

Rajagopal Reddy targets Revanth over outsiders holding key posts

Hyderabad: Taking an indirect jibe at Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Congress MLA from Munugode Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy slammed that individuals, who were not involved in Telangana agitation and had no ties to the Congress party, were holding key positions in the State.City & Local Guides

“It hurts me. As I am in a political party, I am unable to speak more,” he said after unveiling a book chronicling the 25-year musical journey of Eapuri Somanna here on Thursday.

CM Revanth Sees Bid To Delete Lakhs of Voters in Telangana

Hyderabad, August 13

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday said that certain “political forces” were conspiring to delete lakhs of votes in Telangana through the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral roll, alleging that similar attempts had taken place in West Bengal and Bihar in recent times.

Referring to reports of more than 73 lakh voters being deleted at the end of the SIR enumeration phase, Revanth Reddy appealed to people to remain vigilant and ensure that the names of all eligible voters remain on the electoral rolls during the next phase of the exercise.

Participating in the “Minorities Excellence Summit” at Adivasi Bhavan in Banjara Hills, Revanth Reddy, without naming any political party, alleged that “political forces from Gujarat” had begun their march towards Telangana through the SIR exercise and were attempting to target the state. He called upon the people to remain alert and foil any such attempts. The Chief Minister said some leaders had claimed that they had “conquered” West Bengal and that Telangana was their next target.

Responding to such claims, Revanth Reddy said, “You were successful because Didi (Mamata Banerjee) did not take this issue seriously. But we will not allow this in Telangana.” He said the Congress would not allow eligible voters to lose their voting rights and urged party workers to take up the responsibility of protecting the electoral rolls.

The Chief Minister appealed to the youth to visit every household during the next 10 days, compare the voter lists of 2002 with the latest electoral rolls, identify discrepancies and submit the details to Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

He asked the Congress cadre to ensure that not a single eligible voter was deleted from the rolls and called upon everyone to become a “Revanth Reddy” in safeguarding the right to vote. He also urged people across Telangana to personally verify their names and those of eligible members of their families in the voter lists.

Revanth Reddy said the Congress government is committed to the welfare and empowerment of minorities, saying Hindus and Muslims were “two eyes” for him. Referring to Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s statement that the four per cent reservation for minorities would be removed if the BJP came to power in Telangana, the Chief Minister challenged Shah to first remove the Muslim quota in Gujarat before talking about Telangana.

He said the Congress deserved credit for introducing and implementing the four per cent reservation for



minorities. He claimed that the state government had ensured its effective implementation, enabling minority youth to secure jobs in Group-I and Group-II services. “Our government implemented the four per cent reservation effectively, and the youth have secured jobs in Group-1 and Group-2 services. We ensured minorities were given their due place under our government,” he said.

The Chief Minister said some forces had attempted to stall the recruitment process by approaching the Supreme Court, but the State government pursued the matter seriously and succeeded in completing the appointments.

Listing various measures taken for the minority community, Revanth Reddy said a member of the minority community had been appointed to the Telangana Public Service Commission.

He also pointed to the induction of former Indian cricket captain Mohammed Azharuddin into the State Cabinet, the provision of a Group-I level government job to world boxing champion Nikhat Zareen along with a cash prize of `3 crore, and the appointment of cricketer Mohammed Sirajuddin as a Deputy Superintendent of Police.

The Chief Minister urged minority youth to focus not only on formal education but also on acquiring job-oriented skills to take advantage of emerging employment opportunities in countries such as Germany and Japan. He said the State government had already established a Skills University to enhance the employability and skills of students.

Revanth Reddy thanked the Muslim community for its cooperation and support in helping him reach the position of Chief Minister.

Parliament passes Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill

Restricts state governments from imposing any new taxes on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands without conditions and restrictions prescribed by the Centre

New Delhi, August 13

Parliament on Thursday passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, to create a uniform and balanced fiscal framework for the mineral sector nationwide.It restricts state governments from imposing any new taxes on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands without conditions and restrictions prescribed by the Centre.

Responding to the debate in the Upper House, Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy said the legislation does not seek to interfere with the autonomy or revenue rights of states. “It aims to ensure uniform mineral rates across the country. The Centre was seeking to regulate major minerals such as coal, limestone, iron ore, copper and manganese, while states would continue to have powers over 49 minor minerals,” he said.

The Centre will now also regulate mineral-bearing lands having mineral contents. Such lands will be identified as per parameters prescribed by the Central Government under the MMDR Act. This is in addition to the existing provision declaring the Union’s control over regulation of mines and development of minerals.

“No tax, cess or other levy, by whatever name called, shall be imposed by a State Government on mineral rights or mineral-bearing lands. This covers levies based on mineral quantity, mineral value, royalty or any other basis. Such levies may be imposed only as per conditions or restrictions prescribed by the Central Government. Any levy not paid or collected by the State before the Amendment applies will be treated as invalid. However, amounts already deposited or recovered before such commencement shall not be liable to be refunded,” an official statement by the Government said.

Kothagudem: Forest Department vows action over FBO’s death in electric snare

Kothagudem: The forest department has taken the death of forest beat officer B Naveen Naik extremely seriously and steps were being taken to punish those responsible, asserted the district forest officer Siddarth Vikram Singh.The DFO along with the police and electricity department officials on Thursday inspected the spot in Paloncha reserve forest range where the FBO lost his life after coming into contact with an illegal electric snare reportedly laid for hunting wildlife.

PM dials Harsimrat, enquires about Sukhbir’s health

New Delhi, August 13

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday dialled Bathinda Lok Sabha MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal and enquired about the health of her husband Sukhbir Singh Badal.

Sources said the PM spoke to Harsimrat at length about the developments in Nanded and asked if she needed any help.

PM Modi also asked if the SAD president was sound and safe.This is the second engagement in a week between the PM and the top leadership of the Akali Dal.Just recently, the PM had met Sukhbir in the Parliament House complex, raising speculation as to the future of the estranged NDA allies.

The two sides have been visibly warming up to one another ahead of the 2027 Punjab elections even though the BJP has so far officially maintained that it would contest all 117 seats in the state on its own.Private,ly, BJP leaders have been indicating a thaw in the previously cold ties between the BJP and SAD saying one would have to wait and watch to see what shape this thaw takes and if a pre-poll alliance happens.



Sukhbir injured in sword attack at Nanded gurdwara; accused nabbed

Nanded , August 13

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal was injured in a kirpan attack by a Nihang at a gurdwara on the outskirts of Nanded in Maharashtra on Thursday.

The former Punjab Deputy CM, who earlier escaped an attempt on his life at the Golden Temple entrance in December 2024, sustained an injury in his right arm and was rushed to a private hospital, where he received two-three stitches on the arm. A video showed the SAD chief walking inside the hospital with a cloth wrapped around his arm.

A security man accompanying Badal sustained injuries while trying to save him. The incident took place around

2 pm. Sukhbir, his MP wife Harsimrat Kaur Badal, daughters and a son-in-law had come to pay obeisance at the at Gurdwara Mata Sahib Devan Ji Mugat.

The attacker, identified as Jaspal Singh, was arrested. Singh, around 60-62 years old, is a law graduate. He has been working as a sewadar at the gurdwara for nearly two years and has no criminal record.

Talking to mediapersons, Teja Singh, chief sewadar of the gurdwara, said as Badal was coming out of the gurdwara, the sword-wielding Nihang, who managed to come close to the leader due to overcrowding, attacked him. He was immediately nabbed by the security personnel on the spot. Teja Singh claimed the accused was suffering from mental health issues.

This was the second attack on Badal in recent times. On December 4, 2024, Narayan Singh Chaura, a former Khalistani militant, attacked him while he was performing the duty of sewadar outside the Golden Temple in Amritsar as penance for “mistakes causing harm to the Sikh panth”.

Badal was recently summoned by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Behbal Kalan police firing on protesters agitating against the sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib in Bargari. The sacrilege had blown up into a huge political issue in Punjab ahead of the 2017



Assembly elections. The SAD has been out of power for two successive terms in the state.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Harsimrat Kaur, who had been part of the Modi government, to inquire about Badal’s health. Badal had met the PM earlier this month, igniting speculation about the possibility of the SAD joining hands with the BJP again ahead of the Punjab Assembly elections.

Meanwhile, senior SAD leader Bikram Majithia strongly condemned the attack. “An attack on anyone inside a Sikh shrine is deeply disturbing. I am deeply concerned, as this is the second attack on Badal at a major gurdwara.” Linking both attacks, Majithia demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into both incidents of major security lapses.

Senior party leaders Balwinder Singh Bhunder, Dr Daljit Singh Cheema and Arshdeep Singh Kaler demanded a high-level, court-monitored probe into the incident.

They said Badal was attacked even as he had a Z+ security. Cheema accused Punjab Congress and AAP leaders of instigating people against the SAD chief. He alleged that it appeared that the Congress and the AAP were trying to push the state back into the dark days of militancy.

Startups must reach rural, remote areas, says Nirmala Sitharaman

Jaipur, August 13

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday emphasised that startup services should not remain confined to major cities and must reach rural and remote areas as well.

She said the Central and State governments are providing the necessary policy and financial support to expand the startup ecosystem across the country. Sitharaman stated that startups can progress only when they receive the necessary grants and government support. She called upon the youth to work in the right direction to transform startup ideas into reality and ensure that the general public benefits from them.

The Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister was addressing the Rajasthan Youth Conclave at the Rajasthan International Centre (RIC). She said the State Government has taken commendable steps to promote startups and provide financial assistance. Rajasthan is making a significant contribution to India’s innovation ecosystem, and the achievements of its startups deserve wider recognition.South Asians & Diaspora

She noted that after 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the PM Jan Dhan Yojana to promote financial inclusion nationwide and ensure that at least one member of every family had access to a bank account. Today, transactions through these accounts are helping common people access credit facilities.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Indo-US space cooperation gains strategic depth

From being a victim of technology denials to becoming an equal partner and co-explorer of new technological frontiers, India has come a long way in its space research journey. The growing strategic relationship between India and the United States in space exploration is a testimony to this transformation. Despite the volatility in trade relations, the two countries have been making steady progress in space cooperation. The latest illustration of this deepening bond came in the form of an invitation from the US space agency NASA to ISRO to join its Moon Base programme, an ambitious project to establish a permanent research station on the Moon, where astronauts can live, work and carry out experiments for extended periods. The last manned mission to the Moon was in 1972. Efforts have now begun to stage a return, this time to prepare the ground for longer stays. The proposal is to set up a permanent habitat on the lunar surface for astronauts to live, work, and explore through a series of crewed and uncrewed missions near the Moon's South Pole — an area first accessed by India's Chandrayaan mission. Unsurprisingly, the revival of manned missions is being spearheaded by the US through its Artemis programme, which aims to land humans on the Moon before 2028. The Moon Base programme is the logical follow-up. NASA is aware that this goal could be achieved much faster and more efficiently if other partner countries and private companies join the effort. Geographic ReferenceISRO, which has its own plans to land humans on the Moon by 2040, will get valuable hands-on experience in executing complex crewed missions and access to technologies. In 2023, India joined the Artemis Accords, a US-led space alliance, whose purpose is to evolve and commit to a common set of principles that govern the civil exploration of outer space, including the Moon. India was the 27th country to sign on the Artemis Accords. Now, a total of 70 countries are part of the Accords. In the last few years, space agencies of the two countries have come closer to each other than ever before. The same year that India joined the Artemis Accords, the two countries also agreed to develop a "strategic framework for human spaceflight cooperation". It was in the same vein that NASA had agreed to provide advanced training to Indian astronauts at its facilities with the objective of sending them to the International Space Station through privately operated missions. The flight of Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to the ISS in 2025 was a result of this arrangement. Last year, two space agencies achieved a big milestone when they launched the long-awaited NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) mission, an ambitious and first-of-its-kind joint space mission. The offer to cooperate further on Moon missions is a logical extension of these efforts.

Gandhi Hospital Has No Head? Superintendent's Post Vacant for 13 Days

Government Draws Criticism

Indian Chronicle, "Secunderabad, August 13:" "The post of Superintendent at Gandhi Hospital, one of the most important government hospitals in Telangana, has remained vacant for the past 13 days, raising concerns over the delay in appointing a full-time officer." "Dr. Vani, who had been serving as the Superintendent of Gandhi Hospital, was transferred by the government and appointed as the Director of Medical Education (DME). However, no orders have so far been issued appointing her successor." "Meanwhile, Dr. Vani, in her capacity as DME, is reportedly continuing to oversee the hospital's affairs on a temporary basis. Managing the crucial responsibilities of the DME while simultaneously supervising a major hospital like Gandhi Hospital, which ca-



ters to thousands of patients every day, has become a challenging task." "Gandhi Hospital records around 2,000 to 3,000 outpatients every day. In the absence of a regular Superintendent, concerns are being raised over the impact on day-to-day administration, emergency medical services and important administrative decisions." "Patients and hospital staff have urged the government to act immediately and appoint a full-fledged Superintendent to Gandhi Hospital without any further delay."

Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta Inspects Ganesh Immersion Arrangements in Boduppal



"BODUPPAL, AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal Zone Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta, IAS, on Thursday inspected the Chengicherla Vaikuntadhamam roads, Chintal Cheruvu Ganesh immersion point, Racheruvu Ganesh immersion baby pond, and New Hema Nagar Community Hall under Boduppal Circle." "During the inspection, she directed the concerned officials to immediately prepare and submit proposals related to Ganesh immersion arrangements. She instructed officials to ensure adequate infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and necessary safety measures at all immersion points for the convenience and safety of devotees." "The Zonal Commissioner also reviewed sanitation conditions in the respective areas and interacted with sanitation workers to understand their concerns and problems. She further reviewed the progress of FRS enrolment and instructed officials to ensure that all eligible staff members are enrolled." "Boduppal Deputy Commissioner Shailaja, along with engineering, sanitation and town planning officials, participated in the inspection."

Youth Dies After Falling from Building

Police inspect the scene and collect details

Body shifted to Sathupalli Government Hospital for post-mortem

"Khammam Sathupalli, August 13 (Indian Chronicle):" "A tragic incident occurred in Sathupalli town in the early hours of Thursday when a 29-year-old youth died after falling from a building." "According to locals and office staff, Boddu Vineeth (29), a native of Poranki village in Penamalur mandal of NTR district, had been working as a computer operator at Vistaar Finance Company on the Sathupalli-Vemsur Road for some time. He was residing in a rented room at Ambedkar Nagar, Sathupalli." "According to preliminary information, Vineeth reportedly went to the Nagar Panchayat-Millennium School Road area late Wednesday night and climbed onto a building. He allegedly entered a house, following which the family members inside raised an alarm, shouting that a thief had entered. Vineeth reportedly came out and fell from the upper floor of the building." "He sustained serious injuries in the incident. On receiving information, locals alerted the 108 emergency service. The 108 staff reached the spot, provided emergency medical assistance and shifted him to



Sathupalli Government Hospital. However, doctors examined him and declared that he had died." "Police inspected the scene and are collecting information from various sources. They are investigating several possible angles, including why Vineeth went onto the building and what exactly happened there." "The body was shifted to Sathupalli Government Hospital for post-mortem. Further details are awaited as the police investigation continues."

Infant's Body Found in Agricultural Field

Police suspect involvement of unidentified persons

"Khammam, Kusumanchi, August 13 (Indian Chronicle):" "The body of a newborn baby was found in an agricultural field near the local Rajaka Bazaar, behind the Shiva temple in Kusumanchi mandal headquarters, on Wednesday." "According to details, farmer Nelluri Venkateswarlu was ploughing his agricultural field when he noticed the body of a newborn. He immediately informed the concerned officials and police." "Kusumanchi Sub-Inspector Divya Sri, along with Medical Officer Dr. Sai Kumar, inspected the scene. Dr. Sai Kumar reportedly stated that the remains appeared to be from an abortion at approximately four to six months of pregnancy, and had allegedly been left at the location." "Police and medical officials conducted a panchanama at the scene and shifted the remains to a hospital in Khammam for further examination and post-mortem procedures." "Meanwhile, a large number of local residents gathered at the spot after learning about the incident. Police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident and the identity of those responsible."



Kapston Home Services Pvt. Ltd. Launches Consumer App in Hyderabad

Akkineni Nagarjuna Joins as Brand Ambassador; Company Targets Expansion Across India's Major Cities

"Hyderabad, 12-08-2026: Kapston Services Ltd., one of India's most trusted manpower solutions company with over two decades of experience in the B2B services sector, today announced its official entry into the rapidly growing online home services technology market place with the launch of the Kapston Home Services App in Hyderabad through its subsidiary Kapston Services Pvt. Ltd." "The launch was graced by renowned actor Shri Akkineni Nagarjuna, who has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador for Kapston Home Services." "The event was attended by Dr. C R Naidu, Chairman, Mr. Srikanth Kodali, Managing Director of Kapston Services Ltd., along with the senior leadership team of Kapston Group, industry partners, media representatives, and distinguished guests." "Speaking on the occasion, Shri Akkineni Nagarjuna said:" "A home is built on trust, and every service that enters a customer's home should also be built on trust. Kapston has earned that trust during the last two decades by delivering manpower solution services to leading organizations across India. Their vision of bringing the same professionalism, transparency, and quality to every household convinced me to be associated with this brand. I am delighted to be part of Kapston's journey." "India's online home services industry has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, driven by increasing urbanization, digital adoption, and changing consumer lifestyles. However, the industry continues to face significant challenges in terms of skilled manpower availability, service quality, reliability, customer safety, and consistency." "Recognizing these evolving customer expectations, Kapston Home Services is entering the consumer market by leveraging its 17+ years of operational excellence, trained workforce, robust processes, technology-driven service management, and deep expertise in manpower solution services." "Addressing the gathering, Dr. C R Naidu [Retired IPS], Chairman of Kapston Services Ltd., said:" "For approximately two decades, Kapston has successfully delivered manpower solutions and support service to leading clients across India. Entering the consumer home services segment is a natural extension of our expertise. Today's customers expect trusted professionals, transparent pricing, timely service, and consistent quality. We are confident that our experience, trained workforce, and operational excellence will help us redefine the home services experience." "Mr. Srikanth Kodali, Managing Director of Kapston Services Ltd., added:" "Our vision is to build one of India's most

trusted home services brand. Hyderabad marks the beginning of this exciting journey. We will soon expand our operations to Mumbai followed by Delhi, Bengaluru, and other major cities. Our objective is to deliver reliable, technology-enabled, and professional home services while creating meaningful employment opportunities for thousands of skilled service professionals across the country." "Kapston Home Services offers a comprehensive range of professional services including Beauty & wellness, cleaning, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, painting, AC services, appliance repairs, pest control, and other essential home maintenance solutions through its easy-to-use mobile application technology platform." "The newly launched Kapston Home Services App enables customers to con-



Pasula Prabhakar Reddy Birthday Celebrations Attended by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy

"UPPAL, AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The birthday celebrations of BRS party state leader Pasula Prabhakar Reddy were held in a grand manner. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with Malkajigiri Parliamentary Constituency In-charge Ragidi Lakshma Reddy, and BRS state leader Bannala Praveen Mudiraj participated in the celebrations." "On the occasion, they presented Pasula Prabhakar Reddy with a bouquet, fe-



licitated him with a shawl, and conveyed their warm birthday wishes. They wished him a long, healthy, and happy life and expressed hope that he would rise to greater heights in public service." "A large number of BRS party leaders and activists from the Uppal constituency attended the programme and conveyed their birthday wishes to Pasula Prabhakar Reddy." "[5:54 PM, 8/13/2026] +91 93911 09207: END

State-Level Yoga Competitions to be Held in September

Telangana Yoga Association State President S.N.Reddy

"Hyderabad, August 13 (Indian Chronicle) : State-level yoga asana competitions will be held in the first week of September, Telangana Yoga Association State President S.N.Reddy said. The announcement was made at the association's executive committee meeting held at the Olympic Bhavan here on Thursday. The meeting discussed arrangements for conducting the state-level competitions. Reddy directed the district presidents and secretaries to complete district-level yoga competitions in the



Sub-Junior, Junior and Senior categories across all districts by the end of this month. He also urged them to immediately send entries of talented athletes identified at the district level for selection to the state team. Reddy called upon all members of the association to work together to ensure the successful conduct of the Khelo India national yoga competitions to be held in Telangana. State Secretary Nagireddy Siddha Reddy, along with district presidents and secretaries including Kamalakar, Ravinder, Uppala Srinivas, Kishan Naik, Ramakrishna, Uppu Ravinder, Ashok, Anusha, Murali, Anil, Varun, Sainath, Rajasekhar, Sangarapu Sammaiah, Mahender, Ramnarayan, Sagar, Santosh, Suresh, P.Prabhakar Reddy and Susia, among others, attended the meeting.

Grand Har Ghar Tiranga Rally Held in Mallapur Division



Mukesh Sagar, Shashidhar Sagar, Sheela Srinivas Kuruma, Madhu, Boda Prashanth, Anand and others participated in the programme.

“Nacharam, August 13(Indian Chornical):“A grand Har Ghar Tiranga rally was organised in Mallapur Division under the leadership of Medchal-Malkajgiri District Council Member Sangishetty Ravindra Sagar, as part of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. A large number of people participated in the rally carrying the National Flag and displaying the Tricolour with pride.“Hundreds of students, youth, women, senior citizens, community members, leaders and activists participated in the rally, cutting across caste and religious differences, and made the programme a grand success.“Speaking on the occasion, the organisers said that, in connection with the 80th Independence Day celebrations, and following the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the directions of State BJP President N. Ramchander Rao, people were encouraged to hoist the National Flag at every home and participate in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign.“They emphasised that the National Flag is a symbol of our pride and honour, and called upon every citizen to uphold the unity, integrity and spirit of the nation.“Students from Modern School participated in large numbers carrying National Flags and became a special attraction of the rally. Students, youth, women, BJP leaders and party workers marched together with the Tricolour, raising patriotic slogans that reverberated through the main roads of Mallapur Division. ““Our National Flag is our pride...““Our Tricolour is our self-respect...““A Tricolour on every home...““Patriotism in every heart!““““Har Ghar Tiranga Convenor, Mallapur Division Gopu Rajeshwar Patel, along with Shashikala, Sabitha Yadav, Muthyam Reddy, Ramulu Naik, L. Dharmaraju, Lakshma Reddy, Sujatha, Suvasini, Pokala Nirmala, Narendra Sagar, and others participated in the programme.

Excise Deputy Commissioner Receives Threats?

Somireddy approaches police alleging harassment, defamatory campaign and late-night messages

“Khammam, August 13 (Indian Chronicle):“Khammam Excise Department Deputy Commissioner Somireddy has reportedly lodged a complaint with the Khammam Urban Police alleging that real-estate businessman Kondapalli Ganesh, from Illendu in Bhadradi Kothagudem district, has been threatening him and spreading defamatory information against him.“According to the complaint, Somireddy alleged that Ganesh was deliberately conducting a campaign against him and sending threatening messages during late-night hours. He also reportedly alleged that he was being threatened with a complaint to the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).“Allegations over liquor shops““The complaint reportedly states that Kondapalli Ganesh has been giving interviews to several media channels alleging that the Deputy Commissioner was attempting to facilitate liquor shops in Illendu for followers of an MLA.““Somireddy is understood to have objected to these allegations, stating that they could damage his reputation. It was reportedly in this context that he approached the police.““I recently joined as Excise Deputy Commissioner in Khammam““Somireddy reportedly stated in his complaint that he does not personally know Kondapalli Ganesh and that, despite having recently assumed charge as Excise Deputy Commissioner in Khammam, he was being deliberately targeted through a defamatory campaign.““However, Ganesh’s response to the allegations made by the Deputy Commissioner is yet to be known. It remains to be seen what action the police will take on the complaint and to what extent the matter will be investigated.



Strict measures needed to control drugs in the district: Police Commissioner

“Khammam, August 13 Indian Chronicle:“Khammam Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt has directed police officials to take stringent measures to curb the spread of narcotic drugs in the district. He said strict action should be taken against sellers and suppliers while simultaneously blocking the supply channels reaching drug users.“The Commissioner held a crime review meeting at the Police Conference Hall on Thursday. Speaking at the meeting, he stressed the need to prevent drug addiction in society and make efforts to rehabilitate those affected by drug abuse and bring them back into normal life. He directed officials to conduct special awareness programmes in schools and colleges on the harmful effects of drugs.“Sunil Dutt expressed concern over children becoming victims of cybercriminals due to excessive use of social media. He said criminals were befriending minors through Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook and gaming applications, gaining their trust in the name of love and subsequently subjecting them to sexual harassment. He also said criminals were collecting personal photographs and later using them to threaten and blackmail children, resulting in an increase in POCOS-related complaints. He stressed that parents must take adequate precautions to ensure the safety of their children.“The Commissioner directed the police machinery to work in coordination to prevent the increasing number of road accidents in the district. He advised motorists to follow speed limits and remain particularly alert during



accident-prone hours. Traffic regulations should be strictly enforced, with helmet and seat-belt use made mandatory, he said. Special focus should be placed on drunk driving, speeding and the use of mobile phones while driving.“He instructed officials to use technology and special teams to speed up investigations and recovery of stolen property. He also directed them to strengthen night patrolling, increase CCTV surveillance and closely monitor the movements of habitual offenders to prevent thefts.“Additional DCP Ramanujam and ACPs Vasundhara Yadav, Ramanamurthy, Tirupathi Reddy, Sarangapani, Narasimha Rao, Mahesh, Sambharaju, Satyanarayana, Sarwar and Srinivasulu attended the meeting.

Sri Rama Aqua Water Plant Inaugurated by Akarapu Arun Patel

“UPPAL, AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The inauguration of Sri Rama Aqua Water Plant, newly established by Ramadevi of Venkat Reddy Nagar, was held grandly on Thursday near Gudisha Hotel. Akarapu Arun Patel, Uppal Constituency Youth Congress President and youth leader, attended the event as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the water plant.“Speaking on the occasion, Akarapu Arun Patel said that women should take the lead in all fields and excel in the business and social sectors through self-reliance. He stated that society can progress further only when women are economically and socially empowered.“He encouraged women to make the most of opportunities in self-employment and business, and to move forward with confidence and determination.Local leaders, women and colony residents participated in the programme and conveyed their best wishes to Ramadevi, the proprietor of the newly established water plant.



Girl Dies Allegedly After RMP Treatment Goes Wrong

Father Petitions Collector to Seal Hospital and Ensure Justice“Alleges Family Members Were Assaulted and Threatened

“Khammam, August 13 (Indian Chronicle):“The father of a 16-year-old girl has reportedly lodged a complaint with the Khammam District Collector, alleging that his daughter died after an injection administered during treatment by an RMP allegedly went wrong. He has sought the sealing of the concerned hospital, a comprehensive inquiry and legal action against those responsible.“According to the complaint reportedly submitted by Challa Ramesh, a resident of Baswapuram village in Konijerla mandal, his 16-year-old daughter Challa Hemashree fell ill on August 9. He said she was taken to Maruthi Sampath, who allegedly works as an RMP in Khammam and as a PRO at Vatsalya Hospital.“Ramesh alleged that Sampath provided treatment beyond his qualifications and that Hemashree’s condition deteriorated following an injection, ultimately resulting in her death. He further alleged that the family was initially not informed about her critical condition and was made to believe that she was still alive before she was taken to Vatsalya Hospital.“The complaint reportedly stated that the family was informed that treatment was being provided by Dr. K. Rajkumar at the hospital. However, after some time, they were allegedly told that Hemashree had become brain-dead and subsequently died.“When family members and village elders reached the hospital and sought details about what had happened, they were allegedly threatened and intimidated by some individuals, Ramesh claimed.“He also alleged that attempts were made to prevent the family from receiving compensation, and that family members



were assaulted, verbally abused and threatened. He further alleged that they faced difficulties in obtaining the girl’s body.“Ramesh has reportedly urged the District Collector to order a comprehensive investigation, take legal action against those responsible, initiate appropriate action against the concerned hospital and ensure justice for his family.“However, the RMP, doctors and hospital management have yet to respond to the allegations contained in the complaint. The facts of the incident are expected to emerge following investigations by the police and medical authorities.

Inspects Teaching, Interacts with Students at Gurukulam

Trainee Assistant Collector Turns Teacher, Questions Students on Their Progress

Visits Buddhist Heritage Site and Ramadasu Meditation Centre



“Khammam Nelakondapalli August 13 Indian Chronicle:“ Trainee Assistant Collector Pharas Kumar conducted a surprise inspection of the Social Welfare Gurukulam Girls’ School at Singareddypalem village in Nelakondapalli mandal on Thursday.“During the inspection, he observed the teaching process and interacted with students by stepping into the role of a teacher. He asked them questions on various subjects and assessed their academic progress. He also went around the entire Gurukulam and enquired about the problems being faced by the students.“Pharas Kumar examined various records and held discussions with the teachers and lecturers. He gave them several suggestions to improve the quality of education and enquired about the educational facilities being provided at the Gurukulam. He also discussed teaching methods, academic results and other related

issues.“Later, he visited the classrooms and interacted with the students. He enquired about their studies, progress and understanding of the lessons. He personally asked questions on different topics and assessed their responses.“The Trainee Assistant Collector also inspected the kitchen, dining hall and surrounding areas. He directed the staff to maintain proper sanitation and cleanliness across the Gurukulam. He asked the students whether they were being provided quality food and enquired about the functioning and continuous monitoring of CCTV cameras on the campus.“Later, Pharas Kumar visited the Buddhist heritage site at Nelakondapalli and enquired about its historical and cultural significance. He also visited the Bhakta Ramadasu Meditation Centre and offered special prayers.

SFI Stages Collectorate Siege in Khammam

Scholarships and Fee Reimbursements Are Students’ Right, Not Charity
Fill Vacant Lecturer Posts in Government Junior Colleges Across the District
Appoint a Dedicated Education Minister
SFI District Secretary Thudum Praveen

“Khammam, August 13 Indian Chronicle:“ As part of the Telangana State Committee’s call for a statewide protest demanding the immediate release of pending scholarships and fee reimbursements, the Students’ Federation of India (SFI) organized a massive siege of the Khammam District Collectorate with thousands of stu-

dents participating.“Speaking on the occasion, SFI District Secretary Thudum Praveen said that scholarship and fee reimbursement dues across Telangana had crossed Rs.10,000 crore. He alleged that while the state government was allocating funds for commissions and other purposes, it was showing a step-motherly attitude towards the education sector.“He criticized the government for the state being in a situation where there was no dedicated Education Minister. He said students were facing numerous problems due to the accumulation of thousands of crores in pending dues and demanded that the government release the funds immediately.“Praveen also pointed out that several government junior colleges across Khammam district did not have lecturers for all subjects. He demanded that all vacant lecturer posts be filled immediately to ensure proper teaching.“He further alleged that although the state government had announced in the Assembly that a mid-day meal scheme would be introduced in government junior colleges, it had not been implemented on the ground. He demanded its immediate implementation.“He said female students of the B.P.Ed. College in Khammam city were facing severe difficulties due to the lack of hostel facilities. Students who need to reach the ground as early as 5 a.m. are reportedly forced to walk nearly three kilometres. He demanded that a girls’ hostel be established in association with the college.“Praveen also alleged that welfare hostels were lacking basic welfare facilities and demanded that special funds be allocated for improving infrastructure and basic amenities in these hostels.“He warned that if the three ministers representing Khammam district failed to respond immediately and take steps to resolve education-related problems, the SFI would intensify its agitation and obstruct the ministers during their visits to the district.“SFI District President Vankayala Raju, State Committee member Sathwika, District Vice-President Donthaboyina Venkatesh, Khammam Division President Reddypogula Trinath, District Committee members Bhanu, Srikar, SR&BGNR College Secretary Shyam, and SFI leaders Lokesh, Bharat, Gopichand, Satyaram, Sanju, Ragini, Poojitha, Triveni, Sindhu, Bhuvana Keerthi and Pravalika, among others, participated in the programme



dents participating.“Speaking on the occasion, SFI District Secretary Thudum Praveen said that scholarship and fee reimbursement dues across Telangana had crossed Rs.10,000 crore. He alleged that while the state government was allocating funds for commissions and other purposes, it was showing a step-motherly attitude towards the education sector.“He criticized the government for the state being in a situation where there was no dedicated Education Minister. He said students were facing numerous problems due to the accumulation of thousands

Democracy Must Be Protected, Constitution Must Be Safeguarded — Grand Tiranga Rally Held in Chilkanagar

*****UPPAL, AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A grand Tiranga Rally was organized in Chilkanagar on Thursday, following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to spread the spirit of patriotism and national unity to every household. The rally was led by Uppal Assembly Convenor Devasani Balachander, with Convenor Muthyala Krishna Reddy and Co-Convenor Jeripothula Kishan overseeing the arrangements. A large number of students and teachers from St. Andrews, Nalanda Public School and Krishnaveni Talent School in Chilkanagar participated in the rally. The participants carried forward the message, "A Tricolour on every home, patriotism in every heart." Emphasizing that the national flag represents India's unity, integrity and sovereignty, leaders and representatives from various political parties, prominent personalities, youth organizations, women's groups, intellectuals, ex-servicemen and colony welfare associations participated in the rally, rising above caste, religion and political affiliations. Holding the Tricolour in their hands, the participants raised slogans of "Vande Mataram" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," making the rally a grand success. On the occasion, the organizers felicitated retired Air Force officer Pochayya with a shawl. Speaking later, Devasani Balachander said he would approach the concerned authorities and make efforts to establish a playground for students of various schools in Chilkanagar, considering the long-standing need for a sports ground. He warned that if there was no positive response from the authorities, a large-scale movement would be launched with the support of the people of Chilkanagar, and, if necessary, they would even undertake a hunger strike to achieve the demand.



Pasula Prabhakar Reddy's Birthday Celebrations Attended by Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and Ragidi Lakshma Reddy



*****RAMANTHAPUR , AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The birthday celebrations of BRS party state leader Pasula Prabhakar Reddy were held grandly

in Ramanthapur. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and BRS Malkajgiri Parliamentary constituency in-charge Ragidi Lakshma Reddy attended the celebrations and conveyed their birthday wishes to Pasula Prabhakar Reddy. On the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and Ragidi Lakshma Reddy presented a bouquet to Pasula Prabhakar Reddy and congratulated him. They wished him good health, happiness and a long life. They also expressed their hope that he would rise to greater heights in public service and continue to serve the people more extensively. They wished Pasula Prabhakar Reddy continued success in the future and encouraged him to remain accessible to the public and expand his service activities. Family members, admirers, party leaders and activists also conveyed their birthday wishes to him. BRS Malkajgiri Parliamentary constituency in-charge Ragidi Lakshma Reddy, along with BRS party leaders, activists and supporters, participated in the birthday celebrations.

CP Sumathi Conducts Surprise Inspection at Medipally ACP Office

*****MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Malkajgiri Police Commissioner Sumathi conducted a surprise inspection of the Medipally ACP office under the Malkajgiri Police Commissionerate on Thursday. Commissioner Sumathi arrived at the ACP office without any prior notice, where police personnel accorded her a guard of honour. Later, she planted saplings on the police station premises. On the occasion, she reportedly advised the staff to contribute to environmental protection and maintain police office premises clean, green and pleasant. Subsequently, CP Sumathi, along with Uppal DCP Suresh Kumar, held a review meeting with Medipally ACP Mohan Kumar. She reviewed details of cases registered under the ACP's jurisdiction, the progress of investigations, pending cases, staff strength and the problems being faced at various police stations. The Commissioner enquired about the stage of investigation in major cases, measures being taken to dispose of pending cases at the earliest, strategies being implemented to control crime and steps being taken to maintain law and order. She also sought details regarding the problems faced by police personnel at various stations under the Medipally ACP limits, difficulties in performing their duties, police services being provided to the public, resolution of public complaints and measures being taken to prevent crime. CP Sumathi reportedly directed officials to give special attention to crime prevention while ensuring better police services to the public.



She instructed personnel to remain vigilant in the discharge of their duties, prevent any disruption to law and order and resolve public issues and complaints promptly. The Commissioner also stressed the need for police personnel to discharge their responsibilities in a manner that strengthens public confidence in the police. She advised officers to maintain a friendly approach towards citizens while taking strict action against those who violate the law. During the meeting, CP Sumathi reviewed various issues with the police personnel, including duty performance, maintenance of law and order, crime prevention, resolution of public complaints and investigation of pending cases.



"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 13):- Government Whip 10000/- Government 50000/- DEO 50000/- Municipal Chairman Thangallapalli Srivani Ravikumar provided financial assistance of 10000/- as immediate assistance to the family of Halima who died in an accident.

Public government to distribute automatic sewing machines to BC women with 100 percent subsidy:- Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah



*** (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 13):- Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah said that the public administration government in Telangana is launching a scheme to distribute automatic sewing machines with 100 percent subsidy with the aim of providing self-employment to women from weaker sections. On this occasion, Beerla Ayilaiah expressed special thanks to the state Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar Goud. He suggested that BC women should apply for this scheme from August 15th to September 15th. He said that special priority will be given to the Scheduled Castes in this scheme. He said that the government has undertaken a program to provide these sewing machines to a total of 1,19,000 women, 1,000 for each constituency in 119 constituencies of the state. He said that the government will spend Rs. 12,000 for each automatic sewing machine with 100 percent subsidy. He said that employment opportunities are already being provided to women through free bus travel, petrol pumps, Indira Canteens, RTC buses and other programs, and in the same way, Beerla Ayilaiah said that the sewing machine scheme will be very useful for providing self-employment to BC women. He said that in the future, efforts will be made to expand this scheme further and provide additional employment opportunities to women. Welfare schemes to the people through morning walk. Beerla Ayilaiah said that in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, public

representatives, leaders and activists are directly visiting the people and visiting their families through morning walk programs. He said that after knowing the problems and needs of the people, they are identifying the government welfare schemes for which they are eligible, registering applications and submitting them to the relevant authorities. 30 types of free blood tests for women of self-help groups. Beerla Ayilaiah said that the government has started a program to conduct 30 types of free blood tests through Telangana Diagnostics with the aim of knowing the health condition of women of self-help groups in Telangana state and providing them with necessary medical services. He revealed that this program was first started in Aleru constituency in Telangana state. He urged the women of self-help groups to take advantage of this opportunity and get free blood tests done. Beerla Ayilaiah said that Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district is ranked first in the SIR program and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district has stood first in the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) program being conducted in the state of Telangana. He expressed special thanks to the BLOs who worked hard to organize this program successfully and the BLAs who supported them. He called on public representatives, officials and party leaders to work in coordination so that the people can access government welfare schemes and everyone who is eligible gets government benefits.

DLSA Awareness Programme on World Organ Donation Day



***Khammam, August 13 (Indian Chronicle): On the occasion of World Organ Donation Day, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Khammam, organised an awareness programme on organ donation at the Government Hospital, Khammam, on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, DLSA Secretary Smt. P. Devi said that organ donation can help save precious lives even after a person's death. She stressed the need to dispel misconceptions among the public and create greater awareness about organ donation. She explained the procedure for registering as an organ donor, the importance of consent, legal aspects and the procedures to be followed in organ donation. She stated that organ donation must be carried out voluntarily and through a legally recognised process, while the illegal trade of human organs is prohibited by law. She further said that creating widespread awareness about organ donation could help provide a new lease of life to patients in need of organs. She called upon the youth to take an active role in creating awareness about organ donation among the public. Government Hospital Medical Superintendent Sri Narender, medical staff, trainee students, DLSA panel advocates and Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs), among others, participated in the programme.

Tragedy in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district Student Halima dies after huge neem tree branch falls on Bhagayat school



"(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 13):- A terrible tragedy has taken place in the premises of Bagayat school in Bhuvanagiri town of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. A student named Halima died and some other students sustained minor injuries in the incident when a huge neem tree branch in the premises suddenly fell on the students while they were playing in the school grounds. Several students were seriously injured in the incident and are undergoing treatment at a private hospital. In this incident, a student named Halima died on the way to Hyderabad. Upon learning about the incident, Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah visited the students undergoing treatment at Bibinagar AIIMS. After inquiring about the health condition of the students, MLA Beerla Ayilaiah asked the doctors to provide them with better treatment. He said that he is providing financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 to the family of the deceased student Halima. It was revealed that financial assistance of Rs. 5,000 each is being provided to several injured students for treatment. MLA Beerla Ayilaiah expressed his grief that the loss of life due to the tree branch falling on the students is very painful. He expressed his deep sympathy to the family of the deceased Halima. He wished the injured students a speedy recovery.



YOUTH BECOME PARTNERS IN BUILDING VIKSIT BHARAT WITH NATION FIRST RESOLVE : NRR

Hyderabad, Aug 13 : BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao today emphasized that despite several countries across the globe being engulfed in war and crisis, India's economic progress continues onward successfully without interruption due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, great decisions, and good governance. “ He attended as the chief guest in the massive 'Tiranga Rally' organized in Peddapalli district headquarters to mark the 80th Independence Day celebrations. In the Tiranga rally, BJP cadres, students, youth, and the general public turned out in large numbers carrying national flags, making the rally a grand success. MLC Malka Komuriah, senior leader Gomasa Srinivas, BJP District President Karre Sanjeeva Reddy, state leaders Manohar Reddy, Suresh Reddy, and others participated in the rally.” Speaking on the occasion, Rao called upon everyone to make it their primary resolve to shape India into a powerful 'Viksit Bharat' on the world stage in the coming days. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has already emerged as the 4th largest economy in the world, and stressed that students and youth who build the nation's

future must play a pivotal role in this journey of development.” He stated that the Central Government has brought revolutionary changes in providing employment and job opportunities to the youth in the country. He praised initiatives like Make in India, Startup India, Standup India, and MUDRA loans for helping crores of youth become self-employed and turn into job creators.” Rao said there was a remarkable progress achieved in the education sector under the Modi government, he said and explained that while there were previously only 16 IITs in the country, the number has now grown to 23, and NITs have expanded from just 6 in the past to 25 today. Similarly, AIIMS hospitals have been established in every state. He revealed that great reforms have been introduced across the entire education system, including central universities.” On the auspicious occasion approaching Independence Day, he clarified that our mindset should always protect the country's integrity. BJP State President urged everyone to work together with the resolve of “Nation First” and become active partners in building a New India.

Synthetic Colours Used in Kara Preparation; Man Arrested



““MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 13 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A man was arrested by Medipally police for allegedly preparing kara snacks without the required permissions or registration, in unhygienic conditions and using synthetic food colours, in Chengicherla.”According to police, they received information at around 1:30 p.m. on Thursday that kara items were being prepared illegally at SVS Kara Items Shop in Srimatha Aravind Colony. Police, accompanied by mediators, raided the shop. A man who allegedly attempted to flee after seeing the police was apprehended and questioned.”During the search, police seized 30 kg of appadams, 30 kg of murukku, along with

bottles of Three Star Lemon Yellow and Three Star Orange Red synthetic food colours.”The arrested person was identified as Thambidurai Vishnu (28).”During questioning, police found that he was allegedly preparing kara items using synthetic food colours in unhygienic conditions without the necessary permissions and registration, and supplying them to nearby hot chips shops.”Medipally police registered a case and launched an investigation into the incident. The seized materials have been preserved for further action

TribeVibe Entertainment and Alphonso Studios announce the return of Navratri Utsav with the undisputed Queen of Garba: Falguni Pathak, for nine unforgettable nights in Mumbai

“““Hyderabad: ““““Every Navratri, one name becomes synonymous with the spirit of the season: Falguni Pathak. For almost four decades, she has been the unmistakable voice of the festival, bringing generations together through music and tradition, year after year. This October, produced and promoted by TribeVibe Entertainment and Alphonso Studios, Navratri Utsav 2026 returns to Mumbai as India's biggest and premium Navratri celebration. Taking place from October 11th to 19th, 2026, at the Jio World Convention Centre, the nine-night spectacle will once again see the undisputed Queen of Garba, Falguni Pathak, perform live every single night, making it the country's definitive and immersive Navratri experience under one roof. “““An exclusive pre-sale of tickets will go live for consumers who purchased tickets to last year's edition on Tuesday, August 12th at 12:00 PM IST. General On-Sale of tickets will go live on Thursday, August 13th, 2026 at 1:00 PM exclusively on BookMyShow. “““Speaking on the return of Navratri Utsav, Falguni Pathak said, "Navratri has always been more than a festival for me, it is an emotion that brings people together through music, devotion and celebration. Every year, it is incredibly special to see generations come together to sing, dance and create memories that last a lifetime. I am truly blessed and excited to return for Navratri Utsav 2026 at the Jio World Convention Centre, a venue that allows us to celebrate on an even grander scale, without interruptions. There is nothing quite like sharing these nine nights with thousands of people who come together for the same joy, energy and tradition. I can't wait to celebrate with everyone once again.” ““Shoven Shah, Founder & CEO, TribeVibe Entertainment, added, "Navratri Utsav was envisioned as an experience that honours the essence of India's most loved festival while elevating it through world class production and execution. Together with Alphonso Studios, we are proud to bring back an event that has become a landmark celebration for audiences across generations. With Falguni Pathak performing live across all nine nights in a premium indoor setting, Navratri Utsav 2026 will once again deliver an experience unlike any other.”



Amidst regional ferment, Kurds’ quest for statehood



West Asia is in a geo-engineering flux not seen since the birth of Israel 77 years ago. The perennial Palestinian issue is at a pivotal moment with an extreme right Israeli government's hard-line position at odds with the Arab States' insistence on a two-state solution for the Abraham Accords' expansion. After the loss of regional proxies and the resumption of American “maximum pressure” tactics and military threat, a weakened and isolated Iran has agreed to negotiate its nuclear programme. The toppling of the five decades-old al-Assad regime has created new paradigms. Although Turkey has ambitions to reshape Syria, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is battling an Intefadah at home. The decline of oil prices by a fifth in 2025 may upend the regional economic stability. Amidst this tumult, U.S. President Donald Trump, the global disruptor of “Gaza Riviera” fame, is set to pay his first visit abroad to the Gulf next month.How does this regional commotion impact a century-old quest by Kurds for statehood? In the past century, two diaspora-based states, viz. Israel and Armenia, have been created in West Asia. Could Kurdistan be the next or, once again, likely to be brushed under the carpet as weightier developments and superpower politics take precedence? Let us examine the prospects in some detail.An unrealised dream

Kurds are not only the biggest minority group in West Asia, but they are also the world's largest ethnic minority without a state of their own. Estimates vary, but their total population is put at 35 million-45 million. The overwhelming majority of them live in Turkey (around 17 million, 20% of the total population), Iraq (9 million, 20%), Iran (8 million, 10%), and Syria (2.5 million, 10%). Kurd diaspora exists in Germany (around 1.5 million) and other West European countries.While Kurds have their sub-divisions, their common identity is shaped by a shared history and the craggy geography of Asia Minor. Anthropological studies put them to be of Old Mediterranean and Caucasian stock, distinct from either Turkic, Semitic, or Iranian ethnicities dominating their existence. While most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, they are linked to other regional ethnic minorities, such as Yezidis, Alevi, and Zoroastrianism.

The Kurds have a reputation for gritty bravery. Historically, they have often been either exploited as a geo-political pawn or subject to suppression and exclusion. One of the rare occasions when they led the endgame was in the 12th century when Salahuddin, a Kurd General, commanded the Islamic legion to liberate Jerusalem from crusading Christian armies. The Kurdish quest for a state has remained unrequited. The nearest the Kurds came to realising this ambition was at the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, negotiated to dismantle the Ottoman empire. It promised the Kurds an autonomous state in eastern Turkey. However, the Young Turks under Kemal Ataturk thwarted the Kurdistan Homeland project and instead foisted assertive Turkish nationalism. Since then, Ankara has single-mindedly suppressed the identity of Kurds, who were officially called “mountain Turks”. This repression has continued: as late as 1994, a Kurdish female MP was sentenced to 15 years in prison for temerity to speak a sentence in Kurdish after her swearing-in about the Kurd-Turk brotherhood.Counterproductive repression

Turkish repression has been counterproductive: it led to the formation in 1978 of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) by Abdullah Öcalan which has waged a campaign for Kurdish independence. Mr. Öcalan was caught in 1999 and is still in solitary confinement in a Turkish jail. Four decades of no-holds-barred conflict has killed an

estimated 37,000 people. Following the recent softening of Ankara's policies, Mr. Öcalan has called for the cessation of hostilities and PKK declared a ceasefire on March 15. Turkey has announced a \$20 billion socio-economic reconstruction plan for the south-east of the country where most Kurds live but a political package to bring the Kurds to the Turkish mainstream is still awaited.The 13-year civil war provided Syria's Kurds a rare opportunity to fill in the politico-strategic vacuum. With substantive American support, a formidable Kurdish Self Defence Force (SDF) was created to fight the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. SDF currently controls nearly 40% of Syria. This has caused considerable threat perceptions in Ankara which accuses SDF of helping PKK. Turkey has sought to checkmate the SDF by creating exclusion zones and forming a militia against it. However, the US pressure has prevented it from an anti-SDF military campaign. In a potentially far-reaching move on March 11, the SDF Commander and the interim Syrian President signed a basic agreement to integrate the SDF into the new Damascus politico-strategic architecture. Even otherwise, SDF's good fortunes may diminish with the planned attenuation of American military presence in Syria.

During Saddam Hussein's rule, Kurds in neighbouring Iraq suffered brutal pogroms, forced deportation and even chemical weapons attacks. However, the situation changed in 1991 after the U.S. Operation Desert Storm substantially weakened Iraqi hold over Kurds and a Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) was formed in 1992. The Constitution of Iraq following the U.S. occupation of the country granted the KRG considerable autonomy although a 2017 referendum on Kurdistan Regional Independence, which received 92% support, was disallowed by the Iraqi Supreme Court stating that no Iraqi province was allowed to secede. Meanwhile, oil-rich KRG has sought to assert its autonomy, often creating a piquant situation with Baghdad authorities. Following an international arbitration ruling, oil exports through the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline have been suspended for the past two years. Turkish armed forces have also been active in hitting alleged PKK targets in KRG. Iran, too, has occasionally attacked the alleged hostile U.S.-Israeli presence in KRG. Thus, although KRG has now been around for over three decades, its existence is still quite tenuous.

Compared to repression elsewhere in the region, the Iranian regimes have been marginally benign to its Kurds who mostly live in the northwest of the country along mountainous borders with Turkey and Iraq; some Kurds are also living in the Khorasan province in the northeast. These areas lie along the geo-strategic faultlines, forcing Kurds to choose between loyalty to Tehran, Ankara, or Baghdad. Unlike in other Kurdish-populated countries, there are strong ethnic and cultural ties between Kurds and Persians and some modern Iranian dynasties were partly of Kurdish origin. While Tehran has never employed the same level of brutality against its own Kurds as Turkey or Iraq, it has always been implacably opposed to Kurdish separatism. During the long Persian-Ottoman wars and the recent Iran-Iraq war, largely Sunni Kurds were often suspected of being the fifth column of the foreign powers. Under the Islamic Republic, attempts to Persianise, and general economic deprivation, spurred centrifugal tendencies among Iranian Kurds. With the considerable weakening of the Iranian state and looming prospects of the U.S.-Israel military campaign against Tehran, Iranian Kurds, the country's largest minority, may feel encouraged to secede.

Recent weakening of the central authority in each of the aforementioned four countries has brightened the prospects of Kurdish statehood and such proto-states have already emerged in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, they neither have a unifying ideology such as Zionism nor a transnational political entity to dovetail their statehood to the emerging grand Western strategy for West Asia. Their hopes rest on the regional entropy creating a situation conducive to the creation of a Kurdistan. However, even if such a pro-Western surrogate Kurdish state is grafted, it remains to be seen whether it would face autoimmune rejection (as Israel) from regional powers or take deep roots.In short, Kurds' fate currently swings between two of their apt proverbs:

World Bank not informed of India’s decision on Indus Waters Treaty

The World Bank has not been informed of India's decision to keep the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in “abeyance,” sources confirmed to The Hindu. Throughout the history of the treaty, the WB has played a key role as a mediator in cases of disputes arising between India and Pakistan on water sharing agreements, as laid out in the IWT.On Thursday (April 24, 2025), Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, wrote to her Pakistan counterpart, Syed Ali Murtaza, that India was keeping the treaty in abeyance with “immediate effect.”“The obligation to honour a treaty in good faith is fundamental to a treaty. However, what we have seen instead is sustained cross-border terrorism by Pakistan targeting the Indian Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir,” her letter says.The “security uncertainties” have directly impeded India's “full utilisation rights” and Pakistan's action of not responding to previous requests by India to renegotiate the treaty was a “breach of trust” on its part.A Government source told The Hindu that, as Pakistan had been informed about India's position on the treaty, therefore there was “no need” to inform the WB.

A spokesperson for the WB said that “it did not opine” on “treaty-related sovereign decisions taken by its member countries.”“The Indus Water Treaty is an agreement between India and Pakistan that has been profoundly important and successful for more than 60 years”, the World Bank spokesperson said, backing the treaty in response to questions from The Hindu. The spokesperson explained that the Bank was only a “signatory to the treaty for a limited set of defined tasks”, when asked if it planned any measures to reverse the suspension. Implication of India's moveFollowing the Pahalgam attack, India announced on Wednesday (April 23, 2025) that it would hold the IWT, in place since 1960, “in abeyance.” On the surface, this implies that India will stop its periodic communication with Pakistan on sharing hydrological data on the Indus rivers or keep them apprised of infrastructural work on hydro-electric projects in the Chenab, Jhelum and the Indus main, also known as the Western rivers.However, even prior to the Pahalgam incident, the Permanent Indus Commission – or the teams of experts from India and Pakistan that attempt to resolve disputes regarding the sharing of the waters of the Indus basin – hasn't convened since 2022.India in 2023 had called on



Pakistan to “renegotiate” the treaty primarily because several of the original circumstances that prevailed when the treaty was formed had changed. Among them were, changes in the population structure, water requirements, the threat from climate-related cataclysms and ‘cross border terrorism’ were among the reasons India cited to renegotiate the six-decade-old treaty.Under the terms of the IWT, India cannot create significant hydropower storage on the Western rivers – Indus, Jhelum, Chenab – and must maintain water levels at prescribed levels, to ensure that no untoward flooding or disruption of Pakistan's agriculture happens.Its prominent hydropower projects on these rivers such as the Kishenganga project, Baglihar project are run-of-the river, meaning diverting the flow of the river to generate electricity. These projects do not halt the flow of the river via creating storage structures, though in nearly all of the disputes over the years regarding developing hydropower projects, Pakistan has accused India of modifying the design of structures to be able to perniciously control the flows of the rivers with India then clarifying that its intentions were purely to keep the projects running in optimal conditions.“For India to weaponise the waters of the Indus, it has to completely ignore the IWT. Under the current terms of the treaty, this can't be done,” a scientist affiliated to the Central Water Commission.Following the Pahalgam attack, sources have told The Hindu that India will explore “options that it has never considered” under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

How exports are concentrated in few States



Despite a weakening rupee that has put India in the bracket of Asian countries with the worst performing currency, the economy's export numbers look impressive in the aggregate. However, a closer reading of the data reveals a far more uneven and structurally revealing story. When stripped of national aggregates, the data reveals a sharp divergence in performance across regions. A rigorous interrogation of the RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian States 2024-25 reveals underlying structural dynamics.

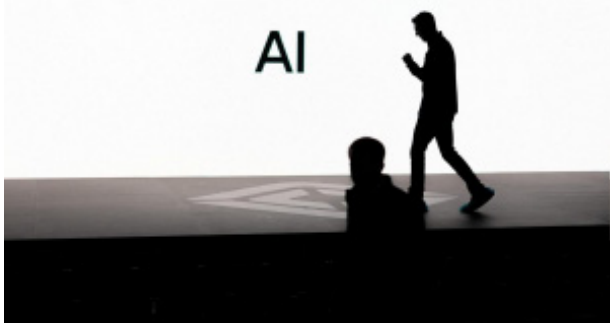
A core-periphery patternThe geography of India's trade is becoming perilously lopsided as the export engine is being powered by a shrinking cluster of States. The top five exporters — Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh — now command nearly 70% of the national export basket. This creates a deceptive narrative where the national average masks a deepening regional crisis — where exports are becoming agglomerated rather than being dispersed across the nation. Firms are increasingly benefiting from spatial clustering, and not spreading out to newer regions. Half a decade ago, the top five States contributed roughly 65% of national exports. That figure has now crept close to 70%. In technical terms, the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), a standard metric used to gauge market concentration, of India's export geography is rising, signalling that India's export geography is becoming dangerously top-heavy. Instead of regions which are lagging behind trying to catch up to these States, we are witnessing a hardening core-periphery pattern. The coastal belts of the south and west are integrating tighter into global supply chains while the vast demographic heartland of the north and the east are effectively decoupling from the trade engine. To understand why this divergence is accelerating, one must look beyond domestic policy to the tightening constraints of today's global trading environment. Shifting from volume to value

The window for low-skill, labour-intensive industrialisation that allowed countries like Bangladesh or Vietnam to plug into the world economy is closing. WTO data indicates a structural slowing of merchandise trade volume growth to a band of 0.5-3%. The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 2023 report estimates show that the top 10 global exporters control approximately 55% of world merchandise trade. In this environment, global capital is not merely seeking low-cost labour which was the traditional advantage of India's hinterland. In today's global economy, capital is no longer drawn merely to low costs but to high economic complexity. Research in economic complexity shows that economies with more diverse and tightly connected export baskets are far better positioned to transition into higher-value production. Product space visualisations reveal a networked structure in which sophisticated goods, such as machinery and automotive components, cluster in dense core areas, enabling relatively smooth movement into adjacent advanced technologies. In contrast, regions whose export baskets are concentrated in sparsely connected, peripheral areas face steep barriers to structural upgrading, as they lack the underlying capabilities required to enter complex value chains.

The tragedy of this divergence is compounded by a shift in the nature of production itself. It undermines the long-held assumption that export expansion would automatically

absorb surplus labour. For decades, development theory assumed export expansion would serve as the primary bridge from agriculture to mass industrial employment. That link is now broken. We are witnessing a clear trend of capital deepening where the ratio of capital to labour increases permanently. The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2022-23 data reveals a "smoking gun" where fixed capital investment grew by roughly 10.6% while employment growth lagged at just 7.4%. The factory floor is becoming more expensive and less labour-absorptive as the fixed capital per person engaged has risen to ₹23.6 lakh. We are exporting value rather than volume of employment. This effectively bypasses the labour-intensive phase of industrialisation that East Asian economies utilised to build their middle classes. Capital over the workerThe Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) corroborates this capital bias from the household side. If the export boom were truly labour-intensive, we would expect a sharp structural shift of workers into factory jobs. Instead, the latest PLFS data indicates that the manufacturing sector's share of total employment has stubbornly hovered around 11.6%-12%. This stagnation persists even as export values hit record highs. It implies that the elasticity of employment with respect to export growth has collapsed. The jobs being created are not in the labour-absorbing factories of the hinterland but in the capital-intensive hubs of the coast. This capital bias is further evidenced by the structural compression in the wage share of Net Value Added (NVA). ASI data indicates that as productivity rises in automated sectors like petrochemicals or precision electronics, the gains accrue disproportionately to capital owners rather than wage earners. The worker is becoming less central to the production process. This explains why we see high GDP growth in industrial States without a commensurate explosion in mass prosperity. Even the PLI-driven surge in electronics exports, growing over 47% year-on-year, is spatially sticky. It remains locked in specific districts in Kancheepuram or Noida because the complexity of these supply chains requires a logistics precision that does not exist outside these industrial islands. The failure of the hinterland to converge is ultimately a failure of state capacity and financial depth. It creates a vicious cycle where the poor subsidise the rich. The RBI's data on Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratios offers a stark financial MRI of this divide. In export powerhouses like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, the CD ratio frequently surpasses 90%. This implies a high velocity of money where local savings are aggressively recycled into local industry. In contrast, in the hinterland States of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, the ratio languishes below 50%. This indicates a perverse form of capital flight where the savings of the hinterland are deposited in banks only to be lent out to projects in the industrialised coast. These financial constraints are compounded by persistent human capital deficits in low-export States, constraining their ability to generate the skilled, healthy workforce required for integration into high-complexity global value chains. Need for new metricsWhat emerges from this evidence is a quiet but profound shift. Exports in India are no longer operating as a lever of structural transformation but have become an outcome of prior structural capacity. States do not export their way into development; they export because they are already developed enough to do so. In this sense, export performance is increasingly a mirror of accumulated industrial wealth rather than a pathway toward building it. If export-linked industrial policy may no longer generate labour-intensive employment, and not catalyse convergence, then the role of an open economy in India's development strategy must be carefully re-examined. Treating export growth as a proxy for inclusive economic prosperity for all risks mistaking outcomes for instruments. It also signals a gap between hope and reality. The danger is not that India misses global trade opportunities, but that it is perhaps measuring progress using a metric that increasingly reflects past advantages rather than future inclusion. Deepanshu Mohan is professor and dean, O.P. Jindal Global University and Director, Centre for New Economics Studies

necks in deploying agentic systems today is error accumulation. Small mistakes compound across multi-step workflows, forcing enterprises to rely on human oversight as a safety net. Mr. Rajagopal's view is that this dependency will not scale. The breakthrough will come from self-verification. Instead of inserting humans into every loop, AI systems will develop internal feedback mechanisms. They will be able to judge, validate, and correct their own outputs. These "auto-judging" agents will mark a shift from supervised automation to self-regulating systems, making large-scale, reliable agentic workflows viable for enterprise use. This evolution in AI capability will inevitably reshape the human side of technology as well. Plumbing organisational hierarchiesOne of the most striking implications Mr. Rajagopal outlined is how AI will redefine the software engineering hierarchy itself. As agents take over routine coding and repetitive tasks, the traditional ladder, in which juniors handle low-level implementation and seniors design systems, will blur. Junior engineers will be pushed up the stack, working earlier on infrastructure, integration, and system-level thinking. Senior engineers, meanwhile, will become orchestrators who design architectures, mentor teams, and ensure humans and AI systems collaborate effectively. This will force a rethink of computer science education, career paths, and what it means to be "experienced" in a world where execution is increasingly automated. Threaded through all of this is a geopolitical undercurrent. The U.S. style of AI development has become increasingly corporatised and closed, driven by scale, capital intensity, and proprietary advantage. China, by contrast, is leaning more heavily into academic and open-source approaches, integrating research and state-backed ecosystems. India, meanwhile, sits at a crossroads. It has the talent, the data, and the scale. But its position in the global AI race will depend on whether it invests in open foundations,



Enterprise AI is maturing — will 2026 be the year it breaks free?

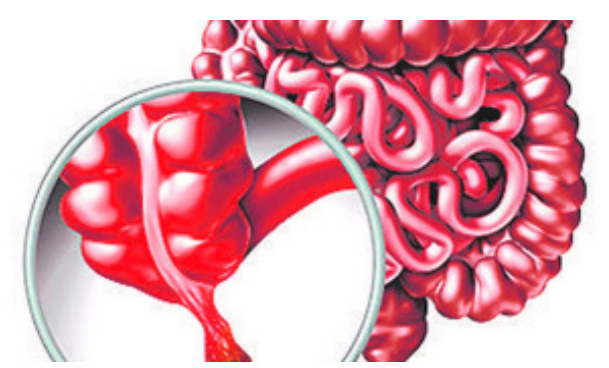
For the past few years, artificial intelligence has lived in a strange duality. On the surface, it looked magical — conversational systems, image generators, copilots that seem to reason. Underneath, enterprises have struggled with a more sober reality: hallucinations, brittle workflows, governance risks, and systems that work impressively in demos but falter at scale. In my recent conversation with Dwarak Rajagopal, Head of AI Research at Snowflake, what stood out was not optimism or scepticism, but maturity. AI, he suggested, is finally moving out of its adolescence. And the changes ahead, in 2026, will be less about bigger models and more about how intelligence is structured, verified, and distributed.

One of the most consequential shifts underway is the quiet erosion of monopoly power in foundation models. For much of the current AI cycle, a handful of companies have dominated the narrative, capital, and capabilities around large models. But Mr. Rajagopal pointed to a critical inflection: the centre of gravity is moving from pre-training to post-training. The biggest breakthroughs are no longer coming from simply scaling parameters, but from how models are refined with specialized, high-quality data. This is opening the door for open source foundation models that can be customized, fine-tuned, and deployed for specific enterprise needs.

In 2026, this will fundamentally weaken the grip of a few AI giants and enable a more distributed innovation ecosystem where startups, researchers, and enterprises build on shared foundations rather than proprietary silos. This shift has deep implications for how intelligence is deployed inside organisations. Enterprises do not need general intelligence; they need contextual intelligence. They need systems that understand their data, their workflows, and their constraints. Open source models, combined with enterprise data platforms, make that possible. AI is no longer being treated as an oracle. It is being treated as infrastructure. The next major frontier, according to Mr. Rajagopal, will not be another leap in raw model capability but advances in agentic AI, driven by improvements in context windows and memory. Today's models remain constrained by working memory. They are powerful in single interactions but fragile across long, multi-step tasks. In 2026, innovation will focus on giving agents persistent memory that will let them retain longer contexts, learn from prior actions, and operate across extended timelines. This will allow AI systems to move beyond reactive assistance and toward sustained problem-solving, supporting complex business processes rather than isolated queries. Automation won't be that easy

Yet autonomy brings risk. One of the biggest bottle-

Your appendix plays a bigger role in your health than you may think



For decades, the human appendix was casually dismissed as a "useless" vestige. Modern research and clinical experience, however, suggest that this small, narrow pouch, attached to the cecum in the lower right abdomen, has a more nuanced role than once believed. "The appendix is like a safe house for good bacteria, supporting the digestive system after illness," says Sugi Subramaniam, senior consultant, surgical gastroenterology at SRM Global Hospitals, Chennai. Beyond this, it may influence the immune system, especially early in life, by exposing white blood cells to antigens in the digestive tract, he notes. Arunmozhi Varman, consultant for laparoscopic and robotic hernia surgery, Rela Hospitals, Chennai describes it as a lymphoid organ that helps the gut recover post-infection.

"Our ancestors may have needed the appendix more, when food cleanliness was uncertain, but even today, it quietly supports immunity. It's a small, silent job, but not the appendix is not a piece of waste as we once assumed," stresses J. Saravanan, senior consultant surgical gastroenterologist & robotic surgeon, VS Hospitals, Chennai. Typically 7–10 cm long, the appendix varies in position and size, sometimes ranging from 2 cm to 20 cm. Gautham Krishnamurthy, senior consultant, surgical gastroenterologist, Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, adds that the appendix has historically been important for digesting raw, plant-based food. Today, it functions mainly as beneficial gut bacteria, protecting and aiding replenishment after disturbances such as diarrhoeal illnesses.

The appendix can become inflamed, causing appendicitis—a common surgical emergency. Classic symptoms include abdominal pain beginning near the belly button and shifting to the lower right side, accompanied by fever, nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite. Siddharth D., consultant, minimally invasive surgery at SIMS Hospital, notes that acute appendicitis affects around 9% of the population, most commonly in their twenties and thirties. Appendicitis is caused by an obstruction from hardened stools (faecolith), an infection, or rarely, tumors. Myths — such as fruit seeds

How junk food, hidden genes and obesity pushed teen to a liver transplant

Fatty liver in teens may seem rare. Except it isn't. It is now the most frequent cause of chronic liver disease, affecting an estimated 10–17 percent of adolescents with obesity. What remains rare, however, is the need for a liver transplant in a child under 18. That was the life-saving intervention for a 14-year-old boy from Surat, who arrived at Mumbai's Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital with acute liver failure caused by an advanced form of fatty liver disease. His case is a stark reminder of why childhood obesity demands urgent attention, especially in Indians who are genetically predisposed to fatty liver disease, even with only abdominal fat.

The teen is now recovering at home, with all parameters holding steady as he underwent a liver transplant just a month ago. His father stepped in as donor and gave his right lobe to save him. "The boy arrived with serious complications, including jaundice, fluid accumulation in the abdomen and severe water retention that led to a sudden 15–20 kg weight gain," says Dr Gaurav Gupta, co-director, Department of Liver Transplant and HPB Surgery at the hospital. "The swelling began to reduce after surgery." What triggered the crisis was a genetic mutation that promotes fat accumulation and retention in the liver. But genetics alone was not responsible. "These predispositions often interact with environmental factors such as diet, obesity and insulin resistance," Dr Gupta explains. "A person with high genetic risk may never develop severe disease if they maintain a healthy lifestyle. But like many teens, this boy regularly consumed ultra-processed and junk foods, which accelerated the damage."

Why teen obesity and imbalanced diet pushed the boy over the edge

After evaluating the boy, Dr Gupta thought about all means to manage symptoms of liver failure. But transplant seemed the only option. "In such cases, the liver can no longer perform essential functions such as filtering toxins, producing proteins and storing glucose," Dr Gupta says. "He had jaundice and massive fluid retention, particularly in his legs. Increased pressure in liver veins forces fluid into the abdomen, causing severe swelling that affects breathing and eating." A series of investigations revealed multiple genetic mutations that explained the rapid deterioration. "A transplant was necessary because a healthy donor liver does not carry the same mutations," he explains. At the time of surgery, the boy weighed nearly 84 kg due to fluid overload. Today, his weight is in the low 60s. "His bilirubin level was above 10 mg/dL and has now returned to normal. All symptoms of liver failure have resolved," says Dr Gupta. Because the condition had a genetic basis, first-degree relatives were also advised to undergo genetic testing. "The goal is early lifestyle correction to prevent similar damage," he adds. Genetic testing revealed high-risk variants in the PNPLA3 and GCKR genes, which significantly increase susceptibility to fatty liver disease and are particularly prevalent in the Indian population. "However, genetics alone was not responsible. The diet was the accelerator," says Dr Arti Pawaria, chief paediatric hepatologist and paediatric transplant physician. Unhealthy dietary patterns, excess calorie intake and reduced physical activity aggravated his genetic risk. "He consumed highly processed foods in his diet like packaged snacks, chips, burgers, cookies, noodles and sodas, usually teen favourites. He had a lot of refined sugar junk foods, which in his case turned out to be hazardous. Schools, parents, and policy makers must work together to reduce children's exposure to ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks, while promoting affordable, nutritious meals and daily physical activity. Early, population-level dietary interventions can avert a looming burden of advanced liver disease in young Indians," she says.

Excess fat from obesity releases fatty acids into the bloodstream, overwhelming the liver. "What children eat

causing appendicitis, or the condition resolving spontaneously — are incorrect. "Delay can lead to rupture, which is life-threatening," warns Dr. Varman. Appendectomy is the definitive treatment. Minimally invasive options include laparoscopic or robotic surgery. "Most patients walk the same day and go home in a day or two," Dr. Saravanan says. The procedure involves small keyhole incisions and camera guidance, though open surgery remains important for complicated cases. In some cases, uncomplicated appendicitis can be managed with antibiotics. Dr. Subramaniam explains, "Non-surgical methods work initially, but there is a greater risk of recurrence. Surgery remains the standard, long-term solution." Studies show about 70% of uncomplicated cases respond to antibiotics, but recurrence can reach 40% within a year, particularly in patients with appendicoliths or limited healthcare access, says Dr. Krishnamurthy.

Doctors often encounter several misconceptions about the appendix. Many believe it is completely useless, but while not essential for survival, the appendix does house beneficial bacteria and supports immunity. Another common myth is that removal of the appendix harms long-term health; in reality, most patients live normal lives without any dietary restrictions. As Dr. Arunmozhi Varman points out, "You can still enjoy pizza and biryani!" Some people think appendicitis affects only young adults, but it can occur at any age, though early adulthood is most common. There is also a dangerous belief that home remedies or ignoring the pain will help; untreated appendicitis can rupture, leading to serious complications. Dr. J. Saravanan emphasises, "If your body sends a strong signal, listen. Come early. We'll fix it before it becomes trouble." Post-surgery recovery is usually smooth. Patients may rest a few days, avoid heavy lifting for several weeks, and start with light meals. Long-term lifestyle or health impacts are minimal. Short-term changes, such as minor bowel adjustments, may occur, but minimally invasive techniques reduce the risk of adhesions or complications. Dr. Krishnamurthy recalls cases during a recent Diwali weekend where a patient delayed surgery, resulting in an emergency laparoscopic procedure due to severe infection.

Such cases highlight the importance of timely intervention. The appendix, though small, plays a supporting role in immunity and gut health. Acute appendicitis remains the most common abdominal surgical emergency. Early recognition, proper medical evaluation, and timely treatment, preferably via minimally invasive surgery, ensure safe recovery and minimal long-term impact. "Life after an appendix removal is completely normal, except in rare cases of complications," notes Dr. Saravanan. "For most patients, it becomes something they barely remember and that's the best outcome we can hope for."



Fatty liver in teens may seem rare. Except it isn't. It is now the most frequent cause of chronic liver disease, affecting an estimated 10–17 percent of adolescents with obesity. What remains rare, however, is the need for a liver transplant in a child under 18. That was the life-saving intervention for a 14-year-old boy from Surat, who arrived at Mumbai's Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital with acute liver failure caused by an advanced form of fatty liver disease.

every day silently shapes their liver health — early dietary discipline can prevent a lifetime of liver disease. Children should be encouraged to eat fresh, home-cooked meals with plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, pulses, eggs, and milk-based proteins. High sugar and refined foods cause fat to accumulate in the liver, even in children who may not look overweight. Healthy eating habits, started early and sustained with physical activity, can prevent fatty liver disease," says Dr Pawaria.

People who receive a liver transplant in their teens can live long, healthy lives, with many experiencing a near-normal lifespan due to significant advances in medicine, leading to high survival rates. "The boy can resume school three months after transplant surgery. Slowly he can take up sports too. Post-transplant, obviously the first three to four months are very critical, where we need to keep a track of him. He should avoid infections and his diet has to be managed carefully. But thereafter, he can have an absolutely normal life, even marry and have children as an adult," says Dr Gupta. But diet and physical activity will have to be in tandem. "The healthy, transplanted liver portion can correct the genetic defect, provided the recipient adheres to a healthy lifestyle and manages associated metabolic risk factors," he cautions.

The 14-year-old will be on immunosuppressants, too, for the rest of his life. Preventing teen obesity, experts stress, must be family-driven. Dr Pawaria advises aiming for at least five daily servings of vegetables and fruits, choosing whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat milk, and healthy fats, and prioritising water over sugary beverages. Lime or cucumber-infused water can help curb soda cravings. Always read food labels to avoid hidden sugars, advise nutritionists. Changes should involve the entire family to avoid singling out the child, while allowing occasional treats in controlled portions. Mindful eating habits also matter. Families should eat together at the table without screens, involve teens in cooking to teach portion control, exercise together, limit screen time, and ensure nine to ten hours of sleep each night. These habits, experts say, may be the most powerful medicine of all.

Securities Transaction Tax collection jumps 75% despite market volatility



Despite the volatility in the stock market, the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) collection has shot up by over 75 per cent to Rs 44,538 crore as of January 12, 2025 as against Rs 25,415 crore raised in the same period in 2024. The rise in collections comes despite a hike in STT on futures & options (F&O) of securities that was levied in a bid to curb speculative market activity in the F&O segment.

The Budget 2024-25, presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23, had proposed to double the STT on F&O of securities, effective October 1, 2024. However, STT collection has been on the rise since July and the rise continued even when the stock market rose sharply and then encountered a major correction between July and December 2024. While STT mobilisation was Rs 16,634 crore on July 11, 2024, it jumped to Rs 30,630 crore on October 10, Rs 35,923 crore on November 10 and Rs 40,114 on December 17. The BSE Sensex which was at 80,429.04 on July 23 last year hit an all-time peak of 85,978.25 on September 27 last year before correcting to 76,499.63 on January 14, 2025.

The increase in STT, which is levied on transactions in specified securities, came at a time when the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised concerns over the rise in volumes in futures and options segment, which can pose a risk to macroeconomic stability. Securities Transaction Tax collection jumps 75% despite market volatility. The increased STT collections are also adding to the revenue kitty of the government. With Rs 44,538 crore collected so far, STT revenue has already breached the budget estimate of Rs 37,000 crore for the ongoing financial year 2024-25. In the previous financial year 2023-24, the STT revenue was estimated to be Rs 32,000 crore (revised estimate) and Rs 25,085

crore in 2022-23. STT on futures and options of securities was increased to 0.02 per cent and 0.1 per cent respectively. Earlier, the rate of levy of STT on the sale of an option in securities was 0.0625 per cent of the option premium, while the rate of levy of STT on the sale of a future in securities was 0.0125 per cent of the price at which such futures are traded. The rate of levy of STT on delivery trades in equity shares is 0.1 per cent on both purchase and sale transactions. However, the premium turnover in F&O declined since after the Sebi slapped restrictions on derivative trading in the wake of rampant excessive speculation by retail investors – it declined from Rs 54.38 lakh crore in September 2024 to Rs 43.99 lakh crore in December 2024, and to Rs 17.47 lakh crore in January 2025 (till January 14th) on the NSE. “Retail investors were active in the cash market and mutual funds also pumped money into the market as they received huge inflows despite the volatility in the market. The STT collection figures show that it has no correlation with the market fall or rise. STT increased when the market rose and also when it later declined,” said an analyst. The increase in STT, which is levied on transactions in specified securities, came at a time when the Sebi and the RBI raised concerns over the rise in volumes in futures and options segment. In fact, the Rs 4,424 crore rise in STT collection from December 17 to Rs 44,538 crore by January 12 happened at a time when the BSE Sensex witnessed a correction of over 3,000 points. Since STT is charged only to the seller, on a round-trip premium turnover of Rs 10,000 in options STT increased from Rs 6.25 to Rs 10. Similarly, in futures, STT led to an increase from Rs 1.25 to Rs 2 for every Rs 10,000 of turnover. When retail investors flooded the F&O segment three years ago, policy makers were worried about losses to them. Nine out of 10 investors were losing money in this segment. While STT collection has increased in the last five months, major market players are lobbying for a reduction in the levy.

Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) in its proposal for the Budget 2025-26 has requested for reduction in STT for arbitrage funds and equity savings funds. “For mutual funds as an investor, the STT on futures and options should be reinstated to the earlier rates,” AMFI said in the proposal. The mutual fund body said that arbitrage and equity savings funds mainly use futures and options for hedging as the underlying assets. “The available arbitrage has now been reduced due to an increase in short term capital gain tax. Further, the increased STT on futures will add to the cost of these funds,” it said.

‘Invest in agri-productivity to boost consumption demand, focus on public health issues & strengthen tax administration’: Bharat Ramaswami



With the rupee under pressure, continuing high food inflation, slower economic growth, and uncertainty about the impact of Trump’s second term, it may be wise to be cautious about the immediate prospects of the Indian economy. On the other hand, it is an opportunity as well. Typically, reflections on policy priorities occupy the first part of the Finance Minister’s speech. They assume an outsized importance this year. The FM could use the Budget to signal India’s commitment to policies and reforms that would continue India’s momentum among the large economies of the world. Last year the FM announced the elements of an economic strategy. Four population groups — the poor, the youth, women and farmers — were to receive special attention. Their welfare was to be achieved by actions in 9 priority sectors including agriculture, employment, manufacturing, urban development and infrastructure. All of these are needed initiatives on which much has already been said. The Finance Ministry should issue a paper on the progress achieved in these sectors. That would ensure accountability and purchase credibility for future pronouncements. In addition, the Budget of last year promised an economic policy framework that would set in motion the ‘next generation of reforms’ for employment and growth. This Budget would be an opportune time to redeem the promise. An ideal framework would consider macro-economic stability, the necessity to invest in people and infrastructure and the imperative to actively engage with the world through trade and investment. Ideally, the framework would resist sector-specific policy support or be very selective in this regard.

The framework would also recognise the federal polity. GST is a case in point. While the simplification of rates cannot be achieved by the Centre alone, the Centre can point to the direction of reform. On its own, it can revise processes to reduce the burden of compliance. To solve such perennial problems in tax administration, the government should task a standing committee of outside experts to flag anomalies and impractical rules. This will save the government, taxpayers and the economy a lot of money. India is faced with two major and pressing public health issues. The first is air pollution. It is acute in north India, but other parts of the country are not exempt from it either. The health costs are large. If unchecked, it will drain the region of investments and talent. The second is the health of our children. Despite progress, a third of our children are too short for their age. Expertise and solutions are available within the government and outside. It is hard to see how Bharat can be Viksit without addressing the problem now. For both problems, the states and the Centre must work together. This will be a memorable legacy of a government in its third term. Food inflation is eating into the incomes of the working class. Price rises are markedly high for vegetables, fruits and proteins. The paradox is that, despite these price signals, we continue to devote resources to produce too much of cereals. Our supply chains are not up to the task — a fact that has been recognised for over two decades. The government must mobilise and empower its agricultural research system to address such important issues of post-harvest management. The government’s Situation Assessment Survey (of 2018/19) shows that farm households that produce much of India’s non-grain crops are smaller, less educated and more likely to be SC/ST than the growers of grain crops. With investment (including FDI), this unsung part of the economy will show the way forward for the larger growers still heavily invested in cereals. In rainfed agriculture, small and marginal farmers

use a variety of livelihood strategies — crop agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries, wage labour and migration. A broad perspective would look not just at crop productivity but also small irrigation projects, flexible assistance in animal husbandry and policies friendly to seasonal migrants. Investing in agricultural productivity will boost consumption demand — the factor that is constraining private investment and growth. But agricultural incomes are less than 50 per cent of rural incomes (Nabard Financial Inclusion Survey, 2020/21). And for individual households, the importance of agricultural income declines with land ownership. Therefore, the government must think of not only agriculture but also education, health and connectivity in rural areas. These benefits reach widely unlike output and input subsidies. Coordination across government ministries is necessary for effective action; but this can follow only if policy goals take an integrated view. A positive development has been the resumption of official data flows — especially the long-postponed consumption surveys. But we still await the population census. That’s outside the domain of the FM. However, it’s the bedrock on which all policies rest.

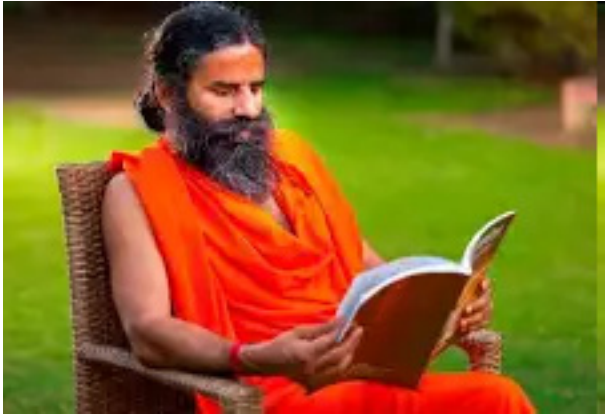
Outward foreign direct investment rises by 17% to \$37.68 billion in 2025

EMS News Agency, Feb 26

dollar, Outward foreign direct investment, business news, indian express In 2023, total overseas direct investment stood at \$32.29 billion, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. In a sign that Indian companies are keen on expanding their global footprints, outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) by domestic firms has seen a jump of nearly 17 per cent to \$37.68 billion in 2024. In 2023, total overseas direct investment stood at \$32.29 billion, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. “This is a positive sign that Indian companies are also going global. They are not just eyeing domestic investments but also looking at other territories. In a way, they are diversifying their growth models,” said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist, Bank of Baroda. Overseas direct investment means acquisition of any unlisted equity capital or subscription as a part of the memorandum of association of a foreign entity, or investment in 10 per cent or more of the paid-up equity capital of a listed foreign entity, or investment with control where investment is less than 10 per cent of the paid-up equity capital of a listed foreign entity. OFDI has three components — equity, loans and guarantee issued. In the last calendar year, overseas FDI by local companies in the form of equity stood at \$12.69 billion, a rise of 40 per cent over the \$9.08 billion invested in 2023. Under the loan category, OFDI by Indian companies was \$8.7 billion in 2024, compared to \$4.76 billion in the previous calendar year. The guarantee issued by domestic firms declined to \$16.29 billion in 2024, as against \$18.44 billion in 2023.

The sectors where Indian companies invest in overseas markets include hotels, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, mining and services. The countries that have seen total financial commitment by way of ODI are Singapore, US, UK, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Malaysia, among others. “The fact that Indian companies are investing in their own subsidiaries indicates that they are expanding outside. This also shows that local companies that have joint ventures are collaborating more with companies in overseas territories,” Sabnavis added. Overseas investments in joint ventures (JV) and wholly owned subsidiaries (WOS) have been recognised as important avenues for promoting global business by Indian entrepreneurs.

Baba Ramdev on early mornings, meditation, and a sattvic diet for inner peace: ‘We neither cheat others nor ourselves’



Baba Ramdev, a prominent advocate of yoga and holistic wellness, recently opened up about his disciplined routine that blends physical activity, mental clarity, and spiritual focus. Speaking to Curly Tales, the 59-year-old yoga guru highlighted the importance of starting the day early at 3 am, meditating, and adhering to a sattvic diet. His approach, he says, is designed to promote overall well-being and vitality. When asked what he does first thing in the morning, he said, “I say my morning prayers by worshipping dharti mata (mother earth) and our gurus and rishis (sages). Then I drink warm water, which clears my stomach in a minute or two. Soon after, I bathe, and then I meditate for an hour.”

When asked if he ever has a cheat day when it comes to food, Baba Ramdev said, “We neither cheat others nor ourselves.” He then discussed the food shown in the video, mentioning that he begins with fresh fruits and follows it with Sattvic vegetables, which he describes as “very healthy.” He also shared the yoga asanas everyone must do: “People should definitely do kapalbhati and anulom vilom.” Baba Ramdev’s routine reflects his preference for simplicity with a focus on good health. Sharath Arora, chief yoga instructor and founder at Himalayan Iyengar Yoga Centre, Dharamkot, Himachal Pradesh, helps understand the benefits of these practices.

Benefits of practicing an hour of meditation in the morning Arora tells indianexpress.com, “Meditating for an hour each morning is a cornerstone of Baba Ramdev’s routine, and its benefits are both ancient and scientifically validated. Meditation helps regulate the autonomic nervous system, reducing stress responses and enhancing relaxation. Over time, regular meditation can lower cortisol levels, improve heart rate variability, and enhance focus and emotional resilience.” From a mental health perspective,

Arora says, consistent meditation practices increase activity in the prefrontal cortex, associated with decision-making and emotional regulation. “Physical benefits include reduced blood pressure, improved digestion, and enhanced immunity. Research from JAMA Internal Medicine highlights that meditation can significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and insomnia,” he states.

Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing) balances the autonomic nervous system by harmonizing the sympathetic and parasympathetic responses. Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing) balances the autonomic nervous system by harmonizing the sympathetic and parasympathetic responses. Arora mentions that a sattvic diet, rooted in Ayurvedic traditions, emphasises fresh, simple, and wholesome foods that are easy to digest and nourish the body and mind. The diet consists primarily of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and dairy products like milk or ghee. To transition gradually to a sattvic diet, Arora recommends reducing processed and fried foods while increasing the intake of whole grains and vegetables. Replace caffeinated beverages with herbal teas or warm water with lemon to detoxify the body. Incorporate ghee and spices like turmeric and cumin into your meals, not only for added nutrition but also for flavour. “Ensure that your meals are freshly cooked and consumed mindfully, which will help enhance digestion. Adopting a sattvic diet doesn’t have to be overwhelming; making these gradual changes will help make the transition more sustainable in the long run,” he adds.

Benefits of practices like Kapalbhati and Anulom Vilom Kapalbhati (Skull-Shining Breath) involves rapid, forceful exhalations that detoxify the lungs and improve respiratory function. Arora explains, “A study published in The International Journal of Yoga highlights its effectiveness in increasing oxygen saturation, enhancing lung capacity, and improving focus. It also stimulates the abdominal organs, aiding digestion and metabolism, making it relevant for sedentary modern lifestyles.” Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing) balances the autonomic nervous system by harmonizing the sympathetic and parasympathetic responses. “Research from Frontiers in Psychology demonstrates its ability to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and enhance cognitive function. Regular practice helps improve sleep quality, making it highly beneficial for individuals experiencing modern-day stress and insomnia,” shares Arora. However, he suggests consulting with a healthcare professional before starting any new routines to ensure they are safe and appropriate for your individual needs, as everyone’s health circumstances may vary.

What happens to the body when you begin your day with fermented foods for 2 weeks straight?

From Anushka Sharma to Shahid Kapoor, Bollywood celebrities seem to love having idlis for breakfast. Besides being gut-friendly, these spongy cakes also support the immune system. Their secret? They are fermented! Curious to find out how fermented food benefit us when consumed during breakfast for a couple weeks straight, indianexpress.com spoke to a health expert.

Deepalakshmi, registered dietitian at The Cleft and Craniofacial Centre and Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital, Chennai revealed that fermented foods are a rich source of probiotics that improve gut health by enhancing digestion, boosting nutrient absorption, and strengthening immunity. When consumed for 2 weeks straight for breakfast every morning, she shared that they may also reduce inflammation and support mental health through the gut-brain connection. Health benefits Deepalakshmi shared that fermented foods not only enhance the diversity of gut microbiota, which plays a crucial role in digestion and nutrient absorption, but regular consumption can lead to better bowel movements, reduced bloating, and a strengthened immune system. Additionally, the anti-inflammatory properties of fermented foods may help improve overall health, while their influence on the gut-brain connection can positively impact mood and mental well-being.

While fermented foods provide numerous health benefits, Deepalakshmi added that they can pose certain risks if not consumed mindfully. “Many fermented foods, such as miso and sauerkraut, are high in sodium, which can contribute to elevated blood pressure if consumed in excess. People new to probiotics might experience digestive discomfort, including bloating or gas, as their gut adjusts,” she mentioned. Additionally, allergies or intolerances, particularly to dairy-based options like yogurt, can be a concern.



The dietitian also added that improper fermentation processes can lead to contamination and foodborne illnesses, making it essential to choose high-quality or home-made fermented foods prepared under safe conditions. Moderation and proper preparation are key to minimising these risks.

What kinds of fermented foods can you include in breakfast?

For breakfast, fermented foods offer a range of nutritious and versatile options. Yoghurt or kefir, rich in probiotics, can be paired with fruits, nuts, or seeds for a wholesome start to the day. Traditional choices like idli or dosa, made from fermented rice and lentils, are both delicious and gut-friendly. Miso soup provides a savory twist and is an excellent addition for boosting gut health. Fermented pickles or sauerkraut can add a tangy flavor when used sparingly as toppings, while sourdough bread serves as a nutritious base for avocado toast or egg sandwiches.

Why is Central TB Division pushing an untested AI tool for screening?

Even as time is running out to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s goal of “eliminating” TB by 2025, the Health Ministry appears to be moving at glacial speed and is largely disinterested. A report submitted by the Health Technology Assessment of India (HTAI) committee in February 2024 on two indigenously developed solutions to screen people with presumptive and subclinical TB using AI-assisted chest X-ray interpretation was posted on the HTAI website only on December 6, 2024. The two indigenously developed solutions are qXR from the Bengaluru-based Cure.ai and Genki from Pune’s DeepTek. HTA assessment of a new technology or tool for cost-effectiveness and efficacy in terms of sensitivity and specificity is not mandatory. However, the Central TB Division (CTD) waits for the HTA report and approval by the Medical Technology Assessment Board (MTAB) chaired by Niti Aayog and involves stakeholders including itself before programmatic implementation of any new tool, technology or treatment regimen using novel drugs for TB. For instance, TrueNat for TB diagnosis was validated by ICMR’s National Institute of Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT), Chennai before it was assessed by the HTA before it was included in the TB programme. Similarly, the BPaLM/BPaL regimen for MDR-TB treatment was tested in a phase 3/4 trial by NIRT and then assessed by HTA before being included in the TB programme by the Central TB Division.

Surprisingly, despite the assessment and approval of the two AI tools by the HTA and MTAB, respectively, the Central TB Division has not included them for programmatic implementation. However, even in the absence of an HTA assessment, the CTD has “recommended for programmatic

introduction” a similar AI tool — DeepCXR — developed by the Institute for Plasma Research, Gandhinagar. An ICMR expert committee had approved the AI tool for “use under the national TB programme”. Worse, CTD failed to officially communicate to the States that it was recommending the use of the DeepCXR tool in the TB programme. Instead, CTD informed the States in end-January this year to “consider utilising” the DeepCXR tool only when the States reached out to CTD seeking AI solutions to analyse chest X-ray images. And the 100-day TB elimination campaign began on December 7, 2024. As per CTD, the DeepCXR technology is available for free for use in the national TB programme. As per a January-February 2020 review paper in the journal Neurology India, the Institute for Plasma Research had trained the AI tool using 6,000-30,000 chest X-ray images with an “overall accuracy of 93% on a test dataset”. Documents show that the AI tool has been trained using 54,000 X-rays and validated using 14,000 X-rays from “multiple datasets from more than 18 sites, with an average accuracy of over 96%”. There is no information on whether the DeepCXR tool is routinely used at any site for TB screening. Except for claims made in some documents and presentations, there is not a single published paper about the tool’s sensitivity and specificity and performance in field settings. In contrast, there are a number of published studies on large patient populations where the performance of qXR and Genki has been evaluated. In fact, the qXR tool from Cure.ai with over 90% sensitivity and more than 70% specificity in people older than 15 years was one of the three AI algorithms that the WHO had referenced when updating the TB screening guidelines in March 2021.

Expect to sign legal agreement of US deal before March-end: Commerce Secretary



GNS News Agency, August 13

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal Wednesday said India and the US could sign the trade deal's first tranche by the end of March after having agreed on its broad contours earlier this month. The signing of the deal is expected to lower the reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from 25% to 18%. Washington has already rolled back the additional 25% tariffs imposed on August 27 last year over India's purchase of Russian oil. "We expect that by the end of March... before the end of March.. we should be able to finalise and sign the legal agreement. However, having said that, I think drafting a legal agreement ...and to the satisfaction of both sides... it also sometimes may take time. But we are hopeful, the teams are working on it, and we should look at March as the timeline in which we should make it operational," Agrawal told ANI on the sidelines of BIOFACH Germany 2026, a trade fair for organic products.

He said the joint statement that India and the US have released lays down the broad contours of the interim agreement, and that this agreement needs to be converted into a legal document. As per the joint statement, India agreed to "eliminate or reduce tariffs" on all US industrial goods and a wide range of American food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

The US agreed to apply a reciprocal tariff rate of 18% on Indian goods, including textiles and apparel, leather and

footwear, plastic and rubber, organic chemicals, home décor, artisanal products, and certain machinery. "Subject to the successful conclusion of the interim agreement, will remove the reciprocal tariff on a wide range of goods identified in the Potential Tariff Adjustments for Aligned Partners," the joint statement said. The US also agreed to remove tariffs on certain aircraft and aircraft parts from India. International trade expert and think tank Global Trade Research Initiative Founder Ajay Srivastava said tariff reductions on US fresh fruits such as apples and oranges, and on soybean oil, are likely to hurt Indian farmers and could face strong opposition from farmer groups. "India has earlier agreed to limited tariff reductions on automobiles under its FTAs with the UK and the EU, but it is not clear whether concessions to the US involve limited quotas and limited duty cuts or unlimited quota and full tariff elimination. Further, tariff elimination on electronic components, smartphones, and solar panels could adversely affect domestic manufacturing of these products in the future," Srivastava said.

The former trade officer said the US, in return, will not reduce regular most favoured nation (MFN) tariffs on any products and will only lower reciprocal tariffs that currently apply to about 55% of Indian exports to America, bringing them down from 50% to 18%. Suresh Nair, tax partner, EY India, said the interim US-India trade deal should make quite a few American farm products cheaper here in India — things like soybean oil, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruits, dried distillers' grains and red sorghum for animal feed, and wines and spirits. India is cutting or scrapping tariffs on these and addressing some longstanding non-tariff barriers that have restricted supply. "That should bring retail prices down for premium nuts, fruits, wines, and particularly soybean oil, making them more accessible to middle-class households and potentially easing input costs for food processors and the livestock sector. On the energy side, the agreement doesn't alter tariffs on oil or energy imports directly, but India's stated intent to purchase \$500 billion worth of US energy products (among other items) over the next five years should lead to larger, steadier volumes coming in, which could help stabilise supply and support more competitive pricing in the longer term, though retail fuel prices will still be influenced by global markets and domestic policies," Nair said.

RBI draft rules on mis-selling: Central bank suggests refunds, ad frameworks, warns against 'dark patterns'

GNS News Agency, August 13

In a move aimed at curbing mis-selling, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday proposed that banks and other regulated entities should obtain explicit customer consent before offering any financial products and services, and compensate them for any instance of mis-selling, as part of draft guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct. The RBI has sought public comments on these draft proposals. The final directions will come into effect from July 1, 2026. While suggesting that banks should refund the entire amount to customers in cases where mis-selling of a product or service is established, the norms also stated that customers must be compensated for any losses incurred. The guidelines include norms for advertising, marketing as well as sales of financial products and services by regulated entities (REs).

Under the proposed framework, RBI regulator barred lenders from deploying any dark patterns — any practice or deceptive design pattern using user interface or user experience interactions designed to mislead or trick users — which could create a sense of urgency and coerce customers into making an immediate purchase of products or services.

"A bank shall ensure that its user interfaces do not deploy any dark pattern. User interfaces deployed by the bank shall be subject to user testing and periodic internal audit for identification of any unfair features, including dark patterns," the draft guidelines stated. A lender should put in place a comprehensive policy for advertising, marketing and



sales of its own as well as third-party financial products or services. The policy added that lenders should ensure their policies and practices neither create incentives for mis-selling nor encourage employees or direct selling agents (DSAs) to 'push' the sale of products or services. "No incentive is directly or indirectly received by the employees engaged in marketing or sales of third-party products or services from the third-party," it said. Lenders should not bundle the sale of any third-party product or service with any of its own product or service. In circumstances where the sale of their own product or service depends on the purchase of a third-party product or service, the customer should have the option to purchase the product from another company or agent. The proposed norms also warn REs against funding the purchase of a product or service via loans without securing the customer's explicit consent.

As FDTL exemptions lapse, IndiGo tells DGCA it is fully prepared to comply with new pilot rest rules

India's largest airline IndiGo's flights operations are expected to be fully compliant with the new pilot rest and duty duration norms from Wednesday, following the expiration of the specific exemptions given to the airline after its operational meltdown early December, according to aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). "IndiGo Airlines has informed DGCA that it shall be fully prepared to comply with the statutory provisions and to implement the approved Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) scheme...upon expiry of the exemptions," the DGCA said in a statement on Wednesday. The specific exemptions from some FDTL norms granted to IndiGo lapsed on Tuesday (February 10).

"IndiGo Airlines has further stated that all necessary operational, fostering, and monitoring arrangements are being put in place to ensure full compliance with the approved FDTL scheme with effect from 11 February 2026," the regulator added. Last month, the carrier had assured the DGCA that it will have sufficient pilot availability to maintain its current level of flight operations—over 2,200 daily flights—beyond February 10. IndiGo had informed the DGCA that it will have 2,400 captains available for its Airbus A320 fleet, against a requirement of 2,280 to maintain stable operations as per its current flight schedule after February 10. As for first officers, the airline had said it will have 2,240 available, against a requirement of 2,050. When the crisis crippled IndiGo's operations for a few days in December, the airline had informed the DGCA that it was short by 65 captains for its workhorse Airbus A320 fleet to maintain its schedule as per the new FDTL rules, even though it had first officers in sufficient numbers.

The Indian Express had reported earlier in January that the airline expected to maintain its current, slightly curtailed schedule despite its specific exemptions from some night duty-related FDTL rules lapsing on February 10. The new FDTL rules stipulate more rest for pilots and rationalisation of their flying duties—particularly late night operations—in a bid to better manage pilot fatigue, which is

a key risk to aviation safety. These new norms, which were stipulated in January 2024, were delayed in their implementation and took effect in two phases—from July 1, 2025 and November 1, 2025—with the second phase rollout hitting IndiGo considerably. The new norms meant that airlines either had to have more pilots to maintain their schedule, or shrink the schedule in line with the new requirements. IndiGo, however, was caught unprepared.

IndiGo is currently operating over 2,200 flights—around 1,900 domestic and the rest international—following a 10% government-mandated curtailment in its approved domestic schedule till March. Given that IndiGo commanded a domestic market share of around 65%, the disruption had brought India's civil aviation operations to their knees. The large-scale disruption, which erupted on December 3, peaked on December 5 with over 1,600 of the airline's 2,300-plus daily flights getting cancelled in a single day. But with the DGCA granting specific exemptions, the airline was able to swiftly stabilise operations over the course of the next few days. On January 9, IndiGo was ordered to curtail its approved domestic flight schedule by 10%.

The airline expects to maintain its current schedule for the entire duration of the Winter Schedule, which ends on March 28. According to sources close to IndiGo, pilot hiring and onboarding pipeline at the airline is robust, which they expect will lead to sufficient numbers of pilots. Also, command upgrades—promotions of first officers to captains—in cases where they were already due have been accelerated, which is expected to help the airline increase its pilot buffers, or bench strength to improve its roster resilience. IndiGo accounts for a lion's share of domestic flights that land or depart between midnight and 6 am, the new definition of 'night' in the revised FDTL rules; the earlier definition was midnight to 5 am. In that one hour—5-6 am—also, IndiGo is the dominant carrier, shows an analysis of the airlines' schedule. Among other changes, the new rules capped the number of landings for pilots operating flights encroaching upon any part of this six-hour period at two, down from six earlier.

'Is spitting brown phlegm, from smoking, a sign of cancer?'



That smoking causes cancer is a known fact, with all cigarette packs also carrying the warning. But despite so much information around, even a harmless health symptom may raise suspicion among a smoker. One such user turned to the online forum Quora to seek answers to his query: "Is spitting brown phlegm, from smoking, a sign of cancer?" To answer this common concern, we spoke to Dr Jitesh Rajpurohit, Thoracic Surgical Oncologist at SSO Cancer Hospital, who said, "Brown phlegm does not automatically mean cancer. In many smokers, it appears because the lungs are trying to clear out tar, smoke particles, and old mucus that have built up over time."

He, however, added, "While it can be harmless, persistent or worsening brown phlegm should not be ignored. Cancer is one of many possible causes—but it is not the most common. Think of brown phlegm as your lungs signalling, 'something is irritating me.'" Reason behind brown phlegm in smokers The most frequent causes of brown or dark-coloured phlegm, as per Dr Rajpurohit, are as follows: Tar and smoke residue: Smoking leaves sticky brown tar in the airways. When you cough, this tar can come up in the phlegm. Chronic bronchitis: A long-term irritation

Shark Tank India's Anupam Mittal stopped using after-shave two years ago; says, 'They are synthetic'

Shark Tank India's Anupam Mittal recently spoke about his personal hygiene habits, revealing that he stopped using "synthetic" aftershaves about 2 years ago. "They are hormonal disruptors. They are synthetic. The long-term effect is severe. In fact, I stopped using the aftershave I applied two years ago. I now use phitkari... alum stone," he told Balika Vadhu actor Neha Marda Agrawal, who appeared on the show's latest season seeking investment for her phitkari-based body odour-containing brand.

Switching from aftershave to phitkari (alum) is a choice some people make to reduce skin irritation, but it comes with both benefits and limitations, experts suggest.

Notably, aftershaves often contain alcohol, fragrance, and preservatives, which can dry the skin, disrupt the skin barrier, and trigger irritation, redness, or razor bumps, especially in sensitive or acne-prone skin. "Stopping aftershave can help reduce dryness, stinging, and post-shave inflammation," said Dr Shareefa Chause, dermatologist, Dr Shareefa Skin Care Clinic, Mumbai, adding that many people notice calmer skin and fewer breakouts over time when they stop the usage. Adding that phitkari has natural astringent and antibacterial properties, the expert continued, "It is known to help tighten pores, and reduce bacterial growth, which can lower the risk of razor infections. It is fragrance-free and usually well-tolerated, making it a safer option for people with sensitive skin." However, using phitkari is not without drawbacks. "Overuse can overly dry the skin, leading to tightness, flaking, or increased sensitivity. It also does not provide hydration or barrier repair like modern, dermatologist-tested post-shave products. In people with eczema-

of the airways caused by smoking. It leads to a daily cough and dark mucus Old blood: Tiny, irritated blood vessels can leak small amounts of blood, which turn brown as they age. Chest infections: Infections can cause mucus to become thicker and darker. Pollution and dust exposure: Smoke and pollution make mucus darker and thicker. cancer If brown phlegm persists, a chest X-ray may be done to check for infections or lung damage (Image: Unsplash)

Most of these causes are treatable, especially if smoking is stopped. However, they should be taken seriously if any of the symptoms last more than 2–3 weeks, become darker/thicker, involve blood streaks or clots, persist as hoarseness or unusual fatigue, or involve unexplained weight loss, chest pain, or shortness of breath. "These do not mean cancer for sure, but they do mean you should see a doctor promptly," the oncologist cautions. However, if someone quits smoking, within weeks, mucus production decreases, the lungs begin to clean themselves, and brown phlegm often turns clear or disappears. Cough and irritation slowly improve, and the risk of serious lung disease drops over time. Even long-term smokers see benefits—it is never too late to quit.

Which medical tests to get if brown phlegm persists, doctors may recommend these medical tests: Chest X-ray to check for infections or lung damage CT scan for detailed imaging if symptoms continue Sputum test to detect infections or abnormal cell Pulmonary function test to assess lung efficiency Bronchoscopy, if needed, to examine the lungs directly However, if a non-smoker develops brown phlegm, the possible triggers could be pollution, chest infections, sinus irritation, occupational exposure, or severe acid reflux. While cancer is less likely in non-smokers, persistent symptoms still deserve evaluation.



prone or very dry skin, regular alum use may worsen dryness," said Dr Chause. If using phitkari, it should be followed by a gentle, non-comedogenic moisturiser to maintain skin balance and prevent long-term dryness. So, be cautious while using even phitkari as moderation is key, said Dr Chause.

Lin Laishram, 40, talks about her pregnancy journey, cravings, Randeep Hooda: 'Baby will be served good food every day'



Actor Lin Laishram, who is expecting her first child with husband, actor Randeep Hooda, is "enjoying being pregnant". The 40-year-old has been extremely busy with her entrepreneurial initiative as the founder of Akhoi, a cloud kitchen showcasing Manipuri cuisine. After collaborating with actor Mona Singh for her recent North Eastern flavours pop-up at Singh's Kona Kona restaurant, Lin spoke about her passion for food, culture, and Randeep as a husband in an interview with indianexpress.com.

Lin: I'm doing really well. It feels different now. I feel more grounded and more responsible towards myself. I'm truly loving this phase and enjoying being pregnant.

Q: Tell us about your cloud kitchen Akhoi initiative...

Lin: Akhoi, in simple words, is my love language. I love feeding people—cooking, talking, and sharing stories through food. It's also my way of bringing Manipuri culture into the mainstream.

Q: How was it collaborating with Mona for this pop-up?

Lin: I love the vibe, the food, and the people at Kona Kona—and of course Mona, whom I discovered as a fellow foodie through this process. The response to Akhoi was amazing. People were curious, asking questions, and engaging with the food. It felt really special, and I'm so happy we got to collaborate.

Lin Laishram Mona Singh Lin Laishram and Mona Singh (PR Handout)

Mona is a darling. She is so passionate about food, which makes working with her fun and effortless. She genuinely enjoyed every dish we curated and even asked for fermented bamboo shoot, which very few people know or ask for. That really stood out to me.

Q: Do you think the cloud kitchen setup has taken off really well these days, and what does it mean for the food

and hospitality segment?

Lin: Absolutely. It's a great opportunity for people like me who are working with niche cuisines. Many are taking it seriously now, and I love that you can follow your passion, generate income, and start small without massive investments.

Q: Your wedding truly stood out for its showcase of a beautiful Manipuri wedding in November 2023... what is it like to look back?

Lin: Definitely. It's usually the first thing people mention when they meet me. I think people connected with the authenticity and the genuineness of it—that's what they really admired.

Q: How are you embracing the idea of parenthood?

Lin: I honestly haven't thought too deeply about it yet because I'm still figuring things out. But one thing is for sure... baby will be served good food every day, every meal.

Q: Tell us about your diet?

Lin: I do have certain dietary guidelines to follow, but I fail almost every day—tasting new food is a huge part of my life now, and I have had a major sweet craving my whole pregnancy.

Q: How are you keeping your mental health in check?

Lin: I write, I chant and meditate daily for about 30 minutes every day. Writing, chanting, and sitting in silence really help me reset and realign myself.

Q: What's a typical day in your life like?

Lin: I start with a workout, then work through the day—usually till 6 pm, though most days stretch well into the night.

Q: Your thoughts on social media...

Lin: I love social media. It has taught me so much and has given me the opportunity to launch a business and learn continuously. But like anything, it can be misused or overused if you're not mindful.

Q: How important is financial independence as a woman?

Lin: Extremely important. My mother was a working woman, and I saw her work well into her 60s. I started working early in life as a sportsperson, and that financial independence brings a very different kind of freedom.

Q: Do you plan romantic dates, or does Randeep?

Lin: We both find typical romantic dates a bit cliché, but we do make time for each other. The only time we truly disconnect from the world and create our own little space is when we're in the jungle—that's when he's in his full element, and I love it. Mumbai is just too hectic to be romantic.

Wang Zhi Yi for Sindhu, Kunlavut for Sen & Liang-Wang for Satwik-Chirag



GNS News Agency, August 13 The BWF Badminton World Championships returns to India after a 17-year gap, with India's top names hoping to continue the 12-edition streak of medalling without fail. Sindhu is in good form after her Singapore triumph; Satwik-Chirag are in Top 5, Lakshya Sen and Ayush Shetty were in finals of All England and Asian Championships respectively. But medaling at World's depends on the draw.

Here's an analysis of what India's top badminton names and medal contenders might be up against at the World Championships: India's most consistent pair avoided top ranked Koreans Seo Seung Jae and Kim Won Ho as well as Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik. But potentially, Indonesian Super 1000 finalists Raymond Indra – Nikolaus Joaquin of Indonesia in pre-quarters can hold hidden shocks, Chinese Liang Weikeng-Wang Chang of China in quarters, make it personal with sly smiles and sleight of hands, and Indonesian Fikri-Fajar simply back their flat games and audacious shotmaking against the Indians. Satwik-Chirag know to grit it out through tough phases, and possess a boom game.

PV Sindhu, WS, 9th seed

Dealt the same possible draw as 2025, Sindhu is ex-

pected to get past a sturdier Wang Zhi Yi in pre-quarters and then problem-solve through a determined youngster, Putri Kusuma Wardani. She avoids An Se Young till semis, which means if she runs into her, she has already assured herself of a sixth medal. But Chinese Wang learnt her lessons last year. She'll be tough to break, hence tough draw even if Sindhu is playing better than she has in last few years. She can hope Beiwen Zhang makes life difficult for Wang.

World No 1 Shi Yuqi is vulnerable first up. Which is good for Ayush. But both will arrive well rested, well prepared. Expect a high quality match. Pressure on the Chinese, one would think who would be sick of Indians who turn up in Round 1 to evict him while he has a crown to defend. The Chinese is legit talented in strokes, and deceptively capable of picking speed even when trailing. But first rounds can be jittery. Ayush has nothing to lose and would fancy playing the Trojan to open up the draw and gallop. Alwi Farhan next, for what it's worth.

Lakshya Sen, MS, seeded 15th

The potential pre-quarterfinal Round of 16 match against Kunlavut Vitidsarn jumps out threateningly. But Sen digs big events. Remember the Paris Olympics? Toughest group but he marched into semis. Kunlavut's ranking won't bother him, the familiarity will only help. The Thai is solid but not invincible. Christo Popov or Alex Lanier next will demand good recovery. Once in semis, Sen can deal with Loh Kean Yew / Jojo Christie / Victor Lai. Strangely, all 3 Chinese are in same half. Not Sen's. Treesa-Gayatri: Americans Lam-Lee are dangerous. Japanese Rin Iwanaga-Kie Nakanishi next. Best time to beat Chinese Jia-Zhang, if the brief is ambition. Tanisha-Dhruv: Chinese Guo-Chen in Round 3 potentially. Nothing better than home support to get their first win in. Unnati Hooda: Michelle Li and Japanese success Tomoka Miyazaki in her path. It could've been worse, and tougher seeds.

Cricket South Africa adds three match T20I series against Indian Women's cricket team

GNS News Agency, August 13

Cricket South Africa revised the schedule for India's tour of the rainbow nation. The earlier itinerary did not include a three-match T20I series in addition to the existing three-match ODI series and a Test match. The one-off Test will be played from December 9-12 before the ODI series kicks in from December 16-22. Now, the Indian team will spend an extra week in South Africa to play the T20I series between December 26 and 30. The T20Is will be played at Benoni and Potchefstroom, which the CSA felt will give both the sides a good platform going into the inaugural Women's Champions Trophy, which will be played in Sri Lanka in February. "We are delighted to confirm the revised schedule for India's tour of South Africa, with the addition of the T20 International series over the festive period, ensuring our Proteas Women have the best possible preparation ahead of the inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka early next year," Pholetsi Moseki, the CSA CEO, said in a statement. "India remain one of the strongest teams



in world cricket, and the opportunity to compete against them across all three formats will provide invaluable competition as we continue building towards another major ICC event," said Moseki. India had toured South Africa in March-April this year for a T20I series which they lost 1-4. The two teams then clashed in the T20 World Cup in England, where SA beat India to dent their chances of entering the semifinal.

Gautam Gambhir tells Team India to be ready from day one ahead of Sri Lanka Test series



GNS News Agency, August 13

Colombo: India head coach Gautam Gambhir has urged the Shubman Gill-led Test squad to be mentally and physically prepared to tackle any challenge right from the opening day of the upcoming two-game series against Sri Lanka, starting in Galle on August 15. The Indian team began its practice session at Colombo's NCC ground on Wednesday morning, and are scheduled to play a three-day practice match at the same venue from August 7-9. Following this, the visitors will head to Galle for the series opener on August 15. The second and final Test is scheduled to be played at the historic Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) from August 23 to 27.

"Guys, we know what's in front of us. We know what we are playing for. We can do the volume, we can push our limits, we can tick all the boxes. Come 15th morning, whether we are batting first, or whether we are bowling first, we're absolutely ready with every answer, every question that's thrown at us and every answer we're ready to give. So make sure we tick all the boxes from now on," said Gambhir in a video shared by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on their official social media handles on Thursday. India's current standing in the World Test Championship (WTC) is at fifth with a points percentage (PCT) of 48.150, while Sri Lanka is at sixth spot with 41.67 PCT. Gambhir also took the opportunity to officially welcome newcomers, off-spin bowling all-rounder Saransh Jain and pacer Auqib Nabi to the Test setup, alongside the newly appointed fielding coach, Subhadeep Ghosh. "Guys, welcome everyone. We've got a couple of new guys in. To start with, Saransh, congratulations, you've worked extremely hard to be here. Make sure that you make your family and country proud whenever you get that opportunity. "Secondly, I want to congratulate Auqib, you had a phenomenal last season, and made J&K win the Ranji Trophy, which is a great achievement. Congratulations once again. Lastly, I want to welcome Joy as well. "He's worked with so many teams for so many years. I'm sure his passion, his commitment will carry this team forward and make sure that his energy levels will help everyone achieve the target, which we want to do," added Gambhir.

India women's South Africa tour expanded with three T20Is

GNS News Agency, August 13

Johannesburg: Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Thursday announced that a three-match T20I series has been added to the schedule for the Indian women's cricket team's multi-format tour of South Africa, set to happen in December 2026. As per CSA, the addition of T20I series in the itinerary comes with an eye to prepare for next year's inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy, to be played in Sri Lanka in February 2027. India had toured South Africa for a five-time T20I series in April this year as part of preparation for the Women's T20 World Cup, but they lost by 4-1.

The tour, scheduled to run from December 9 to 30, will now conclude with the newly added T20I series. A festive Boxing Day T20I encounter will take place on December 26 at Willowmoore Park in Benoni. The final two T20Is will be played at the NWC Oval in Potchefstroom on December 29 and 30 respectively.

The multi-format tour will kick off with a one-off Test match at St George's Park in Gqeberha from December 9 to 12. Following the red-ball fixture, the two sides will compete in a three-match ICC Women's Championship (IWC) ODI series across Paarl, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein between December 16 and 22. Welcoming the revised itinerary, CSA Chief Executive Officer Pholetsi Moseki said, "We are delighted to confirm the revised schedule for India's



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tour of South Africa, with the addition of the T20 International series over the festive period, ensuring our Proteas Women have the best possible preparation ahead of the inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka early next year. "India remain one of the strongest teams in world cricket, and the opportunity to compete against them across all three formats will provide invaluable competition as we continue building towards another major ICC event."

SAI faces 554 coaching vacancies, says Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya



New Delhi: Over 500 vacant coaching positions in the Sports Authority of India (SAI), increased dope tests at the grassroots level and funds provided to football's beleaguered national body were among the diverse issues that Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya addressed in his responses to various Rajya Sabha queries here on Thursday. Despite the launch of a mega recruitment drive by SAI in January to hire more than 350 assistant coaches, 464 positions remain vacant, a number which is over 100 more than last year.

In all, 554 positions are waiting to be filled, including 90 slots for head coaches at its facilities across the country. "The qualifications and competencies of coaches are assessed in accordance with the prescribed recruitment and engagement norms," Mandaviya stated. The minister also revealed that in the last five years, Rs 8.5 crore has been allocated for training and upskilling programmes for coaches to "enhance their professional capabilities." Mandaviya's statement was in written response to a query from the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge. In response to a query from BJP MP Kesri Devsinh Jhala on the anti-doping measures taken by the government, Mandaviya cited

the NADA's dedicated intelligence and investigation mechanisms to collect, and assess information relating to potential Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs), including trafficking, administration, possession and distribution of prohibited substances and methods. The minister said that the number of sample collection sessions at grassroots-level events, including school, university, state, and zonal-level events has also gone up. "A total of 20 sample collection sessions were conducted in 2025, and 55 sample collection sessions have been conducted in 2026 up to July 2026," he noted. In addition, the Sample Collection Personnel (SCP) workforce has also been strengthened through "regular recruitment, training, and re-accreditation programmes."

"A total of 11 training programmes were conducted in 2025, and four training programmes have been conducted in 2026 up to July 2026, to ensure the availability of qualified sample collection personnel across different regions of the country," he said. The government is also pushing for criminalisation of doping by proposing jail term and fines for entities indulging in trafficking and supply of prohibited substances in fresh amendments to the National Anti-Doping Act. A couple of questions were posed on the state of Indian football as well. They focussed primarily on the central government's efforts to keep the sport afloat as it goes through a commercial crisis alongside lack of credible international performances. Mandaviya stated that the government has provided financial assistance to the tune of Rs 37.98 crore in the last five years. This year a total of Rs 3.91 crore has been provided to the All India Football Federation (AIFF) from a total allocation of Rs 8 crore. "At present 527 athletes of football discipline are being trained at various SAI centres across the country," read the minister's statement. "SAI, an autonomous body under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, regularly engages with the AIFF to review the performance and overall development of the sport and provides its advice accordingly," it added.

Nurjahan Jamani aims for ITTF World Para Future title in Finland

Ahmedabad: India's No. 1 para table tennis player Nurjahan Noorali Jamani will look to build on her strong showing in Kazakhstan when she competes at the ITTF World Para Future Lahti 2026 in Finland from August 28 to 30 at the Pajulahti Olympic Training Center.

The World No. 27 reached the quarterfinals at the recently concluded ITTF World Para Aktope in Kazakhstan. Nurjahan narrowly missed a place in the last four by just two points. The result underlined her steady progress as she prepares for another crucial ranking event in which the world's best para table tennis players will showcase their skills.

"Reaching the quarterfinals in Kazakhstan and coming so close has given me a lot of confidence going into Finland. I want to build on that performance and go even further. My goal is to win the tournament. Adani Sportsline's support has been instrumental in helping me compete consistently at the highest level, and I am truly grateful for it," said Nurjahan. Ranked No. 8 in Asia in her class, Nurjahan is targeting a place among the continent's top six players to secure qualification for the 2026 Asian Para Games, which will take place from October 18 to 24 in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

Diagnosed with polio at the age of five, Nurjahan returned to competitive table tennis in 2022 and has since enjoyed a remarkable rise. She successfully defended her title at the UTT Para Senior National Championship 2025-



26 in Indore after winning the UTT National Para Table Tennis Championship, a run of results that helped her become India's No. 1 player in her category. Based in Ahmedabad, Nurjahan works as a Junior Officer at Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL). Through Adani Sportsline's 'Garv Hai' initiative, she receives structured support that includes tournament planning, coaching guidance, performance monitoring and assistance for international competitions, enabling her to compete consistently against the world's best. With qualification for the 2026 Asian Para Games at stake, every ranking tournament is crucial for her. A strong performance in Lahti would strengthen Nurjahan's position in the Asian rankings and move her closer to representing India in Japan.

Josh Hazlewood on facing Bangladesh: 'Lot of unknowns, but I think it's exciting'



GNS News Agency, August 13 Bangladesh will face Australia at Marrara Cricket Ground in Darwin. The venue will host its first Test match after 22 years. Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood said it is quite a refreshing challenge and noted that there are many unknowns. "There's a lot of unknowns going in. You've got the ground, that's an unknown. The wicket in particular is an unknown, as is the opposition in these conditions. So there are a lot of unknowns, but I think it's exciting.

"There's definitely footage and we can find some trends against these batters, but it might be a case of assessing things out there and coming up with plans on the run as well, which is always refreshing," he said on the Unplayable Podcast on Thursday. The Australian Test summer usually tends to start in late November in either Perth or Brisbane. Hazlewood would predict that, as it is a non-season Test match, it might not behave the usual way. "I'm not sure what to expect regarding the conditions. It's not going to be Perth Stadium on day one, or the Gabba. I don't think it will be that typical Australian Test pitch where the quicks are super effective in terms of seam movement, swing and bounce, but it could be more similar to Bangladeshi conditions in terms of low bounce."

"It's a pretty simple plan for Test cricket. It's just execution, and it's execution for a long period of time. Things might change a little bit out there as the day goes on or the game goes on, but in general, it's a pretty simple game plan a lot of the time. "You have time to adapt out there. You might be halfway through your first spell and think, 'Oh, let's try this, let's try that'. In T20 cricket, you don't have that time. If you're a touch off, it's six," he added.

FIFA admits 'mistakes were made' but senior officials rally behind Infantino

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has received a significant show of support from senior officials during a crisis meeting in Morocco, despite mounting pressure over his failed plan to sell a stake in the World Cup. The world governing body acknowledged that "mistakes were made" in the handling of the controversial proposal and promised to ensure such errors are not repeated. The meeting, held in Rabat, saw Secretary General Mattias Grafstrom and other senior management figures "reaffirm their full support" for Infantino's leadership, according to a FIFA statement. This marks a notable shift, as Grafstrom had previously distanced himself from the plan, calling the events of the past week a "sad and reproachable series of events" in an internal email. The proposal, which would have seen FIFA sell minority stakes in a commercial subsidiary called FIFA Forward Enterprise, was met with widespread opposition and has now been formally abandoned. European football's governing body UEFA had threatened a boycott of the World Cup and other FIFA competitions if the plan went ahead, while the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) also voiced strong criticism. The backlash has raised serious questions about Infantino's leadership ahead of the FIFA presidential election in March.



The European Leagues association, which includes the Premier League, La Liga, and Serie A, has called for governance reform at FIFA. In a statement, it said the FFE proposal exposed deeper issues within the organisation and that "FIFA must not be allowed to continue taking unilateral disruptive decisions." The body also rejected any possibility of further expanding the World Cup to 64 teams. Infantino's position has also come under fire from footballing greats, with former Portugal and Real Madrid star Luis Figo calling on him to resign, accusing him of having "debased the office."

