

BJP forms special team for Gen Z outreach; Nabin, Smriti among key faces

PM Modi Urges New BJP Team to Deepen Connect With People

New delhi, August 22

The ruling BJP on Saturday firmed up its political and electoral strategy, placing a national-level push for Gen Z outreach and Vande Mataram at the centre.

The first meeting of the newly appointed national office-bearers of the party finalised a plan for active youth engagement, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent nudge to MPs and ministers to step up their social media presence.

"The BJP strongly condemns the decision taken by the CWC to reaffirm its 1937 resolution and restrict the singing of Vande Mataram to its first two stanzas at Congress programmes. A CWC resolution cannot override constitutional institutions or laws of the country, and a political compromise of 1937 cannot be elevated above the constitutional settlement of 1950 and legislation enacted by Parliament in 2026," Nabin said, quoting the resolution, which accused the Congress of succumbing to vote-bank politics "as it did in 1937 under Muslim League's pressures".

The BJP countered the Congress' claim that Rabindranath Tagore had advised Jawaharlal Nehru to adopt the first two stanzas of Vande Mataram by citing Mahatma Gandhi's description of the Song. "We pledge to recall and disseminate Mahatma Gandhi's testimony that Vande Mataram had become an anti-imperialist cry and 'the purest national spirit'," the resolution read, adding that Gandhi's remarks demonstrated the Song's larger national meaning beyond the religious context of particular stanzas.

PM Modi, who later met the new office-bearers at BJP headquarters here, also spoke of the need to uphold the honour of Vande Mataram. Modi lent voice to the BJP resolution.

The meeting further firmed up plans to launch a month-long Seva Sankalp Abhiyan across India from September 17 to October 17 to coincide with the completion of PM Modi's 25 years in public life as the head of the government. Modi took oath as Gujarat CM on October 7, 2001, and completes 25 years in public life this October.

Under the month-long campaign starting on the PM's birthday, the BJP will engage with four pillars that Modi says constitute the foundations of Viksit Bharat — women, youth, the poor and farmers. "We will reach out to 14 lakh anganwadi workers and honour their contributions; hold Seva Mein Mera Yogdan and Rashtriya Innovation Challenge for the youth and launch a 15-day Seva Setu Abhiyaan to ensure 100 per cent saturation of government schemes' delivery. Those left out of government benefits will be covered," said Tawde.

The scheme saturation plan will especially focus on key interventions such as Kisan Samman Nidhi and PM Awas Yojana (rural and urban).

Manpreet, Pathak at meet

BJP national vice-president Manpreet Badal and former AAP MP-turned-BJP leader Sandeep Pathak attended the meeting chaired by Nabin on Saturday, along with other vice-presidents, including Vasundhara Raje and Ram Madhav, and general secretaries, including Satish Poonia, Smriti Irani and Biplab Deb.



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the newly appointed BJP office bearers at the party headquarters in the national capital on Saturday. Following his first interaction with BJP president Nitin Nabin's new team, which came shortly after the BJP announced the launch of a month-long nationwide "Seva Sankalp Abhiyan" beginning September 17, Modi said the meeting was about discussing "new ideas and perspectives" aimed at strengthening the BJP.

"Organisational meetings are all about new ideas and perspectives aimed at strengthening the party and deepening connect with the people. Great interaction with fellow party colleagues and the new organisational team," Modi posted on X. At the meeting, the Prime Minister, it is learnt, advised the new team to stay connected with the people and further strengthen the organisation.

Earlier in the day, the BJP decided to launch a month-long Seva Sankalp Abhiyan across the country from September 17 to mark the completion of Modi's 25 years in public life as the head of the government and his contributions. During the nationwide campaign, the BJP will reach out to every section of society, including youth, women and farmers, through various programmes, party general secretary Vinod Tawde said.

Every year, the BJP observes a fortnight-long Seva Pakhwada across the country to mark Modi's birthday on September 17.

"Modi's personality is such that he is dedicated to service at every moment," Tawde said, adding, "As he is going to complete 25 years (as the head of the government) on October 17 this year, since he first took oath as chief minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001, we decided to launch a nationwide month-long campaign, Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, keeping the significance of this 25-year milestone in mind."

Interacting with the media at the BJP headquarters, Tawde said that the month-long campaign will feature various activities centred around the "spirit of service that is so integral to Modi's personality".

During the Seva Sankalp campaign, the BJP workers will reach out to 14-lakh Anganwadi workers across the country and felicitate them for their contributions by organising Anganwadi Saman and Matru Samman programmes. Other events to be organised during the campaign will include "Seva Mein Mera Yogdaan" and "Rashtriya Innovation Challenge", especially for youth.



"Under the Seva Setu Abhiyan, we are going to appeal to people, especially youth, to engage in social service activities and make reels for others to get inspiration to do such work," Tawde said. He mentioned that they can make reels while undertaking social service activities, like cleanliness drives, tree plantation, connecting tuberculosis patients with the government scheme that seeks to eradicate the disease.

Asked where such people will post their reels, the BJP leader said, "We will create a platform for that."

During the 15-day-long Seva Setu Abhiyan, BJP workers will organise camps across all blocks to help enrol people in various government welfare schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. A National Innovation Challenge will also be rolled out for youth across the country to promote innovation.

For the successful implementation of the month-long campaign, the BJP organised a national-level workshop for party office bearers at party headquarters on Saturday, Tawde said, adding that similar workshops will be organised for party workers and office bearers across all states till August 31 so that they are ready for the roll-out of the month-long campaign from September 17.

Two Killed as Illegal Building Collapses in Anjaiahnagar



HYDERABAD: Two workers died and three others, including a resident of a neighbouring apartment, were injured when a seven-storey under-construction building collapsed like a pack of cards in Anjaiahnagar, Gachibowli, on Saturday afternoon. The structure was being built on a 50-sq yd plot over a nala.

The victims were identified as Umesh Khare and Mopath of Madhya Pradesh, tile workers at the site. The injured included a 25-year-old resident of Jayadarsini Residency, adjacent to the collapsed building, who was asleep when debris fell on him. He was rushed to hospital.

Police registered a case against building owner Syed Sajid and contractor Khaja Moinuddin. HYDRAA commissioner A.V. Ranganath said Sajid reportedly owned similar illegal multi-storey buildings in the area, constructed on 50–60 sq yd plots and leased as hostels for students and IT employees. Raidurgam sub-inspector Ramaswamy said that the bodies of two workers were shifted to Osmania General Hospital for postmortem, and their families were informed. The injured workers were shifted to a hospital for treatment and their condition was stable.

The collapse damaged balconies and portions of Jayadarsini Residency and another seven-storey illegal building nearby. Civic officials said the weak foundation and the nala beneath the site caused the collapse. The second building, also illegal, will be razed.

Residents said they heard a blast-like sound and rushed out for safety. Many vacated their flats after officials prioritised evacuation of affected blocks. "Casualties would have been multiple if the incident had occurred at night," said K. Ramakanth of Anjaiahnagar.

The incident highlighted the stark contrast between Anjaiahnagar, a congested slum with rampant illegal constructions, and neighbouring Whitefields, a planned layout with gated communities. Several illegal structures in Anjaiahnagar share compound walls with Whitefields apartments, exposing the nexus between encroachers and municipal officials.

Rescue teams from HYDRAA, NDRF, SDRF, CMC, police and fire services reached the site with equipment. Victim-location systems were deployed to detect trapped persons. Congested lanes forced operations to be conducted from Whitefields, with vehicles and equipment parked at Jayadarsini Residency.

HYDRAA commissioner A.V. Ranganath assured residents that debris would be cleared and structural integrity assessed before re-occupation. He said HYDRAA and Cyberabad Municipal Corporation would jointly demolish buildings constructed in violation of rules and urged residents of such structures to vacate them.



In Pune, Rahul Gandhi engages Gen-Z, challenges ‘Manusmriti’'s view of women

Pune: Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, addressed students at the 'Chatron Ki Gunj' event in Pune on Saturday, emphasising that women represent India's greatest asset while launching a sharp critique against the ideology of the Manusmriti.

Speaking under the event's central theme 'Pinjra Toda' (Break the Cage), the Leader of Opposition said that women are bound to no one but themselves and reject patriarchal claims over them.

"I have not come here today to speak on politics," Rahul Gandhi said while interacting with Gen-Z students.Geographic Reference

"When asked about India's main strength, people point to the economy, the military, healthcare, or overall population. But my position is crystal clear: India's 70 crore women are the nation's greatest power."

Rahul Gandhi made a strong pitch for women's empowerment, urging young women to break free from societal restrictions and assert their independent identity.

He highlighted women as the nation's greatest foundation while sharply criticising traditional constraints imposed on them.

Rahul Gandhi declared that the true strength of the country lies in its female population.

"I am often asked about India's greatest strength,

and while people give various answers, my view is clear that the 70 crore women of India are the nation's biggest strength and asset," he said, refraining from discussing mainstream political topics.

He highlighted that women naturally possess immense empathy, sensitivity, and strength, making them indispensable to the nation's progress.

Expressing strong disapproval of traditional frameworks, the Leader of Opposition criticised the Manusmriti for confining women to restrictive roles.

He noted that 'Manusmriti' (the ancient text) suggests a woman must live for her father in childhood, her husband in youth, and her sons in old age, adding that the notion that women should never be independent is unacceptable and shameful.He urged women to rise above being defined solely by traditional roles such as daughter, wife, or mother.While acknowledging these roles are important, Rahul Gandhi asserted, "You are not dependent on anyone. Your relationships do not define your core identity—you have an individual identity of your own."He expressed concern over societal constraints and educational discrimination faced by young women despite their notable achievements across diverse fields.He said that the underlying design of the Manusmriti aimed to prevent women from ever achieving independence or self-reliance, subjecting them to external control.

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Watershed moment for space industry

India's space journey has reached a historic milestone. The successful launch of Vikram-1, the first orbital rocket developed in the private sector, is a watershed moment because it achieved what is exceptionally rare in the space launch industry: a successful orbital mission on its very first attempt. Most new rockets suffer failures or major anomalies during maiden flights, making its flawless insertion of payloads into a 450-km orbit a remarkable demonstration of engineering maturity, rigorous testing and execution. Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace has now joined a small and elite group of global companies that have successfully developed and launched orbital rockets. India is only the third country, after the United States and China, where a private company has independently placed payloads in orbit. The seven-storey rocket, carrying technology demonstration payloads and post-cards, lifted off ISRO's First Launch Pad at Sriharikota and, a little over 15 minutes later, placed its payloads in an orbit roughly 450 km above the Earth. Named 'Aagaman' (arrival), it was the first of two test flights Skyroot plans to do this year before starting commercial launches next year. For nearly six decades, the space sector was entirely in the hands of the government. Every celebrated milestone, from Aryabhata to Chandrayaan-3, every Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) that became the workhorse of global commercial launches, every Mars and Moon mission, bore the unmistakable signature of the Indian state. That monopoly has ended now. The achievement also validates India's 2020 space-sector reforms, which opened ISRO's infrastructure to private firms, proving that Indian startups can independently design, build and launch orbital-class rockets.

Renewed Malabar Gold Showroom Inaugurated

Hyderabad, August 22 (Indian Chronicle) : The renovated Malabar Gold & Diamonds showroom at Somajiguda was inaugurated by actress Srinidhi Shetty, Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, Malabar Gold & Diamonds Managing Director-India Operations Asher O, and Head-Retail Operations Siraj P.K., Malabar Group Chairman M.P.Ahmed said in a statement on Saturday. He said



the company is offering traditional and bridal jewellery along with lightweight and contemporary designs to meet changing customer preferences. As part of the inauguration, a discount of up to 25% on value addition for gemstone and uncut jewellery has been announced until September 14. The showroom also offers 100% HUID-hallmarked gold, certified diamonds, lifetime maintenance, buyback and fair-value exchange services.

Bhongir MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy Consoles Families of Hezelo Pharma Accident Victims

Government stands by the affected families: Bhongir MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy

(Yadadri Bhongir District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – August 22): A tragic incident occurred last night at Hezelo Pharma in Dothigudem, Pochampally Mandal, where a reactor explosion claimed the lives of two workers. On Saturday, Bhongir MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy visited Gandhi Hospital to console the families of the deceased and offer them words of comfort and courage. He expressed his deepest condolences to the bereaved families. "Noting that similar accidents had occurred at this company in the past, the MLA viewed the incident with great seriousness. He immediately spoke to the Bhongir District Collector over the phone, urging a comprehensive inquiry into the cause of the accident and demanding strict action against those responsible. He directed officials to ensure the strict implementation of safety standards in industries. "Additionally, he inquired about the health condition of the accident victims undergoing treatment at Yashoda and Sunrise Hospitals and wished them a speedy recovery. He instructed officials to take the necessary measures to ensure the victims receive quality medical care. MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy urged the government to stand by the families of the deceased and to take measures to ensure they receive adequate financial assistance from the company management. He was accompanied by Pochampally leaders Paka Mallesh Yadav, Kallem Raghava Reddy, Sama Mohan Reddy, Ambarish Reddy, and others.



Court duty officers told to expedite disposal of pending cases, warrants

Gaush Alam reviews court-related work; stresses effective use of technology and coordination for speedy justice.

Karimnagar August 22 (Correspondent): Karimnagar Police Commissioner Gaush Alam has directed court duty officers to accord priority to the speedy disposal of pending trial cases and execution of court warrants.

Addressing a review meeting with court duty officers of the Karimnagar Police Commissionerate here on Saturday, Mr. Gaush Alam reviewed the status of pending cases, summons and warrants, e-Petty cases, drunken driving cases and the progress of trial cases.

He instructed the officers to ensure the timely execution of summons and warrants and regularly update details of disposed cases in the respective online systems. Special attention should be paid to warrants pending execution, he said.

The Commissioner also called for expediting the disposal of e-Petty cases and proper updating of case details in the relevant online systems. Court duty officers were asked to continuously monitor cases pertaining to their jurisdictions and maintain accuracy, efficiency and punctuality in court-related duties.

Mr. Gaush Alam stressed the need to make effective use of technology in the execution of warrants. He asked the officers to utilise legally accessible information through the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), wherever required, to make warrant execution more effective.

With the next Lok Adalat scheduled shortly, the Commissioner asked officials to identify cases that could be settled through the forum in advance and take necessary steps for their disposal.

Court duty officers, investigating officers and other personnel should work in close coordination to ensure speedy justice to citizens and efficient handling of court-related matters, he said.



TRSMA Calls for 'Teachers and Schools Protection Act'



Hyderabad, August 22 (Indian Chronicle) : The Telangana Recognised Schools Managements Association (TRSMA) has expressed deep concern over the murder of private school principal Rupa Reddy and urged the government to ensure a time-bound investigation into the case and secure swift punishment for those responsible through a fast-track court. TRSMA State President Sadula Madhusudhan, General Secretary N. Ramesh Rao and Treasurer P. Raghavender Reddy demanded the introduction of a 'Teachers and Schools Protection Act' to ensure the safety and security of teachers, principals, correspondents and school staff. They also called for a dedicated security mechanism for schools and

greater involvement of parents in maintaining student discipline. The association suggested conducting programmes for students on counselling, anger management, life skills and value-based education. The TRSMA leaders said they would bring these demands to the attention of the Chief Minister, Principal Secretary of the School Education Department, Director General of Police, district collectors and district education officers. Calling for collective action, they appealed to the government, parents, students and society to work together under the slogan, 'Protect Teachers-Protect Education.'

Actor Teja Sajja and Actress Meenakshi Chaudhary Inaugurated Vaarahi Silks & Silver Jewellery Showroom at Vanasthalipuram X Roads

Hyderabad, August 22, 2026: Leading fashion and jewellery brand Vaarahi expanded its presence with the launch of Vaarahi Silks 6.0 and Vaarahi Silver Jewellery 2.0 at Vanasthalipuram Cross Roads. The new showroom was inaugurated by popular actress Meenakshi Chaudhary and actor Teja Sajja. "Under the guidance of Vaarahi Directors Manideep Yechuri and Dr. Spandana, the brand continues to expand its presence with a focus on quality, exclusive designs, tradition and a modern shopping experience. "Following its journey that began with its Jubilee Hills store, Vaarahi Silks has expanded to Kukatpally, Patny, Nellore and Vijayawada. With the opening of its sixth store at Vanasthalipuram, the brand aims to make its collections more accessible to customers in Vanasthalipuram and surrounding areas. "The new store offers an extensive range of Kanchipuram silks, Banarasi, bridal, wedding, festive, traditional and contemporary sarees. The collections focus on quality, skilled craftsmanship and exclusive designs suitable for every



occasion. "Vaarahi Silks & Silver Jewellery Launch Offers" "Flat 15% discount on the entire stock" "On purchases of ₹20,000 and above: Free 100 mg gold coin" "On purchases of ₹10,000 and above: Free 5 gm silver coin" "The showroom also features premium 92.5 purity silver jewellery, crafted with 24K gold plating. The collections include traditional, contemporary and statement designs suitable for weddings, festivals, gifting and special occasions. "Vaarahi Silver Jewellery Launch Offers" "On purchases of ₹25,000 and above: 25% discount + Free 5 gm silver coin" "On purchases of ₹1,00,000 and above: 15% discount + Free 100 mg gold coin" "These special launch offers are valid from August 22 to August 26, 2026. "Under the leadership of Manideep Yechuri and Dr. Spandana, Vaarahi said that Vaarahi Silks 6.0 and Vaarahi Silver Jewellery 2.0 bring premium sarees, exclusive silver jewellery and Vaarahi's signature designs together under one roof at



Vanasthalipuram.

Bhuvanagiri MLA Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy appeared in the Nampally special court

(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 22):- As part of the hearing of the case related to the Raj Bhavan siege program orga-



nized against the black laws of the central government in the past, Kumbham Anil Kumar Reddy, BC Finance Corporation Chairman Nuthi Srikanth Goud appeared in the Nampally special court on Saturday. They were accompanied by Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District DCC SC cell Chairman Kakunuri Mahender and Congress leaders Edumekala Mahesh Yadav.

Financial assistance to the family of the deceased:-23rd Ward Councilor Barre Pujita-Jahangir

(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 22):- Humanity is the goal.. Bhuvanagiri Municipal Town Councilor Barre Pujita - Jahangir has called for supporting families in distress. Upon learning about the death of Barre Chandramma of Ward 23, Councilor Pujita Jahangir visited her family members and provided financial assistance. On this occasion, she expressed her deep sympathy to the family members of the deceased. She said that she feels it is her responsibility to provide her best support to those who are grieving the loss of their family head. She urged everyone in the society to come forward to support the poor, marginalized and weaker sections of the society when they are in distress. " Barre Pujita-Jahangir said that humanity should be shown by helping those in need. The family members thanked her for standing by the deceased's family during this time.





—“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 22):- Bonalu was celebrated in Bhuvanagiri town on Saturday under the auspices of Mudiraj Sangam for the mothers of Peddamma, Bangaru Maisamma and Pochamma. On this occasion, Congress Party Sevadal State Executive Committee member Pittala Balaraj lifted the Mudiraj Bonam and offered it to the goddess. Mudiraj Sangam members, caste elders and others participated in this program.

Students Must Prepare Seriously for Class 10 Exams from Class 9 Onwards

—“District Additional Collector Yuvraj Marmat—“Kumrambheem, Asifabad.District Reporter. Indian Chronicle. August. 23.—“Asifabad, August 22, 2026: Students studying in Class 9 in government schools should start preparing seriously for their Class 10 annual examinations from now onwards, said District Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Yuvraj Marmat.On Saturday, he held a meeting with Class 9 students and teachers at the Zilla Parishad Boys' High School in Tiriyani Mandal headquarters. He discussed the students' academic progress, attendance, learning abilities, discipline and future goals.The Additional Collector advised students to strengthen their academic foundation from Class 9 itself and prepare well in advance for the Class 10 examinations. He encouraged them to attend school regularly and practice their lessons at home every day.He also directed schools to conduct special activities to develop



students' self-confidence, creativity, leadership qualities, communication skills and problem-solving abilities. He explained the “Vidya Plus” programme, which has been designed to promote the overall development of students by identifying their hidden talents and providing them with proper guidance and encouragement.“He urged parents to regularly monitor their children's academic progress and coordinate with teachers. Parents should avoid putting excessive pressure on students and instead identify and encourage their interests and abilities.Every student has unique talent, he said, adding that with proper identification, guidance and encouragement, students can achieve great heights in the future.Mandal Education Department officials, the school headmaster, teachers and others participated in the programme.

Everyone Must Participate in Building a Healthy Telangana

—“State Sports Department Special Secretary Jameesh Ranjan—“Kumrambheem,Asifabad.District Reporter,August,23 —“Asifabad, August 22, 2026: State Sports Department Special Secretary Jameesh Ranjan said that everyone should be encouraged to develop awareness about physical fitness and physical literacy as part of efforts to build a healthy Telangana.“On Saturday, a virtual orientation programme on the implementation of physical literacy activities at the district level was conducted through video conference from the SHAPE office in Hyderabad. District Collectors and nodal officers from across the state participated in the programme.“Speaking on the occasion, Jameesh Ranjan said that yoga, sports, walking and regular exercise should become part of everyone's daily routine to maintain a healthy lifestyle. He emphasized the need to create awareness about physical literacy among people of all age groups.He directed officials to implement physical literacy programmes at the district level in coordination with the Young India Physical Education and Sports University. He also stressed the importance of preparing



proper action plans, ensuring coordination among departments and closely monitoring the implementation of programmes.“District Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Yuvraj Marmat, District Education Officer Sachidananda Chary and District Youth and Sports Officer Ashwaq Ahmed participated in the video conference from the Integrated District Collectorate Complex in Asifabad.The Additional Collector said that physical literacy programmes would be implemented effectively in the district with proper coordination among officials. He said the district would involve the School Education Department, Olympic Association, national and international-level athletes and members of sports clubs to make the programme successful.District Panchayat Officer Bikshapathi, District Minority Welfare Officer Nadeem, District Secondary Education Officer Ramdar and others participated in the programme.

Awareness Programme on Water Conservation Held at Kakatiya High School in Manthani

—“Manthani Peddapalli District, August 22(Indian Chronicle): An awareness programme on water conservation was conducted at Kakatiya High School in Manthani town as part of the Student Lead Movement (SLM) programme.“The programme was organised under the leadership of Lead Coordinator Pavani with the message, “Save Water – Protect Future Generations.” Students took out a rally to highlight the importance of conserving water.“Students were educated on the value of water and the need to use it responsibly. They were encouraged to avoid wastage, turn off taps when not in use, immediately repair water leakages, and adopt rainwater harvesting practices.“Three-D Artist D. Sivaramakrishna, who attended the programme as the chief guest, said that every drop of water is precious and that protecting water resources is essential for a secure future. He urged students to use water responsibly at home, school and in their surroundings.“School Principal Pradeep Reddy said water is the foundation of life and that, with water resources declining day by day, everyone must make efforts to conserve water. He appreciated the SLM initiative for creating awareness among students and called upon them to spread the message of water conservation not only at school but also in their homes and local communities.“School directors, teachers and students participated in the programme.



Seven-year-old Athira Premani Indar earns a place in the Noble Book of Records for Chess 960



—“Exceptional talent in Chess and 210 puzzles—“Seven-year-old Athira Premani Indar has set a record in the Noble Book of World Records for her performance in chess. On Saturday, at the Jubilee Hills International Centre, Athira—who trained at the Ekagra Chess Academy under the aegis of Lernorama Technologies Pvt. Ltd.—achieved this feat by playing 15 simultaneous Chess960 games and solving 210 chess puzzles. Chief Adjudicator Chokkalingam Balaji and Chief Arbiter Subbarajulu witnessed her remarkable talent and inducted her achievement into the Noble Book of Records. Woman Grandmaster Boddha Pratyusha also attended the event, watched Athira play, and congratulated her.“Coaches Chaitanya and Sandeep Naidu expressed their happiness over this record-breaking success. Athira stated that her goal is to become a Grandmaster and credited her achievement to the support of her parents, Prema and Mani Indar, as well as her coach, Chaitanya.

Make AITUC State Conference a Grand Success



—“Kumrambheem, Asifabad.District, Reporter "Indian Chronicle" August. 23.—“Asifabad AITUC State's fourth conference will be held in Karimnagar from September 6 to 8, AITUC District General Secretary Boge Upender said. On Saturday, wall posters related to the conference were released at the Asifabad RTC Depot along with workers.“Speaking on the occasion, Upender said that since its formation on October 31, 1920, AITUC has fought several struggles and made sacrifices for workers' rights and secured 44 labour laws. He criticized the BJP-led Central Government for adopting anti-worker, anti-farmer and anti-people policies.

He demanded the immediate repeal of the four labour codes and continuation of the 44 labour laws.“He demanded a minimum wage of ₹26,000, equal pay for equal work, job security and an end to privatization of public sector organizations. He also demanded removal of the ceiling on ESI and gratuity benefits, merger of RTC with the government, and immediate conduct of recognition union elections. He further urged the authorities to stop the alleged harassment of RTC employees

.“AITUC National General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur, along with national and state-level leaders, will attend the conference in Karimnagar, he said. Upender called upon workers from all sectors across Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district to participate in large numbers and make the state conference a grand success.“Workers Naresh, R.P. Singh, Narayana, Shafi, Hameed, Shekhar and others participated in the programme.

Repeal GO No. 97 Immediately Don't Merge Polytechnic Education with Shakti Policy: PDSU

—“Kumrambheem, Asifabad,District, Reporter. Indian Chronicle.August, 23.—“Asifabad, The Progressive Democratic Students' Union (PDSU) has demanded the immediate repeal of GO No. 97 issued by the Telangana government to merge Polytechnic education with the Skill India Private University under the Shakti Policy.“On Saturday, the PDSU district committee organized a protest against GO No. 97 at Ambedkar Chowrasta in Asifabad district headquarters. Speaking on the occasion, PDSU District General Secretary Jagajampula Tirupati said that bringing Polytechnic education under a private university could seriously affect the future of students.“He expressed concern that the existing higher education op-



portunities available to Polytechnic students, particularly opportunities to pursue B.Tech, could be affected. He also warned that shifting Polytechnic education to a private university may increase the financial burden on students from poor and weaker sections of society.“Tirupati demanded that Polytechnic education continue under the existing system and that GO No. 97 be immediately withdrawn. He urged the state government to reconsider the decision keeping the future of students in mind. He warned that if the demands are not addressed, PDSU would intensify student movements across the state.“PDSU Mandal President and Secretary Sameer and Tarun, district leader Gauri Vasanth, Mandal Vice-President Shivashankar, Treasurer Siraj, and leaders Fariyaz Khan, Shiva Prasad, Pranay and others participated in the protest.

New Ration Cards Distributed in Ada Efforts Underway to Ensure Welfare Benefits Reach Every Eligible Family

—“Kumrambheem, Asifabad,District.Reporter."Indian Chronicle" August,23.—“Asifabad A programme for the distribution of new ration cards was held at Ration Shop No. 2401025 in the limits of Ada Gram Panchayat in Asifabad Mandal. Gram Sarpanch Komuram Bagubai attended as the chief guest and distributed new ration cards to eligible beneficiaries.The beneficiaries expressed their happiness on receiving the new ration cards. Speaking on the occasion, Sarpanch Komuram Bagubai said that the state government is giving priority to the welfare of poor and middle-class families. The issuance of new ration cards is being taken up with the objective of ensuring that eligible families receive the benefits of various government welfare schemes.She said that a ration card is not only important for accessing essential commodities but also serves as an important document for availing several government welfare schemes, subject to eligibility.She stated that elected representatives and officials are working in coordination to identify eligible families and ensure that they receive the benefits



of government programmes.The Sarpanch appealed to eligible families who do not yet have ration cards to approach the concerned officials and submit their applications. She assured that all necessary assistance would be provided to ensure that every eligible family receives a ration card.She further urged people to make proper use of the welfare schemes being implemented by the government. The new ration cards will help eligible families access subsidized food grains and other benefits provided under various government schemes.Village Secretary Kiran Kumar, VRO Chinnu, Deputy Sarpanch Parameshwar, senior Congress party leaders, former MPTC member Baburao, beneficiaries and villagers were present at the programme.

Government Whip Beerla Ayilaiah paid a courtesy call on Medical and Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha

—“(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau.. Indian Chronicle.. August 22):- Telangana State Medical, Health, Family Welfare and Science and Technology Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha was paid a courtesy call on Telangana State Government Whip and Aleru MLA Beerla Ayilaiah in Hyderabad. On this occasion, he presented the laddu prasad of Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy to Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha. Later, the two discussed various development programs to be undertaken in Aleru constituency as well as Yadadri



Bhuvanagiri district, especially issues related to the medical and health sector. Government Whip Beerla Ayilaiah brought various issues to the attention of the Minister to take necessary steps to provide better medical services to the people.“On this occasion, Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha responded positively and said that the government would give priority to issues related to public welfare.

Congress Party Must Be Strengthened at the Grassroots

Leaders and workers should work in coordination: DCC President Atram Suguna

““Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. "Indian Chronicle" August.23.““Rebbena DCC President Atram Suguna called upon Congress leaders and workers to work in coordination to further strengthen the party at the grassroots level and take party programmes extensively to the people.As part of the Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan, a general body meeting was held at the party office on Saturday for the election of the Rebbena Mandal Congress Committee. The meeting was chaired by Mandal Congress President Kishan Goud, while DCC President Atram Suguna attended as the chief guest.During the meeting, applications were received from party leaders and workers for the election of the new Mandal Congress Committee. Discussions were also held on the process of forming the new committee as per party guidelines.Speaking on the occasion, Atram Suguna said that the Congress party must be strengthened from the village level. She called for the formation of the Mandal Committee in accordance with party rules and urged leaders to expand party activities across all villages. She said the Sangathan Srijan Abhiyan would help strengthen the party’s organizational structure and enable Congress programmes to reach people



more effectively. She called upon leaders and workers to remain united and work collectively for the development and strengthening of the party.District Vice-President Pallo Prakash Rao, District Spokesperson Durgam Ravinder, District Secretary Chiranjeevi Goud, District Executive Committee Member Chenna Somashekar, Youth Congress Assembly Coordinator Elagala Sai Kumar, senior leaders, women leaders, ward members, Mandal Congress leaders and workers participated in the meeting.

Massive Solidarity Rally Held in Uppal Condemning Principal’s Murder

““UPPAL, AUGUST 22 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Condemning the murder of K. Roopa Reddy, Principal of Nagarjuna Grammar School, and demanding stringent measures to prevent such incidents in the future, the United Schools Protection Forum organised a massive solidarity rally in Uppal on Saturday.“The rally was held under the leadership of Forum State President Vijender Reddy and State General Secretary Pariveda Venkateswara Rao. Around 300 teachers, school management representatives and members of the education sector participated in the rally.“The rally began at Uppal Circle and proceeded via Little Flowers Junior College before concluding at Uppal Police Station. Participants paid floral tributes to a portrait of Roopa Reddy and expressed their deepest condolences to her family.“The organisers appealed to the government, police department, school managements, parents and students to work collectively to protect the dignity, safety and rights of teachers.“Special Measures Sought for Teachers’ Safety“Forum leaders said teachers play a crucial role as guides and mentors in building society. Apart from imparting academic knowledge, teachers help students develop discipline, moral values, social responsibility and personality.“They said teachers are facing increasing pressure due to changing social conditions, student behaviour, parental expectations, institutional responsibilities and the growing influence of social media. Ensuring a safe and respectful working environment for teachers is the collective responsibility of society, they added.“Private School Managements Seek Police Support“Representatives of private schools and teachers expressed concern over their safety and urged the police department to take special measures to protect school management representatives, principals, teachers and other staff.“They demanded strict action to ensure that such incidents do not recur. The organisers emphasised the message, “Only when teachers are respected can society progress.” They said teachers have



a profound influence on students’ lives after parents and stressed the need for society to safeguard their dignity and respect.““Protect–Educate–Empower” Slogan“Forum leaders said the United Schools Protection Forum is promoting the slogan ‘Protect–Educate–Empower’, focusing on three key objectives—protecting teachers, strengthening the education system and empowering students.“They stated that the education sector can become stronger only when teachers are provided with a secure and dignified environment in which to work.“Forum vice-presidents Siripuram Upender, Sridhar, Vaddepalli Kabir Basha, Chandana, Vasundhara and Usharani, along with state leaders P.V. Ram Narsaiah, Sooram Ramireddy, Venkatesh, Sandeep, Vemulakonda Venkanna Goud, Somashekar Goud, Raju, Anand Kumar, Kiran, Govardhan Reddy, Joshi and others participated in the programme.“Correspondents, principals, teaching and non-teaching staff from various schools also took part in the rally.

REGALLA SATISH REDDY Honoured with Guru Puraskar Award

““UPPAL, AUGUST 22 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Regalla Satish Reddy, a Guruswamy from Kapra who has been actively involved in spiritual activities and dedicated to serving Ayyappa Swamy devotees and fellow Guruswamys, has been conferred the prestigious 2026 Guru Puraskar Award.The award was presented at the Guru Puraskar Award ceremony organised by the Mahasesta Seva Sangham under the leadership of Raju Guruswamy at Thyagaraya Gana Sabha in Chikkadpally.“Satish Reddy received the award from Raja Thirunal Suresh Varma of the Pandalam royal family of Kerala. The organisers said the awards were being presented to recognise and encourage Guruswamys who have been rendering dedicated service to Ayyappa Swamy devotees, conducting spiritual programmes and contributing to society.“As many as 108 Guruswamys from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka who have made significant contributions to devotional and social service activities were selected and honoured with the Guru Puraskar Awards this year. The organisers appreciated their efforts in guiding Ayyappa Swamy devotees and promoting spiritual activities in various regions.“Speaking after receiving the award, Regalla Satish Reddy said he was extremely happy and proud to receive the Guru Puraskar from a member of the Pandalam royal family. He said the recognition of his services to Ayyappa Swamy had increased his responsibility and added that he would continue to work for the welfare of devotees and society in the future.“A large number of Ayyappa Swamy devotees and Guruswamys from Telangana and other states attended the programme. The ceremony was conducted in a grand and devotional atmosphere. Several devotees and Guruswamys later congratulated award recipient Regalla Satish Reddy.“Karun Teja Reddy, Rakesh Reddy, Rajesh, Abhinav Reddy and several other Ayyappa Swamy devotees and Guruswamys were present at the programme.



Calling Questioners ‘Dimak Naxalites’ Is Undemocratic

BJP-led Central Government Must Withdraw the Remarks: DYFI State President Kota Ramesh

““Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, District. Reporter. (Indian Chronicle):August.23.““Kumrambheem, Asifabad Calling those who question government policies “Dimak Naxalites” is undemocratic, said DYFI State President Kota Ramesh.He demanded that the BJP-led Central Government immediately withdraw such remarks.The fourth district conference of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) was held in a grand manner at Rose Garden Function Hall in the district headquarters of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad. Speaking on the occasion, Kota Ramesh said that in a democracy, the right of citizens to question government policies must be respected. He urged the government not to suppress dissenting voices and to uphold democratic values.“He demanded the immediate filling of backlog vacancies and other vacant posts in both Central and State government departments. He criticized the Central Government for failing to fulfill its promise of providing two crore jobs every year and called for the immediate filling of vacant posts in Central government departments.“Ramesh demanded that the State Government immediately issue notifications and undertake recruitment for two lakh jobs. He also

called for filling vacancies in the Police Department and conducting recruitment for DSC, JL, DL and Group-1, 2, 3 and 4 posts, along with vacancies in all other government departments.He demanded a monthly unemployment allowance of ₹5,000 until employment and livelihood opportunities are provided to unemployed youth. He also urged the government to withdraw GO orders that lead to disputes and court cases and conduct recruitment in a transparent manner without legal complications.“Ramesh demanded implementation of the Job Calendar and Youth Declaration promises announced by the State Government and called for the immediate launch of the Rajiv Yuva Vikas scheme. He also demanded employment and livelihood opportunities for local youth in local industries.He called upon unemployed youth to participate in large numbers and make future DYFI-led struggles successful if the Central and State governments fail to address the problems of the youth.DYFI District President Gedam Tikanand, District Secretary Godisela Karthik, Vice-Presidents Durgam Nikhil and Purushotham, Assistant Secretary Satish, District Committee members Manjula and Savitha, and leaders of various people’s organizations participated in the programme.

Boduppal TNS President Ramola Shravan Kumar Extends Bonalu Greetings

“BODUPPAL, AUGUST 22 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Boduppal TNS President Ramola Shravan Kumar extended his heartfelt greetings to the people and devotees



of the Boduppal Circle under the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation on the occasion of the sacred Bonalu festival.“Speaking ahead of the grand celebrations scheduled for Sunday, he said that Bonalu is a symbol of Telangana’s rich culture and traditions. He wished that all the people of Boduppal be blessed with happiness, prosperity, good health and longevity, and prayed that the Goddess bless everyone with her divine grace.“He urged devotees to celebrate the festival with devotion and joy and appealed to everyone to cooperate with temple committees and the concerned authorities to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the festivities.

Invitation to Parameshwar Reddy for Bonalu Celebrations

““UPPAL, AUGUST 22 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Temple committee members, Congress leaders and representatives of colony welfare associations met Uppal constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy at his residence in Uppal on Saturday.“The visitors presented invitation cards for the Shravana month Bonalu celebrations and Palaharam Bandi processions and invited him to attend the festivities as the chief guest. Temple committee members from Kushayiguda Market, Meerpet HB Colony Division and Mallapur extended the invitations.“Later, Congress leaders from Mallapur and Nacharam met Parameshwar Reddy and urged him to take steps for the construction of underground drainage systems and CC roads in their respective colonies. Residents of Sabera Colony in Venkat Reddy Nagar Division requested allocation of funds for underground drainage works.“Members of the Uppal Sheshsai Nagar Colony Welfare Association also brought several local issues to his notice and appealed for their early resolution.“Speaking on the occasion, Parameshwar Reddy assured the residents that he would bring their problems to the attention of the concerned officials and make efforts to resolve them. He said steps would be taken to ensure that development works are taken up at the earliest.“Later, several people also met Parameshwar Reddy and invited him to their respective family functions by presenting invitation cards.“Welfare association members, Congress leaders and activists, and local residents from various colonies participated in the programme.



Lions Club Service Activities Extended to Rural Areas Appreciated: SCR Divisional Manager Santosh Kumar

““KEESARA, AUGUST 22 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): South Central Railway Divisional Manager Santosh Kumar Varma appreciated the efforts of Lions Clubs in extending their service activities beyond urban areas to villages and providing assistance to the underprivileged.“At the Sri Ramalingeswara Swamy temple in Keesara, Medchal-Malkajgiri district, special protective umbrellas were distributed to Endowments Department staff to help them work safely during the scorching heat and rains. The umbrellas were distributed by Santosh Kumar Varma under the leadership of Lions Club of Bhayanagar Green City Zone Chairperson Lion Vadloju Jyothirmaya Chari.“Speaking on the occasion, Santosh Kumar Varma appreciated the Lions Club for recognising the services and difficulties faced by sanitation workers and extending support to them. He said sanitation workers were rendering their duties without compromising their own health while working to ensure cleanliness and protect the health of devotees and the public.“Lions Club of Bhayanagar Green City District 320C Zone Chairperson and VBS Trust Chairman Lion Vadloju Jyothirmaya Chari said sanitation workers were working tirelessly to safeguard public health and deserved continued support and recognition.Keesara Sub-Inspector Srinivas, South Central Railway Malkajgiri Zone Sub-Inspector Methari Raju, Lions Club members Lion Sunil, Lion Anji Goud and Endowments Department staff were among those present.



‘If no gun was fired, how did pellets hit my son?’: Mother of teen injured in CJP protest



GNS News Agency, August 22

Sahil Lochab's mother, Jyoti, has been going from one police station to another for days, seeking an FIR over the pellet injuries her son suffered during the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest last month. On Friday, she stood outside the Parliament Street police station, a yellow dupatta covering her head, and spoke to the media. "On August 14, we went to the Connaught Place (CP) police station but we were asked to go to another police station. Then we were made to go back to the CP thana. They say that no gun was fired. If not then how did it (pellets) hit my son," Jyoti asked. Sahil, 19, now wears large dark sunglasses. He underwent surgery on his right eye, where the pellets hit him.

Mother and son were at the police station to try to get an FIR lodged. This time, they were accompanied by Rahul Gandhi, who began a dharna outside A protest that changed his life. A student at Delhi University's School of Open Learning, Sahil had earlier told The Indian Express said he joined the protest because he was frustrated after the Delhi Police recruitment examination he had appeared for in 2024 was cancelled following a paper leak. "I wanted to join the Delhi Police and had given the exams in 2024. Then the paper got leaked. That's why I joined the protest," he said. On July 20, he said the protest site had descended into chaos. "At

that time I was in Connaught Place... I folded my hands as the security forces were running towards us. And then bam. Something hit the right side of my face and I fell down," he had told last month. Rahul has still refused to leave the Parliament Street police station. He'd been out since morning, first going to Mandir Marg police station to seek an FIR against police officers who allegedly ordered the firing of pellets during the Cockroach Janta Party protest.

After his demand was not accepted, Rahul, along with Sahil and Jyoti, reached the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), New Delhi, and sat inside his office on a white sofa. A series of conversations followed as DCP Sachin Sharma tried to persuade the Congress leader to leave. Rahul then came out and sat on the steel benches where visitors usually wait. Sharma followed and continued speaking. He eventually returned inside. Rahul then addressed the media from the gates of the Parliament Street police station. "We are being told that bullets can be fired at youngsters but Delhi Police and Amit Shah won't get you justice. She (Jyoti) has been pushed around from police station to police station," he said. He then took Lochab's medico-legal case report issued by Lady Harding hospital, where he first rushed after he was hit with pellets on July 20. "History of patient being hit by pellets near Jantar Mantar Delhi at about 3 pm. Multiple puncture wounds present on right side of face, limb...", he read out. He then asked Sahil to remove his sunglasses and pointed to the pellet injuries. "He has three injuries to his eyes. He won't be able to see. He has been blinded... We just want an FIR," said Rahul. Rahul's sister and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra joined him at the sit-in. Senior party leaders Jairam Ramesh, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Kumari Selja also reached the DCP office.

The senior police officers remained behind the large iron gates of the DCP's office, which were locked. Outside, Congress workers gathered on the road, sitting in a circle, raising slogans and singing patriotic songs. More workers continued to arrive carrying Congress flags.

HIV-positive Pune man who raped minor gets 20 years' rigorous imprisonment

GNS News Agency, August 22

A Pune court on Thursday sentenced a 24-year-old HIV-positive man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping a five-year-old girl in 2019. The police said the girl later contracted the virus. The incident occurred on November 25, 2019, when the girl, who stayed in a village in Pune district, went to a shop to buy snacks. The accused, who stayed in the same village, lured her with guavas and raped her. He was 19 years old at the time.

The special court observed that the offence was serious in nature, the victim was barely six years old, and the accused committed the offence despite knowing that he was HIV-positive. Investigations revealed that the accused had attempted to sexually assault the minor in 2018, but no complaint was filed against him then. The police also learnt that the accused was aware of his HIV-positive status and had been on medication for several days.

The 2019 incident After the minor's grandmother lodged a First Information Report at the jurisdictional police station, the accused was initially booked under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) section related to sexual harassment and Pre-



vention of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act sections related to sexual assault and sexual harassment. However, after a medical examination at a government hospital, on December 7, 2019, the police invoked rape charges under the IPC and penetrative sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault charges under the Pocso Act. The police submitted the chargesheet against the accused on February 3, 2020. During the trial, the prosecution examined nine witnesses.

Bengaluru police seize Rs 9 crore unaccounted cash from Kerala car



GNS News Agency, August 22

The Bengaluru police on Tuesday intercepted a Kerala-registered Creta car allegedly carrying unaccounted cash worth Rs 9 crore. The vehicle with two occupants was intercepted at a signal on Hosur Road, shortly after it crossed

the BETL toll, at around 10.30 pm by the night-beat staff of the Electronic City police station. Creta Car The Kerala-registered Creta car that was intercepted in Bengaluru.

The occupants and the vehicle were brought to the Electronic City police station and handed over to a team of Income Tax officials led by Jagadish, Deputy Director of Income Tax (Unit – 22, Bengaluru). According to M Narayana, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Electronic City Division, a detailed inspection of the vehicle led to the seizure of Rs 9 crore in cash, which had allegedly been concealed inside. "One of the detained persons has been identified as Sachin, 42, who is associated with a jewellery business based in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu," he said. Following the seizure, Income Tax officials conducted searches at a few residences in Tamil Nadu and reportedly seized an additional Rs 1.3 crore in cash. "The Income Tax officials have taken over the case; further inquiry is being conducted by them," a senior police officer said.

Suffer': Bombay High Court showers 'analog paneer' fury on Udupi eatery

GNS News Agency, August 22 The Bombay High Court, which has often criticised the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its enforcement action against state eateries, has now turned towards a Thane restaurant for using banned analog paneer. Remarking that the Udupi Swaad restaurant from Thane needs to "suffer" for some time, the Bombay High Court refused immediate relief to the restaurant against FDA action.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Ravindra V Ghuge and Justice Gautam A Ankhad was hearing a plea by Udupi Swaad Restaurant from Wagle Estate, Thane against the food safety body's action on August 11. "You need to suffer first as you have made people suffer by eating this (analog paneer)... Poetic justice. We will take a different strict view," Acting CJ Ghuge said. The suspension followed a June report that had declared its paneer sample unsafe and sub-standard.

The petitioner argued the action was taken without issuing a mandatory improvement notice under Section 32 of the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, forcing its closure and causing revenue, livelihood, and reputation losses. However, Additional Government Pleader Vikrant Parshurami for the FDA justified the action as per the state-wide prohibition. "Have you advertised in your menu card and inform or indicate customers you are serving them analog paneer and not the actual paneer? You are making people eat something rotten by making them believe that it



is paneer and you are saying improvement notice should be given to you? Why don't you advertise on your signboard that original food is not available with us? Acting CJ Ghuge orally questioned the petitioner.

"People do not read everything and know what they are eating. You must be adding very nice spices and masala so that it tastes better and they may say it has a wonderful taste. Then they realise they are eating something rotten as instead of paneer they ate analog paneer," the judge added. After the petitioner assured that analog paneer would not be used again, Acting CJ Ghuge orally responded, "You must tell them what they are eating. How can you serve something that they (customers) have not asked for? You should be penalised and all those customers should go to the consumer forum and seek damages and costs."

‘Running from one court to another’: Why Delhi’s prosecutors are struggling



GNS News Agency, August 22 At 10.30 am on a Monday, a public prosecutor at Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court was in a rush. Hastily adjusting his black blazer, he dashed into one courtroom, only to come out minutes later. He slumped into a chair in the corridor, buried his face in his hands, stretched his tired shoulders and let out an exhausted sigh. There was little time to rest. He reached for his diary and scanned the list of cases he had to handle that day. "Every day is so stressful. There are so many cases and it's difficult to keep track," he told. He is among 292 public prosecutors in Delhi's courts, several of whom have seen their workload grow following the transfer of 138 judges through a Delhi High Court notification last month and the opening of new courts at Rouse Avenue Court.

Thirteen judges have been posted to Rouse Avenue Court to hear cases under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA). Six are Special NIA Judges who will exclusively hear terror cases. As a result, one PP now handles five courts, up from three, while another has been assigned three instead of one. They must also prepare for cases under unfamiliar special laws. A total of 29 PPs have been impacted by the transfers. Data shows that Delhi's trial courts have only about half the public prosecutors they need. As of August 2026, there were 32 sanctioned posts for public prosecutors, 210 for additional public prosecutors and 265 for assistant public prosecutors. Of these, only 16, 156 and 120 posts were filled, respectively, including 52 prosecutors working on a contractual basis. This leaves vacancies of 50%, 25% and 54%, respectively. Pending criminal cases in Delhi, meanwhile, increased from 13 lakh in mid-2025 to 15 lakh in mid-2026. About 20,000 criminal cases are listed every day in Delhi's trial courts. Most Sessions Courts have cause lists

of about 20 to 25 cases a day, meaning prosecutors posted in multiple courts are dealing with up to 50 cases a day. Public prosecutors play a key role in the judicial machinery: They represent the state in serious criminal cases, argue the chargesheet, oppose bail, examine witnesses during trials and respond to applications filed by accused persons.

Explaining his workload, one public prosecutor said, "Judges request that I finish the arguments in their courts. I tell them my difficulty and explain that I have other matters in other courts. They're shocked, but they agree to my request. Our day is just spent running from one courtroom to another." The problem is particularly acute in Sessions Courts, where cases require detailed reading of files. When hearings in different courts clash, prosecutors said they cannot argue either matter effectively and cases are adjourned. "Handling one court is fine. There are dozens of cases but we know how to tackle them... But in the new courts that we've been assigned, we don't know the details," said another PP. A different public prosecutor said sometimes, they are left with little time to prepare for important cases. "We don't even have time to read through case files sometimes. Once, I just had 20 minutes to understand a high-profile case. I had to argue for police custody," he said.

"We can't afford to skip any hearing as the judge will impose a cost on us. Lawyers for the accused persons start complaining if we're late. On some days, I'm in 8 courts if other PPs are on leave. In neither of them, am I able to argue effectively. The accused persons are benefitting... while years of our hard work goes to waste," said a PP at Rouse Avenue Court. "Cases are rising, but our numbers remain the same. How can we be expected to look at multiple courts with serious cases at once? If it goes on like this without vacancies being filled, the whole system will fail," he added. Victims, witnesses affected The prosecutors said the shortage is also affecting hearings involving victims and witnesses. "At times, I'm called by three different judges at the same time. In some instances, I've had to leave a hearing midway... This impacts the victims and prolongs the hearings," a PP told The Indian Express. Another prosecutor said preparing for cases in multiple courts is particularly difficult because of the volume and complexity. "Some PPs are dealing with 1,000 cases... It takes a long time to scrutinise the police file and anticipate the defence's arguments. We also have to prepare for examining witnesses... Arguments are happening only for formality's sake... victims are suffering," he added.

Pune on my plate: A cafe that charges you for your time, not table



Tucked in the heart of Pune's Bhosalenagar, Mauji is not your regular cafe. It is purely time-based, spacious, yet cozy, and the kind of place that makes you stop and stare the moment you walk in. The idea is refreshing. You don't pay for holding a table; you pay for actually using the space, which takes away the pressure to keep ordering. For students, freelancers, and startups, it's economical because unlimited coffee, snacks, and Wi-Fi come with the time. You can work, chill, or even bring your own food. "For someone who just wants a third space, paying for beverages can feel expensive compared to a regular cafe. But at Mauji, if you plan to stay longer, it actually saves money and gives you freedom," says manager Yash Makkad.

"Vandita Kedia, our founder, has travelled extensively and experienced these kinds of spaces herself. She wanted to bring a similar concept to India. The idea was to bring the concept of a third space to India at a time when the concept wasn't very common here. In a normal cafe, you might sit at a table for two hours and constantly feel that you should order something because you are occupying the space; here you already know that you are paying for your time. So, it is your time and your space. You can sit, work, talk, or simply relax," he adds. The outdoor seating is full of lush green plants, while the interiors are a full cross-world mood board. No single theme, no boring uniform look. Think bohemian textures, mix-matched furniture, pops of colour, and corners that all have a different personality. One corner says "let's get to work," another says "let's just chill." That is the point. Mauji was built as a third space – not home, not office, but that perfect in-between for all age groups. At Mauji,

you pay for time, not the table. No more awkward feeling of sitting too long without ordering. It runs on a subscription model. Beverages and snacks are on the house; refill as many times as you want. You pay hourly starting at Rs 215 for the first hour, or take a day pass for Rs 1,000 per person. Monthly passes start at Rs 10,000 and give you unlimited beverages, snacks, Wi-Fi, and access to the whole space. Food is charged separately. It is also one of the few BYO (Bring Your Own) cafes in Pune.

While Mauji's primary focus is to enhance the experience of the space itself, the cafe offers a wide and thoughtful menu comprising bestsellers like their creamy avocado toast, signature coffees, and mushroom sandwiches. What makes it special is that the menu is seasonal and changes every three months, so there is always something new to try. The chefs also keep it personal, customising dishes to your taste and preference. It's not just unlimited snacks with your time, but quality food made to feel like your own. Mauji Mauji was built as a third space – not home, not office, but that perfect in-between for all age groups. (Photo Credit: Special Arrangement) It is fully tech-driven and automated. Scan a QR, enter your details once, and next time just punch in your number to check in. The menu pops up on your phone. So, if you don't want to interact with anyone, you don't have to. Makkad says, "We want Mauji to be open to everyone. We also have a group of around 10 to 12 older people who meet here once every month. They usually come on the first or second Sunday.

They come in, sit together, talk, have their coffee and spend time here." Ananya Chandvaskar, a regular at Mauji, says, "I work at Curious Collective here... We are part of a monthly subscription model. In a way, we rented the space upstairs, which works as our co-working space. Instead of working from a typical corporate office, we chose Mauji because it gives us both an office-like setup and many different spots for shooting. It works really well for us." Another regular at Mauji, Riddhi Khandekar says, "If I feel like sitting in the workspace and focusing, I can do that and get into a proper work mode. If I want to relax while working, I can sit on one of the sofas. If I want a change of environment, I can simply move to another corner. That's what makes Mauji different for me. It gives me the freedom to choose how I want to work."

Maharashtra man suffered brain haemorrhage. Centre-allocated funds were available, yet he died

GNS News Agency, August 22 For 47-year-old Rajan Ganpat Sankpal, a haemorrhagic stroke and seizures quickly became a medical emergency. A CT scan showed extensive bleeding inside his brain, and doctors urgently sought 8,000 IU of anti-haemophilic Factor VIII. Sankpal, who lived with haemophilia A, died by the end of July. His case has brought into sharp focus concerns over access to life-saving clotting-factor medicines for nearly 5,500 haemophilia patients in Maharashtra. Despite the Centre's allocation, patient groups say Factor VIII shortages at government hospitals have persisted. Haemophilia is a genetic bleeding disorder in which the blood does not clot properly, making timely access to clotting-factor medicines essential to prevent prolonged bleeding and serious complications. "This year Maharashtra received Rs 55 crore under the Centre's National Health Mission (NHM), while another Rs 91 crore had been allocated by the state this year, taking the total to Rs 146 crore. Despite the funds being available, procurement remains stalled," said Jigar Kishore Kotecha, West Regional Council Chairman and Advocacy Head of the Hemophilia Federation of India, Maharashtra. Earlier, the Hemophilia Society Maharashtra flagged shortages of Factor VIII at several civil hospitals. Dr Sunil Lohade, vice-president of the Hemophilia Society of Maharashtra, said a six-year-old child had to travel nearly 400 km to Pune because Factor VIII was unavailable nearby.



"The Hemophilia Society had to mobilise the medicine," he said, citing another death case. "Patients have also been demanding extended half-life clotting factors for the past three years," he said. The government, however, said the issue was not a lack of funds. Dr Suhas Mohnalkar, Director of the State Blood Transfusion Council, said districts could use funds through the District Planning and Development Committee and the costs are covered by the government if patients register under the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Jan Arogya Yojana. "If they are not using these mechanisms, the fault lies at the district level," Mohnalkar said. He said funds released by the Centre under NHM first go to the Finance Department, after which requirements are assessed, files prepared and approvals obtained before they are sent to the Maharashtra Medical Goods Procurement Authority (MMGPA) for tendering. "

Karnataka Apartment Bill 2026: 75% rule, common areas, compensation explained



Piloting the Bill, Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said existing legislation did not clarify common area ownership in apartment complexes. "There are already disputes about that. Tomorrow, when the building has to be demolished and rebuilt, there is also no clarity about ownership of common areas," he added.The Real Estate Regulatory Authority has also failed to tackle several issues, the minister said, noting that apartment complexes have registered under different laws. "As a result, some apartment complexes have two to three groups claiming to be official representatives. So, the law is being introduced to provide relief for apartment owners. Under this law, all Resident Welfare Organisations must be formed as

per the Bill," he further said.

Other key issues addressed by the Bill include the management of common areas, how these areas should be transferred from the builder, how to resolve disputes, and appointing competent authorities to resolve those disputes.

Additionally, the Bill introduces a provision that allows for the reconstruction of old apartments when their safety is compromised. If 75 per cent of the residents opt for reconstruction, there is a provision for that. "Those who do not agree will get compensation amounting to twice the value of the property," he further said.Another Bill passed was the Karnataka Municipalities (Amendment) Act, 2026, which was a move to provide 'A' Khata to residents of unauthorised layouts in urban centres outside Bengaluru. Gowda, who piloted this Bill, said the law will ensure 'bhoo guarantee (land guarantee)' for all residents of the state."Since they have not done layouts as per law, we will declare the road as a public road irrespective of the road width. Then we can provide documents for these people. Lakhs of layout residents will benefit," he said.The Bills were passed without discussion as the Opposition BJP and JD(S) continued their protest inside the Assembly demanding the resignation of minister B Nagendra over alleged irregularities in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation.

Maharashtra man, son fall from cliff after fight over phone, mother follows

GNS News Agency, August 22

A family dispute over a mobile phone ended in tragedy in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar on Friday, with a 19-year-old allegedly jumping to his death from a hill and both his parents falling to their deaths while trying to stop him, police said.The deceased were identified as 19-year-old Kunal Chandgude, father Murlidhar Chandgude, 48, and mother Sangita. The family lived in the Zalta Phata area of the city.

According to local media reports, Kunal went to Khawadya hill in Tisgaon around 10 am following an argument with his parents over his demand for a mobile phone. His parents reached the hill soon after and tried to persuade him to return home.Police, villagers and fire brigade personnel also arrived and spent nearly three hours trying to bring him down. Fire personnel attempted to place a safety net below the hill, but Kunal kept moving along the edge of the cliff, officials said.Around 1 pm, Murlidhar moved closer to his son in an attempt to calm him and pull him away from the edge. Kunal then jumped, and his father fell while at-



tempting to save him, police said.Sangita, who witnessed her husband and son fall, also jumped from the hill moments later, officials said.All three died in the incident. Their bodies were recovered by police and sent for postmortem examination.The incident took place in the Tisgaon area under Waluj MIDC police jurisdiction. Residents said the hill has witnessed suicide attempts in the past.

‘Insect-infested flour, lack of water testing’: FDA suspends Maharashtra eatery licence



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) crackdown on eateries in Maharashtra has extended beyond Mumbai and Pune, with officials at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar stepping up inspection drives. In a major action, FDA officials suspended the licence of a prominent eatery, Chhappan Bhog Thali Restaurant and Banquet Hall, in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar on Thursday.Shrikant Karkale, Joint Commissioner, FDA (Food), Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar division, told The Indian Express that a surprise raid was conducted at the Chhappan Bhog on Thursday.He said serious discrepancies were observed, such as insect-infested jowar and bajra flour being kept in a ready-to-use condition. "During our inspection, the workers said that they would use the flour by just keeping aside the insects," Karkale added.He also pointed out that if food stock is kept for a long period,

then there is a risk of moisture absorption and mould growth, leading to increasing insect infestation.

The FDA team also found a lack of separate storage arrangements for food, packaging materials, chemicals and personal items. "The food stock in the refrigerator/freezer was also not properly stored or labelled during inspection. There is a risk of cross-contamination, chemical contamination and use of items that have crossed the expiry date," Karkale said.FDA officials also said there were no records at the restaurant of testing the water used for preparing food items.They added that considering these violations, the FSSAI licence of the eatery was suspended under the Safe Food Safe Maharashtra campaign.Meanwhile, when contacted, Shivaji Patil, President, Aurangabad District Hotels and Restaurant Owners Association, said, "We are asking hoteliers to follow rules and regulations, undertake third-party audit and ensure medical check of staff."Flour Insect-infested flour was found during the FDA raid at the Chhappan Bhog restaurant in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. (Photo Credit: Special Arrangement)

State-level FDA officials said they were stepping up inspections of establishments and facilities to identify violations, check adherence to prescribed standards and take action wherever necessary."These ongoing inspections indicate that regulatory scrutiny is being extended beyond Maharashtra's major metropolitan centres to ensure that businesses operate in accordance with the rules and regulations," an FDA official added.

Swine flu cases surge to 1,777 in Delhi: What doctors are seeing

Swine flu cases continue to climb in Delhi, with 1,777 confirmed cases logged till August 20, shows data from the Delhi Health Department. Several hospitals in the city have reported a surge in cases over the past two weeks, with doctors seeing patients across age groups.While most have responded well to treatment, some have developed pneumonia and, in severe cases, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), said a source at Apollo Hospital in Jasola. "But equally, a large number of patients have responded well to treatment and recovered without needing intensive care," the hospital source said.

According to Dr Rakesh Gupta, internal medicine specialist at Apollo Hospital, swine flu has become rampant and is suspected in almost every patient walking into his OPD this season."Everyone coming to my cabin is suspected to have swine flu," he said. "Out of 20 patients I see every day, 15 test positive. It's very common," he told

Among those who walked into the OPD on the hospital's second floor was a 32-year-old businessman from Gujarat on a work trip to Delhi. A heaviness had settled into his body over the past couple of days, and his cough and fever had worsened rapidly, leaving him unable to ignore it any longer.He spoke through a blue disposable mask: "I am going back to Surat tomorrow. I could have gone to a doctor there, but even getting up in the morning was becoming difficult for me."He paused as a coughing fit took hold of him. "My wife also urged me to visit a doctor. I came here directly from my hotel."Dr Gupta said people with co-morbidities are more compromised. Those with diabetes, heart disease, or weakened immunity from other conditions face a higher risk of severe illness.At Max Hospital, Saket, Dr Rommel Tickoo, internal medicine specialist, told The Indian Express that there has been a surge."We are seeing a lot of swine flu cases. The elderly people and those with

co-morbidities have complications and develop pneumonia, bronchitis. But few have needed ICU admission."How is it diagnosed and treated

Diagnosis, Dr Gupta explained, relies on a nasal or throat swab tested through RT-PCR — considered the gold standard for confirming influenza — though rapid antigen tests are also used for quicker, if less definitive, results.Treatment options remain limited to a single antiviral, Oseltamivir, which works best when started early in the course of the illness.Doctors advise vaccinationOn prevention, he pointed to the seasonal influenza vaccine, a quadrivalent shot that protects against four circulating flu strains and is recommended annually since the virus mutates and immunity wanes over time."People can get an annual shot of the vaccine — it's advisable especially for the elderly, pregnant women, and those with chronic illnesses," he said. "The immunity kicks in two to three weeks after the shot. And even if you've had the infection from a different strain before, that exposure can offer the body some cross-protection."Giving a note of reassurance, he said, "This is a season of viral infections, but there's no need to panic."Dr Tickoo's advice is: don't take antibiotics. "Within the first 48 hours, start with an antiviral. Just have paracetamol and see a doctor at the earliest, if you are developing symptoms.""Take a flu vaccine shot once a year," he added. "The best time to take it is October."

What is swine flu?

The H1N1 virus, commonly known as swine flu, is a type of influenza virus that causes a viral infection of the nose, throat and lungs.Influenza viruses are classified into four types — A, B, C and D. Among these, Influenza A is the most common type that spreads from pigs to people. Common symptoms include fever, cough, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, sweating and chills.

‘Asking from 2014’: Mamata didn’t give land for border fencing, says Amit Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is on a three-day visit to West Bengal, lashed out at former chief minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee for allegedly delaying land allotment needed for border fencing."I had been asking for 1,129 acres of land from 2014. I was tired of holding hands and feet. But she did not give the land," Shah said at a function organised by the Sahastra Seema Bal (SSB) in Siliguri.Shah then praised Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, saying, "Now, the state government's permission comes with just a phone call. The letter is sent later."

He further alleged that Banerjee did not attend any SSB function in the last 15 years. The SSB sent invitations, but she never responded, he claimed. Shah said that Banerjee

had never attended a function of central paramilitary forces such as the SSB or the Border Security Force. He emphasised that these agencies are not aligned with any political party or ideology and are neutral in safeguarding the nation.Shah laid the foundation stones of several key border-security projects and later joined SSB jawans for lunch.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the Siliguri Corridor, Shah said 560 acres of land were required to secure the Chicken's Neck—the corridor in Bengal that connects the northeastern states with the rest of India—and Adhikari had granted approval. He added that a triangular security grid would be established for the area. The entire corridor is being monitored from three bases—Chopra, Kishanganj and Dhupguri—Shah said.Shah also spoke about how the national song 'Vande Mataram' was now given its due importance. "Vande Mataram was not sung in the whole even after Independence. In the new rules, the national song has been given due status. This step was historic. As a result, the future generation will get to know Bankimchandra Chatterjee's nationalist vision in a better way," he added.Adhikari, who addressed the event after Shah, highlighted the importance of SSB. Comparing Shah with Chanakya, he said, "He is Chanakya. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Amit Shah ji has secured the border." He added that he hoped West Bengal would contribute the most to a developed India in 2047.

Congress begins alliance talks with AAP, RGP ahead of 2027 Goa Assembly elections

GNS News Agency, August 22

Panaji: The Congress has opened formal alliance talks with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Revolutionary Goans Party (RGP) to build a united front ahead of the 2027 Goa Assembly elections. Talking to reporters, state Congress president Girish Chodankar confirmed positive preliminary discussions with AAP and RGP leaders, but noted that detailed seat-sharing negotiations will begin once the Goa Forward Party lifts its temporary suspension on alliance talks.

As the principal Opposition party, the Congress has taken the initiative to bring like-minded parties together to fight the upcoming assembly polls as a united front, he said.Chodankar said that Goa AAP chief Valmiki Naik and RGP president Viresh Borkar have shown positive signs of allying with the Congress.The formal talks of alliance will begin shortly, during which other details, including seat-sharing, could be discussed, he said.

He asserted that the Congress is also willing to go ahead with a tie-up with the Goa Forward Party, which has temporarily suspended talks."We are waiting for the GFP

to lift the suspension of talks, so that we can begin the discussion," Chodankar said.Earlier this month, the GFP, which had allied with the Congress during the 2022 state polls, stalled the negotiations, claiming they want to concentrate on all 40 constituencies in the coastal state.In the 2022 Goa assembly polls, the BJP won 20 of the 40 seats, while the Congress bagged 11. GFP had won one seat back then.



Rashtrapati Bhavan withdraws communique on Change of Guard ceremony cancellation amid Tarique Rahman visit row



New Delhi: A Rashtrapati Bhavan communique on Friday announcing the cancellation of Saturday's Change of Guard ceremony to accommodate the full rehearsal of Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's ceremonial welcome was withdrawn, adding a fresh layer of confusion to the status of the high-profile visit.

The withdrawal highlighted the ongoing diplomatic friction between New Delhi and Dhaka ahead of the upcoming BRICS summit on September 12-13. Relations have been strained over Bangladesh's recent demand for the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.A fresh communique from the Rashtrapati Bhavan said "press release issued on the subject 'No Change of Guard Ceremony this

Saturday', which was issued on August 21, 2026, stands withdrawn."This communique came an hour after the President's house had announced that it was cancelling the weekly ceremony for the full rehearsal of the welcome planned for the visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister.

"The Change of Guard Ceremony at the Forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan will not take place this Saturday (August 22, 2026) due to the full rehearsal for the ceremonial welcome of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh," the withdrawn communique read.The development led to further diplomatic uncertainty surrounding Rahman's proposed visit to New Delhi for the upcoming BRICS summit following recent tensions between the two neighbours over Dhaka's demand for Hasina's extradition.On Tuesday, Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi sought to ease bilateral friction during a reception in Dhaka for Bangladeshi business leaders and a visiting Indian delegation during which he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi desired to make Rahman's trip "memorable".However, signals emerging from the diplomatic corridors of Dhaka remained cautious and during an interview with the state-run BSS news agency published on Thursday, Bangladesh Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir stated that the likelihood of Rahman's summit visit "remained slim" unless an atmosphere built on "mutual trust" and a "dignified invitation" from New Delhi were available.

IndiGo faces another technical disruption, passengers report booking issues



GNS News Agency, August 22New Delhi: IndiGo's website faced another technical disruption on Friday, leaving several passengers unable to book flights, complete web check-ins or access certain online services. Some users also reported difficulties logging into the airline's mobile application.The airline acknowledged the issue through a service advisory, stating that it was experiencing intermittent problems with its core reservation platform. IndiGo said the disruption could make it difficult for some customers to access its online services.

"We are currently experiencing intermittent issues with our core reservation platform, which may make it difficult for some customers to access our online services," the

low-cost airline said."Our teams are working on priority, along with our partner, to resolve the issue as quickly as possible," it added.During the disruption, IndiGo's website displayed a "no data available" message when users attempted to access flight booking services. Several passengers also raised complaints through the airline's official X account, citing failed bookings, problems with web check-ins and delays or failures in receiving payment confirmations.South Asians & Diaspora

The airline has not yet disclosed the specific cause of the latest disruption or identified the technology partner involved in addressing the reservation platform issue.The incident comes just two days after IndiGo reported a similar problem with its core reservation system. On Wednesday, the airline said it was facing "intermittent issues" with the platform that could affect customers' access to online services.

The recurrence of the technical problem within the same week has raised concerns among passengers who rely on IndiGo's digital platforms for booking, check-in and payment-related services.IndiGo is India's largest airline by domestic market share and accounted for around 67 per cent of the country's domestic aviation market in July. Given its dominant position, disruptions to its reservation and booking systems can affect a large number of passengers across the country.The airline's latest advisory did not provide a timeline for the complete restoration of its online services.

Question looms over Harry’s return to UK. Can he rebuild his relationship with Prince William?



London: The royal family’s long-running American soap opera is returning to Britain. The question is whether it will blossom into a happy reunion or descend into anger, division and chaos.Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, plan to return to the United Kingdom from California in a matter of weeks. They have already enrolled their children, Prince Archie, 7, and Princess Lilibet, 5, in British schools so they can start the autumn term with their classmates.

News of the surprise decision, which broke late Wednesday in stories published by the Telegraph and Sun newspapers, has sparked widespread discussion about where the couple will live, who will pay for their security and whether they will return to royal duties one day.But perhaps the most difficult issue is whether Harry can repair his once-close relationship with Prince William, the heir to the throne, which was decimated by Harry’s very public complaints of mistreatment at the hands of Buckingham Palace staff, racism in the royal family and the failings of the monarchy. There are also concerns that Harry and Meghan could try to upstage William and his wife Catherine, when they once again share the British stage.“That will be something for the palace to deal with,” Craig Prescott, an expert on the UK constitution and the monarchy at Royal Holloway University of London, told The Associated Press. “They wouldn’t want Meghan and Harry’s presence in the UK here to overshadow the work of the monarchy, and there will have to be some discussion and allowance for that.”

The couple are expected to live at a private, non-royal residence outside of London, and they won’t resume their royal duties, which they gave up when they moved to the exclusive Southern California community of Montecito six years ago, British media reported late Wednesday. While Harry and Meghan’s decision is a surprise to many, royal historian Ed Owens said recent events created a pathway for the couple’s return.First, Harry spoke of his desire for reconciliation, then there was the apparently successful meeting between the king, his younger son and daughter-in-law and their children last month at Charles’ Highgrove estate in western England. In addition, there is Harry’s stated desire for his children to grow up British and that the UK looks like a safer place to be right now, given the divisions in American society, said Owens, author of “After Elizabeth: Can the Monarchy Save Itself?”Royal experts expect Charles to forgive HarryFinally, Owens said he expects

Charles to forgive Harry because, as the supreme governor of the Church of England, he has to demonstrate the teachings of Christianity, including the virtue of forgiveness.William may find forgiving his brother more difficult, but someday he too will become head of the church, Owens said.“It may be that privately William never fully forgives his younger brother for what he deems the betrayal of the family,” Owens told The AP. “But publicly,” he will, “because for traditional moralists, traditional Christian values, they demand that there is this public act of forgiveness, that there’s reconciliation between the brothers.” Charles was informed of Harry and Meghan’s plans on Sunday, and the matter wasn’t discussed during their recent visit to the UKRelations have been strained in the House of Windsor

Relations between Harry and Meghan and the rest of the royal family have been strained since the couple gave up their royal duties and moved to California in 2020 to earn their own living. The couple later signed lucrative contracts with Netflix and Spotify.The rift deepened after the couple gave a series of interviews and Harry published his explosive memoir “Spare,” in which he said they left Britain to escape the restrictions of royal life. The couple also criticised palace officials for being insensitive to Meghan’s mental health and alleged at least one member of the royal family had expressed racist views when she was pregnant with their first child. Meghan describes herself as biracial.Oprah Winfrey asked Harry to summarise his reasons for leaving Britain in a 2021 interview that was broadcast around the world.“Lack of support and lack of understanding,” he replied.Strains are exacerbated by long-running battles with the newspapers

Those tensions were exacerbated by Harry’s long-running legal battle with Britain’s tabloid newspapers, which he alleges illegally hacked his phones and invaded his privacy when he was younger. The courtroom drama seemed to be nearing an end after Harry and other plaintiffs lost their lawsuit against the publisher of the Daily Mail last month.That case left Harry facing a potential bill for millions of pounds after the court ruled the plaintiffs were liable for the publisher’s legal fees. Associated Newspapers has filed documents showing that its costs amounted to 34.5 million pounds (USD 47 million).

Harry has also been embroiled in a legal wrangle with the British government after a government committee refused to authorise police protection for him and his family when they are in the UK The prince says they need armed police protection because they are at risk as members of the royal family, regardless of whether they are working royals. The couple’s security arrangements are a “private matter” for Harry and Meghan to deal with, Prime Minister Andy Burnham said when asked about the issue on Thursday.After Harry lost his court challenge of the committee’s decision in May 2025, the prince said he hoped to reconcile with his family while continuing to vent his anger at those in Britain he feels have mistreated him and his wife.“I can’t see a world in which I would be bringing my wife and children back to the UK at this point,” he told the BBC at the time. “And the things that they’re going to miss are, well, everything. You know, I love my country. I always have done, despite what some people in that country have done.” Although much of the media attention on Harry and Meghan has focused on family tensions and recriminations in recent years, Owens suggested that the story may now shift to the royals’ efforts to rebuild family harmony.“I think time is a great healer. It creates space in a social media-saturated world,” he said. “People are always looking for the next thing to talk about and, arguably, that will be reconciliation between first of all father and son, and then potentially the two brothers.”

Pakistan army chief says Balochistan militants are foreign proxies

Islamabad: Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on Friday described militants active in Balochistan as “foreign-sponsored proxies” working to destabilise the restive province.Munir made the remarks while interacting with prominent figures and political leaders from Balochistan, according to a statement issued by the army.Balochistan has been facing a long-running separatist insurgency led by groups, including the outlawed Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), which seeks independence for the mineral-rich province.Munir stressed that the present and future of Balochistan and Pakistan are “one and forever”.

Without naming any country, he alleged that militants active in the province “are foreign-sponsored proxies being employed by hostile elements to destabilise Balochistan, obstruct its development and create a wedge between the state and its people”.

Munir said the destiny of Balochistan rests only in the hands of its people. Insurgents demanding independence for Balochistan have been alleging political marginalisation and exploitation of the province’s natural resources by the central government.The BLA has in recent years stepped up attacks targeting security forces, government installations, Chinese nationals and projects linked to the China-



Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).In July, militants attacked a police check post in the Ziarat area, in which 27 policemen were killed.In May, the BLA carried out a suicide bombing attack on a shuttle train in Quetta, killing at least 47 people and injuring 98 others.In January, the group carried out coordinated attacks across several districts of the province, targeting security installations, government buildings and civilian areas, resulting in the deaths of at least 31 civilians and 17 security personnel.In March 2025, the BLA hijacked a train in Bolan, killing at least 59 people and taking hundreds more hostage.

Two vessels with 22 Indians on board hijacked by pirates in Yemen, Somalia

New Delhi: Two commercial vessels carrying a total of 22 Indian nationals have been hijacked by pirates in separate incidents off Yemen and Somalia, a senior shipping ministry official said on Friday.He said that according to the latest information, the Indian crew members are safe.

An Eritrea-flagged oil products tanker, M T Sibu 1, with 20 crew members — 16 Indians, one Syrian national, one Sudanese national, one Iraqi national and one seafarer whose nationality is yet to be confirmed — was hijacked by armed pirates in the Gulf of Aden, around 30 nautical miles off the coast of Yemen on August 20, the official told PTI.Booking Historical Guided Tours

“As reported by Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) agency – S K S Krishni Marine Services (Opc) Private Limited, six armed pirates are presently onboard the vessel and have taken control of the vessel,” he said.He said the RPSL has been advised to submit the incident report and subsequent periodic updates through the e-Navik online marine casualty reporting system for examination and record.Another Cameroon-flagged cargo ship, LUTUF, with six Indians among its 10 crew members



was hijacked by pirates off Somalia’s Puntland coast on August 17, the official said.“The vessel is reported to have been boarded by eight pirates, armed with AK-47 type weapons and operating from two skiffs.“The crew initially mustered in the citadel. However, the pirates gained access and subsequently brought them to the bridge. The vessel is currently under pirate control. No injuries have been reported thus far,” he said.

Iran vows 'devastating' response to US threat to cut off its economic lifelines



DUBAI/WASHINGTON, - Iran said on Friday that its response to any new U.S. threats would be “devastating” after Washington pledged to impose the toughest financial ?penalties in history with the aim of toppling the Iranian leadership.Washington prepared for sanctions that U.S. Treasury chief Scott Bessent said he would detail on Monday. President Donald Trump ?earlier warned of economic consequences against any country that provided “any type of lifeline to Iran.”The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.The chief of staff of Iran's Armed Forces, Major General Ali Abdollahi, said the Islamic Republic’s reaction would be broad and decisive.

"With preparedness across land, sea, air, air defence and cyberspace, Iran's armed forces will respond to the enemy's new threats with crushing, punishing and devastating responses," Abdollahi was quoted as saying by Iranian media.Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the ?country's main negotiator in mediated talks with the United States, said Washington appeared to have concluded it could not prevail in its direct military confrontation.“We must make plans to ?deal with the un-just sanctions so that we can overcome them,” he said in neighbouring Iraq, accusing the U.S. and Israel of resorting to ?what he said was economic and “cognitive” warfare.

BESSENT SAYS MEASURES SHOULD NOT DRIVE UP OIL PRICEOil prices edged lower on Friday but were on track for a second weekly rise after rising on ?Thurs-day following the new U.S. sanctions threat.“I'm not sure why oil has popped up on this,” Bessent told CNBC. “If we are doing the maximum economic pressure, then that means that likely there will ?not be a large-scale kinetic re-start,” he said, using a term referring to military force.Thousands of people have been killed in the war, which has drawn in Gulf nations and raised global fuel prices as Iran has attacked shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, which before February carried about a fifth of all traded

Trump threatens to isolate Iran. Who are its trading partners?

DUBAI, A threat by U.S. President Donald Trump to impose unprecedented economic warfare and isolation on Iran could have implications for countries that trade with it. Trump warned of economic consequences for any country that supports Iran.Here are some of Iran’s main trading partners in recent years:The Reuters Power Up newsletter by columnist Ron Bousso provides everything you need to know about the global energy industry. Sign up here.CHINA

China, the biggest buyer of Iranian oil, could face additional pressures from the U.S. over its purchases if Trump follows through on his promise.Over the past decade, China has created a ring-fenced system of refiners that process mainly Iranian oil and ?do not have much U.S. exposure.Iranian oil delivered to China has long been branded as Malaysian, and more recently Indonesian, and trades in a tight loop, is settled in Chinese currency and involves a chain of difficult-to-track ?intermediaries, say refinery sources and traders involved in the business.The U.S. Treasury in April imposed sanctions on a Chinese independent refinery for buying billions of dollars’ worth of Iranian oil and warned Chinese banks of secondary sanctions if they facilitated trade of Iranian oil.

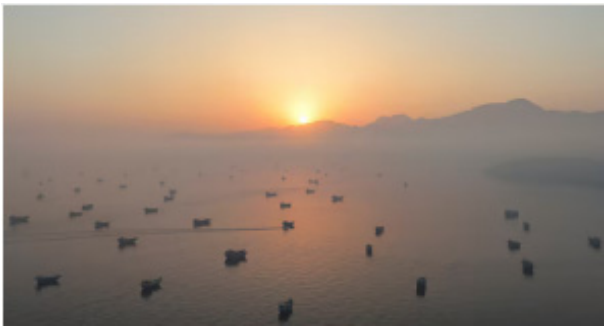
“Sanctions and pressure will not solve the problem. China calls on all parties concerned to take responsible measures to resolve the issue through political and diplomatic means.” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters in a briefing.Over 80% of Iran’s shipped oil has been destined for China, as Chinese independent refiners take advantage of discounted U.S.-sanctioned oil. Kpler estimates that China bought an ?average of 1.38 million barrels per day of Iranian oil in 2025.UNITED ARAB EMIRATESThe United Arab Emirates has historically been one of Iran’s most critical economic lifelines, and Dubai’s banks have long held substantial Iranian-linked deposits, much of them now ?immobilised under U.S. sanctions.The UAE was among Iran’s largest trade partners before the war, providing 30% of its imports worth an overall \$21 billion in 2024, according to the World Trade Organization’s latest figures. It ?also accounted for 13% of Iran’s exports in the same year, the data showed. Non-oil foreign trade between the two countries totalled \$6.6 billion in 2024, according to UAE economy ministry data, with the vast majority of trade represented by re-exports.This week, the UAE suspended ?all financial and economic transactions with Iran until further notice, citing a military escalation by Tehran with a missile threat, refocusing the spotlight on fraught ties between the countries.TURKEYTurkey and Iran maintain significant economic ties, with Turkey importing Iranian natural gas and exporting manufactured goods to ?Iran. Turkey has not signalled any willingness to curtail commerce with Iran, with bilateral trade standing at around \$5-6 billion annually, with Turkey exporting to Iran around \$3 billion. Turkey imports almost all its natural gas consumption and Iran is a notable source, providing 13% of all gas imports.

IRAQIraq’s trade with Iran reached more than \$10 billion in 2025, according to official Iraqi trade figures, with the relationship largely driven by Iranian exports of food, consumer goods and other products to the Iraqi market. Trade declined in 2026 after the Iran war started, which increased regional security risks and led to intermittent disruptions along key border ?crossings, as well as higher transport costs, said Mohammed Karim, an Iraqi trade ministry official with knowledge of trade activities with Iran. These conditions, combined with broader supply chain disruptions affecting the movement of goods, reduced the volume and reliability of cross-border commerce although ?the countries remain important trading partners, said Karim.Energy is a key part of the relationship. Iraq pays Iran around \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year for natural gas, according to Iraqi energy officials, with the gas used to generate electricity.

oil.Just seven commodity ships sailed along the Strait of Hormuz on Thursday, half the previous day’s tally, data from shiptracker Kpler ?showed, compared with more than 130 a day before the war.The U.S. and Iran have twice announced ceasefire deals, in April and June, aiming to restore the free flow of ships through ?Hormuz on a path towards ending the nearly six-month-old conflict, but both quickly crumbled.Bessent told CNBC he would “talk about exactly what we’re going to do” on Iran at a press conference on Monday.“We are going to ?collapse this ?regime. It is time for our allies and the rest of the world to make a decision,” he said, describing a naval blockade reimposed on Iran in July and the “toughest sanctions in history” as a “one-two punch”.Iran has weathered near-continuous economic sanctions for nearly 50 years, since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, but its people are suffering high inflation, a weakening currency and energy shortages along with damaged infrastructure.

Some Iranians interviewed by Reuters have said more economic punishment could increase hardship, weaken the clerical establishment and prompt unrest, although there has been no sign of that since a deadly crackdown on ?protests in January.Before Bessent spoke, Iran’s foreign ministry ?said U.S. sanctions would not “create even the ?slightest hesitation in Iranians’ determination to safeguard Iran’s independence, dignity and national sovereignty.”Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, a relative moderate who has expressed concern about the economy, said Iran’s response to attack would be “crushing” but that the war should end now that the U.S. is isolated internationally, reiterating an earlier ?stance.

LATEST US BLOCKADE STARTS REDUCING OIL FLOWS TO CHINATrump is under pressure to end the war, with high fuel prices dragging down his ?approval ratings and potentially ?threatening his Republican Party’s control of Congress in midterm elections in November.Bessent said China got half its energy from the Gulf so it would make sense for them to “get with the program”.China buys more than 80% of Iran’s shipped oil, according to 2025 data from analytics firm Kpler, but further U.S. economic warfare with Beijing, which has eased earlier restrictions on exports of its vital rare-earth minerals, risks retaliation.Offer of Iranian ?crude to Chinese ?buyers have already declined since the U.S. reimposed its blockade on Iranian ports in mid-July, trade sources told Reuters.China’s embassy ?in Washington said “sanctions and pressure do not help resolve the problem”, calling for diplomatic means.Tightening sanctions entails other risks, especially to U.S. allies in the Gulf, some of whose energy facilities and the desalination plants they depend on for drinking water ?have come under Iranian attack.



Two Iraqi energy officials said any new U.S. sanctions on ?Iraq could create ?significant challenges for Baghdad in maintaining payments for Iranian energy while avoiding exposure to U.S. sanctions, particularly given existing restrictions that have forced Iraq to use restricted accounts to settle payments.

OMANoman has long maintained cordial ties with Iran, dating back to before the 1979 Islamic revolution, with Muscat often acting as a mediator between Iran and other countries, including the U.S.The countries’ trade relationship has grown in recent years, with trade of goods totalling \$1.5 billion in 2025 and \$345 million in the first four months of this year, according to data from Oman’s National Centre for Statistics & Information.PAKISTANFor Pakistan, any U.S. action against countries involved in trade or assistance to Iran could be a serious setback, analysts said, amid Pakistan-Iran commitments to expand bilateral trade to \$10 billion.Following past sanctions on Iran, formal trade between the two countries had come ?to a halt until recently. However, informal trade has taken exports ?and imports from both sides to approximately \$4 billion, according ?to unofficial statistics. After the Islamabad interim agreement was signed in June, efforts were quickly made to expand trade cooperation. Pakistan and Iran have for years traded oil, wheat, rice, live stocks and medicines through informal channels.INDIAIndia’s trade with Iran dropped sharply in 2020, when Washington pressed on with sanctions on Tehran. Two-way trade was cut by more than two-thirds to nearly \$4.8 billion in the fiscal year 2019-20, from \$17 ?billion in the previous year. Over the years, trade between India and Iran has fallen further, and stood at \$1.63 billion in the fiscal year 2025/26, according to data from India’s commerce ministry.Indian ?exports worth \$1.3 billion make for the ?bulk of this trade as New Delhi predominantly ships cereals, tea, coffee and spices to Iran.Officials in New Delhi have previously maintained that such exports continue on humanitarian grounds and should remain outside the scope of any sanctions.ARMENTIAIran accounted for \$768 million, or 3.6% of neighbouring Armenia’s total trade turnover in 2025, according to official Armenian statistics. Armenia’s trade turnover with Iran reached \$371.4 million in the first half of 2026, marking an 8.4% increase. Exports were recorded at \$42.8 million, a 6% decrease, while imports amounted to \$336.9 million, a 12% increase.Some 20% of Armenia’s foreign trade passes through ?Iran. Armenia and Iran ?have a “gas for electricity” swap agreement, where Armenia uses gas supplied by Iran to make electricity, which is then sent back to Iran as well as ?being used domestically in Armenia.AZERBAIJANTrade turnover between Azerbaijan and Iran rose 4.5% in January-June 2026 compared with January-June 2025, to \$312.6 million from \$299.1 million, according to Azerbaijan’s State Customs Committee. Azerbaijan’s imports from Iran increased 1.5% to \$297 million from \$292.7 million in the same period of 2025.Azerbaijan’s exports to Iran rose 2.4-fold to \$15.6 million from \$6.4 million in ?January-June 2025.Iran accounted for 3.56% of Azerbaijan’s total imports, up from 2.54% in January-June 2025.

Where is ISRO heading?



EMS News Agency, July 8

Only three decades ago, the Indian space programme was a diminutive affair, dominated by the newfound successes of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and a then-fledgling clump of communications satellites. Today, the programme is a large tree with a flourishing canopy. There is a slew of ongoing projects accompanied by projects being ideated, developed, tested as well as retired.The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) — employer of several thousand engineers, scientists, and administrators — is now accompanied by IN-SPACe, a new nodal agency to oversee and enable private space enterprises' activities, and NewSpace India, Ltd., to manage commercial launch commissions and commercialise Indian space technologies. ISRO's spaceport in Andhra Pradesh has expanded to two launch pads while a second port is under construction in Tamil Nadu. Its PSLV rocket is likewise joined by five others — three operational and two in the works — with bespoke features to meet specific civil and national needs while serving commercial markets when opportunities arise.

ISRO operates more than 50 satellites in earth orbit and has launched more than 400 in commercial missions paid for by foreign governments and companies. It has also hoisted four missions to the moon, one to Mars, two space telescopes, and a solar physics probe. Missions in the near future include a synthetic aperture radar satellite co-built with NASA, more interplanetary missions, an orbital space station, and of course human spaceflight.Its experts are designing next-generation engines (especially the SCE-200), green(er) fuels, and high-performance materials. The organisation is currently transferring SSLV and PSLV manufacturing to industry while government reforms from 2019 invited private enterprises to build and operate virtually any technology.

Against the backdrop of India's history, a national space programme of this magnitude is by all means very successful. 'Success' here refers to the programme's ability to plan and execute longer-term projects with crore-rupee budgets, coordinate activities across multiple centres, manage procurement, logistics, and accounts with industry contractors, and balance political ambitions and public expectations. Unfortunately, neither ISRO nor the programme has the luxury of having their efforts vis-à-vis spaceflight, space exploration, and commercialisation judged only by the yardstick of how far India alone has come.

The fact is the Indian space programme can take great strides and still remain uncompetitive with the other countries belonging to the same elite club to which it has repeatedly claimed to belong. While the U.S. and Russia (including the erstwhile USSR) had a head start of many decades, China, Japan, and Europe for a long time enjoyed more funding, technological sophistication or both.

But it's also possible to flip this tension the other way. The dramatic rise of commercial opportunities in space technologies and spaceflight — led by the successes of and radical innovation by companies like SpaceX and aided by the struggles of regulatory agencies to catch up — has placed the carts of profit and/or primacy before the horse of national needs.For example, India is committed to an increasingly complex series of scientific missions to the moon, to be complemented in due course by the Bharatiya Antariksh Station and crewed moon missions. The cumulative cost will be in the tens of thousands of crore rupees and lakhs of work-hours — yet neither ISRO nor the Department of Space have explicitly articulated what the ultimate purpose is here. Simply put, what's in it for Indians?

In 2019-2020, the Department of Space reorganised the space programme to allow ISRO to focus on research. It hived off the responsibility of organising and executing commercial launches to NewSpace India, Ltd. (a public-sector undertaking), in 2019 and that of overseeing the activities of the country's young and ambitious space startups to IN-SPACe (an autonomous body) in 2020. This division of labour was intended to improve each arm's ability to better define its goals and work towards them in an era in which space technologies are both diversifying and becoming more sophisticated.

At the same time, the division is still open-ended to the extent that there isn't a policy or law that specifies what long-term goals they are collectively working towards and why. This is in and of itself not a bad thing if the space programme is also finding its footing, but it can't afford to take its time. Some important inefficiencies linger in the reorganisation that could lead to the uneconomical use of valuable resources. For example, IN-SPACe is both promoter and regulator of private space enterprises; there is no independent tribunal to settle disputes between private companies and IN-SPACe; and there is no space law attuned to the needs of this new, wider ecosystem of participants.Nonetheless, the more vehement supporters of India's plans have advanced three typical arguments: (i) partaking of the comity of nations, (ii) not losing out on future opportunities, and (iii) the value of spin-off technologies. Speculative though the value of all three are, they can't be dismissed out of hand. Argument (i) in particular is quite valuable: countries working together on space missions can reduce the per-country costs as well as open new channels for soft diplomacy. The value of (ii) and (iii) is more obvious: to keep opportunity costs in future from surging while amortising them in the interim by taking advantage of the new technologies that become available in the course of achieving those overarching goals.But a direct counterargument here is that the cost of attaining these new technologies can be much lower if we pursued them in a more direct manner rather than anticipating them as spin-offs. More broadly, if there is one correct answer to how ISRO and India should orient themselves — joining the pursuit of greater goals versus being led by Indians' needs — it has yet to present itself. The leaders of the Indian space programme also haven't explicitly articulated what their long-term priorities are nor how they are to be determined.

The launch vehiclesAs things stand today, at least a significant part of the answer lies with India's launch vehicles. The reason is simple: both national and commercial missions are affected by their capabilities and availability.

ISRO can currently access four launch vehicles: the PSLV, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark 2 (GSLV Mk-2), the Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM-3), and the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV). It has also just started work on the Next-Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV) and is conducting what appear to be mid-stage tests of the Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV). It is also making good progress on a human-rated version of the LVM-3,

called HLV-M-3, for its Gaganyaan human spaceflight missions.In addition, the Department of Space pays launch service providers abroad to buy payload capacity on their rockets when India's own don't fit the bill.

For many years, ISRO followed a supply-driven model of launch services: it would build and launch satellites onboard rockets, then promote the availability of these services in order to induce demand. But as it acquired newer, better rockets as well as access to more launch options, and together with reforms in the space sector, ISRO switched to a demand-driven model: until a customer — within India or international — requested a particular service, ISRO wouldn't build the corresponding satellite and/or launch vehicle.The problem now is that people and/or industries have to want a service before it can exist, and they may not think to want it unless the want is acute or, more likely, they may not even be aware of the possibility that a satellite-based service could fulfill their requirements. Because the provision of these launch services is an important revenue source for ISRO as well as the industry member that will operate the satellite, the question is who will be responsible for seeding demand: ISRO or industry. The answer isn't yet self-evident.

This said, India's budding space startups could help bridge this gap to a meaningful degree. Soon after the Government of India opened the door to private sector participation, it has also been trying to give the first people through the door a push, or at least is giving an impression to that effect. The government has sweetened startups' involvement by opening up and/or expanding foreign direct investment (FDI) in rockets and launch facilities and in satellite manufacturing, operations, and data products; floating an interest-free loan pool of Rs 1 lakh crore for all tech startups; an investment pool of Rs 1,000 crore for space tech startups; a 24% hike in the allocation for IN-SPACe; and proposed removing the angel tax — all in 2024 alone.

When she announced the 2024-2025 (post-poll) budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also said the government hopes the national space economy will expand fivefold in the next 10 years. While the size of the venture capital fund read together with this comment elicited mixed reactions from startup operators, the government's aim is clear: for private enterprises to take advantage of opportunities in the global space economy — and make use of the available launch options.Many startups are doing good work. Some notable ones include Bellatrix Aerospace (small-satellite manufacturing and in-space mobility), Digantara (space surveillance and satellite traffic management), GalaxEye Space (multi-sensor earth observation), PierSight (persistent maritime monitoring with synthetic aperture radar satellites), Pixxel (hyperspectral imaging), SatSure (infrastructure and agriculture intelligence based on satellite data), and Skyroot Aerospace (launch vehicle design and construction). I haven't included many others here strictly due to space constraints.There's a chicken-and-egg problem here as well, however. The growth stories of North American and European startups teach us that for them to really break into a traditionally state-held bastion, the government needs to be an anchor customer in their early days: i.e. provide repeating and high-value business. Thus far, the Indian government has failed to do this, instead choosing to provide financial incentives and investment capital. Startup leaders sincerely hope it will resolve this lacuna soon.The Gaganyaan supremacy

This said, the availability of four launchers with two more in the works doesn't mean demand is the only problem. There is a significant confounding factor that influences which launcher is picked for which mission, and which becomes clearer when the options are considered one at a time. The SSLV has been designed such that a new rocket can be built and launched in one week, with a payload capacity of 500 km to low-earth orbit (100 km and above from the surface) and 300 kg to a sun-synchronous orbit. In transferring the manufacturing specs to industry, ISRO's plan seems to be for companies to sign on launch contracts by satellite providers in such volumes as to keep the SSLV launch manifest busy, and free up the PSLVs and GSLVs for higher-value missions. But it's not clear whether there is enough demand for small-satellite launches to sustain the SSLV programme.

The GSLV Mk-II is unavailable for commercial launches. In the early days of ISRO's cryogenic engine programme, it received a few units from the Soviet Union based on which it developed its own variant. ISRO called the three-stage medium-lift rockets that flew with the Soviet KVD-1 cryogenic engines the GSLV Mk-I and those with the Indian variant, called CE 7.5, became the GSLV Mk-II. The GSLV Mk-III is powered by ISRO's even-better CE 20 engine and a more powerful booster stage. The vehicle was later rechristened the LVM-3 for its distinct design. The RLV and the LVM-3 need to be understood together. A preamble: ISRO has had a tough time manufacturing launch vehicles for successive missions fast enough. This is why, for example, it had to postpone the launch of the Chandrayaan-3 mission in 2022 to secure a commercial launch contract from the London-based satellite internet services provider OneWeb. The company had originally been scheduled to launch its satellites onboard a Russian Soyuz rocket, but then Russia invaded Ukraine, the UK imposed sanctions on the Asian country, and OneWeb was forced to terminate its contract and look for another provider. This was ISRO, which at the time could build one LVM-3 unit only every eight months and thus had to postpone the Chandrayaan-3 mission to the next year.Even now, given the investments already made as well as the political mileage its successful execution is expected to yield for the national government, Gaganyaan's HLV-M-3 remains ISRO's primary focus (as launch vehicles go), leaving other missions to become subordinate to its deadlines. The RLV is one such casualty.The RLV's final payload capacity to low-earth orbit is unclear. Even assuming it's (a high) 20 tonnes, it probably won't be useful for commercial missions. The SpaceX Starship already offers a higher payload capacity at a lower per-kilogram price. Instead, its features indicate the RLV will be a runway-capable 'space plane' that can carry experiments into low-earth orbit, stay there for some time, and bring its payload back. Thus, it's more like Boeing's X-37B, somewhat like the Soviet Union's Buran project, and little like the NASA Space Shuttle. The RLV's launch profile also means its payload will have particular volume constraints.This said, thanks to HLV-M-3, ISRO has been making slow progress. Even now, it's not clear when the organisation plans to have the RLV ready for operational missions. And because ISRO currently doesn't have access to a homegrown launch vehicle for satellites heavier than six tonnes, it has to pay Arianespace or, as it did recently, SpaceX to get super-heavy payloads to orbit. While these foreign options are available, they are expensive, don't have leeway for the launch vehicle to be adjusted to the payload's needs, and don't allow defence technologies to be present onboard.Finally, and fortunately, there's little uncertainty about the NGLV's purpose: it will be a bulkier version of the LVM-3 capable of lifting even heavier payloads to the geostationary transfer orbit, up to around six tonnes. It will also be partially reusable and thus potentially offer a per-kilogram cost for payloads considered reasonable for commercial missions.

All you need to know about: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome



Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is a complex hormonal disorder that affects millions of women worldwide. Characterised by menstrual irregularities, metabolic disturbances, and dermatological concerns, the condition presents significant health challenges.However, timely intervention, lifestyle modifications, and medical support enable women to manage PCOS effectively and lead fulfilling lives. Understanding symptomsThe symptoms of PCOS vary among individuals, making early diagnosis essential. The most common manifestations include menstrual irregularities, such as unpredictable, heavy, or absent periods. Metabolic disturbances, often linked to insulin resistance, contribute to unexplained weight gain and difficulty in managing weight. Dermatological concerns, including excessive facial hair, persistent acne, and hair thinning, are also commonly reported. Symptoms usually emerge during adolescence or early adulthood, and diagnosis is typically confirmed when at least two of three criteria are met: irregular menstrual cycles, elevated androgen levels detected through blood tests or physical symptoms, or the presence of ovarian cysts

How pragmatism is inadequate to understand Ambedkar's scholarship

After several decades, the scholarship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is getting global attention. In the last four years, four biographies by different scholars and four scholarly books, excluding a set of five volumes on Dr. Ambedkar's life and philosophy, have been written.Still, scholars from different disciplines or through interdisciplinary approaches are reluctant to teach or research Ambedkar's thoughts.In this context, it is interesting to see the scholarship of Scott R. Stroud explore the intellectual relationship between John Dewey and B. R. Ambedkar. His last book, The Evolution of Pragmatism in India: Ambedkar, Dewey and the Rhetoric of Reconstruction, demonstrated the scholarship of Ambedkar and Dewey within pragmatist thought. Initially, Stroud, as a Deweyan scholar, explored the Deweyan influence on Ambedkar's political philosophy to develop the theory of Ambedkar's navayana pragmatism.

His latest article which appeared in the Economic and Political Weekly titled "B. R Ambedkar and the Evolution of Pragmatism in India", responded to some of his critiques, and defended his Deweyan argument. This essay critically engages with Stroud's article in EPW.

Cannot be reduced to pragmatismStroud's scholarship attempts to interpret Ambedkar's political philosophy in the global pragmatist tradition. Pragmatism is a progressive philosophy; and therefore, thinkers like Ambedkar become important figures in the global pluralist pragmatist philosophical tradition, Stroud argues. However, the range of scholarship on Ambedkar over the years demonstrates that he goes beyond pragmatism — the pragmatist-Deweyan interpretation articulates only one aspect of Ambedkar's thought. Stroud provides only a Deweyan reading of Ambedkar. Making a Deweyan interpretation of Ambedkar's multifaceted activities and intellectual engagement only gives us a partial understanding of him and reduces Ambedkar's versatile radical philosophy.In his recent book, Ambedkar's Political Philosophy: A Grammar of Public Life from the Social Margin, Valerian Rodrigues explicates the wide-ranging nature of Ambedkar's scholarship of political philosophy. Rodrigues argues that John Dewey is only one of his teachers. Therefore, merely interpreting Ambedkar's thought through Dewey and pragmatism will give only one philosophical underpinning.

For example, one of the claims Stroud developed is that Ambedkar passionately learned from Dewey's teachings, which remained with Ambedkar for a long time, whether it was the French Revolution or a lecture on psychology. Further, Stroud created a speculative story through a book written by Nima Adlerblum, assuming it was Ambedkar who would attend each lecture of Dewey and reproduce Dewey's words and language. Further, Stroud focuses on Ambedkar's western education, in which Dewey's influence was central.By doing so, Stroud wishes to portray Dewey as a permanent thinker who shapes Ambedkar's philosophy. This however seems to omit the fact that Ambedkar was a versatile reader who explored different philosophies and utilised social experiences and scholarship in his activism.Stroud rather forcefully argues that most of the concepts and terminologies Ambedkar used in his activism and intellectual formulation accorded with Dewey. But this obsession with Dewey's impact and pragmatism on Ambedkar creates a limited kind of scholarship.Stroud defines pragmatism as "flexible, adaptive and diverse". Arguably, Ambedkar did adopt a kind of pragmatic approach engaging with the modern state in articulating democracy. Unfortunately, Stroud is not interested to interpret this through Dewey's The Public and Its Problem — probably because he could not connect the arguments in the book with Ambedkar's experience; the way he engages with the state with a pragmatic approach such as negotiating with

Samsung unveils One UI 8 Beta, bringing personalized AI and enhanced productivity to Galaxy devices

Hyderabad: Samsung has officially announced the beta rollout of One UI 8, its latest software update built on Android 16. Redefining the Galaxy user experience, One UI 8 introduces an advanced multimodal AI agent, productivity improvements, and deeper personalization. Early-bird access is granted for Galaxy S25, S25+, and S25 Ultra users in Germany, Korea, the UK, and the US.Close-quartered collaborative efforts with Google saw the integration of real-time design feedback into One UI 8 as the UI launches alongside Android 16 for the very first time. It opens AI-powered multimodal capability, contextual UX, and suggestions for foldables.Highlights include Now Bar and Now Brief that deliver curated insights to assist with task management. Privacy, from the Sa release of Knox Vault, is treated as paramount, giving the user complete control over processing both on-device and in the cloud AI.

identified via ultrasound. In certain cases, additional effects such as infertility or dark patches on the skin, known as acanthosis nigricans, indicate metabolic concerns that warrant medical attention.

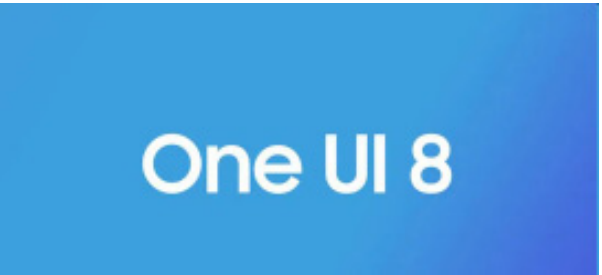
Addressing PCOS at an early stage can significantly improve long-term health outcomes. Managing insulin resistance through dietary modifications and physical activity is crucial in reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes. Cardiovascular health also benefits from a nutrient-rich diet and regular exercise, which aid in managing hypertension and cholesterol levels. For those seeking to conceive, lifestyle modifications alone often improve fertility, though medical assistance may be required in some instances. While lifestyle adjustments remain the foundation of PCOS management, medical interventions offer additional support. A modest weight reduction, even as little as five to 10 % of body weight, has been shown to restore ovulatory function and alleviate symptoms.Pharmacological treatments, including ovulation-inducing medications assist in stimulating egg release, while insulin-sensitising drugs help regulate blood sugar levels and restore menstrual regularity.In more complex cases, advanced therapeutic options such as ovarian drilling, a minimally invasive laparoscopic procedure, can enhance ovulation. Assisted reproductive techniques, including intrauterine insemination (IUI) and in vitro fertilisation (IVF), offer viable solutions for those facing fertility challenges. Meanwhile, emerging treatments, including targeted hormonal therapies and specialised nutritional supplements, continue to show promise in improving ovarian function and overall symptom management. With increasing awareness and advancements in treatment, individuals with PCOS can take charge of their health, make informed choices, and improve overall well-being.



Gandhi, other Indian leaders, and the later Constituent Assembly debates. Although, Stroud equates pragmatism and social democracy, it is important to see Ambedkar's original emphasis of social democracy, and not within the pragmatist tradition.

Pragmatism is important, but inadequate to annihilate caste in a Brahmanical society. Ambedkar cited Dewey in Annihilation of Caste, but it is not a pragmatic text.Stroud claims that Ambedkar learned the "psychology of habit and custom" from Dewey in thinking about the psychology of caste. But how could Stroud overlook the untouchability encountered by Ambedkar throughout his life — whether it is physical or psychological?Stroud's articulations are lofty; it also implicitly indicates that Ambedkar's originality lies in Dewey, that Ambedkar's scholarship and experience of caste count for little, and that his reading of several texts on caste seem secondary.

Stroud argues that Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism was a pragmatic approach. But Buddhism was a life-long philosophy that Ambedkar cultivated from his childhood; giving credit or echo to Dewey is a misinterpretation. For example, Ambedkar's family were part of the Kabir Panth, which teaches the importance of ethics and morality. Further, Ambedkar read the Buddha Charitra in his early age which remained his sole inspiration. Ambedkar also wrote a letter to Sharada stating, that "the only person to whom I owe all my being is Gautama Buddha."Very importantly, Rodrigues shows in his recent book, a wide-ranging scholarship on the "epistemic location of Ambedkar" that includes Kabir's legacy, Dewey's influence, Phule's presence in Ambedkar, the social and political discourse of Bombay and India, Fabian socialism, social democracy and so on. In the Columbia alumni newspaper, where Ambedkar expresses admiration for his "great professors, John Dewey, James Shotwell, Edwin Seligman, and James Hervey Robinson", Stroud only picks John Dewey for his project of pragmatism. Similarly, one should also explore Ambedkar's time in London (LSE). How can Ambedkar's western education only focus on Dewey?The Annihilation of Caste was a lifelong project for Ambedkar's emancipatory politics and philosophy. The annihilation of caste, the declaration of renouncing Hinduism and the conversion to Buddhism were revolutionary acts, not merely accorded to pragmatism. They were part of his praxis because Ambedkar could see the limitations of the modern state and constitutional democracy.He found Buddhism to be an ultimate path. His 22 vows discard the authority of Hindu gods and goddess — it is not a reformist act either, not even restructuring Hindu society. Too much reading of pragmatism into Ambedkar suggests an American project — the same American project yet to adequately address the structural and perpetual racial discrimination faced by people of colour. Ambedkar was equally aware of the limitations of pragmatism and the modern state and hence caste annihilation was his project of emancipation.



One UI 8 simplifies everyday workflows. Auracast audio streaming allows device connectivity across the range, from Galaxy Buds3 to hearing aids, by way of QR codes, and repair center visits become easy via NFC-enabled support tools. The updated reminder app organizes your trips and works, still, with voice instructions.

During Emergency, Tamil Nadu exceeded vasectomy targets under family planning programme



One of the most disturbing features of the infamous Emergency (1975-77) in India was the sterilisation drive across the country to enforce population control. In several States, there were complaints of forcible sterilisation of men, irrespective of whether they had fathered a child or not. In Tamil Nadu there were no cases of forced sterilisation. Nonetheless, the State did well in meeting its targets. The Shah Commission of Inquiry, constituted by the Morarji Desai government to probe into Emergency excesses in the country, noted that during 1975-76, Tamil Nadu exceeded the sterilisation targets fixed by the government of India, the performance being 2,70,691 vasectomy surgeries during 1975-76 against a target of 2,11,300. In the year 1976-77, 5,69,756 surgeries were performed as against the given target of five lakhs. The M. Karunanidhi government was dismissed in January 1976, seven months after Emergency was promulgated. A helicopter dropping family planning pamphlets over a slum area near the Marmalalong bridge, Saidapet in Madras, the capital of Tamil Nadu in December 1975.

“The target of five lakhs set by the Government of India for 1976-77 was raised by the State Government to six lakhs. The State’s target was distributed among the different districts and these were further broken down into targets for the blocks, municipalities etc. Field workers appointed by the State Government exclusively for family welfare work were given specific monthly targets e.g. 10 sterilisation cases to each Block Extension Educator/Family Welfare Health Inspector, 5 cases to each Health Visitor and one case to each Auxiliary Nurse Mid-wife,” the Shah Commission noted in its third and final report. The District Collector was given overall charge and control of the entire family planning programme in the district and was empowered to exercise administrative control over the field staff insofar as they related to the implementation of the family planning programme. “Some disincentives for Government servants, employees of local bodies and cooperatives were introduced vide Health and Family Planning Department’s G.O. dated September 17, 1976. Subject to exceptions specified in the order, the disincentives contemplated restriction of facilities such as free medical attendance, maternity leave with pay to women employees and maternity benefits to wives of men employees, to the first three children only,” the Commission noted. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi presiding over the meeting with the Chief Ministers of all States and the Union Territories to discuss strategies to implement the new population policy in India, at New Delhi on April 15, 1976. Dr. Karan Singh, Union Minister for Health and Family Planning (left) is also present. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi presiding over the meeting with the Chief Ministers of all States and the Union Territories to discuss strategies to implement the new population policy in India, at New Delhi on April 15, 1976. Dr. Karan Singh, Union Minister for Health and Family Planning (left) is also present. | Photo Credit: The Hindu Archives

Government servants having two children or less or who had got themselves/their spouses sterilised were assured preferential treatment in

the matter of grant of government housing loans; loans for purchase of scooter, motor car etc.; assignment of house sites and; allotment of houses by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board. The Order also envisaged that an undertaking would be obtained from the new entrants to government service that they would restrict the number of children to two except in the case of those government servants having both children of the same sex. In that event, they could have one more child. They were also expected to furnish an annual statement about the family size etc. to the Head of Office. Some of these disincentives were, however, withdrawn in April 1977 and the rest in September 1977. Role of school teachers

The Commission pointed out the services of school teachers were sought to be utilised for motivational work among the public. In September 1976, the Education Department informed the Director of School Education that every teacher must get a minimum of two cases for sterilisation during the year. “While there should be no compulsion on the part of either the motivator or the acceptor, the teacher should take active interest in this vital programme and try to exceed the target,” it said. The Population Education Cell of the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) in Madras organised an educational programme in Tamil Nadu in August 1975. The Population Education Cell of the Family Planning Association of India (FPAI) in Madras organised an educational programme in Tamil Nadu in August 1975 | Photo Credit: The Hindu Archives

According to the order, fulfilment of the targets would lead to commendation entries in the Character Rolls of the teachers concerned. Other incentives would take the shape of certificates of merit, appropriate cash awards and advance increments for outstanding contribution and State-level awards for the maximum motivational targets achieved. Punitive action

At the same time, it was brought to the notice of the State government at the Parliamentary Consultative Committee meeting held at Madurai on December 7, 1976 during the President’s Rule, that disciplinary action had been taken en masse against the teachers and staff other than Health and Family Planning staff for their failure to achieve the Family Planning targets fixed by the Commissioners of Panchayat Unions and others. There were also allegations that circulars had been issued by overzealous Panchayat Union Commissioners for suspension/dismissal of the teachers for failure to bring cases of sterilisation. “The Commissioner and the Secretary, Health and Family Planning Department, therefore, wrote to the Heads of the Departments concerned on December 8, 1976 requesting them to issue strict instructions to the Commissioners of Panchayat Unions and other executive authorities to withdraw all circulars threatening action against teachers etc. for non-fulfilment of the targets assigned to them,” the Commission noted. He also desired that persons who had been placed under suspension or had been dismissed from service on account of their failure to achieve family planning targets should immediately be restored to duty in the posts in which they were employed prior to their suspension/dismissal etc. The Shah Commission said the State government had submitted there was no organised resistance to the family planning programme during the Emergency nor was any person detained under MISA/DISIR or any other law for opposing the family planning programme. However, the State government did not furnish information on the number of cases of sterilisation of unmarried persons, persons having two or less children and persons more than 55 years of age. Nonetheless, it told the Commission that 90 cases of death after sterilisation had been reported during the period Emergency.

Reserved faculty posts are still vacant and out of reach

India’s commitment to social justice, enshrined in the Constitution, mandates equitable representation to marginalised communities in public institutions. Reservation policies for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) aim to address historical inequalities with a quota of 15%, 7.5%, 27%, and 10% of posts, respectively. Yet, central universities and premier institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences consistently fail to fill reserved faculty positions, shifting the focus to this constitutional mandate. Importantly, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led political dispensation has often promised to abide by the agenda of social justice to make India’s institutions more inclusive and democratic. In this case, what are the systemic barriers that prevent these institutions from enabling inclusive representation? A persistent gap

In data presented by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the Lok Sabha in April 2021, there were significant vacancies in reserved faculty posts across 45 central universities: 2,389 for SCs, 1,199 for STs, and 4,251 for OBCs. More recent reports suggest that while some progress has been made with a special drive for recruitment in certain universities (Jawaharlar Nehru University and University of Delhi), the gap persists. A University Grants Commission (UGC) report (2023) indicated that nearly 30% of reserved teaching posts in central universities remain unfilled, particularly at senior levels such as associate professor and professor. This shortfall is in contrast to other public sectors (railways and banks), where reserved posts at the lower levels (Group C and D) are often filled. However, senior positions of power and privileges are still out of reach for marginalised social groups. In academia too, the senior positions (vice chancellors, directors, principals and professors) have been dominated by unreserved categories, highlighting a structural disparity in higher education. Systemic barriers

Several factors contribute to the non-fulfilment of reserved faculty posts. First, central universities and institutes of national importance operate with significant autonomy, sometimes insulating them from governmental oversight. While the UGC mandates adherence to reservation policies, enforcement varies. Vice-Chancellors and selection committees, often drawn from dominant social groups, show a lack of urgency or accountability to prioritise the social justice agenda. Second, the UGC’s shift in 2018 to the “13-point roster system” for faculty recruitment has been contentious. Unlike the earlier 200-point system, which treated the entire institution as a unit for calculating reservations, the new system considers individual departments as units. In smaller departments with limited posts (for example, six faculty positions), only one post may be reserved for OBCs, and none for STs until 14 posts are created. This has significantly reduced the number of reserved positions, particularly for STs, prompting legal chal-



lenges and protests. Third, allegations of bias in the selection process persist. Qualified candidates from marginalised communities often face rejection under vague criteria such as “candidate not found suitable”. Such practices can discourage talented academics from SC, ST, and OBC backgrounds from pursuing university careers, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion. A study by the Ambedkar University Faculty Association in 2022 highlighted that over 60% of reserved post vacancies in central universities were attributed to such discretionary rejections. Finally, institutional practices sometimes undermine fairness. Reports of biased appointments influenced by political affiliations or ideological alignment raise concerns about transparency. Though successive governments, both Congress and BJP, have championed social justice, the gap between policy rhetoric and implementation remains wide. Addressing the challenge

Filling reserved faculty posts requires a multi-pronged approach. First, stricter enforcement of UGC guidelines is essential, supplementing the values of social justice. Regular audits and public reporting of reservation compliance could hold institutions accountable. Second, revisiting the 13-point roster system to ensure that it aligns with constitutional mandates is critical. Hearings by the Supreme Court of India, that are ongoing on this issue, may provide clarity. Third, universities must address biases in recruitment by enabling diversity in selection committees and standardising evaluation criteria. Training programmes to sensitise academic leaders to social justice principles could foster inclusivity. Finally, it requires proactive outreach and political enforcement. Social justice should not remain a mere political slogan. The ruling class must ensure its effective implementation in every institution. The persistent vacancy of reserved faculty posts undermines India’s vision of an inclusive education system. Universities are not merely centres of learning but also spaces for social transformation. Ensuring equitable representation in faculty positions is not just a legal obligation but also a moral imperative to reflect India’s diverse society. As the National Education Policy 2020 emphasises multidisciplinary and inclusive education, central universities must align their recruitment practices with the goals of ensuring more faculty members from the marginalised social groups.

How Gen Z is turning gaming and YouTube sharing into full-time careers



Vaibhav Murarka was once juggling code assignments and controllers. A graduate in game development from Artemisia College, Indore, he now streams daily to an audience that eagerly watches him break down levels and build strategies in real time. When asked what the hardest part of his job is, Vaibhav did not hesitate. “Creativity is the hardest part of this profession. It’s about showing up with something fresh every day for your audience,” he says. For a generation raised on YouTube walkthroughs and multiplayer games, gaming is no longer just a hobby. It’s the dream that could pay well, too. At the same time it’s challenging the very definition of what counts as a ‘career,’ a source of income, at least for some. For many out-of-the-box Generation-Z (individuals born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s) youth, it reflects a deeper shift in how careers are being re-imagined. It is a move away from traditional careers such as engineering, medicine, or civil services and toward self-expression, digital identity, skill-based and creative growth.

Mostly a trend seen among males, youngsters with their funky game handles stream themselves live on YouTube while playing online games. Trending games are Valorant, GTA and Counter-Strike 2. The gamers attract a growing audience community, with a separate female fan following too, on platforms like YouTube and Discord. During their live streams, they interact with viewers by enabling live chat, reading and responding to comments in real time. The gamers earn money by monetizing these livestreams and uploaded videos on YouTube. Many also repurpose short, engaging clips from their streams and share them on other social media platforms to boost visibility and income.

Vaibhav says that rivalries often develop among gamers, and their audiences sometimes engage in verbal spats online. Gaming as a career today is no longer limited to monetization and community-building through YouTube or Discord. It has expanded into the organized world of esports, where competitive tournaments are held online. Gamers are first scouted or auditioned, and if selected, they go on to compete in these tournaments, ultimately either winning or losing like in any professional physical sport. Reluctance to take the beaten path

The disinterest in conventional career paths is rooted in more than just boredom. Many young people today are exposed to a world of information and inspiration online, long before career counselling kicks in at school. “I started playing videos games since childhood. I came to know about YouTube game streaming later and then decided I wanted to pursue game development as a course in college,” says 23-year-old Vaibhav who is a full time game-content creator. “When you can watch tutorials on Youtube and platforms like Unacademy for certain subjects such as game development, your understanding of what’s possible changes. You learn new skills and topics” said Mustafa Palitanawala, an experienced game producer from Bengaluru who has spent over a decade in the industry. He feels that the internet and availability of information has dismantled the old idea of careers. A YouTube streamer (Jayant, name changed), who wants to stay anonymous because of his popularity, echoes this sentiment. “Our generation doesn’t just want jobs. We only work for engagement and our community.” For both Jay and Vaibhav, their early interest in gaming turned into a calling. Despite their education and degrees, they and many others of this generation are often open and fearless to explore. “My father owns a business here and I am also trying to produce two games of my own,” says Vaibhav. From hobby to career

The gaming industry in India has exploded over the course of time in terms of users, an ecosystem of creators, developers, content managers, and esports athletes. What

: Centre allows use of non-transport motorcycles for passenger journeys through aggregators

The Union government on Tuesday (July 1, 2025) for the first time allowed use of non-transport (private) motorcycles for passenger journeys through aggregators, subject to state government approval, providing long-awaited regulatory clarity for India’s shared mobility sector. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in its ‘Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2025’ said the new guidelines attempt to provide a light-touch regulatory system while attending to issues of safety and security of the user and the welfare of the driver. “The State government may allow aggregation of non-transport motorcycles for journey by passengers as shared mobility through aggregators resulting in reduced traffic congestion and vehicular pollution, along with providing inter alia affordable passenger mobility, hyperlocal delivery, creating livelihood opportunities,” “the guideline said.

According to the guideline, the State government may, in exercise of its powers under sub-section (3) of Section 67 of the Act, permit aggregation of non-transport motorcycles for journey by passengers. “The State government may, under sub-section (3) of Section 67 of the Act, impose fees on the aggregator for issuance of authorisations permitting non-transport motorcycles to undertake journeys through such aggregator, on a daily/ weekly/ fortnightly basis, as may be determined by the state government,” it added. This move brings relief to bike taxi operators like Rapido and Uber, who have long operated in a legal grey area, especially in states like Karnataka, where a recent ban on bike taxis had led to widespread protests. Major industry players, including Uber and Rapido, have welcomed the move, acknowledging its potential to drive innovation, expand affordable mobility, and create new livelihood opportunities. Uber lauded the guidelines as a “forward-looking step toward fostering innovation and regulatory clarity.” “Timely adoption by states will be key to ensuring uniform implementation and building much-needed predictability for all stakeholders. We commend the Ministry for its consultative and balanced approach, and remain committed to working closely with governments at all levels to support effective and inclusive rollout of the framework,” an Uber spokesperson said. Rapido specifically welcomed the

was once considered a hobby has matured into a business market. As of 2021, India is among the top five mobile gaming markets in the world with Indian gaming firms partnering with major players like Tencent, Krafton, and Ubisoft. For gamers like Vaibhav streaming began as fun. But today, it’s a full-time job that revolves around mindful content planning, video editing, community interaction, and trend and audience monitoring. “Most people think it’s just us playing games. My father is still against this as a profession. But it’s more like running a channel and is quite hectic,” he says. Jayant adds that livestreaming is performance. “You’re talking, reacting, building connections with the chat, playing the game all at once. Social media monetization makes me call it a job.” Beyond just playing, those with creative and technical inclinations are turning to game design, UI/UX development, sound design, animation, psychology and animation. Tools as simple as Adobe Photoshop and as complex as Unity, Unreal Engine, and Blender are now becoming as important as coding once was. Skill over degree

While some like Vaibhav have formal degrees in game development, many others like Jayant are entirely self-taught. In a fast-moving field like gaming, it is your ability to build, adapt, and create that counts. “The industry doesn’t ask for your degree. I myself don’t have one. Our portfolios are what sell,” said Mustafa.

One of the biggest shifts is how community validation has replaced traditional metrics of success. “My audience is my biggest supporter,” said Jayant. He noted that the age group of his views are from age 14 to 28. “When someone says they wait for my videos after school, it’s a kind of responsibility to be consistent.” This sense of connection, the “responsibility” has also created mental pressure to stay relevant, constantly creative, and mentally sane. Meanwhile, esports and competitive gaming tournaments played at regional, national, and even international levels for games has created an entirely new career track. Sponsorships, prize money, brand deals, and media attention are making esports a legitimate option for those with fast reflexes and team coordination.

Unstable venture

Even with all its potential, the gaming industry remains precarious. “Back in my days when I used to play games and decided a career in it, there were no couches and degrees available for the field,” noted Mustafa. Vaibhav’s experience added to the scenario as he mentioned he is still looking for a full time game development employment. For streamers, income is tied to views, platform algorithms, and sometimes brand sponsorships, which none are guaranteed stable. “You could go viral one time and be invisible the next time. There is no surety,” Jayant noted. The pressure to constantly create, entertain, and grow can take a toll on mental health. Both Vaibhav and Jayant mention burnout, loneliness, and creative fatigue as ongoing challenges. There’s also the question of acceptance. Families and society at large are still catching up to being a streamer, developer, or esports athlete. Mustafa, even after being in the industry for 11 years, is still compared with people having degrees. For 20-year-old Jayant who has taken a break after his school, it is difficult explaining to his relatives that he plays games and earns from it. Vaibhav says his mother does support his career choices but his father still wants him to pursue the family business of textile manufacturing. Entering formal education

Some educational institutions are already beginning to incorporate elements of game design, creative technology, and digital art into their curriculum. Elective modules in visual storytelling, basic coding, UX design, and even YouTube content creation are making small inroads. Most educational frameworks are still designed around theoretical exams, rigid syllabi, and rote learning though. “We need project-based learning, creative freedom, and exposure to real-world applications. Only then will students feel that their aspirations, whether in gaming, design, or anything else are valid,” Mayura Bijale, a coding instructor and computer teacher at The Orbis School, Pune, noted. Ms Mayura says the education system must reflect the evolving interests of students. “We have, at least in our school, introduced elements of coding, animation, and game-based learning at a young age,” she said. But curriculum content alone is not enough. Gamers say education must also cultivate soft skills like collaboration, critical thinking, and adaptability, all of which are crucial in creative industries like gaming and other alternate paths like content creation. Mustafa says in any creative field, there is no right answer but just better ideas, and better execution.



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operationalisation of Clause 23 of the MVAG 2025. This clause permits the aggregation of non-transport motorcycles for passenger journeys, a move Rapido described as a “milestone in India’s journey towards a Viksit Bharat.” By recognising non-transport motorcycles as a means of shared mobility, the Government has opened the door to more affordable transportation options for millions, especially in underserved and hyperlocal areas...the move will also help address pressing challenges such as traffic congestion and vehicular pollution, while expanding the reach of last-mile connectivity and hyperlocal delivery services,” Rapido said in a statement. In 2020, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued the “Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines 2020” under Section 93 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. Since 2020, India’s shared mobility ecosystem has undergone rapid and significant change. The rise in demand for diverse and flexible mobility solutions including bike-sharing, introduction of electric vehicles (EVs), and auto-rickshaw rides, has widened the consumer base. The Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines 2020 have been revised to keep the regulatory framework up to date with the developments in the motor vehicles aggregator ecosystem. The new guidelines attempt to provide a light-touch regulatory system while attending to issues of safety and security of the user and the welfare of the driver.

West Asia conflict inflates India’s net oil, gas import bill by 43% in April-July



Amid supply tightness and elevated prices due to the West Asia crisis and stifled energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz, India’s net oil and gas imports surged by 43.4% in value from year-ago levels in the first four months of the current financial year, according to provisional data from the petroleum ministry. Net oil and gas imports — arrived at deducting petroleum product exports from oil, natural gas, and petroleum product imports — in April-July stood at \$57.8 billion against \$40.3 billion a year ago. In volume terms, oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports were only marginally higher. As for petroleum product exports, the volumes declined, while export value rose. Petroleum product imports declined in volume as well as value, although the volume decline outpaced the fall in value, which is also reflective of high prices in the international market.

India depends on imports to meet over 88% of its crude oil requirement and about half of its consumption of natural gas, which is imported as LNG. Despite depending on imported oil and gas, India is a net exporter of petroleum products due to its massive refining capacity. The country also imports some petroleum products like liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Around 40% of India’s crude oil imports, 60% of its LNG imports, and 90% of its LPG imports came from West Asia through the strait. Apart from grappling with physical supply tightness due to the Strait of Hormuz crisis, the resultant surge in international prices forced India to import oil and gas at extremely high rates, as the country has been prioritising supply security over price considerations.

Oil import dependence flat through July The country’s crude oil import bill surged by over 56% on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis in April-July to \$63.4 billion, even as import volumes rose slightly to 81.9 million tonnes — or about 600 million barrels — from 81.5 million tonnes, as per data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC). This translates to an average landed price of about \$106 per barrel for imported crude in April-July, sharply higher than

about \$68 per barrel in the corresponding period of last year. The data shows that India’s dependence on imported oil for the four months ended July was 88.3%, almost flat on a y-o-y basis. As for LNG imports, while supplies rose slightly — to 11,867 million standard cubic metres (mscm) in April-July from 11,269 mscm a year ago — the import bill rose by almost a fourth to \$5.6 billion, reflecting the spurt in prices.

Petroleum product imports declined 45.1% in volume terms to 9.0 million tonnes, as supply of major petroleum products that India imports — like LPG — were impacted by the West Asia conflict. In value terms, the decline in petroleum product imports was relatively lower — down 26.3% to \$5.6 billion — due to high international prices. India’s petroleum product export volumes fell almost 18% y-o-y to 16.5 million tonnes in April-July as domestic fuel supplies were prioritised amid the global supply crunch. Nonetheless, exports surged almost 35% in value.

Supply tightness, price surge due to import dependence Energy imports are a major component of India’s overall imports, and any meaningful increase has ramifications for the country’s trade balance, current account, inflation, and the rupee’s exchange rate, among others. As India annually imports 1.8-2 billion barrels of oil, every \$1-per-barrel increase in oil prices bumps up the country’s oil import bill by up to \$2 billion on an annualised basis. As per PPAC data, crude oil imports in 2025-26 stood at over \$122 billion. If oil prices sustain at \$100 per barrel in the current financial year and import volumes don’t decline notably, the oil import bill could be upwards of \$200 billion for the year.

According to a March report by Nomura, India is among the three most vulnerable Asian economies to high oil prices in terms of import bills and current account balances. It said that every 10% oil price increase typically widens India’s current account deficit by 0.4% of the GDP. The June MoU between the US and Iran brought a sigh of relief for India and the global energy market, cooling prices and easing the pressure on supplies for a few weeks. But the renewed conflict in the Gulf following the pact’s effective collapse has emerged as a major concern as energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz crashed again. Heavy dependence on energy imports has led to a double whammy of supply tightness and price surge. While highly diversified crude sourcing has helped in ensuring adequate oil, petrol, diesel, and jet fuel availability amid the West Asia crisis, some rationing of gas supplies to certain industries and commercial consumers was done in order to ensure adequate availability for households and a few priority sectors.

Nuclear liability caps to get 5-year review under SHANTI Act draft rules

Liability caps for nuclear operators under the SHANTI Act will be reviewed every five years by an expert group, which can recommend changes to the graded limits, according to the Act’s draft rules released by the Department of Atomic Energy. Rule 78 of the draft rules, which were released on August 14, provide for the Centre to form a group of experts in specific domains — nuclear science and engineering, actuarial science, insurance and law, along with public-interest representatives — to review the “maximum limits of operator’s civil liability for nuclear damage” and propose amendments to the act’s second schedule.

The second schedule of SHANTI act introduced graded liability caps based on the size of a nuclear installation, replacing the earlier flat cap of Rs 1,500 crore under the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 (CLNDA). Under the new framework, operators of reactors above 3,600 megawatt-electric (MWe) face a maximum liability of Rs 3,000 crore, while those between 1,500 MWe and 3,600 MWe face a cap of Rs 1,500 crore. The limits fall to Rs 750 crore for reactors between 750 MWe and 1,500 MWe and Rs 300 crore for those between 150 MWe and 750 MWe. For reactors up to 150 MWe, fuel-cycle facilities other than spent-fuel reprocessing plants, and transportation of nuclear material, the liability is capped at Rs 100 crore.

Supreme Court takes up the liability cap issue The review mechanism is not entirely new. Section 6 of the now-repealed CLNDA also allowed the Centre to periodically review the operator’s liability and notify a higher amount. The draft SHANTI Act rules, however, explicitly provide for a defined time period for an expert group to undertake the review and recommend amendments to graded caps. This comes as the issue of liability cap has also reached the Supreme Court, following a petition which challenged the act for allowing “private sector and foreign companies to operate nuclear power plants in India, [and] has also capped the liability of these operators at an absurdly low level and exempted the supplier from any liability,” in violation of the Constitution. On Monday, the top court also asked the Centre to respond whether the SHANTI Act would preclude



constitutional courts from determining a “fair and just” monetary compensation in case of a nuclear mishap. Following the passage of the SHANTI Act, which opens India’s tightly regulated civil nuclear sector to private players, accountability and liability emerged as key concerns among critics. Dilution of operator’s ‘right of recourse’

One of the most contentious changes is the dilution of the operator’s “right of recourse” against nuclear equipment suppliers in the event of an accident. According to Section 17 of the CLNDA, the operator of a nuclear installation, after paying the compensation for nuclear damage, shall have the right to recourse where (a) such right is expressly provided for in a contract in writing; (b) the nuclear incident has resulted as a consequence of an act of supplier or his employee, which includes supply of equipment or material with patent or latent defects or sub-standard services; and (c) the nuclear incident has resulted from the act of commission or omission of an individual done with the intent to cause nuclear damage. The SHANTI Act retains provisions (a) and (c) but omits provision (b), which previously exposed nuclear equipment vendors to long-term and uncertain liability risk in the event of a nuclear accident. This provision was repeatedly flagged by foreign nuclear equipment vendors as a deterrent to investing in India’s nuclear sector as it exposes them to long-term and uncertain liability risk in the event of a nuclear accident.

AI data centres to add 26.3 GW load by 2031-32, says power ministry; grid stability a concern

Data centre electricity demand is forecast to grow 20-fold by 2040 from 10 TWh in 2025 and would account for 7% of the total electricity demand, it added. Data centre electricity demand is forecast to grow 20-fold by 2040 from 10 TWh in 2025 and would account for 7% of the total electricity demand, it added.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centres will put an additional load of 26.3 gigawatts (GW) by 2031-32, the Ministry of Power informed the parliament on Monday. This additional load is expected to be integrated into the grid and will primarily be served by renewable energy capacity, the ministry added. The fresh projection is almost double the government’s earlier projection in March this year when it estimated that electricity demand from data centres will reach 13.56 GW by 2031-32. The present estimate is based on projects received by different states to set up data centres as the ministry is also holding consultation with stakeholders such as state transmission utilities, distribution utilities and data centre developers, the ministry officials said. Discussions are going on regarding reliable power supply, requirement of transmission and grid balancing as power load from data centers could be very spiky and have sharp ramps. Policy-level discussions have also been underway on locating data centres away from urban centres to avoid transmission congestion, The Indian Express has learned. Notably, most data centres tend to be concentrated near IT hubs, which could lead to transmission congestion if more capacity is added to meet the data centre demand. There is also some opinion that data centres should come up near green energy sources. This could be beneficial in avoiding

transmission congestion while enabling the electricity demand from these data centres to be met through green energy sources, people aware of the discussions said. These discussions came as the country is expected to witness a sharp increase in data centre capacity in the coming years. From a mere 375 megawatt (MW) data centre capacity in 2020, India’s current capacity stood at around 1.5 GW by 2025. According to a report by Wood Mackenzie, a global energy consultancy firm, India’s operational data centre capacity will increase to 12 GW by 2030, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 40%. “AI-dedicated capacity is expected to expand nearly 24-fold over the same period, rising from 275 MW to 6,546 MW, as hyperscale cloud providers, enterprise digitalisation and artificial intelligence accelerate demand for computer infrastructure,” it said in a statement on Monday. The report claimed that India’s expanding digital economy is underpinning unprecedented demand for data centre capacity. “Valued at INR 32 trillion in 2025 and contributing approximately 12% of GDP, the country’s digital ecosystem serves more than 1.03 billion active internet users and processes around 22 billion UPI transactions each month. Meanwhile, India’s domestic AI market is projected to reach INR 11.7 trillion by 2032, further increasing demand for high-performance computing infrastructure,” it said. Data centre electricity demand is forecast to grow 20-fold by 2040 from 10 TWh in 2025 and would account for 7% of the total electricity demand, it added. While AI runs on algorithms, it also requires electricity in large volumes. As a result, sector experts had expressed concerns over grid risks associated with these huge data centre loads.

RWAs a barrier, Government may let high-income households compile own spending data



Two years ago, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) and some Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) had squared off: the latter felt the government’s surveys asked difficult questions and sought private details, while the ministry was worried by the rising unresponsiveness from high-income households living in gated societies. Now, the ministry is considering letting these families compile their own data. With the next edition of the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) expected to begin in mid-2027 and continue for about a year, the ministry is looking at the adoption of “diary-based data collection” for high-income households living in gated societies, instead of a door-to-door survey by field officials.

In this method, households note down the information themselves, as and when the relevant activity occurs. In the case of the HCES, this would mean jotting down how much is spent in a month on different goods and services, ranging from food items to haircuts. The most recent HCES, conducted from August 2023 to July 2024, saw 2.6 lakh households being surveyed from across the country, barring a few inaccessible villages in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The survey sought responses for a total of 405 goods and services. While it is called “diary-based data collection”, households may not have to actually note down their expenses in a physical diary. The ministry, which now uses tablets to record responses to its surveys, may employ a system where such households can enter their consumption expenditure details on an online portal, sources said.

“This is at a planning stage, but the thought is to use the diary method only for richer households who live in gated societies on a pilot basis before the 2027-28 consumption expenditure survey begins,” said an official aware of the deliberations. “It is an open secret that participation of richer households living in societies and RWAs in our surveys is reducing. The diary method is used in other countries, so maybe we can give it a try too,” the official said. The overall urban non-response rate during the 2022-23 HCES jumped to 9.8%, from 2.8% in the 75th round of the National Sample Survey, conducted from July 2017 to June 2018. In rural areas, the non-response rate increased to 4.1% from 1.5% during the same period. For the most affluent urban and rural respondents, the non-response rate was 11% and 3.9%, respectively. In the 2011-12 survey, the corresponding figures were 3.3% and 1.3%.

‘Recall error’ problem While a diary-based system is “always better”, the problem for MoSPI will be how two data sets compiled through different methods will be “stitched together”, said Pronab Sen, India’s first chief statistician. Data collected through surveys suffer from what is called a “recall error” — people can make errors in remembering their expenditure details. The diary method minimises this problem as households can write down the information as and when they make the purchase. With lower literacy rates in the low-income group, only higher-income households may be able to correctly follow the diary method. This segregation of methods creates a problem:

Meesho expects over 10 lakh seasonal jobs during festive season

New Delhi: E-commerce marketplace Meesho expects to create over 10 lakh seasonal job opportunities across its seller and logistics ecosystem to meet the surge in demand during the upcoming festive season. Geographic Reference

The projected employment generation includes approximately 6.5 lakh jobs across its seller network and about 3.75 lakh roles across its logistics operations. “The festive season is an important period for businesses across our ecosystem to scale up and prepare for increased demand.

“This year, we expect to enable over 10 lakh seasonal job opportunities... Nearly 1.3 lakh sellers are expected to hire seasonal workers across packaging, manufacturing, production, warehousing and inventory management, as they build inventory, launch new products and expand their festive collections,” Meesho said in a statement on Friday. In the logistics sector, Meesho’s own logistics platform, Valmo, along with its third-party logistics (3PL) partners, will scale up capacity. The seasonal roles in this segment will span delivery, sortation, delivery centre operations and supervisory functions. “The festive season continues to create

data collected from the former group through door-to-door surveys would have higher recall errors than diary-based data supplied by the latter group.

This problem is not insignificant as India’s survey samples are dominated by the low-income group. So, while the diary approach is “not a bad idea”, Sen warned that “you can’t wish away the recall error” which separates the two different sets of data. Saying that the ministry is looking into the matter, a source said: “This is something we are thinking about — how the data compiled by the diary method can be integrated with the main survey”. The HCES gives a measure of how much people spend on various goods and services, tracking the change in consumption patterns across different levels of consumers in rural and urban areas. It is key to understanding not just household consumption behaviour, but also standards of living, well-being and inequality. The share of expenditure on different items is also used to update the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket, which forms the basis of one of the most important economic indicators, the headline retail inflation. It is this measure of change in prices that the Reserve Bank of India looks at while deciding on interest rates. The central bank’s CPI inflation target is 4% in a band of 2-6%. In the past, the HCES was conducted every five years. However, after an overhaul of the methods, two back-to-back surveys were conducted in 2022-23 and 2023-24. Going forward, the ministry intends to conduct the HCES every three years or so.

MoSPI vs RWAs Concerned by the falling participation of high-income households in its surveys, MoSPI held a “brainstorming session” with representatives from more than 75 organisations and housing societies from across the country in September 2024, hoping to find solutions to the issues it faced — from survey staff not being allowed to enter gated societies, to the lack of awareness on why these surveys are important for policy purposes, often leading to refusal to provide information. With the government looking to make its policies increasingly data and evidence driven, a rise in non-response rates can lead to inappropriate conclusions being drawn and decisions not leading to desired results.

A rise in non-response rates can curtail the sample size of surveys. If these non-responses are from a certain segment, the final composition of the sample may be different from what was intended, leading to incorrect estimates from the exercise. On the other hand, RWAs voiced concern on the sensitive and private nature of some questions, and the apprehension that the details may be shared with other government departments. MoSPI has assured that data privacy is of paramount importance, and the data is anonymised. They also cited the inability to remember details, and the discomfort in answering certain questions in front of family members — like expenditure on alcohol and cigarette consumption. RWAs cited security issues as a reason for not permitting survey staff inside gated societies. MoSPI’s field officers already follow an elaborate procedure to gain access to gated societies, including informing the district collector, local bodies, and the police station for necessary permission and support. Sometimes, according to sources, residents just say that they don’t want to participate in a survey. For instance, residents of an affluent society in Gurugram refused to take part in MoSPI’s Time Use Survey. Similar incidents have also been reported from high-rises in Bengaluru, Kolkata, Udaipur, Mumbai and Bhopal, among others, over the years for various surveys, including the HCES, the government’s flagship Periodic Labour Force Survey, the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises, and the Urban Framework Survey. While the survey work was finally completed in some cases, the ministry had to “substitute” the original residential society with a similar one in other cases, said sources.

Stock markets trade marginally higher amid elevated crude oil prices



Mumbai: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty were trading marginally higher in early deals on Friday as elevated crude oil prices due to geopolitical uncertainties and a sharp fall in US markets made investors cautious. After a positive beginning to the trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex turned flat and was down 25.97 points to 77,506.51 in early deals. The 50-share NSE Nifty also skidded 5.75 points to 24,223.10 after a positive start.

However, both the benchmark indices bounced back and were trading marginally higher. The BSE benchmark quoted 62.60 points higher at 77,595.14, and the Nifty was up 10.65 points to 24,244.80. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharat Electronics, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, Tata Steel and ICICI Bank were among

the biggest winners. InterGlobe Aviation, Titan, Hindustan Unilever and Trent were among the laggards. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 583.36 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.30 per cent lower at USD 93.50 per barrel.

“Global cues have turned cautious, with the Dow falling 1.32 per cent, the S&P 500 declining 0.87 per cent and the Nasdaq losing 1 per cent. Brent crude remains elevated near USD 93 a barrel amid renewed US-Iran tensions,” Rajesh Palviya, Head of Research at Axis Securities, said. In Asian markets, South Korea’s Kospi, Shanghai’s SSE Composite index and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index quoted higher, while Japan’s Nikkei 225 traded lower.

US markets ended in negative territory on Thursday. “The Treasury-driven relief that supported markets on Thursday proved short-lived, with US equities falling sharply overnight as bond yields reversed their earlier decline. President Donald Trump’s comments on an ‘economic war’ against Iran have also revived concerns over oil-driven inflation and prolonged geopolitical uncertainty,” Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said. On Thursday, the Sensex jumped 628.04 points, or 0.82 per cent, to settle at 77,537.72 after four days of decline. The Nifty also bounced back after seven days of losses. It ended at 24,231.85, up 153.55 points, or 0.64 per cent.

Treesa-Gayatri end India's 15 year wait for women's doubles medal at World Championships



GNS News Agency, August 22

World No 39 Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand confirmed a historic medal for India at the BWF World Championships 2026, defeating fourth seeds Jia Yi Fan and Zhang Shu Xian of China in the women's doubles quarterfinals at the Indira Gandhi Arena in New Delhi on Friday. The unseeded Indian pair lost the opening game 16-21 before mounting a gritty comeback to take the second 21-15. They carried that momentum into the decider, sealing the match with a dominant 21-13 victory to guarantee India's first women's doubles medal at the World Championships since

2011, when Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa claimed bronze in London.

Treesa-Gayatri pair began their campaign with a dominant Round of 64 victory over Spain's Paula Lopez and Lucia Rodriguez, winning 21-9, 21-13 in just over 30 minutes. They followed that with another commanding performance in the Round of 32, defeating 16th seeds Lauren Lam and Allison Lee of the USA 21-15, 21-12. In the Round of 16, they produced another big upset, stunning seventh seeds Rin Iwanaga and Kie Nakanishi of Japan 21-16, 21-12 to reach the quarterfinals. That victory made them the first Indian women's doubles pair to reach the World Championships quarterfinals since 2015.

The medal confirmation is particularly significant as it is the only guaranteed podium finish for India so far at this event, with singles stars PV Sindhu, Lakshya Sen, Unnati Hooda and Ayush Shetty, along with other contenders, having been eliminated earlier in the tournament. The men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty remain in contention for another medal. The fifth seeds will face Chinese third seeds Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang in the quarterfinals later on Friday. A victory for Satwik-Chirag would confirm India's second medal at the World Championships.

India coach on Kuldeep Yadav: 'One game doesn't decide the way he has performed'



GNS News Agency, August 22

A buoyant India arrived in Colombo with the prospect of clinching a third consecutive series in Sri Lanka, after going 1-0 up with a 165-run win in the series opener at Galle. The win was built on standout performances from Devdutt Padikkal and Manav Suthar, whose runs and wickets helped India dominate the series opener. But despite the convincing result, Kuldeep Yadav endured a relatively quiet outing, finishing with match figures of 1/103 from 25 overs. Spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule insisted the left-arm wristspinner had simply fulfilled the role the team required.

"He's been bowling extremely well. Just the situation that arose in Galle; he had to play a different role, and he tried his best to adapt and tried to execute as much as possible. I think he was playing his role. I think we had to see how the trajectory or the speeds worked in every session. As the days went by and there was a demand for different types of speeds and different types of trajectories, he definitely made an effort to bowl that way," Bahutule told reporters on Friday.

Bahutule also made it clear that Kuldeep's performance in the first Test would not affect his standing within the team. "It all depends on the conditions. How, what is the need at that particular time, in different conditions, what would be the right combination, is fast bowling an option, is adding a spinner an option, and Kuldeep, look, for me, I think he has been a fabulous bowler over the years." "Yes, the wickets sometimes are slow, and sometimes the ball operates differently for the spinners on certain surfaces. But for me, he has always been a match winner, and he definitely is in the scheme of things, but we will again decide on the combination," Bahutule added.

India have four spin options in the squad – Kuldeep, Ravindra Jadeja, Manav Suthar and Saransh Jain – and Bahutule said the final combination for the second Test would be dictated entirely by conditions. "It all depends on the conditions. What is needed at that particular time? What is the right combination? Is an extra fast bowler the better option, or is another spinner the better option?" "Finger spinners, you can manipulate the fingers and bowl at the speeds you want to bowl. So, it is definitely a tough proposition for a spinner, but I don't think one game decides on the way he (Kuldeep) has been performing and the way he is approaching his cricket. He has been a match-winner for India," the former India leg-spinner said. Bahutule reserved special praise for Suthar, whose control and consistency have quickly made him a dependable option in India's attack. "He is somebody who is very accurate. His trajectories are just getting better and better, puts in a lot on the ball, the revs are good and he is somebody who is like a banker for us, consistently being in the lengths which we want to and that's how he is also evolving, he is also growing and we try and keep it very simple to be honest, not complicate things and work on his strengths," he said.

'Very strong, very sharp': Chinese duo hail Treesa-Gayatri after World Championships upset



GNS News Agency, August 22

Indian women's doubles pair Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand confirmed a medal at the Badminton World Championships on Friday, defeating fourth seeds Jia Yifang and Zhang Shu Xian of China in a thrilling quarterfinal. The Indian duo came back from a game down to win 16-21, 21-15, 21-13, ending India's 15-year wait for a women's doubles medal at the World Championships. India's only previous medal in the category came in 2011, when Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa won bronze in London. "Treesa is a very strong attacking player and Gayatri is a very sharp minded player," Chinese shuttler Jia Yifang said about the Indian pair. After PV Sindhu and Ayush Shetty were knocked out earlier, the women's doubles pair carried India's medal hopes alongside Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty.

Treesa and Gayatri had the worst imaginable start to

the first game, unable to match the speed of the Chinese duo. Jia and Zhang made the Indians run around the court, forcing multiple errors. The Chinese led 9-2 at one stage, but the Indian pair made an impressive comeback to make it 8-9, with Gayatri finding her precision and Treesa her smashing power. Despite trailing 8-11 at the mid-game break, the Indian duo stayed in the contest with Treesa's body smashes and Gayatri's pristine net play. However, the Chinese pair upped the ante with a couple of body smashes, and the Indians could only save one match point before losing the opener 21-16. The Indian duo stepped up in style in the second game. Treesa and Gayatri started rotating between the front and back courts, creating more smashing opportunities. As the smashes increased, the Chinese pair made mistakes on the net. Two errors from Jia gave the Indians an early 5-3 lead.

The game went toe-to-toe until Treesa and Gayatri led 11-10 at the mid-game break. The scores were level at 14-13, but Treesa began smashing every opportunity. At 15-14, she hit five consecutive smashes before winning the rally to make it 16-14. With the crowd noise rising, the Chinese made three net errors as the Indians raced to match point and won the second game 21-15 to force a decider. The third game was all about the Indian pair's supreme confidence and the backing of the crowd. The Chinese made multiple errors due to the drift, with their pushes and smashes going out. The Indians led 11-5 at the mid-game break and closed the match with a 21-13 victory to confirm India's first medal of the 2026 World Championships.

further added, "I would like companionship... someone I can travel with and enjoy good food and places with... but otherwise, I'm very happy with my own company." Seema Sajdeh, who also participated in Alliance with her ex-husband Sohail, said, "See, the thing is that this show was far harder for him than it was for me." She continued, "Because he is, again, he gets along with everybody, but he's not too much... he doesn't make too much conversation. For me, I'm a people's person... With him, he likes his comfort zone." When Seema Sajdeh spoke about Sohail Khan during an interview with Times Of India earlier, Seema had opened up about her bond with former husband Sohail Khan after their divorce. "At the end of the day, we are parents to two beautiful boys. We've been divorced for four years now. We've gone through our motions, and we're a great team when it comes to the boys. We're better friends than we ever were as a couple," she said. She then called Sohail an emotional person and added that she thinks being in captivity made him even more emotional. "But no. Like I said, we're a unit when it comes to our children, and we're co-parenting them beautifully. We're great friends today."

Neha Dhupa and Angad Bedi recently welcomed Alliance participants Nikhil Chinapa and actor-producer Sohail Khan's ex-wife Seema Sajdeh, in the latest episode of their podcast – Double Date. During their candid conversation, Seema opened up about her perspective of having a companion in life. The Fabulous Lives Of Bollywood Wives star revealed that she feels happy going home to her dogs, and feels quite 'self sufficient'.

In the beginning of their vlog, Neha introduced Seema as 'Seema Sajdeh Khan', when she instantly corrected the actor and clarified, "No, I am not a Khan anymore." Later on in the video, Nikhil joked that Sohail Khan might have been her first choice for her appearance on Double Date. "Noooo," she smiled and replied. During the chat, Angad asked Seema whether she missed having a man in her life. Seema answered, "At the end of a long day, I want to go home to my dogs. If I have another human being sitting there, I may not be okay with it... I think I've become accustomed to being alone. I'm very happy by myself. I'm very self-sufficient. I don't get scared... many people are very scared to be alone in life eventually, but I actually like my own company." She

Australian team ageing, needs new players: Jason Gillespie after Darwin defeat



Bangladesh's stunning nine-wicket win over Australia in the Darwin Test has laid bare several of the hosts' deficiencies. With an ageing squad, the Kangaroos have the daunting task ahead of playing 21 Tests in the space of a year. Australian fast-bowling legend Jason Gillespie, in an exclusive interaction with The Indian Express, shared his views on the team's performance against Bangladesh and the road ahead.

What did you think of Australia's performance?

Pat Cummins' captaincy was fine, but Australia batted poorly in the first innings. Bangladesh outplayed them throughout the game. They played old-fashioned, patient Test cricket. Australia will bounce back strongly in Mackay. However, this is an ageing team, and selectors will bring in new players over the next 6-12 months. For now, they have got in Matt Renshaw in place of Jake Weatherald for the Mackay Test. Other than that, the only discussion will be whether Scott Boland plays; I'm not sure if that's in place of one of the seamers or the spinner. But Australia will bounce back strongly. The surface will be very good at Mackay. What did you make of the pace trio's (Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood) performance? They've been great. I thought they bowled quite well in the first Test. But Bangladesh just batted very, very well. I think that if they bowl the same way again, they'll have a chance to perform better against Bangladesh. Bangladesh's seamers were good as well. They deserved to win. Tanzid Hasan got a hundred and other batters contributed to get a lead in the first innings. Some good signs for Bangladesh... Their challenge now is to back that up. And the Australians will want to bounce back from what was a pretty disappointing performance.

Where do you stand on the Scott Boland vs Josh Hazlewood debate?

Hazlewood for me. He proved why he was picked (with a 6/89 in the first innings). Boland is a very good bowler; there's no doubt about that. But Hazlewood has over 300

Test wickets. So for me, Hazlewood deserved that opportunity.

What is going wrong with Marnus Labuschagne?

He looked okay in Darwin in the second innings for his 31 runs. But he's just finding ways to get out. He finds himself nicking the ball behind the wicket quite regularly and gets out caught playing at balls outside the off stump. He needs to score runs in Mackay, else his spot will definitely be in jeopardy. There are several players waiting in the wings. There's young lad Ollie Peake, Jayden Goodwin from Western Australia, Campbell Kellaway, and Sam Konstas. These players will all be seen as potential options going forward. If Marnus fails, I don't know who they're going to pick. But they're all up-and-coming young players. Why are so many Australian domestic batters averaging less than 40? The pitches are prepared too much in favour of seam bowlers, as well as the extra lacquer on the Kook-aborra ball. Then how do you pick batters? This is where selectors need to look at the attributes they believe can succeed at the Test level, not just statistics. It is the art of selection. Just looking at numbers, at cold hard stats, that's not selection, because then you just let the stats person do that. The art of selection is identifying attributes and traits and skill sets that you think can succeed at the next level.

What are the batting and spin options for the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Trophy?

Look, Matt Renshaw is a nice player. He has patience and technique, like Usman Khawaja did. He's learnt a lot. Peter Handscomb, he's a bit older, but he's a very good spin player. So several options are floating around Australian cricket. Corey Rocchiccioli, an off-spinner from Western Australia, is a very fine bowler. Lloyd Pope and Tanveer Sangha are good leg-spin options.

What do you think of Cameron Green's future?

He played very well in the second innings (scored 104) at Darwin, but he's got to back it up with consistent performances. He's played 38 Test matches now, he's played a lot of cricket. He needs to move away from being a potential player to being a consistent performer. And if he can do that, then he'll have a long career.

Who are the next potential long-term fast bowlers?

Callum Viddler from Queensland looks a good prospect. He bowls quick with good airspeed. Then you've got Jhye Richardson from Western Australia. There are a couple of South Australians who've performed well over the last little period: Nathan McAndrew and Jordan Buckingham. There are a few different options for the Australian selectors to look at, going forward.

Sri Lanka appoint 1996 World Cup winner Hashan Tillakaratne as senior team batting coach

GNS News Agency, August 22 Colombo: Former Sri Lanka captain and 1996 Men's ODI World Cup winner Hashan Tillakaratne has been appointed as the batting coach of the senior men's national program, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) announced on Friday. The 59-year-old left-handed batter, who scored 8,334 international runs across 83 Tests and 200 ODIs from 1989 to 2004, officially assumed his new role on August 20. His contract runs till December 31, 2027.

"Sri Lanka Cricket wishes to announce the appointment of Hashan Tillakaratne as the batting coach of the senior men's program. He will be based at the National High Performance Center of the SLC and will work with the national players as part of the Senior Men's Program." "The former World Cup winner previously served as the batting coach of the Sri Lanka men's national team and the head coach of the Sri Lanka women's national team. He also has served as the head coach of the Bangladesh Women's National Team.

"Tillakaratne represented Sri Lanka from 1989 to 2003, playing 83 Test matches and 200 ODIs and accumulating more than 8,200 international runs across the two formats. His appointment came into effect on 20th August 2026 and will continue until 31st December 2027," said SLC in its statement on Friday. Tillakaratne brings extensive coaching and



administrative experience to the National High-Performance Center setup in Colombo. His finest Test innings came against India in 2001, when he crafted a magnificent unbeaten 136 in the third Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) Ground in Colombo, the venue for the second Test between the two teams starting on Sunday. Following his playing career, in which he captained Sri Lanka in 11 Tests, Tillakaratne served as a national selector and worked with various senior, U-19, and women's setups and completed a recent coaching stint in the United States of America (USA).

Michael Hussey open to England Test batting coach role after Stephen Fleming approach



Mackay: Former Australia batter Michael Hussey said is considering an offer to become England's Test batting coach after receiving an informal approach from newly appointed head-coach Stephen Fleming. Hussey spent nearly 15 years alongside Fleming at five-time IPL-winning franchise Chennai Super Kings (CSK) as both a player and later as batting coach. "We (Fleming and I) obviously get on really well and work a lot together. So, it was just a bit of a passing comment, really saying, 'Look, what do you reckon? Would you think about being the batting coach?'"

"There is a lot of different things to consider. My short

Sahan Arachchige, Kamil Mishara added to Sri Lanka squad for second Test vs India

New Delhi: Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Friday announced their squad for the second and final Test match against India. All-rounder Sahan Arachchige and batter Kamil Mishara have been drafted into the 14-member squad that will face the Shubman Gill-led side in the second Test in Colombo from Sunday. Dinesh Chandimal, who suffered an injury during the opener in Galle, is out, as is his replacement Pasindu Sooriyabandara, who was out for a golden duck in the only innings he batted after making his debut as a concussion replacement.

There was no place for the other opener, Nishan

Madushka, while bowling all-rounder Ramesh Mendis and fast bowler Dilshan Madushka also missed out. Arachchige got his reward after leading the Sri Lanka A side in the unofficial Tests against the Indian A team and putting up an impressive performance. He scored 127 in the second game and also scored 72 in the first match. He made 209 runs in the two games and topped the charts for his team, second only to India's Sai Sudharsan. The all-rounder remains uncapped in Tests. Mishara was in impressive form in the Lanka Premier League 2026, having scored 411 runs in nine innings in the recent season.

Five decades, five languages, three generations: Why Radikaa Sarathkumar cannot be replaced

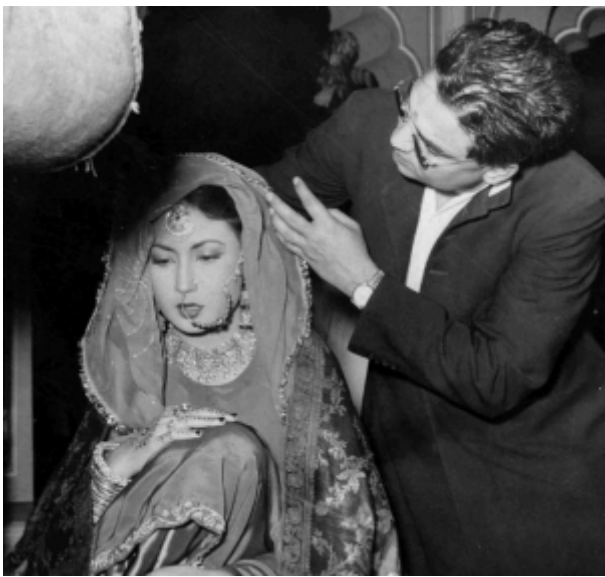


Name another actor in Indian cinema who has shared the screen with Sivaji Ganesan, Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan, Vijay and Suriya. Not as a child artist making cameos across eras. As a working, credited, scene-commanding performer in each of their films. With a career that stretches across 48 years, over 200 films, five languages, a television production empire, a National Film Award and three full generations of Tamil cinema's leading men, the list begins and ends with Radikaa Sarathkumar.

If you are wondering how her career began, it was almost by accident. She was studying in London when she visited India during a Christmas break in 1977. That was when director Bharathiraja spotted her and offered her a role in his next film. His film Kizhakke Pogum Rail released in 1978, and Radikaa Sarathkumar, barely 15, played the character Panchaali. In interviews over the years, she has repeatedly said she never wanted to enter the profession. But from that first film, the industry did not let her leave. And 48 years later, it still has not.

Generation one: Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan, Sivaji Ganesan Through the late 1970s and the entire 1980s, Radikaa Sarathkumar was one of the busiest leading ladies in South Indian cinema. She worked opposite Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan and Sivaji Ganesan. Between 1978 and 1990, she appeared in well over 200 films across Tamil and Telugu. In Telugu alone, she acted in more than 120 films between 1981 and 1989, a pace that few actors, male or female, have matched. What set Radikaa apart from many of her contemporaries was the kind of roles she chose. She did not limit herself to the conventional heroine parts that the industry typically offered. She played women with agency, women who argued, women who made decisions, women who were not waiting for the hero to rescue them. It was a radical choice for the era, and it gave her performances a texture that directors valued and audiences responded to.

Kamal Amrohi's wife learnt from magazine he'd married Meena Kumari: 'She took off bangles'



Meena Kumari, regarded as one of the most talented and highest-paid heroines of her time, married filmmaker Kamal Amrohi in 1952. At the time, Kamal was already married to Sayeda Al-Zehra Mehmoodi and had three children. However, he never formally informed his first wife about his marriage to the actress. His son, Tajdar Amrohi, has now recalled how his mother discovered her husband's relationship with Meena Kumari and their first meeting. Speaking to Vickey Lalwani, Tajdar said: "My mother was an orthodox woman and was not a part of the film industry. She didn't know anything about films. Back in those days, there used to be a very popular Hindu magazine, called Shama and the Hindi version of the magazine was called Sushma. While going through that magazine, she came across an article that spoke about Kamal Amrohi's love affair with Meena Kumari. She was among the most famous actors in India." The article mentioned that the filmmaker and the actress were having an affair and were likely to get married. While his family lived in Uttar Pradesh's Amroha, he lived in a massive bungalow in Mumbai (then Bombay). Tajdar recalled: "When she read the news, she was extremely shocked. Later, other people also came to know. My mother hid that magazine but my sister caught her in the act. When my sister read the magazine, she found out our father was having a love affair." Despite the shock, Tajdar said his mother never confronted his father. "My mother never confronted my father. In fact, my father was quite grateful to my mother because she never questioned him about 'Choti Ammi'. She never accused him of infidelity or betrayal. And as far as I know, she didn't care to ask him until her last breath. And at the same time, nobody had the audacity to badmouth my father before her. She wouldn't tolerate it. She would always say: 'It is between the both of us.' "Not just my father, but even Choti Ammi had kept this secret hidden from her own father. Only her sisters knew about her affair with Kamal Amrohi." Tajdar also spoke about Meena Kumari's decision to marry his father. "My father was a very handsome, extremely intelligent, highly educated man and belonged to a big family. It was an honour for any woman to get married to such a background. When they got married, my father was more famous than Choti

Generation two: Vijay, Suriya and the transition Most leading actresses of the 1980s and early 1990s retired or faded from public view by the time the next generation of heroes arrived. However, Radikaa Sarathkumar did not. Instead, she made one of the smartest transitions in South Indian cinema history. She moved from being the leading lady to being the most reliable supporting actress in the industry. She appeared in films like Jeans, Saguni, Naanum Rowdydhaan, among others, her roles varying from a mother to a supporting role incredibly important for the film. While many of her peers from the 1980s disappeared entirely or moved to television as a step down, Radikaa treated television as an expansion, not a retreat. The television empire

In 1999, Radikaa Sarathkumar founded Radaan Mediaworks India Limited, a production company focused on Tamil television. The timing was significant because Tamil television was entering a growth phase, and Radikaa positioned herself at the centre of it. Radaan produced some of the most popular and longest-running Tamil serials of the 2000s, including Chithi, Annamalai, Selvi and Arasi. She also produced Idi Katha Kadu in Telugu, expanding the company's reach across languages. Chithi, in particular, became a cultural phenomenon in Tamil Nadu, running for years and making Radikaa as much a television star as she was a film star. The serial's popularity was such that it was eventually revived, with Radikaa returning to the franchise. Now, in 2026, Radikaa Sarathkumar is in Vishwanath and Sons, playing Suriya's mother. She played the leading lady opposite heroes who were older than Suriya is now. And yet, in the film, the dynamic works because Radikaa Sarathkumar brings a naturalism and emotional weight to the mother role that makes the generational shift feel invisible.

Suriya with Radikaa Sarathkumar in a still from Vishwanath and Sons, directed by Venky Atluri. Suriya with Radikaa Sarathkumar in a still from Vishwanath and Sons, directed by Venky Atluri. Before Vishwanath and Sons, she appeared in Annabelle Sethupathi, Vaanam Kottattum, Love today, each time in a supporting role that punched above its screen time. She has also continued working in Telugu cinema, appearing in Raja the Great with Ravi Teja, Krishna Vrinda Vihari, Aadikeshava and S Saraswathi. And then, earlier this year, Radikaa did something nobody expected. She came back as a leading lady. Thaaai Kizhavi, directed by debutant Sivakumar Murugesan and produced by Sivakarthiskeyan and Sudhan Sundaram under Sivakarthiskeyan Productions and Passion Studios, saw her playing Pavunuthaayi, a fiercely independent, intimidating elderly moneylender in a rural village near Madurai. The film was entirely hers. Made on an estimated budget of Rs 10 crore, Thaaai Kizhavi went on to collect Rs 82 crore at the box office, making it one of the most profitable Tamil films of the year. The reason Radikaa Sarathkumar is still relevant at 63, after 48 years and over 280 films, is adaptability and an understanding how she can embed herself in the evolving scale of cinema. She understood, earlier than most, that a career in cinema is not one job.

Ammi." Several years into their marriage, Meena Kumari fell unwell, prompting Mehmoodi to travel to Mumbai to see her personally. It was the first time the two women met. "My mother came to see my Choti Ammi when she heard that she wasn't keeping well. When my mother met her, she removed her bangles and made Choti Ammi wear them. As she passed on the bangle, she said: 'Dulhan wahi jo piya mann bhaaye' (The bride is the one who pleases her husband). My husband is happy with you." According to Tajdar, while his mother appeared to be a strong woman to the world, she would often cry when she was alone. "She never showed her tears. She would show anger. But never made it feel like another woman took away her happiness." He added: "My father always sent money home. He always took care of my mother. He didn't do any compromise on that. He gave us good education." Meena Kumari and Kamal Amrohi remained married for nearly two decades, until her death in 1972 of liver cirrhosis. However, things soured between the two of them, and they were separated. While many claimed they got divorced, Tajdar said that was not true.

Mini Mathur on interfaith marriage with Kabir Khan: 'Our kids have no religion'

Mini Mathur, who recently won the Prime Video reality show Alliance, has been in the public eye since the mid 1990s. Mini started her career as a TV host but gained massive popularity after she became a VJ on MTV. But before she joined MTV, she married director Kabir Khan, who, at the time, was making documentaries. In a recent interview, Mini shared that their interfaith wedding did not face any problems from either of the families, even though her father was a "conservative" man. She also shared that she has never declared any religion for her children on any of the official documents. "Never wanted my husband's name on passport"

In a chat with Hauterfly, she said that she had gotten married to Kabir before she joined MTV and it was "another issue." She explained, "I was told by certain people saying 'We didn't know you were married'. Because I had won the VJ hunt. I never wanted my husband's name in my passport. I didn't change my name. My kids shouldn't have either of the parents' names. I said if they are writing Khan, then they should write Mathur as well." Mini shared that she never faced any problems with the local authorities in Mumbai. "BMC never gave me a problem registering their names. The passport office never gave me a problem registering their names. Now, I don't know what's happening but I never faced any opposition." I decided to do Karva Chauth Talking about sticking to her faith, she shared that even though she is not a religious person, she believes that it is a cultural connection that she shares with her parents. "I decided that I will do Karva Chauth and 'havan' because that's how I have grown up. And I have a cultural bond with my parents. I am not a religious person myself, but these are the things I have grown up with."

Deepika Padukone demanded 10% Spirit profit, leaked details: Sandeep Reddy Vanga's brother



The controversy surrounding Deepika Padukone's exit from Spirit has resurfaced, with Sandeep Reddy Vanga's brother Pranay Reddy Vanga making fresh claims about the disagreement. While the actress' reported demand for an eight-hour workday had earlier dominated the debate, Pranay has now claimed that remuneration and profit-sharing were also key points of contention.

Sandeep Reddy Vanga's brother opens up about Deepika Padukone's exit in a recent interview with NTV. Pranay Reddy Vanga addressed the circumstances surrounding Deepika Padukone's exit from the Prabhas-led film. According to him, the decision to move on from the actress came after discussions over her remuneration, working hours and other aspects of the project. Explaining the reasons behind the development, Pranay said, "The reason is the same as what was already mentioned. One was remuneration, the second was timing. Apart from that, there are some other reasons too." He also maintained that the decision was ultimately made by Sandeep. According to Pranay, the filmmaker had been in discussions with Deepika for around a year and a half and was interested in casting her in Spirit. He suggested that her successful run at the box office gave her greater leverage during negotiations. Pranay claimed that the negotiations escalated when Deepika sought a percentage of the film's profits rather than simply a higher fee. He said, "She demanded 10 per cent from the film's profit. Soon after, everything went overboard. See, she can ask for anything. If we are willing to

give, we can give. But the economics (budget) should also work out for us. We thought that it was not working. This is why we thought of other options. Once we started looking for other options, they started leaking everything." Pranay further said that the team had spent more than a year discussing the film's story and Deepika's character with her. He said that details from those conversations later surfaced publicly, which he said left the team unhappy. "We discussed the story and character with her. Things discussed internally should not be revealed but she leaked all of them. That is why we are disturbed," he said.

He also clarified that, according to his account, the dispute was not simply over an additional Rs 5-6 crore in remuneration. All about Spirit controversy After Deepika's exit, Triptii Dimri was announced as her replacement. The controversy grew further when a report claimed that the Prabhas-starrer would feature an 'A-Rated Action' twist. Sandeep subsequently took to X, expressing his anger over what he described as a leak of his film's plot.

"When I narrate a story to an actor, I place 100% faith. There is an unsaid NDA (Non Disclosure Agreement) between us. But by doing this, You've 'DISCLOSED' the person that you are..." Without naming anyone, he added, "Putting down a Younger actor and ousting my story? Is this what your feminism stands for? As a filmmaker, I put years of hard work behind my craft & for me, filmmaking is everything. You didn't get it. You won't get it. You will never get it." He ended the post with, "Aisa karo.... Agli baar poori kahani bolna... kyunki mujhe jarra bhi farak nahi padhta (Next time, tell them the complete story because I don't really care)." He also quoted the saying, "Khundak mein billi khamba noche." and used the hashtag "Dirty PR Games". Deepika Padukone on her eight-hour workday demand Deepika has previously addressed the wider controversy without directly responding to every allegation surrounding her exit from projects. Speaking to CNBC-TV18 in 2025, she said, "I am someone who has always fought my battles silently, and for some strange reason, sometimes they become public—which is not the way I know and not the way I've been brought up. To fight my battles silently and in a dignified way is the way I know." In a separate conversation with Brut India, Deepika defended her reported demand for an eight-hour workday, arguing that it was not unreasonable. "I don't think what I am asking for is ridiculously unfair and I think only someone who has worked in the system enough will know the conditions that we work in. And I am saying this, if I may say so myself, a top star, so you can only imagine what the working conditions must be like for everyone else, for the crew, for example," she said. Deepika also pointed out that male actors have followed similar schedules for years. "I am not the first one who has asked for something like this. In fact, there are a lot of actors, male actors, who have been working on a 8-hour shift for years and it's never made headlines," she said.

One Night Only movie review: A nice-enough rom-com that aims to be radical



Quite like those predictable responses, this latest film by Will Gluck (with other bawdy modern romances behind him, such as Anyone But You, Friends with Benefits, Easy A) is a nice-enough rom-com that pretends very hard to be somewhat radical. And while it is beating about the bush, the film's "build-up" — despite all the kissing and petting and lovemaking going on around the two leads — is hardly a turn-on. While the "after" is not the movie's concern.

But, in the middle, One Night Only truly sparkles, thanks largely to the charisma of Barbaro and Turner, and not by a small measure due to the shiny itsy-bitsy thing that Allie wears for a majority of the film. Rarely has a halter neck been called upon to hold up so much, and rarely has it been wielded this effortlessly. The premise is that a "post-Obama" US government (that is as close to a political statement as the film gets) "outlawed" premarital sex three years

Harshita Gaur recalls Allu Arjun praising 'Mirzapur', says she 'wasn't expecting that'

Mumbai: Actress Harshita Gaur recalled a memorable fan interaction involving Telugu superstar Allu Arjun during her Mirzapur journey. In an exclusive interview with IANS, she revealed that she met Allu Arjun several years ago and was pleasantly surprised when he spoke highly of the popular series. Speaking about the many reactions she has received for Mirzapur, Harshita said, "There are a lot of fan reactions. And it's not over yet. It's still going on. So, there are a lot of things." She then recalled meeting Allu Arjun and said his response to the show was unexpected for her. "A long time ago, I happened to meet Mr. Allu Arjun. He praised this show so much. I wasn't expecting that," she said.

Harshita added that Allu Arjun's perspective and reaction to Mirzapur stayed with her. "I think he gave me a very good perspective and reaction," she said, reflecting on the memorable interaction. Harshita Gaur played Dimpy Pandit in "Mirzapur" a role that went on to become one of the most recognized performances of her career. The actress also opened up about the impact her Mirzapur character, Dimpi, has had on her career. While the show brought her widespread recognition, Gaur admitted that the character's popularity has also overshadowed some of her

ago, allowing single people to have sex only one night of the year. All the adults are branded on their wrists with marks which light up as red and green depending on whether you are conforming or breaking the rules. The young people may abuse the "mandate", so to speak, every so often, but clearly no one — including police, who are called upon to enforce the celibacy rule — believes in rebelling against it. Owen and Allie cross each other's paths on this once-in-a-year night, when amorous men and women can barely keep their hands off each other — be it in the Metro, restaurants, streets, cars, or open windows of their homes — except the two of them.

Owen has a girlfriend (Maya Hawke), who tells him on this day that she wants to "experiment" for this night, and says he is too "super-programmed" (the buttoned-down Polo T-shirt he wears is the only real example of it, though). Allie would rather have a meaningful connection than a meaningless romp in the hay, though it doesn't require her much persuasion to wear the aforementioned dress to try her luck in any case. Why the singles are not using the rest of the 364 days to prepare for this big night is not clear. But, if you go down that path, little about this "mandate", and the uncomplaining obedience of it by a population, then little is. Meanwhile, Owen and Allie keep running into each other across New York, even as they are going down different romantic paths, and several known faces drop in as cameos. Luckily for One Night Only, sparks indeed fly and the film does become an equal parts comedy as the desperate search for consummation — and in a hilarious sequence, for a condom — leads the two into several sticky situations. So is One Night Only a cautionary tale about sexual prudism, or about sexual liberation? What is all that sex on one side, and that easy resolve not to have it for a year, meant to add up to? A President-like figure pops up once cites how "teen pregnancies are down to zero" as are sexually transmitted diseases. He also suggests the one-day's concession is a "compromise", for the US to show the world "that it is different".



other performances. "Yes, it has overshadowed them. Dimpi has become so big. Unless something else comes along, I don't have any problem with it. I am happy." Reflecting on her journey from the beginning of her career to Mirzapur, Harshita Gaur spoke about how much she has grown both personally and professionally. The actress admitted that although she has worked comparatively less over the years, the experiences she has gained have contributed significantly to her evolution as an actor.