

Telangana HC directs review of power utility promotions since 2014

Hyderabad: Justice Nagesh Bheemapaka of the Telangana High Court directed the electricity utility managements to review all promotions granted since June 2, 2014, and complete the exercise within six months. The direction covers Telangana Transco, Genco, Southern Power Distribution Company and the Northern Power Distribution Company.

Parliament panel finds Justice Varma guilty in cash-at-home case

New Delhi, August 12

Justice Yashwant Varma, facing removal proceedings over the alleged discovery of unaccounted cash at his official residence, has been found guilty on all three articles of charge by the three-member Lok Sabha inquiry committee.

The committee, in its report tabled in both Houses of Parliament on Wednesday, concluded that “Article I is proved”, “Article II is proved” and “Article III is proved”, leaving little ambiguity in its findings on the controversy that erupted after burnt currency was allegedly found at the judge's residence last year.

On the first charge, the panel said “substantial un-



explained Rs 500 denomination currency notes” were found in the storeroom situated within Justice Varma’s official residential premises at 30, Tughlak Crescent, New Delhi.

The judge, it said, “failed to furnish a satisfactory explanation regarding the presence, source or ownership thereof”. The panel also held Justice Varma responsible for the failure to preserve material evidence. Finding Article II proved, it said the evidentiary condition of the storeroom had been disturbed before lawful sealing and inspection, while the later non-availability of the currency notes remained unexplained.

Significantly, the committee clarified that its finding did not rest on proof that Justice Varma personally removed the cash.

Instead, it said the finding was based on his “failure to preserve, acquiescence in disturbance through the establishment attached to the premises, and resulting loss of material evidence”. The committee was equally scathing about the explanation furnished by the judge.

Finding Article III proved, it said Justice Varma’s explanation, particularly his reply dated March 22, 2025, and the subsequent stand taken by him, “did not exhibit the candour, transparency and institutional responsibility expected in the circumstances”.

The explanation, the panel said, “remained evasive and unsatisfactory” when tested against the evidence of independent official witnesses and corroborative material. The committee then recorded its consolidated conclusion in unequivocal terms: “Articles of Charges I, II & III are proved.”

It submitted the report along with the record of proceedings, documents, exhibits and other material forming part of the inquiry “for such further action as may be considered in accordance with law”.

The controversy began after a fire broke out at Justice Varma’s official residence on the night of March 14, 2025. Firefighters called to the premises allegedly discovered burnt currency in a storeroom, triggering a judicial inquiry and subsequent removal proceedings.

Justice Varma has since resigned, making the removal proceedings against him virtually infructuous. His resignation, however, has not yet been notified by the Union Law Ministry.

He was then a judge of the Delhi High Court and was later repatriated to his parent court, the Allahabad High Court, following the controversy.

The three-member inquiry committee had submitted its findings to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in May.

Revanth For Optimum Utilisation Of Godavari

Hyderabad: , August 12

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday directed irrigation officials to ensure optimum utilisation of Godavari river water by carrying out lift operations from the Yellampalli, Devadula and Sitarama projects.

At a review of the irrigation department at MCRHRDI, the Chief Minister said water was not being stored in the Sundilla, Annaram and Medigadda barrages of the Kaleshwaram project in accordance with the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) recommendations. He directed officials to strictly follow the NDSA recommendations.

Irrigation minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy informed the Chief Minister that defects had been identified in the Medigadda and Sundilla barrages. Revanth Reddy directed officials to consult the NDSA immediately on the issue.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also informed the meeting that water-lifting operations were being carried out using nine pumps at the Devadula project, which is an unprecedented move. The Chief Minister asked officials to focus on resolving minor issues related to lift irrigation operations at the Devadula and Sitarama projects.

The meeting also reviewed pending compensation to farmers whose land had been acquired for various projects. Revanth Reddy directed officials to prepare an action plan for immediate disbursement of compensation.

He also instructed irrigation and revenue officials to conduct field visits and prepare a factual report on



villages prone to submergence and pending compensation and rehabilitation issues.

The Chief Minister said compensation should be paid immediately in villages facing an immediate impact. Completion of the process would pave the way for filling the Baswapur and Gouraveli projects with water.

Revanth Reddy also directed officials to conduct a comprehensive study on increasing the capacity of the Gattu and Gudumdoddi lift irrigation schemes and appoint a consultant for the Gudumdoddi pumped-storage project.

CMO Principal Secretary V. Seshadri, CMO secretary Manicka Raj, irrigation secretary E. Sridhar and R&R commissioner Shiva Kumar Naidu attended the meeting.

HC puts stay on Shaadi Mubarak, Kalyana Lakshmi schemes

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court has stayed the Shaadi Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi schemes in the state. Justice Shruvan Kumar issued interim orders to this effect on Wednesday, August 12.

The court was hearing a petition challenging the legality of these schemes. The petitioner, Advocate Vijay Gopal, argued that the schemes were being implemented through Government Orders (GOs) that were not backed by any law made by the state legislature.



The High Court issued orders directing that no payments be made under these schemes until the next hearing on the matter. During a previous hearing, the High Court had directed the Telangana government to file a counter-affidavit. Reports suggest that Vijay Gopal brought to the court's attention that, though the government had been directed to file a counter-affidavit during the previous hearing, it had failed to do so even after four weeks.

CM Revanth orders strict recovery of dues from CMR millers

Hyderabad: Cracking the whip on rice millers for defaulting on Custom Milled Rice (CMR) targets, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday directed officials to intensify the recovery of dues owed by the millers. Discovering City Tours Stating that the government adopted a cooperative approach towards millers who operate with a genuine business mindset, the Chief Minister warned that it would deal sternly with those who deliberately attempt to evade payments.

Shortcut Will Cut You Short, Modi Tells Gen Z

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged the younger generation to read long-form content such as autobiographies in the “age of reels”, cautioning that social media influencers could pull them in different directions and that chasing shortcuts could prove counterproductive.

“Shortcut will cut you short,” Modi said while releasing former President Ram Nath Kovind’s autobiography, *Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles*, at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.



“This is the age of reels. Social media influencers pull you here and there. In this age of shortcuts, remember one thing,” Modi said, drawing an analogy with warnings at railway stations against crossing tracks instead of using foot overbridges.

Urging young people to read about the lives of those they admire, Modi said autobiographies offered a different perspective on historical events and helped readers understand the struggles behind individual achievements.

“Even if you want to go by shortcuts, I urge the youth — read autobiographies of whoever you admire. Autobiographies give you the chance to understand the events of history in a different way. They are close to history,” he said.

The Prime Minister said Kovind’s life demonstrated how determination could help a person overcome adversity and rise to the country’s highest constitutional office.

Describing the autobiography as a “heritage for Indian democracy”, Modi said the younger generation had much to learn from the former President’s life.

“We need many more young people who would be like Kovind in future — people who are not defeated by circumstances but possess the determination to overcome every challenge,” he said.

Modi said that while Kovind’s life and struggles

were personal, “the victories of those struggles belong to Indian democracy”.

He also highlighted Kovind’s public engagement after demitting office, particularly his work on the “One Nation, One Election” initiative, which the Prime Minister said could “open a new chapter in Indian democracy”.

Recalling Kovind’s childhood, Modi said the former President had lost his mother in a fire but overcame the tragedy with the values and strength instilled in him by his father.

Modi also recalled his interactions with Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan, saying the former President would engage him in conversations beyond normal protocol and personally see him off to his car.

Speaking at the event, Kovind recalled the hardships of his childhood in a village in Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh, including living in a house where rainwater leaked through the roof.

He said crores of poor families had since received houses under government schemes, enabling them to live with dignity.

Kovind also recalled former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s commitment to uplifting the “last person in the line” and praised Modi’s ability to connect with ordinary party workers.

Shah ready to debate student protests; Rahul says ‘not interested in lectures’

New Delhi, August 12

The monsoon session of Parliament appeared headed towards a complete washout with the government and the Opposition failing to reach a meeting ground on Wednesday even through Home Minister Amit Shah said he was ready for a debate on student protests, putting the ball in the court of rival parties.

Rejecting the proposal, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said the Opposition was “not interested in Shah’s lectures”.

Breaking silence on the matter which has agitated the Opposition and wrecked parliamentary proceedings from Day One of the session, Shah said he was willing to sit through a structured debate on student protests over NEET-UG paper leak and answer every question the Opposition had.

“There are parliamentary rules and conventions to hold a discussion. The Opposition can write to the Speaker and he can schedule a debate. I am willing to sit through from 3 pm today to 3 pm tomorrow and answer everything. I am being told to make a statement, but that is not how a discussion works in a parliamentary democracy. It is now up to the Opposition to decide whether they want a debate or uproar,” the Home Minister said in a rare statement outside Parliament.

Shah followed it up with a letter to Speaker Om Birla, urging him to consult the Opposition and schedule the debate. “I have unshakeable faith in democratic institutions where debate and dialogue are the only way forward to find a solution,” he said in the letter even as the ruling BJP dared the Congress-led Opposition to debate the matter.



“Here is a government which is ready to debate the matter and an Opposition which is running away. Normally, it is the other way round. I am completely frustrated. This is the first time in my 30 years as a parliamentarian that I am witnessing such a situation,” said Rijiju after the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day without any transaction of business barring the passage of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill-2026 within minutes and without a debate amid Opposition sloganeering.

Shah, for his part, requested the Speaker to allocate as much time for the debate on student protests on the NEET-UG paper leak issue as the House wanted. He also took a dig at the Opposition saying people would now decide who wanted to engage in a discussion and who was escaping it.

The monsoon session commenced on July 21 and ends tomorrow. It progressed in the shadow of a Cockroach Janta Party-led student protests against the NEET-UG paper leak and the police action on protesters. The Opposition has been demanding Shah’s statement on the police action against students from the start of the session.

In response, Rahul said Shah’s call for the discussion was a “last-minute attempt to fill the deflated balloon of his image”. “The youth only want to know one thing—who ordered that protesters be shot at with pellet guns,” he said, reiterating his stand that “if Shah ordered the action, he was culpable; and if he did not, he was incompetent”. “Either way, the Home Minister should resign,” the Congress leader said, triggering a strong response from the government.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju termed the situation unprecedented and inconceivable. He said the Opposition was “scared of a debate and was running away”.

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Indian Chronicle

English Daily

A big challenge to Islamabad's authority

The growing civil unrest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is fundamentally a challenge to Islamabad's control of the territory and its policy of repression. Political disenfranchisement has given way to demands for self-determination. What began as demonstrations over the soaring cost of living has now evolved into a sustained political movement led by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), a coalition of traders, civil society activists and local politicians. The coalition has organised protests in recent weeks that are posing the most significant challenge in years to Pakistan's authority over the region. Over 40 protesters have been killed so far by security forces. Faced with brutal oppression, denial of human rights, high power tariffs, residents of PoK are now demanding the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force to replace the Pakistani army. The emerging civil strife provides a window of opportunity for India to launch a diplomatic offensive and expose Islamabad's horrific misdeeds in the region. For a country that has used terrorism as an instrument of state policy to foment trouble on foreign soil, decades of misadventures are now coming home to roost. The very "mujahideen" that the Pakistani establishment trained, armed and sent to bleed India have now turned their guns inward, weaponising themselves against the state. New Delhi must use international forums to highlight the ongoing atrocities in the PoK region and demand accountability from Pakistan. In fact, India has been amplifying JAAC's grievances at every briefing conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs. However, New Delhi is bound by certain limitations. A military action across the Line of Control to protect the citizens of PoK would be an act of war against a nuclear-armed neighbour.

Special Pooja Performed by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy at Sri Kala Bhairava Swamy Temple



UPPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Special pooja rituals were performed with devotion at the Sri Kala Bhairava Swamy Temple in Uppal Bhagya Nagar on the occasion of Amavasya. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy visited the temple and offered special prayers to Lord Kala Bhairava Swamy. "After seeking the blessings of the deity, MLA Lakshma Reddy wished that all people be blessed with good health, happiness and prosperity. Speaking on the occasion, he prayed that with the blessings of Lord Kala Bhairava Swamy, the people of Uppal constituency as well as the entire state should live in peace and happiness, and that peace and prosperity prevail in everyone's life." He also wished that good things always happen to the people and that the blessings and grace of Lord Kala Bhairava Swamy remain upon everyone. A large number of devotees visited the temple on the occasion of Amavasya and offered special prayers to Lord Kala Bhairava Swamy. The temple premises witnessed a festive atmosphere with devotees turning up in large numbers. Temple organizers made necessary arrangements to ensure that devotees faced no inconvenience. BRS party leaders and activists, temple organizers and devotees participated in the programme.

'Let's Celebrate Har Ghar Tiranga as a Festival in Every Home': NARESH KUMAR NARSINGOJ



MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CJRONICLE): As part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga – Ghar Ghar Tiranga' campaign being conducted on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to mark Independence Day on August 15, a grand national flag rally was held at the Uppal Court Complex in Medipally. The rally was organised under the leadership of Naresh Kumar Narsingoj, Member of the Additional Standing Counsel of the Central Government. A large number of advocates participated in the rally, carrying the national flag from the Uppal Court Complex to the Hanuman Temple, expressing their patriotism. Speaking on the occasion, Naresh Kumar Narsingoj said that Independence Day is a festival of pride for every Indian. He called upon people to participate in the August 15 celebrations with patriotic spirit while remembering the sacrifices of the great freedom fighters. He urged every Indian to proudly hoist the national flag at their homes and make the 'Har Ghar Tiranga – Ghar Ghar Tiranga' campaign a grand success. He appealed to people across the country to participate in the celebrations by demonstrating unity, integrity and patriotism. He further stressed that everyone should respect the national flag and that it is the responsibility of the present generation to educate future generations about the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters. He called upon people to celebrate Independence Day as a festival in every home. Uppala Sudhakar, Srikanth, Ravi Goud, Vamshi Krishna, Chandrasekhar, Bharat, Naresh, Jaya, Suryam, Swapna, Mallikaraj and others participated in the programme.

Three Districts Should Be Included in Police Constable Recruitment-



UPPAL MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Appeals to Minister Sridhar Babu UPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy expressed concern over the non-allocation of vacancies to Medchal-Malkajgiri, Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri and Hyderabad districts in the recently issued Telangana State Police Recruitment Board notification for police constable recruitment. "The MLA met State Minister for IT, Industries and Legislative Affairs Duddilla Sridhar Babu and urged him to take the issue to the government's attention." He said the

Telangana State Level Police Recruitment Board had issued a notification on July 29 this year to fill 7,112 police constable posts in the state police department. However, no vacancies were allocated to Medchal-Malkajgiri, Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri and Hyderabad districts, causing concern among unemployed youth in these areas. "Lakshma Reddy said a large number of eligible unemployed youth from these three districts had been preparing for police jobs for a long time and were eagerly waiting for recruitment opportunities. Excluding these districts from the current recruitment process could deprive local youth of equal opportunities and leave them deeply disappointed, he said. "The MLA urged Minister Sridhar Babu to bring the matter to the attention of the concerned authorities and take steps to include vacancies for Medchal-Malkajgiri, Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri and Hyderabad districts in the ongoing police constable recruitment process. "Alternatively, he requested the government to issue a separate notification for these three districts at the earliest and ensure justice for the unemployed youth. Former corporator Devender, BRS state leaders Gandham Nageshwar Rao, Mahesh Goud, Jetta Kishore and Dharmareddy Shravan, along with other BRS leaders and party workers, were present.

Problems brought to PARAMESWAR REDDY's attention, solutions follow!"



UPPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "With the objective of resolving public issues, Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameswar Reddy has been receiving grievances from residents and taking immediate steps to address them by coordinating with the concerned officials. As part of this initiative, residents of various colonies and representatives of different associations met Parameswar Reddy and brought their issues to his attention. "New Bharat Nagar Issues Resolved" Residents of New Bharat Nagar in Uppal brought several issues to Parameswar Reddy's notice, including water pollution, drainage problems on Road No. 17/B, and road-related issues on Road No. 4. Responding immediately, he spoke with Water Works and municipal officials and initiated steps to resolve the problems. "Assurance on Anupuram Community Hall" Residents of Anupuram Colony in AS Rao Nagar met Parameswar Reddy and raised the issue of a community hall. He immediately spoke with the Kapra Deputy Commissioner and assured the residents that necessary steps would be taken to resolve the issue. "Efforts to Resolve South Swaroop Nagar Land Issue" Residents of

South Swaroop Nagar, Uppal, submitted a representation regarding land ceiling and the inclusion of their lands in the 22-A prohibited list. Parameswar Reddy discussed the issue with the Revenue Minister and assured the residents that he would make every effort to resolve the matter. He also stated that the state government was positively considering the removal of eligible lands from the 22-A list. "Steps for Land for Senior Citizens' Association" Representatives of the Uppal Constituency Senior Citizens Association submitted a representation seeking allocation of land for construction of an association building. Parameswar Reddy immediately spoke with the District Collector and requested that the pending issue concerning one acre of land be resolved. "Invitations Pour In" Meanwhile, Parameswar Reddy received invitations from various associations and committees. Representatives of the Mallapur Kuruma Association invited him to attend their Bonalu celebrations. Representatives of the Padmashali Association invited him to the inauguration of the PHT Market Shopping Mall on Uppal Main Road. "Representatives of the Mallapur Chavurasia Samaj invited him to attend special puja celebrations being held on the occasion of Nag Panchami. Members of the Ek Minar Masjid Committee in Habsiguda also met Parameswar Reddy, brought their issues to his attention and sought his cooperation in resolving them. "Parameswar Reddy assured them that he would take up their grievances with the concerned officials and make efforts to resolve them. Members of various Colony Welfare Associations, along with Congress Party leaders and activists, participated in these programmes. "Parameswar Reddy said that whenever people bring their problems directly to his notice, he would continue to coordinate with the concerned officials and work towards finding solutions to their issues.

BJP Leader Sriram Venkat's Innovative Initiative –

"The Growth of Small Businesses is the Strong Foundation of Atmanirbhar Bharat" Tamaka, August 12 (Indian Chornical): "Inspired by the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat, and motivated by the leadership of Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, MP Dr. K. Laxman, Telangana BJP State President Ramachander Rao, and Secunderabad District President Bharat Goud, BJP leader Sriram Venkat has come forward with an innovative idea aimed at encouraging small businesses and self-employment. "From a Small Tea Stall to a Premium Tea Centre – A New Beginning for a Friend's Business" Political leadership is not limited to meetings, public gatherings and speeches. True public service also means bringing positive change to people's lives and supporting their growth. With this vision, BJP leader Sriram Venkat transformed his friend's ordinary tea stall into a modern premium tea centre, sending a strong message about respecting, supporting and encouraging small businesses. "For several years, his friend had been running a small tea stall. Observing his hard work, Sriram Venkat felt that it was not merely a place where tea was sold, but a source of livelihood for a family, an individual's dream and a foundation for the family's future. With this thought, he decided to give the business a completely new identity. "A Surprise Plan – Transforming the Tea Stall into a Premium Tea Centre" Without informing his friend in advance, Sriram Venkat personally planned the transformation of the tea stall. The premises were redesigned with a modern look, attractive lighting, wood-finish interiors, a clean environment and improved seating arrangements. "To provide customers with a better experience, facilities including air conditioning, television, refrigerator and oven, along with premium tables and chairs, were added. "A simple tea stall was transformed into a modern, comfortable and attractive premium tea centre. "The happiness and emotional reaction of his friend upon seeing the newly transformed tea centre became the true highlight of the initiative. "A Small Business Does Not Have to Be Small in Standards" This is the core idea behind Sriram Venkat's initiative. "A business may start small, but with proper planning, cleanliness, quality and modern facilities, it can grow into something much bigger. Through this initiative, he has attempted to demonstrate exactly that. "A tea stall? A premium tea centre? A business? Strength for a family's future? A friendship? Encouragement for a new beginning? This initiative conveys a powerful message about supporting small businesses and empowering families. "Big Encouragement for Small Businesses – A New Definition of Public Service" At a time when the country is moving forward with initiatives such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, Startup India and self-employment under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sriram Venkat



believes that encouraging small businesses is also an important part of strengthening the economy. "His philosophy is simple. "When a small business survives, a family survives. When a family becomes stronger, society becomes stronger. When society becomes stronger, the nation becomes stronger. "Sriram Venkat stated that the dedication shown by Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, MP Dr. K. Laxman, Telangana BJP State President Ramachander Rao and Secunderabad District President Bharat Goud towards resolving public issues, encouraging youth and serving society has been an inspiration to him. "Not a Gift, But an Investment in the Future" Sriram Venkat believes that instead of giving a friend an expensive material gift, it is more meaningful to help improve their livelihood and create opportunities for sustainable income. "His approach is: "A gift that brings happiness for one day is valuable, but creating an opportunity that generates income every day is an even greater form of support. "According to him: "Every small business has a family behind it. "Every family has a dream behind it. "Society should stand by those dreams and help make them a reality. "Young people should not look only for employment but should also consider self-employment and entrepreneurship. "When local businesses become stronger, the local economy becomes stronger. "A Message to Youth – "Start Small, Think Big" Through this initiative, Sriram Venkat wants to convey that a tea stall, tiffin centre, small shop or startup can all provide a respectable means of livelihood. "His message to the youth is: "There is nothing wrong with starting small; the real mistake is stopping yourself from thinking big. "He believes that while government schemes can create opportunities for young people, society can further strengthen those opportunities by extending encouragement and support. "Working with the People – Development of the People as the Goal" Sriram Venkat believes that social service, encouraging youth, supporting small businesses and identifying local issues while finding solutions are strong foundations of meaningful public leadership. "With the vision: "Those who stand with us should grow... "Small businesses should become stronger... "Youth should move towards self-employment... "Every family should become financially stronger... "Positive change should come to society... "he is committed to continuing his service-oriented initiatives while remaining closely connected with the people. "A Powerful Message That Began with a Cup of Tea" Giving a new look to an ordinary tea stall may appear to be a small initiative. But the thought behind it is much bigger. "Supporting a friend's business... "Strengthening a family's future... "Giving a small business a new identity... "Building confidence among youth in self-employment... This is the real purpose behind Sriram Venkat's initiative.



Renee Hospital serves free lunch to patients, attendants Prof. Dr. Bangari Swamy organises charitable initiative on his mother's eighth remembrance anniversary in Karimnagar.



Karimnagar August 12 (Correspondent): Prof. Dr. Bangari Swamy, chairman of Renee Hospital, Karimnagar, organised a free lunch for patients and their attendants on Wednesday to mark the eighth remembrance anniversary of his mother, the late Smt. Bangari Laxmi. Food was served to patients undergoing treatment and their caregivers at the hospital premises as part of a charitable initiative undertaken by the management. Prof. Dr. Bangari Swamy and members of his family participated in the programme. Hospital staff and well-wishers were also present. In a statement, the management of the RENEE Group of Hospitals said the remembrance programme was organised in memory of Smt. Bangari Laxmi, who passed away on August 12, 2018. The statement was issued by Prof. Dr. Bangari Swamy and Dr. Rajni Priyadarshini, Director of Renee Hospital, Karimnagar, and Founder of Rajni Fertility Centre. Prof. Dr. Swamy said the initiative was intended as a tribute to his mother and reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to community service activities.

Grand Bonalu Food Cart Procession Held in Habsiguda;



KANDI SHRAVAN KUMAR REDDY Participates HABSIGUDA, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A grand food cart and Ghatam procession was held on the occasion of the Bonalu festival of Sri Sri Lal Darwaza Mahankali Ammavari at Habsiguda Street No. 1, under the leadership of Shivravi Madiga. Habsiguda Division Congress President Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy attended the event as the chief guest. On the occasion, Shivravi Madiga and members of the festival committee felicitated Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy with a shawl. "Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy wished that the blessings of Goddess Mahankali would be upon all the people of the division and prayed for their happiness and prosperity. "The Ghatam procession of the Goddess was conducted amid drum beats and enthusiastic dances by the youth, creating a festive atmosphere. Kandi Shraavan Kumar Reddy also joined the youngsters and danced enthusiastically during the celebrations. "Division former president Gannaram Vijay Kumar, Division General Secretary Dharma Naik, Ramalayam Chairman Chintala Baburao, Javed, Vanguri Nursing Rao, Ramarao, Division Youth Congress President Vasu Naik, Gunti Sai Kumar, Tinku, Ganesh Naik, Mekala Shiva, Babu, Pandu and others participated in the programme.

Contractors who fail to complete works must face action:



BRS STATE LEADER BANNALA PRAVEEN MUDIRAJ UPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): BRS party state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj demanded strict action against contractors who have failed to restore roads even eight months after completing sewerage pipeline works. "On Wednesday, Praveen Mudiraj met Water Works Executive Director Pankaja at her office and submitted a representation seeking immediate action. He said that contractors who undertook sewerage pipeline works in Beerappagadda, Dharmapuri Colony, Sairam Nagar Colony and Indira Nagar Colony have shown serious negligence in restoring the damaged CC roads after completion of the pipeline works. "Considering the ongoing monsoon season, Praveen Mudiraj urged officials to complete the road restoration works immediately to prevent inconvenience to residents. He also requested that notices be issued to the contractors and that they be directed to complete the pending works within the stipulated deadline. "Executive Director Pankaja responded positively to the representation. She assured that notices would be issued immediately to the concerned contractors and steps would be taken to ensure completion of the road restoration works.

‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ Rally Aimed at Promoting Patriotism and Protecting National Unity: Chandrupatla Sunil Reddy



“Manthani Peddapalli District, August 12 (Indian Chronicle): A grand ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ rally was organized in Manthani town of Peddapalli district following the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP State Executive Committee Member and former district president Chandrupatla Sunil Reddy attended the programme as the chief guest and formally flagged off the rally. “The rally began at Gandhi Chowk and proceeded through the main

streets of Manthani to Ambedkar Chowk, with participants carrying a large National Flag and raising patriotic slogans. “Speaking on the occasion, Sunil Reddy said he was delighted to see the ‘Har Ghar Tiranga’ rally being organized on such a large scale in Manthani in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call. “He said the initiative was aimed at fostering patriotism among every citizen, protecting national unity and integrity, and bringing people together under one national identity. As part of the 80th Independence Day celebrations, he appealed to everyone to hoist the National Flag at their homes. “Sunil Reddy recalled that India attained independence through the sacrifices and supreme sacrifices of numerous freedom fighters. He said the Narendra Modi-led government is working in accordance with their ideals to make India a leading nation in the world and establish it as a Vishwaguru (global leader). “Leaders and workers from various political parties, members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and more than 1,000 students from schools across the region participated enthusiastically in the rally, making the event a grand display of patriotism and national unity.

Special Prayers Held at Sri Shiva Shankara Mahamayi Temple on Ashada Amavasya“

“UPPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Special prayers and rituals were performed with devotion at the Sri Shiva Shankara Mahamayi Temple in Uppal on the occasion of Ashada Amavasya. Special abhishekams and pujas were conducted for Goddess Mahamayi, followed by the distribution of teertha prasadam to devotees. “Later, an Anna Prasadam (free meal) distribution programme was organized at the temple. A large number of devotees participated in the programme and sought the blessings of the Goddess. “Temple members Uppoji Balavantha Chari, Bikshapathi, Rajagopal Chari, Srinu, Madhu, Venkataramana Chari, Cholletti Srinu, Sridhar Chari, Palera Gopi Chari, Shamireddy Hanumanth Reddy, Mamilla Mallesh, Krishna Reddy, Teega Vittal Rao, Narsing Rao, Jagan, Narsimha Reddy, Abhiram, Anareddy Venkat Reddy, Papaiah Goud, Naveen, Mudugonda Ravi, Praveen Reddy, Narsimharao, Kothakonda Ramesh, Mahesh, Ram Prakash, Gopi Chari, Pasupuneti Kumar, Venkatayya, Kumar, Bhaskar Chari, Naveen Goud, Raju, Sandeep, Mahesh Kumar, Prashanth Kumar, Kokala Ravikiran,



Bhavani Shankar, Shravan Kumar, Lakshman, Santhosh Kumar, Bunty, Srinu, Srinivas Goud, Ganesh Goud, Yadi Goud and Venkatesh, among others, participated in the programme.

Rajamouli Goud Gets Opportunity to Promote Bhagavad Gita Globally



“Manthani Peddapalli District, August 12 (Indian Chronicle): Sri Sri Sri Brahmasri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamy’s ashram, along with ISKCON temples and other organizations, is undertaking a major programme to spread the message of the Bhagavad Gita across the world. As part of the initiative, RRTV Chairman Medagoni Rajamouli Goud has been given an opportunity to participate as a

Sanatana Dharma campaigner. “The organizers stated that the programme has been taken up with the objective of spreading the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to people across the world. The campaign will include various activities in India as well as abroad, with the participation of spiritual organizations and devotees. “Speaking on the occasion, the organizers said that the Bhagavad Gita contains valuable teachings on spirituality, morality and human values and that its message should reach people across the globe. They said efforts are being made to spread the Gita’s teachings among the younger generation in particular. “As part of the programme, Sri Sri Sri Brahmasri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamy, ISKCON representatives and members of the Bhagavad Gita Foundation are expected to participate in the campaign. The organizers expressed their happiness over Rajamouli Goud being associated with the initiative and appreciated his commitment to promoting Sanatana Dharma. “They said that spreading the message of the Bhagavad Gita throughout the world is a noble effort and called upon everyone to support the campaign. They also urged people to follow the teachings of the Gita in their daily lives and contribute to the preservation and promotion of Indian spiritual traditions.

NIMS Receives 30 Wheelchairs for Patient Care



Hyderabad correspondent, August 12 (Indian Chronicle): NIMS has received 30 quality wheelchairs do-

nated by HelpNeedy and various philanthropists to improve mobility and convenience for patients. Valued at Rs 11,500 each, the wheelchairs will be used to transport patients, particularly those unable to walk, between different departments of the hospital. NIMS Director Prof. Rahul Devaraj thanked HelpNeedy and the donors for supporting the hospital with essential equipment. He said such contributions significantly enhance patient convenience and help strengthen healthcare facilities. The wheelchairs were donated in memory of several individuals, with HelpNeedy contributing nine. Assistant Medical Superintendent Salman, RMO Sachin and hospital staff attended the programme.

HCA Offices to Be Set Up in Every District

--More Opportunities for Rural Cricketers; Offices to Be Established Within 2-3 Months: T. Seshanarayana “UPPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) is taking steps to take cricket development to remote and rural areas across Telangana. As part of the initiative, HCA offices will be established in every district of the state, said T. Seshanarayana, Chairman of the District Cricket Infrastructure Development Committee. Speaking at a media conference held at the HCA office in the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal, he said the district offices would be established within the next two to three months. “The offices will help address the issues faced by local cricketers and receive applications related to selection processes. This will enable players from the districts to access HCA services locally without having to travel to Hyderabad for every requirement, he said. Seshanarayana said special focus would be placed on rural areas rather than limiting cricket development to cities. Along with improving infrastructure in the districts, the committee plans to visit schools and colleges to encourage students to take up cricket. “Cricket grounds will be developed wherever necessary, and the required facilities will be provided to aspiring players, he added. “He said the primary objective of the committee was to identify talented cricketers from the districts and provide them with appropriate opportunities. Applications for player selections will be accepted locally, helping the HCA identify and nurture talent at the grassroots level. “The selection-related process will be moni-



tored by HCA Head of Cricket Operations A.T. Rayudu, he said. Seshanarayana said efforts would be made in the coming days to strengthen cricket infrastructure in every district of Telangana and identify rural talent, providing promising cricketers with opportunities at the state and national levels.

Father Dies After Saving Daughter from Drowning in Bokkala Vagu at Manthani



“Manthani Peddapalli District, August 12 (Indian Chronicle): A tragic incident occurred in Manthani town of Peddapalli district, where a father lost his life after risking

his life to save his daughter who accidentally fell into Bokkala Vagu. “The deceased has been identified as Parshaveni Raju, a resident of Boyinipet under Manthani Municipality. Raju worked as a shepherd and supported his family through his daily work. “As part of his routine work, Raju was taking his sheep across Bokkala Vagu when his daughter accidentally fell into the stream. Without hesitation, he immediately jumped into the water to rescue her. Raju successfully brought his daughter to safety, but unfortunately drowned in the stream and lost his life in the process. “The incident has cast a pall of gloom over Boyinipet, as the father saved his daughter’s life but sacrificed his own. “On receiving the information, Manthani police reached the spot and began collecting details about the incident

20-Year Jail Term for Accused in Rape and POCSO Case

“MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Fast Track Special Court for Rape and POCSO cases at Neredmet on Wednesday sentenced the accused in a rape and POCSO case registered under the jurisdiction of Medipally Police Station to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of ₹2,000. “A case was registered at Medipally Police Station in 2025 under Crime No. 279/2025, invoking Sections 64(2)(M) and 351(2) of the BNS, and Section 5(I) read with Section 6 of the POCSO Act. The accused was identified as Kalla John (45), a painter and resident of Bolligudem, Boduppal. Following the trial, the court found the accused guilty and sentenced him to 20 years of imprisonment along with a ₹2,000 fine. The court also directed that ₹3 lakh be paid as compensation to the victim. “Inspector R. Govinda Reddy conducted the investigation. Special Public Prosecutor P. Srinivasa Chary represented the prosecution. CDO K. Krishnamaraju, summons staff member K. Saikumar, liaison officer M. Shivakumar, briefing officer M. Sujatha, monitoring officer P. Narasimha Reddy, and others assisted the prosecution during the trial. Police officials appreciated the officers and staff of Medipally Police Station for conducting an effective investigation and ensuring that the accused was convicted.



Arun Patel Participates in Bonalu Food Offering Processions



RAMANTHAPUR, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the Ashada Masam Bonalu celebrations, Thottelu and food offering processions were organised with great religious fervour in several colonies

under the Venkat Reddy Nagar and Habsiguda divisions. “Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President and young leader Akarapu Arun Patel attended the spiritual celebrations as the chief guest and offered special prayers to the Goddess. “On the occasion, Arun Patel congratulated the youth, committee members and organisers for successfully conducting the food offering processions in their respective colonies. “The organisers included Karthik and his team from Venkat Reddy Nagar, Arjun and his team from Ram Reddy Nagar, Mahesh and his team from Navrang Guda, Akhil and his team from Habsiguda P&T Colony, and Tinku and his team from Habsiguda Harijan Basti. “Arun Patel particularly appreciated the youth for celebrating the Bonalu festival with devotion and enthusiasm while preserving Telangana’s culture and traditional values. Devotees and local residents accorded a warm welcome to Arun Patel. The committee members and youth groups expressed their gratitude to him for participating in the celebrations and extended their wishes that the blessings of the Goddess remain upon everyone.

Police Commissioner Conducts Surprise Inspection of Khammam Three Town Police Station



“Khammam, August 12 (Indian Chronicle): Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt directed police officials to focus particularly on the effective maintenance and utilization of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) to speed up crime investigation and identification of accused persons. “On Wednesday, the Police Commis-

sioner made a surprise visit to the Khammam Three Town Police Station and interacted with complainants to understand their grievances. He subsequently inspected the functioning of the police station, performance of the staff, investigation reports, CCTNS data uploads, General Diary records, seized vehicles and the station premises. “On the occasion, the Commissioner instructed the police personnel to make effective use of the advanced features available through CCTNS. He stated that the system plays a crucial role in ensuring proper data entry at police stations, transparency in the investigation process and improving the use of technology in policing. “He further said that new technological methods were being introduced under the project to help identify persons involved in various crimes across the district. Police personnel should gain adequate knowledge and expertise in using these new features, he advised. “The Commissioner said that senior officers should make effective use of the CCTNS project so that personnel at the lower levels could also utilize the system more efficiently. He directed the staff to make extensive use of e-Summons and e-Sakshya services as part of the project. “He also instructed the officers to counsel rowdy-sheeters and maintain continuous surveillance over them. “Town ACP Ramanamurthy participated in the inspection.”

MAHANKALI BONALU TO BE HELD IN UPPAL ON AUGUST 20

-Extensive Arrangements Under the Endowments De-

the Endowments Department held on



partment-TEMPLE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TELKALA MOHAN REDDY “UPPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The temple committee has decided to conduct the Bonalu festival at the Mahankali Ammavari Temple in Uppal on August 20. Several key decisions were taken at a meeting of the Mahankali Temple Committee under

Wednesday. “Speaking on the occasion, Temple Committee Chairman Telkala Mohan Reddy said that, for the first time, the Mahankali Ammavari Bonalu celebrations in Uppal would be conducted on a grand scale under the supervision of the Endowments Department on August 20. “He said extensive arrangements were being made by the temple committee to ensure that devotees face no inconvenience during the Bonalu celebrations. All necessary facilities would be provided to devotees, and steps would be taken to ensure that the festivities are conducted peacefully and smoothly. “Temple Executive Officer Veeresham, along with committee members, would supervise the arrangements, he said. Committee representatives Gummadilli Krishna, Mashetty Raghavendra, Gundu Bhaskar Reddy, Potluri Venkatesh, Turpati Jangaiah, Kanyamain Swapna, temple priests Naveen Kumar Sharma, Naresh Mudiraj and Gumideli Raju, along with representatives of various caste associations and others, participated in the meeting.

Beneficiaries Should Complete Indiramma House Construction by Utilizing Government Financial Assistance



District Collector Divakar T.S. “Timely Financial Assistance to Velugumatla Beneficiaries – Indiramma House Construction Progressing Rapidly” Officials Directed to Coordinate and Ensure Completion Within the Specified Deadline” District Collector Inspects Indiramma House Construction Progress in Velugumatla” Khammam, August 12 (Indian Chronicle): District Collector Divakar T.S. urged beneficiaries to make effective use of the Indiramma Houses

scheme being implemented by the government with the objective of providing dignified living conditions to poor families and to realize their dream of owning a house.”On Wednesday, the District Collector conducted a field-level inspection of Indiramma houses under construction in the Velugumatla area of Khammam city. He interacted directly with the beneficiaries undertaking construction and enquired about their problems, requirements and the current stages of construction. He also reviewed the difficulties being faced during construction and issued necessary instructions to the concerned officials for their resolution.”“Along with Additional Collector P. Srinivasa Reddy and Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, the Collector inspected the houses individually at the field level. He reviewed the progress of construction at various stages, including foundations, walls, slabs, roofing and finishing works.”“The Collector directed Housing Department officials to ensure that every house is constructed in accordance with prescribed quality standards. He instructed them to provide necessary technical guidance to beneficiaries and extend all possible support to ensure that construction works are completed at the earliest.”“He further directed officials of all concerned departments to coordinate effectively and take necessary measures to complete the works within the stipulated deadline.”“Housing PD Bhukya Srinivas, Khammam RDO Srinivas, Khammam Urban Tahsildar Jayachandra, EE Jaggarao, Housing AEs, officials from various departments and staff members participated in the inspection.

SIR Process: Khammam District Gears Up for Next Phase“Draft Voter List on August 17; Final Electoral Roll on October 19



“Voters who receive notices must submit the required documents” Khammam, August 12 Indian Chronicle: “Khammam District Collector Divakar T.S. said the first phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has been successfully completed in the district and that the district administration is fully prepared for the next phase. He thanked the public, Booth Level Officers (BLOs), officials, staff, public representatives and media personnel for their cooperation in the SIR process.”“The Collector held a media conference on SIR at the Collectorate conference hall and explained the status of enumeration forms, digitisation, anomalies, voters who had not returned their forms, the next course of action, claims and objections, and submission of supporting documents.”“Draft Electoral Roll on August 17” Collector Divakar T.S. said the Election Commission had extended the SIR schedule twice and that the first phase had now been completed.”“The draft electoral roll will be published on August 17. Claims and objections will be accepted from August 17 to September 16, while their disposal will continue from August 17 to October 15. The final electoral roll will be published on October 19, he said.”“10.85 Lakh Enumeration Forms Digitised” A total of 10,85,927 enumeration forms, accounting for 87.31 per cent, have been digitised in Khammam district.”“Of the forms collected, 43,131 voters could not be mapped. Notices will be issued to them as per the rules. Those receiving notices must submit one appropriate document from the 11 categories of documents prescribed by the Election Commission.”“The Collector said those who do not currently have the required documents should apply for them and assured that steps would be taken to facilitate their speedy issuance.”“1,32,736 Anomalies Identified” The SIR data revealed 1,32,736 anomalies, accounting for 10.67 per cent of the total forms.”“These anomalies include differences in the spelling of names and age differences of less than 15 years between parents and children, among other issues. The Collector said these would not be treated merely as data errors. Field-level verification would be conducted, facts would be established and necessary corrections would be made accordingly.”“1,57,854 Voters Did Not Return Forms” The Collector said 1,57,854 voters had not returned their enumeration forms.”“Field-level verification found 33,380 deceased voters, 11,004 duplicate voters and around 1,01,000 voters who had permanently migrated to other areas.”“Around 11,000 voters could not submit their forms for various reasons. The information gathered during field verification will be examined according to the rules and appropriate action will be taken while preparing the draft electoral roll, he said.”“Another Opportunity for Eligible Voters” Eligible voters who failed to submit their enumeration forms will get another opportunity from August 17 to September 16.”“They can submit the required details, docu-



ments and a declaration stating that they do not have voting rights in any other place. The Collector urged all eligible voters to make use of this opportunity.”“Eligible citizens seeking fresh registration as voters can also apply through Form-6. They must submit the documents prescribed by the Election Commission based on their date of birth.”“Voters Receiving Notices Must Submit Proof” The Collector said Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) would issue notices in cases where the voter’s previous SIR electoral-roll details were unavailable or did not match the information in the database.”“Voters receiving such notices must submit documents establishing their date and place of birth, in accordance with Election Commission guidelines. The EROs will examine the documents and take a decision as per the applicable rules.”“Documents Based on Date of Birth” Collector Divakar T.S. said that voters born before July 1, 1987, must submit any one of the documents prescribed by the Election Commission to establish their identity or date of birth.”“Those born between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004, must submit their own document along with a prescribed document of either one of their parents.”“Those born after December 2, 2004, must submit their own document along with prescribed documents of both parents.”“He said voters could submit any one appropriate document from the 11 categories prescribed by the Election Commission, as applicable to their case.”“Claims and Objections to Be Examined” Claims and objections regarding enumeration details will be examined by the EROs. Notices will be issued where necessary and the supporting documents will be scrutinised before decisions are taken in accordance with the rules.”“The Collector said appeals against decisions taken by the EROs could be filed as per the prescribed procedure up to October 15. He urged citizens to utilise all available opportunities to ensure that their names and details are correctly reflected in the electoral roll.”“Media Urged to Create Awareness” Collector Divakar T.S. appealed to the media to play a key role in disseminating accurate information about the SIR process and preventing misconceptions among the public.”“He said the process was aimed at ensuring that every eligible voter’s name remained on the electoral roll while details of deceased, permanently migrated and duplicate voters were examined in accordance with the rules.”“The Collector made it clear that the SIR process was being carried out in a transparent manner and in accordance with the guidelines of the Election Commission.”“During the interaction, the Collector answered questions from journalists on various aspects of the SIR process, including collection and digitisation of enumeration forms, anomalies, verification of voter details, submission of documents, claims and objections.”“Collectorate Election Cell supervisors Raju and D.T. Ansari, other officials and media representatives attended the meeting.”

National Library Day Celebrated at Government Junior College

Khammam Aug 12 Indian Chronicle: “National Library Day was celebrated grandly at the local Government Junior College under the aegis of the National Service Scheme (NSS), marking the 134th birth anniversary of renowned librarian and educator S. R. Ranganathan.”“The programme was presided over by college Principal Lingamneni Nalini Sri, who said that a library is not merely a place where books are kept, but a treasure house of knowledge, a centre of learning and a guide for students’ future. She said a good book can be a student’s best friend and helps expand knowledge, improve thinking ability and develop the wisdom to distinguish between right and wrong. Books also play an important role in understanding history, developing knowledge and gaining a better understanding of the world, she added.”“College Librarian Anumula Mohan said it was a matter of great happiness to celebrate the 134th birth anniversary of S. R. Ranganathan. He said Ranganathan’s efforts played a significant role in the development of libraries in India. Libraries are especially important for intermediate students, he said, adding that apart from textbooks, students should read books on literature, history, science, competitive examinations, biographies, newspapers and important magazines to broaden their knowledge.”“He further ad-



vised students that although mobile phones and social media have become an integral part of modern life, there is no need to completely avoid them. However, they should use them wisely and also set aside some time every day for reading books.”“Later, the NSS unit felicitated Librarian Mohan in recognition of his services.”“NSS Programme Officer Anthoti Tirupathi Rao, college staff members Pamthi Lakshmikantham, Unnam Ramakrishna, Mogili Ramesh, Sara Rajendra, Tagaram Yashoda, UDC Madar Saheb, Jashwanth, Bujamma and Aruna, along with students, participated in the programme.

Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ and ‘Vande Mataram’ Echo in Nelakondapalli



“Khammam, Nelakondapalli, August 12 – Indian Chronicle”“The slogans of ‘Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ and ‘Vande Mataram’ reverberated across the Nelakondapalli mandal headquarters on Wednesday as the BJP organised the Har Ghar Tiranga programme following the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.”“As part of the programme, BJP

leaders and party workers took out a massive procession through the mandal headquarters carrying the national flag and raising patriotic slogans.”“Speaking on the occasion, BJP state leader Kondapalli Sridhar Reddy said that the national flag is a symbol of the honour and unity of the country. He said the programme was being organised with the objective of strengthening the spirit of patriotism among every Indian.”“He stated that such programmes were highly inspiring and called upon the youth to actively participate in the development of the nation. He also urged people to carry forward the ideals of great personalities who sacrificed their lives for the country.”“BJP mandal president Pagarathi Sudhakar, Ananthu Upender Goud, Chava Kiran, Malleboina Govinda Rao, Surepalli Gnanaratnam, Gundu Ajay, Suresh, Hanumanth, Sagar, Manne Krishnaiah, Govind, Ramakrishna, Divakar, Mallikarjun, Anil, Harsh, Ganesh and others participated in the programme.”

Inter College at VM Home a Welcome Assurance : Bokka Venkataiah

“Hyderabad, August 12 (Indian Chronicle) : Bokka Venkataiah, founder and state president of Anjali Telangana Orphans Rights Protection Organisation and state working president of the Orphans Rights Struggle Forum, said the assurance to establish an intermediate college at Victoria Memorial (VM) Home in Hyderabad was welcome. In a statement on Wednesday, Venkataiah said he met Telangana State SC Welfare Department Secretary and VM Home Secretary Vijayendra Bhoi at the State Secretariat and requested the establishment of an intermediate college at VM Home. He said orphan students at the institution have been facing difficulties in securing admissions for higher education after completing Class 10. Venkataiah said Vijayendra Bhoi assured him that intermediate education would be introduced at VM Home soon. He said he had been fighting for the welfare of orphans and orphan students for the past two-and-a-half decades and had succeeded in securing several government orders for their welfare. Venkataiah further urged the government to establish ITI, degree, diploma and polytechnic institutions at VM Home along with the intermediate college. Such facilities, he said, would provide orphan students with better opportunities for higher education and employment. He expressed hope that



the initiative would benefit orphan students and said they would remain grateful to the Telangana government, Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy and Vijayendra Bhoi for supporting their educational needs.

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Appeals for Funds to Repair Damaged Roads and Drains in Charlapalli Division

UPPAL, AUGUST 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy submitted a representation to State Minister for IT, Electronics & Communications, Commerce and Legislative Affairs Duddilla Sridhar Babu, seeking funds for the repair and restoration of roads and drainage systems damaged due to the recent heavy rains in Charlapalli Division.”“The MLA stated that BT roads, internal CC roads and stormwater drainage lines in several areas of the division have been severely damaged, causing considerable inconvenience to the public. He also pointed out that the damage to the stormwater drainage system has led to waterlogging in several areas, posing safety concerns for residents.”“Bandari Lakshma Reddy requested the minister to sanction the necessary funds for construction of new BT roads, reconstruction of damaged CC roads and development of stormwater drainage lines. He urged that priority be given to these works in the interest of public convenience, safe transportation and preventing waterlogging during the monsoon season.”“BRS party leaders, including Nemuri Mahesh Goud, and others participated in the programme.



PRC Should Be Announced Immediately: PRTU–TS



“Manthani Peddapalli District, August 12 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The PRTU–TS Peddapalli district unit has urged the state government to respond immediately to the problems faced by employees and teachers and announce the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) without further delay.”“Union leaders stated that employees and teachers

have been suffering financially due to the absence of a PRC for the past three years.”“A membership enrolment programme was conducted by PRTU–TS at various schools in Manthani mandal on Wednesday. PRTU–TS Peddapalli district president Gandu Krishnamurthy and general secretary Kanuganti Srinivas participated in the programme and addressed the teachers.”“They urged the government to announce the PRC immediately, keeping the interests of employees and teachers in mind. They said the delay in implementing the PRC was causing significant financial losses to employees and teachers.”“The leaders called upon employees and teachers to extend united support to programmes undertaken by the union for securing their rights and welfare. They also appealed to a large number of teachers to participate in the Maha Dharna scheduled to be held in Hyderabad on September 1 and make it a success.”“Manthani mandal president Egadi Suresh, general secretary Pachika Swaroopa, State Associate President Komurayya, and several other teachers participated in the membership enrolment programme.

Ration Rice Replaced with Cash!

Allegations of a ‘New Racket’ Operating Across Khammam District — No Visible Action Against Fair Price Shop Dealers — Are Concerned Officials Turning a Blind Eye? “Khammam, August 12: Indian Chronicle”“A new controversy is reportedly emerging in the ration distribution system in Khammam district, with allegations that some fair price shops are allegedly providing cash to beneficiaries instead of distributing ration rice. While the government is spending substantial amounts to ensure food security for poor families, allegations that ration rice is being diverted without reaching beneficiaries have raised serious questions.”“Cash Instead of Rice — What Is Going On?”“Under the prescribed rules, ration cardholders are entitled to receive rice. However, allegations are surfacing that cash is being paid instead of rice at some ration shops.”“This has raised several questions among the public.”“Why is cash being given instead of ration rice?”“Where is the ration rice going?”“Is there any provision allowing such cash payments?”“Or has a new racket emerged within the ration distribution system?”“Where Are the Inspections and Action?”“Questions are being raised over the monitoring of ration shops by the concerned authorities. Beneficiaries allege that despite complaints about ir-

regularities, visible and stringent action against the concerned shop operators is yet to be seen.”“Are officials conducting field-level inspections? Or are inspections being completed only on paper? People are demanding that Civil Supplies Department officials conduct surprise inspections across the district and establish the actual facts.”“Will E-POS Records Reveal the Truth?”“People say the alleged irregularities could be verified by thoroughly examining e-POS transaction records, biometric details, stock registers, the quantity of rice received from government godowns, and the quantity actually distributed to beneficiaries.”“Authorities also need to investigate whether rice is being shown as distributed in the records against beneficiaries’ names while, in reality, the beneficiaries did not receive the rice.”“Why Play with the Rice Meant for the Poor?”“Ration rice is not an ordinary commodity. It is a crucial component of the government’s food-security system for poor families. Any irregularity in its distribution directly affects vulnerable households.”“Therefore, people are demanding special inspections of ration shops across Khammam district to determine the truth behind the allegations that cash is being given instead of ration rice.”

ED raids 5 Kolkata locations over Trinamool funds, Abhishek Banerjee’s chartered flights



GNS News Agency, August 12

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday launched coordinated raids at five locations across Kolkata to investigate the source of massive financial transactions involving the Trinamool Congress’s (TMC) bank accounts and the funding of party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee’s chartered flight rentals. Separate ED teams began search operations early in the morning in Central Avenue, Rajarhat-New Town, and adjacent areas.Among the premises searched were the office and residence of a prominent businessman known to be close to Abhishek Banerjee. According to sources, the funds used to rent chartered flights for Banerjee were allegedly channelled through this businessman’s firm, Carewell Aviation.

‘Go back’ slogans for rebel TMC MP Saayoni Ghosh in town on edge after child’s rape-murder

GNS News Agency, August 12

Trinamool Congress MP Saayoni Ghosh and MLA Ritabrata Banerjee, rebels challenging Mamata Banerjee’s leadership of the Trinamool Congress, faced ‘go back’ and ‘chor’ slogans at Baruipur in West Bengal’s South 24 Parganas, where they went to meet the family of an 11-year-old rape-murder victim.Baruipur is part of the Jadavpur parliamentary constituency, which Saayoni Ghosh represents in Lok Sabha. The town is on edge after the body of the 11-year-old was found in a sack dumped in a pond. Police have registered a case under the sections of gangrape and also invoked the stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The preliminary autopsy confirmed sexual assault and also revealed that the child was alive when she was thrown into the pond. What has added to the unrest in the area is the lynching of a man known to be close to one of the accused.

As Saayoni Ghosh approached the victim’s home, she was greeted by a crowd shouting “gaddar” – meaning traitor – and “go back”, apparently targeting her for the mutiny against her former boss Mamata Banerjee, who brought Saayoni Ghosh into the political limelight. The crowd also questioned why she had come three days after the girl was found dead.While speaking to the victim’s mother, Saayoni Ghosh said, “I have no words, only that we are with you. The Chief Minister will ensure that no mother will lose their child as you did. This is not the time to think whether we are ISF, BJP, NCPI or TMC. We must all stand together against such a horrific crime. I am going to meet the Chief Minister. Strictest punishment will be given to the culprits.”The Baruipur rape-murder, coming less than two months after the BJP took over the reins in Bengal, is a major test for Chief Minister Suvenud Adhikari. Adhikari’s former boss and Trinamool chairperson Mamata Banerjee has targeted the state government after she was stopped from visiting Baruipur.

The political reactions to the horrific crime are also playing out against the backdrop of the meltdown in the Trinamool Congress. The Mamata Banerjee-led party, which ruled Bengal for 15 years, has unravelled within weeks of its crushing defeat in the May election.Twenty out of the party’s 28 Lok Sabha MPs have joined the Nationalist Citizens Party of India, which was barely known two months

In Gujarat, Hindu, Muslim women donate kidneys to each other’s husbands



GNS News Agency, August 12

A Hindu woman and a Muslim woman donated their kidneys to each other’s husbands in Ahmedabad because donation by their relatives was not medically possible, Sterling Hospital in the city said.A 45-year-old Hindu man from Ahmedabad and a 42-year-old Muslim man from Udaipur received the women’s kidneys in simultaneous transplants on July 9, according to a hospital statement.“The landmark procedure involved two patients with chronic kidney disease and end-stage renal disease, whose respective donors (relatives) could not donate directly due to medical incompatibility. This led both families to explore the possibility of an organ swap,” the statement read.

These were the first kidney swap transplants performed at the hospital. The doctors carefully reviewed the scans and determined that the donor from the first patient’s family met the criteria to donate to the second patient, and vice versa. The donor-recipient pairs were appropriately matched. Both families were counselled, and they agreed to proceed with the swap transplant, according to the hospital statement.Compassion, harmony and trust

The hospital described the transplants as “a powerful example of compassion, trust, communal harmony, and the shared human desire to save a life”.Dr Sudhir Morad, Clinical Superintendent, Sterling Hospital, said, “This milestone represents much more than the success of a complex transplant procedure. A kidney swap gives patients a second opportunity when a willing donor cannot directly donate because of incompatibility. What makes this achievement particularly meaningful is the spirit of compassion, harmony, and trust demonstrated by the donors and families. We are proud to bring together advanced

According to ED sources, the agency is tracing the financial routing of suspicious funds flowing through TMC’s official bank accounts. Preliminary investigations indicate that a sum exceeding Rs 150 crore was allegedly routed through multiple aviation and travel companies for questionable purposes.The probe stems from a complaint by TMC MLA Ritabrata Banerjee, who alleged that the exorbitant rent for these chartered flights was financed through “cut-money” (extortion commissions) and protection rackets. The ongoing raids are aimed at verifying these allegations and scrutinising the exact banking trail behind the expenditure.Tussle over Trinamool fundsThe agency’s crackdown coincides with an internal legal battle over control of the party’s finances following a recent split within the Trinamool Congress. After shifting political camps, the party’s former treasurer, Aroop Biswas, formally requested that banks freeze TMC’s accounts, leading to an ongoing legal battle in the Calcutta High Court.The high court has repeatedly denied requests from the ‘Kalighat Trinamool’ faction for an urgent hearing on the matter, including a fresh refusal on Tuesday.Tanusree Bose is a dedicated journalist reporting for from Kolkata. Her work focuses sharply on the complex administrative, political, and judicial developments across West Bengal, establishing her as an authoritative voice in regional news coverage. Experience Current Role: Reports for the prestigious national daily, providing her content with a high level of Trustworthiness. Geographical Expertise: Provides focused, in-depth coverage of West Bengal, demonstrating an intimate



back. At the Assembly level, about 60 of Trinamool’s 80 MLAs have rebelled against Mamata Banerjee’s leadership. The MLAs are yet to join another party.Leaders from both factions of the Trinamool Congress and the BJP have reached Baruipur to meet the girl’s family. Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, who leads Trinamool’s rebel faction in Parliament, was among them. Siuli Saha, a rebel MLA and Chandrima Bhattacharya, Mamata Banerjee’s aide who recently quit her camp, also met the family. Chief Minister Adhikari is in Baruipur to meet the family.“We want capital punishment for the culprits. The Chief Minister has said it, and we want it implemented. The previous government passed the Aparajita Bill. It should be immediately made an Act,” said Dastidar.The Aparajita Women and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill, 2024, is a stringent anti-rape legislation unanimously passed by the Bengal Assembly. The Bill provides for the death penalty if a sexual assault results in the victim’s death or leaves them in a vegetative state. It enhances the minimum punishment for rape to life imprisonment for the remainder of the convict’s natural life, or the death penalty.State urban development minister Agnimitra Paul and BJP leader Locket Chatterjee also visited the victim’s family.While Mamata Banerjee was prevented from travelling to Baruipur, leaders from her camp – Biman Banerjee, Dola Sen and Pratima Mondal – visited the girl’s family on Monday.Bengal’s Director General of Police, Siddh Nath Gupta, also visited the girl’s family. “Investigation is on, and arrests have been made. If it is found that there were lapses on the part of the police initially, an inquiry will be done and action taken,” Gupta told the media.

medical expertise, multidisciplinary teamwork, and a deeply human approach to help more patients find a path towards a healthier life.”Both men have recovered well following the transplantation, with serum creatinine levels of 1.26 mg/dL and 1.30 mg/dL, respectively, at discharge, indicating good early kidney function, the statement said, adding that all four people involved were discharged on July 18.The transplants were performed by a multidisciplinary team led by Dr Sonal Dalal, Dr Javed Vakil, Dr Ketan Shukla, Dr Himanshu Patel, and Dr Bhavin Mahetaliya, with the support of transplant coordinator Rahil Shah.

WhatsApp users report media-sharing issues globally

New Delhi: Meta-backed WhatsApp users reported issues with the messaging platform on Monday with the disruption appearing to affect the sharing of photos, videos, stickers, GIFs and other media files across several countries.

According to outage-tracking platform Downdetector, users began registering reports early Monday morning. Among the reported issues, 41 per cent were related to messaging, 40 per cent to the app itself and 13 cent to notifications, the tracking platform showed. While text messaging continued to work for some users, multimedia content was reportedly taking longer to send or remained stuck during the upload process.As per many users, they were able to send and receive

text messages but faced difficulties uploading photos and videos in chats. In some cases, images appeared in conversations but remained stuck while uploading, while others reported seeing loading icons or prompts asking them to retry the action.

Stickers and GIFs were also reportedly affected, leading many users to believe the disruption was linked specifically to WhatsApp’s multimedia services. For some, larger media files failed to upload or experienced significant delays.

Why Channi is emerging as a new power centre in Punjab Congress politics



As the Punjab Congress prepares for the 2027 Assembly elections, an informal shift appears to be taking shape within the party. While Amarinder Singh Raja Warring continues to head the state unit after the high command’s recent announcement, former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi—tasked with leading the party’s campaign committee for the upcoming polls—has emerged as the one around whom several senior leaders are holding consultations, reflecting the rise of a new political centre within the state unit.Recent meetings at Channi’s residence have drawn attention within political circles. While they have not been officially described as factional gatherings, their frequency and the profile of those attending have reinforced the perception that Channi is increasingly becoming the principal point of consultation for leaders discussing the party’s organisational and electoral strategy.The reasons for this development lie in a series of political decisions that have steadily enhanced Channi’s stature over the past two years.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the Congress leadership’s continuing confidence in Channi came during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. After the Congress’s defeat in the 2022 Assembly polls, Channi lost both the Bhadaur and Chamkaur Sahib Assembly seats. Yet, the party high command chose to reposition him by fielding him from the Jalandhar parliamentary constituency.The decision was politically significant. Jalandhar had traditionally been associated with the family of former Congress MP Chaudhary Santokh Singh. Following his death, his wife contested the bypoll in 2023 and lost to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate Sushil Rinku. In 2024, Chaudhary’s family was one of the strongest contenders for the ticket. Channi, meanwhile, had never contested an election from the Doaba region. Despite this, the Congress leadership backed him.The decision paid off electorally. Channi won the Jalandhar Lok Sabha seat comfortably, securing a fresh mandate from a politically significant region outside his traditional base. For many within the Congress, the victory strengthened his credibility as a leader with statewide appeal rather than one confined to a particular constituency or faction.

His standing has since grown further in Parliament.

10 years after LPG death, court awards Rs 7 lakh to Nagpur family



A consumer court in Maharashtra has directed an insurance company to pay a man in Nagpur Rs 7 lakh with interest, over a decade after an LPG cylinder leak killed his wife. It also directed Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) to pay Rs 60,000 to his family.The Nagpur District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, in an order passed on July 2, granted relief for Sahebrao Katare, who lost his wife, Devratna Katare, on March 3, 2015, while under treatment for three months.Devratna suffered 54 per cent burn injuries on December 23, 2014, while she was preparing dinner in the kitchen. Sahebrao also sustained 12 per cent burn injuries while trying to save his wife.Sahebrao told the commission that he was entitled to Rs 20 lakh as per the policy for deaths caused by such

‘I’m 62 and I don’t have a home’: Noida’s Godrej Nest homebuyers left hanging



A government employee posted in Mumbai broke his fixed deposit meant for his teenage son’s education to pay the final installment of Rs 7 lakh on a delayed Noida flat—a home he had planned for his retirement.The bank from which he had taken a home loan to buy his 2BHK flat in Godrej Nest, in Noida’s Sector 150, refused to extend further credit, insisting on a written confirmation of the possession date.“They said they needed the confirmation date. How could we give them this when even I wasn’t sure?” he said.The man’s ordeal mirrors the experience of many in NCR, where delayed possession — even by major developers — have left families trapped between unfinished homes and mounting EMIs.“Wanted a permanent address for my family”In 2022, armed with an initial investment of Rs 40 lakh from his parents, the man booked the 2BHK-plus-study apartment measuring 1,543 sq ft for Rs 1.34 crore.Hailing from Bihar, he said he has been forced to relocate to different cities for work but wanted a permanent address for his parents.Then the wait for his flat began.“I was promised possession in September 2024,” he said. “But the date went by and there was no sign of the flat.”Repeated calls to the relationship manager brought no clarity. Living in Mumbai, he could not visit the site regularly. “A relative finally went there — and found the building was still incomplete,” he said.Finally, by the end of June

Channi was appointed chairperson of the key Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare. More recently, he was selected for the Sansad Ratna Award for outstanding parliamentary performance, becoming the first MP from Punjab in 16 years to receive the honour. He is also among only two chairpersons of parliamentary standing committees to be recognised with the award this year.These developments have added a national dimension to Channi’s political profile. Today, he combines several roles that few Punjab Congress leaders currently possess simultaneously: former chief minister, sitting Member of Parliament, chairperson of an important parliamentary committee, and a nationally recognised parliamentarian. That institutional stature is one reason many Congress leaders increasingly see him as a natural point of convergence.“Former chief ministers rarely become ordinary organisational leaders. They retain administrative experience, statewide visibility and direct access to the party’s central leadership. During periods of internal uncertainty, these attributes often make them the preferred interlocutors for leaders seeking organisational consensus,” said a senior Congress leader.Administrative experience and social representation

Political experts said that Channi’s social profile has further strengthened his position. As Punjab’s first Dalit chief minister and now the Jalandhar MP, he represents a constituency that remains electorally crucial, particularly in Doaba, where Scheduled Castes account for nearly one-third of the population. His political presence allows the Congress to project both administrative experience and social representation at a time when the party is attempting to rebuild its electoral coalition.Political observers also see echoes of an earlier phase in Punjab Congress politics. In the run-up to the 2017 Assembly election, senior leaders gradually consolidated behind Amarinder Singh, helping establish him as the party’s undisputed electoral face despite competing internal power centres. While the present circumstances are different, the pattern of leaders gravitating towards a former chief minister during a period of organisational uncertainty bears comparison.None of this indicates that the Congress high command intends to replace Raja Warring as state party chief. “But whenever dissatisfaction grows inside a political party, leaders usually look for a recognised face around whom discussions can take place. Channi naturally fits that role because he has administrative experience and electoral credibility,” the leader said.Several Congress leaders privately acknowledge that meetings at Channi’s residence have acquired political symbolism. “Whether this emerging alignment eventually alters the organisational structure of the Punjab Congress will depend on decisions taken by the party leadership. But for now, one trend is becoming increasingly visible: Channi has emerged as the party’s principal alternative centre of political gravity,” said a local leader.

LPG leaks.

In the order, the commission exonerated the local distributor for operational faults, while it directed the insurance company to pay Rs 5 lakh for the accidental death, Rs 1 lakh for the husband’s injuries, under the Public Liability Policy for Oil Industries, and Rs 50,000 for property damage. It also ordered BPCL and the insurer to pay the family Rs 50,000 for prolonged mental agony and another Rs 10,000 for legal expenses within 45 days.

According to the complainant, a gas leak occurred while Devratna was replacing an empty LPG cylinder with a new one. The gas spread rapidly as soon as she removed its cap. The whole kitchen and the house went ablaze in an explosion after the gas caught fire from a prayer lamp in the kitchen.The family incurred expenses of Rs 6 lakh at the hospital and in the loss of household items due to the blaze. The family had approached the local police, but there was no progress in the probe, Sahebrao alleged.During the proceedings, the local distributor of BPCL claimed the blast occurred because the gas burner knob was not shut, stating there was no deficiency in service or negligence. United India Insurance Company also opposed the complainant’s plea, stating there was a delay in submitting the requisite documents.The commission found a communication gap between the oil company and the insurer, which delayed the family’s legitimate claims.

this year, the builder began handing over possession in two of the seven towers, covering around 550 flats, he said.

“I received an email on July 2 informing me of the handover, but it also said maintenance charges would apply from July 1 and that I still had to pay Rs 1.30 lakh,” he said. “I’ve asked for a break-up because this amount wasn’t mentioned in the second milestone, which I’ve already paid in full.”Though the keys are now ready, relief remains elusive.“I’m still repaying loans, my parents are dependent on me... I wanted them to shift soon so they could live close to relatives,” he said. “I saw other properties where they said registration wasn’t happening and possession could be given without it. So, I chose Godrej because of the brand name... Our assumption was wrong.”“If this doesn’t work out, I’ll be nowhere,” he said. “My entire retirement life will be constrained.”He said buyers who have invested such large sums now feel they have little choice but to accept what is offered. “With a company like Godrej, there should have been much greater clarity.”Another homebuyer, who received keys in late June and did not wish to be named, alleged poor construction quality.“I’ve been forced to redo almost everything — including tiles in the bathroom and kitchen,” she said. “We’ve had seepage complaints from day three.”Dissatisfied with what she described as a rushed handover, she added, “I paid a 30% premium four-five years ago because I trusted the brand’s promise of luxury and quality. I’ve received neither. The design and construction are already eight years old, and despite repeated delays, there’s been no effort to upgrade the project.The homebuyer alleged that two towers — A2 and B2 — were delivered only after sustained pressure. “At this pace and quality, I genuinely don’t know whether the remaining towers will be handed over in July, August or even later. We still don’t have a gas pipeline or meters installed, which were promised before possession.”“I don’t have a home”While some buyers have received keys, others, like a retired government school principal who sold her property in Jaipur, remain in limbo.“

Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission takes suo motu cognisance of ‘minors paraded on police car’



GNS News Agency, August 12

The order was passed by a full bench comprising chairperson Justice A M Badar and member Justices Swapna Joshi and Sanjay Kumar. The order was passed by a full bench comprising chairperson Justice A M Badar and member Justices Swapna Joshi and Sanjay Kumar. The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (MSHRC) has taken suo motu cognisance of an alleged incident where Pune Police publicly paraded murder suspects on the bonnet of a police vehicle, observing that if the widely circulated videos of the incident were ultimately found to be genuine, they depict a “barbaric incident” that “will certainly bring shame to otherwise wellgoverned and well ruled State of Maharashtra”.

In a strongly worded 10-page order passed on Monday, a full bench of the Commission directed notices to be issued to Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone II) Milind Mohite and Senior Police Inspector Mansingh Patil of Bharati Vidyapeeth police station. It also sought personal affidavits from the Maharashtra Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police to explain the state’s stand and the action taken in the incident. The Commission simultaneously ordered a fact-finding inquiry by its own investigation wing. The order was passed by a full bench comprising chairperson Justice A M Badar and member Justices Swapna Joshi and Sanjay Kumar. The commission’s observations were regarding a case in which Pune police detained seven minors in connection with the murder of a 17-year-old boy, who was allegedly hacked to death with sharp weapons in Pune’s Katraj. The action of the local police station officials to parade three of the minors on a car bonnet had been termed as “unwarranted” by Pune Police Commissioner Amitesh Kumar and an inquiry into the incident was initiated.

The Commission said it constituted a full bench con-

sidering the importance of the matter after taking note of video clips circulating on social media. According to the order, the videos purportedly show three young accused tied to the bonnet of a police vehicle, paraded through Pune’s streets, forced to kneel and walk through residential localities while being assaulted with batons. Referring to the viral videos, the Commission observed, “If these stills from widely circulated video clips on social media platforms regarding misdeeds of Pune Police, if ultimately found to be correct, then it will certainly bring shame to the otherwise well governed and well ruled State of Maharashtra. A lurking doubt creeps in the judicial mind as to whether it is a calculated and designed effort to malign the State of Maharashtra and its Home Department.”

Drawing a parallel with the controversial Kashmir incident in which a civilian was tied to the bonnet of an Army vehicle, the Commission observed, “Pune Police has virtually imitated the said incident prima facie to tarnish and malign the image of the State Government and to project style of working of Pune Police as a ‘Jungle Raj’ functionary.” The order records that media reports indicated the suspects had been arrested in connection with the murder of a young man in July this year. Instead of merely effecting their arrest, the Commission noted, they were allegedly taken to various housing societies, made to walk on their knees, assaulted publicly and tied to the bonnet of a police vehicle while being paraded through busy roads. The Commission also took serious note of allegations that the police officer leading the operation threatened children who had gathered to witness the spectacle, observing that such conduct ignored the provisions of the Juvenile Justice law and caused “great psychological trauma” to minors.

Holding that the alleged conduct amounted to a serious breach of constitutional safeguards, the Commission observed, “It hardly needs to emphasise that the act of tying young suspects/accused to the bonnet of the Police vehicle and parading them constitutes flagrant violation of constitutional rights, statutory protection and the fundamental tenets of due process of law apart from binding law laid down by the Hon’ble Supreme Court on the issue.” The Commission has directed its Investigation Wing, headed by Special Inspector General of Police Datta Karale and assisted by Registrar Vijay Kedar, Superintendent of Police Viswas Pandhare and other officers, to complete a preliminary fact-finding inquiry and submit its report within one week. The matter has been posted before the Division Bench of the Commission on August 20. The order clarifies that all observations made by the Commission are prima facie in nature and will not influence the final adjudication of the case on merits.

Blood oozing, foul smell: Decomposed body parts found in bag on Tamil Nadu Express

GNS News Agency, August 12

Police said the incident came to light after an unidentified person alerted the railway control room about the bag lying unattended near the rear end of a general coach of the train. Police said the incident came to light after an unidentified person alerted the railway control room about the bag lying unattended near the rear end of a general coach of the train. Decomposing body parts were found inside a red trolley bag in the general coach of the Tamil Nadu Express after the train arrived at Agra Cantt railway station on Wednesday morning.

Police said the incident came to light after an unidentified person alerted the railway control room about the bag lying unattended near the rear end of a general coach of the train. The caller reported that the bag appeared to be oozing blood and emitting a strong foul smell. By the time the information was received, the train, which was coming from Chennai and heading to New Delhi, had already left Gwalior station and was enroute to Agra. A message was immediately relayed to Agra. As the train arrived at Agra Cantt railway station around 5 am on Wednesday, personnel from the Government Railway Police (GRP) and the Railway Protection Force (RPF) boarded the general coach, located the bag and removed it from the train. “On opening the trolley bag, we found decomposed human remains. The re-



covered body parts included a leg and what appeared to be a portion of the abdomen. The remains were wrapped in a polythene sheet bearing the word ‘Chennai,’ said Rajeev Dixit, Circle Officer, GRP. Police have sent the recovered remains for a post-mortem examination and its report is awaited. Dixit said a team has been formed which will travel to Chennai as part of the probe to gather information that could help identify the victim and trace the circumstances in which the body parts were placed on the train. “Based on the recovered remains, we suspect the victim was a male, although this will be confirmed after the post-mortem examination and forensic analysis,” he said.

CID invokes Maharashtra’s organised crime law in hooch tragedy case



The Maharashtra Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is probing the hooch tragedy in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad, has invoked the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against the accused in the case. The consumption of suspected methanol-laced illicit liquor claimed 21 lives — 17 in the Phugewadi-Dapodi belt of Pimpri Chinchwad and four in Pune’s Hadapsar area — between the last week of May and the first week of June this year. Separate cases were registered at Dapodi and Hadapsar police stations under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Maharashtra Prohibition Act against those allegedly involved in the illicit liquor network. The investigation was later transferred to the Maharashtra CID. The key accused arrested so far include Yogesh Ramchandra Vhankade alias Sikandar Rathod and Radheshyam Prajapati, who allegedly produced and supplied the illicit liquor. The probe revealed that Vhankade allegedly purchased bootleg liquor from Prajapati in Uruli Kanchan and, after mixing methanol, supplied it to different parts of Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. Based on the evidence gathered, two more accused — Arun Jagdamb Choubey (59) and his son Abhishek Arun Choubey (34) — were arrested for allegedly selling methanol to Vhankade. Apart from Vhankade, Prajapati and the Choubey father-son duo, the CID has arrested Datta Bhivrao Londhe alias Bhau, Akash Deepak Jadhav, Kalpesh Ashok Agarwal and Aryan Sanjeev Dhotre. In a statement, the CID said MCOCA was invoked as the accused gang and its members were allegedly involved in a series of serious offences

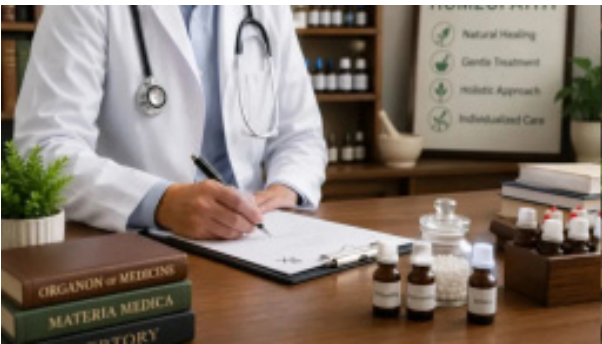
that created fear and insecurity among people in Pune district. Despite multiple criminal cases and preventive action, their alleged activities continued, the agency said.

After examining the evidence and criminal records of the accused, senior officers approved the invocation of MCOCA, the CID said, adding that the move was aimed at dismantling the alleged organised crime syndicate. Earlier, Pune Rural police suspended four constables who were allegedly in contact with Prajapati, who is suspected to be a key supplier of the illicit liquor. Before this, nine police personnel from Pune city and Pimpri Chinchwad police, along with 13 officials from the state excise department in Pune, were suspended pending inquiry for allegedly failing to curb the illicit liquor trade. With the suspension of the four Pune Rural police personnel, the number of government officials suspended in connection with the case rose to 26. The probe has also revealed that Vhankade allegedly procured methanol through an online business-to-business platform after claiming it was required for manufacturing perfumes. Investigators said the supplier allegedly sold the chemical without seeking the required documents, GST number or carrying out adequate verification.

Telangana DCA busts fake nutraceutical racket in Hyd

Hyderabad: Drugs Control Administration (DCA), Telangana during raids in Malakpet, detected Gabazen tablets being falsely manufactured and sold under the guise of a ‘food product/nutraceutical’. The product was found to have been manufactured by Gothic Pharmaceuticals, Cherlapally IDA, and marketed by Sifco Ayustar, Hyderabad, the DCA said in a statement. Gabapentin is a prescription drug classified under Schedule H of the Drugs Rules and is not a nutraceutical. It needs to be manufactured under a drug licence, adhere to GMP norms and meet quality standards prescribed.

Indian Medical Association threatens nationwide stir over registration of homoeopathy practitioners



The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has demanded that the Certificate Course in Modern Pharmacology (CCMP) be scrapped, warning that it will launch a nationwide agitation if their demands are not met. “The IMA’s action committee will conduct a meeting with Maharashtra-level office bearers and help them fight this issue,” IMA National President Dr Anilkumar Nayak told The Indian Express.

“We are greatly troubled by Maharashtra’s government resolution passed on August 3 allowing the registration of CCMP-certified homoeopathy practitioners in the Maharashtra Medical Council,” he said. MMC officials said one practitioner has been registered so far, while around

2,500 applications remain pending. In a letter to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Dr Nayak said the CCMP has not been approved by the erstwhile Medical Council of India (MCI), the National Medical Commission (NMC), or the National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH). “Such a course is against the principles of Medical Education and cannot be valid. Dual medical council registration is unprecedented and not allowed anywhere in India. It is neither well thought out nor justified. It creates misinformation amongst the general public about the qualifications and capabilities of the doctor in treating their ailments,” Dr Nayak and other IMA office-bearers wrote in the letter issued Tuesday. The matter is currently sub judice before the Bombay High Court, where hearings are in the final stages. IMA Maharashtra president Dr Santosh Kulkarni said the government should not proceed with registrations while the matter is pending before the court.

“The hard work and efforts of students securing admission to MBBS are in vain. It is a tragic situation if they are equated with CCMP doctors who have completed a part-time course,” they said. In Pune, IMA city unit president Dr Alka Kshirsagar submitted a memorandum to Pune District Collector Jitendra Dudi expressing serious concern over allowing practitioners to practise modern medicine without full MBBS education and training. “BHMS practitioners are already registered with the Maharashtra Homoeopathy Council. Hence, there is no need for dual registration with the MMC,” Dr Kshirsagar said.

Calcutta High Court dismisses Abhishek Banerjee’s plea to travel abroad for eye treatment

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday dismissed TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee’s plea to travel abroad for eye treatment, citing the ongoing proceedings in the criminal cases against him.

The observation comes a week after the single-judge bench of Justice Saugata Bhattacharya had asked Banerjee to seek opinion from the medical board at SSKM Hospital on whether the overseas travel was unavoidable. However, as the TMC leader submitted that he was not ready to do so, the court dismissed his plea to go abroad. The matter was taken up after the Supreme Court directed the High Court to dispose of Banerjee’s application within a week. Appearing for Banerjee, Senior Advocate Rebecca John argued that the criminal cases against him carried a maximum punishment of three years, with most being bailable offences. She also cited previous instances where Banerjee was allowed to travel abroad for treatment in cases initiated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). “He went as many as 12 times between 2023 and 2025... Every time he has gone abroad, he has returned to the country on schedule. There is no fear that he will abscond. His wife and two children are in Kolkata. They will remain here. Abhishek is a Member of Parliament and holds a diplomatic passport. As a result, the government can easily keep track of every detail of his travels abroad. Therefore, allowing him to go abroad will not cause any harm or inconvenience to the investigation or to the other party in the case. He has always cooperated with the investigation and has participated in the investigative process,” his counsel submitted. The HC bench, in response, said that there are other cases pending against the TMC national general secretary and his travel would affect the proceedings.

“Several other cases against you are also pending, and hearings in those cases are ongoing. If you go abroad, what will happen to the hearings in those cases? This is not the only criminal case. There are several other cases against you,” Justice Bhattacharya said. “It is certainly necessary for Abhishek Banerjee to receive medical treatment. But if that treatment is possible in Kolkata or anywhere else in India, then there is no need to go abroad. Appropriate treatment should be provided within the country. Whether the treatment will be abroad is not the main issue. The real issue is ensuring that he receives proper treatment,” the court said. The court opined that appearing before doctors at SSKM was necessary to assess Banerjee’s medical condition and furnish an opinion before the bench whether it was neces-



sary for him to go abroad or if the treatment can be administered in India. Justice Bhattacharya also said that he was not satisfied with the credibility of the medical documents related to Abhishek’s treatment.

When the court repeatedly sought clarification on whether Banerjee was willing to appear before the SSKM medical board, Advocate John stated that he wished to travel abroad and would not submit to examination by the board. She also submitted that it was the right of the applicant to choose his doctor and medical institute for treatment, especially when it involves continuity of medical care. “Where he chooses to receive treatment is a matter of his personal preference. He should not be restricted to the question of which country or which hospital he will go to. He has the right to receive treatment from a doctor or institution of his choice,” she said. Recording this position, the Court observed that there were around 15 criminal cases pending against Banerjee, with proceedings continuing in several of them, making it necessary for the Court to satisfy itself that overseas travel was medically unavoidable. “In view of such submission, this Court finds the issue agitated in the application ought not to be kept pending further. Hence, the application is dismissed,” the court held. “If this treatment can be administered in India, there is no need to go abroad. I will direct the Department of Ophthalmology in SSKM, a three-member medical board can check Banerjee and give a report. If treatment is very urgent, it can be administered in our country as well. India is not lagging in medical science; we are also making advancements. Even Supreme Court judges are getting treated in our country,” Justice Bhattacharya added.

DRI seizes over 19 kg of psychotropic drugs from Satara, arrests Pune buyer



drug factory, satara, pune. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance, the DRI unearthed the illegal facility as part of its crackdown on illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking. The Pune Regional Unit of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has busted a clandestine manufacturing unit in Satara district that was allegedly producing the prescription psychotropic drugs Alprazolam and Diazepam for illegal trafficking. The agency seized finished and intermediary drugs along with around 400 litres of raw materials used in their manufacture and arrested two persons, including the alleged manufacturer and the intended buyer from Pune. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Finance, the DRI unearthed the illegal facility as part of its crackdown on illicit drug manufacturing and trafficking. Acting on intelligence inputs on August 1, DRI officers raided the unit in Satara district, where Alprazolam and Diazepam — both psychotropic substances regulated under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985 — were allegedly being manufactured for illegal distribution. Officers apprehended the alleged manufacturer at the premises.

During the search, officials seized around one kilogram of finished Alprazolam, more than 15 kg of Alprazolam in intermediary form and about 3.75 kg of Diazepam. They

also recovered nearly 400 litres of raw materials and reaction mixtures allegedly used in the manufacturing process. The agency seized all the material under the provisions of the NDPS Act. In a follow-up operation, DRI officers arrested the intended buyer from Pune and recovered evidence that, according to investigators, pointed to a planned transaction for further trafficking of the drugs. Alprazolam and Diazepam belong to the benzodiazepine class of medicines and are prescribed to treat conditions such as anxiety disorders, panic attacks, insomnia and seizures under medical supervision. Because of their sedative properties and potential for dependence, the NDPS Act regulates their manufacture, possession and distribution. “Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused persons were involved in the illegal production and trafficking of drugs on previous occasions as well. Both the accused have been arrested under the provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985,” the Finance Ministry said. The latest action comes months after the DRI’s Operation Sahyadri Checkmate, launched in January, in which the agency dismantled a clandestine mephedrone manufacturing laboratory in the Sahyadri ranges of Satara district. In that operation, the DRI arrested five persons, including the alleged “cook” of the operation, and seized finished mephedrone and raw materials worth more than Rs 55 crore. Sushant Kulkarni is a Special Correspondent with The Indian Express in Pune with 12+ years of experience covering issues related to Crime, Defence, Internal Security and Courts. He has been associated with the Indian Express since July 2010. Sushant has extensively reported on law and order issues of Pune and surrounding area, Cyber crime, narcotics trade and terrorism. His coverage in the Defence beat includes operational aspects of the three services, the defence research and development and issues related to key defence establishments. He has covered several sensitive cases in the courts at Pune. Sushant is an avid photographer, plays harmonica and loves cooking. ..

How exposure to nature helps fight against chronic stress, poor heart health, and pain



Walking through a forest, with its quiet canopy and cool shadows, offers more than just a break from the hustle-bustle of daily life. There's growing evidence that spending time in certain environments can alter how the brain processes physical pain. The science is new, but the observations are not. In Japan, the practice of shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing, encourages people to immerse themselves in nature to soothe both mind and body. And for someone walking through the forest, the physical act of walking itself offers significant health benefits. Now, scientists are beginning to explain why stepping into the green may help relieve stress and certain types of chronic pain. Research shows that time spent in forests can significantly lower stress hormones like cortisol and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Even a short walk among trees changes how the brain reacts to stress. This "reset" happens quickly, offering almost immediate relief, and has lasting effects even after you leave the forest.

The impact of nature on heart health is especially striking. A review of existing scientific literature on the topic published in the journal Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine in 2020 found that middle-aged and older adults in forest walking programmes experienced notable reductions in blood pressure. Beyond that, spending time in nature boosts heart rate variability, an indicator of a well-functioning cardiovascular system. The evidence suggests that forest therapy could be a valuable addition to the treatment plans to improve heart health. One of the most intriguing emerging benefits of nature, however, is its potential to alleviate chronic pain. People living with conditions like mi-

graines, fibromyalgia, or arthritis often report feeling better after spending time outdoors, particularly in green spaces.

Scientists are now beginning to understand one of the reasons behind this. A growing body of research shows that the colour green may directly affect how our brains perceive pain. It turns out that exposure to green wavelengths of light can reduce pain sensitivity in both animals and humans. In one study published in Pain Medicine in 2021, researchers tested green light-emitting diodes on patients with fibromyalgia, a chronic pain disorder that's difficult to treat. These patients, who had not found relief from standard therapies, were exposed to green light for an hour or more each day over several weeks. Remarkably, they reported a significant reduction in pain intensity, frequency, and duration. They also experienced improvements in sleep quality and overall daily function. So, how does this work? While the exact mechanisms aren't fully understood, scientists believe that green light may influence how our brain's pain pathways operate. Studies have shown that exposure to green light increases the levels of enkephalins, which are natural painkillers produced in the spinal cord. These enkephalins work similarly to opioid drugs but without the risk of addiction or side effects. A green light also appears to reduce inflammation, a key factor in chronic pain. But the green colour of forests isn't the only restorative aspect. Forests provide a multi-sensory environment that stimulates the brain in ways that distract from pain. The rustling leaves, the damp smell of soil, and the sound of birds all engage different parts of the brain, pulling attention away from the discomfort of chronic pain. From an evolutionary perspective, connecting with nature makes sense. Our early ancestors lived in natural environments, relying on the sights, sounds, and smells of their surroundings for survival. The sensory input provided by forests likely shaped how our brains respond to environmental cues, reinforcing a sense of safety and reducing stress levels. Interestingly, the benefits of nature aren't limited to long hikes or remote wilderness trips. Even short, frequent exposures to green spaces in urban environments can help. A stroll through a park, sitting under a tree, or spending time in a garden can help lower stress levels and pain perception. This is a realistic, accessible option for people living in cities where green spaces can offer a refuge from the concrete jungle.

Why eliminating tobacco smoking should be on the agenda of governments

Accelerating the decline in tobacco smoking globally, by decreasing smoking prevalence from current levels to 5% everywhere, could increase life expectancy and prevent millions of premature deaths by 2050, according to a study from the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries and Risk Factors (GBD) Tobacco Forecasting Collaborators published this week in The Lancet Public Health journal. The authors reiterate what experts world over have said for long that speeding up progress towards ending smoking could deliver substantial health benefits to the population. The authors focussed on a scenario for the next three decades.

Based on current trends, the authors find global life expectancy will likely rise to 78.3 years by 2050 – up from 73.6 years in 2022. However, if tobacco smoking were to gradually decline from current levels to a rate of 5% in 2050, this would result in one year of additional life expectancy in males and 0.2 years in females. In a scenario where tobacco smoking was eliminated from 2023 onwards, this could result in up to 1.5 additional years of life expectancy among males and 0.4 years among females in 2050. In both scenarios, millions of premature deaths would also be avoided. Smoking, as has been established, is a leading risk factor for preventable death and ill health globally. While rates of smoking have fallen substantially over the past three decades, the pace of decline varies and has slowed in many countries. Cancers, ischemic heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are—and will continue to be—the leading causes of premature deaths from smoking, said the paper. Together, these conditions account for 85% of potentially avoidable years of life lost (YLLs)—a measure of premature deaths. Several countries have set ambitious goals to reduce smoking rates to below 5% in the coming years. However, there is still significant opportunity to expand and strengthen proven policies and interventions to achieve these targets, they pointed out. "We must not lose momentum in efforts to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, smoking around the world. Our findings highlight that millions of premature deaths could be avoided by bringing



an end to smoking," said senior author, Stein Emil Vollset, from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). The new analysis provides in-depth forecasts of the health burden for 204 countries, categorised by age and sex, from 2022 until 2050. It is the first study to comprehensively forecast the health impacts due to smoking for all countries and all causes, as well as on 365 diseases and injuries. The main measure studied was YLLs or Years of Life Lost, a measure of premature deaths, counting each death by the remaining life expectancy at the age of death.

In the scenario in which countries reduce smoking rates to 5% by 2050, there would be 876 million fewer YLLs compared to the most likely future scenario. Life expectancy in 2050 would be 77.1 years in males and 80.8 years in females. The greatest gains in life expectancy among males would be in East Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, with between 1.2 and 1.8 extra years of life gained. Among females, life expectancy would increase the most in East Asia, High-income North America and Oceania, with between 0.3 and 0.5 additional years gained. For the scenario in which smoking would have ended globally in 2023, the estimates indicate a maximum of 2.04 billion YLLs could be avoided by 2050 compared to the most likely future scenario, and life expectancy in 2050 would be higher still, at 77.6 years for males and 81 years for females.

WHO felicitates India for eliminating trachoma that can lead to irreversible blindness

New Delhi: The World Health Organization on Tuesday felicitated India for eliminating trachoma — a bacterial eye infection that can cause irreversible blindness. India is the fourth country in Southeast Asia, after Nepal, Myanmar, and Pakistan to achieve the feat, the WHO said. Trachoma is a neglected tropical disease that is caused by infection by the Chlamydia trachomatis bacterium. The disease, if left untreated can result in irreversible blindness. "The Regional Office for South-East Asia of the World Health Organization deems it a great honour to declare that the Government of India has eliminated trachoma as a public health problem in 2024," read a citation by the WHO. "India's success is due to the strong leadership of its Government," said Saima Wazed, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia. The Regional Director also lauded the commitment of ophthalmologists and other cadres of healthcare workers who ensured "effective surveillance, diagnosis, and management of active trachoma, provision of surgical services for trichiasis, and promotion of water, sanitation, and hygiene, particularly facial cleanliness, among communities." Wazed also presented a plaque and a citation to India, at the Public Health Awards event at the Seventy Seventh Regional Committee Session being held in the national capital. India was known to be trachoma endemic in the 1950s and 1960s. Currently, there is no recent evidence on the magnitude of trachoma and related blindness in India, as per the Health Ministry survey. The Union government had declared the country free from infective trachoma and active trachoma in children. The findings of the National Trachoma Prevalence Surveys and Trachoma Rapid Assessment Surveys conducted from 2014 to 2017

showed that the overall prevalence of active trachoma was 0.7 per cent. However, the WHO was yet to declare India free of trachoma. According to WHO, the prevalence of trachoma should be less than 5 per cent to mark it as eliminated. In 2023, AIIMS initiated a study in collaboration with the global health body to determine existing trachoma cases in Northern India. In its initial study, AIIMS noted the prevalence of trachoma to be around 3.5 per cent. Trachoma, a very painful disease, causes blurry vision, red and swollen eyes, pain while blinking or sleeping, and vision loss. It can spread from person to person through contaminated fingers, fomites, and flies that have come into contact with discharge from the eyes or nose of an infected person. Poor hygiene, overcrowded households, and inadequate access to water and sanitation are environmental risk factors for trachoma transmission. To eliminate trachoma as a public health problem, WHO recommends the SAFE strategy — surgery for trichiasis, antibiotics to clear infection, and facial cleanliness and environmental improvement to reduce transmission. It is a comprehensive approach to reducing transmission of the causative organism, clearing existing infections, and dealing with their effects. Elimination of trachoma is part of the 2021-2030 neglected tropical disease roadmap by the WHO which targets the prevention, control elimination, and eradication of 20 diseases and disease groups by 2030. Meanwhile, Wazed also felicitated Bhutan for achieving interim targets for cervical cancer elimination; Timor-Leste for eliminating lymphatic filariasis; Maldives and Sri Lanka for Hepatitis B control in children; and six countries for achieving SDG and global targets for reducing under-five mortality and stillbirth rates.

Sweet tidings? Maharashtra sugar barons make beeline for Opposition MVA



Ahead of the Assembly elections, political activity has started heating up among the sugar barons of Maharashtra, especially those who control cooperative sugar mills. And, in a clear reversal of trends, it is the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) that is emerging as their preferred destination, rather than the BJP-led Mahayuti they had supported during the Lok Sabha elections. Incidentally, as per sugar industry insiders, the new political migration mostly comprises leaders who do not have cases against them or have to deal more with the state government than the Centre. "Those who have serious cases against them might not take the risk but others would certainly do," a source said, referring to cases lodged against leaders by Central agencies.

When Ajit Pawar walked out with a majority of the united NCP's MLAs and joined the Eknath Shinde-led government in 2023, one of the common accusations his camp faced was that they had changed sides to escape scrutiny from the Central agencies. For instance, Cabinet minister and NCP MLA Hasan Mushrif's mills, which are linked to companies led by Ajit Pawar, had seen repeated visits by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for alleged misappropriation of funds. Similarly, when Congress leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, who manages the Bhaurao Chavan Cooperative Sugar Mill in Nanded district, joined the BJP in February this year, his detractors claimed Chavan was hoping to avoid the glare of Central agencies. The Indian Express had reported in April that as many as 23 of 25 prominent leaders who joined BJP since 2014 were either let off by the Central agencies or their cases were allowed to go cold. Cut to recent days. Samarjeet Ghatge, chairperson of the Shri Chhatrapati Sahu Cooperative Sugar Mill in Kolhapur district, once seen as close to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, was among the first to change sides ahead of the Assembly elections. Asked if he feared action from Central agencies, as alleged by many, he said, "The audit of the mill is in public domain. Anyone can examine the same." On Monday, former minister and BJP leader Harshvardhan Patil became the latest sugar baron to jump ship to the Opposition side. Patil is the chairperson of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar

Factories Limited and Karmayogi Shankarraoji Patil Cooperative Sugar Factory. At his induction, Sharad Pawar said Patil would be the party's contestant from the Indapur Assembly seat.

After making public his decision to quit the BJP Friday, Patil said he was doing it to honour the sentiments of his workers. "I was offered some proposals by the Deputy Chief Minister, but if I agreed to them, it would have been selfish," he said. In a meeting with Fadnis, Patil was reportedly offered a different constituency or a Rajya Sabha berth as consolation but he refused saying his supporters wanted him to contest Indapur, a stronghold for Patil. Patil's return to the MVA fold came almost exactly five years after he quit the Congress to join the BJP ahead of the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly polls. At the time, the 61-year-old had cited the developmental agenda of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah as the reason behind his move.

This time, Patil's exit was prompted by his desire to contest the Assembly polls from his preferred Indapur constituency. State BJP chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule said, "The BJP could not do this as we have a sitting NCP (Ajit Pawar) MLA, Dattatrey Bharné, from Indapur. In such a situation, it was difficult to stop him." The exit of the sugar barons comes when the BJP-led Mahayuti is already trying to get its house in order ahead of the Assembly polls. Unlike some of the established Maratha families in western Maharashtra, who can influence half a dozen seats, Patil's electoral prowess is limited to his own Indapur constituency in the Pune district. However, Patil is a seasoned politician who is seen as a past master at political management, particularly in the sugar belt. In state politics, Patil has friends across party lines, with the only exception being his long-running rivalry, particularly in Indapur, with Ajit Pawar. After his defeat in the 2019 Assembly polls, when he quit the Congress to join the BJP, Patil had failed to become either an MLC or Rajya Sabha MP or minister. It was only in February this year that Patil was appointed as president of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Federation. Given the cash-incentive nature of their business, cooperative sugar mills have always tried to be on the right side of the party in power.

Thus, when the BJP came to power in 2014, there was a mass migration of sugar barons to the saffron party from the NCP and Congress. In 2019, another spell of migration was observed, especially from western Maharashtra. The trend is now reversing, with barons now returning to the Congress and Sharad Pawar's NCP. Party sources say that more names of sugar barons who are expected to switch sides are doing the rounds, including those in Solapur and Ahmednagar districts.

Arab states – and peace – are more important than Iran or Israel



As Iran and Israel threaten to plunge the Middle East into a dangerous regional war, India must stand by its Arab partners that are being squeezed by the conflict between the two countries. Unfortunately, there has been little appreciation of their concerns in the Indian discourse on the current phase of the conflict. The lack of public sensitivity to Arab perceptions of the conflict between Iran and Israel stands in contrast to the elevation of the engagement with the Arab world to the highest levels under the government of Narendra Modi over the last decade. Today, Iran and Israel attract significant and often passionate political support from India. Although they occupy much of India's mind space, neither country matches the depth of India's interests in the Arabian Peninsula. There is no question that Delhi must necessarily pursue good relations with all the key actors in the Middle East. Each of these partners brings a unique set of benefits. But any objective construction of a hierarchy of Indian interests in the Middle East will easily demonstrate the superior salience of Delhi's ties to the Arabs. Consider the simple metric of population. With nearly 500 million people spread across 23 states, the Arab world stands apart from Israel (about 10 million) and Iran (90 million) as a major commercial, technological, political, and diplomatic market.

Within the Arab world, the Arabian peninsula stands out in its strategic importance for India. With historic civilisational ties to India, a deep religious connection, massive financial clout, growing trade ties, role in energy security, embrace of a large Indian diaspora, Arabia overshadows Iran and Israel. Arabia's attempts to promote moderate Islam have the potential to contribute positively to the Indian Subcontinent's domestic and regional politics. To be sure, India's ties with Iran are as ancient and civilisational as those of Arabia. In fact, geographically, Iran is a little bit closer to the Subcontinent than Arabia. Its borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan make it a dynamic part of South Asian geopolitics. Iran's geographic potential to serve as India's bridge to inner Asian regions and bypass the political barrier that Pakistan has become, has seen Delhi devote significant diplomatic energies in cultivating Tehran. Iran is a hydrocarbon superpower with massive reserves of oil and natural gas. Above all, it has the natural resources and the political will to become a dominant regional power. But Iran's ambitions have also produced problems of their own. India's ability to realise the full potential of cooperation with Iran is constrained by the prolonged confrontation with the West that Tehran is locked in, and the massive number of resulting sanctions. Worse still, Tehran's regional claims and its revolutionary religious ideology have put it at odds with its Arab neighbours. India too has often been at the receiving end of Iran's Islamist internationalism. The overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic

Republic of Iran in 1979 has had a lasting impact on the Arabian peninsula. Tehran's quest to reorder the Middle East in consonance with its ideology makes it an existential challenge in the threat perceptions of the Gulf regimes. Iran's pursuit of regional primacy has seen the creation of proxies in the Arab world to promote Tehran's influence. If India has been trenchant in criticising Pakistan for similar policies, it has remained silent on Iran's negative role and supra-national claims in the Arab world. The question is not about hypocrisy or double standards in Delhi. Governments have their compulsions in what they say and don't say. That should not preclude our foreign policy community and the political class from an objective discussion of Iran's regional role.

Since India normalised relations with Israel at the turn of the 1990s, there has been a steady expansion of engagement between the two nations. Unlike the Congress governments, the NDA government has owned the relationship with Israel and given it greater substance. Israel has emerged as an important partner for India in a variety of fields, especially in the security and technological domains. As Delhi has grown closer to Tel Aviv, Israel has lost much goodwill around the world, including in the West, thanks to its harsh policies in Gaza and the West Bank and a refusal to yield on the question of Palestinian statehood. Its disproportionate response to the October 7 terror attacks and the demand for absolute security have seen Israel lose more political ground in the region and beyond. Its massive use of military force is not leading to any significant political gains for the Jewish state.

This, in turn, has lent greater legitimacy to Tehran's confrontation with Israel, its claim to regional leadership and has weakened the Arab states looking for reasonable solutions for the regional crises. Threatened by Iran's growing regional clout, the prospect of its nuclear weapon capabilities, and the volatility in US policies, some Gulf Arab states have normalised political ties with Israel and expanded economic, technological, and military cooperation with it. The Abraham Accords of 2020 were premised on the hope that in return for deeper engagement with Israel, Tel Aviv would accommodate Palestine's political aspirations. That has not materialised despite the best efforts of the Biden Administration over the last couple of years. To ameliorate their precarious security condition, the Gulf Arabs have also sought to find common ground with Iran. That too has not gone too far, despite the recent agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia to resume diplomatic relations. As a senior official of the Gulf Cooperation Council put it recently, "Iran's open support for designated terrorist groups, sectarian militias and other armed rebels acting outside the law in regional states has posed an impediment for normalising relations with the GCC."

Kota C-section death raises questions: How safe are Caesarean deliveries and what complications can occur?



A woman died while the condition of five others deteriorated due to complications following caesarean deliveries at a government medical college and hospital in Rajasthan’s Kota. Considered very safe and life-saving when medically necessary, what are chances of complications with this procedure?“While complications can happen, most C-sections are completed safely. The risks are usually lower when the surgery is done in a well-equipped hospital with experienced doctors, trained nurses, proper hygiene and emergency support systems. Early recognition of warning signs such as fever, severe pain, breathing difficulty, excessive bleeding or swelling is very important because timely treatment can save lives,” says Dr Preeti Rastogi, Director & HOD, Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Medanta, Gurugram.The exact cause of the complications in the Kota case is under investigation, so individual incidents should not be seen as representative of the overall safety profile of caesarean deliveries, she explains.

What is a C-section delivery?

A Caesarean section, or C-section, is a surgery used to deliver a baby through cuts made in the mother’s abdomen and uterus. It is often done when a normal vaginal delivery may be risky for the mother or baby. In many cases, C-sections are life-saving procedures. However, like all surgeries, they can sometimes lead to complications.While medically necessary C-sections save lives, non-essential caesarean deliveries should be carefully evaluated after discussion with the treating obstetrician.

When does a C-section procedure become complicated?

C-section complications can happen during the surgery, immediately after delivery, or even weeks later. Some complications are mild and manageable, while others can become serious if not treated quickly.One of the most com-

mon complications is infection. Infection may occur at the surgical wound, inside the uterus, or in nearby organs such as the bladder. Women with infection may develop fever, pain, redness around the stitches, swelling or foul-smelling discharge. Doctors usually treat these infections with antibiotics, but severe infections may require longer hospital care.Heavy bleeding, also called postpartum hemorrhage, is another major risk. Since a C-section is a surgery, blood loss is generally higher than in a vaginal delivery. In some cases, bleeding becomes severe enough that the mother may need a blood transfusion or emergency treatment. Excessive bleeding can become life-threatening if not controlled quickly.Some women may also develop blood clots after surgery. These clots usually form in the legs or pelvic veins. If a clot travels to the lungs, it can block blood flow and become extremely dangerous. Doctors often encourage women to start walking carefully after surgery to reduce this risk.Complications related to anesthesia can also occur. During a C-section, women are usually given spinal, epidural or general anesthesia. Some patients may experience allergic reactions, breathing problems, low blood pressure, severe headache, or nausea due to these medicines. Serious reactions are uncommon but possible.In rare cases, nearby organs such as the bladder or bowel may get injured during surgery. These injuries can lead to pain, infection, urine leakage, or the need for additional surgery. Although uncommon, such complications require immediate medical attention.

Are new-borns at risk too?

Babies can also face some risks during a C-section. Some newborns may develop temporary breathing problems, especially if they are delivered before labour begins naturally. Very rarely, the baby’s skin may accidentally get cut during the surgery.Recovery after a C-section requires careful hygiene and regular monitoring of wound healing. Mothers may experience pain around the stitches, difficulty moving, weakness, or tiredness for several weeks. Keeping the surgical area clean and dry is important, as poor wound care can increase the risk of infection or reopening of stitches.

What about future pregnancies?

C-sections can also affect future pregnancies. Women who have had one or more C-sections may face a higher risk of problems related to the placenta in future pregnancies. There could be bleeding that would require complex treatment. The scar on the uterus may also weaken and, in rare situations, tear during a future pregnancy or labour.

For months, doctors treated them for TB. They actually had lupus

At 16, Vijay Waghmare from Asangaon village in Maharashtra’s Satara district felt constantly exhausted. A passionate dancer, he spent most evenings practising with friends and initially brushed off the fatigue, weight loss and joint pain as the result of poor sleep, irregular meals and physical exertion. His farmer parents took him to a local physician, who prescribed painkillers. For a while, the symptoms eased. Within weeks, they returned and worsened.Alarmed, his family took him to a private hospital in Satara, where doctors suspected tuberculosis and advised immediate treatment. But unable to afford prolonged care there, they travelled to Mumbai’s KEM Hospital. After extensive tests, doctors arrived at a different diagnosis: Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), a chronic autoimmune disease in which the body’s immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues and organs.Now 19, Vijay has regained weight and strength, returned to dancing, and is responding well to treatment with immunosuppressive medicines. But like most lupus patients, he requires lifelong monitoring to prevent flare-ups and complications. His case is far from isolated.A disease hidden behind common symptoms

Doctors say delayed diagnosis is common for lupus patients in India, where the disease is frequently mistaken for tuberculosis because of overlapping symptoms such as persistent fatigue, fever, weight loss, body pain and weakness.Lupus can also cause joint swelling, skin rashes, sensitivity to sunlight and mouth ulcers in its early stages. Left untreated, it can progress to damage the kidneys, lungs, heart and even the brain.For 20-year-old Kajal Patil from Mumbai’s Mazgaon, the diagnostic journey stretched for nearly 18 months. She was diagnosed with tuberculosis after experiencing severe fatigue and joint pain at 17 while preparing for her Secondary School Certificate examinations. As her condition worsened, she struggled to study and eventually became bedridden. After completing months of anti-tuberculosis treatment, her symptoms temporarily improved. But when they returned, she was diagnosed again — this time with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis — and underwent another prolonged treatment course. It was only when recurring fatigue, joint pain and skin rashes led her to KEM Hospital that doctors identified lupus.She was started on high-dose steroids and other medicines to suppress immune activity. Over time, her condition stabilised. She has since completed her Higher Secondary Certificate examinations and now plans to enrol in a computer course.

Why is lupus so often missed?

According to doctors and researchers at the Indian Council of Medical Research–National Institute of Immunohaematology (ICMR-NIRBID), lupus awareness remains strikingly low in India despite the disease predominantly affecting young women in their reproductive years.“Persistent fatigue and joint pain are often the earliest symptoms. If ignored, lupus can later affect the kidneys, lungs, heart and brain,” said Dr Vandana D. Pradhan, Scientist E and Head of the Department of Clinical and Experimental Immunology at ICMR-NIRBID.The institute screens nearly 5,000 patients annually for autoimmune diseases, diagnosing approximately 200 new lupus cases every year. Most patients are between 20 and 45 years old, and women account for nearly 90 per cent of cases. Doctors attribute this gender disparity partly to hormonal factors, particularly estrogen. Patients with conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome, thyroid disorders and other autoimmune diseases may face a higher risk.“Autoimmune diseases often occur together. Thyroid disorders themselves are autoimmune conditions. But awareness about autoimmune diseases is extremely limited,” Dr Pradhan said.While there is no cure for lupus, doctors say early diagnosis followed by continuous treatment — usually involving steroids, immunosuppressants and regular follow-up testing — can help control symptoms, reduce flare-ups and prevent irreversible organ damage.

The tuberculosis overlapOne of the biggest reasons lupus slips through the cracks is its clinical similarity to tuberculosis, still one of India’s most closely watched public health conditions. “There is very little emphasis on autoim-



mune diseases in standard medical textbooks unless doctors pursue specialisation,” Dr Pradhan said. “As a result, many patients presenting with weight loss, fatigue and fever are immediately evaluated for tuberculosis.”The challenge is compounded by lupus’ unpredictable course. The disease typically follows cycles of flares and remission, where symptoms may improve temporarily before returning — often leading patients to stop medication midway, assuming they have recovered. Doctors caution that treatment interruption can trigger severe relapses and increase the risk of permanent organ damage.

India currently has no nationwide lupus registry, making it difficult to estimate the true scale of the disease. The Indian Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Inception Cohort for Research (INSPIRE), a multicentre cohort launched in 2018 involving more than 2,500 lupus patients across India, offers some of the clearest insights. Its findings show nearly 42 per cent of patients had kidney complications, close to 19 per cent had nervous system involvement and among more than 2,000 participants tracked, 170 deaths were recorded. Uncontrolled disease activity and infections emerged as the leading causes of mortality.For many families, diagnosis is only the beginning of the struggle. Nithin Rajamani, a social scientist at ICMR-NIRBID who works with lupus patients on mental health and social support, said treatment costs remain a major barrier. “Depending on disease severity, patients spend around ₹3,000 to ₹6,000 every month on medicines alone,” he said. “That is apart from travel expenses, wage losses and repeated hospital visits.”Specialised lupus diagnosis and treatment facilities remain concentrated in tertiary care hospitals in major cities, making access especially difficult for rural patients. Women often face additional delays because symptoms like fatigue and body pain are frequently dismissed as routine stress or the physical strain of household work.Many women dismiss fatigue and joint pain as part of daily life. In rural areas, even doctors may not immediately suspect lupus because testing facilities and awareness are limited,”

High cholesterol is no longer a 40+ problem: Why more Indians in their 20s are at risk

A 29-year-old marketing professional visited the OPD after experiencing occasional fatigue and mild breathlessness during workouts. He had no major health complaints, did not smoke and believed heart disease was something people worried about only later in life. However, a routine health check-up revealed alarmingly high LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels. Further questioning uncovered a strong family history of early heart disease — his father had suffered a heart attack at 48. The early stages of arterial damage had already begun silently over the years.Cases like these are becoming increasingly common in urban India, where unhealthy diets, long working hours, chronic stress, poor sleep, and lack of physical activity are accelerating metabolic disorders at a much younger age. Yet cholesterol testing continues to be viewed as something only middle-aged adults need to think about.The myth of ‘middle-aged cholesterol’

For decades, cholesterol testing has largely been associated with people above 40. This assumption is now out-

Semaglutide generics launch pushes sales of GLP-1 drugs by 75% in 1 month



THE MARKET for diabetes and anti-obesity GLP-1 medicines has risen by over 75% in size since the launch of generic versions of semaglutide over a month ago, shows recently released pharmaceutical market data.Total semaglutide sales have gone up from 25,000 units in February to 1.7 lakh units in April, driving the overall sales of GLP-1 medicine.

The data shows 4.14 lakh units of GLP-1 injectables were sold in India in April this year, going up by 76% from 2.35 lakh units in February. This increase was also captured in the data for March — the generic versions of semaglutide became available March 21 onwards, a day after pharmaceutical giant Novo Nordisk lost its patent on its blockbuster molecule — when 2.66 lakh units of GLP-1 drugs were sold.The data shows this increase in market over the last two months was driven by semaglutide. While other GLP-1 drugs such as tirzepatide and liraglutide saw some dip in sales — dropping from 1.1 lakh units in February to 0.98 lakh units in April — there was nearly seven-fold increase in sales of semaglutide by volume.Both semaglutide and tirzepatide — the two GLP-1 drugs that have been approved for treatment of obesity — belong to a class of drugs called incretin mimetics. They mimic the action of the gut hormones called incretins to improve secretion of insulin, inhibit secretion of glucagon that stimulates glucose production in the liver and also reduces appetite by slowing down digestion.While semaglutide uses just one target hormone GLP-1, tirzepatide uses another one called GIP. Trials have shown more weight loss on average with tirzepatide as compared to semaglutide.Innovator’s demand

An increase was seen in the sales of the innovator product — increasing from 25,000 units in February to 32,000 in April. But the sales of generic versions of semaglutide jumped from 0 units in February, to 40,000 units in the last 10 days of March, and 1.37 lakh units in April, according to the

data.“People were waiting for the drug and the price reduction helped,” said Dr V Mohan, Chairman, Dr. Mohan’s Diabetes Specialities Centre.Though the anti-obesity GLP-1 drugs by Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly entered the Indian market only in 2025, just a year before the expiry of Novo Nordisk’s patent, the generic versions have not cut into the sales of the innovator products. Instead, they have created their own market.The semaglutide market in India is split evenly between Novo Nordisk’s innovator molecule and the generic versions. Both the innovator and the generic molecules generated Rs 44 crore each in sales in the month of April.

“The innovator molecules have more or less managed to retain their market, yet there has been a significant growth in the generic versions of the drug. What this essentially means is that the generic drugs have expanded the market instead of cutting into the market for the innovator molecules,” said Sheetal Sapale, vice president (commercial), Pharmarack.When it comes to generic versions of semaglutide, Torrent pharmaceuticals has emerged as the leader, capturing 38% of the market. This is followed by Zydus with 10% and Lupin with 9%. While this market share reflects both injectable and oral versions of the drug, the trend remains similar when it comes to injectable versions only, with Torrent leading with 28% of the market share.The high share of total semaglutide by Torrent pharmaceutical is owing to the fact that it is the only company to enter the oral segment with its brands Semalix and Sembolic. Most of the other companies stuck to injectable semaglutide.Changing trendsEli Lilly’s Tirzepatide continues to be the market leader. A slight dip in its sales was noted in the month of March when the generic versions were launched, but it has almost recouped its share. Tirzepatide sales worth Rs 135 crore were recorded in February, dropping to Rs 114 crore in March, and again bouncing back to Rs 121 crore in April.The semaglutide market, on the other hand, has expanded from Rs 48 crore in February to Rs 88 crore in April. Among this, the share of the innovator semaglutide products such as Ozempic, Wegovy and Rybelsus has gone down from Rs 48 crore in February to Rs 44 crore in April, whereas the sales of the generic versions of the drug has increased from 0 in February to Rs 44 crore in April, according to market insights provided by Pharmarack.“While the value of the market is similar for the innovator and generic products, the volume is much higher for the generic versions. The volume impact of generics, along with strong unit growth, indicates increased affordability along with aggressive promotion expanding the market,” said Sapale.“This also shows that some doctors are sticking to the innovator molecules for patients who are able to afford it,” she added.

Top doctors want ban on junk food ads, celeb campaigns targeting children: Why this works

There is something fundamentally unequal about asking a child to make a “healthy choice” while surrounding that child with advertising specifically designed to make unhealthy choices seem more attractive and pleasure-seeking through food an everyday ritual.That is the uncomfortable question behind a new public statement by leading Indian doctors and public-health experts calling on the Government to take decisive action against the marketing of foods high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) and ultra-processed foods (UPFs).

Their demands are unusually specific: a 6 am–11 pm watershed for HFSS and UPF advertising; mandatory front-of-pack warning labels; restrictions on celebrity endorsements, cartoon characters, child-directed promotions and “buy one, get one” offers; and a ban on sugary beverages and HFSS products in school canteens.The statement puts the issue bluntly: “Take the Lead: Ban the Advertisements of Junk Food Products.” It also warns that aggressive and misleading advertising is contributing to the country’s growing diet-related non-communicable disease burden, particularly among young people.

In January, India’s own Economic Survey 2025–26 made a strikingly similar case. It said improving diets cannot depend solely on changing consumer behaviour and suggested that India explore a 6 am–11 pm ban on UPF marketing across all media, including digital platforms. It also backed stronger front-of-pack warning labels and suggested restrictions on marketing infant and toddler foods and beverages. India’s health experts and its economic policymakers are beginning to recognize the same problem: the food environment is influencing individual choices faster than individual health education can counter it.

India’s warning lights are already flashing

The numbers explain the urgency. According to NFHS-5, 24% of Indian women and 23% of men aged 15–49 were overweight or obese in 2019–21. The proportion of children under five who were overweight increased from 2.1% in 2015–16 to 3.4% in 2019–21.The Economic Survey also highlighted the extraordinary growth of the UPF market in India and warned of the consequences for obesity and NCDs. It estimated that more than 3.3 crore children were obese in 2020, with the number potentially reaching 8.3 crore by 2035 if current trends continue.

These figures should not be interpreted as evidence that ultra-processed food or advertising is the sole cause of obesity. Diet, physical activity, urbanisation, income, sleep, family circumstances and the wider food environment all



matter. But that is precisely why advertising deserves attention. It is one part of the environment governments can actually regulate.

A child is not an ordinary consumerThe World Health Organization (WHO) is unequivocal on this point. Its 2023 guideline says food marketing influences children’s food preferences, purchase requests and dietary intake and shapes their norms around food consumption. Modern marketing is not simply a television commercial. It can be a cricket sponsorship, a celebrity endorsement, a cartoon character on packaging, an influencer video, an online game, a competition, a promotional toy or a “limited-time” offer.

WHO, therefore, recommends mandatory and comprehensive regulation, backed by government-led nutrient profiling, and warns against allowing marketing restrictions to simply migrate from television to digital media. That has a direct implication for India.Children watch cricket, movies and entertainment programmes with their parents. They use YouTube and social media. They play games. The child does not live inside a regulatory category called “children’s programming.”

India can learn from countries that have gone further. Chile provides perhaps the most instructive example. Beginning in 2016, it introduced an integrated food policy combining front-of-pack warning labels, restrictions on child-directed food marketing and restrictions on the sale of unhealthy products in schools.

The impact on children’s exposure to unhealthy food advertising was dramatic. After the first phase, exposure to advertising for foods high in calories, sugar, saturated fat or sodium fell by 44% among preschool children and 58% among adolescents.

normal weight, and still carry significantly elevated cholesterol levels without realising it.Early screening allows doctors to identify risk before permanent damage occurs. A simple lipid profile can detect abnormal cholesterol levels before plaque buildup becomes extensive, giving individuals an opportunity to make corrective lifestyle changes early. It also helps identify inherited conditions such as familial hypercholesterolemia, a genetic disorder that causes very high LDL cholesterol from a young age. Many people with this condition remain undiagnosed until a serious cardiac event occurs within the family.Another important reason for early testing is the concept of cumulative exposure. Cardiovascular risk is influenced not only by how high cholesterol levels are at a given point, but also by how long the body remains exposed to elevated cholesterol. The earlier cholesterol levels are controlled, the lower the lifetime damage to blood vessels and the lower the future risk of heart attack and stroke.Research also increasingly shows that cardiovascular disease is affecting younger adults.

How Milind Soman completed his toughest sea swim at 60: ‘No extreme protocols. Just repetition of the same drill’



When actor and fitness enthusiast Milind Soman emerged from the cold waters of the Strait of Gibraltar on May 1, Indian flag in hand, after completing the 15-km crossing from Tarifa in Spain to the Moroccan coast, the internet reacted with collective disbelief. “How is this man 60?” That was the top comment.

Soman completed the crossing in under five hours with three other Indians, all in their 30s. Speaking to The Indian Express, he says, “The Gibraltar crossing is one of the world’s most demanding open-water challenges, shaped by strong and shifting currents, rapidly changing tides, dense international shipping traffic and water temperatures that can dip to a punishing 15°C. This is where the Atlantic crashes into the Mediterranean, creating unpredictable and often brutal conditions. Although accomplished endurance swimmers train specifically for it, decades of disciplined consistency rather than the last-minute push saw me through.” A challenge nearly a decade in the making

The swim had been in the works since 2017, when Soman first applied to the Gibraltar Swimming Association. “Getting a slot is no easy feat. The strait is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world, with only one support boat permitted per swimmer each day. Clearances depend heavily on weather and marine traffic. There is a queue. I applied in 2017 and forgot about it,” he says. Then the pandemic happened.Years later, the opportunity resurfaced through a friend, and the long-delayed crossing was finally back on. By then, his body was already prepared. All he needed was to swim for half an hour for a few days continuously in the straits to acclimatise his body to the water.Soman insists no miracle training was behind this feat. “Marathons for 25 years — so my body was fit. I kept to my swim rituals, just a couple of times a month,” he says.His endurance journey began in the pool. Long before becoming one of India’s most recognisable public figures, Soman was a competitive swimmer who represented India at the national level in the 100m and 200m breaststroke. Running entered his life much later. It was only after making an appearance at the Mumbai Half Marathon that he discovered its appeal as the simplest form of cardiovascular training.He began with 10-km runs, steadily increasing distance over the years, eventually pushing himself to 100-km ultramarathons. At 47, he completed his now-iconic 1,500-km run from Delhi to Mumbai over 30 days.

Contrary to what many would expect, Soman did not spend months obsessively training for the sea crossing. “I had already completed several long sea swims in Goa earlier this year, including distances approaching 20 km. Recently, I completed my first Ironman (a premier long-distance endurance event consisting of a 3.86 km swim, 180.25 km bike ride and a 42.2 km marathon run). I didn’t overtrain or prepare specifically for the event, I maintained a consistent baseline,” he says.His philosophy is simple: if fitness is maintained year-round, the body can remain re-

markably capable.His daily routine reflects that belief. Not one for gyms and fad diets, Soman’s mornings begin with sit-ups and leg raises in bed, followed by planks, four or five rounds of Surya Namaskar, and push-ups — sometimes 20, sometimes 40. “Nothing elaborate. No extreme protocols. Just repetition of the same drill,” says Soman.His nutrition is equally pragmatic. He avoids fad diets, preferring local, seasonal, home-cooked food, fruits and whole grains while steering clear of heavily processed packaged products.

Soman says the challenge was not fatigue. “The only challenge was keeping the core body temperature up.” At 15°C, prolonged exposure becomes a physiological battle. Hydration during the crossing was carefully managed by the support crew. Open-water rules prohibit touching the boat, so every 45 minutes the team passed him nutrition bottles during one-minute feeding breaks.“My fluids included electrolytes, isotonic salts, carbohydrate gels and hot coffee to help counter the cold. Adding to the challenge, all my younger co-swimmers, including a helicopter pilot, an IAS officer and an entrepreneur from Bengaluru, meant synchronising pace. If you’re not swimming at your own pace, you can get colder,” he explains.Soman’s crossing underscores a larger truth about ageing and athleticism. According to fitness expert Mickey Mehta, endurance at 60 is fundamentally different from endurance at 25.“The goal shifts from maximising performance to avoiding excessive fatigue or injury — and recovering well. This is where many people misunderstand later-life fitness. Endurance after 60 is not about aggression. It is about calibration. The pace and intensity should challenge you, not kill you,” says Dr Mehta.

At this stage of life, endurance becomes a process of measured stress on the body — enough to challenge the heart, lungs, bones, muscles and agility systems, but not enough to overwhelm recovery. “Ageing naturally reduces aerobic capacity (VO2 max), muscle mass, joint mobility and recovery efficiency. But these declines are not a reason to stop. They are a reason to train smarter. When approached scientifically and progressively, endurance training after 60 can improve cardiovascular efficiency, muscular endurance, mobility, balance, immunity and overall vitality,” says Dr Mehta.

He stresses that before beginning serious endurance work, individuals — particularly those with hypertension, diabetes, osteoarthritis or sedentary lifestyles — should assess cardiovascular health, gait mechanics, joint range, previous injuries and baseline tolerance.Training should become more consistent, not more extreme. “That means beginning with body weight work and gradually progressing to resistance, agility drills and cardiovascular exercise such as brisk walking, cycling, swimming and structured functional conditioning. Monitoring exertion, breathlessness and recovery response is critical. So is integrating breath regulation, mobility work, cooling down and stretching,” he adds.When personalised appropriately, says Mehta, endurance training after 60 is one of the most effective tools for preserving independence, reducing frailty risk and supporting healthy ageing.Soman rejects the idea that age itself is the obstacle. “The real obstacle is neglect. If you live your life a certain way, life can keep getting bigger.”He cites the example of two participants from his Pinkathon event. “In this women-only marathon, we had women aged 68 and 76. The first began serious fitness journeys only six years ago. Any time is a good time to start moving. Real endurance is not a feat, but taking the first step and building yourself up,” says Soman.

‘My period is late, but I’m spotting. I only notice it when I wipe. What is going on?’



Your periods going off the calendar can be confusing and leave you with a million doubts. Now imagine that they get delayed, and to make it even more confusing, you notice spotting only when you wipe. No proper flow, no clear answers. One such confused internet user shared a similar experience on Quora, seeking answers. The query read: ‘My period is late, but I’m spotting. I only notice it when I wipe. What is going on?’

Is it a shift in your cycle? Are you not having your period? Is it something to worry about? Are you pregnant? Is this a symptom? Intrigued, we decided to dig deeper and solve the mystery. “It means your body started to bleed but didn’t get a full flow,” reveals Dr Kaishreen Khan, Consultant- Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Motherhood Hospitals, Kharadi, Pune.To put it simply, one of the reasons could be that your uterus lining is “shedding very lightly” or something is delaying the normal period. “It’s your body’s way of saying something changed this cycle.”

Does this mean you are pregnant?

“Yes, it could be,” Dr Khan confirms. “Implantation bleeding happens when a fertilized egg attaches to the uterus.” This kind of spotting is usually subtle—“very light, pink or brown, and lasts 1–2 days around the time your period is due.”However, this alone does not confirm pregnancy, for which further medical testing is needed.More often, the cause is hormonal. “Hormone changes are the biggest reason — stress, sudden weight change, travel, or poor sleep.” Conditions like PCOS or thyroid issues, changes in birth control, perimenopause, or even intense exercise can also disrupt the cycle. Sometimes, there’s no major cause at all—“just a one-off hormonal hiccup.”In such cases, pregnancy becomes less likely—but testing can still give clarity.Similarly, if bleeding picks up after a few days, it’s often just a delayed cycle. “That usually means your period just started late and lightly.”In fact, it’s fairly common for periods to begin with spotting before a full flow. “If the bleeding now looks like your usual period and lasts 3–7 days, it’s likely normal. In such cases, pregnancy becomes less likely—but testing can still give clarity.”When to test and when to worry“Take a home pregnancy test if your period is 8 to 10 days late, using first-morning urine,” says Dr Khan.

If it’s negative and your period still doesn’t come, “repeat it” after about a week. You should also check in with a doctor if this keeps happening. “Consult your gynecologist if this happens 2–3 cycles in a row, or if you’re trying to conceive.”

At the same time, certain symptoms need urgent attention. “Don’t ignore severe belly pain, especially one-sided — it could be an ectopic pregnancy,” Dr Khan warns.Other warning signs include “sudden heavy bleeding, clots, dizziness, pain during sex or foul-smelling discharge,” as well as fever or pelvic pain.“These signs mean you shouldn’t wait — call your doctor the same day,” the gynecologist concludes.

Amazon India to expand Ashray rest centres network to 250 by 2026

Hyderabad: Amazon on Sunday announced plans to expand its network of Ashray rest centres for delivery drivers to 250 facilities across India by the end of 2026. The move builds on the company’s existing network of 100 centres operating across 16 cities, including Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai.

As part of the expansion, Amazon said it will launch 50 new Ashray centres by the end of May. The facilities are open to all delivery drivers, including those not associated with Amazon’s logistics network.

The air-conditioned centres provide seating areas, drinking water, electrolytes, mobile charging points, clean washrooms, first-aid kits, and resting spaces, particularly aimed at helping delivery personnel cope with extreme summer conditions. According to the company, the existing Ashray centres have collectively recorded more than one million visits from delivery drivers in 2025.

Amazon India has also introduced mobile Ashray units in the form of air-conditioned vans stationed along high-traffic delivery routes. These mobile units offer amenities such as drinking water, electrolytes, Wi-Fi connectivity, charging points, and resting spaces to drivers without requiring them to travel to fixed centres.Salim R. Memon, Director of Operations at Amazon India, said the initiative reflects the company’s focus on the health, safety, and well-being of delivery associates. He added that the expansion is part of Amazon’s broader investment of over ₹2,800 crore towards improving safety, health, and financial well-being measures across its operations network.Amazon said it is partnering with organisations such as Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), Udyasa Foundation, and READ India to establish the new facilities.

AI for children should not bypass human validation: Vineet Nayar, Founder, Sampark Foundation



During his tenure, Vineet led the transformation of HCL Technologies into one of India’s fastest-growing global information technology service companies. His management practices at HCL Technologies became case studies at bothHarvard Business School and London Business School.In 2013, Vineet stepped down from HCL Technologies to focus on Sampark Foundation, which he co-founded with his wife Anupama Nayar. The foundation works to drive ‘large-scale transformation in primary education through frugal innovation’.

Vineet holds a degree in mechanical engineering from GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology and a management degree from XLRI Jamshedpur. He is also the author of the management bestseller, Employees First, Customer Second: Turning Conventional Management Upside Down (Harvard Business Press).Vineet spoke to indianexpress.com on the work of the Sampark Foundation, the challenges of transforming education in India through technology, and how AI could transform the education sector in rural India. Edited excerpts:Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us about your journey from HCL Technologies to the Sampark Foundation.Vineet Nayar: My journey from HCL to Sampark Foundation was not about moving from business to philanthropy. It was about moving from one large transformation challenge to another.Sampark Foundation today reaches 20 million children across two lakh government schools through eight state government partnerships.

It is not as if we picked up education as a possible intervention in the first instance. We identified five areas, including health, rural development, agriculture, water management, and education, and we launched projects in each one of them. We discovered that the education sector offered the possibility of impact at scale.My wife is a special education teacher from the Spastic Society, and my mother was a government school teacher for 30 years. That was of great help. We experimented, learned, and eventually honed in on education.It was an interaction with my mother which made me realise the need to find one’s true meaning in life. And true meaning, she said, comes only when you help others achieve their goals.That was the moment of change around 2011-2012, when I was 50 years old, that I realised the need to change my path so that I would still have the energy to execute another transformation.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: What were the initial challenges?

Vineet Nayar: When I entered the education sector, I saw that millions of children were in school, but learning was not happening. The system had become dependent on compliance instead of inspiration. Teachers were overloaded. Classrooms were overcrowded. Solutions were designed in boardrooms, not for the realities of rural India.I realised that if we wanted transformation at scale, we had to combine three things: technology, simplicity, and the power of human connection. That became the foundation of Sampark.What excites me most is that Sampark is not a charity, distributing products. We are building scalable learning systems for Bharat.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us about your learnings from HCL that you have brought forward to the Sampark Foundation. And what is it that you had to unlearn?

Vineet Nayar: The world often behaves as if machines are replacing humans. My experience has been the opposite. Machines amplify humans. Weak systems become weaker with technology. Strong human systems become transformational.At HCL, I also learned that large systems change only when frontline people are empowered. In education, the frontline is the teacher. Yet most education reform treats teachers as the problem instead of the solution.So we asked ourselves a different question: how do we make teachers successful? How do we reduce complexity inside classrooms?The second lesson was about scale. India needs solutions that can work across millions of children. Every Sampark innovation is designed with scale, affordability, and simplicity at its core.The third lesson was around feedback loops. Technology becomes powerful when it creates visibility and accountability. Without data, systems drift. With data, systems improve.

On what I needed to unlearn, the amount of resources I had at HCL Technologies was almost unlimited, and I could pick up the phone and speak to anyone in the world. All of that collapsed overnight.So I had to build the organisation all over again, this time with people who were interested in villages and rural education, which is a much smaller pool. People no longer picked up your calls just because you held a particular chair or title. And yes, we had resources, but not billions of dollars to take unlimited bets. So that was one major level of change.

The second level of change was emotional and cultural. At HCL, it was a for-profit initiative. The enthusiasm and motivation were certainly there, but here the morale of the employees is at a level I had never experienced before. As a result, my own motivation, morale, and sense of satisfaction became far higher.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Where does tech fit in the Sampark Foundation’s vision?Vineet Nayar: Technology sits at the centre of Sampark’s work, but not in the way Silicon Valley imagines it. We are not obsessed with shiny technology. We are for solving real problems at scale.Most educational technology fails in rural India because it assumes infrastructure, internet, training, and ideal classroom conditions. Rural India has none of these consistently.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us more about one of your innovations, Sampark TV, and how it works on the ground?

Vineet Nayar: When you enter a classroom, you will see all the content aligned with the state textbooks, almost in a Netflix-style interface. The entire system is driven by an Android device connected to a smart board. It does not require internet connectivity.Now, pedagogy is based on the idea that there is a structured way of teaching every microconcept correctly. You will see lesson plans, animated videos, and there will be gamified assessments that teachers conduct in the classroom.There is also an AI engine inside Sampark TV that captures and sends classroom data back to us. We process it through the AI engine and share daily insights with government agencies.

Normally, we do not know what is happening inside classrooms. What Sampark TV has done is make teaching easier and learning more engaging, while also allowing us to understand what is actually happening in the classroom.At the same time, we are able to extract class-

room-level data and provide it to state administrators. They can see which teachers are teaching according to plan and which are not.The teacher does not have to independently explain every microconcept. She becomes an enabler of learning rather than the sole source of instruction. The multimedia content helps deliver the concept.I am completely against devices in the hands of children, and I can cite research to support that view. I believe the device should remain in the hands of the teacher. So what you will see is one large Android screen in the classroom, fully controlled by the teacher. No personal devices in the hands of students. It is currently active in 86,000 classrooms.

Vineet Nayar: Sampark AI helps us design the optimal learning path for every microconcept. The Sampark AI engine inside the Android device captures data on what the teacher is teaching and how the children are responding. That data flows into our AI engine, which then feeds insights to government administrators through dashboards. They can see which teachers are progressing according to plan and which are not. Sampark AI helps us assess children periodically to understand whether learning is actually happening.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: How does the system track individual student-level performance?

Vineet Nayar: So the first level of tracking happens at the classroom and community level. We visually identify the responses and understand what percentage of children selected the correct answer. That completes the classroom-level assessment.When a Sampark staff member visits the classroom, they take photographs of the children’s workbook pages. Then AI converts those photographs into correct and incorrect responses, and that gives us assessment data for each child individually.Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us about the Harvard Business case studies on Sampark Foundation.

Vineet Nayar: The Harvard case study on Sampark explores a fascinating challenge: can large-scale social transformation happen with the same rigour, innovation, and accountability expected in the corporate world?The cases examine how Sampark built scalable education systems by combining technology, behavioural insights, operational discipline, and government partnerships.Sampark Foundation also features among the 10 cases in the book Genius at Scale by Harvard professor Linda Hill.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Education in rural India. How much of it is a tech problem?

Vineet Nayar: Rural education is not fundamentally a technology problem. It is a systems and human capability problem. Technology cannot replace motivation, teacher ownership, leadership, or community participation. But technology can dramatically amplify outcomes when used correctly.The mistake many people make is believing that distributing devices equals educational reform. It does not. A tablet without pedagogy is just hardware.India must be careful not to copy Western models blindly. Our solutions must be built for multilingual classrooms, low infrastructure environments, and first-generation learners.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us about three tech solutions that have not worked in an Indian educational context.Vineet Nayar: The first failure has been hardware-led thinking. India spent years believing that tablets and computers alone would improve learning. They did not.The second failure has been internet-dependent models. Rural India cannot rely on uninterrupted connectivity for learning.The third failure has been importing urban edtech models into rural government schools. Most of these products were designed for affluent, English-speaking environments and collapsed when exposed to the realities of Bharat.

Venkatesh Kannaiah: Tell us about the challenges the education ecosystem would face from new tech interventions?

Vineet Nayar: Let’s talk about AI companies first. AI companies want subscribers. Initially, they offer free services, but eventually they begin charging for them.Now, despite knowing that AI can fudge facts and hallucinate, we are still putting these tools into the hands of children through subscription-based models. We do not know what kind of history, geography, or understanding a child may absorb over the next two or three years.Companies push AI into the hands of children primarily to drive subscriber growth, because their valuations increase when they can claim a billion or two billion users. And because these products are initially free, many state governments in India are adopting them.Now they are training their AI engines using our data. Once people become dependent on these systems, there may no longer be viable alternatives.

I often give this example: when I first entered the technology industry, there were operating systems from companies like Wipro, Infosys, and HCL Technologies. Then Microsoft entered the market, and its operating system spread rapidly because pirated copies were freely available. Over time, Indian operating systems disappeared. I believe something similar could happen here. These companies will learn from our data, build dependence, and later move to subscription models.The edtech companies, in my view, are among the biggest contributors to this problem. They built subscription-driven models for urban children and are now pushing the same approach into rural education.

In our villages and towns, we have multi-grade classrooms. Classes 1, 2, and 3 often sit together. We have multiple languages. Attendance may only be 120-130 days a year. And teachers spend only around 19% of their time teaching, while 81% goes into administrative work.In this context, the tool should be in the hands of the teacher, not the child. That is why I am strongly against putting iPads or similar devices directly into the hands of children. I am strongly against edtech models that isolate the child with a screen.It reminds me of the “Free Basics” debate, when Facebook proposed free internet access. Thankfully, the Indian government did not approve of the same. In my opinion, policymakers should apply the same level of scrutiny to these education models as well.Venkatesh Kannaiah: Do you work with startups? Tell us about some opportunities that you see for social impact startups in the edtech sector.Vineet Nayar: I mentor 19 startups, many of them using AI and advanced technology to solve relevant business and social problems.Some are solving for teacher productivity and learning personalisation. Others are improving employee assessments, operational efficiency, healthcare delivery, financial models, drug discovery, or enhancing human capability.In education, the biggest opportunities are in foundational learning, multilingual AI systems, adaptive learning, teacher enablement, and low-cost, scalable infrastructure.I personally commit a certain number of hours every month to mentoring these 19 startups. I do not invest in them, nor do I charge a fee.

The first question when startups approach me is: What is the use case you are trying to solve? Secondly, is the benefit actually reaching the end beneficiary? And thirdly, is there a meaningful technology embedded in the solution? If a startup can answer those three questions convincingly, I am willing to mentor them. It does not matter whether they are for-profit or not-for-profit.

RIL, Jio to pump Rs 10 lakh cr to make AI affordable: Ambani



Reliance Industries (RIL) and Jio will invest Rs 10 lakh crore over seven years as the conglomerate looks to play a major role in India's AI transformation and make AI affordable and accessible for citizens, RIL Chairman and MD Mukesh Ambani said on Thursday. According to Ambani, after connecting "India to the Internet era", Jio will connect the country to the "intelligence era" by reducing the cost as "dramatically" as the company did for mobile and internet data earlier.

At the India AI Impact Summit, he announced Jio Intelligence—RIL's AI-focussed arm—will build India's sovereign compute infrastructure, and the conglomerate will partner with best tech companies globally not as importers of AI, but as "co-architects of a new AI century".

On the investment announcement, he said, "This is not speculative investment. It is not for chasing valuation. This is a patient, disciplined, nation-building capital, designed to create durable economic value and strategic resilience for six decades to come," he said. Likening AI to Akshaya Patra, Ambani said it offers limitless augmentation in knowledge, efficiency, and productivity.

A central question around AI today, he said, is whether it will concentrate power in the hands of a few or will it democratise opportunity for all, and added that India believes in the latter—a future where AI is "available, affordable, and beneficial to all". He also said that success of the AI movement globally hinges critically on cooperation and

sharing "be it chips or rare earths" and not hoarding, and that India has a unique strength in that context as it serves as a "vital bridge" between the Global South and Global North.

Ambani asserted India will emerge as "one of the greatest AI powers" in this century as no other country can match its strength in "demography, democracy, development, digital infrastructure, data generation, and AI harvest". Emphasising that Jio will deliver AI to Indians at highly affordable prices, Ambani said, "... Jio will do so with the same reliability, quality, scale, and extreme affordability that transformed connectivity. India cannot afford to rent intelligence. Therefore, we will reduce the cost of intelligence as dramatically as we did the cost of data." Ambani said Jio Intelligence will build India's sovereign compute infrastructure through "three bold initiatives"—gigawatt-scale data centres, ready green power surplus, and a nationwide edge compute.

"We have already started construction on multi-gigawatt, AI-ready data-centres at Jamnagar. Over 120 MW will come online in the second half of 2026 this year, and a clear path to gigawatt-scale compute for training and large-scale inference... We have an in-house energy advantage with up to 10 GW of ready green-power surplus, anchored by solar in both Kutch and Andhra Pradesh," Ambani said. "An edge-compute layer, deeply integrated with Jio's network, will make intelligence responsive, low-latency and affordable—close to where Indians live, learn and work... Our resolve is clear: make intelligence as ubiquitous as connectivity," he added. The RIL chairman said Jio Intelligence is guided by five "non-negotiable principles", including a commitment to multilingual AI capability across all Indian languages and a promise that AI will create new high-skilled work opportunities rather than displacing jobs. The other principles include making AI accessible to agriculture and informal sectors, and small businesses, keeping "responsibility, security, data residency, and trust as Jio's core guarantees", and building a deep partnership ecosystem with Indian enterprises, startups, and top technology and research institutes.

Artificial General Intelligence on the horizon within 5 years: Google DeepMind CEO

Google DeepMind CEO, and one of the world's foremost AI scientists, Demis Hassabis told delegates at the India-AI Impact Summit that artificial general intelligence (AGI) could be achieved within the next five years, marking what he described as a "threshold moment" for AI and human progress. "... In 2026, we're at another threshold moment where AGI, artificial general intelligence, is on the horizon, maybe within the next five years," Hassabis said.

AGI is a theoretical form of AI that possesses the ability to understand, learn, and apply knowledge across a wide variety of tasks at a level equal to or exceeding human capabilities. Unlike current Narrow AI designed for specific tasks, AGI is pegged to generalise knowledge across domains, exhibit common sense, and solve novel problems autonomously.

Hassabis said advances in foundational models and autonomous AI systems are progressing rapidly. He said these technologies could reach a level of general capability comparable to human intelligence much sooner than many expect. He placed AGI in the context of major historic shifts, comparing its potential impact to foundational breakthroughs like fire and electricity. He said AGI might deliver roughly 10 times the impact of the Industrial Revolution, but unfolding on a much shorter timescale.

While largely optimistic about the benefits, he high-

India needs its own critical AI infra at scale to avoid fragility: Jeet Adani



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to redefine sovereignty going forward and thus India must build its own critical AI infrastructure instead of relying on infrastructure overseas, Jeet Adani, Adani Group executive director and son of Gautam Adani, said. He emphasized that the \$100-billion worth of AI infrastructure investment announced earlier this week by the ports-to-renewables conglomerate is to ensure that India's AI future is "secured, sovereign, and built at national scale".

Addressing the India AI Impact Summit, Adani prescribed three pillars of sovereignty he believes will "define India's AI century"—energy sovereignty, compute and cloud sovereignty, and services sovereignty. "In earlier centuries, nations built steel plants and shipyards. In the digital age, nations invested in semiconductor ecosystems. In today's AI age, sovereign compute capacity becomes strategic infrastructure. It matters where compute resides, under whose jurisdiction it operates, and who controls access. Cloud sovereignty does not mean isolation. It means autonomy," Adani said.

He stressed that India must host critical AI workloads domestically, build data centre ecosystems at scale, and ensure access to domestic high-performance compute for the country's startups, academia, defence, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors. "If intelligence infrastructure is concentrated externally, strategic leverage concentrates externally. And external concentration creates national fragility. In earlier centuries, nations have built navies to secure trade routes. Today, we have to build a sovereign compute to secure intelligence routes," he said. Underlining that energy sovereignty translates into "intelligence sovereignty", Adani emphasised that in today's AI era, power grids and data grids become inseparable and India must press ahead with renewable energy expansion.

"AI is written in code. But it runs on electricity... If a nation's energy systems are fragile, its intelligence systems are fragile... India's renewable expansion across solar, wind, storage is no longer just a climate policy, it's a strategic

infrastructure policy," Adani said. "So, what will be different in India because of this? Renewable clusters will co-locate with AI data centres. Industrial corridors will integrate energy and compute planning. Storage and grid stability will become national priorities."

On services sovereignty in the AI age, Adani noted that while India's information technology revolution made it a global services powerhouse, much of the productivity dividend was captured by other countries, and argued that the AI revolution offers a "once-in-a-century opportunity" to change this. He insisted AI must first serve as a "force multiplier" for Indian citizens before it becomes a "margin multiplier" for others.

"Our AI must first amplify our Indian productivity—enhance our agricultural resilience, personalise our education at massive scale, optimise our networks of logistics and ports, improve our energy and distribution efficiency, modernise our manufacturing competitiveness, expand our healthcare diagnostics across rural India, and deepen our financial inclusion across Tier 2 and 3 towns and villages," Adani said. Talking about the Adani group's recently announced \$100-billion investment to build a sovereign, green-energy-powered AI infrastructure platform, he said that it is not just a data centre expansion but the trigger for a 5-gigawatt and \$250-billion integrated energy-and-compute ecosystem "engineered to anchor India's intelligence revolution". "By integrating renewable energy, grid resilience, and hyperscale compute into a unified architecture, this commitment ensures that India's AI future is not only powered but secured, sovereign, and built at national scale," Adani said.

Nissan launches Gravite 7-seater MPV at introductory price of Rs. 5.65 lakh in India

Hyderabad: Nissan Motor India on Tuesday launched the all-new Gravite, a 7-seater MPV, at an introductory price of Rs. 5.65 lakh (ex-showroom). Unveiled in Udaipur, the Gravite marks the beginning of the company's renewed product push in India.

Inspired by India and made in India at its alliance partner's facility in Chennai, the Gravite is positioned as a spacious, versatile and practical family mover with a strong road presence.

‘Waking up the muscles’: How Soha Ali Khan reboots her fitness and sweats out the jet lag after a holiday; ways women in their 40s can find balance



Resuming workouts after a break or vacation often feels harder than expected, and Soha Ali Khan's experience captures this common reality. The actor, who is back home after a rejuvenating holiday in Japan, shared a glimpse of her gym workout, which consisted of circuit strength training. "The first workout after a break is the hardest — and that's why I chose circuit strength training! Waking up all the main muscle groups and sweating out the jet lag," the 47-year-old shared in a post on Instagram.

After a period of rest or reduced activity, the body undergoes short-term changes in muscle strength, cardiovascular endurance and neuromuscular coordination. "During vacation, activity levels tend to be lower, meals may be different, and sleep patterns can shift. These changes are perfectly natural, but they mean that when you return to your usual workout, the body isn't immediately ready to perform at the same level it was before the break," explained consultant dietitian and fitness expert Garima Goyal.

‘I went to rehab, to fix myself’: Anurag Kashyap reveals how prolonged stress due to failing work projects led to a heart attack; why this is a warning for every professional

Periods of prolonged stress due to professional disappointment can take a serious toll on one's health. In a recent interview, filmmaker Anurag Kashyap spoke candidly about how years of professional frustration and personal strain affected his health and well-being. Reflecting on the collapse of a long-gestating project, he told The Hollywood Reporter, "I was only grieving over Maximum City. I was frustrated with Maximum City because the investment in that was so much. Because I'd been attached to Maximum City since 2009, when Danny Boyle was producing it. Slumdog Millionaire writer was writing it, and he wanted me to direct it at that time." He also recalled the project's development process and creative disagreements, saying, "It got India all wrong. Anything based in India, I won't do it in English. So, I've been walking the same path."

The stress surrounding the shelving of the project coincided with a difficult period in his personal life. With encouragement from his daughter, Kashyap told The Hollywood Reporter that he chose to enter rehab and focus on recovery. "I went to rehab, to fix myself — and I fixed myself." Around that period, he also suffered a leg injury that left him confined to bed for months. Because he was on blood thinners, he says surgery wasn't possible. Eventually, work found its way back into his life in an unexpected manner. He recalls, "Luckily, Zoya Akhtar called me. She said, 'Will you play yourself in Made in Heaven?'. I thought he first turned down the offer, explaining his condition — 'I said, 'I'm lying in bed, my leg is gone, I'm in a wheelchair.' — Akhtar had a simple solution: 'We'll put the wheelchair in the scene.' In a 2022 interview with SCREEN, he also described how unhealthy coping habits developed during this period, leading to rapid weight gain and further complications: "My daughter was very worried. She sent me to rehab. I went to the rehab to fix myself, and I fixed myself. But I got a tear in my right leg in the rehab while playing cricket. And because of being on blood thinners, I couldn't go for surgery. I couldn't walk and was on a wheelchair. I was on bed rest for months."

But how can prolonged professional stress translate into serious physical health issues?

Sonal Khangarot, licensed rehabilitation counsellor and psychotherapist, The Answer Room, tells indianexpress.com, "Prolonged stress, disappointment, or unresolved grief keep the body in a chronic 'threat mode.' The brain repeatedly activates the fight-or-flight system, releasing stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. Over time, this constant activation raises blood pressure, strains the heart, disrupts sleep, and weakens immunity."

Anurag Kashyap's health battles shed light on the link between professional disappointment and physical collapse. Anurag Kashyap's health battles shed light on the link between professional disappointment and physical collapse. He adds that stress can also "alter appetite and metabolism,

According to her, the first few sessions after a vacation can feel tougher because your muscles and heart have to re-adapt to the load and intensity of exercise, especially in the 40s. "Muscle fibres that were previously conditioned lose some of their efficiency relatively quickly when not challenged, and the cardiovascular system — which adapts to demands like walking, running or gym work — becomes slightly less responsive after a period of inactivity. As a result, movements may feel heavier, breathing may feel more laboured, and fatigue can set in sooner than it used to," Goyal said. Another factor is psychological. "Expectations of performance are often set by how you felt before the break, so when your first workout doesn't feel as strong or smooth, it feels harder than it actually is. This mismatch between expectation and current reality can make the session feel more challenging, even though your body is just recalibrating." It's also important to consider recovery rhythms. A break typically alters sleep patterns, hydration and even metabolic signals in the body. When you step back into a rigorous routine without easing in gradually, the nervous system — which coordinates movement, timing and effort — hasn't yet re-engaged efficiently, noted Goyal. Understanding that this initial difficulty is temporary and normal can make the transition back into training more encouraging. "Instead of trying to match pre-vacation performance right away, easing into workouts with shorter sessions, moderate intensity and mindful movement helps the body reinstate strength, endurance and coordination more effectively. Within a week or two of consistent effort, the heart rate stabilises, muscles regain confidence, and workouts begin to feel familiar again," said Goyal.



leading to weight gain, emotional eating, or insulin resistance." Grief that is suppressed rather than processed often shows up as fatigue, body pain, breathlessness, or frequent illness because the nervous system never fully settles. "People may cope through smoking, alcohol, inactivity, or irregular routines, which further harm cardiovascular and respiratory health. Emotionally, hopelessness and burnout reduce motivation to seek care or maintain healthy habits," notes the expert.

Warning signs that suggest support is urgently needed Khangarot states. "When coping behaviours shift from occasional relief to patterns that harm functioning, it signals urgent need for support. Key warning signs include rapid increase in alcohol or food use, needing more to feel relief, or using these behaviours daily to manage emotions. Noticeable withdrawal from work, family, or social contact; neglect of hygiene, sleep, or responsibilities; and persistent irritability, hopelessness, or numbness are red flags." She adds that physical changes like sudden weight gain or loss, chest tightness, breathlessness, frequent illness, or blackouts also indicate risk. Emotional indicators include loss of interest in previously valued activities, intense guilt or shame about coping habits, or inability to stop despite consequences.

Steps to rebuild physical and mental health after a period of burnout Khangarot recommends starting with a medical and psychological check-in. "A doctor can assess sleep, heart health, nutrition, or medication needs, while therapy helps process grief, shame, or chronic stress patterns. Structured routines are next — regular sleep times, simple home-cooked meals, hydration, and 20–30 minutes of light movement like walking or stretching rebuild nervous system stability." Reduce harmful coping gradually. She notes, "Replace alcohol or overeating with grounding habits such as journaling, breathing exercises, or short check-ins with a trusted friend. If dependence is significant, join guided programs or support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous."

Why you should tear your baggage tag ‘vertically’ after a flight

On Instagram, Ariya recently shared an informative video on baggage tags issued by airlines, saying, "The tags that you get to put on suitcases, you should not just take them off and throw them away. Here's why. You see, these bar codes contain all of your personal information. You might want to keep those, as your information is on them. Your credit card information, your address, all of it on it. Don't know how or if anybody has the capability to access it, but the world we live in." But how much of her claim is valid? According to aviation expert Amit Mittal, the fear around credit card exposure is largely misplaced. "The barcode on your luggage tag does not contain your credit card information," he clarifies. "It primarily contains a 10-digit numeric code known as the License Plate Number or LPN. This number acts as a pointer to the airline's internal database."

What details does a bar code entail?

Mittal explains that the typically encoded information includes the LPN, flight number, destination airport code, and the Passenger Name Record (PNR)—a six-character booking reference. "The barcode itself is not a storage device of detailed personal data. It links to backend systems," he says.

Can someone access your details?

An average person scanning the barcode with a smartphone will not see sensitive financial data. "At most, they may retrieve your last name and PNR," Mittal notes. "Even if someone attempts to access the 'Manage Booking' portal, credit card numbers are masked, CVV is never visible, and passport numbers are partially hidden." However, he adds a note of caution: "While the aviation system remains secure, basic booking details could potentially be viewed if someone misuses the PNR and surname combination." Is throwing the tag away risky?

"From an aviation security standpoint, discarding the tag does not threaten aircraft safety," Mittal explains. "But from a personal privacy perspective, it's always better to dispose of it responsibly." He also highlights an operational reason to remove old tags. "Leaving previous barcodes attached can confuse automated scanners, causing unnecessary system load or even baggage misrouting," he says.

Best practice for travellers Mittal recommends a simple solution: "Once you reach home or your hotel, remove the tag and tear vertically through the barcode. This makes it unreadable to optical scanners." Alternatively, shredding or blacking out the PNR and name with a permanent marker works well.

Jaiswal's Sri Lanka mission: To find the balance between attack and defence



GNS News Agency, August 12

For Yashasvi Jaiswal, the first Test against Sri Lanka at Galle, starting on Saturday, will present a familiar challenge in new surroundings. To find the magic formula between attack and defence, when to hold back and when to go full-throttle, a chemistry he has been trying to perfect. He has both the games, can seamlessly switch between attack and defence, but sometimes the dilemma has struck him and hastened his downfall. Apparently, the best time to bat in Asia is when the ball is new, the wicket is fresh and there is pace on the wicket. Former India batsman Ajinkya Rahane talked enviously of the openers getting the best of the conditions to bat, as opposed to the middle-order batsmen. "The easiest position to bat in was top two in India at that time because the ball was new and the wicket was good. Batting in the middle order became tougher as the ball got older, started reversing, and the pitch deteriorated. Sometimes, even scores of 30 or 40 were really crucial," he told.

But it could be different in Sri Lanka. There could be swing on offer when batting first on the first day, as the curators leave grass for the surface to not dry up and deteriorate prematurely. Cheteshwar Pujara rates his 145 at SSC in 2015 as one of his toughest knocks because the ball swung viciously on the first day. Some decks, however, could spin exaggeratedly from the first ball. It could be a leap into the unknown. It would not invoke pre-game nightmares like the SENA pitches, but presents challenges of its own. It's not a haven of runs for openers, Sri Lanka's former talisman Dimuth Karunaratne told Cricinfo. "It's the toughest place," he said. "Usually after a couple of overs, you can get a gauge on what the pitch is doing and whether the seamers or spinners are the bigger threat. Not there. Sometimes the spinner is on, and the new ball is jumping from here. Then a seamer bowls and it jumps from there. How to make sense of this? You have no idea what is going on."

Root removes curfew, tells teammates, 'Let's be adults, look after yourselves'

GNS News Agency, August 12 Newly appointed England Test captain Joe Root has removed the curfew imposed on the team and has instead called on his teammates to behave like 'grown adults'. The curfew rule brought in after drinking related incidents during tour of New Zealand and Australia will not be in force beginning the series against Pakistan starting later this month.

The curfew that has been put in place has been under the spotlight and during the recent series against New Zealand, former captain Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson ended up breaking it. It led to a series of off-field shake-ups with Stokes missing the second Test before returning to captain the third Test during which he announced his international retirement. In the weeks that followed Brendon McCullum was removed as the head coach of the Test team with Stephen Fleming coming in as his replacement. With Fleming coming on board, England handed over the Test team to Root, who will have his second stint as skipper.

And with the series against Pakistan coming up Root told Sky Sports: "There's not going to be a curfew. I don't think this needs to be a big deal, to be honest. My view on curfews is that I don't think they work and if you want guys to take responsibility on the field, they've got to feel like they can be grown adults off it and make good, strong decisions off it," added Root. "And that's for us as a team to manage well, and self-police well, for me and Flem (Fleming) to manage well in many ways."

According to reports, England are understood to have removed the curfew even for the white-ball team for which

That may be the simplest description of Jaiswal's challenge. It is not about blocking everything, but about making the right decisions. To make sense of the conditions and tailor his game accordingly. In recent times, specifically in the series against South Africa, he was split between attacking and defending, often veering to extremes. But he could revert to some of his knocks in the home series against England. In his 209 against England in Visakhapatnam in 2024, he batted through the first day as India lost six wickets at the other end to Shoaib Bashir, James Anderson, Tom Hartley and Rehan Ahmed. He absorbed the pressure early, scoring at a measured pace before gradually increasing his attacking intent. That is the approach India will want from him in Galle: positive and attacking, but not rushed. Maintaining that balance will become increasingly important as conditions change and the pitch begins to wear. His second innings knock against New Zealand in Bengaluru later that year offered another example of that balance. Jaiswal was on 10 off 30 balls, but attacked once he felt more settled. He cut and drove through the off side and took on Ajaz Patel. He moved from 10 off 30 to 35 off 52, but then fell trying to attack the left-arm spinner again, charging down the track only to be stumped by Tom Blundell. It was Jaiswal in a nutshell. His aggression can change a Test match, but it can also get him out. The most productive shot can be his biggest weakness too. The cut shot gives him plenty of runs, but it has also dismissed him eight times, making the stroke both productive and risky. It brings him runs because he trusts his hands and can hit the ball late. But the same instinct can make him play at balls that are not quite in his hitting zone. In the warm-up game, where he smoked a 46-ball 61 in the second innings showed both his sides. He scored when he got on top of the bounce, but struggled when the ball stayed low. His aggression has made him successful. Jaiswal has scored more runs than anyone else in the subcontinent since debuting in July 2023, amassing 1417 runs in 15 matches at an average of 54.50 with three centuries. All those runs have come in India, but batting in Asia is also about adapting when the pitch changes. A ball that can be driven or cut comfortably in the morning may not be there to be hit in the same way later in the day. The longer the innings goes, the more important good judgement becomes. In Galle, knowing when to attack and when to show restraint could determine how long he stays at the crease. With Tests being his only format for now for India, every opportunity becomes more valuable. Galle will not just test his ability to control his aggression; it will also offer an early measure of how effectively he can adapt and thrive in Asian conditions beyond India.



McCullum is still in-charge with Harry Brook as captain. Interestingly, during Root's first stint as captain England had curfew in place between 2017 and 2022 after the drinking incidents during the 2017-18 Ashes. But now in his second stint, Root has started on a fresh note asking players to be more responsible. "Ultimately, you're grown adults, you know what it takes to play for England, you know what your responsibilities are off the field and we need to make sure we don't find ourselves with any of those situations, off the field, to manage. We should be known for how we play our cricket and what we do on the field. We should be on the back page of the papers, and people reading about that sort of stuff. So, that's as much as I've got to say on it. Let's be adults. Look after yourselves, look after each other, create a good, strong culture where you know the right time is to celebrate and enjoy a win, or to have a sensible beer or whatever. And remember you're playing for England," Root said.

No curfew for England players ahead of Pakistan Tests: Joe Root



London: In his second spell as England's Test captain, Joe Root has done away with the midnight curfew imposed on his side and has urged players to behave like 'grown adults' as they prepare for the upcoming series against Pakistan, starting at Headingley on August 19. The decision marks a clear departure from the ECB's player behaviour guidelines introduced in July following a string of off-field alcohol-related incidents — like former captain Ben Stokes and Gus Atkinson were out past a midnight curfew after England won the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's.

"There's not going to be a curfew. I don't think this needs to be a big deal, to be honest. My view on the curfew is that the players are doing their work, and if you want guys to take responsibility on the field, they've got to feel like they can be grown adults and make good, strong decisions off it. That's for us as a team to manage well, and police well for me and (new head coach) Stephen Fleming. We should be known for how we play cricket and what we do on the field. We should be on the back page of papers," Root said in the latest episode of the Sky Sports Cricket Podcast.

Underlining the need for a healthy team culture, Root added, "Be adults, look after yourselves, look after each other. (We need to) create a good, strong culture where you know when the right time is to celebrate and enjoy a win or to have a sensible beer, but remember — you've got to play for England."

"I don't want people to feel like they can't enjoy winning a Test match because they want to have a beer or, at the right time, let their hair down, and then that's absolutely fine. We're human beings at the end of the day. You know what your responsibilities are, you know how you need to prepare for a Test match and what it takes, and the effects that these things can have on you. So be smart, be sensible, and just be an adult." Addressing his relationship with the coaching setup, Root admitted he was disappointed by the departure of former Test coach Brendon McCullum, while

expressing enthusiasm for working alongside incoming head coach Stephen Fleming.

"I'll be honest with you. I was gutted when I found out Brendon was no longer going to be the Test coach. He's someone that I feel has really got the best out of me personally. I love the way he sees the game, and the way that he's opened my eyes up to looking at it slightly differently. I feel like he's a brilliant coach. I'm very glad that we still get to work together in the white-ball stuff. He's someone that I owe a huge amount to, and that I've become pretty close with. I think they're doing brilliant stuff in white-ball teams. And I wish him all the very best in that." Welcoming Fleming to the Test fold, Root said, "(Fleming and I) have crossed paths a bit over the last few years when he's coached different teams around the world. I have someone that I've always admired. He's someone that I really did admire as a player. The way that he's always held himself as a captain first and foremost. His record as a coach has been exceptional, albeit in T20 cricket. There's so much that I'm looking forward to in that respect." Reflecting on his first term in charge, Root acknowledged past tactical errors, especially regarding the insane workload of speedster Jofra Archer, and vowed to handle the fast bowler with greater care this time.

"I think at times maybe I did over-bowl him and over-use him. The attack that he works with now complements him really well. (Now) there are other people that can potentially play a role that I might have used Jofra in the past. I believe he's a generational talent and someone who is going to produce wonderful things for England across the formats. "In Test cricket, he's capable of doing some wonderful things. Clearly, as I said, I didn't get everything right the first time around. I made mistakes, but he's going to be a really important factor in what we do moving forward. I'm very excited to work with him again." Root also addressed the public perception surrounding his return to the leadership role. "I think the hardest thing for me will be people's opinion of how I captained four years ago. I think it's very important to remember, and for me to remember more than anything, I'm a completely different player from what I was four years ago. As a player, I've always looked to evolve and move my game forward. I don't see this as any different. You've got to learn. When you make mistakes and when you get things wrong, you look at yourself, and you know you don't want to make that mistake again. You learn from it, and you deal with it for the next time around. That shouldn't be a hindrance. I hope people don't see it like that. I hope they see it as a massive upside to getting the chance to do it again." Asked whether he would welcome a potential Test return for former skipper Ben Stokes ahead of the 2027 Ashes, Root signed off by saying, "I don't know — let's get there first."

Siraj set to spearhead India's pace attack in Lanka

Galle: Spinners running amok on the slow turners in Galle and Colombo has been the dominant theme in the build-up to the two Tests between India and Sri Lanka, starting here Saturday. While it is not far off the truth, one bowler will be eager to write his own script across the next fortnight or so — Mohammed Siraj. In the absence of premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah, Siraj will have to assume the lead role, besides handholding Prasidh Krishna and Gurnoor Brar. It's not precisely an unfamiliar place for Siraj, for he has stepped up to the plate several times when Bumrah was either rested or injured. A quick rewind to last year's Birmingham Test against England will attest that statement. Siraj produced a match-defining spell of six for 70 in the first innings when Bumrah was absent because of his workload management.

Siraj bowled a staggering 1113 balls in that series, picking up 23 wickets, but here the 32-year-old will certainly not have to deliver that many balls. But his role will not be any less significant in the series against the Islanders. It's a bit of an anomaly but Siraj shines even brighter when Bumrah is not operating from the other end. Bowling alongside the phenom, Siraj has taken 90 wickets from 29 Tests, and averages 32. However, in the 17 Tests where he was the lead bowler, Siraj has taken 50 wickets and average plummets to a creditable 25.4.

Siraj loves attention but he does not have the main character syndrome. "He has always been a tough competitor. He does not shy away from a challenge. It comes from his tennis ball background where you need to bowl many overs continuously." Of course, once he joined the Indian team, he has worked tirelessly over his fitness, and he can bowl one or last ball of the day with the same intensity. That way he has not changed at all," says Mohammed Mahboob Ahmed, who mentored Siraj at the Charnimar Cricket Club in Hyderabad. Intensity will be Siraj's biggest asset in the upcoming two-match series where pitches will not offer him much assistance, nor will there be too much



for him in the humid Lankan air save for the initial hour. But he will have to overcome it with his characteristic zest to be the leader when top dog Bumrah is absent. Siraj can combine stock and shock to telling effect even on benign tracks. He has this uncanny knack to produce a breakthrough when it is absolutely necessary. It could be a magic incoming delivery that leaves the batters completely short of an answer, or a common-placed full length ball that at times can fetch an inside edge. All these could be his weapons against the Lankans here.

Add to it his ability to conjure some lusty blows down the order with the bat, and Siraj transforms into a compelling package. Recently, the Hyderabad man hammered three sixes in a row to carry India to win over a Sri Lanka Cricket XI in a warm-up match in Colombo. More than his ability, it symbolises his will to win at any cost and from any circumstances. "Bachpan se hi woh aisa hi tha (He was like that from his younger days). Never liked defeat or never accepted defeat. He will lead from the front if the team finds itself in a pressure situation," says Mahboob. In the next 18 days, India will find themselves in deep pockets of pressure against a team which knows how to win in home conditions. Siraj could be India's secret trump card.

Murali Kartik backs Kuldeep for consistent role in India's Test side



New Delhi: Former India spinner Murali Kartik believes Kuldeep Yadav needs consistency and a clearly defined role in the Test side as the team prepares for a crucial two-match series against Sri Lanka, with Ravindra Jadeja entering the twilight of his career. India are fifth in the World Test Championship standings after four wins and four defeats in the current cycle. They will look to revive their campaign after a 0-2 series loss to South Africa, beginning with two Tests in Sri Lanka. They will then tour New Zealand for two Tests in November before hosting Australia for a five-Test series in January-February. "This series is critical with the view of the WTC if we are serious about Test cricket, we are at number 5, our fortunes haven't been great in red ball cricket of late, which is well-documented and everyone

knows it," Kartik said in a virtual media interaction organised by Sony Sports Network. The Sri Lanka series is also expected to be a significant examination of India's spin resources. Kartik feels the transition in India's spin department makes Kuldeep's role particularly important. "The series will be test for the spinners as well. Jadeja — as good as he has been for Indian cricket — is in his twilight years. Manav Suthar with the way he made his debut against Afghanistan was very heartwarming for any old-school spinner." However, Kartik feels Kuldeep has not received the sustained backing during the Rohit Sharma-Rahul Dravid era that can allow a bowler of his quality to flourish in Test cricket. Since Gautam Gambhir took over as coach in July 2024, Kuldeep has played six Tests. "Kuldeep has been a match-winner for India but unfortunately for him it played out differently when he had Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid and now he's not got that kind of a run in," he said. Kuldeep's omission from India's five-Test tour of England had also raised questions over his place in the red-ball setup, despite his reputation as a wicket-taking spinner. "When you think of what happened in England, everybody kept saying during the course of those five Test matches, where is Kuldeep, where is Kuldeep? And Kuldeep didn't play, he was sitting out," Kartik said. "So it's very important from that point of view, now that Jadeja is in his twilight of his career, is he the leader, or is it going to be someone else." Kartik also dismissed the notion that Kuldeep's batting limitations should weigh heavily in selection decisions, arguing that his primary value remains his ability to take wickets.

AB de Villiers on Padikkal vs Sarfaraz as India's No.3: 'He hits in funny areas'



GNS News Agency, August 12

Former South Africa captain AB de Villiers has leaned towards Devdutt Padikkal playing at number three for India in the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka. The 42-year-old said that the left-hander had an edge over someone like Sarfaraz Khan as he was calmer than the Mumbai right-hander. Padikkal staked his claim to bat at number three, after scoring an unbeaten 142 in the first innings of the warm-up match against Sri Lanka Cricket XI. "One question mark around that number three batting spot, with either Sarfaraz Khan or Devdutt Padikkal having to put up their hand for that spot. I'm leaning towards Padikkal, a left-hander, really solid technique. He just comes across as a guy who can bat for long periods of time. Sarfaraz is more the exciting kind of candidate," de Villiers said on his YouTube channel.

"He can take the game away from the opposition. He hits in funny areas, and he always keeps the captain on their toes. It's a difficult decision to make here. I think what the coach will look at is, Gautam Gambhir will look at the make-up of the side and the balance. Do we need more of an exciting prospect at number three who can take the game away and take it on, or do we need more of a consistent player in Padikkal, a left-hander, always nice to have right-left-hand combinations, especially with spinners on turning

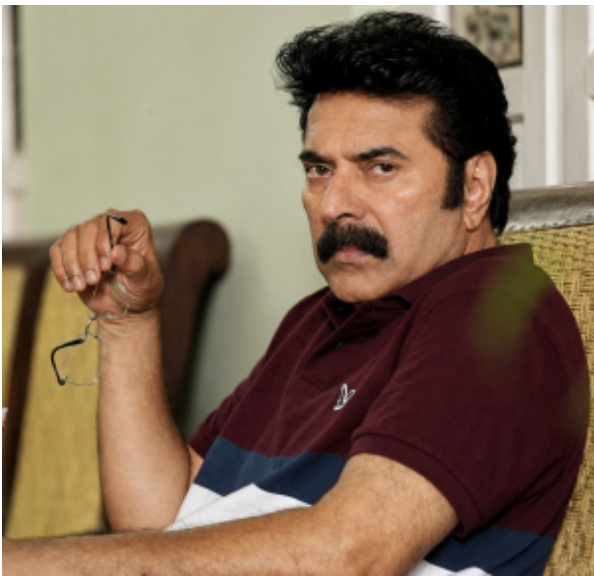
Shubham Dey, Jatin Jairam enter U-11 final

Hyderabad: Shubham Dey of AVSC defeated Bhoumik of AWA 7-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-2, 11-5 in the boys under-11 semifinal of the sixth Gujarati seva Mandal Telangana State-ranking table tennis tournament here on Wednesday.

Results Boys' Under-11 — Semifinals:

Shubham Dey (AVSC) bt Bhoumik (AWA) 7-11, 11-7, 10-12, 11-2, 11-5; Jatin Jairam (SITTA) bt Shobit Jain (GSM) 8-11, 11-9, 11-7, 5-11, 11-9. Quarterfinals: Shubham Dey (AVSC) bt Liyaan Rao (AWA) 11-7, 11-6, 11-2; Bhoumik (AWA) bt Nandiraju (SPARS) 11-8, 11-8, 11-7; Jatin Jairam (SGUTTA) bt Siddharth (PPTA) 11-4, 12-10, 11-6.

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



Cochin Haneefa was renowned not just as a phenomenal actor but also as an exceptional writer-director. In a career spanning close to 40 years, he appeared in over 300 films across Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi, and Telugu languages, winning the hearts of audiences wherever he set foot. Haneefa was also a beloved figure among industry insiders, and almost everyone still has only the nicest things to say about him.

The unbreakable bond between Mammootty, Cochin Haneefa While he shared a warm bond with almost everyone around him, Malayalam megastar Mammootty held a special place in Cochin Haneefa's heart. In fact, the only time Malayalees saw Mammootty, widely considered as the regional film industry's Valyettan (big brother), cry in public was when the actor-director died. The image of a highly emotional Mammootty struggling to pacify a sobbing Maniyanpilla Raju during one of the moments following Haneefa's death still remains etched in Malayalees' minds. Cinema Anatomy | Jana Nayagan: Vijay's propaganda film makes even Sura and Villu look like masterpieces For the unfamiliar, Cochin Haneefa died at the age of 59 in February 2010. He had been unwell for some time due to liver-related problems. However, not even his closest friends in the industry knew about his illness till the last minute, as he did not wish to burden others with his woes. By the time the megastar and others learned of his condition, it was too late. During a 2023 episode of his podcast, Mukesh Speaking, actor-politician Mukesh recalled the Malayalam megastar's reaction to

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

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

Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh. Indian cricketer Arshdeep Singh has confirmed his relationship with actor and model Samreen Kaur. Weeks after fuelling dating rumours, Indian fast bowler Arshdeep Singh has officially introduced Samreen Kaur as 'my person' on Instagram. The cricketer put an end to weeks of dating speculation by making his relationship with actor-model Samreen Kaur Instagram official. The cricketer shared two loved-up pictures confirming what fans had long suspected, and the post went viral in no time. The post now has more than 2.2 million likes, along with congratulatory messages pouring in from fans and fellow cricketers. Born on September 7, 1999, Samreen Kaur hails from Jammu and Kashmir. She first stepped into the spotlight as a finalist representing the state at the Femina Miss India 2018 pageant before pursuing a career in modelling and acting. She later completed her B.Com (Honours) from Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce, Pune. Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh. Samreen Kaur hails from Jammu and Kashmir.

Samreen made her acting debut with Kabir Khan's 83 and later appeared in the ZEE5 web series Nail Polish and featured in the film Sardaar Ji 2. She has also featured in Punjabi projects and gained immense popularity through music videos with artists including Badshah, Guru Randhawa, Jubin Nautiyal, Jass Manak and Maninder Buttar, making her a familiar face among young audiences. Actor-model Samreen Kaur is making headlines after Indian pacer Arshdeep Singh. Samreen Kaur is an actor and model.

Apart from films, Samreen has built a massive social media presence, where she regularly shares fashion, travel and lifestyle content. Her popularity has continued to grow over the years, making her one of the emerging faces in the entertainment industry. Before her relationship with Arshdeep



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

Niharika NM recalls rejecting a film due to intimate scenes: ‘Actor didn’t want body double’

Content creator-actor Niharika NM recently recalled rejecting a film due to an intimacy clause. She revealed that her co-star didn't want to do the scene with a body double.

Niharika NM, who is gearing up for her upcoming film Bhai tera Star Hai opposite Raghav Juyal, started her journey as a content creator. However, she revealed in a recent interview, that making humorous reels and sketches wasn't her ultimate goal. The actor-influencer wanted to become an actor but the journey as a newcomer was challenging in Bollywood. She also recalled rejecting a film due to its 'intimacy clause'. During a chat with News18, she shared, "When I had moved to Bombay three-four years ago, I spent three years training under a production house. I had gone to film school and I've a background in theatre."

The actor-content creator continued, "I definitely wanted to give acting a shot. I didn't know how far it would go or what I exactly wanted to do. All I knew was that I was passionate about it and I enjoyed it." But, she soon decided to stop struggling for an offer in Bollywood and started auditioning in South cinema, implying Hindi film industry's unrealistic beauty standards. "I tried in Hindi films first but I didn't enjoy the standards that were set for women – how they should look or how their skin tone should be. I thought that it's not the space I should fight in. It was also a very crowded space," she said.

Later on, Niharika went on to sign a three-film deal with Karthik Subbaraj's production house, Stone Bench Films. She added, "But midway through my training process with

them, I turned down really good South films which did wonders at the box office. I couldn't believe it! I was bound by contract. That will remain one of my biggest regrets. But I'm happy for whoever did it. And once the contract ended, there was no stopping me. Then I phoned like raita across films of different languages." But, that was another difficult path to walk, as she didn't want to do intimate scenes on-screen. "There were so many reasons why I got rejected from films. It all sounds hilarious at this point. There was one particular film I was supposed to do. It was being made by this great director. I grew up watching him. He handpicked me. I had auditioned for the part. The look test was done." She shared, "The contract was sent to my house and I had signed it. There was this intimacy clause in it and I had told them that I'm not comfortable doing onscreen intimacy. They were fine with it and were planning on going ahead with a body double. But the actor wasn't okay doing the scene with a body double. He wasn't interested. It was his call. Then it became a situation of this or that." Niharika NM marked her international debut with a guest voice role in the American sitcom Big Mouth season 7 in 2023. She also made her South debut in the Tamil film Perusu last year, followed by Mithra Mandali and Idhayam Murali. Her upcoming movie Bhai Tera Star Hai is set to hit the theatres on July 30. Directed by Vivek B Agarwal, the comedy drama also stars Sanjay Kapoor and Nikki Walia.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

