

SCCL CMD inaugurates 1.23 MW rooftop solar plants in Kothagudem

Kothagudem: The SCCL Chairman and Managing Director, Dr. Buddha Prakash Jyoti inaugurated the 1.23 MW rooftop solar power plants installed on company buildings on Singareni Corporate Area buildings here on Friday. One segment of a 100 KW rooftop plant installed on top of the Head Office main building was connected to the grid. Speaking on the occasion, the CMD noted that Singareni, being a coal-producing company, has been making its mark not only in the thermal power sector but also in solar and floating solar power generation with the recent business expansion initiatives.

Kothagudem police crack chain-snatching cases, eight held

Kothagudem: The district police have solved a series of chain-snatching cases that took place in different parts of the district and arrested eight accused, including one inter-state offender. Speaking to the media here on Friday, Superintendent of Police B Rohith Raju informed that a special investigation was carried out into the cases reported under the limits of Aswaraopet, Dammamet, Burgampad, Paloncha rural, Tekulapally, Komararam, Julurpad and Chandrugonda police stations. Six gold chains weighing around 150 grams and three two-wheelers were seized from the accused. The recovered property was worth around Rs 26 lakh.

Murmu stresses youth welfare, women’s leadership, economic resilience in I-Day eve address

New Delhi, August 14

Anxieties among students over paper leaks resonated in President Droupadi Murmu’s Independence Day eve address, in which she called upon everyone to do their best to secure the future of India’s youth.

Describing young people as national assets, the President said, “Just as the government and society must remain united to ensure national security, everyone must contribute to safeguarding the present and future of our students.”

Murmu made a strong reference to the need to curb paper leaks, describing public examinations as gateways to opportunities for students. She also noted recent government efforts to strengthen the integrity of entrance tests.

“The Government is undertaking comprehensive steps to reform these examinations. The objectives of these reforms are to completely curb the use of unfair means in public examinations, make the examination system more transparent, more secure, and more trustworthy for the youth. Through the Government’s initiatives and emerging economic activities, a wide range of new avenues are opening up for the youth. By exploring such new opportunities, our young people can embark on new paths to success,” she said, adding that the physical and mental wellbeing of young people forms the cornerstone of the country’s future.

Noting that 65 per cent of the country’s popula-

tion is below the age of 35, the President said families and society share the responsibility of motivating them.

In other wide-ranging remarks, the President spoke about the importance of women’s reservation in politics, an agenda still pending before Parliament after the 131st Constitution Amendment Bill was defeated during the special session in April.

“Along with efforts towards the economic self-reliance of women, we are seeing them in leadership roles across many fields. It is a remarkable achievement of our democratic republic that the number of women exercising their right to vote is growing. ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam’ was enacted in 2023 with the purpose of reserving 33 per cent representation for women in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies. Achieving the objectives of this Act will enhance women’s role in leadership and make our democracy more inclusive,” the President said, nudging the early realisation of the long-pending promise of women’s reservation in politics.

The address also focused on India’s economic resilience in the face of the West Asia crisis and the country’s ongoing campaign for reforms of the UN and other multilateral institutions.

Stressing self-reliance as the way forward, the President said warfare and instability in several parts of the world were affecting every country, but India had fared well.



Armed Forces for Operation Sindoor and backed the government’s stand on placing the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance.

“Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with the country that harbours terrorism is a decisive step in the interest of our nation, especially farmers,” she said, while expressing pride in the achievements of Indian women across sectors.

Murmu also stressed the importance of fundamental duties and said, “Every citizen who faithfully discharges the Fundamental Duties enshrined in our Constitution is an active partner in our nation-building process.”

Earlier in her address, the President spoke about equal opportunity and dignity as the cornerstones of the Indian Constitution and how this timeless document was enabling ordinary people to make extraordinary contributions.

“Equality of status and of opportunity, along with the dignity of the individual, are among the cherished ideals of our Constitution. Today, people from ordinary backgrounds are making extraordinary contributions in many fields. This strengthens my belief that in today’s Bharat, everyone can dream big and also realise such dreams,” Murmu said.

Even in such trying circumstances, our economy is moving ahead as the fastest-growing major economy in the world. According to economic projections, the growth rate of the Indian economy is expected to be more than twice the average global growth rate. ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ has further strengthened the foundation of our economic progress and national security,” she said, adding that national interests form the basis of Indian foreign policy, with many countries now supporting India’s call for reforms of the UN.

In important remarks, the President lauded the

Telangana Cabinet Okays Rs 200cr Plan To Convert Autos Into Evs

Hyderabad:, August 14

The Cabinet on Friday approved a Rs 200-crore autorickshaw electric conversion scheme, offering owners a subsidy of up to Rs 1.5 lakh per vehicle to convert petrol- and diesel-powered three-wheelers into electric vehicles or replace them with new e-vehicles.

The scheme will cover the 18,766 petrol- and diesel-fuelled autorickshaws operating within Hyderabad’s Core Urban Region (CURE). Drivers can use the subsidy to install electric conversion kits in existing vehicles or scrap their old autos and purchase new electric ones.

The Cabinet also extended by three months the deadline for applications under the Hyderabad Industrial Land Transformation (HILT) policy following requests from applicants. Applications can now be submitted until October 31. The HILT policy was promulgated through GO No. 27 on November 22, 2025, and detailed operational guidelines were issued through GO No. 81 on May 22, 2026.

Under the policy, polluting manufacturing units operating in 21 industrial parks within Hyderabad’s CURE limits are to be relocated to peri-urban areas

Telangana to deposit Rs 2,400 cr fee reimbursement in advance

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has announced that the state government would deposit Rs 2,400 crore towards fee reimbursement directly into bank accounts in advance starting from the current 2026-2027 academic year.

He said that Rs 250 crore was already made available for payments. The development comes after the government had announced that fee reimbursement would take place in four phases every year, with Rs 250 crore released each month.



Addressing a public meeting after unveiling the statues of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule at Necklace Road on Friday, August 14, the Chief Minister said that the fee reimbursement amount will be credited to students’ bank accounts within a month after they apply online.

The government said the new payment system was to help stop colleges from withholding certificates from students over non-release of fee reimbursement.

Reddy said that a new course will be introduced to students from nursery through Class 12. “We are already providing comprehensive facilities, including breakfast, starting from the nursery level,” said CM Reddy. “Possessing a certificate is not enough these days.”

He emphasised that everyone must acquire technical skills to get jobs in the competitive world. “Even IT professionals are losing their jobs and returning home,” the CM remarked.

Reddy said that Advanced Technical Centers (ATCs) were established in 119 constituencies in collaboration with the Tata Group in 2024, and students enrolled in the ATCs are provided with a monthly stipend of Rs 2,000. “The main objective of the ATCs is to impart technical skills alongside formal education,” he said.

The Chief Minister spoke on the Group-1 recruitment exams as well, highlighting that 60 per cent of the selected candidates belong to the Backward Classes (BC). “With 90 per cent of students scoring full marks, competition in the field of education has intensified significantly,” he said.

‘My responsibility to give cash rewards to those who excel in sports’

Addressing the Young India Sports University’s establishment, Revanth said the educational institution also provides government jobs to those who excel in athletic activities.

“It is my responsibility to provide cash rewards and jobs to those who excel in sports and win medals,” the CM said, adding that opportunities arise only through education and one must seize them.

Taking a swipe at the previous government, Reddy said Bharat Rashtra Samithi barely provided opportunities to the BC community to pursue higher studies, instead confining them to cattle farming.

“Are we still expected to stitch footwear? Are we still expected to just herd sheep and buffaloes? Shouldn’t this community get educated? Shouldn’t they become IAS officers? Shouldn’t there be IPS officers, ministers, and MLAs among you?” he questioned.

The BRS leaders’ intention was for their own children to rule the state, the CM alleged.

He claimed that no other state had conducted a BC Census since British rule. “No one had conducted the BC census since the British era. We conducted the census and determined the exact figures for the BC community within a year.”

Telangana worker dies in Saudi Arabia, NRI offers Rs 40,000 aid

Hyderabad:, August 14 An Non-Resident Indian (NRI) entrepreneur has provided Rs 40,000 to support the family of a Telangana worker who died in a road accident in Saudi Arabia, helping them meet expenses to file a compensation case in a Saudi court.

Gurram Mahesh, a toddy tapper from Anantharam village in Jagtial Rural Mandal of Jagtial district, had travelled to Saudi Arabia seeking employment. He died on July 6, 2023, about 45 days after arriving in the Kingdom,

after being hit by a car while riding a bicycle in the Al-Hasa area of Hofuf. Mahesh’s wife, Pooja Rani, and their two daughters approached CM Pravasi Prajavani in Hyderabad on Friday, August 14, seeking assistance to initiate legal proceedings to claim compensation following his death. Responding to their appeal, NRI entrepreneur Akunoori Shankar handed over a cheque for Rs 40,000 to Pooja Rani. The assistance will be used for document attestation and court-related expenses involved in filing the compensation claim in Saudi Arabia.

Telangana govt extends HILT policy deadline to Oct 31 amid poor industry response

Hyderabad, August 14

The State government has extended the deadline for submitting applications under the HILT policy to October 31 following a poor response from industries.

Under the HILT policy, the government had sought to facilitate the relocation of polluting industries from within the CURE area to locations beyond the ORR. However, not many industrialists were keen on relocating and raised several issues with the government. The government has accordingly extended the deadline for submitting applications to October 31.

Following the recent successful auction of maize and the revenue generated from it, the Cabinet decided to sell the surplus paddy through an e-auction as well. The base price was fixed at Rs 2,389 per quintal, he said.

A day after Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy raised the issue, the Revenue Minister admitted that genuine lands had also been included in the prohibited category under 22-A. He assured that such issues would be addressed transparently. Instructions have already been issued to the Revenue and Stamps and Registration departments to address the issue. Campaigns & Elections

He said lands included in the prohibited list, other than government lands and those with legal issues, would be cleared within a couple of days. “A list of prohibited and non-prohibited categories will be uploaded on the websites by Friday evening,” Srinivas Reddy said.

Other major decisions at the Cabinet meeting

- Distribution of new smart cards to ration cardholders across the State will begin from August 15.
- Administrative sanction was accorded for an estimated expenditure of Rs 2,100 crore for Phase-II works of the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Project.
- A Rs 500 bonus will be paid for seven fine-grain varieties starting this year.
- Increasing the capacity of the Gudem Doddi Pumped Storage Project from 1.19 TMC to 15 TMC.
- The Telangana Rising Global Summit 2.0 will be held on December 7, 8 and 9 this year. The ‘Future City’ plan will also be unveiled during the event.
- The State’s ITIs, ATCs and polytechnic colleges to be brought under the ambit of the ‘Young India Skills University’. Geographic Reference
- Construction of Young India Integrated Residential Schools in the Adilabad, Nirmal, Mudhol, Boath, Sirpur, Gajwel and Dubbak constituencies was approved.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, BARKUNTA RAJU, S/o RAJESHWAR, aged 28 years, R/o H.No. 1-30, Akkapur, Mandal: Nirmal Rural, District: Nirmal, Telangana – 504106, hereby declare that my name is entered in my Aadhaar Card No. **478928597534** as BARKUNTA RAJU, S/o RAJESHWAR, R/o 1-30, Akkapur, Mandal Nirmal Rural, District Nirmal, whereas in my Passport No. **N7741509**, my name is entered as VEMPALLI RAJU, S/o RAJESHWAR VEMPALLI, and my mother's name is LAXMI VEMPALLI, R/o 1-20, Kamkatai Village, Mandal Sarangapur, District Nirmal. I hereby declare that BARKUNTA RAJU, S/o RAJESHWAR, R/o 1-30, Akkapur, Mandal Nirmal Urban, District Nirmal, and VEMPALLI RAJU, S/o RAJESHWAR VEMPALLI, R/o 1-20, Kamkatai, Mandal Sarangapur, District Nirmal, are one and the same person, i.e., myself, and not any other person. This declaration is made for the purpose of correction/change of my name in the relevant records. All concerned authorities and the general public are requested to take note of the same.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Justice Varma case—time for judicial reckoning

The judiciary in India enjoys an overwhelming public perception that it is impartial, incorruptible, and insulated from the transactional politics that shape other wings of the state. That perception is precisely what’s at stake when corruption allegations surface. The controversy surrounding Justice Yashwant Varma, at whose residence in Delhi huge unaccounted cash was recovered last year, was a blot on the image of the judiciary. Such instances can result in the erosion of public trust in the justice delivery system. A sense of closure has come in this case with the Lok Sabha inquiry committee concluding that all three charges against the former Allahabad High Court judge — unexplained possession of cash, failure to account for it and interference with evidence — stand proved. The three-member panel held that the judge, who has since resigned, had failed to furnish a satisfactory explanation for the presence and ownership of cash found in the storeroom of his residence. The committee has rightly concluded that his resignation cannot terminate a statutory inquiry once Parliament has set the process in motion. While the findings of the inquiry are a welcome development, the case raises larger questions about judicial corruption. Earlier, an in-house panel appointed by then Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna found that the judge exercised “active or tacit control” over the storeroom in which the money was kept. More than 200 MPs endorsed a removal motion against him in July 2025, and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla constituted the statutory inquiry committee the following month.

Justice Varma was serving in the Delhi High Court when a fire broke out at his official residence. The firefighters and police who arrived at the scene found jute sacks full of cash, some half-burnt, stashed in a corner of the outhouse. The shocking revelations that followed cast a dark shadow on the image of the judiciary, which is supposed to be the ultimate check on executive and legislative excesses. If its own integrity is questioned, its ability to perform that constitutional role is weakened. The misconduct of a few judges casts suspicion on thousands of honest ones. If litigants begin to believe that money, influence, personal connections or political proximity can affect judicial outcomes, the fundamental principle of equality before the law is undermined. The parliamentary committee’s insistence that the inquiry continue even after a judge’s resignation restores the purpose of the Judges (Inquiry) Act. It ensures that proceedings are not merely about removing an incumbent judge but also about arriving at an authoritative institutional conclusion. That distinction matters for public confidence in the justice system. The case led to broader reforms — mandatory asset disclosures and greater transparency in judicial inquiries. The government must take the opposition parties on board and build a consensus before initiating impeachment proceedings. The Varma case is a reminder that judicial independence and accountability must not contradict but complement each other.

Students Should Cultivate Social Service Activities

Need to Create Ground-Level Awareness on Laws: Para-Legal Volunteer Kolipaka Nagamani

“Khammam Nelakondapalli August 14 indian Chronicle:““Students should develop the habit of participating in social service activities, said Para-Legal Volunteer Kolipaka Nagamani. An awareness programme was conducted for students at Bhairavunipalli village on Friday, following the directions of the District Legal Services Authority. “Speaking on the occasion, Nagamani urged everyone to cooperate in preventing child marriages. She called for identifying child labourers and taking steps to enrol them in schools. She also stressed the



need to create widespread awareness about the POCSO Act. “She advised students to stay away from bad influences and participate in activities that benefit society. Students were urged to keep away from drugs and inform the police if they noticed any illegal sale of narcotic substances. She also advised parents and guardians not to provide vehicles to minors. “Nagamani further emphasized that students should gain awareness of various laws and make proper use of the legal protections available to them. “Para-Legal Volunteers Kishan Rao, G. Saritha, K. Nagendra, G. Nagalakshmi, E. Udayashree and others participated in the programme.

Congress seeks apology from Modi, Shah over alleged insult to Kharge

Choppadandi MLA Medipalli Satyam says incident in Uttarakhand amounted to an affront to Dalit and Bahujan communities.

Karimnagar August 14 (Correspondent) : Choppadandi MLA and Karimnagar District Congress Committee president Medipalli Satyam on Friday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah publicly apologise to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge over an alleged incident in Uttarakhand, which he described as an insult to Dalit and Bahujan communities.

Addressing a programme in Karimnagar, Mr. Satyam said it was unfortunate that caste discrimination and untouchability continued to persist in the country even after nearly eight decades of Independence.

Referring to reports from Haldwani in Uttarakhand, he alleged that BJP and RSS activists had conducted a purification ritual at a venue where Mr. Kharge had recently addressed a public meeting, claiming that the place had become polluted after the Congress leader’s visit.

“This is not merely an insult to Mallikarjun Kharge, but an affront to Dalits and Bahujans across the country,” Mr. Satyam said.

He accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of attempting to undermine constitutional values and democratic institutions since coming to power in 2014. He alleged that Dalits and Bahujans were being marginalised through policies and actions of the ruling dispensation.

Mr. Satyam demanded a comprehensive inquiry into the incident and stringent punishment for those responsible to prevent recurrence of such events. He warned that if action was not taken, the Congress would intensify protests under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

The remarks were made as part of a Congress programme held in Karimnagar district.



Secular Writers Forum State Conference on August 16 in Khammam

““ Khammam August 14 indian Chronicle:““The second state conference of the Secular Writers Forum will be held on August 16 at Vedika Function Hall in Khammam, the forum organizers said. “On Friday, renowned poet Jeevan unveiled the poster and Sparsha Study Forum representative Sparsha Bhaskar released the pamphlet related to the state conference. “Jeevan and Bhaskar said the conference is being organized with the objective of protecting fundamental democratic and constitutional values such as democratic cultural dialogue, multicultural identity, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. “The conference will begin at 10 a.m. on August 16 at Vedika Function Hall. A seminar on “Democratic Cultural Dialogue” will be inaugurated with a keynote address by renowned poet and analyst Prasen. “Sessions will also be held on “Citizenship Issues and Challenges in Democracy”, addressed by Jaharah, and “Multiple Identities in Literature”, addressed by Jeelukara Srinivas. R. Seetharam will speak on “Contemporary Social Context and Collective Action. “Mettu Ravinder, Pasunuri Ravinder and Sunkireddy Narayana Reddy will preside over different sessions, the organizers said. “Jeevan and Bhaskar appealed to people to make the conference a success, saying that it seeks to envision an India founded on democratic protection, justice, liberty and other constitutional values, and to translate those ideals into writing and action. “Poet Seetharam, Prasen, Ramesh Kumar, Phani, Madhavi, Kanno, Subhashini and Chirra Ravi, among others, participated in the poster and pamphlet release programme.a



Arrangements Completed for Mandal-Level Prajavani: District Collector Divakar T.S

Mandal-Level Prajavani to Begin from August 17 — From 10 AM to 1 PM



“Khammam, August 14 indian Chronicle:““District Collector Divakar T.S. has directed officials to make all necessary arrangements for conducting the Prajavani grievance redressal programme at the mandal level from August 17. “The Collector said that the Prajavani programme, currently being conducted every Monday at the district headquarters, will also be held at mandal headquarters with the objective of resolving public grievances quickly at the local level. He reviewed the arrangements on Friday at a meeting held in the conference hall of the Collectorate along with Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Sreeja. “Speaking on the occasion, the Collector instructed officials to conduct the Mandal Prajavani every Monday from 10 AM to 1 PM at the respective MPDO offices. “He directed that training for data entry operators required for the programme be completed by August 16. Login IDs and user guides should also be provided to the data entry operators, he said. “The Collector instructed officials to make proper seating arrangements for the public and officials at the Prajavani venues and keep computers, printers, scanners and other necessary equipment ready. “He also called for extensive publicity about the launch and functioning of the Mandal Prajavani programme and directed officials to inform all mandal-level officers in advance to ensure their mandatory attendance. “ZP CEO Deeksha Raina, District Agriculture Officer D. Pullayya, Irrigation SE Venkateshwarlu, Horticulture Officer Madhusudan, DMHO Dr. Rama Rao, DCO Gangadhar, DSO Chandan Kumar, Electricity Department SE Srinivasa Chary, RWS EE Vanisree and other officials participated in the review meeting.

The anti-worker-farmer BJP regime should be put to an end..

The anti-worker, farmer and people policies of the BJP should be reversed..

Make the Delhi program in Chalo on September 1 a success:- CPI District Executive Member MD Imran

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 14):-““CPI District Executive Member MD Imran has called on the people of the entire country to unite and reverse the anti-worker, farmer and people policies being followed by the BJP government at the Center.“ After the CPI Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Executive Committee member Imran, who inaugurated the campaign march organized by AITUC and CPI Bhuvanagiri Town Committee on Friday to protest against the anti-people rule of the central government, waved the flag in front of the new bus stand in Bhuvanagiri town, Imran criticized the BJP government at the center for implementing policies against the interests of workers, farmers and the common people. He said that it is taking away the rights of workers and taking steps to weaken labor laws. He criticized that the country’s economy is being weakened by handing over public sector enterprises to private individuals. “He said that even though the prices of essential commodities are increasing day by day, people’s incomes are not increasing, and the central government is not paying attention even though unemployment is increasing. He said that the government is responsible for providing remunerative prices to farmers, minimum wages to workers, job security and social security. “He said that there is a need to unite workers, farmers and the people and strengthen movements across the country against the anti-people policies of the central government. On this occasion, he called for a huge public meeting to be held at Ramila Maidan in Delhi on September 1. He asked workers, farmers, employees and people from Bhubaneswar town to gather in



large numbers for this huge meeting. Imran called for a united fight to reverse the anti-people policies being followed by the BJP government and protect the rights of workers, farmers and the common people. “Mahila Samakhya District President Somana Sabita, AITUC District Assistant Secretary Ganaboyina Venkatesh, District Executive Committee Member Samala Shobhan Babu, CPI City Secretary Putta Ramesh, Midday Meal Workers Union District General Secretary Mumtaz Begum, Raccha Mohandas, Umesh, Mallesh, Srinu Narasimha Jagan Raju Venkatesh Upender and others participated in this program.

Everyone Should Strive to Realize the Ideals of Khammam Uday Kiran: Md. Avez Chishti, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Library Chairman



“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – August 14): Fruits and bread were distributed at the local hospital to mark the first death anniversary of local Youth Congress leader Khammam Uday Kiran. Md. Avez Chishti, the Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Library Chairman, attended the event—organized by the Town Congress Committee—as the chief guest. He described Uday Kiran's passing while actively engaged in social service and party activities as deeply unfortunate. He urged the youth to strive towards realizing Uday Kiran's ideals and to take the lead in social service. Town President Kura Venkatesh, District Youth Congress President Manga Praveen, Bendala Raju, Chala Gurukula Raghubabu, Gangaraju Surya Prakash, Khammam Venkatesh, Jangayya Yadav, Bonagiri Venkataramana, Vasagoni Swamy Goud, and others participated in the program.

Plastic Ban Only on Paper? Sacks of Plastic Covers Sold in Khammam’s Kaswa Bazaar — Officials Allegedly Turn a Blind Eye

“Khammam, August 14 Indian Chronicle:”“Although the government has imposed restrictions and undertaken various measures to reduce the use of plastic, the ground reality appears to be quite different. In Khammam city’s Kaswa Bazaar area, large quantities of plastic covers are allegedly being openly stored and sold. Local residents have raised concerns that the concerned municipal authorities are failing to take action despite the alleged sale of prohibited plastic covers.”“Sacks of Covers... Where Are the Rules?”“Local residents say that large quantities of plastic covers are being stocked and sold in certain commercial areas of Kaswa Bazaar. Despite the continued use of plastic covers by businesses ranging from small shops to large commercial establishments, authorities are allegedly not taking strict action in terms of inspections, seizures and fines.”“A Serious Threat to the Environment”“Plastic waste entering drains can damage drainage systems and obstruct the flow of rainwater, leading to several civic problems. There is also a risk to livestock when animals consume plastic waste. Burning plastic garbage can further have adverse effects on the environment and public health.”“Where Are the Inspections?”“Authorities need to conduct regular inspections against the sale of prohibited or non-compliant plastic covers. In view of allegations that large quantities of plastic covers are being sold in Kaswa Bazaar, local residents have urged municipal officials to conduct special inspections and establish the facts.”“Questions Over



Official Action“While officials claim that the plastic ban is being enforced, allegations that the rules are being openly violated in market areas have raised concerns among the public. Authorities also need to focus on the supply chain behind the sale of plastic covers and identify the sources supplying them to local traders.”“The issue has now triggered a debate among residents over whether the plastic ban is limited merely to official announcements or whether it will actually be enforced strictly on the ground. People have urged the concerned authorities to conduct inspections in Kaswa Bazaar and take action under the law if violations are found

Women’s Associations Should Act as a Bridge Between People and Government

Women Should Remain Alert to Digital Frauds Independence Day Celebrations Should Be Observed Grandly

“Khammam August 14 indian Chronicle:”“A district committee meeting of the Telangana Veeranari Women’s Association was held at the Ambedkar Bhavan premises under the chairpersonship of C.H. Satyavathi. Telangana Veeranari Women’s Association Khammam district president P.R. Devi attended the meeting as the chief guest and addressed the gathering.”“P.R. Devi said women’s associations should work as a bridge between the people and the government and play an active role in addressing public issues. She called upon women to celebrate Independence Day with patriotic spirit and ensure that the national flag is hoisted with pride.”“She expressed concern that even after nearly eight decades of Independence, women continue to face humiliation and discrimination at home, workplaces, in society and while travelling. She also expressed anguish over the increasing incidents of murders, sexual assaults and violence against girls and women.”“Devi said women would receive greater respect in society when stronger laws and special legislation are effectively implemented for their protection.”“Recalling the past, she said Independence Day celebrations once brought great excitement among children and created a festive atmosphere in schools. However, she lamented that the occasion has gradually become merely a ritual and another holiday.”“She urged political parties and the government to give greater priority to women in the upcoming municipal corporation elections.”“She also called upon the Central and State governments to provide free skill training to youth and make related services available through skill portals. She suggested providing facilities such as transportation, accommodation, food, study material, examination fees and certification.”“Devi advised women, par-



ticularly those confined to their homes, to remain aware of health issues and healthy food habits. She also urged women to be vigilant against digital frauds and online scams.”“Regarding the ₹5 lakh financial assistance provided for Indiramma houses to poor families, she urged the government to adopt a positive approach and avoid imposing excessive rules and procedural hurdles in the release of housing bills.”“She called for the formation of committees of the Telangana Veeranari Women’s Association in all districts and announced that district-level conferences would also be organised in the coming days.”“District leaders of the Telangana Veeranari Women’s Association, including Katakam Venkatalakshmi, Tippiarti Ramya, Mandal Bhavani, Battula Upendra, Parika Bhavani, S. Sravanthi, Banka Swathi and Tallada Lakshmi, among others, participated in the meeting.

Manda Sanjeeva Reddy and Jakka Venkat Reddy Attend Sri Mahankali Temple Annual Celebrations Special Prayers Offered for the Prosperity and Well-Being of the People

“MEDIPALLY , AUGUST 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The fourth annual celebrations of Sri Mahankali Ammavari Temple were held with great devotion and grandeur at Korremula village under the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation limits.”Manda Sanjeeva Reddy, former Ghatkesar ZPTC member and Boduppal BRS party president, and Jakka Venkat Reddy, former Mayor of Peerzadiguda, attended the Sri Mahankali Ammavari Kalyan Mahotsavam as chief guests. They offered special prayers and sought the blessings of the Goddess.”“Speaking on the occasion, they prayed for the prosperity, peace, happiness and well-being of all people.Korremula village Sarpanch Venkatesh Goud, former MPTC member Jagan Reddy, temple committee members, village elders and others participated in the celebrations.



Students Receive Sportswear at Boduppal ZPHS Sadarland Global Healthcare Extends Social Service



“BODUPPAL, AUGUST 14(INDIAN CHRONICLE): Sadarland Global Healthcare Private Limited, as part of its corporate social responsibility initiatives, organized a programme at Boduppal PM Shri Zilla Parishad High School in the Boduppal Circle of Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation. At the initiative of Manda Sanjeeva Reddy, the company provided funds of approximately Rs. 3 lakh for the construction of a roofed shed over the school stage to facilitate cultural programmes. Sports dresses were also distributed to underprivileged students.”“Former ZPTC member and Boduppal BRS president Manda Sanjeeva Reddy, BRS general secretary Meesala Krishna, Sadarland Vice President Veera Raghavan, Shiva Bala Srinivas, Mareddy Shyam Sunder Reddy, retired school headmaster Ravikumar and Headmaster Ashok Kumar were among those who attended the programme and distributed the sportswear to the students.”“Speaking on the occasion, Sanjeeva Reddy expressed his special gratitude to the representatives of Sadarland Global Healthcare for allocating around Rs. 3 lakh towards the school's development. He advised the students to pursue education with determination and strive to become responsible and successful citizens.BRS senior leaders Kotha Chakrapani Goud, Bandaram Sridhar Goud, Maisagalla Srikanth and Uppari Vijay, along with teachers and several other leaders, participated in the programme.

'Padayatra Satyagraha' in Solidarity with the Congress President Against the Haldwani Incident

DCC President, Telangana Government Whip, and Alair MLA Beerla Ilaiah

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – August 13): Responding to the call given by the AICC and PCC, a 'Padayatra Satyagraha' (protest march) was organized on Friday at 4:30 PM to express solidarity with the Congress President following the Haldwani incident. The event was led by DCC President, Telangana Government Whip, and Alair MLA Beerla Ilaiah, with the participation of the Seva Dal. The march proceeded from the Congress party office in Alair town to the statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Babasaheb Ambedkar.”“Recently, at the venue where a Congress rally was held in Haldwani, Hindu right-wing organizations performed a ritual termed "purification" using Gangajal (holy water from the Ganges). Shockingly, they undertook this act alleging that the presence of Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on the stage had "desecrated" the site, thereby necessitating "purification." This despicable act clearly reflects the underlying discriminatory mindset fostered by the BJP and exposes the regressive, divisive path consistently pursued by its leadership. This shameful and regressive action does not merely insult the Congress President... This is an affront to the constitutional values—such as equality, fraternity, social justice, and human dignity—cherished by millions of Indians. There is no place for such discriminatory practices or mindsets in a democratic society governed by the Constitution of India; hence, this Satyagraha Padayatra (peaceful protest march) is being organized. Participants in this event in-



cluded state leaders Pramod Kumar, Tangallapally Ravikumar, and Survi Venu Goud; State Congress Secretary Pittala Balaraju; 'Revanth Sainyam' leader MD Nazir Bhai; District Seva Dal President Shaik Wajid; Alair Seva Dal President Suresh; Mandal Presidents Jangayya Yadav, Sathi Reddy, and Valigonda President Sahadev; District Secretaries MD Abid and Srinivas Ali; as well as the Mother Dairy Chairman, Market Committee Chairman and Directors, PACS Directors, Sarpanches, Deputy Sarpanches, Mandal leaders, leaders of affiliated wings, Women's and Village unit presidents, and leaders from the Youth Congress and NSUI.

Open School a lifeline for students who discontinued education, says Collector

Collector Chitra Mishra urges students to make use of Open SSC and Intermediate admissions under TOSS.

Karimnagar August 14 (Correspondent): District Collector Chitra Mishra has called upon students who discontinued their education to make use of the opportunities offered by the Telangana Open School Society (TOSS) to resume their studies and pursue higher education.

As part of the TOSS admission drive, the Collector unveiled a poster and booklet at her chamber on Friday night.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Mishra said that many students in rural areas had been forced to stay away from formal schooling due to various circumstances and that the open school system provided them with an opportunity to continue their education. She urged eligible students to apply for admissions to Open SSC and Intermediate courses and complete their studies.

The Collector said that TOSS had emerged as an effective platform for those who had dropped out of school to return to academics and build a foundation for higher education. She advised students to utilise the open school system to achieve their educational goals.

Emphasising that age and personal circumstances should not become barriers to education, Ms. Mishra said that everyone should take advantage of available educational opportunities and strive to fulfil their aspirations. She also directed officials concerned to intensify awareness campaigns on Open SSC and Intermediate admissions in rural areas.

District Educational Officer Chaitanya Jaini, TOSS coordinator for the erstwhile district Ramadugu Ravinder, DCEB Secretary Bhagavanthaiah, coordinator Ashok Reddy and others were present.



Congress Condemns Haldwani Incident as Undemocratic

“Khammam, August 14 indian Chronicle:”The Khammam District Congress Committee and Urban District Congress Committee organized a massive protest rally and Satyagraha in Khammam on Friday, condemning the alleged “purification” of a site in Haldwani with Ganga water following a Congress rally and expressing solidarity with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. “The protest was held on the directions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and following the call given by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president Bomma Mahesh Kumar Goud.”The rally, led by District Congress president Nuthi Satyanarayana Goud and Urban District Congress Committee president Nagandla Deepak Choudhary, began at the District Congress Office and proceeded to the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue at ZP Centre, where the leaders staged a protest. “Former MLA Kondabala Koteswara Rao, Telangana State Warehousing Corporation chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao, SUDA chairman Puvvala Durgaprasad, District Library Corporation chairman Mohammed Khader Baba, District Mahila Congress president Dobbala Soujanya, Seva Dal president Syed Ghouse, SC Cell president Boddu Bondaiah, former Deputy Mayor Mukhtar Johara, former corporators Kamarthapu Murali and Kannam Vaishnavi Prasanna, and PACS chairman Ravuri Saibaba were among those who participated.”Addressing the gathering, Nuthi Satyanarayana Goud, Nagandla Deepak Choudhary and former MLA Kondabala Koteswara Rao strongly condemned the incident in Haldwani. They described the reported “purification” of the place with Ganga water by Hindu right-wing organizations as highly objectionable and undemocratic. “They alleged that the incident reflected discrimination because Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge belongs to the Dalit community and described it as an example of what they called the BJP’s



“divisive and discriminatory politics.”The Congress leaders said such actions were against the constitutional values of equality, fraternity and human dignity. They stated that the party strongly condemned any act that allegedly undermined the self-respect of millions of Indians. “State Kisan Congress vice-president Balaji Naik, District Congress senior leader Ranga Janardhan, District Congress Committee members Kilaru Anil Kumar, Mukhtar, Kotte Rajasekhar and Pallapati Krishna, Urban District Congress Committee members Kosuri Prasad and Yeluri Srinivas, OBC Cell vice-president Gajji Suryanarayana, city Congress affiliate leaders Sheikh Abbas Beg and Banala Laxman, along with several other Congress leaders, elected representatives and party workers, participated in the protest. “Leaders and workers from the Mahila Congress, Youth Congress, NSUI, Seva Dal, SC, ST, BC, Minority and Kisan Cells, as well as block Congress committees and INTUC, also took part in the rally and Satyagraha.

CMD Conducts Surprise Inspection Focus on Net Meter Issuance and Consumer Services

“UPPAL, AUGUST 14 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): TSSPDCL CMD Jitesh V. Patil, IAS, conducted a surprise inspection of the Habsiguda and Sainikpuri Customer Service Centres on Friday. During the inspection, he reviewed the receipt and processing of applications under the Prime Minister’s Surya Ghar scheme, issuance of net meters, resolution of pending cases, new electricity connections, additional load applications and other consumer-related services. The CMD directed officials to expedite the issuance of net meters and ensure that meters are released to eligible consumers without any delay. He emphasized complete transparency at every stage, from scrutiny and approval of applications to net meter issuance and grid connectivity. Patil also reviewed the services being provided to consumers at the Customer Service Centres, including registration and resolution of complaints. He instructed officials to resolve every complaint within the stipulated time and provide better and more efficient services to consumers. “Later, the CMD held a meeting with Medchal Chief Engineer P.V. Ramesh, DEs Subbarao, Anwar Pasha and Srinivas, SAO Prabhakar, ADEs, AEs and other staff. He sought detailed informa-



tion on field-level issues, the status of pending applications, consumer services and measures being taken to improve service delivery. Officials informed the CMD that essential equipment, including power transformers, meters, poles and conductors, was available as required. “Habsiguda SE P. Venkanna advised consumers facing any electricity-related issues within the Habsiguda Circle to contact the 1912 toll-free number or the Circle Control Room at 8712471466.”

Municipal Commissioner directs immediate recovery of shop rent arrears in Karimnagar

Public auction to be held soon for vacant shops in Ambedkar Stadium, Passport Office premises and IDSMT Shopping Complex.

Karimnagar August 14 (Correspondent): Municipal Commissioner Praful Desai on Friday directed Revenue Department officials to immediately recover pending rents from shops and commercial complexes owned by the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation.

At a review meeting held at the municipal corporation office, Mr. Desai assessed the status of arrears from commercial establishments under the corporation’s jurisdiction and discussed the proposed auction of vacant shops

He instructed officials to intensify recovery efforts, particularly in cases where rent arrears have remained unpaid for a long period. Stating that municipal revenue was vital for the city’s development, he appealed to traders to pay rents on time and cooperate with civic development initiatives.

The Commissioner also directed officials to initiate steps for conducting public auctions at the earliest for vacant shops in the Sports Complex at Ambedkar Stadium, shops located in the Passport Office premises, and vacant units in the new IDSMT Shopping Complex.

Emphasising transparency in the auction process, Mr. Desai asked the Revenue Department to prepare a structured plan for enhancing municipal revenue. Officials were instructed to identify shops whose lease period had expired and take necessary steps for fresh ten-



ders and auctions.

Additional Commissioner Ayaz, Deputy Commissioner Venu, Revenue Officers Niyaz and Bhoomanandam, Revenue Inspectors and other officials attended the meeting.

Telangana State Government Whip Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah distributed shoes to students at Jalalpur village government school

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 14):- Jalalpur: A shoe distribution program was organized on a grand scale at the Zilla Parishad High School in Jalalpur village of Bommalaramaram mandal of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. The shoes donated by Gundla Sudhakar were distributed to the students by Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah as the chief guest. On this occasion, MLA Beerla Ayilaiah, who visited the school, was given a grand welcome by the students and teachers. The students welcomed the MLA with a traditional welcome dance. Later, the MLA participated in a meeting organized at the school. On this occasion, he congratulated the students who had excelled in their studies and handed over cash prizes to them. He wished that the students would study harder and rise to a higher level. Later, addressing the students, MLA Beerla Ayilaiah said that the public government in Telangana is giving top priority to education. He said that the government is undertaking many programs to provide better education and necessary facilities to the students. He especially promised to complete the BT road from Kazipet to Yavapur via Jalalpur. He advised the students to take advantage of the government facilities and set goals and move forward. Similarly, the MLA congratulated the donor Gundla Sudhakar who identified the needs of the students and provided them with shoes. He called on everyone in the society to provide assistance to the students and the poor to the extent possible. He said that it is commendable for donors to come forward for the educational development of the students. School principals, teachers, students, parents, villagers, local public representatives and others participated in this program.



Quality Seed Production and Modern Technology Key to Boosting Agricultural Productivity: Collector Divakar T.S.

“Practical Exposure to Modern Agricultural Technologies Should Be Provided to Agriculture Students”Research Findings Must Be Widely Disseminated to Farmers

“District Collector Visits Madhira Agricultural Research Station and Agricultural Polytechnic

“Khammam/Madhira, August 14 indian Chronicle:” District Collector Divakar T.S. has called for strengthening



the services of the Madhira Agricultural Research Station to make them more accessible to farmers, with special focus on quality seed production and supply. He said research should aim at developing technologies and crop varieties that help farmers achieve higher yields. “The District Collector visited the Agricultural Research Station and Agricultural Polytechnic under Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University in Madhira town on Friday. He reviewed ongoing research activities, seed supply suitable for El Niño conditions, seed production, crop cultivation, infrastructure, staff details, courses offered at the Agricultural Polytechnic and facilities available to students. “Officials of the research station briefed the Collector about its establishment, objectives, research activities undertaken so far, technologies developed for various crops and seed production. Scientists informed him that since its establishment, the station has undertaken research mainly on sorghum and pulses, and is currently focusing on greengram and blackgram research and seed production. “The officials said research is being carried out on greengram, blackgram, redgram, sorghum and paddy, along with the

production of quality breeder and foundation seeds. “The Collector inspected the available seed stocks and production targets for various crops for 2026–27 and issued several instructions. “Speaking on the occasion, Collector Divakar T.S. directed scientists to focus on developing high-yielding varieties of greengram and blackgram that are resistant to pests and diseases. He also stressed the need for research on cultivating pulses under paddy fallow conditions. “He reviewed details of varieties developed by the Madhira Agricultural Research Station, including MGG-385 (Madhira Greengram-01), MGG-389 (Madhira Greengram-389), MBG-1070 (Madhira Blackgram-01) and MBG-1080 (Madhira Blackgram-1080). He directed officials to ensure that information on newly developed varieties, cultivation practices, water-use efficiency measures and technologies aimed at increasing crop productivity reaches farmers. “The Collector emphasized that research findings should not remain confined to laboratories and research stations, but should be effectively transferred to farmers at the field level through coordination with Agriculture Department officials. “He called for giving special priority to quality seed production and preparing a plan to ensure timely availability of seeds to farmers. He also suggested creating awareness among farmers about technologies suitable for expanding pulse cultivation, high-yielding varieties and crop rotation practices. “Later, the Collector visited the Agricultural Polytechnic in Madhira. He reviewed the Agriculture Diploma course, student admissions, teaching staff, practical training and other facilities provided to students. “Officials explained that students are being given practical training in crop cultivation, agricultural technology, farm mechanization and horticulture, among other areas. “The Collector said practical field experience, along with classroom teaching, is extremely important for agriculture students. He advised the authorities to provide students with exposure to modern farming practices, micro-irrigation, seed production, crop protection, marketing and agri-based industries. “Chief Scientist of the Agricultural Research Station K. Rukmini Devi, Madhira Tahsildar Rambabu, the Principal of the Agricultural Polytechnic, scientists, teaching staff and other officials accompanied the Collector.

Government Whip MLA Beerla Ailaiah inaugurated CCTV cameras and women's association building in Ramalingampalli

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 14):- Telangana State Government Whip

and Aleru MLA Beerla Ailaiah inaugurated several development programs in Ramalingampalli village of Bommalaramaram mandal of Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. MLA Beerla Ailaiah inaugurated the CCTV cameras installed with (CSR) funds in the village, as well as the women's association building. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that people's safety is given top priority in the development of villages. He said that the installation of CCTV cameras in villages can control crime as well as curb anti-social activities. He said that when suspicious incidents occur anywhere in the village, the details through CCTV cameras will help the police a lot in identifying the responsible parties. He said that the CCTV cameras will also be useful for the people to feel more secure. Similarly, the women's association building will be very useful for the women of the village, the MLA said. He said that this building will be useful for organizing meetings of women's groups, self-help group programs, and training programs related to women's economic empowerment. He hoped that women would move forward together and take advantage of self-employment opportunities and grow economically. Beerla Ayilayya suggested that women should take advantage of the various welfare and development programs provided by the government through women's groups. He said that efforts will be made to take development programs further forward with the participation of women in villages. MLA Beerla Ayilayya stated that the government is committed to the comprehensive development of villages, public safety, and women's empowerment, and as part of that, we are providing the necessary infrastructure with various funds.



Government Whip Beerla Ayilaiah conducts surprise inspection of a company that makes oil from tires near Rangapur village in Bommalaramaram mandal

“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 14):- Government Whip Beerla Ayilaiah conducted a surprise inspection of a company that makes oil from tires near Rangapur village in Bommalaramaram mandal. Beerla Ayilaiah inspected the huge stock of tires in the company and the condition of the workers working there. The MLA expressed his anger over the workers working without minimum safety precautions. “He ordered the officials to provide complete information within two to three days on whether the company has permissions to operate? Or not. “Beerla Ayilaiah made it clear that steps will be taken to close the company if it is found that the company is operating without proper permissions. The MLA, who spoke to Pollution Control Board officials and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Collector Anurag Jayanthi over the phone, ordered an immediate comprehensive investigation into whether the company is causing problems and pollution problems to the people. He instructed the officials to take action against the company without any delay if it is found to have violated government regulations and permissions. Beerla Ayilaiah made it clear that strict action will be taken against industries that pose a threat to the health and safety of the people.



Beerla Anita presents oxygen machine to sick woman



“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 14):- Upon learning about the illness of Tandra Parashuramulu, wife of Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah, Beerla Foundation Chairperson Beerla Anita, responded with a humanitarian attitude. Beerla Anita presented an oxygen machine worth approximately Rs. 25,000 to the sick woman. Speaking on the occasion, Parashuramulu expressed special gratitude to Beerla Ayilaiah and Beerla Anita, who understood his wife’s condition and presented the oxygen machine. He said that their help has been a great help to his family. Speaking on the occasion, Beerla Anita said that Beerla Foundation always works for the people and stands ready to support them whenever and wherever they face danger. He stated that the aim of the Beerla Foundation is to share in the hardships of needy families by providing their best assistance. Many expressed their appreciation for the Beerla Foundation, which continues its many service programs by standing by the people in their time of need.

What is the problem if someone else is LoP: Calcutta High Court on Sovandeb plea



GNS News Agency, August 14

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday questioned the practical implications of the dispute as it started hearing a petition filed by TMC MLA Sovandeb Chattopadhyay challenging the Assembly Speaker’s decision to recognise Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of Opposition A division bench comprising Justice Shampa Sarkar and Justice Ajoy Kumar Gupta asked, “What is the problem if someone else is made the LoP?”Senior Advocate Kalyan Banerjee, appearing for Sovandeb, said, “These 80 MLAs won on the TMC symbol, under the leadership of the TMC and its organisation.”

The bench then sought to know whether any TMC MLA had protested against the selection of the LoP between May 9 and May 20, to which Banerjee said, “not until May 27”.He further argued that the controversy arose because unlike previous occasions when the Protem Speaker recognised the LoP, the Speaker for the first time called for a formal resolution from the party regarding the nomination.“The Protem Speaker was initially supposed to recognise the LOP. This is the first time a Speaker has called for the resolution regarding nominating an LOP from the party. Every-

body on May 19 signed the resolution giving the date of May 6. On May 6, an informal decision was taken by the Chairperson of the party,” Banerjee said.The bench questioned the role of the LoP, asking, “Apart from receiving a salary, what is the function of LoP?”Banerjee said that the LoP serves as the link between the party and the House.“The LOP acts as a bridge between the party and the House. The view of the party is communicated by the LoP. We got 41% of the votes. The LoP represents the voice of those 41%. Their grievances need to be put forward in the House,” Banerjee said.The HC observed that recognition as LoP did not automatically make a person the leader of the party organisation.

The Division Bench further observed , “These 58 persons who now form a breakaway faction, have decided they are a majority. Now they recognise a different person as a LOP. This recognition doesn’t amount that the person is the leader of TMC. He is only a leader inside the House. It doesn’t make them Leader of the organisation. Today if these people are not fighting for the Opposition vote of Bengal, can your client not voice those concerns in the House, irrespective of the LoP’s views? Will the Speaker not allow him to submit?”According to Banerjee, time is allotted to the Opposition in the Assembly and that is decided by the LoP.The matter has been scheduled for Wednesday.The HC last week refused to issue an interim order on the West Bengal Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose’s decision to appoint breakaway TMC group MLA Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of Opposition.TMC MLA Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay moved the court challenging the rejection of his name and the appointment of Ritabrata Banerjee as the LoP by the Speaker of the assembly.Justice Krishna Rao, refusing any interim order on the Speaker’s decision as prayed for by Chattopadhyay, directed that the matter would appear for hearing again on July.

’20 lakh set to benefit’: Slum rehabilitation eligibility cut-off gets Delhi government nod

GNS News Agency, August 14

’20 lakh set to benefit’: Slum rehabilitation eligibility cut-off gets Delhi govt nodThe decision is in line with the out-comes of a recent high-level review meeting chaired by Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah and the provisions of the Delhi Slum and JJ Cluster Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy 2026, said the CM’s Office in a statement. The Delhi government on Tuesday approved rehabilitation benefits for all eligible residents of settlements established till January 1, 2025 — a move expected to cover nearly 20 lakh people and facilitate permanent housing for about 4-5 lakh families living in JJ clusters across the Capital.“...Unprecedented efforts have been made across the country to provide the poor with dignified living conditions, better housing and essential amenities. In Delhi, the government is working swiftly to rehabilitate slum residents in line with the spirit of ‘Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas’ and the commitment of ‘Har Gareeb Ko Pakka Ghar,” Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said“With the revision of the cut-off date, a much larger number of eligible families will now be able to benefit from the scheme. The decision will open the door to permanent housing for around 4-5 lakh families, or nearly 20 lakh people, living in various JJ clusters across Delhi. Eligible families will be provided multi-storey flats equipped with all essential civic amenities,” the CM added.The decision was taken

at the 36th Board Meeting of the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), chaired by the CM, with Delhi’s Urban Development Minister Ashish Sood, Chief Secretary Rajeev Verma and senior officials from the departments concerned in attendance.The decision is in line with the outcomes of a recent high-level review meeting chaired by Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah and the provisions of the Delhi Slum and JJ Cluster Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy 2026, said the CM’s Office in a statement.

The CM also said that her government’s role will not be limited to providing only housing but also all the necessary civic infrastructure required for a better quality of life will also be ensured in the new rehabilitation colonies. These colonies will include Anganwadi centres, schools, health centres, children’s playgrounds and other basic facilities.The new policy is also taking into account the realities of family expansion. In cases where members of the same family are living in separate units on different floors within a slum structure, a provision is being considered to bring them within the ambit of rehabilitation as well, subject to payment of the prescribed additional charges, said Gupta.Further, pointing that Delhi government is working in coordination with the Central government, the CM said that the housing colonies for the slum dwellers will be developed in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

Bengal govt to bring law to confiscate, auction properties of corrupt officials, says Suvendu

GNS News Agency, August 14

Issuing a stern warning against corruption, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari said his government is set to introduce a stringent law to confiscate and auction the assets of corrupt officials and politicians.Speaking in the Assembly on the final day of the Budget session, Adhikari said, “A bill is being introduced in this session to confiscate and auction assets of corrupt officials.”Delivering a sharp warning, he spoke about recent anti-corruption raids, saying, “No thief will be spared. We saw how police recovered gold from the house of former Bidhannagar mayor’s friend’s house in Nadia. We will not leave this unfinished.”

Adhikari also took aim at the current state of the TMC, calling the remaining MLAs “lamp posts” who failed to stand up to the party’s top leadership. “The real one was Yuvraj (Prince). No one protested. I had the guts, and I protested,” he said. “Those who fought to oust the Communists are gone. In whose hands did the party end up?”The session also witnessed intense moments. As Adhikari vowed that the state would ensure justice for the RG Kar victim, Panihati MLA and the victim’s mother Ratna Debnath broke down in tears on the Assembly floor.The Chief Minister drew a clear line between the “old guard” of the TMC and the controversial local strongmen.He paid his respects to veteran leaders Sovandeb Chatterjee and Samar Mukherjee, calling them the “gentlemen in politics”, but explicitly warned that local leaders accused of lawlessness would face strict action.“The BJP workers from Ratua might get angry at my words, but this respect must be shown. However, Jahangir Khan, Saukat Molla, Dilip Mondal, Sona Pappu, and Raju Naskar will not be spared,” Adhikari said.

The speech prompted a walkout by a section of Opposition MLAs, including Ritabrata Banerjee. Watching them exit, Adhikari said, “The Kalighat TMC is here, and those who call themselves the real Trinamool have walked out.”Following the walkout, TMC MLA Kunal Ghosh stood up in the House, while taking a swipe at defectors. “I support whatever action you are talking about, but do not spare any of these people who have left the party,” Ghosh said.The Chief Minister quickly countered, placing the blame back on the Opposition’s internal dynamics. “Your party is in this condition because of you all, not me,” Adhikari responded. Addressing a pending dispute regarding an alleged fake signature case where three individuals reportedly told the CID that the signatures were fraudulent, Adhikari extended an assurance to the House: “They submitted a complaint about a fake signature. If you have any evidence against them, submit it. I promise to take action.”Reassuring minority communities and the public at large, Adhikari concluded by stating that “no bhadralok (gentleman) or untainted person will be touched,” while questioning the previous administration’s policies on minority education, advocating for modernisation so that students could become doctors and engineers instead of being restricted to traditional systems.Taking repeated swipes at the TMC leadership without explicitly nam-

ing Mamata Banerjee or party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, the Chief Minister referenced past political blockades.“You used to deny me permission to hold rallies,” Adhikari stated, addressing the opposition benches.Pointing out the shift in power following the 2026 Assembly elections, Adhikari added, “Today, you are sitting at home listening to my speech. I was on the streets in 2011 to bring you to power, and I was also on the streets in 2026 to remove you.”In a fiery session of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari launched a series of sharp, indirect attacks against former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), declaring that their political era in the state has permanently come to an end.

Addressing allocation to minorities reduced from last vote on account Adhinari said, “I have taken an oath that after becoming the Chief Minister, I will not use any word or sentence about which it can be said that a specific community has been hurt.”The Chief Minister also spoke about how Mamata Banerjee had “used minorities solely for her own interests and how they were deliberately misled”. “They are the ones making a hue and cry that everything is lost. You have misled the Muslims. Why will you send them to madrasas? Why won’t you send them to schools and colleges, why won’t you make them doctors and engineers? You have to answer.”

Mounting debts push ex-sarpanch to suicide in Husnabad

Siddipet: Suspected mounting debts forced a former sarpanch to end his life at Mammadapur in Husnabad mandal on Tuesday. The former sarpanch Pittala Sampath (48) was elected as a village head twice, in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

He also took up several development works by borrowing amounts from friends and other sources. The delay in release of funds by different departments increased his debt burden.The Rs 11 lakh bill pending with Mission Bhagiratha department reportedly added to his woes. As the lenders insisted on the repayment of loans, Sampath took the extreme step due to his inability to clear them. The former sarpanch, who left home on Monday night, was found hanging from a tree on the outskirts of the village on Tuesday.

He is survived by his wife and two children. Police registered a case and the probe is on.

Fire department says 12-metre building needed no NOC or fire audit



As the Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Tuesday began probing Monday’s devastating fire in Lucknow that claimed 15 lives, officials in the Fire Services Department, which along with the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) and the Electricity Department is under scanner, sought to distance themselves from the responsibility for the tragedy.The state government has already indicated that it holds the three departments accountable for lapses, suspending a fire service officer (FSO), an executive engineer of the Electricity Department and two LDA engineers within hours of the incident.Among the three departments, the Fire Services Department is expected to face the toughest scrutiny as the tragedy involved a major fire.A senior Fire Department official, when contacted, said the building did not exist in the department’s records and therefore the Fire Services had no knowledge that commercial activities were being carried out there.

The official said the building owners never approached the local fire station or the office of the chief fire officer (CFO) over the past 13 years for a fire no objection certificate (NOC). The present owners, who were arrested on Monday, had purchased the property in 2013 as a residential building and never got its land use converted for commercial purposes, he claimed.The official cited the National Building Code (NBC) 2016, claiming that residential or commercial buildings up to 15 metres in height and with a built-up area of up to 500 square metres do not require a fire NOC. The building where the fire occurred is around 12 metres high and has a built-up area of about 185 square metres, he said.

He further claimed that the NBC 2026 norms have raised the exemption limit, stating that buildings up to 24 metres no longer require a fire NOC.According to the offi-

10 years ago, building escaped demolition as owner claimed he wasn’t heard

GNS News Agency, August 14

An application submitted a decade ago by the owner of the Aliganj building that caught fire on Monday, killing 15 people, led to the revocation of a demolition order issued over unauthorised construction, The Indian Express has learnt. The owner, in the application, claimed he had not been given an opportunity to present his case before the demolition decision was taken.Sources told The Indian Express that the order withdrawing the demolition proceedings was passed “by the same officer” who had originally ordered the demolition.Speaking to The Indian Express, Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar said a 15-day demolition notice has been issued. He said the officer who had issued a demolition notice a decade ago but later revoked it would also face action, and that the LDA has recommended to the state government that appropriate disciplinary proceedings be initiated against him.

The three-storey commercial building had a pet shop and clinic in the basement, ground and first floors, while the second floor, which bore the brunt of the blaze, housed Head Hopper Studios, a company involved in 3D art production and game development. Most of the victims worked there.15 dead in fire at Lucknow animation training studio Rescue personnel douse the flames at the site in Lucknow’s Aliganj on Monday. (Express photo by Vishal Srivastav)Officials said the 1,992 sq ft plot in Sector D of the Aliganj Scheme was originally allotted under the LDA’s hire-purchase scheme through a lottery on July 11, 1980. Following execution of the agreement in November 1980, possession of the property was handed over to the allottee.The property was later registered in the names of the allottee and his wife through a sale deed in 2005. On January 19, 2013, the couple sold the property to Virendra Pratap Shukla and Surendra Pratap Shukla, after which the LDA carried out mutation in their favour on August 7, 2014. Virendra is among those arrested.Senior officials said approval for a residential building plan was granted on August 20, 2014, under the authority’s self-certification scheme, under which the building owner submitted an affidavit, along with the building plan, to use it as a “residential building”.However, in 2016, the LDA found that it was being used for commercial purposes and construction beyond residential use was carried out, and registered a case against Virendra.15 dead in fire at Lucknow animation training studio Rescue personnel had to make two big holes in an adjoining building to enter the structure that was engulfed in flames. (ANI)Sources said following this finding, the building was issued a “demolition notice for the unpermitted portion” on May 10, 2016. However, within two months, the notice was revoked citing a reason that the “owner had made an appeal that he was not heard before giving such notice”. Records show that the demolition order was set aside on July 5, 2016.Officials said the LDA is looking into all records since the notice was revoked and has summoned engineers and officials who were in charge at that time, inquiring why no action was taken despite the fact that the building continued its “commercial use” on a “residential permit”.

According to a senior LDA official, “Prima facie, we came to know that the demolition order was withdrawn on the basis of the owner’s representation that he was not heard before the order was passed. The order was revoked by the same officer who had issued the notice in the first place. The circumstances under which the order was revoked are now part of the inquiry.”15 dead in fire at Lucknow animation training studio Yogi Adityanath inspects the site of the tragedy, on Monday. (ANI)Asked why no action was taken even though the building did not have a No Objection Certificate (NOC) and lacked fire-safety measures, a senior official told The Indian Express that the building owner cited a “technical ground” — that the building was 12 metres tall (ground plus three floors), which, as per building bylaws, did not require a fire NOC.The official added that the building was recorded in LDA records as residential. The owner did not approach the local fire station or the Chief Fire Officer’s office for clearance in the 13 years since the premises began being used for commercial activity, the official added.The officials said the Indira Nagar fire station of-

cial, the Fire Department initiates the process of issuing a fire NOC or conducting a fire audit only when the building owner approaches the department or when the building exceeds the prescribed height limit.Split AC outdoor unit exploded, sparked fireAccording to the department’s preliminary investigation, the fire originated on the first floor after a split AC outdoor unit installed beside the staircase allegedly exploded. The official said outdoor units of all the air conditioners installed in the building had been placed along the staircase. The establishments on different floors had thick glass enclosures which shattered following the blast, intensifying the fire, the department claimed.The official further alleged that while the building had an approved electricity load of 20 kW, around 40 kW was being used, which appeared to have triggered the fire.According to the department, the Dial 112 emergency helpline received the fire call at 2.27 pm and the first fire tender reached the spot at 2.46 pm. The Chief Fire Officer, accompanied by 10 firefighters, entered the building using the fire tender’s hydraulic ladder at 2.55 pm.Rescue teams later broke openings in the rear wall of the building as dense smoke had engulfed all the floors.

Responding to questions over the suspension of Indira Nagar Fire Station Officer Kamendra Kumar Singh, the official said Singh was suspended for allegedly failing to conduct surveys of commercial establishments operating without mandatory fire safety measures.Suspended officer blames chiefSuspended Fire Station Officer Kamendra Kumar Singh on Tuesday released a video statement in which he read out a letter addressed to the Chief Minister.Story continues below this adSingh claimed that suspending a lower-rung officer like him was unjust as his responsibilities were limited to local inspections and submitting reports. He maintained that he neither had the authority to issue clearances nor to enforce fire safety compliance at a higher level, powers which, he said, rest with the Chief Fire Officer.He further argued that the fact that a residential building was being used commercially should have been within the knowledge of the CFO.In the video, Singh also alleged that delays in the Fire Department’s response and poor coordination reflected negligence on the part of the CFO. He urged the government to revoke the action against him and instead initiate strict departmental as well as legal proceedings against the Chief Fire Officer.While the CFO did not respond to repeated calls by to The Indian Express seeking his response, Singh declined to speak beyond his video statement.



ficer, along with officials from the power department and LDA engineers, who were suspended, were found guilty of ignoring a building being used for commercial activity that was not properly reflected in official records, and for failing to initiate any audit of the premises.Following the fire, the UP government Tuesday directed district administrations to launch a special drive against unregistered coaching institutes and conduct safety audits of all registered centres. Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay said all District Magistrates have been instructed to carry out a comprehensive survey of coaching institutes operating in their respective districts and prepare a list.The inspections will cover building safety, fire-fighting arrangements, electrical safety and other essential facilities available for students. “Student safety and quality education cannot be compromised. The government is committed to ensuring discipline, transparency and accountability in the education sector,” Upadhyay said.The Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted on the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, also conducted a detailed inspection of the gutted building and spoke with injured victims undergoing treatment at KGMU.So far, four persons have been arrested in connection with the incident, while four officials have been suspended.

KNRUHS announces PwD, CAP certificate verification schedule for MBBS, BDS admissions

Hyderabad: The Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences (KNRUHS) on Friday released notifications related to physical assessment and certificate verification schedules for Persons with Disability (PwD) and Children of Armed Personnel (CAP) seeking MBBS and BDS admissions under specialized reservation categories.

PwD candidates must undergo mandatory physical evaluations from August 13 to 14 at the Learning Center and Mini Conference Hall, old OPD Block, NIMS. They must report on time, accompanied by a parent or guardian, and carry relevant original certificates alongside mandated documents.The Health University said candidates requiring specialized secondary evaluations in fields such as Neurology, Ophthalmology, ENT, or Hematology could be asked to attend on subsequent days.

Physical verification of original certificates for candidates under Children of Armed Personnel (CAP) quota at Office of Director, Sainik Welfare, Somajiguda, will be on August 13 and 14. The candidates must attend the physical verification accompanied by a parent or guardian and failure to attend will result forfeiting claim for admission under the CAP category.



In PM Modi’s footsteps, Shivakumar eyes defence land for new Bengaluru garden



GNS News Agency, August 14

The Karnataka government is likely to cite the example of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s request for defence land in Varanasi to create a park as part of its efforts to create three new parks in Bengaluru, Chief Minister D K Shivakumar has indicated. The government plans to create three new parks on the lines of the 240-acre landmark Lalbagh Botanical Garden in south Bengaluru—one proposal involves defence land and two others involve forest land—Shivakumar indicated after inaugurating the 220th edition of the annual flower show at Lalbagh

“Our government is considering three Lalbagh-style gardens in Bengaluru,” Shivakumar said. “We intend to build

one such park on defence land in Bengaluru. The land will remain under the ownership of the defence ministry, but we need permission to build the parks there. I have written a letter in this regard and will meet the Union defence minister soon. The Prime Minister has previously given permission to build a park on defence land in Varanasi,” he added. “Additionally, we have decided to set up two similar parks on forest land within Bengaluru city, and I have held discussions with forest department officials. We plan to assign this responsibility to agencies like the Greater Bengaluru Authority, Bangalore Development Authority, and the Horticulture Department. During our tenure, we are committed to protecting the city’s greenery and improving public life,” he said.

100-day programme to empower farmersThe theme of the 220th edition of the Lalbagh Flower Show, which is held around Independence Day, is the ‘Glory of the Ganga Dynasty’. “The history of the Ganges represents equality, farmers’ lives, and struggle. This is a celebration of our culture, farming life, and art,” Shivakumar said. The Karnataka chief minister also indicated that the state government would announce plans for an initiative to increase greenery in the state while supporting farmers’ livelihood. “It will be a collaborative effort of farmers and the government, which we will formally announce on August 15. A 100-day government programme has been planned, focusing on empowering farmers,” he said.

MMRDA canteen in Mumbai allowed to reopen after operator gets food safety licence

GNS News Agency, August 14

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Maharashtra on Thursday night permitted the canteen at the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority’s (MMRDA) headquarters in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) to resume operations after its operator obtained a Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) licence.

Earlier this week, on Monday, an inspection at the canteen inside the MMRDA headquarters revealed that the contractor was operating the facility without any FSSAI licence, which is mandatory for running any food establishment. The FDA immediately ordered the canteen to stop operations and imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on the contractor. During the inspection, the contractor maintained that he had already applied for a new FSSAI licence. “I checked the documents and found that he had applied for registration on July 22. I had already scrutinised the application and reverted. On the day of the inspection, the application was pending with him for modifications,” an FDA official said.

Meanwhile, FDA officials directed the contractor to



complete the required compliances until he obtained the licence. After he obtained the FSSAI licence on Thursday, the FDA permitted him to resume operations from Friday. On Wednesday, FDA officials found that two canteens at the city’s premium institute, IIT Bombay, were operating without FSSAI licences. They were subsequently issued stop-business notices. A third canteen, which held a valid licence but was found non-compliant with certain food safety norms, was served an improvement notice.

UP Governor’s Gorakhpur remark sparks buzz, Akhilesh Yadav takes a swipe



GNS News Agency, August 14

In a remark that has sparked a buzz in political circles a year before the Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Governor Anandiben Patel has invoked Gorakhpur as the political and spiritual base of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath while flagging poor facilities at a local state university. The Governor has pulled up the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gorakhpur University and the local administration over hostel infrastructure and student amenities. As Governor, Anandiben Patel is the chancellor of state universities in Uttar Pradesh. Addressing the 45th convocation ceremony of the university on Thursday, the Governor said, “Lagon ko shayad bura lagega, lekin jo hamari kamiyan hain, woh to humein batani hi padegi. Aane wale teen mahine mein pooro karke dikhao. Aur yeh to Gorakhpur hai, jahan swayam hamare Mukhyamantri virajmaan hain. Wahan hi aisi kamiyan rahengi to kya hoga?” (People may not like it, but we have to point out our shortcomings. Show me within the next three months that these deficiencies have been addressed. And this is Gorakhpur, the Chief Minister’s home. If such shortcomings exist here, what will happen?”

The remarks carry political significance because they were made in Gorakhpur, which Adityanath represented in Parliament for five consecutive terms before becoming the Chief Minister. Gorakhpur is also home to the Gorakhnath Math, of which Adityanath is the Mahant. Akhilesh Yadav, chief of Uttar Pradesh’s main opposition, has now latched to Patel’s remarks to take a swipe at alleged infighting within the BJP. What Anandiben Patel Said

The Governor said the university has nine hostels – six for boys and three for girls – but noted that the boys’ hostels don’t have a mess facility. “Girls hostel mein mess chal rahi hai, boys hostel mein nahi chalti. Kyon, tiffin mein achha lagta hai?” (Girls’ hostels have mess facilities, but boys’ hostels don’t. Why? Is outside food better?” she asked. Patel said she inspected the food served on campus during her stay, questioned the quality of cooking oil, and ordered testing of food samples. At one point, she said that while one set of samples had been sent for testing, she ensured collection of another set that she would send for testing in Lucknow. “Sometimes, samples get switched. This used to happen in Gujarat. I am not saying this as a Governor. I am a mother. Our children should get proper food,” she said.

The Governor said food delivery services to the campus may also become a route for drugs to enter hostels, saying she had received such inputs during her visit, and found evidence of narcotics use in several universities across Uttar Pradesh. “I have visited almost all state universities; only four remain. Narcotic substances have been found everywhere. I have photographs. Is this the Nasha Mukht Bharat we speak of? If students remain addicted, how will we build a developed India?” she asked. Patel highlighted

several shortcomings on campus, including gaps in Wi-Fi connectivity and power supply and lack of hygiene in many hostels, and asked officials to ensure a turnaround within three months. What University Said Vice-Chancellor Poonam Tandon told The Indian Express that the university had initiated action after the Governor’s directions. “Along with the district administration, we have started work on the issues raised by the Governor and would try to resolve most of them within a week,” she said.

The Vice-Chancellor said students had earlier resisted attempts to set up mess services at boys’ hostels. They had argued that the estimated cost of around Rs 100 per day (about Rs 3,000 a month) would be unaffordable. The university administration is now trying to find a solution, she said. Tandon said the nearly 75-year-old university is now undergoing renovation with government funding. Repair work is underway in hostels, cupboards are being installed, and a proposal has been prepared to reconstruct an old hostel that was declared unsafe by the Public Works Department, she said. Yadav took to social media to share a video of Patel’s remarks at the university. Referring to her mention of samples being switched in Gujarat, he said, “While unravelling the ‘Gorakhpur model’, irregularities in the ‘Gujarat model’ have come to light. The common point is a BJP government and its corruption in both states. Infighting has turned the ‘double engine’ into ‘trouble engine’,” he said in a post on X. “Double engine” is a pitch the BJP routinely uses in state polls to underline the advantage of having the same party in power at the state and the Centre.

Badal backs students’ protest, says time to kick out ‘Dilliwalas’ for exam scams in Punjab

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Thursday extended support to students protesting outside Punjabi University in Patiala seeking the resignation of education minister Harjot Singh Bains.

Addressing a gathering of students protesting under the banner ‘Bhavikh Bachao Morcha’, Badal said that both Bains and health minister Dr Balbir Singh shouldn’t continue as ministers. “They have to take full responsibility for the paper leaks and the 10+ exam scams that have impacted over 10 lakh youth in Punjab,” he said.

Urging students to create a mass movement to throw the anti-youth and anti-Punjab AAP government out of power, Badal said, “We are here to expose AAP’s hypocrisy. They want to Delhi to fight for students, but when they were questioned by the media there about paper leaks in Punjab, they denied that. This is completely unacceptable because the Punjab Chief Minister himself has gone on record to officially admit in March 2023 that the Punjab State Teacher Eligibility Test paper had leaked.”

Detailing the multiple exam scams under the AAP dispensation in Punjab, Badal said, “There have been over 10 exam leaks, including the latest Pharmacy Officers paper leak last month. Instead of admitting its fault and taking corrective measures to stem this rot by dismissing guilty ministers, the AAP government has gone into a denial mode. They are busy advertising a fake ‘Sikhiya Kranti’ when on the ground they have absolutely failed.”

On Amazon’s plea, Bombay High Court’s ‘killing a mosquito with a sword’ jibe and advice to Maharashtra food regulator



GNS News Agency, August 14The Bombay High Court on Friday again criticised Tukaram Mundhe-led Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its action against Amazon Retail India, saying the food safety regulator was trying to implement its policies vigorously to solve a problem that does not warrant drastic actions. The court also advised the regulator to “go systematically”. “We need to tell you that in order to implement your policies vigorously, you try to kill a mosquito with a sword,” the High Court said.

The High Court, however, also praised the food safety regulator for its action against violations, but asked whether it would shut down all commercial establishments to deal with this situation. A bench of Acting Chief Justice Ravindra V Ghuge and Justice Gautam A Ankhad was hearing a plea by Amazon Retail India against the FDA action on its

Bhiwandi warehouse for allegedly sending expired food into the retail market instead of scientifically destroying it. The High Court cautioned the FDA that, as per settled law, the food licence cannot be cancelled while an appeal against suspension was pending. Senior advocate Venkatesh Dhond, appearing for Amazon, told the court that the FDA officers visited the warehouse on June 24 and suspended its licence the next day without issuing an improvement notice.

He said the FDA action was on the disposal of expired goods under food safety regulations, but there was no question on the functioning of the warehouse. On July 1, the food safety regulator issued a show-cause notice, and then cancelled the licence even when its suspension appeal was pending.

“During the appeal, how can there be a cancellation order? It is a settled law that during the appeal period, no such action can be taken. Therefore, we need to tell you that in order to implement your policies vigorously, you try to kill a mosquito with a sword. Procedure has to be followed,” Justice Ghuge questioned the state government lawyer. After Government Pleader (GP) Neha Bhide told the bench that FDA would file an affidavit in response to the plea, the judge remarked, “That we know. But what is to be done now? As we have said [earlier hearings over FDA actions], we appreciate your action. This is laudable, and you deserve a compliment. But go systematically. To deal with the situation, you will shut down all commercial establishments in Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Palghar? Unless that is the rule that everything should be stopped.”

Suicide threat, cries, gloom shroud Dharavi’s Meghwadi amid demolition drive: ‘Yanked my kid out of house’

GNS News Agency, August 14

A demolition drive under the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) triggered protests in Meghwadi on Thursday, as residents tried to stop officials from razing 16 houses marked for eviction. The operation was partially halted after an elderly resident who threatened to end his life collapsed and local Congress MLA Jyoti Gaikwad intervened, but was eventually completed, with 14 homes demolished and two promised to be handed over peacefully. Officials of the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA), accompanied by police, began the demolition around 11 am after the occupants failed to vacate their homes despite notices issued under the Maharashtra Slum Areas Act, 1971. The action is part of the ongoing exercise to clear Sector 6, where rehabilitation buildings are proposed under the redevelopment project. Residents gathered outside the houses and pleaded with officials to stop the demolition.



Dharavi demolition Residents gathered outside the houses and pleaded with officials to stop the demolition. (Express Photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee) Some family members remained inside even as workers began dismantling parts of the structures and disconnecting water and sewerage connections. During the protest, resident Bipin Padaya threatened to commit suicide before collapsing. He was taken to hospital, where his condition was stable. Dharavi redevelopment demolition Bipin Padaya threatened to commit suicide before collapsing (Express Photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee) Residents said they were not opposed to the redevelopment project but wanted transit accommodation instead of the monthly transit rent being offered. They said the rent was insufficient to find homes close to their workplaces and children’s schools and expressed concerns over whether the payments would continue until rehabilitation was completed.

“They yanked my child out of the house,” said Savita Reddy, a tenant whose house was being demolished. House owner Suresh Parmar claimed he had not received

any demolition notice. The demolition follows months of negotiations between residents, the SRA and Adani Navbharat Developers Private Limited (ANDPL). Dharavi demolition A boy takes his books and other belongings as DRP officials begin demolition at Dharavi (Express Photo by Sankhadeep Banerjee) In July, authorities issued eviction notices to 123 residents who had not agreed to vacate. According to officials, all but 16 families eventually shifted. Residents, however, maintained that they had not received adequate clarity on their rehabilitation and wanted assurances about their permanent homes and the continuity of transit rent. Officials have said transit accommodation cannot be provided because of the lack of available housing and that eligible residents are being paid monthly rent, along with brokerage and an annual increase. Around 1 pm, Congress MLA Jyoti Gaikwad reached the site and held discussions with officials. The demolition was subsequently slowed and later stopped, with action carried out only on houses that had already been vacated. A meeting between residents and SRA Chief Executive Officer Mahendra Kalyankar has been scheduled on Friday to discuss the remaining structures.

In Tamil Nadu Assembly, Vijay defends Cauvery talks with Karnataka



GNS News Agency, August 14

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay defended his decision on Friday to consider direct talks with Karnataka over the Cauvery water dispute. At the same time, he made it clear that his government has not abandoned legal routes in the case. Vijay said he proposed talks with Karnataka on the Cauvery issue, hoping for a positive outcome. Speaking in the Tamil Nadu Assembly session, Vijay said he did not want to indulge in “cheap politics” over the dispute. Responding to the opposition leader Udhayanidhi Stalin in the session, Vijay mentioned how Tamil Nadu had handled the Cauvery issue since 1969 from considering dialogue to sticking to dealing with the dispute legally. “Our stand on the Cauvery issue remains firm. There is no change in our approach of dealing with it,” he said.

Quoting late Congress leader and former Tamil Nadu Assembly Opposition leader P G Karuthiruman, Vijay said that the Cauvery issue needed careful negotiation. Vijay was also considering visiting Bengaluru and holding talks, hoping that could offer a way forward. “Even nations that are sworn enemies hold dialogue to resolve issues,” he said, adding that he is prepared to bear insults for the sake of the Tamil Nadu people. The Cauvery dispute The Tamil Nadu-Karnataka Cauvery dispute dates back decades. A water-sharing agreement was signed in 1924, which remained in force for 50 years. Under the agreement, Tamil Nadu was allowed to expand its agricultural area by 11 lakh acres from the existing 16 lakh acres while Karnataka was permitted to increase its irrigation area from 3 lakh acres to 10 lakh acres. After the agreement lapsed in 1974, Karnataka ar-

gued that the pact had restricted its agricultural development and began constructing reservoirs in the Cauvery basin. This escalated the dispute. Tamil Nadu objected to the dams. Subsequently, the Union government constituted the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal in 1990 to decide on the sharing of the river’s waters between the basin states. The Supreme Court also directed the government to frame a mechanism for implementing the award. Which led to the establishment of the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.

Miyapur rescue operation continues as Balaiah remains missing

Hyderabad: The search for 70-year-old Balaiah, who was allegedly swept away in a storm water drain at Vaishali Nagar in Miyapur, entered its 10th day on Friday, with rescue teams yet to trace him. Teams from GHMC, HYDRAB, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Fire Services and the police continued an extensive search using drones and other advanced equipment, but there has been no information on his whereabouts. Officials said desilting of the drain is also being carried out as part of the operation under the supervision of Zonal Commissioner Narayana Amit. Miyapur Inspector N Jayaram said search teams covered nearly 5 km along the storm water drain but were unable to locate him. “The civic authorities are continuously on the job, but their efforts have not been fruitful yet. The debris and silt in the storm water drain are making the search more difficult. The silt is being cleared, and all possible locations that our teams can reach are being thoroughly checked,” the inspector said. With no breakthrough even after several days, Balaiah’s family remains anxious. Speaking to media persons, his wife Padma, who works as a domestic help, appealed to the civic authorities to continue the search until he is found. “It has been several days, but we still have no information about him. Every day we come here hoping for some news. We just want him to be found, whatever the outcome,” she said.

Farmers in Kenya dispute that cyanide poisoning could have killed 15 elephants



GNS News Agency, August 14

Kimana: The carcass of one elephant lies on a dusty road, while another has been almost completely eaten by scavengers, leaving just the skull. They are among 15 elephants that died of suspected cyanide poisoning in Kenya's Amboseli National Park after eating tomatoes in nearby farms. Investigations are ongoing into how cyanide found its way to an ecosystem where wild and domestic animals coexist and farms grow tomatoes and onions, but growers are disputing claims that cyanide from their tomatoes killed the elephants. The elephant deaths and disputes about the cause have intensified concerns over growing human-wildlife conflict in the region due to expanding agricultural activities near Amboseli park. Kenya has until recently been widely recognised for rebuilding its elephant population from historic lows to more than 36,000 individuals by reducing poaching and protecting elephants. Farmers sceptical cyanide from their farms killed elephants

Elvis Muchai has farmed on the edge of Amboseli for two decades. In all that time, he said, he has never heard of farmers poisoning wildlife. That is why he was sceptical of reports last month that the 15 elephants had died from suspected cyanide poisoning after consuming tomatoes believed to have been contaminated with the chemical.

Muchai, who farms tomatoes in Kimana area, said local communities have long coexisted with elephants despite suffering repeated crop losses when the animals cross the park's electric fence and raid farms, particularly during the dry season. "We are used to the animals eating from our farms," he said. Fifteen elephants died in one month. Last month, the Kenya Wildlife Service announced that 15 elephants had died in the Amboseli ecosystem in a span of a month. Preliminary laboratory tests detected cyanide, while postmortem examinations found tomatoes in the animals' stomachs. The head of veterinary services at Kenya's wildlife agency, Dr. Isaac Lekolool, said the elephants had shown signs of "paralysis and difficulty breathing" before they died. Initial tests pointed to cyanide poisoning, although further laboratory tests are being done to determine the concentration of cyanide. "We are yet to find out where this cyanide came from," Lekolool said, adding that the elephants

had also consumed watermelons. He urged caution over the handling and use of pesticides on farms. One of Kenya's most productive farming regions Kimana, which borders Amboseli, is one of Kenya's most productive agricultural areas, growing tomatoes, onions and French beans that are transported to markets to the capital, Nairobi. The samples tested for toxic chemicals were obtained from the elephants' stomach contents and the analysis of blood samples is ongoing, Dr. Lekolool said. He disputed earlier claims that cyanide, which is regulated by the government for use in mining, may have been present in the park due to illegal mining.

Farms have expanded near the park and conflict between people and elephants remains the second leading cause of deaths after poaching, according to Kenya's National Elephant Plan. Between 2000 and 2020, at least 1,160 elephants died in incidents linked to self-defence or retaliatory killings as communities sought to protect their crops, property and lives, the Plan notes. But Duncan Juma, communications director of Kenya's wildlife service, ruled out human-wildlife conflict in the death of the elephants, saying "the community loves these animals." Urgent need to tackle human-wildlife contact The International Fund for Animal Welfare, or IFAW, said the recent suspected cyanide poisoning highlights the urgent need to tackle the underlying causes of human-wildlife conflict. "As people and elephants increasingly share space, protecting wildlife and safeguarding communities' livelihoods must go hand in hand," IFAW wrote in a statement. IFAW's East Africa Director Ben Wandago said the reported cyanide poisoning must be "urgently and thoroughly investigated" and recommended that coexistence solutions to protect communities living near the park be implemented.

"This tragedy also underscores the urgent need for the strict control and responsible handling of highly toxic substances to prevent them from entering the natural environment," he said. Farmers are doubtful that the cyanide could have originated from commonly used agricultural inputs. Muchai said he has never encountered cyanide among the pesticides or chemicals sold to farmers in the area and insisted that products available on the market are regulated by the Kenyan government. "The chemical they are talking about, we've never seen it or heard of it here," he said. Last season alone, Muchai said elephants destroyed about half an acre of his tomato crop, costing him an estimated 500,000 Kenya shillings (USD 3,800). "We have lived with these animals for years. They eat our crops, and many of us have never received compensation," he said. Another farmer, Rymond Mrosso, also questioned whether pesticides used by local farmers could explain the deaths and wondered why only elephants appeared to have been affected. "We have goats, cows and other wildlife such as gazelles that also feed in these areas," he said. "If the crops were poisoned, why were only the elephants affected?"

NASA astronauts Anil Menon, Jessica Meir undertake spacewalk to upgrade space station



GNS News Agency, August 14

Washington: NASA astronauts Anil Menon and Jessica Meir on Friday concluded their spacewalk outside the International Space Station to assemble a modification kit for its power channel, which would allow the addition of solar arrays. Menon and Meir exited the Quest airlock and carried out structural upgrades on the exterior of the orbital laboratory during the six-hour, 27-minute spacewalk. Their primary objective centred on installing mounting hardware on the station's 3B power channel, located on the Starboard 6 truss segment. "This work will enable the future installation of roll-out solar arrays, called IROSA, to provide additional power for the orbiting laboratory, supporting critical systems and the safe, controlled deorbit of the space sta-

tion," NASA said in a statement.

Since 2021, astronauts on prior spacewalks have deployed six of the International Space Station Roll-Out Solar Array (IROSA) assemblies, leaving now just two awaiting delivery to the station later this year. Menon was positioned on an articulating portable foot restraint atop a worksite interface, providing a stable angle to work from the truss. The two astronauts later routed cabling that will carry electricity from the future IROSA into the 3B power channel and then covered the struts with multi-layer insulation. "Anil, you can see the moon to the – well, I am not sure what way you're facing, butâ€¦," said Meir, taking a short break during the spacewalk. "To my right. Yeah, I see it – thanks for the heads-up. I can see a future moon base there," Menon said. This was the first of the three spacewalks for the space station's Expedition 75 crew this month. During the second spacewalk on August 13, two astronauts will replace a Space-to-Ground antenna on the orbital complex. The antenna is a critical communication system NASA uses to transmit data and high-speed communication between the Mission Control Centre in Houston and the space station. During the spacewalk on August 25, the crew members will connect power channel cables and data relay systems as part of ongoing maintenance, including preparations for the space station's future deorbit. The astronauts also will replace a navigational aid used for spacecraft docking on the Harmony module's forward port, NASA said.

HILT deadline extended again as industry response remains tepid

Hyderabad: With a lukewarm response to the Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation (HILT) policy even a year after its launch, the Congress government has extended the deadline by another three months. Applications will now be accepted until October 31, after the earlier deadline failed to generate the level of participation expected by the government, with industries not being keen to opt for the scheme despite a series of concessions.

The HILT policy seeks to convert industrial land within the Outer Ring Road (ORR) into residential, commercial and other mixed-use developments while relocating industries to alternative sites outside the ORR. However, the poor response is being attributed to the government's focus on unlocking the real estate value of Hyderabad's industrial land rather than its actual objectives. Of the 9,292 acres spread across 22 industrial estates and parks, nearly 4,740 acres could potentially be converted after accounting for land required for roads and infrastructure. Yet, applications so far cover only about 450 acres from 193 industries, which is less than a tenth of the potentially convertible land. The limited uptake is particularly significant because the government expects the applications to generate around Rs 1,500 crore through the Development Impact Fee (DIF). So far, Rs 150 crore towards its target has been deposited. The government is expecting the extended window to attract another 300 applications. But the hesitation among functioning industries remains a key obstacle. Industry representatives have flagged conversion costs, uncertainty over the values used to calculate the DIF and the lack of fully developed relocation sites as major concerns. For an operating factory, relocation is not simply a land-use change, as it involves rebuilding plants, shifting machinery, retaining skilled workers and recreating logistics and utility networks. This has forced many manufacturers to adopt a wait-and-watch approach, even as some sick, defunct or underutilised units have shown greater in-



terest in the policy. The government has sought to address these concerns. The Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIIC), which was appointed as the nodal agency, has identified alternative sites at Madaram, Dandu Malkapur, Sangareddy, Ibrahimpatnam, Gowrelli and Thimmapur. Land acquisition and environmental clearances are also being pursued. The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority issued a preliminary notification on July 25 last year for converting the land use of 21 industrial parks into multi-use parks. The latest extension comes with another concession. The government will allow applications until October 31 using registration values that were in force before June 5. Officials said they were also considering extending the relocation period from one year to two years for small and medium industries and from three years to four years for large and mega units. The policy has also faced legal scrutiny in the Telangana High Court, while the opposition parties have questioned its implementation and valuation framework. The government maintained that HILT is aimed at redeveloping ageing industrial areas, reducing pollution within ORR limits and creating better-equipped industrial locations outside the site.

AP Cabinet approves integrated pedestrian safety, universal accessibility policy



GNS News Agency, August 14

Amaravati: The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved an integrated Pedestrian Safety & Universal Accessibility Policy, bringing together pedestrian safety, universal design, scientific road audits, technology-driven monitoring and circular-economy principles under a single statewide framework. The policy, along with detailed operational guidelines, has been designed to fundamentally change the way roads and streets are planned, built and monitored in the state, an official release said on Friday. "The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved an integrated Pedestrian Safety & Universal Accessibility Policy, bringing together pedestrian safety, universal design, scientific road audits, technology-driven monitoring and circular-economy principles under a single statewide framework," it said. At the heart of the policy is a decisive shift from vehicle-centric road design to people-centric infrastructure, with the objective of ensuring that roads are safe and accessible for all citizens, including children, senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

The framework will apply across the state, including urban areas, rural and peri-urban stretches, urban fringes and satellite towns, and will cover both new projects and the retrofitting of existing infrastructure. The policy comes against the backdrop of a serious national road-safety challenge with India recording over 1.72 lakh road accident fatalities in 2023, including 35,221 pedestrian deaths.

Pedestrians accounted for more than 20 per cent of all the road fatalities. The Supreme Court has also recognised safe and obstruction-free footpaths as a facet of the Right to Life under Article 21 and called for a shift towards people-centric road infrastructure, the release said. A major feature of the policy is the institutionalisation of comprehensive road-safety audits. Roads, junctions, pedestrian crossings and high-footfall locations will be systematically assessed while accident blackspots and vulnerable stretches will receive priority attention. Locations will be assigned a quantifiable safety score, incorporating pedestrian vulnerability and universal-accessibility parameters. The framework envisages prioritising 15-20 high-fa-

tality blackspots using two to three years of accident data, with at least 20 per cent of roads to be surveyed within the first year.

Further, the policy lays down detailed standards for the design of pedestrian infrastructure. Continuous footpaths will provide a minimum two-metre clear walking zone, along with firm and slip-resistant surfaces, level continuity across entrances and side streets, including adequate headroom free from poles, signage and other obstructions. Universal accessibility features will include tactile ground-surface indicators, wheelchair-friendly kerb ramps, protective bollards and audible signals while grade pedestrian crossings will be preferred over inaccessible foot-over-bridges, with lifts to be provided where required. The policy also adopts a zero-tolerance approach to pedestrian deaths and footpath encroachments with local bodies, police and revenue authorities expected to work together to keep walking spaces obstruction-free. A distinctive element of the Andhra Pradesh framework is its integration of pedestrian infrastructure with the circular economy. The policy mandates the use of processed construction and demolition waste for non-structural pedestrian components, including pavement and paver blocks, street furniture and certain protective bollards. It also envisages incentives for manufacturers and contractors using certified recycled materials, with pilots intended to build local supply chains before wider rollout, the release said. Further, the policy goes beyond engineering interventions and places significant emphasis on behavioural change and citizen participation. A district-level mobile application or portal is envisaged to allow citizens to report wrong-side driving and footpath encroachments.

Residents' Welfare Associations will also be encouraged to participate in accessibility walks, social audits and community monitoring while NGOs, persons with disabilities and academic institutions will be brought into the consultation process. Implementation will be backed by technology, providing for GIS mapping of footpaths, geo-tagged photographic documentation, drone-based surveys and digital inventories of pedestrian infrastructure. Physical and financial progress across Urban Local Bodies will be tracked through dashboards, while CCTV and drones may be integrated with command centres for real-time monitoring and enforcement. The overall policy architecture follows three sequential mandates, which includes comprehensive safety audits, infrastructure, accessibility, circular-economy interventions and behavioural change through citizen participation and social policing. The framework seeks to diagnose unsafe streets, build safer infrastructure and sustain improvements through community participation. With the new policy, Andhra Pradesh is seeking to establish a new benchmark for road planning in India – one in which pedestrian safety and accessibility are treated as core infrastructure priorities rather than secondary considerations, the release added.

Trump's Iran dilemma: He's stuck in war with no exit in sight



Trump is caught between an emerging interim deal being negotiated by Iran and Oman that would give Tehran control over the Strait of Hormuz it never possessed before the war, or following through on his warnings of sharp escalation, risking a more prolonged crisis.

WASHINGTON, - With President Donald Trump's war against Iran now in its sixth month, this week's flurry of threats and diplomacy has underscored the ever-tighter bind he finds himself in as he tries to extricate the U.S. from an unpopular conflict he originally claimed would last just weeks. Trump is caught between an emerging interim deal being negotiated by Iran and Oman that would give Tehran control over the Strait of Hormuz it never possessed before the war, or following through on his warnings of sharp escalation, risking a more prolonged crisis.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. The first option, analysts say, would grant Iran its biggest concession since the U.S. and Israel attacked it on February 28 and formalize, at least for now, the Islamic Republic's supervision of the vital oil-shipping conduit, which the Trump administration had vowed to prevent. The second path, likely a fresh wave of airstrikes, could be fraught with political peril for Trump ahead of November's pivotal U.S. midterm elections, while seeming to offer no better chance of success than the earlier bombing that failed to bring Tehran to its knees.

Trump could instead choose to maintain the uneasy status quo. That would mean maintaining a blockade of Iran's ports and periodically retaliating for any attacks on shipping. But this approach too would not offer Trump a face-saving way out of a conflict he had predicted would be over by mid-April.

"It's a menu of bad options but Trump may have come to the realization that he can't let this war go on endlessly," said Aaron David Miller, a former Middle East negotiator for Democratic and Republican administrations. "Something has to give, and that may be recognition of a new Iranian reality in the strait."

Responding to Reuters' questions, a U.S. official said on condition of anonymity that any "temporary" shipping routes would be "without any impediments," with no party overseeing transit. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has insisted that the strait, where Iran has had a near-chokehold on a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments since the start of the war, must remain an open international waterway not controlled by Iran and free of tolls or fees. But Trump has previously contradicted some of Rubio's assertions about the war, and analysts say he could do so again.

With U.S. gasoline prices high, his own approval ratings low and the war deeply unpopular with the American public, the president's room to maneuver is increasingly limited, they say. As the conflict has dragged on, Trump's bluster has done little if anything to force Iran to give ground, and analysts say it is looking more likely that the president could be the one making the biggest compromises. Reopening the strait is seen as a prerequisite for a return to negotiations between Iran and the U.S., which the Trump administration wants to focus on Iran's nuclear program, the main declared target of the president's military campaign. The question remains whether the U.S. would be ready to accept any arrangement worked out between Iran and Oman, which sit on opposite sides of the strait.

The proposed terms would give Tehran some control over ships entering the Gulf through the strait, a senior Iranian source and two regional officials told Reuters. Trump has said a deal reopening the waterway is imminent, but Iranian officials have said details remain to be resolved.

Even if an Iran-Oman pact is sealed and U.S.-Iran talks resume, experts are skeptical about the chances for a final peace agreement based on the memorandum of understanding the U.S. and Iran signed in June but which quickly unraveled. That preliminary deal had also given Iran some sanctions relief from the start, which drew criticism from some of Trump's fellow Republicans. Trump administration officials have increasingly accepted that the conflict likely will still be going on in some form by the time of the midterms, a White House official said on condition of anonymity. In some states, early voting begins as soon as September. This would pose further political risks for Trump, who campaigned for a second term on promises to avoid foreign interventions and focus on Americans' economic concerns, as his Republican Party struggles to keep control of Congress. The U.S. official told Reuters that Trump's decisions on Iran are not guided by "fluid opinion polls." MAIN WAR GOALS UNACHIEVED

Though Trump has regularly claimed victory for having killed many of Iran's leaders and degraded its military capabilities, most analysts agree that the president has been stymied on many of his goals for the war. He said on Saturday he canceled plans for new large-scale attacks after Middle Eastern partners asked him to give diplomacy another chance, but at the same time he threatened to hit hard if the effort failed. Some analysts suggested Trump's climbdown may have also been driven by concerns about depletion of U.S. missile stockpiles. Trump, however, has denied the U.S. is running low on munitions. Even so, Trump issued a new contradictory message to Iran on Wednesday. "I'd rather make a deal because I don't want to kill people," he told a rally in Las Vegas. "But at some point we're gonna." Iran has warned Washington's Gulf allies that any new U.S. strikes would trigger retaliation against their energy infrastructure, five sources with knowledge of the discussions said.

Jonathan Panikoff, former deputy U.S. intelligence officer for the Middle East, said China, Russia and North Korea are watching closely. "They are learning what U.S. limitations are going to be for years to come," he said. Even some Iran hawks who have mostly backed Trump's war are advising caution. "The Islamic Republic is trying to force President Trump into a lose-lose proposition before November," Behnam Ben Taleblu of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a hardline anti-Iran think tank in Washington, wrote on X. The Trump administration should avoid "rushing into anything" and recognize "where the U.S. does and doesn't have leverage," he said. Reporting and writing by Matt Spetalnick; Additional reporting by Nandita Bose; Editing by Don Dufree and Daniel Wallis Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tab

S8 tension: cosmologists can’t agree on how clumpy the universe is



Cosmology is in for exciting times, going by the latest research that suggests the key to revealing the fundamental nature of the universe lies in finding out how clumpy it is. Accepted theory has it that after the universe was explosively born in a 'Big Bang' in the void some 13.8 billion years ago, it expanded, engendering galaxies, star clusters, solar systems, and planets. When scientists looked at the cosmic microwave background (CMB) — the radiation left over from the Big Bang itself — they saw an absolutely smooth glow across the sky. The early universe must have been remarkably uniform, they concluded, with only small variations in density (of about one part in 100,000 when it was 380,000 years old).

How did matter in the universe get to be so lumpy today after starting out so evenly? The 'lumps' we see in the universe arose from different chunks of matter like galaxies and dark matter — a hypothetical, invisible form of matter that doesn't interact with light or electromagnetic radiation and which makes up a significant portion of the universe — being pulled together by gravitational forces. Over the years, cosmologists have tried to map the overall spread of matter through the early universe. In the standard cosmological model, called the Lambda Cold Dark Matter (ΛCDM) model, dark matter and dark energy — the mysterious force that drives the expansion of the universe — comprise about 95% of the universe. The interplay between these components influences how the primordial fluctuations evolved into the large-scale structures that we observe today. Cosmologists use the term Sigma 8, or S8, to quantify the matter around us. This matter is made up of baryonic particles, such as protons and neutrons, that bunch up in different regions of space. The value of S8 is calculated by studying various regions of the universe. Each region is defined by an astronomical length scale of approximately 26 million light-years. Within these regions, cosmologists count the number of galaxies and other cosmic structures, such as galactic clusters and filaments, to assess the distribution of matter.

A higher value for S8 indicates more clustering with a greater amount of matter clumped together, while a lower value indicates a more uniform distribution of matter. A problem arose when cosmologists used different ways to measure the value of S8 and came up with different estimates. This lack of agreement has come to be called the 'S8 tension' in astrophysics. Cosmic-shear surveys Astronomers have conducted galaxy surveys to determine the value of S8. One method involves measuring the distortion in the shape of galaxies as seen from the earth: an effect known as cosmic shear. These distortions occur when starlight passes through a galactic cluster and is bent and amplified by gravitational forces, much like a magnifying glass does. Astronomers use this gravitational lensing to study indistinct epochs in the evolution of the universe. Cosmic-shear surveys help to map the diffusion of matter, including dark

matter, in the universe so cosmologists can deduce the amplitude of matter fluctuations as quantified by S8.

The results of the latest such survey were recently published in the journal Physics by an international team of researchers from the University of Tokyo. They used the Hyper Suprime-Cam (HSC) — a camera installed on the Subaru Telescope in Hawaii — to collect data and came up with a value of 0.747 for S8, which tallies with the values found by previous surveys. "The Subaru HSC survey is one of the deepest wide area surveys of the sky," Surhud S. More, a co-author of the study and professor of astrophysics at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Pune, wrote in an email. He added that the researchers probed matter's distribution using the gravitational lensing effect down to small scales. "We were able to show that any movement of ordinary matter, such as gas within the large-scale structure of the universe, will not be sufficient to explain the smaller value of the clumpiness which had been found in our previous study." In other words, the discrepancy in S8 has to do with the dark matter and dark energy that pervades the cosmos. While this reaffirms that all is well with the ΛCDM model, it does not dispel the S8 tension itself: studies like this were based on gravitational lensing to determine the value of S8 to be 0.747, which does not agree with the higher value predicted by data from the CMB.

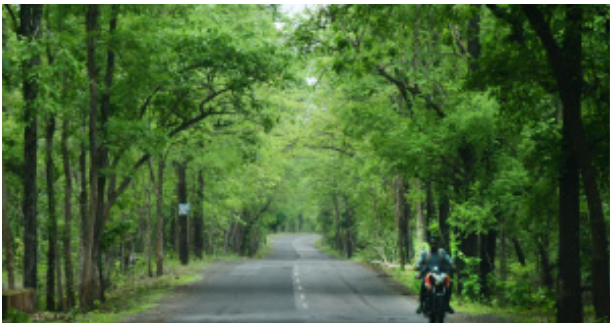
Cosmologists consider the CMB to be a better tool to look back in space and time. They have known for a long time that the surge of primordial matter in the CMB holds clues to the universe's origins in the form of 'ripples' generated by the expanding universe. These ripples resulted in lumps and bumps — future star clusters and galaxies — in the otherwise uniform fabric of space. These telltale galactic signatures were detected in 1992 by NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer satellite. But with the S8 tension persisting, the ΛCDM model looks to be in need of modification — unless some as yet undiscovered systematics could affect such a conclusion. As Prof. More said, "One of the main difficulties in using deep surveys such as Subaru HSC is our lack of understanding of how fast the galaxies in these surveys are actually receding from us, quantified by the redshift [increase in wavelength] of certain lines in their spectrum. As the millions of galaxies used in these analyses are faint, one cannot analyse the spectrum of light of these galaxies to determine this redshift. This constitutes one of the major uncertainties that still remains unresolved before we start entirely doubting the standard theory of cosmology." Last year, data from the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument in Arizona in the US suggested that the push of dark energy — represented by the cosmological constant lambda in the ΛCDM model — is weakening and that the universe may actually be decelerating over time. The possibility of dark energy getting weaker means that the pace of expansion of the universe will eventually slow down and may, at some point, even turn negative. In that case, it is not inconceivable that the universe will collapse in on itself in a 'big crunch'. In any case, the task of updating the ΛCDM model will become easier when the Rubin Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST) begins operating later this year. The LSST will launch from the Vera C. Rubin Observatory being built in northern Chile, using its camera — the largest ever built — to peer back in space and time like never before. Who knows what answers this unparalleled wide-field astronomical survey of the universe, wider and deeper than all previous surveys combined, will provide to questions we can't even imagine now about the mysteries of the universe...

Expanding tree cover is crucial

As climate change accelerates, tree plantation and carbon sequestration are essential for environmental sustainability. For India, a rapidly growing economy reliant on carbon-intensive industries, expanding tree cover is crucial for mitigating climate change while supporting industrial growth and rural livelihoods. India's forest and tree cover is 25.17%, significantly below the 33% target set by the National Forest Policy of 1988. This shortfall has serious implications, as deforestation, rapid urbanisation, and industrial emissions continue to degrade ecosystems.

Tree plantations act as natural carbon sinks, absorbing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO2). However, in India, this sequestration potential needs to be enhanced through large-scale afforestation programmes. Beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increased tree cover improves soil health, recharges groundwater, retains water, reduces soil erosion, and enhances resilience against extreme weather events. Recognising this, India has introduced several policies and initiatives to accelerate afforestation efforts. The National Agroforestry Policy (2014) and the Trees Outside Forests in India Program encourage private landowners, farmers, and industries to participate in large-scale tree planting. They aim to reduce dependence on natural forests for timber and fuelwood, restore degraded ecosystems, and provide additional income sources for rural communities.

The Green India Mission, part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change, has been instrumental in reviving degraded forests and promoting sustainable forest management. According to government data, GIM has helped increase forest cover by 0.56% between 2017 and 2021. Corporate social responsibility initiatives have also contributed to large-scale tree plantation drives. Companies in sectors such as automobile manufacturing, cement, and energy have undertaken afforestation projects to offset emissions. Many corporations are also integrating afforestation efforts into their carbon credit strategies, allowing them to claim emission reductions while restoring ecosystems. Indian industries face growing pressure to reduce their carbon footprint due to stringent international regulations. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, set to be enforced in 2026, will impose tariffs on carbon-intensive imports such as steel, cement, and aluminium. As trade between India and the EU reached \$124 billion in 2023, these tariffs could greatly impact Indian exporters. To remain competitive in global markets, industries are increasingly investing in carbon-offset projects, including large-scale tree plantations. Such investments help companies align with global sustainability standards, earn carbon credits under frameworks such as the Verified Carbon Standard and Clean Development Mechanism, and offset emissions in a cost-effective manner instead of purchasing expensive international carbon credits. Sustainability is no longer about regulatory compliance — it has become a strategic advantage. Companies are integrating sustainability into their operations by developing green supply chains, sourcing raw materials from sustainable forestry projects, and implementing energy-efficient manufacturing processes. With global capital markets increasingly favouring environmental, social, and governance principles, Indian industries must adapt to maintain their market position. Tree plantations also offer economic and social benefits. Large-scale afforestation initiatives create millions of jobs, especially in nursery man-



agement, forest conservation, and agroforestry. These are particularly vital for rural communities. Agroforestry, which integrates trees into agricultural systems, is a particularly promising approach. It enhances soil fertility by improving nutrient cycling, provides additional income from timber, fruits, and medicinal plants, and increases resilience to droughts and erratic weather conditions. A study by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research found that agroforestry can increase farm incomes by 20-30%. To support community-led afforestation, government and non-governmental organisations have stepped in to provide financial incentives, training and capacity-building programmes to educate farmers and rural workers, and market linkages to help communities sell forest-based products. These foster a sense of responsibility and ownership. Policy recommendations Despite its benefits, large-scale tree plantation faces several challenges. One is the rising cost of carbon credits. In 2023, the average price of carbon credits under the EU Emissions Trading System was \$83 per tonne of CO2. For Indian businesses, investing in afforestation offers a more cost-effective solution than purchasing expensive carbon credits from international markets. Another challenge is the absence of a robust carbon trading policy in India. To fully capitalise on global carbon markets, India must establish a transparent national carbon credit registry, a well-defined regulatory framework under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and financial incentives to encourage private-sector investments in afforestation. As India strives to achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, tree plantations and carbon sequestration will be key pillars of its sustainability strategy. The risks of inaction are too high. B.B.L. Madhukar, Chairman, FORE School of Management, and Director General, BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Hyderabad man loses Rs 1.6 crore in crypto currency investment fraud

EMS News Agency, June 2

Hyderabad: A man has approached the Cyberabad Cybercrime police alleging he was duped to the tune of Rs 1.60 crore by cyber fraudsters who promised him huge returns for investments in crypto currencies. The 47-year-old private employee from Miyapur told the police that his mobile number was recently added to a Telegram group by unidentified persons, where he was contacted by a woman who claimed to show huge returns for investment in 'Bitcoins' and also offered him guidance and tips for the same.

A graphic novel that brings to life Francis Buchanan’s survey of South India



Dr. Sashi Sivramkrishna's recently published graphic novel, A Journey into the Furnace of History: The Dying Embers of Ancient Iron-Smelting in India, has an origin story that spans nearly two decades. The kernel for this book, which documents Sashi's own attempts to retrace the journey of the Scottish physician, botanist and surveyor Francis Buchanan through the erstwhile Mysore State, emerged in the early 2000s when he was working on a documentary on the curse of Talakadu. "It is an interesting story about the Mysore Maharajas combined with two natural phenomena," says the Bengaluru-based economist and the chairman of the Foundation to Aid Industrial Recovery (FAIR), a not-for-profit society that focuses on helping the country's under-managed sectors. This 400-year-old curse, which is believed to have been uttered by Queen Alamelamma, the queen of the once-strong but now crumbling Vijayanagara Empire, when the Wadiyars dethroned her husband and took over Mysore, had three parts to it: Talakadu would become a desert, the river Malangi would turn into a whirlpool, and the Mysore Kings would bear no heirs.

Although he is someone who "could not believe that curses come true... I am quite a rationalist", he thought of investigating this story, going into the project with an open mind. "Wherever we went, in Mysore and places around it, people generally believed in it," he recalls. And while there appeared to be some anecdotal evidence, with many of the Mysore rulers failing to beget heirs and having to adopt, "it all seemed very confusing," says Sashi, who researched the subject, with a colleague, for a year and a half, "getting stuck along the way, because there was very little evidence about all this." In 2005, as part of his research, Sashi visited the library of the Mythic Society on Bengaluru's Nrupathunga Road, looking through some references, when he came across Buchanan's three-volume survey titled A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, published in 1807. Buchanan, who became a medical officer with the British East India Company in 1794, had been commissioned to survey South India in 1800, following the death of Tipu Sultan and the British's decisive victory over the Kingdom of Mysore. While going through the survey, he discovered this. "Buchanan had visited Malangi, and he does talk about some curse and states that Talakadu was covered in sand," says Sashi, who went on to make a film about the curse in 2005. "That was my introduction to Buchanan."

Sashi then found himself delving deeper into Buchanan's work, becoming increasingly fascinated by this survey. "Normally, when you look at history, it is about battles and wars," he says. "But here, Buchanan touches upon people and the day-to-day life in these places. He talks about farmers, agricultural labourers, people weaving blankets, things we don't usually learn as part of our history education." That is when he decided that he wanted to trace Buchanan's journey, travelling back and forth, between Bengaluru and the places chronicled in Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, trying to understand whether the occupations Buchanan had described continued to exist and in what form. As Sashi, accompanied by other researchers, travelled to places such as Channarayana Durga, Yelladakere, Chikkanayakanahalli

Breathing life into Vembanad lake



Vembanad, the longest lake in India and the largest in Kerala, is gasping for breath. The 96.5 km-long water body spans the districts of Alappuzha, Kottayam, and Ernakulam and forms part of the Vembanad-Kol wetland system, a Ramsar site. Six major rivers drain into the lake, which accounts for around 30% of the State's total surface water resource. Over the past century, the lake has shrunk significantly due to human-induced interventions, land reclamation, and natural sedimentation, according to experts. Though vital to the region's ecology and agriculture, it faces severe threats from pollution, eutrophication, unsustainable agricultural practices, and invasive weed proliferation.

A few years ago, a study by the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies revealed alarming levels of plastic waste, silt, and other sediments in the lake. According to a recent expert committee report prepared as part of the Vembanad Lake Rejuvenation Project, an ambitious joint effort of the Alappuzha district administration and the Local Self Government Department, the lake's surface area has shrunk mainly due to land encroachment. Citing previous studies, the report notes that the surface area of the lake diminished by 27% between 1917 and 1990. The drastic reduction in not only area, but also depth, has significantly reduced the lake's floodwater retention capacity and impaired its critical ecosystem services, including water purification, biodiversity support, and sediment transport. The unchecked proliferation of water hyacinths has further worsened the situation, contributing to dangerously high levels of chemical oxygen demand and biological oxygen demand. As a result, the fish catch has declined by about 66% over the last three decades.

The efforts to rejuvenate the lake are being spearheaded by Alappuzha District Collector Alex Varghese. The initiative draws "inspiration from the Namami Gange

and Gattipura, and talked to the people who inhabited them, they became deeply intrigued by one of the occupations described by Buchanan: iron-smelting. In South India, where iron has been smelted since at least 2000 BCE, going by artefacts at very early iron age sites, they couldn't help but wonder why the traditional craft of smelting has largely disappeared, says Sashi, who worked with Mahadev Nayak, Amalendu Jyotishi and GJ Lingaraj on this project. "We met people who told us that smelting would happen even in the 1930s and 40s; they remember their grandfathers doing it," he says, adding that, in India, there is usually a certain continuity of tradition, with things rarely disappearing completely. "So I started looking for answers to why and when iron smelting disappears from this region," says Sashi, who was involved in this research till 2010 and has published it in several academic journals, including Environment and History and Economic and Political Weekly.

To make his research more accessible and to document his own journey, in 2022, he thought of putting it together into a graphic novel, which eventually became A Journey into the Furnace of History, beautifully illustrated by the Kolkata-based illustrator and a graphic novelist himself, Harsho Mohan Chatteraj. "I got in touch with a friend in Kolkata who introduced me to Harsho, a renowned artist in this space," he says. They worked together, with Sashi sending him old pictures, and Harsho slowly creating them, panel by panel, he recalls. "I wrote the whole script, having an idea of what it needed to be, panel by panel. I could visualise the novel because I come from a documentary space," he says of the 210-panel-long novel, which took about two years to create and was officially released in 2024. A Journey into the Furnace of History not only captures Sashi's journey through the region but also offers insights into Buchanan's thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and examines the craft, tradition and legacy of iron-smelting. Starting with a description of an encounter with a blacksmith, Marappa, who takes Sashi and his colleagues to an iron-smelting site a little outside Channarayana Durga, the book touches on other fascinating insights about this tradition, including how Tipu Sultan's ongoing battle with the British upped demand for iron, how tribes like the Asur and Agaria played a massive role in the development of this technology, the origin of the famous Wootz steel or ukku and the surprising relationship between smelting and deforestation.

"From these findings, a larger narrative of iron smelting evolved," states the book's introduction, pointing out that Indian environmental history has missed the scale and importance of proto-industrial development in South India, viewing medieval economies as agrarian, consisting of self-sufficient villages. And yet, the centrality of a war economy in the feudal period and the need for arms and ammunition were too large to be brushed aside, continues the introduction, which goes on to argue that there is a need to rethink our environmental history by "integrating military and metallurgical history, with elements of anthropology, economics and sociology." Since iron smelting requires larger amounts of wood to make charcoal, the fuel for the activity, it leads to excessive deforestation, says Sashi, who believes that while many environmental historians attribute the destruction of forests in India to a colonial enterprise, connected to the advent of railways, the reality is a bit more complicated. "Typically, environmental history is not connected to iron and steel, but imagine armies of 50-100,000, carrying a sword, shield... elephants with armour... canons," he says, pointing out that even making a small canon would require 1000-1500 tonnes of wood to make. In Sashi's opinion, there is a desperate need to connect the environment, the military, the social and the political history of the nation, and to reach a larger audience, which the graphic novel attempts to do. "We can write technical or academic papers and get them published, but how many people are interested in reading them?" he asks. Graphic novels, on the other hand, are well suited to convey research and are also very accessible, in his opinion. Besides, he admits, he has personally always loved graphic novels. "I grew up on comics... Superman, Batman, Tintin. Even my knowledge of Indian history started with comics," he says. "Comics have always been able to communicate with me, so I thought if I made one, I could communicate with others."

Programme". It gained momentum on October 28, 2024 when a workshop was held focusing on addressing the challenges of restoring the water body. Eight subcommittees — agriculture, fisheries, water resources, tourism, biodiversity, environment and sanitation, disaster management and climate change, and revenue — were constituted. A \$188.25 crore comprehensive five-year plan was formulated and recently submitted to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The estimate may be revised based on the detailed study on water resources and irrigation projects being conducted by the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management.

The short-term goals include the removal of plastic waste, construction of bio-shields to protect farmlands, fish ranching, weed eradication, and the construction of 31 bio bunds, each 1 km long in 31 grama panchayats. The long-term targets include dredging the lake bed to increase its water-holding capacity, promoting organic farming to prevent pollution from pesticides and chemicals, conserving the flora and fauna, establishing sewage and faecal sludge treatment plants in flood-prone Kuttanad, manufacturing value-added products from water hyacinth, and boosting tourism and fish yield. While the report is under the State government's consideration, 28.72 tonnes of plastic waste and a greater quantity of water hyacinth were removed from the lake in recent mega cleaning drives conducted under the aegis of the Alappuzha district administration. Rejuvenating the lake is critical for enhancing the region's resilience to climate change impacts such as erratic rainfall, sea-level rise, and intensified flooding events. However, it is easier said than done.

For instance, houseboats are among the top sources of pollution in the lake. While the report calls for enacting strict laws against unauthorised vessels, previous efforts to rein in illegal houseboat operations have been largely ineffective. Another significant hurdle is land encroachment. The expert committee report notes that reclaiming encroached areas "necessitates strong political support and decisive action."

Since Kuttanad is part of the Vembanad wetland ecosystem, the lake's restoration should be linked to the revival of the entire Kuttanad region. Coordinated collaboration among various stakeholders, including local communities, district administrations, and different levels of governance, will be key to overcoming these complex challenges and will require support from the Union and State governments.

Fatty liver disease goes down with novel weight loss drugs, shows new study: What does this mean for therapy?



Nearly two in three people with fatty liver disease lost some of the liver fat and inflammation after using semaglutide 2.4 mg weekly shots for one-and-a-half years, according to initial results from an ongoing phase 3 trial, published recently in the New England Journal of Medicine. Importantly, around one in three patients also saw reduction in liver fibrosis or scarring of the liver that prevents it from functioning properly.

Metabolic dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MAFLD) — until recently referred to as the Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease — is a chronic condition where there is an excessive build-up of fat on the liver. This fat accumulation leads to inflammation, scarring of the liver and may even cause liver cancer. The prevalence of MAFLD in India is estimated to be between 9% and 32%. Dr SK Sarin, liver specialist and vice-chancellor of the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, talks about the significance of the findings.

What do the results of the phase III trial tell us?

This is a very important study, which builds on the findings of the phase 2 trial on the impact of semaglutide on MASLD. Phase 2 trials are usually done to fix the dosing and the highest 2.4 mg dose of the medicine was used for the current trial. The results show that 62.9% of the people

on semaglutide saw a loss of liver fat and inflammation as compared to 34.3% among people given placebo. The stiffening of the liver also reduced in 36.8% of the participants on semaglutide as compared to 22.4% on placebo. The participants lost around 10% of their body weight in the current trial as compared to 14% recorded previously. All in all, the study shows promising results for fatty liver disease.

How does the drug work? Are these the effects of weight loss?

Semaglutide belongs to a class of medicines known as GLP-1 receptor agonists which mimic the action of certain gut hormones to improve secretion of insulin, inhibit secretion of glucagon that stimulates glucose production in the liver, and also reduce appetite by slowing down digestion. The study does not look into the confounding variable of weight loss, so we cannot say if there is any other reason for the improvements seen. However, it is well-known that when people lose weight, MASLD improves. People who lose around 7-10% of their body weight, see a reduction in liver fat. And, with a weight-loss of more than 10%, they see regression in fibrosis. This happens even if people lose weight without using these drugs.

What is the current treatment for MASLD? What are the challenges?

The best way to treat MASLD is weight loss — be it with drug or with diet and exercise. The drug is meant for people who are not able to move and exercise or are unable to lose weight with diet and exercise. They come with several side effects such as vomiting, nausea, and even serious side effects such as stomach paralysis, inflammation of the pancreas, and thyroid cancer. At present, there are three lines of treatment. One, of course, are the GLP-1 drugs that work on the gut hormones. Two, a drug called resmetirom that works on the thyroid hormone — this is again very expensive at around \$ 5,400 a month. Third, FGF21 medicines that work on the adipose tissues. All of these medicines are meant to help with weight loss and thereby improve the liver.

Karnataka youth dies after drinking five bottles of alcohol: Why heavy drinking is simply poison for the heart

Do not bet on a bottle of alcohol, which studies have proven to be toxic to health. A 21-year-old man in Karnataka has died after he drank five bottles of liquor neat over a Rs 10,000 bet with his friends. The incident also proves how binge-drinking at one go can be a major risk factor for a sudden cardiac arrest. "While occasional alcohol consumption in moderation may not pose major health risks for many, binge drinking — defined as consuming a large quantity of alcohol in a short time — can have serious and immediate consequences for heart health," says Dr Mukesh Goel, Cardiothoracic and Cardiovascular, Heart and Lung Transplant surgeon, at Apollo Hospital, Delhi. This pattern of drinking overwhelms the body's ability to cope, leading to a cascade of harmful effects on the cardiovascular system. He lists the effects:

Heavy drinking at one session heightens the risk of heart attack and stroke within hours of consumption. It triggers the release of certain hormones that cause constriction of blood vessels, thus increasing the blood pressure abruptly. This stresses the arteries and the heart, increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke. Rapid consumption can raise blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to dangerous levels, which impact key organs and their functioning, like breathing, heart rate and body temperature regulation.

Heavy alcohol consumption is linked to abnormal heart rhythms, even in healthy individuals. Alcohol is a diuretic and quickly depletes electrolytes and fluids in the body. In this case the person drank neat, which means he was severely dehydrated. Electrolytes are crucial for maintaining a stable and regular heartbeat. Any imbalance disrupts the



electric impulses in the heart, leading to sudden cardiac arrest. Repeated episodes of heavy drinking can weaken the heart muscle, reducing its ability to pump blood effectively and eventually leading to heart failure. Alcohol can interfere with oxygen delivery to the heart tissue, increasing the risk of angina (chest pain) or myocardial infarction (heart attack). Binge drinking can make blood platelets more prone to clumping together, increasing the chance of dangerous clots that can block blood vessels in the heart or brain. The liver can only metabolise a limited amount of alcohol per hour. Excessive intake overwhelms the organ. As it struggles to handle the toxins produced during this process, they pile up quickly, damaging liver cells. Alcohol depresses the central nervous system, which can slow down brain function and impair motor skills. In extreme cases, this sluggishness of the brain can lead to unconsciousness, coma, even death.

Ultra-processed food expert and nutrition scientist Kevin Hall resigns: What it means for research



Amidst funding cuts and layoffs, the United States' National Institute of Health also lost one of its foremost nutrition and metabolism scientists, Kevin Hall. After working for 21 years, he resigned earlier this month, saying "recent events have made me question whether NIH continues to be a place where I can freely conduct unbiased science."

Why did Hall decide to quit?

The move comes after the scientist's views on one of his recent publications about addiction to ultra-processed foods was censored. In a post on X, Hall said: "I experienced censorship in the reporting of our research because of agency concerns that it did not appear to fully support preconceived narratives of my agency's leadership about ultra-processed food addiction. I was hoping this was an aberration. So, weeks ago I wrote to my agency's leadership expressing my concerns and requested time to discuss these issues, but I never received a response."

He said that given the bipartisan support to preventing diet-related chronic diseases, he had hoped to expand the research programme. He went on to say: "The NIH ... allows scientists to take risks, form unique collaborations, and do studies difficult to conduct elsewhere."

What did the study say?

Last month, the agency published a study that showed that the dopamine-hit after eating ultra-processed foods was not similar to what is seen in drug users as previously thought. Brain scans have shown that the levels of the feel-good hormone dopamine increases in the brain when people take addictive drugs, pushing them to go for it again and again. It was believed that the dopamine-reward mechanism may be similarly triggered by foods high in fats, sugars,

and salts, driving people to consume more and more. In their latest research, Dr Hall's team, however, did not see significant changes in the dopamine levels in brain scans after consuming ultra-processed foods. Those who did show very small increases in their dopamine level, however, found their milkshakes to be more pleasurable and ate more cookies later on. However, researchers put in a caveat that the machine used to study the brain, while very effective for tracking the large dopamine changes caused by drugs, might not have been sensitive to detect small changes. So the research raised more questions about what makes these foods more addictive.

What are ultra-processed foods?

Ultra-processed foods are industrially produced foods containing ingredients not available in home kitchens, such as breakfast cereals, biscuits, chicken nuggets and other frozen foods. These tend to contain high levels of salts, sugars, and fats, especially harmful fats such as trans fats. While many naturally occurring fruits, vegetables, or nuts might contain high levels of either fats or carbohydrates, they rarely ever contain both unlike ultra-processed foods. These foods have been known to cause addictive behaviours in people and are known to lead to diet-related chronic diseases such as obesity, hypertension, and diabetes among others.

Hyderabad-based ParentVerse now available on iOS and Android

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based ParentVerse, a digital parenting companion, launched on iOS and Android, for families navigating the challenges of raising children in a tech-driven world. The app under a 'freemium' model offers free features with plans to introduce advanced, premium tools for subscribed users in the near future. It offers a more engaging and empowering experience, allowing parents to guide their children's digital usage while promoting healthy habits through interactive, gamified tools.

Ukraine and US have finally signed minerals deal. What does it include?



Kyiv: After months of tense negotiations, the US and Ukraine signed a deal that is expected to give Washington access to the country's critical minerals and other natural resources, an agreement Kyiv hopes will secure long-term support for its defense against Russia. According to Ukrainian officials, the version of the deal signed on Wednesday is far more beneficial to Ukraine than previous versions, which they said reduced Kyiv to a junior partner and gave Washington unprecedented rights to the country's resources. The deal itself has not yet been made public, but the Economy Ministry and the Prime Minister's office have offered some details.

The agreement — which the Ukrainian parliament must ratify — would establish a reconstruction fund for Ukraine that Ukrainian officials hope will be a vehicle to ensure future American military assistance. A previous agreement was nearly signed before being derailed in a tense Oval Office meeting involving US President Donald Trump, US Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "We have formed a version of the agreement that provides mutually beneficial conditions for both countries. This is an agreement in which the United States notes its commitment to promoting long-term peace in Ukraine and recognizes the contribution that Ukraine has made to global security by giving up its nuclear arsenal," Ukrainian Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said in a post on Facebook. The signing comes during what US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said would be a "very critical" week for US-led efforts to end the war that appear to have stalled. Ukraine sees the deal as a way to ensure that its biggest and most consequential ally stays engaged and doesn't freeze military support, which has been key in its 3-year-old fight against Russia's full-scale invasion. "This agreement signals clearly to Russia that the Trump administration is committed to a peace process centred on a free, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine over the long term," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement.

What does the deal include?

The deal covers minerals, including rare earth elements, but also other valuable resources including oil and natural gas, according to details released by Ukrainian officials. It does not include resources that are already a source of revenue for the Ukrainian State. In other words, any profits under the deal are dependent on the success of new investments. While Trump has repeatedly expressed inter-

est in Ukraine's rare earth elements, it unclear what other minerals might be part of the deal. Earlier this year, Andrii Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential office, said it could include lithium, titanium or uranium. The agreement ensures full ownership of the resources remains with Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials. The state will determine where and what can be extracted. It also does not refer to any debt obligations for Ukraine, the officials have said, meaning profits from the fund will not go toward the paying the US back for its previous support.

What are rare earth elements? They are a group of 17 elements that are essential to many kinds of consumer technology, including cellphones, hard drives and electric and hybrid vehicles. China is the world's largest producer of rare earth elements, and both the US and Europe have sought to reduce their dependence on Beijing, Trump's chief geopolitical adversary.

How will the fund work?

The agreement establishes a reconstruction investment fund, and both the US and Ukraine will have an equal say in its management, according to Svyrydenko. The fund will be supported by the US government through the US International Development Finance Corporation agency, which Ukraine hopes will attract investment and technology from American and European countries. Ukraine is expected to contribute 50% of all future profits from government-owned natural resources into the fund. The United States will also contribute in the form of direct funds and equipment, including badly needed air defense systems and other military aid.

Contributions to the fund will be reinvested in projects related to mining, oil and gas as well as infrastructure. No profits will not be taken from the fund for the first 10 years. Trump administration officials initially pushed for a deal in which Washington would receive \$500 billion in profits from exploited minerals as compensation for its wartime support. But Zelenskyy rejected the offer, saying he would not sign off on an agreement "that will be paid off by 10 generations of Ukrainians."

What is the state of Ukraine's minerals industry?

Ukraine's rare earth elements are largely untapped because of state policies regulating the industry, a lack of good information about deposits, and the war. The industry's potential is unclear since geological data is thin because mineral reserves are scattered across Ukraine, and existing studies are considered largely inadequate. In general, however, the outlook for Ukrainian natural resources is promising. The country's reserves of titanium, a key component for the aerospace, medical and automotive industries, are believed to be among Europe's largest. Ukraine also holds some of Europe's largest known reserves of lithium, which is required to produce batteries, ceramics and glass. In 2021, the Ukrainian mineral industry accounted for 6.1% of the country's gross domestic product and 30% of exports. An estimated 40% of Ukraine's metallic mineral resources are inaccessible because of Russian occupation, according to data from We Build Ukraine, a Kyiv-based think tank. Ukraine has argued that it's in Trump's interest

The future in your palm - a non-contact wearable that studies skin flux to estimate health

William Blake could have scarcely estimated just the expanse that a palm full can contain, when he said 'hold infinity in the palm of your hand', but science today can give him a fair estimate. Smaller and smaller wearable devices, with the surface area the extent of a mere watch dial, have come to play, measuring all kinds of health parameters on the go — heart rate, blood oxygen, even continuous blood glucose levels. Here's yet another wearable, but one with a difference. Researchers have zeroed in on a wearable that can study the streams of molecular substances that pass through the skin, as a measure of studying the health status of individuals. What is different is that this wearable is 'non contact' relying on an enclosed chamber immediately adjacent to the skin's surface to do its job.

A collaboration of American and South Korean experts from the domains of materials sciences, dermatology, engineering, bio-medics and chemistry worked to produce a small device, just about the size of a smartphone face, that has demonstrated unique capabilities to measure the flux of water vapour, volatile organic compounds and carbon dioxide at various locations on the body, to examine not just skin health but general health too. The particular use has been to study wound healing properties in diabetes and has the additional advantage of non contact operation, therefore potential damage to fragile tissues can be avoided. John A. Rogers who is the Lewis Simpson and Kimberly Querry Professor of Material Sciences and Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, and Neurological Surgery at the Northwestern University, U.S. and is steering the research says his team has been working on wearable technologies for about two decades now. "With the COVID pandemic, there began a heightened awareness of the value of technologies that could continuously monitor health status; catch very early signs of disease or infection or health complications, in remote and, cost-effective ways. We have introduced a number of skin interface devices for measuring vital signs like electrocardiograms, blood oxygenation, body temperature."

The wearable in question however is unique, he explains. "It is unique in the sense that the sensors don't contact the skin. They're actually separated from the skin, and instead of directly measuring underlying physiological processes- cardiac cycles, lung function, for example, we're measuring, properties of the skin itself and measuring species that emerge from the body through the skin to the surrounding environment. And likewise, we are also measuring chemical species that can move from the environment into the body through the skin." He adds this is something that people haven't looked at before, and experiments have proved that there's a lot of interesting information that emerges, related to wound healing but also basic health. The authors write up the results in a recent paper published in Nature journal. This technology can provide unique insights for clinical decision-makers managing conditions such as dermatological diseases and dermal wounds, but who are also interested in understanding the underlying pathophysiology better. It can also monitor hazardous chemicals that enter the human body via the skin, making it a viable option to monitor the health of persons working in hazardous industries and zones.

He continues to explain: The skin is a layered substance with a pretty good impermeable water barrier on the very surface - called the stratum corneum. Underneath that is the epidermis and then the dermis. Those tissues are fairly permeable to water. But the stratum corneum is a very thin layer of dead cells, and serves as a barrier. If that barrier did not exist, you'd have tons of water evaporating and water loss just coming out through all surfaces of the body.



A small device, just about the size of a smartphone face, has demonstrated unique capabilities to measure the flux of water vapour, volatile organic compounds and carbon dioxide at various locations on the body.

So, it performs a very critical function as a water barrier. If that's compromised in any way, then, you can be at risk for dehydration and, degradation in the properties of the healthy living part of the skin, the epidermis and, and the dermis. Therefore, measuring water permeation through the skin can tell you a lot about the barrier function of the skin, and various skin disorders can reduce the barrier functions, Prof Rogers explains. "You can monitor that. Transcutaneous CO2 for example, coming right through the surface of the skin is important, and physicians already know how to interpret that." He adds that their assumption is that the device, with its capacity to read and measure the environmental species that enters the body through the skin will likely yield additional insights that physicians are not aware of yet. The device itself, he describes, is like a small pocket, with wireless electronics that can transmit data to your phone. It also has a chamber that forms a microclimate when the device is sealed against the surface of the skin. Suspended within that chamber is a suite of sensors, very small semiconductor devices that can measure water, CO2, and various volatile organic compounds. On the back, there is a valve that can be opened and closed through a wireless trigger. When the valve is closed and the device is on the surface of the skin, the sensors measure a gradual increase in the concentration of water vapor and CO2. When the valve is open to the surrounding environment, the heightened concentrations of those species can dissipate because now those species can just diffuse out to the surrounding environment. We make measurements with the valve closed, then open, and so on. The rate at which those concentrations increase determines the flux." These low-cost devices can just be adhered to the surface of the skin, and measure these properties continuously, without a physician having to be at call. The device can be mounted anywhere on body and track outward flux and also inward flux at the same time. Prof. Rogers says there has already been some interest in the device from the perfumery industry. And while it has not yet been studied in an environment where the patient has suffered burns, he added that it would be an exciting pathway to launch on. Once adequate data emerges from the device over a period of time, measurements off the skin might turn out to be an additional vital sign that doctors rely on to estimate the health of their patients, in addition to the conventional vital signs.

40 Years of Sensex: What It Means to India and Its People



As part of its awareness initiative #BeTheSmartInvestor, aimed at helping everyday citizens understand the pulse of the Indian economy, BSE, in association with The Indian Express, took to the streets to gauge public perception of the Sensex. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between complex financial concepts and the general public, making economic information more accessible and relatable to people from all walks of life. Over the past four decades, India has witnessed a rapid transforma-

tion. New flyovers, expanding metro networks, and growing cities stand as visible signs of progress. Amid this change, one constant has continued to act as a key indicator of the country's economic health – the Sensex. In this video by BSE, in association with , people on the streets are asked a simple question: What does the Sensex really mean? The responses reveal a wide range of understanding. Some describe it as stock prices moving up and down, reflected in green and red lines, while others admit they have little idea, especially if they are not from a finance background. For many, the Sensex represents the overall condition of the stock market and the performance of companies listed on the exchange. The discussion also looks at whether tracking the Sensex is important. While some believe it matters mainly to those who invest, others compare it to a health check-up for the economy – something that helps assess whether India's growth is on track. Participants note that market movements can influence prices of goods, raw materials, and everyday expenses. The video explains that the Sensex is India's oldest and most widely tracked stock market index, launched on 1st January 1986. More than just a number, it reflects India's economic journey and serves as a key indicator of market health.

Atomic Energy Commission clears FDI policy, sends it for inter-ministerial consultation

Prasad also highlighted the need to shorten approval timelines for nuclear projects. CEA Chairperson Ghanshyam Prasad also highlighted the need to shorten approval timelines for nuclear projects. The dilution of the liability clause under the proposed SHANTI Act is expected to boost foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's nuclear power sector as it opens up to private participation. Speaking at a high-level workshop on the Act, Seema Jain, Member (Finance), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), said on Friday the Atomic Energy Commission has approved an FDI policy, which has now been sent for inter-ministerial consultation. Jain said that achieving the target of 100 gigawatt (GW) of nuclear power capacity by 2047 would require investments of at least Rs 20 lakh crore, assuming a baseline cost of Rs 22 crore per megawatt (MW). "Now that kind of financing will require all sorts of innovative measures to happen so that you know that kind of money and the financial space is made available for this sector," she said, adding that initiatives related to banking and FDI are in the pipeline. The inaugural session of the workshop was also attended by Ghanshyam Prasad, Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA); Gurdeep Singh, CMD of NTPC; and Praveen Gupta, Member (E&C), CEA. Indigenisation of LWR tech future roadmap

As India has mastered Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) technology and achieved criticality in Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) technology, Jain said the next challenge is the indigenisation of Light Water Reactor (LWR) technology, which dominates the global nuclear fleet. "...the next challenge for us would be to indigenize that (LWR) technology, not just the design part but also the fuel processing and the other associated elements, the components, the equipment and all of those things so that India emerges as a very, very reliable partner, not just domestically for the



Indian industries but also for exporting this technology in the neighborhood," Jain said. Delivering the keynote address, CEA Chairperson Ghanshyam Prasad said nuclear power remains the only viable alternative to coal for baseload generation, given its ability to provide stable and clean energy. However, he flagged concerns over higher tariffs for new nuclear power plants compared to older ones. "...the tariffs of the old nuclear power plants are right now ranging from 272 to 387 paisa per unit. Which is a very good tariff price. This reminds me of the hydro segment which at the time when you build it, it looks to be higher. But over a period of time you find that it is one of the cheapest sources," he said. He said the challenge is going to come from the new plants which are coming up as the tariff of these plants range somewhere around 5.50 to 6.50 paisa per unit. "We will have to take steps to reduce this tariff by way of some measures," he added. Prasad also highlighted the need to shorten approval timelines for nuclear projects. At present, the entire process — including regulatory clearances and implementation — takes around 13 years. He stressed the need to reduce this to about 8–9 years.

SEC, Adanis seek more time, propose new schedule in US case

New York: The US Securities and Exchange Commission and Indian businessmen Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani have jointly requested a US court for more time to file key submissions in a civil securities case, proposing a revised schedule for motions and responses. In a filing before the US District Court for the Eastern District of New York, the parties said they had conferred in line with the court's April 7 directive and agreed on a new timeline, which has been submitted for approval by Judge Nicholas G Garaufis.

The SEC had sued Adani Group founder Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar in November 2024, alleging they had misled investors by failing to disclose an alleged bribery scheme linked to Indian state officials, framing the case under US securities laws. Denying all allegations, the two, through their lawyers, filed a pre-motion letter on April 7 ahead of a planned April 30 motion, seeking dismissal of the fraud lawsuit, arguing the case represents an impermissible extraterritorial application of US law and fails for lack of personal jurisdiction.

Under the proposed schedule, the defendants' (Adanis) motion to dismiss would be due by June 8, the SEC's amended complaint or opposition by August 7, and the defendants' reply by September 21. The parties also suggested May 20, May 22 or May 29 as potential dates for a pre-motion conference, subject to the court's availability. The request follows a pre-motion letter filed by the defendants on April 7, after which the court directed both sides to confer on the next steps. In their anticipated motion to dismiss, the Adanis are expected to argue that the court lacks juris-



diction because the claims concern conduct outside the United States, that the alleged statements are too general to be relied upon by investors, and that they were not involved in a USD 750 million bond offering in 2021.

The SEC filed the lawsuit in November 2024, alleging violations of US securities laws. An earlier briefing schedule approved in January had set April 30 as the deadline for the motion to dismiss, June 29 for the SEC's response and August 13 for the defendants' reply. The Adanis have denied the allegations and said they will seek dismissal of the case. Gautam Adani is represented by Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, while Sagar Adani is represented by Nixon Peabody LLP and Hecker Fink LLP. The SEC is represented by its New York regional office.

Lenskart apologises after online backlash, releases new style guide welcoming religious symbols

New Delhi: Following massive online backlash over a purported internal grooming document, eyewear retailer Lenskart has issued a public apology and released a standardised 'In-Store Style Guide' that allows employees to wear religious and cultural symbols at work. In a statement on X, the company said it is making its guidelines public and transparent to address the concerns of its customers and community. The new policy "explicitly and unambiguously" welcomes all symbols of faith carried by team members, including the bindi, tilak, sindoor, kalawa, mangalsutra, kada, hijab, and turban. "If any version of our workplace communication caused hurt or made any of our team members feel that their faith was unwelcome here, we are deeply sorry. That is not who Lenskart is, and it is not who we will ever be," the company said.

This comes following a controversy that erupted earlier this week when a document, alleged to be Lenskart's employee grooming policy, went viral on social media. Netizens pointed out that the policy restricted employees from wearing certain religious markers, particularly the bindi and tilak, sparking outrage and calls for a boycott.

Addressing the uproar a few days ago, Lenskart



founder Peyush Bansal had stepped in to clarify that the viral document was an "outdated version" and did not reflect the company's current stance. "I want to speak directly that this document does not reflect our present guidelines. Our policy has no restrictions on any form of religious expression, including bindi and tilak," Bansal had stated, apologising for the confusion and concern the situation had caused.

The animal that eats its own brain: Strange life of the sea squirt



Losing your brain sounds like the end of everything. But for one small marine creature, it's just part of growing up. Sea squirt, a tiny sac-like sea creature, keeps replacing its brain throughout its life cycle. This marine animal belongs to the genus Ciona and looks like a soft, blob-like tunicate attached to rocks. But its life story is one of the strangest transformations in the animal kingdom. Sea squirts don't start life as stationary blobs. One of the most popular brain-replacing species in this genre is Ciona intestinalis, also known as sea vase—a solitary, translucent, filter-feeding sea squirt found in temperate coastal waters. As larvae, they resemble tiny tadpoles (~1-2 mm long), complete with a simple cerebral vesicle (a.k.a. their brain), a dorsal nerve cord, a notochord, and a muscular tail for free-swimming exploration in ocean currents.

This larval stage lasts 1-3 days, powered by phototaxis and rheotaxis to find suitable settlement sites. Studies using electron microscopy show that the larval brain contains ~200 neurons involved in sensory processing. Then, something bizarre happens: upon settling headfirst via adhesive papillae, metamorphosis triggers autophagy—self-digestion of ~80% of the central nervous system, including

most of the brain, tail, and notochord tissues within hours.

Why would an animal do that?

As an adult, it becomes a stationary filter feeder, staying fixed in one place and feeding by pulling in water. It uses tiny openings in its body called gill slits to filter out plankton and nutrients. In fact, it can pump over 100 times its own body volume in water every day.

Since it no longer moves or searches for food, it no longer needs a complex brain. And brains are expensive to maintain—they can use up a significant amount of energy. So instead, the sea squirt redirects that energy toward survival and reproduction, producing hundreds of eggs in a single cycle. At a microscopic level, scientists have found that genes linked to brain development become much less active once the animal settles down. At the same time, the body increases production of enzymes that help break down and absorb the unused brain tissue. Even after all this, the sea squirt isn't completely without a nervous system. It retains a very simple set of nerve cells—just enough to handle basic reflexes, like closing up if something touches it.

So is the brain actually replaced?

It's not exactly "replacing" the brain, but more like a one-time radical rewiring. The sea squirt builds a simple brain during its free-swimming larval stage, then absorbs it completely once it settles down, essentially shedding traits it briefly shared with more complex chordates, a group it diverged from around 550 million years ago. This unusual life cycle challenges the idea that brains are always preserved across related species. In a way, the sea squirt offers a striking lesson in efficiency: intelligence is not always necessary, it's situational. Scientists have even found that if the animal is prevented from settling, this brain resorption is delayed, proving that it's an adaptive response rather than a fixed timeline. In nature, survival isn't about holding on to complexity; it's about keeping only what you truly need.

The Vicky Kaushal guide to ending a 'kalesh': 'Don't cater to logic'

Arguments, conflicts, or what many, especially in northern India, casually call kalesh, are an unavoidable part of daily life—be it with partners, family members, or even colleagues. But how you respond in those moments can either resolve the issue or make it worse. Uri actor Vicky Kaushal once shared a relatable take on handling such situations. "Always the way to navigate through a kalesh is to cater to the person who is most emotionally hurt. Don't cater to logic; cater to emotions. Kalesh happens when one person is logical, and the other is emotional," he said in an interview with ETimes while promoting his film The Great Indian Family (2023).

But how accurate is this advice from a mental health perspective? We reached out to Dr Anitha Chandra, Consultant – Psychiatry, to break it down. Why emotions take over during conflicts? According to Dr Chandra, Vicky's statement reflects a common psychological dynamic seen in arguments. "In emotionally charged situations, the brain's limbic system—the emotional centre—tends to dominate over the rational part. This is why logic alone often fails to resolve conflicts when someone is already hurt or overwhelmed," she explains. When one person is seeking emotional validation, and the other responds with facts or reasoning, it can feel dismissive—fueling the conflict further. Vicky Kaushal, Vicky Kaushal and Katrina Kaif got married on December 9, 2021 (Image: Instagram/Vicky Kaushal). Addressing emotions first can calm the situation. Dr Chandra agrees that acknowledging emotions is often the first step to de-escalation. "When you validate someone's feelings, it helps them feel heard and understood. This, in



turn, reduces emotional intensity and makes them more open to listening," she says. Simple responses like "I understand why you're upset" or "That must have been difficult for you" can go a long way in diffusing tension.

While emotional validation is important, Dr Chandra cautions against completely ignoring logic. "If you only address emotions and not the underlying issue, the conflict may resurface. Sustainable resolution requires a balance of empathy and rational discussion," she adds. In other words, emotions may open the door to resolution—but logic helps close it. However, in professional or high-pressure settings, combining emotional intelligence with clear communication is key. Nevertheless, Vicky Kaushal's advice highlights an important truth: people need emotional validation before they can engage in logical conversation. As Dr Chandra explains, the most effective way to handle a "kalesh" is not to choose between emotion and logic—but to use both, in the right order.

Stop the cold shock: Why lukewarm water is better for managing fever



When someone has a fever, the instinct is often to cool the body down as quickly as possible—sometimes with cold water. But experts say this approach can backfire. According to Dr Meenal Thakral, Consultant-Geriatric Medicine, Artemis Hospitals, using room-temperature or lukewarm water is not only safer but also more effective.

Why not cold water?

"Water that is room temperature or lukewarm is better because it cools the body slowly without making it feel stressed," explains Dr Thakral. During a fever, the body's internal thermostat is already set higher. "Cold water shocks the skin, causing blood vessels to narrow and triggering shivering, which actually generates more heat," she says. In contrast, lukewarm water works with the body. "It allows heat to escape gradually through the skin, helping bring the temperature down naturally," she adds. It's also far more comfortable, especially for children, making the process calmer and more effective.

Can cold water make fever worse?

"When very cold water is applied, the body tries to conserve heat," says Dr Thakral. "This leads to shivering and vasoconstriction, which prevents heat loss." The result? The cooling effect is short-lived. "The fever may return quickly, and the person may feel more uncomfortable and stressed," she notes.

Why children and the elderly need extra care "Children and older adults have less stable systems for controlling body temperature," explains Dr Thakral. "Children tend to shiver quickly, which can push their temperature up further, while older adults may have poor circulation and slower responses." She adds that these groups are more vulnerable to discomfort and complications. "Cold sponge baths can make them feel weak, chilled, or even unwell," she says. Because of this sensitivity, gentle and controlled cooling is essential. The safest way to give a sponge bath

ICICI Bank Q4 profit rises 9 per cent to Rs 14,755 crore

Mumbai: ICICI Bank on Saturday posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 14,755 crore for the fourth quarter of FY26, a 9 per cent year-on-year (YoY) rise. The second-largest private lender had reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 13,502.22 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year. The lender's core net interest income (NII) rose 8 per cent YoY to Rs 22,979 crore during the quarter, compared to Rs 21,193 crore in the same period last year, the bank said in an exchange filing. Total income for the quarter stood at Rs 84,613.66 crore, up from Rs 79,747.77 crore in Q4 FY25. The bank's interest earned during the quarter came in at Rs 49,593.75 crore, compared with Rs 48,363.84 crore in the previous quarter. Other income — which includes premium income from the insurance business and other operating revenues — rose to Rs 35,019.91 crore from Rs 31,360.85 crore a year ago. Operating profit (before provisions and contingencies) increased to Rs 21,004.88 crore in Q4 FY26. Total expenditure stood at Rs 63,608.78 crore, while employee costs for the quarter came in at Rs 6,256.82 crore. Provisions (other than tax) and contingencies declined sharply to Rs 260.67 crore in Q4 FY26, compared with Rs 2,646.52 crore in the previous quarter. On the business front, total assets rose to Rs 29.14 lakh crore, compared to Rs 26.42 lakh crore a year ago. Deposits increased to Rs 18.30 lakh crore, from Rs 16.41 lakh crore in the year-ago period. Gross advances rose to Rs 16.44 lakh crore, compared to Rs 14.20 lakh crore a year earlier. Apart from earnings, the lender has announced a dividend of Rs 12 per equity share for its shareholders which is subject to necessary approvals. Shares of ICICI Bank on Friday settled at Rs 1,352.80, up 0.54 per cent on the NSE.

Vinicius Jr signs contract extension with Real Madrid till 2032



After months of will he, won't he saga, Brazilian forward Vinicius Jr pledged his future to Spanish giants Real Madrid after agreeing to a contract extension till 2032. With that, rumours of him going to Premier League champions Arsenal were put to rest. "Real Madrid C. F. and Vinicius Jr. have agreed on the extension of our player's contract, which links him to the club until June 30, 2032," the club said in a statement on Thursday night. Vinicius has scored 128 goals in 375 matches since joining Madrid at age 18 and has helped the club win 14 titles, including La Liga three times and the Champions League twice. "His contribution to all these titles has been pivotal due to his gameplay, assists,

and goals, including those scored in the last two Champions League finals won by Real Madrid: the Fourteenth (Paris, 2022) and the Fifteenth (London, 2024). During this period with Real Madrid, Vinicius won The Best FIFA Men's Player Award 2024, was named the Golden Ball of the Intercontinental Cup 2024, Best Player of the Champions League 2023-2024, Golden Ball of the Club World Cup 2022, and Best Young Player of the Champions League 2021-2022," the club wrote further. "Vinicius Jr has become one of the most important players in one of the most successful periods in our history," Real added. Financial terms of the extension were not disclosed. Vinicius wrote on Instagram: "Eight years at the Bernabeu are too few ... 6 more years, and forever!" Los Blancos enter the 2026-27 season with a new coach – Jose Mourinho, for a second stint – and renewed expectations among fans. Madrid hasn't won a major title in two years with superstar striker Kylian Mbappe onboard. The club went through two coaches in Xabi Alonso and Alvaro Arbeloa last season

The record 15-time European Cup winners have seen Paris Saint-Germain win consecutive Champions League titles. Madrid has finished runner-up to fierce rival Barcelona for the La Liga title the past two seasons. Earlier on Thursday, Real Madrid reached a deal with Leipzig for the transfer of young Ivory Coast international Yan Dione. The 19-year-old forward joined on a seven-year contract.

‘Be more proactive’: Rahane’s advice to India batters ahead of SL Tests



GNS News Agency, August 14 Former India player Ajinkya Rahane, who announced his international retirement last month, had a word of advice for the India batters who are set to take on Sri Lanka in a 2-match Test series, beginning on August 15. "I think in Sri Lanka, the first day wicket generally is very good. But being top of the bowler as a batsman is very important. That's what I have learned in Sri Lanka. You cannot be too defensive," Rahane told PTI. Rahane played a key role in 2017 when India toured Sri Lanka, scoring 200 runs with a hundred and a fifty, helping his team win 3-0.

"You have to probably be more proactive because they

will have spin friendly wickets, and Sri Lanka do have decent spinners in their side. And again, a home team is always a tough team to beat. Whatever I've learned playing cricket for so many years, you can't take anyone for lightly. So it's all about, I think, having your own game plan as an individual and being proactive. Even in Test cricket, it's going to be the key," he said. Rahane had on Friday joined Amsterdam Flames as a marquee player in the inaugural European T20 Premier League, hoping to make global impact through the opportunity that came to him the day he announced his international retirement. The tournament is scheduled to be played between August 26 to September 20 across Dublin, Ireland, and the Hague, Netherlands.

"It's a great opportunity for me. When I announced my retirement... I think the same day this opportunity came up. I took a day to probably think through it. (Flames co-owner) Steve (Waugh), personally, called me and asked me about if I'm interested to play for his team," Rahane said. "The amount of experience I have, the amount of cricket I have played for so many years with a certain attitude, certain mindset, I thought it's a great opportunity for me to go out there, probably create an impact globally. Share my experience with other players. So I'm really looking forward to this stint with the ETPL," the 38-year-old Mumbaier added.

Harry Brook’s time will come, Joe Root ‘amazing’ for now: Brendon McCullum



GNS News Agency, August 14

Brendon McCullum has said that Harry Brook's "time will come" as Test captain, even as he threw his weight behind the return of Joe Root as England's red-ball skipper. Brook, the Three Lions' ODI and T20I leader, was Test vice-captain when Ben Stokes announced his shock retirement, yet was overlooked for captaincy. "Everyone knows the affection that I have for Harry," white-ball head coach McCullum told Sky Sports. "He's a wonderful player and he's doing a fine job as white-ball leader. I think his time will come in the Test job." McCullum added, "I'm looking forward to working with him and hopefully growing and developing him into the leader that he can become. At some stage in the future, he will have a very important role in that capacity. But for now, Joe will do an amazing job."

‘Naming Sooryavanshi vice-captain was avoidable’: Ex-batter slams zonal selectors



GNS News Agency, August 14

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has played only eight First-Class matches, averaging under 18. (BCCI) Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has played only eight First-Class matches, averaging under 18. (BCCI) Domestic batting great Priyank Panchal questioned the decision to appoint Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as the East Zone vice-captain for the 2026-27 season-opening Duleep Trophy, starting August 23 in Bengaluru. The East Zone squad that was announced last week raised eyebrows when the zonal selectors named the 15-year-old as deputy to his India teammate Ishan Kishan, who was appointed as captain of the side. Sooryavanshi, the only player from Bihar in the side, was elevated to the position in a side that also includes experienced stars such as Mohammad Shami, Mukesh Kumar and Abhimanyu Easwaran. Panchal questioned the decision to elevate Sooryavanshi to a leadership role just eight matches into his First-Class career. The left-hander broke

a heap of records last month, becoming India's youngest-ever international player during India's T20I tour to England and later won the Player of the Series award in Zimbabwe. However, the Bihar prodigy remains inexperienced on the First-Class circuit. Sooryavanshi has only featured in eight red-ball matches, scoring 207 runs at a 17.25 average with a solitary half-century. "I think the zonal selectors could have avoided making Vaibhav Sooryavanshi the East Zone vice captain. It could put unnecessary pressure on the young kid. Let him understand the dynamics of red ball cricket first, properly, before entrusting such duties upon him," Panchal wrote on X. "I think the zonal selectors could have avoided making Vaibhav Sooryavanshi the East Zone vice captain. It could put unnecessary pressure on the young kid. Let him understand the dynamics of red ball cricket first, properly, before entrusting such duties upon him. Thoughts? Meanwhile, the East Zone selectors defended the decision, insisting that the call on Sooryavanshi was a futuristic call. "We are not thinking about the present alone," Manish Vardhan, the Jharkhand selector on the East Zone selection committee, told Cricinfo. "A vice-captain gets to observe the captain closely and understand how a team is run. We wanted Vaibhav to be more involved with the group because we think it will help him as he develops. He's an extremely talented cricketer and is maturing steadily. Giving him this responsibility is another part of that process," Vardhan added. East Zone are slated to face North-East Zone in the initial round while the West Zone will take on North Zone. The winners of the respective matches will proceed to face South Zone and Central Zone in the semi-finals starting August 30, with the final scheduled to begin on September 5.

‘He is India’s match-winner’: Former keeper picks India’s key player for SL series



India wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant's Test stature has taken a hit in recent months after the 28-year-old lost his vice-captaincy role ahead of the one-off match against Afghanistan in June. Pant's batting had come under scrutiny after he had taken over as captain in a crucial second Test against South Africa in Guwahati, where India suffered their heaviest defeat by 408 runs last November.

While India's spin batting deficiencies have been exposed over the last two home seasons, former India wicket-keeper Deep Dasgupta believes that Pant will be the most

important batter during the forthcoming two-match series in Sri Lanka. "He is very important for India in this series. Rishabh is a proper cricket geek who can talk cricket for 24 hours. Whenever I've spoken to him, it's always been about cricket. Though from the outside, he probably looks different, he's a proper cricket guy. He is India's match-winner, and it'll be important for the Indian batters not to be too defensive and take the fight to the opposition bowlers," Dasgupta said on his YouTube channel. Pant is the highest active six-hitter in Tests, having racked up 97 sixes in 50 matches. The Delhi wicket-keeper has aggregated 3557 runs at an average of 43.37 with eight centuries and 19 fifties. Dasgupta added that Sri Lanka's spin attack posing two left-arm tweakers will play in favour of southpaw Pant during the series. "Wellalage and Jayasuriya are both left-arm spinners, which makes Pant the batter even more important for India. Rishabh already has a reputation when he enters the crease. On top of that, it's enhanced when there is a left-arm spinner bowling. Pant's presence will be very important for India in this series," Dasgupta added. India are currently in action in a three-day practice game against Sri Lanka XI in Colombo, starting Friday. Shubman Gill's side will feature in two Tests as part of the ongoing World Test Championship cycle, starting August 15.

Ashwin on Hardik’s IPL future: ‘Don’t count on him going to a team other than...’



Former India all-rounder R Ashwin weighed in on the rumours surrounding Hardik Pandya's IPL future with the Mumbai Indians, with reports indicating that the 32-year-old may be the centre of a blockbuster trade discussion. After two successive seasons as MI captain when the five-time champions failed to qualify for the Playoffs, reports have linked Pandya to potential trade deals with the Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders. Reflecting on a potential trade deal, Ashwin remarked that Pandya will not be pursued by any other team outside CSK or KKR, who are desperate for a reset. While the Super Kings recently announced the exit of Stephen Fleming after 17 years as head

coach of the franchise, KKR will be heading in a new direction after the retirement of their last season's skipper Ajinkya Rahane. Ashwin said that MI may only accept a swap deal with KKR if they acquire the services of pacer Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh in return.

"Don't count out Hardik going to a franchise other than CSK or KKR. The talks are that CSK will give Dube and a pacer, while KKR gives away Cameron Green. What happens if Green decides to focus on the Ashes next year? If I were MI, I would accept a deal with KKR on only one condition, which is getting Harshit Rana and Rinku Singh in return. That is the only way MI gets stronger," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel. "MI will also think who between CSK and KKR gets stronger through the Hardik trade. If CSK give away Dube and one Indian pacer to get Hardik, they get strong but not invincible. However, if KKR get Hardik, they suddenly look very strong. KKR will become a lethal batting lineup with Hardik. These are teams with five, five and three titles, so MI have to think how they can ensure one of these teams doesn't leapfrog them," he added. Hardik has been out of action since the conclusion of the IPL 2026 season. Featuring in 10 games, Hardik only aggregated 206 runs and four wickets as MI finished ninth in the 10-team standings.

Why did Tejaswin Shankar do a Novak Djokovic after winning CWG decathlon medal



After completing a victory lap of the Scotstoun Stadium to celebrate a decathlon bronze medal, Tejaswin Shankar stood in the middle of the arena to relish the moment. Then he did what Novak Djokovic famously does after winning Wimbledon. Tejaswin, the first Indian to win a Commonwealth Games medal in decathlon, plucked some grass from the turf and chewed it. Severe pain because of tendinitis in his right knee — or jumpers' knee in athletes' parlance — had forced Tejaswin to pull out of the high jump. His chances of a decathlon medal seemed all but over, but redemption was swift. "It was surreal. For a few seconds, I was still wondering how I won a Commonwealth medal with one-and-a-half legs. I started walking to the stand where my wife and mom were sitting. Someone gave me an Indian flag. We took a victory lap. An Indian security guard said he felt proud. I felt like it was a movie. Then I went to the infield, and like Djokovic, ate some grass," Tejaswin told

Olympic medallists Damian Warner (silver) and Lindon Victor (gold) were among the 12 competitors. Before he shed tears of joy, Tejaswin had bawled like a child three days earlier when his knee acted up. Video clips of him crying in the mixed zone emerged, but that is only half the picture. "When I walked into the mixed zone, I was asked a question. I spoke three sentences. I went behind a banner, and started sobbing like a baby. I am usually good at keeping my emotions to myself. I was 100 percent convinced that the decathlon was also over for me," Tejaswin said. Decathlon was scheduled to start two days later. That night, Tejaswin was on ChatGPT searching for a ray of hope. He slept only at 3am and woke up by 6am. He spent the morning thinking how he would spend time around Indian teammates in Glasgow, knowing that he had done nothing of note. The diagnosis of Dinshaw Pardiwala, the team doctor, was comforting.

"Dr Pardiwala did some tests and said there was no rupture. The negative was that the knee was very inflamed so even if I competed in the decathlon, I would be in severe pain," the athlete recalled. "Pain can be managed but it depends on how your body responds, the doctor said. Painkillers will bring the pain down, and the hope was that the adrenaline would take over. I was wondering if it would be better to skip the CWG and focus all my energy on the Asian Games." "Following this, strength and conditioning coach Wayne Lombard and India team physio Mayur Thakkar resurrected his CWG. The latter asked Tejaswin if he wanted to fight or not. "I half-heartedly said yes. Mayur guaranteed me that I would be ready to start the decathlon on July 30." Thakkar and Lombard spent eight hours a day, for the next two days, to get Tejaswin ready to compete. The South African found a rehabilitation clinic in Quarriers village, which had a hyperbaric oxygen chamber and red-light therapy. "The village was about 40-45 minutes from our hotel. We did whatever we could to fix the knee in the short span of two days. Physio Mayur's soft tissue treatment helped. All these things came together," Tejaswin said. The clinic posted

on Instagram about Tejaswin's visit when he won a medal. He replied, thanking them. On the first morning of the competition, Tejaswin rolled his ankle while on the treadmill. Luckily for him, it was just a scare. During the first event, the 100 metres, his mind was all over the place and he forgot to stay low in the drive phase (first 30 metres). "I was just flustered. Once the race was over, only then did I realise that the decathlon's first event was over. Because at that time, I was more worried about the knee."

However, his fortunes improved in the long jump. A personal best of 7.82 metres was a boost. "It was much needed and put me back in contention. My first jump was decent... around 7.40 metres. I had a bad landing and a half-hearted take-off, a whole shoe length behind the (take-off) board. So I decided to make the most of the next jump. When the reading came out I knew I was back in contention. That single moment flipped everything. I was back in the competition mentally." Ahead of the decathlon high jump, Tejaswin was worried about aggravating the pain in his knee. "In both the long jump and high jump, I have the same leg (right) for take off. That is why I was more worried about these two events. In high jump, at that particular angle when I plant my foot, I feel the pain. I was also experiencing post-traumatic stress due to what had happened two days prior. I could slowly feel the pain coming back. I took limited jumps. Once I crossed 2.15m, I tried to clear 2.18 and then 2.21. It was a gamble."

After day one, Shankar was in second place but despite a personal best in the discus throw (40.44m), he slipped to fourth after the pole vault — the third-last event. But the javelin throw changed his fortunes. "The only time I thought I was in contention for a medal was after the javelin. Because I had to throw over 50 metres in order and the guy above me (Sammy Ball) has a better personal best in the 1,500m. In javelin, I executed the plan with 53.12 metres and Sammy threw only 44 metres (44.88 metres), though he is a 50-53 metre thrower. So after javelin, I got a good lead over him, and he had to do something miraculous (in 1,500m) to get the bronze," Tejaswin, a Reliance Foundation backed athlete, said. The biggest takeaway for Tejaswin was how he bounced back when everything seemed lost. "I proved that in the face of adversity, I can still figure it out. This experience is what is needed if you want to compete with these guys at the Olympic Games and World Championships. In those competitions, it is not about who has the better personal best but who is able to manage emotions."

Neeraj Chopra becomes co-owner of UBS Athletics Kids Cup

New Delhi: Two-time Indian Olympic medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra on Friday became the co-owner of the UBS Athletics Kids Cup having already served as the programme's Ambassador for the past two seasons. The UBS Athletics Kids Cup is one of a grassroots initiatives, designed to introduce children to sports through fun, inclusive and accessible competition. It has engaged more than 250,000 children across 2,500 plus schools in five cities. "Over the last two seasons, I have seen the impact that UBS Athletics Kids Cup has created for children across schools," said Chopra, who added a Commonwealth Games silver to his crowded cabinet last month, in a release. "Every child deserves an opportunity to discover and showcase their talent, and becoming Co-owner felt like the natural next step because I truly believe in the vision we're building together."

Who was Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja? Kargil hero played by Siddharth in Operation Safed Sagar



More than 27 years after Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja made the ultimate sacrifice during the Kargil war, his story is reaching a new generation through Netflix's Operation Safed Sagar. The series stars Siddharth as the decorated Indian Air Force officer, whose decision to risk his own life while searching for a fellow pilot turned him into one of India's most revered war heroes. The series focuses on the Indian Air Force's role in the Kargil war through the young pilots of the Golden Arrows squadron. On May 27, 1999, Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja was leading a photo reconnaissance mission over the Batalik sector as part of Operation Safed Sagar, the Indian Air Force's air campaign during the Kargil War. During the operation, Flight Lieutenant K. Nachiket's MiG-27 developed technical trouble after coming under enemy fire, forcing him to eject near enemy-held territory. Despite being aware that Pakistani forces had deployed shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles in the area, Ahuja chose to remain overhead in an attempt to locate Nachiket and guide rescue efforts. He continued circling the area even after being warned of the danger. His MiG-21 was eventually struck by a surface-to-air Stinger missile. Ahuja ejected safely from the aircraft but landed across the Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

According to Indian authorities, Ahuja survived the ejection but was captured after landing. His body was returned to India the following day, and the post-mortem reportedly revealed gunshot wounds, leading India to accuse Pakistan of violating the Geneva Conventions. Pakistan denied the allegations and maintained that he died during the conflict. Flight Lieutenant Nachiket, whom Ahuja had

stayed behind to help, was captured but returned to India eight days later. Squadron Leader Ahuja became the first officer from the Indian Air Force to lay down his life during the Kargil War. He was posthumously awarded the Vir Chakra, India's third-highest wartime gallantry award. He went beyond the call of duty. Speaking to The Tribune on the 25th anniversary of the Kargil War, former Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa, who was Ahuja's commanding officer during the conflict and inspired Jimmy Shergill's character in Operation Safed Sagar, had recalled the officer's extraordinary courage.

"Ahuja went beyond the call of duty. He sacrificed his life for his colleague Flight Lieutenant K. Nachiket. Ahuja was trying to guide a helicopter to the crash site," Dhanoa told The Tribune. Ajay Ahuja: The man behind the uniform Born in Kota, Rajasthan, Ajay Ahuja graduated from the National Defence Academy before being commissioned into the Indian Air Force in 1985. During his 14-year career, he flew MiG-21 and MiG-23 aircraft and logged more than 1,000 hours as a flying instructor, earning a reputation as a patient mentor and accomplished fighter pilot. At the time of the Kargil war, he was the Flight Commander of No. 17 Squadron—the Golden Arrows—the Indian Air Force's specialist photo-reconnaissance unit that played a key role in Operation Safed Sagar by gathering intelligence and helping identify enemy positions. His commitment to the Air Force was something his wife, Alka Ahuja, recognised from the very beginning of their marriage. In a 2024 interview with The Times of India, she recalled one of their earliest conversations after they got married. "To my utter shock then Flight Lieutenant Ajay Ahuja told me that I was his second wife immediately upon my marriage." She added, "But when he explained that his first wife is none other than the Indian Air Force, I felt proud and found in him not only a loving husband but a person who had immense love for the motherland. Ajay proved it only a few years later when going beyond the line of duty he made the supreme sacrifice not even caring for falling in the enemy's net."

Siddharth wears Ajay Ahuja's wing badge in Operation Safed Sagar. The makers of Operation Safed Sagar met Alka Ahuja and described her home as a memorial to her husband. She also entrusted them with her husband's original wing badge, which was worn on screen by Siddharth. About Operation Safed Sagar Inspired by the Indian Air Force's role during the 1999 Kargil War, Operation Safed Sagar tells the story through the eyes of the IAF rather than attempting to chronicle the entire conflict. The series follows the young pilots of the Golden Arrows, who begin as a photo-reconnaissance unit tasked with gathering intelligence before finding themselves at the heart of India's aerial campaign as the war intensifies. Siddharth stars as Squadron Leader Ajay Ahuja, while Jimmy Shergill plays a character inspired by former Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa. The series also features an ensemble cast portraying Indian Air Force officers and personnel who took part in Operation Safed Sagar.

Mohanlal promises help to actor Mohan Sharma living in old age home, struggling to survive

Just a few days ago, reports emerged about the difficult circumstances in which actor-producer Mohan Sharma, once a prominent figure in the South Indian film industry, particularly Tamil cinema, now finds himself. The multi-hyphenate, who has worked across acting and production, is currently living in an old-age home and struggling to meet his monthly medical expenses. Largely living in isolation, Sharma recently opened up about his circumstances and revealed that superstar Rajinikanth was the only person who reached out to him when he needed help the most. Now, actor Mohanlal has also reacted to his plight. 'Will do whatever is needed for him'

In a conversation with Amrita News, Mohanlal was asked about Sharma and his current situation. Recalling his association with the actor-producer, he said, "I have acted in movies produced by him. I contacted him, and someone from our team is going to meet him. We will do whatever is needed for him. Cinema is a kind of magic, not just cinema, but why things happen like this, people call it karma or fate."

Mohanlal admitted that hearing about Sharma's circumstances was deeply upsetting. "Hearing about it makes one feel very sad." He went on to explain that he believes help does not always need to be made public. "Helping someone doesn't mean advertising it to everyone. There are so many people who help quietly. I mentioned it now only because you asked; I even have letters written by him. We had a very good relationship. He produced huge hit movies like Ivide Thudangunnu." Reflecting on their past association, Mohanlal said, "It has been a long time since we met, but we acted together in many films back then. Movies like Nellu and Chattakari." He also pointed out that Sharma's situation may not be unique within the film industry. "There are many other actors in similar situations whose stories we may not know." He added, "We don't know what actually happened to him or what led to his situation. There could be various reasons why a person's life deteriorates like that, and it's a very complicated issue."

What did Mohan Sharma say about his situation?

Sharma had earlier spoken candidly about his health and financial struggles in an interview with Trend Talks. He revealed that a series of medical complications had left him facing significant expenses. "I needed major surgery on my leg due to a growth. It left me unable to walk, so I had to have the surgery. I also had a ligament tear. I spent Rs 4-5 lakh on those surgeries. Besides, I also have vertigo, hypertension (high BP), and diabetes. I need daily insulin injections. I require around Rs 35,000 a month just for medicines."

He also explained how his financial difficulties eventually led him to move into an old-age home. "At one stage, I didn't even have money for my medicines. I couldn't tell anyone about my situation. At that time, my friends from the Rotary Club, who are trustees of this institution, suggested I stay here." For Sharma, the difficulties were also closely tied to his career as a filmmaker. He recalled how his final film despite receiving recognition, left him with mounting financial liabilities. "My last film, the bilingual Gramam/Namma Gramam, won many awards, but I struggled to release it. I had to spend on theatres, publicity, and posters myself. My budget went way over; it soared up to Rs 2 crore instead of the planned Rs 1.25 crore." In an attempt to clear the debts accumulated during the film's release, Sharma eventually sold his home in Poes Garden,



a posh residential locality in Teynampet, Chennai. He had purchased the property on the advice of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. Sharma has now also sought help from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay. Speaking about his efforts, he said, "Vijay is my friend. I've known him for 25 years and worked on his films. I've sent a request to meet him. I haven't received a reply yet. If I meet him, I'll tell him my problems. If he does something, it will be a big help."

Nayanthara and Kevin's 'Hi' release postponed to August 28

Chennai: The makers of director Vishnu Adavan's eagerly awaited romantic entertainer 'Hi', featuring actors Nayanthara and Kevin in the lead, on Friday announced that the film would now hit screens worldwide on August 28 this year. Seven Screen Studios, one of the production houses producing the film, took to its social media timelines to make the announcement. It wrote, "We know you've been waiting to say Hi ?? and here's when you finally can! Mark your calendars for AUGUST 28 as the most heartwarming entertainer of the season arrives in theatres. Get ready for the fun-filled #HiMovie, featuring #Nayanthara and #Kevin. For the unaware, the film was originally scheduled to hit screens on August 14. However, now the makers have decided to release the film on August 28. It may be recalled that the Censor Board has already cleared the film for release with a U/A certificate. The film, which is being jointly produced by Zee Studios South, The Rowdy Pictures and Seven Screen Studios, will also feature a host of actors including K Bhagyaraj, Prabhu, Radhika, Sathyan, Adithya Kathir and Kureishi among others. Sources close to the unit of the film have told IANS that the story of the film takes place across three cities—Chennai, Coimbatore and Pollachi. They also point out that the film will be a family entertainer and that it would not have any villains featuring in it.

Treated like 'kachra' by Rajesh Khanna, Dimple Kapadia's sister Simple was dismissed as 'ugly'



Dimple Kapadia was just 16 when she made her starry debut in Raj Kapoor's superhit film Bobby, alongside Rishi Kapoor, back in 1973. Her younger sister Simple, who was in boarding school at the time, learnt this via newspapers and was in shock that Dimple was now going to be a part of the movies. Dimple's career, however, came to a halt just after Bobby released as she married superstar Rajesh Khanna, who did not want his wife to be a movie star, and Dimple obliged. Simple, who later made her debut in the movies, following her sister's footsteps, made her debut in the movies in 1977 with her brother-in-law Rajesh Khanna, who was starting to experience flops for the first time in his career, and their film, Anurodh, flopped. For a few years, Simple tried to position herself as an actress, but just after 25 films, she gave up and switched to costume designing, which ultimately fetched her a National Film Award.

Simple Kapadia was a 'part of sister Dimple Kapadia's dowry' When Dimple married Rajesh, Simple moved in with them and joked that she "was a part of her dowry." It is well known that Dimple and Rajesh had a difficult marriage right from the start but despite living in the same house, Simple never realised the gravity of their problems. In a 1986 chat with journalist Sushmita Ray, Simple said, "Surprisingly, I was not aware of the problems between her and Kaka although I stayed in the same house. Frankly, I never got along with him." Describing Rajesh as a "difficult man to understand," Simple said that she could "never relate" to him. She recalled that when she signed her debut film, Shakti Samanta's Anurodh, Rajesh "treated me like kachra (dirt)." "Since it was my first film, I was very nervous and unsure, but he didn't lift a finger to help me. He refused to rehearse the dialogues with me," she said and added, "He was very uncooperative, and one day, I was close to tears."

At this point, Shakti Samantha stepped in to resolve the situation. He had collaborated with Rajesh on hits like Aradhana, Kati Patang, Amar Prem, among a few others, but he supported Simple as he felt that she was being disrespected on the set. Simple recalled, "Finally Shakti da fired Kaka. He said, 'You may be a superstar and she may be your sister-in-law but she is a newcomer on my sets, and you should treat her with respect'. Poor Kaka had to do what he was told. He had no option."

After the film flopped, in a chat with India Today in 1977, she said that she wasn't comfortable working with Rajesh. "Actually, I'm quite uncomfortable working with him because when you know a person inside out it seems funny seeing him so different in front of a camera," she said. Simple could not avoid being compared to Dimple, especially since Bobby had been a huge hit. "Anurodh is definitely not a Bobby and can never even be compared to it, just like I guess I can never be another Dimple." A few years later, Simple said she was unbothered about Anurodh's fate as she "never wanted to act in films" but only did it because she needed the money. She told Ray, "I hated asking my parents for money. Besides, there was no other job I could do. Who would give a respectable job to a high school dropout?" Simple said that she never pursued her career seriously and was never keen on giving more takes than needed. "When Anurodh flopped, people said that the audience couldn't accept an ugly sister after the gorgeous Dimple

Tamil Nadu CM Vijay's wife Sangeetha withdraws divorce case, retains right to file fresh petition

Vijay Divorce Case: Sangeetha, the wife of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, has withdrawn her divorce petition before the Family Court in Chengalpattu, near Chennai, bringing an end, for now, to a case that had drawn considerable public attention because of the actor's political office. According to an order passed by the Single Judge of the Family Court, Chengalpattu, Sangeetha appeared via video conference and confirmed that she did not wish to pursue the divorce proceedings initiated earlier this year. "The petitioner appeared through video conference and confirmed that she does not wish to proceed further with this case. She has filed the withdrawal petition," the court recorded. The court also noted that notice had been served on the respondent's counsel, who recorded no objection to the request. It subsequently permitted the petitioner to withdraw the case while granting liberty to institute fresh proceedings if required. "The petitioner is permitted to withdraw this case with a liberty to file a fresh petition in future, if required. Hence, this petition is allowed," the order said. According to the court records, the case status has been updated to "Uncontested – Withdrawn."

The withdrawal effectively ends the present proceedings without any adjudication on the merits of the dispute. Since the petition has been withdrawn rather than decided, the court has not examined or ruled on the allegations or claims originally made in the case. The liberty granted by the court means that the petitioner retains the legal right to approach the court again with a fresh petition, should circumstances require it in the future.

The development marks a significant turn in a case that had generated widespread discussion after news of the divorce petition emerged earlier this year. At the time, the proceedings attracted significant public attention as they involved the spouse of a leading actor whose rise to the office of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister had brought his personal and public life under intense scrutiny. Friday's order, however, offers no explanation for the decision to withdraw the petition. The court merely recored the petitioner's statement that she did not wish to proceed further and noted the absence of any objection from the respondent's side. Initial reports of trouble in Vijay's marriage to Sangeetha emerged in late February 2026, when it was reported that she had filed for divorce. According to the petition, Sangeetha had cited allegations of infidelity, mental cruelty and emotional neglect as among the grounds for seeking dissolution of their marriage.

In the petition, Sangeetha alleged that Vijay was involved in an extramarital relationship with a female co-star.

Kapadia. What sh*t! The truth is that I didn't make an effort to do well in that film. I know Dimple is beautiful. I've known it since the day I was born. My sister is the most gorgeous thing that has taken place in this industry – in fact, in the world," she said.

Soon after, she found her next passion – to be a dress designer. She clarified that she did not take up the profession just because she was Dimple's sister. "I am not like other star sisters who take up dress designing so that all the money comes home. I started designing dresses because I had no choice. Dimple was totally dependent on me for her clothes," she said. Dimple made her comeback in the movies in 1984, after she separated from her husband Rajesh Khanna. Dimple wanted her sister for some honest opinions, and would always call her when she couldn't decide what to wear, or how to style herself. Back in the 1980s, the costume department for movies wasn't as organised and while designers like Bhanu Athaiya worked in the movies, a lot of mainstream films left the selection of costumes to the film's lead heroine. Simple was always on the call with Dimple for such matters. "I decided that if I was going to constantly dish out my precious advice, I should jolly well get paid for it," she said. Soon, she started designing for other actresses as well, including Sridevi and Maadhavi. Simple had watched her sister Dimple's marriage failing from close quarters, and had an inseparable bond with her. Back in 1986, she decided that if she were to get married, the would-be husband should be someone who lived close to Dimple's house. "Girls usually look for a man who is tall, dark and handsome. But my requirements are different. I want someone who lives close to my sister's place. He should treat Dimple just as I do and should not object to my spending time with her. After all, my sister tops my priority list," she said.

A few years later, in 1992, Simple married Rajinder Singh Shetty but the marriage didn't last and the two got divorced. Simple's son, Karan Kapadia, was born in 1993. He made his debut in the movies with 2010's Blank. Simple won National Film Award for Rudaali

The biggest moment of her career as a dress designer came in 1994, when she won the National Film Award for Best Costume Design for Dimple-starrer Rudaali. In later years, Simple also designed costumes for films like Darr, Barsaat, Chachi 420, 23rd March 1931: Shaheed, Socha Na Tha, The Hero: Love Story of a Spy, among others.

For Dimple too, her sister was her lifeline. In a 2024 interview with Vogue, Dimple recalled Simple's contribution to her career. "My entire wardrobe for my films was always done by my sister, Simple," she recalled and said that her sister always ensured that she had plenty of costume options, which made her feel more confident. In 2009, Simple died at the age of 51 after a three-year battle with cancer. Her last credited work was in the 2010 film Tum Milo Toh Sahi, but she had to leave the film midway after she got sick. In a chat with The Times of India, director Kabir Sadanand recalled her joyous presence. "I didn't want the world to see her on a wheelchair. Even though she was ill she insisted on coming to the sets and spending time with us. When we'd ask about her health she would turn around and say, 'Who's ill around here?' Her spirit carried us forward to the end of the film," he said.

He recalled how Dimple internalised her pain of losing her sister and said, "But not once did Dimple bring her grief to the sets. Not once did we get to feel the enormity of her suffering. Every day she was in and out of the hospital and on the sets on time ready to face the camera. Dimple doesn't believe that the world needs to know about her suffering. She internalised all the pain that she felt about Simple's condition." Aside from Anurodh, Simple appeared in films like Chakravyuha, Man Pasand, Lootmaar, Zamaane Ko Dikhana Hai, Pyaar Ke Do Pal, among others.



She claimed that the alleged relationship caused her "deep emotional pain and mental suffering, amounting to betrayal and violation of marital trust." Sangeetha further alleged that Vijay had initially assured her that the relationship would end, but continued it despite those assurances. According to her petition, this resulted in what she described as "mental cruelty," public humiliation arising from social media posts, emotional neglect and constructive desertion. She had described the marriage as having "irretrievably broken" and claimed that it survives only on paper. Based on the petition, Sangeetha has sought a decree of dissolution of the marriage, along with permanent alimony commensurate with Vijay's income and social standing. She had also sought the right to reside in their matrimonial home in Neelankarai until the disposal of the petition, or equivalent accommodation, and requested that the proceedings be conducted in camera to protect the dignity and privacy of all parties.

Vijay and Sangeetha married on August 25, 1999, at a time when the actor was still establishing himself in Tamil cinema. Sangeetha, a Sri Lankan Tamil, has largely stayed away from the spotlight despite Vijay's rise to become one of Tamil cinema's biggest stars and, later, his entry into politics. The couple have two children, son Jason Sanjay and daughter Dhivyaa Sasha. Their personal life has generally remained private, although speculation about trouble in their marriage has surfaced periodically over the years. Rumours of a possible separation intensified in 2025 after Sangeetha was absent from a major event associated with Vijay's political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). Her absence prompted speculation on social media about the status of their marriage, though there was no official confirmation of a separation at the time.