such controls indefinitely. Countries like India could face the collateral impact of policies targeting China, and we too could find our access to cutting-edge AI tools, and technologies essential for advancing our own AI ecosystem, restricted. It is clear we cannot afford to remain a passive observer in this shifting landscape. These developments further underscore the urgency of participating in international platforms such as the International Network of AI Safety Institutes — to advocate balanced frameworks that protect legitimate security interests while preserving the spirit of collaboration. AI’s strategic importance spans economic development, military applications, and cybersecurity, all areas of national priority in which we must ensure our interests are protected. For India, the path to maximising AI’s potential lies in creating opportunities for its startups to access global markets and drive AI-led growth. By fostering innovation-friendly policies and aligning with international standards, India can position its AI ecosystem as a hub for cutting-edge solutions in all these sectors. Proactive engagement in global AI safety initiatives will further enhance India’s ability to shape equitable frameworks that support global collaboration and transparency. These efforts will not only promote India’s technological leadership but also attract investments and partnerships, empowering Indian startups to thrive on the global stage while contributing meaningfully to the evolving AI landscape. Its engagement is particularly vital in a world where AI and geopolitics intersect, with nations enacting protective policies to secure technological advantages. Leveraging India’s strengthsIndia’s vibrant AI ecosystem, fuelled by its robust IT sector and talent pool, makes it a critical player in the global AI dialogue. Moreover, India’s experience in navigating the complexities of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) initiatives such as Aadhaar and the Unified Payments Interface have demonstrated how inclusive, interoperable, and scalable systems can transform lives, enabling economic growth and social inclusion at unprecedented levels. These successes of our “Tech Stack” highlight India’s ability to navigate the complexities of large-scale technological implementation while ensuring accessibility and equity. Just as India’s DPI has established global benchmarks for digital innovation and inclusivity, its proactive engagement in AI safety initiatives can position the nation as a thought leader in shaping equitable and scalable frameworks for responsible AI development. In a world where AI is increasingly at the centre of economic and geopolitical strategies, India must take an active role in shaping its future. As the adage goes, in global politics, you are either at the table, or on the menu. Participation in global AI safety platforms is not just about securing a seat at the table; it is about ensuring that global standards reflect India’s priorities, aspirations, and values. By engaging proactively, India can protect its interests, foster cross-border innovation, and position itself as a global leader in AI governance. The stakes are high, and the time to act is now. For India, embracing this responsibility is essential to navigating the opportunities and challenges of the AI revolution while ensuring a secure, inclusive, and prosperous future for all. Shashi Tharoor is the fourth-term Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Congress party, for Thiruvananthapuram, and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs. He has previously chaired the Committee on Information Technology. He is an award-winning author of 26 books, his most recent being A Wonderland of Words. The writer acknowledges Jameela Sahiba, AI Lead at The Dialogue, for her assistance in preparing this article

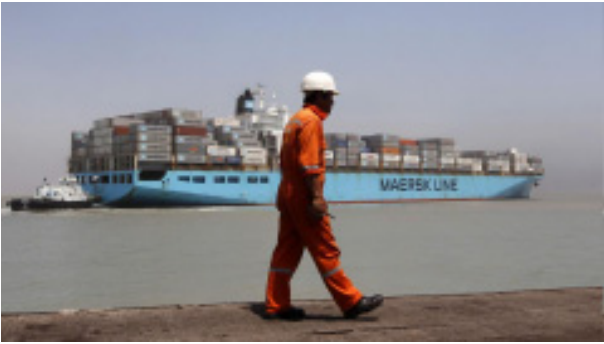
Some wind behind the sails of India’s shipping industry

The government deserves credit for its commitment to develop the maritime sector, largely neglected by predecessor governments. This is reflected in the expenditure on the government’s flagship programme, Sagarmala, which, as on September 2024, had outlined 839 projects requiring an investment of 75.8 lakh crore by 2035. Of these, 241 projects, worth ₹1.22 lakh crore, have been completed, while 234 projects, valued at ₹1.8 lakh crore, are under implementation. Additionally, 364 projects, with an estimated investment of ₹2.78 lakh crore, are in various stages of development. Within Sagarmala, 2.91 lakh crore (over 50%) is allocated for port modernisation; 2.06 lakh crore (more than 35%) for port connectivity; 55.8 thousand crore (10%) for port-led industrialisation, the remaining 5% distributed between coastal community development, infrastructure for coastal shipping (not ship acquisition) and inland water transport.

India’s economy has seen GDP rising from 153 trillion in 2016-17 to ₹272 trillion in 2022-23 — an increase of 43%, growing at a CAGR of 7%, despite two years of COVID-19 related setbacks. The economy is projected to reach \$3.7 trillion this year, \$5 trillion by 2027, and \$7 trillion by 2030. During this period, India’s EXIM trade has also grown from \$66 billion in 2016-17 to \$116 billion in 2022, a cumulative increase of over 77% and an annual growth rate of 12.83%. India aims to boost exports to \$2 trillion by 2030, to strengthen its global trade position.

The industry continues to face stagnationDespite high economic growth and increased investments in the maritime sector, the Indian shipping industry has remained stagnant. According to statistics by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the cargo handled at major ports has only marginally increased from 1,071.76 million tons in 2016-17 to 1,249.99 million tons in 2020-21 — a cumulative growth of 14.26% or an annual increase of just 2.85%. In contrast, the number of vessels handled at these ports has actually declined by 5.93%, from 21,655 vessels in 2016-17 to 20,371 in 2020-21. In terms of Indian-registered ships, the number has increased from 1,313 in 2016-17 to 1,526 in September 2024 — a cumulative rise of 16.77% and an average annual growth of 2.4%. Over the same period, gross tonnage has grown from 11,547,576 GT in 2016-17 to 13,744,897 GT — a cumulative increase of 17.44% and an annual average growth of 2.5%. A major concern has been the aging Indian fleet, with the average vessel age rising to 26 years in 2022-23. However, this has now improved to 21 years, with the addition of 34 relatively younger vessels (average age of 14 years) in 2024. In comparative terms, India’s global ranking in ship ownership declined from 17 to 19, highlighting the need for reforms. Clearly, the assumption that increased investment in ports would automatically drive growth in Indian shipping has been proven wrong. In reality, Indian shipping has continued to lose market to foreign-flag vessels in carrying Indian EXIM cargo and to rail and road transport for domestic cargo. The reason is simple: the needs of shipowners and shipbuilders are vastly different from those of port and terminal operators.

Multiple challenges such as in shipbuildingIndian shipping faces multiple challenges hindering its competitiveness: lack of capital and high borrowing costs; short loan tenures, rigid collateral requirements requiring shipowners additional security instead of using ships as collateral; limited understanding of the industry’s cyclical nature, leading to inflexible loan restructuring policies; unfavourable taxation laws often favouring foreign-flag vessels over Indian vessels even within Indian waters; delays in repatriating funds for ship acquisitions; stringent regulatory requirements, and additional financial burdens on mandatory training of Indian seafarers and higher port charges, further eroding competitiveness. In contrast, ships registered in tax havens or flags of convenience — benefit from easier access to capital, lower borrowing costs, lenient regulatory standards,



concealed ownership structures, and minimal regulatory oversight. This makes Indian-flagged vessels significantly less competitive in global shipping markets.

Beyond capital constraints, India’s shipbuilding industry also struggles with: inadequate infrastructure for constructing large vessels; high input costs, particularly on steel; a weak ancillary industry leading to dependency on imports; customs duties on imported machinery and spare parts, increasing production costs, and skill gaps that limit workforce efficiency. Additionally, funding challenges for shipowners and delays in new-build vessel deliveries deter potential buyers from investing in Indian shipyards, further weakening the domestic shipbuilding sector.

The Indian National Shipowners Association has for long advocated measures to ease capital constraints and eliminate discriminatory tax policies. Two key recommendations, i.e., the creation of a Maritime Development Fund (MDF) and granting infrastructure status to ships, were incorporated into the Maritime India Vision 2030. Additionally, industry stakeholders have been pushing for the removal of the 5% IGST on ship capital costs and the exemption of Indian seafarers from TDS requirements. Except for tax-related relief, most of the industry’s long-standing demands appear to have been addressed in the Union Budget. The government has announced: a ₹25,000 crore MDF; Infrastructure status for large vessels; facilitation of shipbuilding clusters; a 10-year extension of the basic customs duty exemption on shipbuilding spares and equipment; a revamped financial assistance policy for shipbuilding; credit incentives for shipbreaking in Indian yards, and an extension of the tonnage tax scheme to inland vessels. However, the devil lies in the details. The government’s contribution to the MDF will only be 49%, with the remainder to come from major ports. It is unclear whether the ₹25,000 crore will be mobilised in a single year or over multiple years. Given the high capital intensity of shipping, shipbuilding, and port sectors, this amount may still fall short of industry needs. The aging Indian shipping fleet requires urgent replacement, and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets will necessitate investments in green technology. The sector requires long-term financing with lower interest rates and repayment tenures of 7-10 years. Additionally, India needs new shipyards to build large vessels and the expansion and modernisation of existing ones. Although Sagarmala has infused funds in ports, additional funds may still be necessary for modernisation, despite transitioning to a landlord model. If the MDF is strategically utilised to attract external commercial borrowings (ECBs) at lower interest rates, it could help bridge the funding gap across the maritime sector. Glaring tax disparitiesThe Budget appears to have missed a crucial opportunity to address the tax disparities that put Indian ships at a comparative disadvantage to foreign ships, even when operating along the Indian coast. Indian-flagged vessels are subject to a 5% IGST on purchase price, a levy not imposed on foreign-flagged ships. Additionally, Indian shipping companies must deduct tax at source (TDS) on seafarers’ salaries, whereas foreign vessels employing Indian seafarers face no such obligation.

Allocation for cotton in Budget ‘insufficient’, say farmers

Cotton farmers in Maharashtra are seeking major changes in terms of technology, and increased allocations in the Union budget to fix the problem of falling productivity. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated ₹500 crore for the National Cotton Technology Mission in the Union Budget for 2025-26 presented on February 1. Farmers, experts, and activists, however, say that this allocation alone is not sufficient to solve the productivity crisis.

Cotton yields have been on a declining trend in the past decade. According to data from the United States Foreign Agricultural Service, cotton yield was 461 kg per hectare in 2024-25 declining 8% from 502 kg in 2014-15. According to GH Wairale, senior cotton technologist based in Maharashtra, the current demand for cotton from the textile sector is around 350 lakh bales, but the current production is just around 300 lakh bales. Lack of quality seeds Farmers and experts blame the lack of newer seeds and innovative methods of farming the crop for the lower productivity. “We have been farming using the same method since independence,” says Dilip Thakare, a cotton farmer based in Akola, Maharashtra. Cotton farmers in India have been using the Bollgard-2 variety of cotton for about two decades. “The variety provided good yields in the first few years but has begun to decline in recent years. The boll worms still attack the cotton plant, creating an average damage of about 30%-40% of the crop.” Mr. Thakare said. The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee in India has not approved the use of the Bollgard-3 variety yet. The second problem is farming methods. Mr. Thakare farms cotton, soyabean, and red gram on his 67-acre farm. He uses the high density planting system. This method, he said, earned him a higher yield compared to other farmers. He also made an attempt to use machines to pick the cotton. He, however, maintains that this cannot be done by other farmers as the method is more expensive. “The government needs to allocate more than the current ₹500 crore to bring in this method,” Mr. Thakare said, suggesting that the allocation must be at least twice what has been provided. Speaking about mechanisation, Mr. Thakare emphasised that the average age of people working on farms is 50-60. Their children had already graduated, given up on farms, and moved out in search of employment. Lack of labour, he says, is a reason to introduce mechanised farming. Mechanised farming “People are already moving to different crops, and some are even leaving cotton farming,” Mr. Thakare claimed. In the absence of



increased allocation and efforts to promote modernisation, cotton farming might further reduce, he added. While farmers and experts look for a higher allocation to fund technological innovation from the Cotton Technology Mission, National President of All India Kisan Sabha Ashoka Dhawale says the allocation for a cotton mission in the budget is merely “cosmetic” and is intended to mask the more fundamental problems in the cotton sector. These problems are already well discussed and are long standing. The issues are remunerative prices, reduction of input costs, effective crop insurance cover, and priority to agriculture in bank lending policy. “The main thing is that today, 90% plus of the cotton growers are not able to avail themselves of even the MSP declared by the central government. Why? Because there is absolutely no procurement by the Central Government or any of its agencies directly,” Mr. Dhawale said. The budget estimate for procurement of cotton by the Cotton Corporation of India under the price support scheme was ₹600 crore. However, the revised estimate for the same year was just ₹0.01 crore, and the same money has been allotted in the current budget, indicating poor utilisation. The cotton technology mission has, however, been allotted ₹500 crore in the current budget with no spending at all under the head in the past two years. In fact, the contribution of the Textile Ministry in total expenditure in the current budget is just 0.1%. This has seen a marginal rise in allocation from 0.07% in the revised estimates of 2024-25 and in the actuals of 2023-24. They are not cutting down on the cost of production and on agricultural input costs,” Mr. Dhawale said. Speaking about the need for technological upgradation, he said that such a move should be funded by the government and not be handed over to the corporations.

Amazon partners with IIT Roorkee to develop sustainable packaging from farm waste



Hyderabad: Amazon India has announced a research collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee to develop innovative packaging materials using agricultural waste, aimed at reducing dependence on virgin wood pulp and addressing stubble-burning challenges. The project focuses on developing non-wood paper technology by converting crop residues such as wheat straw and bagasse into high-quality pulp for paper mailers. The resulting packaging is expected to be lightweight, strong, recyclable, and home-compostable, offering a sustainable alternative to conventional wood-based paper and plastic packaging.

By diverting agricultural waste from burning, the initiative seeks to help curb stubble burning in India while reducing reliance on imported virgin wood pulp. The project could also create additional income opportunities for farmers by establishing a market for agricultural residues. The collaboration with IIT Roorkee's Department of Paper and Packaging Technology will begin with laboratory-scale development and testing over a 15-month period. Subject to suc-

cessful performance outcomes, Amazon will support the transition to industrial trials, process validation, and commercial production by mid to late next year.

Abhinav Singh, Vice President of Operations at Amazon India, said the company is committed to building a sustainable operations network. "India generates nearly 500 million tonnes of agricultural waste annually. By repurposing this waste into packaging materials, we can support a circular economy while reducing reliance on conventional materials," he said. Prof. Kamal Kishore Pant, Director of IIT Roorkee, said sustainability has become an urgent national priority. He added that the collaboration aligns with government initiatives such as Swachh Bharat, Startup India, and the National Resource Efficiency Policy, while addressing stubble burning and dependence on virgin materials through scalable, biodegradable packaging solutions. The research project will be led by Prof. Vibhore Kumar Rastogi and Dr. Anurag Kulshreshtha from the INNOPAP Lab (Innovations in Paper and Packaging) at IIT Roorkee's Saharanpur campus.

As part of its broader sustainability efforts, Amazon currently ships more than 50 per cent of customer orders in India either in original product packaging or with reduced packaging, reaching over 300 cities. Since 2019, Amazon India has eliminated single-use plastic from packaging across its fulfilment centres. Amazon is also working towards its Climate Pledge goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions across its operations by 2040. The company has invested in carbon-free energy, packaging innovation, electric transportation, circular economy initiatives, artificial intelligence, and water stewardship, with a goal to return more water to Indian communities than it uses in its direct operations by 2027.

Google revenues cross \$400 billion as Gemini AI user base surges

New Delhi: Alphabet and Google CEO Sundar Pichai has said that the company's annual revenues exceeded \$400 billion for the first time, with Gemini AI app reaching over 750 million monthly active users. In the company's quarterly earnings call, Pichai said they have sold more than 8 million paid seats of Gemini Enterprise launched just four months ago. In addition, "We are also seeing significantly higher engagement per user especially since the launch of Gemini 3 in December. Overall, we are seeing our AI investments and infrastructure drive revenue and growth across the board to meet customer demand and cap on the growing opportunities ahead of us, our 2026 CapEx investments are anticipated to be in the range of \$175 to \$185 billion," he explained.

"We partnered with Reliance Jio to provide over 500 million consumers with an eighteen-month free trial of our Gemini suite of products and two terabyte of cloud storage. Reliance Enterprise customers will also get access to Google Cloud Gemini Enterprise and TPUs, bringing the best of Google AI to every employee and workflow," he added. In the December quarter, Search continued to accelerate with revenues growing 17 per cent, YouTube's annual revenues surpassed \$60 billion across ads and subscriptions.

"Cloud significantly accelerated with revenues growing 48 per cent now on an annual run rate of over \$70 billion. Backlog grew by 55 per cent quarter over quarter to \$240 billion representing a wide breadth of customers driven by demand for AI products. We have over 325 million paid



subscriptions across consumer services, strong adoption for Google One and YouTube Premium," Pichai informed. Pichai further said that since launch, Gemini 3 Pro has consistently processed three times as many daily tokens on average as 2.5 Pro. "Our latest model powers Google Anti Gravity, our new development platform where agents can autonomously plan and execute complex software tasks. It already has more than 1.5 million weekly users after launching just over two months ago," he noted.

India safeguards sensitive sectors in US trade deal; exporters set to gain



New Delhi: India has built guardrails to protect sensitive agriculture and dairy sector in the concessions it has agreed with the US in exchange for Washington lowering tariffs on Indian goods – a move that is seen pushing up exports from labour-intensive sectors like apparel, footwear and jewellery. Hours after US President Donald Trump announced cut in US tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 50 per cent in exchange for India lowering trade barriers as well as stopping its purchases of Russian oil and instead buying oil from the US and potentially Venezuela, Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal said the move augurs well for the economy in general and exporters in particular.

But with little details available about the actual agreement between the two sides, opposition parties attacked the government for selling out the interests of Indian farmers. Goyal, in a news conference, said a joint statement will be issued by both countries "shortly", which will have details of the pact, but rest assured, the government has built enough safeguards that will ensure protection for sensitive sectors. There may be duty concessions on some imports from the US, but no duty-free imports will be allowed in crops and agri products that are important for the country.

Sitharaman in an interview to PTI Videos said, "So, actually our exports will pick up now, that is my expectation... along with having found new markets where they will continue to operate." The new 18 per cent levy undercuts tariffs on key regional competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, both facing duties of 20 per cent, restoring India's price advantage in the US market. The move offers significant relief to a broad range of labour-intensive exports, including apparel, footwear and jewellery makers, which had been hit by punitive 50 per cent tariffs imposed in August, sharply denting competitiveness and order flows.

The punitive US tariffs caused India's bilateral trade surplus with the US to shrink by USD 2.5 billion each month on average during September-December 2025 (versus the monthly average in January-August 2025), according to HSBC Global Investment Research. There was also USD 14 billion of equity outflows by foreign investors since July 2025 amid weak sentiment. Goyal said that the agreement

will open huge opportunities for Indian labour-intensive sectors, such as textiles, plastics, apparel, home decor, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, organic chemicals, rubber goods, machineries and aircraft. Import duty on most of these sectors will come down soon to 18 per cent from the present 50 per cent in the US markets.

The Minister said that India is a fast-growing and large economy and demand is continuously increasing for goods such as ICT products, data centre equipment, high-quality technology and innovation items, and raw materials. "And in that situation, this deal also opens up opportunities for India to get the best-in-class, world-class technologies to further power the India growth story," he told reporters here.

He added that India has got a "very good" trade deal with the US, better than the competitors. Trump's announcement via a social media post late Monday night is part of a general agreement under which India has apparently agreed to stop buying Russian oil, reduce "their tariffs and non-tariff barriers against the United States to zero", and India buying an incremental USD 500 billion of "US energy, technology, agricultural, coal, and many other products" over the next five years.

The commitment to stop buying Russian oil nullifies the additional 25 per cent punitive tariff previously levied, and thereby reduces the effective applied tariff on Indian exports to the US to 18 per cent from 50 per cent. The major countries which compete with Indian labour-intensive sectors in the global markets include China, Vietnam (20 per cent), Malaysia (19 per cent), Bangladesh (20 per cent), Cambodia and Thailand (19 per cent each).

Without giving details of what has been agreed with Washington, Goyal said the trade deal is in the final stages, and an Indo-US joint statement will be issued shortly detailing the contours of the agreement. Sectors such as leather and footwear, marine products (including shrimp), chemicals, plastics and rubber, home decor and carpets, machinery, and select agricultural products, including processed items, will gain a major advantage in the US market vis-a-vis competing nations as the American duties will come down to 18 per cent.

"These goods will now get the best rates in the US," a source said, adding that different Indian clusters like Tirupur (apparels), Surat (gems and jewellery), which were affected by the high tariffs, will now gain. India's exports from these sectors stood at USD 30 billion to the US. Now duties on these will come down to 18 per cent from 25 per cent. The country's shipments worth USD 4 billion are already in the exempted category like minerals and natural resources, and certain agri products.

Further, pharma and mobile phones worth USD 25 billion are also out of the ambit of US tariffs. Though the US is a major market for these segments of goods, Indian exporters have started diversifying their sales in other countries.

With seven new corridors, India will be 100% atmanirbhar in making Bullet trains, says Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw



While India's first bullet train project — the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail is under construction — the government has announced Mumbai-Pune, Pune-Hyderabad, Hyderabad-Bengaluru, Hyderabad-Chennai, Chennai-Bengaluru, Delhi-Varanasi and Varanasi-Siliguri high-speed rail corridors as "Growth-Connectors". He said that the Indian Railways has fully understood the complexities of high-speed rail systems and is ready to implement them independently. Vaishnaw also noted that land acquisition would be one of the main challenges for the project and said that all states should support it, as this is what "people deserve and desire". Edited Excerpts:

What was the rationale behind choosing the seven corridors for the next phase of the Bullet train project?

High-speed rail is a major game changer. Among these seven corridors, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bengaluru can be called the high-speed diamond (or triangle). All three are major economic centres. Connecting them will not only improve connectivity but also trigger new development all along these corridors. The Union Minister further said that two new bullet train projects have been sanctioned. Vaishnaw said the Indian Railways has fully understood the complexities of high-speed rail systems and is ready to implement them independently.. (Image generated using AI) If we look at the Tokyo-Osaka high-speed rail in Japan, all the cities along the route — Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, Kyoto, and Osaka — have witnessed tremendous economic activity. In India, the first corridor connecting Mumbai, Thane, Vapi, Surat, Vadodara, Anand, and Ahmedabad will see the same kind of development. Thus, the entire corridor will extend from Ahmedabad-Mumbai-Pune-Hyderabad-Chennai, along with the Hyderabad-Bengaluru corridor. In the North, the Delhi-Varanasi-Patna-Siliguri corridor will also be developed. Altogether, these new corridors will span about 4,000 km and involve an estimated investment of Rs 16 lakh crore.

How will these projects be financed?

That is in the process and the Detailed Project Reports (DPR) are being prepared. The work will be done in a focused manner. Will the new corridors be developed with foreign collaboration like Japan being a partner in the Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor?

That has not been decided yet. In the first project, we collaborated with Japan. But we have learnt a lot also. There is a steep learning curve. But now we have absorbed and understood the complexity of high-speed trains. For these seven projects, indigenous technologies will be used. A lot of construction technologies such as track works, slab, viaduct, pillars, foundation have been developed in India. Along with this, overhead electrical, advanced stations, signalling systems, all of this will be designed and prepared in India. Even the Bullet trains, in future, will be manufactured in India.

How is the Bullet train different from other trains?

There are three important factors in these high-speed trains. The most important one is the interaction of wheel and track. When the wheel is spinning at such high speed, the interaction with the track is extremely complex. And its alignment must be proper even to the last millimetre of the stretch. Second one is the Pantograph. Because when the Pantograph collects the current at that speed, over 300 kmph, the design has to be extremely good. Third is the design of the train itself, because when the Bullet train runs at this speed, it creates a vacuum. This is why it should be a complete air tight design.

Will the train being manufactured by BEML be replicated as India's Bullet train?

Which high-speed rail system — Chinese, Japanese,

or South Korean — was considered for the seven corridors?

We have to work according to our country's needs. We have a very unique geography. Our culture, the way our cities have developed, the way our states are organised, we have to keep all this in mind to design a high-speed corridor. On the technology part, we must have our own technology by learning the best from each part of the world. We should learn from wherever we get the best solutions and develop our own technology. We will be 100% atmanirbhar in the high-speed corridor. The propulsion system — including the converter, inverter, and motors that run and control the train — is being manufactured in India and exported to Europe and the US.

The first Bullet train project has been delayed. What will be an action plan to get the seven new corridors completed on time?

In the first project, the design was very complex. Initially, it was planned on an embankment, similar to Japan. However, this would have disconnected villages on either side of the track and raised environmental concerns, similar to those seen in Kerala's SilverLine project (K-Rail). Later, it was decided to construct the corridor on a viaduct, and a detailed design was prepared. However, two years were lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and another two years were lost because of the denial of Maharashtra government under (the then Chief minister) Uddhav Thackeray. Once the work began, it progressed at a rapid pace, with an average of 15 km being completed each month.

Wouldn't land acquisition be a hurdle for these projects as well?

Definitely, that is a factor. But I am confident that all the states will support this because this is something which people deserve and desire.

What about the earlier prepared DPRs for the seven projects? Have they been put on the back burner?

No. These projects are largely based on the earlier DPRs. The overall thinking was to ensure that at least one project comes up in each part of the country. This has been planned keeping major cities and strategic considerations in mind.

The cost of first project has escalated from Rs 1.08 lakh crore to Rs 1.98 lakh crore. How will it be financed?

That is yet to be decided.

What are the benefits of the new East-West dedicated freight corridor?

There are many industries in the hinterlands of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, including steel plants, power plants, mines, and manufacturing units. The aim is to connect all of these to ports on both the East and West coasts. On the East Coast, several lines — Barbil, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur — lead to Paradip.

Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh will be connected to the West Coast. A junction near Surat will link the Western and East-West corridors. The Vadhan Port, set to become one of the top ports in the world, will also be connected. The DPR of this project also is being prepared.

The Budget data shows that AC-3 tier passenger numbers are slipping. Is that a cause for concern since it generates Railways' highest passenger revenue?

A major focus is on increasing general coaches to ensure dignified travel for low-income passengers. The induction of 17,000 general and sleeper coaches is underway, and work on nearly 4,000 of them is already complete. As soon as more Vande Bharat Sleeper trains are rolled out, these numbers will also increase. A total of 200 Vande Bharat Sleeper trains are being manufactured.

How will you achieve diversification of freight? Will e-commerce see an increase?

We are doing commodity-wise reform. The first reform we did was in the cement sector. We introduced a specialised container and flat freight rate for cement. Similarly, the work on automobiles is ongoing. Along with this, there will be reforms for steel, containers, parcels that will be rolled out in the coming months. We will do 52 reforms this year. The nature of the train is that it is always hub-to-hub unlike road, which is door-to-door. A ship is always major hub to major hub, and the same goes with the airways. So, in the train, we focus on making it multi-modal and that is being done.

Dermatologist warns that laser hair removal can sometimes trigger more hair growth, especially on your face

Laser hair removal is widely regarded as a long-term solution for unwanted hair, offering smoother skin and reduced need for shaving or waxing sessions. However, a dermatologist recently took to Instagram to note that the treatment doesn't always produce the expected results for everyone. Dr Abigail Waldman, in her post, mentions, "I'm a dermatologist and paradoxical hypertrichosis or paradoxical hair growth is possible after using laser hair removal. This is more common on the face than it is on the body." She adds, "Cooling the skin, before and after laser, can help reduce this unwanted side effect. A lot of lasers actually have cooling inside the laser. But make sure that if it doesn't, then you are cooling with ice before and after laser hair removal, especially on the face."

But what causes paradoxical hypertrichosis after laser hair removal, and how common is this reaction?

Dr Archana Lakshman, consultant dermatologist & cosmetologist, GVG Invivo Hospital, tells indianexpress.com, "Paradoxical hypertrichosis is a rare phenomenon where fine, thin hair in the treated area becomes thicker or denser instead of reducing. It is believed to occur when the laser energy is insufficient to completely destroy the hair follicle but still stimulates it, triggering hair growth." Factors such as low fluence settings or using the wrong wavelength for a person's hair and skin type can play a role. Dr Lakshman adds that although it can be alarming, "this reaction is uncommon and is estimated to affect only a small percentage of patients undergoing laser hair removal." The reassuring point is that this can be addressed in the following laser sessions and brought under control.

Are there specific skin types, hair types, or treatment settings that increase the risk of experiencing increased hair growth following laser sessions?

Dr Lakshman mentions that individuals with darker skin types, fine facial hair, or hormonal conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome may be more susceptible.



She adds, "Cooling the skin, before and after laser, can help reduce this unwanted side effect."

"Using an inappropriate laser or incorrect laser parameters for the person's skin and hair combination can also increase the likelihood. Areas with fine vellus hair, such as the face or neck, are more prone compared to coarse hair on the body," notes the expert.

According to Dr Lakshman, the best way to reduce risk is to undergo treatment with a board-certified dermatologist who uses the correct laser type and energy settings after a thorough assessment of the skin and hair. Sticking to the recommended number of sessions and avoiding unregulated clinics is equally important. "If paradoxical growth does occur, the dermatologist may adjust the laser parameters or recommend alternative treatments such as electrolysis or prescription topical therapies to gradually reduce the new hair growth," concludes Dr Lakshman.

Mohamed Salah set to sign for Turkish outfit Trabzonspor



GNS News Agency, August 11

Egyptian star Mohamed Salah is all set to sign for Turkish club Trabzonspor, ending his 9-year association with Premier League giants Liverpool after helping them win 2 league titles and a Champions League trophy. On Wednesday, Salah arrived smiling at an Istanbul airport wearing Trabzonspor's burgundy and blue kit ahead of his expected move to the club as hundreds of fans jostled to get a glimpse of the Egyptian forward. The Turkish club had announced on Tuesday that they were in negotiations with Salah and club chairman Ertugrul Dogan said they expected to sign the 34-year-old on a free transfer at a ceremony in the Black Sea city on Thursday. "Trabzon, are you ready I can hear you. See you very soon," Salah said in a video posted by the club on X. "Everywhere is Trabzon to us," he added

while wearing a Trabzonspor kit, referring to the club's motto. Upon arriving at Ataturk Airport, Salah was met by hundreds of fans. He waved at supporters and initiated a traditional chant with them, before departing for a medical check and a later planned flight east to Trabzon. Salah left Liverpool this summer after nine years, having scored 257 goals in 442 appearances. In the 2024-25 season, Salah scored 29 Premier League goals and provided 18 assists, equalling the league record for most goal involvements in a single season and setting the record for a 38-game campaign. He was named Premier League Player of the Season and won the Golden Boot and the Playmaker Award, becoming the first player to take all three in one campaign. His output waned last season, with seven goals and seven assists in 27 league matches and he was left on the bench in Champions League games, leading to a public spat with Liverpool's then-manager Arne Slot.

Salah started his career in Europe at Swiss side Basel in 2012 and later joined Chelsea. He also had brief stints at Fiorentina and AS Roma between 2015 and 2017 before joining Liverpool. Trabzonspor – generally considered to be the fourth biggest team in Turkey after Istanbul sides Fenerbahce, Galatasaray, and Besiktas – finished third in the Super Lig last season and will enter the Europa League playoff round. The club's last league championship was in the 2021-22 season. Salah had been close to joining Besiktas, but negotiations had stalled over financial and image-rights demands, according to local media.

Ronaldo watches his partly-owned club Almeria defeat current team Al Nassr

GNS News Agency, August 11

Cristiano Ronaldo on Tuesday attended a pre-season friendly between his current club Al Nassr and UD Almeria, a club he owns a 25% stake in. The Portugal superstar watched from the stands as the Spanish second division outfit defeated the Saudi Pro League champions 2-0 in a pre-season friendly. Ronaldo also met his Al Nassr teammates as well as new coach Ange Postecoglou, who replaced Jorge Jesus. He was gifted a personalised jersey by UD Almeria president Mohamed Al Khereiji.

In February, Portuguese legend purchased a 25 per cent stake in Almeria. "It has been a long-held ambition of mine to contribute to football, beyond just on the pitch," Ronaldo said in a statement. "Almeria is a Spanish club with strong foundations and clear potential for growth. I look forward to working alongside the leadership team to support the next phase of the club's growth." The club, in a post on social media, said that Ronaldo has acquired the stake in Almeria through CR7 Sports Investments, a subsidiary of CR7 S.A. Almeria said that Ronaldo's investment "marks a significant step in the continued expansion of both the club and the Portuguese businessman's investment portfolio." Ronaldo will next be seen in action for defending Saudi champions Al Nassr vs Al-Fateh on August 15. This will be the first time the Portugal icon takes to the field after playing his last-ever World Cup campaign, which ended af-



ter they lost 1-0 to Spain in the Round of 16 last month. Substitute Mikel Merino scored in added time, sending his side into the quarter-finals while extending their run without conceding a goal. Merino struck in the 91st minute after fellow substitute Ferran Torres slipped a pass behind Portugal's defence. Ahead of the match, Ronaldo had admitted that the 2026 FIFA World Cup would be the last time he plays in the tournament. "Yes, it's my last one. Let's go and enjoy it," said Ronaldo in a press conference ahead of the game. It was a rather combative interaction with the press with Ronaldo calling out journalists who he said don't "like" him.

PCB threatens ban on ex-PAK cricketers for participating in unauthorised league

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced that former players who are participating in an unauthorised tournament called the Asian Legends Cup in Lusaka, Zambia, will face disciplinary actions, including a ban of two years from approved overseas cricket leagues or events. "International Cricket Council (ICC) considers this league as an unsanctioned/disapproved cricket event under the ICC Regulations on the Sanctioning of Events and Player Release and the tournament has not been sanctioned by the Zambia Cricket Union (ZCU) as well. The ICC has further reiterated that all foreign players are required to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from their respective home Board before participating in overseas cricket events. The Regulations also place an obligation on Member Boards to take appropriate action against any player who participates in an unsanctioned event. Failure to comply with these obligations may result in action against the respective Member Board," the PCB said in a statement.

"In light of the above, the following disciplinary measures will be taken on individuals found to have participated in the said unsanctioned event without obtaining the requisite approvals from the PCB: A ban of two (02) years from the issuance of any PCB No Objection Certificate (NOC) for participation in approved overseas cricket leagues or events. Ineligibility for any cricketing, coaching, consultancy, mentoring and/or other assignments with the Pakistan Cricket Board and the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) for a period of two (02) year," it added.

India's Glasgow 2026 para champions honoured by M3M Foundation and PCI

GNS News Agency, August 11

Hyderabad: In recognition of India's historic performance at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games, M3M Foundation, in partnership with the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), felicitated the country's medal-winning para athletes and their coaches for their outstanding achievements on the international stage. The ceremony honoured India's seven Commonwealth Games para medallists, who delivered the nation's best-ever performance in para events at the Games by winning seven medals — three gold, two silver and two bronze.

The athletes felicitated included Sharmila Dhankar (Gold – Women's Shot Put F57), Shilpa Shyla (Bronze – Women's Shot Put F57), Jhandu Kumar (Bronze – Para Powerlifting), Soman Rana (Gold – Men's F57 shot put), Shubham Juyal (Silver – Men's F57 shot put), Dilip Manadu Gavitt (Gold – 100 m T47), Mohammed Basil (Silver – 100 m T47). The event also recognised the invaluable contribution of the coaches and support staff whose dedication has played a vital role in India's growing success in para sports.

Speaking on the occasion, Devendra Jhajharia, President, Paralympic Committee of India, said "Our athletes have once again shown the world what determination, resilience and hard work can achieve. This historic performance is not just a medal tally, it is a testament to years of commitment from our athletes, coaches and the entire support system. I sincerely thank M3M Foundation for recognising our champions and standing firmly with the



Paralympic movement. Such partnerships play a crucial role in helping our athletes dream bigger and achieve greater success." Dr. Payal Kanodia, Chairperson, Paralympic Committee of India, said "Every medal won in Glasgow is far more than a sporting achievement, it is a testament to extraordinary resilience, unwavering determination, and the indomitable spirit of the human will. Behind every podium finish lies years of relentless discipline, sacrifice, and the steadfast guidance of coaches, families, and support teams who have shaped these remarkable journeys. Today, we celebrate not just victories, but the triumph of courage over adversity. My goal is to build a more inclusive, athlete-centric sporting ecosystem that empowers every para athlete with world-class opportunities, infrastructure, and support to realise their fullest potential.

P.V. Sindhu unveils vision for sports excellence centre in Andhra Pradesh



Hyderabad: Double Olympics medallist P.V. Sindhu and the Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh unveiled the vision for the P.V. Sindhu Centre for Sports Excellence in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday, marking the public launch of a landmark non-profit institution that aims to redefine sports development in India. Conceived by the former World Champion and Padma Bhushan awardee P.V. Sindhu, the Centre is being developed as an integrated sports and education ecosystem that brings together seven sporting disciplines, high-performance coaching, sports science, recovery, nutrition, strength and conditioning, and academics under one campus.

The ceremony marked more than the laying of a foundation stone. Construction is already well underway, with the basement and substructure complete and the superstructure taking shape.

The project's vision evolved significantly following discussions with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who encouraged Sindhu and her husband, Venkata Datta Sai, to think not just about the next few years, but the next hundred. What began as a badminton academy has since grown into a long-term institution designed to serve generations of athletes and students. Inspired by visits to some of the world's leading high-performance sports facilities, including Aspetar in Doha and the Inspire Institute of Sport, the centre has been designed around the belief that elite performance is created through the seamless integration of coaching, science, recovery, education and culture.

Auqib Nabi has magic in his wrists, knew he would go places: Ex-J&K captain Samiullah Beigh

New Delhi: In a modern cricketing landscape obsessed with speed guns, former Jammu and Kashmir captain Samiullah Beigh believes true quality lies in the ability to move the ball off the pitch, a trait he identified in fellow fast-bowling all-rounder Auqib Nabi. Nabi's sensational rise has earned him a maiden call-up to the Indian Test squad for the upcoming two-match series against Sri Lanka, thus making him the first player from Jammu and Kashmir to get a call-up to the national red-ball side. Beigh, who also works as an assistant engineer in the Public Works Department in Srinagar, spoke exclusively to IANS about the all-rounder, the physical and mental endurance essential in unearthing relentless seamers in the valley, and how overcoming adversity makes players from smaller states uniquely tenacious.

Q. Back in 2022, you mentioned somewhere that Auqib Nabi is someone to watch out for. Now that he has been called up to the Indian Test team as Jasprit Bumrah's replacement, how does it feel to see that prediction become a reality?

A. Yes, back in 2022, I held a two-month coaching camp for the senior Ranji team at the JKCA ground in Srinagar. I could see raw talent in him, wherein he could move the ball off the pitch from the same spot without any major change in action. Having played at higher level myself as a fast-bowling all-rounder, I immediately spotted that this trait is extremely rare in the cricketing world, and this lad could go places if groomed properly. In that camp, we worked on a few things without tinkering with his natural abilities.

Q. Nabi's teammates call him 'Hacker' because of hitting the exact same spot relentlessly without overcomplicating things. How crucial can this specific brand of discipline be in international cricket compared to the sheer raw pace of someone like Umran Malik?

A. In modern-day cricket, raw pace means nothing unless it is backed up with the ability to deviate the ball off the pitch. Umran Malik is a glaring example of a bowler with raw pace only, which is why he is struggling to get into the state team. Auqib has magic in his wrists, and the cricketing world will be really surprised to see his skill set in slightly helpful conditions, though Sri Lanka may not necessarily be the place for his ideal debut.

Q. The dry, sluggish pitches in Sri Lanka historically reward seamers who plug away at disciplined lengths and extract subtle movement. Given Nabi's success on flat decks and in stifling humidity in the Ranji Trophy, how well-equipped do you think he is to succeed in Galle or Colombo? Geographic Reference

A. Galle as well as Colombo are historically non-ideal for pacers; they are either very flat or square turners. Any fast bowler would hate to make his debut in such conditions. But Auqib, being a rare commodity, will definitely provide lots of control to the team if given a chance, and he will surely make the new ball talk at least for a few overs.

Q. You have spoken previously about how you would carry drinks for the zonal team despite being amongst the wickets as players from traditional powerhouse states were mainly in the playing eleven. With Auqib in the Test team and six J&K players recently making the North Zone squad for the Duleep Trophy, do you feel that systemic bias has finally been dismantled?

A. No, systemic bias takes a lot to overcome – it is an inherent bias. Although live broadcasts and J&K creating history by winning the Ranji Trophy have helped, I believe the mindset of selectors and people who matter has still not overcome that block regarding selecting players from J&K. If that were not the case, Auqib should have been selected for the tours of England, the West Indies, or Afghanistan, or at least in the first-choice squad for the Sri Lanka series.

Q. Coach Ajay Sharma mentioned that J&K cricketers used to be picked for the Duleep Trophy merely as 'quota players'. As a former player, what does it mean to you to see J&K players now single-handedly pulling their team into winning the Ranji Trophy and commanding spots in the Duleep Trophy on merit?

A. This statement by coach Ajay Sharma exactly highlights that the bias towards cricketers from this part of the country hasn't gone away. There was never a quota system. If that were so, I recall at least two instances where I was not picked for the North Zone squad despite being the highest wicket-taker in the league round of the Ranji Tro-

The nearly two-lakh-square-foot campus will feature international-standard facilities, including specialised badminton infrastructure, a 25-metre competition swimming pool, Andhra Pradesh's first 25-metre shooting range, integrated sports science and recovery spaces, and an on-campus school that will enable young athletes to pursue both education and sport without compromise. Located in Visakhapatnam, the centre seeks to establish the city as a national destination for sport, education and high-performance training while creating wider opportunities through coaching, talent identification, research partnerships and community outreach. P.V. Sindhu said, "This centre is my most meaningful contribution to Indian sport. I am committing much of what I have earned throughout my career towards building an institution that creates opportunities for future generations. My dream is to create an ecosystem where young athletes have access to world-class coaching, sports science, education and the support they need to realise their full potential. I also appeal to corporates and philanthropists to join us in this journey through CSR and long-term collaboration, so together we can build an institution that will serve generations to come." Mr. Nara Lokesh, Hon'ble Minister For Human Resources Development, Information Technology, Electronics & Communications and RTG, said, "P. V. Sindhu has brought immense pride to India through her remarkable achievements on the global stage. With the establishment of the P. V. Sindhu Centre For Sports Excellence, she is creating a lasting legacy by inspiring and nurturing the next generation of champions." "This initiative perfectly aligns with the vision of the Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu Garu to transform Andhra Pradesh into a leading sporting destination with world-class infrastructure and opportunities for young talent. The Government of Andhra Pradesh is proud to partner in this landmark initiative and remains committed to creating an ecosystem where every aspiring athlete has the opportunity to dream big, train with the best, and represent India with distinction. I congratulate Sindhu, her family, and all the partners associated with this inspiring endeavour, which will shape the future of Indian sport for generations to come." The Centre is expected to be completed by May 2028, when it will welcome its first generation of athletes and students.



phy. Simply put, the selectors wouldn't take our performances seriously, and I think not much has changed.

Q. Former J&K players Abdul Qayoom and Mohammed Mudhasir have spoken a lot about the fast bowling talent in J&K. What exactly is it about the J&K cricketing environment that breeds fast bowlers with such relentless stamina?

A. Fast bowling is about genes and passion. Here, we are naturally well-built and very passionate about fast bowling from a very young age. Plus, our diet and climate help build the stamina and strength needed for a fast bowler to survive the test of time and longevity. Most of our good fast bowlers have served for a decade or so. For instance, Abid Nabi and I played for about 16 to 17 years for the senior J&K Ranji team.

Q. A few years ago, you stated that for J&K to truly capitalize on its gold mine of fast bowlers, the BCCI and JKCA needed to appoint a permanent fast-bowling coach and trainer. With the rise of first Umran and now Auqib, is that need fulfilled, or are the players still relying mostly on raw talent and short-term mentorship?

A. Yes, the JKCA has to appoint a full-time, all-weather bowling consultant for J&K fast bowlers, and not just for one season. Fast bowling is about preparing in off-season and pre-season camps, when J&K currently has no coach available to train and groom fast bowlers across various age groups. The J&K Cricket Association would do well to think along those lines.

Q. What immediate impact do you think Nabi sharing a dressing room with Mohammed Siraj and the Indian support staff will have on the young fast bowlers currently training back in Baramulla, Srinagar and various parts of J&K?

A. Waiting makes you mentally strong and hungry to grab opportunities with both hands. MS Dhoni once said that players from smaller states are mentally stronger than those coming from bigger ones, and I can very well relate to it. We are built to deal with adversity and take things in our stride right from our childhood days.

Everything we achieve now feels like a bonus because, given the adversity we have seen, not many expect us to reach those levels. And when we do, we don't look back. I am sure Auqib will do wonders in the days to come.

Mirabai Chanu recalls emotional Glasgow gold after years of setbacks

New Delhi: Commonwealth Games gold medallist Mirabai Chanu opened up on the emotional weight behind her Glasgow triumph during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with India's CWG 2026 medallists, recalling the injuries, family problems and disappointment of missing out on a medal at the Paris Olympics that made her podium moment particularly poignant.

Chanu, who won gold in the women's 48kg weightlifting category at the Glasgow Games, said the moment she saw the Indian flag rise and heard the national anthem after years of setbacks proved too overwhelming to contain her emotions.

PM Narendra Modi, while interacting with Chanu, acknowledged the emotion behind her gold-medal performance and told her that the tears themselves reflected the magnitude of her achievement.

Dhurandhar 2 actor recalls accidentally injuring Ranveer Singh during action scene, reveals actor's 'humanity': 'I was scared, he hugged me'



During various interactions, Ranveer Singh had made one thing clear — that he worked extremely hard for Dhurandhar. The film's recently released second part is currently on a spree of breaking box office records. But even during the film's intense action sequences, Ranveer never let go of his humility. Recently, his co-star in Dhurandhar 2, Gursewak Singh, shared one such instance when the actor, despite being injured on set, continued to shoot and also motivated Gursewak, who was hurt during the sequence. Gursewak took to Instagram to share photos with Ranveer and wrote in Hindi, "Why brother Ranveer Singh is such a lovely person and brilliant artist, let me tell you a story. We were shooting an action scene at Amritsar's plane house, which is also in the movie. I was behind Ranveer Singh and I had a bomb that I had to go ahead and set."

He went on to share, "Then I had to go to the tractor

and protect myself between the tyres, and then Ranveer had to cover me, as told by action master. We had quite a few rehearsals and everything went perfectly. But don't know how I got wrong and it took 2 seconds to set the bomb. As soon as I left there, me and Ranveer brother had a big collision — like something would hit at 70 speed. I fell into the tyres, and Ranveer fell on me." The actor shared that both he and Ranveer were injured. "His gun hit my stomach and my gun hose hit his elbow. He got up and moved out there. He was hurt too, but I fainted, and I was scared he might have been hurt more," he said.

Gursewak added that the entire crew rushed to check on Ranveer after the accident and only seconds later realised that he too was injured. A doctor was immediately called in, and director Aditya Dhar also rushed to his aid. The doctor informed the team that Gursewak had suffered an injury to his stomach and had swelling. Meanwhile, Aditya consoled him and said, "It happens in action, don't you be afraid". I told him that Ranveer Singh sir also got hurt. He said, 'No problem, you relax, it's part of the shoot' and told the doctor to check properly." After Ranveer got to know about Gursewak's condition, he too rushed to meet him. The actor shared, "I said in fear, 'Sir, sorry, it was my fault.' but Ranveer told me 'never mind,' and gave him a hug."

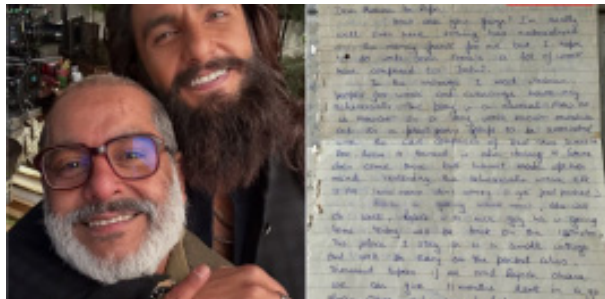
Gursewak went on to reveal that despite his injury, Ranveer continued to shoot and even motivated him to do the same. He said, "My eyes were teary- I was totally emotional with their love. Then he saw my injury and asked, 'Can you shoot or do want a break?' I also dared and said, 'It's the last scene, when you're doing it, I'll do it too'. I asked, 'Sir, how hurt are you?', He said, 'Elbow will have a little trouble exercising, but never mind — let's do the scene.' Then we finished that scene. This is the third day of shoot. After that we shot for 35 more days." Lauding Ranveer, he further wrote, "From that day till the release of the movie, Ranveer Singh never let me feel like I made a mistake. This is what humanity is... Love... Take care of each other. I guess this is why he's a star..."

Dhurandhar star Gaurav Gera shares emotional 1998 letter from his days of struggle in a Mumbai cottage: 'Future is bright'

Actor Gaurav Gera, who plays Mohammad Aalam in Dhurandhar: The Revenge, has been receiving widespread praise for his performance in the film. As the spy-thriller continues to do well at the box office, the actor recently shared a very personal moment from his early days in Mumbai. On Sunday, Gaurav took to his Instagram account to post pictures of a handwritten letter he had written to his parents back in 1998, soon after he moved from Delhi to Mumbai to pursue a career in acting. In his post, Gaurav reflected on his 28-year journey and how much has changed over time.

Through the letter, Gaurav shared details about his simple life back then. In the letter, he spoke about living in a small cottage with a friend to manage expenses and learning to survive in a new city. Talking about his hopes at the time, he had written, "Other expenses include telephone, electricity, gas, and water bills, and food. Mumma and Papa, the future is bright, but I still have a lot to learn," demonstrating his patience and belief in his dreams.

He also wrote a caption that read: "This letter to my parents — 3rd Dec 1998 ... less than a month after I moved to Mumbai ... this was 28 years ago ... so no emails, let-



ters ... of course, after that, lots of TV, some films, ad films, musical plays, radio, TikTok, Reels ... it's been a lovely journey with ups and downs ... God has been kind ... but this Dhurandhar ... dunno what the future holds ... but I want to thank my 23-year-old self for staying hopeful and Ma Pa for endless support #DhurandharTheRevenge." Dhurandhar: The Revenge, directed by Aditya Dhar and starring Ranveer Singh, released on March 19 and continues to perform strongly at the box office.

Ustaad Bhagat Singh Box Office Collection Day 4: Pawan Kalyan film bombs, struggles to cross Rs 90 cr mark; earns less than Hari Hara Veera Mallu



If Ustaad Bhagat Singh's performance continues this way, it will become an even bigger box-office bomb than Pawan Kalyan's globally panned Hari Hara Veera Mallu (2025)

Ustaad Bhagat Singh Box Office Collection Day 4: In a significant setback for Telugu star Pawan Kalyan, his latest action comedy Ustaad Bhagat Singh has completed its opening weekend without crossing even the Rs 90 crore mark globally. Unfortunately, the movie hasn't even recorded a two-digit daily collection since the second day of its release, and its poor performance continued on Sunday, March 22, as it earned just a few crores more than what the Telugu version of director Aditya Dhar's Ranveer Singh-led Dhurandhar: The Revenge minted on the same day.

If Ustaad Bhagat Singh's performance continues this way, it will become an even bigger box-office bomb than Pawan Kalyan's globally panned Hari Hara Veera Mallu (2025). On Sunday, the movie recorded an India net collec-

tion of just Rs 8 crore across 3,200 shows, taking its total domestic earnings to Rs 60.80 crore, according to industry tracker Sacnilk. On the same day, the Telugu version of Dhurandhar 2 earned Rs 5.25 crore, besides its original Hindi edition's Rs 107 crore. Dhurandhar 2 worldwide box office collection, all records broken till now: Biggest Hindi opener; rare back-to-back Rs 100 cr days; fastest to cross Rs 500 cr mark Ustaad Bhagat Singh's worldwide gross currently stands at Rs 80.75 crore. During the day, the action comedy witnessed an overall occupancy of 33.96 per cent in the Telugu market. While the morning shows commenced with 21 per cent occupancy, the rate fluctuated as the day progressed, reaching 41.38 per cent in the afternoon, 44.54 per cent in the evening, and 28.92 per cent during night screenings. Worse still, the action comedy is performing worse than Pawan Kalyan's most recent box-office bomb, Hari Hara Veera Mallu. Although the two movies opened at the same Rs 34.75 crore (both on Thursdays), Hari Hara Veera Mallu experienced a steep decline in its daily earnings to Rs 8 crore on Friday. However, it improved its collection slightly and earned Rs 9.15 crore and Rs 10.60 crore on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. Even as Ustaad Bhagat Singh fared better than Hari Hara Veera Mallu on its first Friday with Rs 9 crore, it declined afterwards, collecting only Rs 9.05 crore and Rs 8 crore in the domestic market on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. Thus, while Hari Hara Veera Mallu's opening weekend nett collection stood at Rs 19.75 crore, Ustaad Bhagat Singh's was Rs 17.05 crore. Hari Hara Veera Mallu grossed Rs 116.88 crore in its lifetime against a mammoth budget of Rs 300 crore. Helmed by Harish Shankar, Ustaad Bhagat Singh had opened to largely negative reviews from all quarters. In her review, SCREEN's Yashaswini Sri wrote, "Pawan Kalyan's movie had every reason to work. A beloved star, a director who hit gold with him once before, and over five years of build-up. What arrives on screen instead is a film that worships its hero, lectures its audience, and forgets to tell a story worth caring about."

'Heartbreaking': Kareena Kapoor Khan shuts down rumors of Ranbir Kapoor reviving the iconic RK Studios



Last year, reports were rife that Ranbir Kapoor was all set to revive his grandfather Raj Kapoor's legendary RK Studios, which was established in 1948. However, recently, during an event in Mumbai, Kareena Kapoor squashed all such claims, stating that Ranbir is currently focused on acting. As reported by The Economic Times, Kareena spoke about the revival of RK Studios and said, "That's just not true. It was even being discussed in our family group, and everyone was like, 'This isn't happening.'"

Kareena admitted that fans really want this generation of the Kapoor family to revive the iconic studio, but clarified that Ranbir is focused on acting. She called her

cousin "the best actor in India" today and said he wants to concentrate solely on that. "It's heartbreaking, but it's not happening," Kareena said. However, she also added that it is only Ranbir and Karisma who could potentially revive the studio, being the two most successful actors from the current generation of the family. She also clarified that she does not see herself taking up such a responsibility, as she does not think like a director or a producer.

RK Studios, which was founded in 1948, shaped the identity of Indian cinema for decades to come. The studio delivered films like Barsaat (1949), Awaara (1951), Mera Naam Joker (1970), Satyam Shivam Sundaram (1978), Prem Rog (1982), and many more that continue to live on today. During the conversation, Kareena also spoke about her memorable characters—Geet (from Jab We Met) and Poo (from Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham)—and how the younger generation, while inspired by these roles, does not want to imitate them. "No one really intentionally wants to (ape them), because you have to have your own identity, and that's very important," she said.

Lately, Kareena has opted for more character-driven roles. She will next be seen in director Meghna Gulzar's Daayra. Speaking about the same, she said, "Trying to do something different every year. Our film (Daayra) is topical, and I'm really looking forward to it." Kareena shared that she constantly tries to reinvent herself through her characters and also expressed interest in featuring in a mini-series. "I am hoping to do something really different this year, maybe a good show, maybe a miniseries," she said.

'I gave Ranveer Singh a look...': Rakesh Bedi reveals Dhurandhar easter eggs audiences missed, how he set up Dhurandhar 2's biggest twist

The comical, yet equally shrewd and menacing character of Rakesh Bedi's politician Jameel Jamali in Dhurandhar 2 has garnered praise from all quarters. In a recent interaction, Rakesh opened up about how he prepared for the role and revealed that he had been subtly hinting at the major plot twist in Dhurandhar 2 right from the beginning.

Warning: Spoiler alert. Speaking to CNN-News18, Rakesh admitted that he was aware of his character's graph from the very start and understood how Jamali was manipulating Ranveer Singh's Hamza to fulfil his own political motives while making him believe he was in control. He said, "I knew the graph of my character from the beginning, otherwise how I would have craft it? There are a few looks that I have given to Ranveer in the first part when I see him for the first time or when I am sitting in the car and I look at him, I am noticing him in that moment. In many places in the previous film, I have given these looks to Ranveer because in the film, Ranveer doesn't know, but I know that he is my asset and I have to work on him."

He added, "And then the planning starts that how without Ranveer even knowing it, I start eliminating one person after another through him, eventually taking Ranveer to the top. I let Ranveer think that he is using me, but it is actually that I am using him the way I want to." When asked how he prepared for the shrewd character of a Pakistani politician, Rakesh admitted that he studied several real-life figures. He said, "I studied a lot of Pakistani politicians for this role." Recently, Pakistani politician Nabil Gabol claimed that Rakesh's character is based on him. Responding to this,



the actor said, "The one politician who thinks I studied him for this role, he has a misunderstanding. He thinks that I took inspiration from him because I resemble him, but it is not the case. Let him take that privilege, he's basking in the glory that somebody has portrayed him but actually I have not. I didn't even know that a Nabeel Gabol type person exists."

Praising Ranveer and Dhurandhar director Aditya Dhar, he said, "Ranveer's performance is out of the world. I don't see any actor today who is anywhere near him. He is fantastic. He is a bundle of energy." He added, "No words for Aditya, he is an amazing man. One of the coolest demeanour in the industry. Doesn't lose his cool ever, doesn't raise his voice ever and the magnitude of the gravity that he carries inside him is immense, which doesn't come out very easily. When you talk to him or when he directs you, you realise that this man is really full of something."

Dhurandhar 2 worldwide box office collection, all records broken till now: Biggest Hindi opener; rare back-to-back Rs 100 cr days; fastest to cross Rs 500 cr mark

Dhurandhar 2 Box Office Collection Worldwide: Despite opening to polarised reviews, with one section praising it as a cinematic marvel while the other criticising it as yet another pro-establishment propaganda vehicle, it seems there's no stopping director Aditya Dhar's Ranveer Singh-starrer Dhurandhar: The Revenge at the box office. In fact, the spy actioner has grossed Rs 691.32 crore globally in its opening weekend itself, according to industry tracker Sacnilk, and is poised to become one of the biggest hits in Indian cinema. Dhurandhar 2 has already broken several records and is continuing its successful run.

Dhurandhar 2 box office collection On Sunday, the spy actioner recorded an India nett collection of Rs 114.85 crore across 21,202 shows, taking its total domestic earnings to Rs 454.12 crore. During the day, the movie witnessed an overall occupancy of 79.7 per cent in the domestic market. Thus far, the film has grossed Rs 149.35 crore overseas. However, only its Hindi version is currently performing well and earned Rs 107 crore on Sunday. While the Telugu edition contributed Rs 5.25 crore to the overall daily haul, the Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada versions earned just Rs 2.50 crore, Rs 90 lakh, and Rs 10 lakh, respectively.

Dhurandhar 2's opening weekend performance is on par with movies with the highest nett collections in India. The spy actioner minted Rs 227.85 crore over its first Saturday and Sunday combined. In comparison, Baahubali 2, which ranks second on the list, recorded Rs 183 crore, while KGF 2 collected Rs 173.65 crore. However, Dhurandhar 2 trails behind the top performer, Pushpa 2, which recorded a cumulative total of Rs 260.3 crore during its opening weekend.

After earning Rs 43 crore from paid previews a day prior to its worldwide release, Dhurandhar 2 opened at Rs 102.55 crore in India. Its Hindi version alone accounted for Rs 99.10 crore, delivering the biggest Hindi opening-day performance ever and surpassing Pushpa 2: The Rule's Rs 70.30 crore.

Even before its worldwide release, the Ranveer Singh-starrer had teased that it had the potential to become one of the biggest Indian movies, as it registered record-breaking



paid preview collections. On Wednesday, March 18, it earned Rs 43 crore from such screenings, the highest ever for an Indian film, thus smashing the record previously held by Pawan Kalyan's They Call Him OG (Rs 25 crore). * First Hindi film to cross Rs 100 crore mark in a single day On its release day, the spy actioner also became the first Hindi movie to score Rs 100 crore nett in a single day. It has followed it up with becoming the only Hindi film to earn Rs 100 crore from one language on Saturday. * Second-highest India opener worldwide Dhurandhar 2 has fundamentally taken Hindi cinema to new heights after trailing behind regional industries for a long time. The movie earned Rs 236.63 crore worldwide, ranking second on the list of biggest-opening Indian movies, ahead of RRR (Rs 223 crore) and behind Pushpa 2 (Rs 275.2 crore).

* Fourth-highest day 1 collection in India Not just worldwide, the Ranveer Singh-starrer showcased its power even in the domestic market and recorded the fourth-highest day one nett collection (Rs 102.55 crore) for a movie in India. It now ranks behind Pushpa 2 (Rs 164 crore), RRR (Rs 133 crore), and KGF 2 (Rs 116 crore).

In yet another major achievement for Hindi cinema, Dhurandhar 2 also crossed the Rs 100 crore mark on both its first Saturday (Rs 113 crore) and Sunday (Rs 114.85